

Waterhouses Community Association
Trustees Annual Report 2022-23

As Honorary Secretary, it is my pleasure to present this Annual Report.

1) Waterhouses Community Association's goals

Our goals are to raise funds to cover the cost of running the Village Hall, provide activities, and to try and improve the quality of life and the environment for residents of our Village and the surrounding areas. We must thank the Committee Members and all our Volunteers for their hard work and continued support over the past year.

Sadly, we lost one of our members this year, Freda Brown. Freda was heavily involved in raising funds towards the cost of building the village hall. She continued to support the hall over the years and enjoyed attending hall events. She will be greatly missed.

2) Activities

Thanks to our volunteers, we have been able to provide the following regular activities over the past financial year:

- Weekly coffee morning
- Weekly cinema night
- Weekly floorball
- Puddlejumpers playgroup has increased its weekly sessions from two to four, one of which is a messy play session
- Social evening each Wednesday and Friday night
- Twice weekly dance fitness sessions
- Fortnightly knit and natter sessions
- Monthly family film nights
- Monthly grub club
- Bi-monthly quiz nights
- Bi-monthly wine club
- And the theatre club has started again this year

Other events include:

- The Easter Duck Race (17 April 2022)
- The Queen's Jubilee Party (5 June 22)
- Halloween pumpkin trail (31 Oct 22)
- Tree Lighting (2 Dec 22)
- Childrens' Christmas Party (17 Dec 22)
- Seniors Christmas Lunch (19 Dec 22)

The hall is also home to Beavers, Cubs and Scout groups, as well as Music and Memories run by Lesley Woodhead.

Over the last year, the hall was also hired for 25 private events, including parties, photo shoots and sensory play, generating almost £1000 in income. Users have been extremely complimentary about the hall facilities, its cleanliness, and the service they received from volunteers.

3) Fund Raising

Over the last year, volunteers have also organised and delivered the following fundraising events:

- MacMillan Coffee morning (10 Sept 22), with all proceeds going directly to MacMillan
- Craft Fair (17 Sept 22)
- Two Ceilidhs (1 Sept 22 and 11 March 23)
- Christmas Fair (26 Nov 22)

We need to continue to raise funds over the coming year to cover the increasing costs of running the hall. This will not be an easy task as volunteers are at an all-time low, as our older volunteers are not being replaced by others. We are keen to find volunteers who can help organise and deliver events, where a couple of hours from each volunteer can make a huge difference. We know that everyone leads busy lives, but if you know of anybody willing and able to join us, please let us know.

4) Projects and Initiatives

Two projects have continued over the past year:

- The Orchard Project
The trees are now well established and no longer need so much care. The amount of fruit they produce will vary from year to year depending on weather conditions, but local residents are encouraged to take whatever fruit is available.
- Waterhouses Woodland Group
The group had their second kiln lighting in August 22 and regular lightings are planned over the coming months. Two members of the group are now fully trained for the use of chainsaws, which will make preparations for future burns considerably easier. Proceeds from the sale of charcoal are passed the community association who oversee this project and hold the accounts.

The group are also working on a perimeter walk-way around the eastern end of the woodland, which is due to be completed this year.

Durham County Council have used a digger to improve the paths around eastern end of woods, towards Esh Winning. They have joined waterways with pipes, which now drain into a wildlife pond. The earth bank alongside Andy Crossland's field have also been reinstated, which should stop it getting flooded. Planting to stabilise the banks will be added by Waterhouses Woodland Group in due course.

The number of regular volunteers has increased to 10. They meet each Friday afternoon at 1pm. If you are interested in joining the group or would like to hear more about the work of the group, please talk to Stefan Gemski at the end of this meeting.

In addition, a new initiative was introduced this year:

- Warm Spaces
We were successful in obtaining a £1000 grant to support the 'Warm Spaces' initiative, which ran from mid-November to April 2023. We offered two sessions each week: Wednesday mornings in place of the coffee morning to support older residents, and Thursday mornings in place of one of the playgroup sessions to support families. Although the hall heating system is working, four oil filled radiators were bought to provide some additional heat when needed.

5) Hall matters

- At the last AGM, it was reported that the hall had been flooded in March 22 due to the tank in the loft overflowing. The hall was closed for several weeks to allow it to dry out, and then again to allow repairs to be completed. The last of the repairs were signed off in July 22 and all accounts have since been settled.
- Hire rates were reviewed in August 2022, with marginal increases to bring us in line with other halls for hire in the local vicinity. The cost of hiring the main hall is now £12 per hour.
- Following the Queen's death in September 22, the Parish Council kindly provided us with a Condolence Book, which was placed in the foyer for all to use.
- In November 22, we welcomed Kevin Gill as a member of Waterhouses Community Association Committee.
- Ownership of the bar was transferred from Waterhouses Social Club to Waterhouses Community Association on 1 January 2023. This change was initiated because the Social Club no longer had the required number of members to qualify for a Club Premises Licences. However, as village halls and charities would normally hold a Premises Licence, with management sitting with the trustees, all parties considered this to be a sensible solution. The terms of the licence were updated to include the adoption of the Challenge 25 scheme and the introduction of a drug policy, which are now standard across bars.
- On 22 April, we welcomed Mary Kelly Foy and her team to our coffee morning. She was keen to hear about hall activities and talk to local residents about issues of concern. Issues raised included the poor state of the footpaths opposite The Paddocks, limited transport links and potential sustainable energy such as ground source heating.
- Repairs and maintenance activities have been carried out throughout the year, eg the required 5-year electric survey was completed in August 2022, with a number of actions identified; electric hand dryers were repaired and replaced; a damaged toilet was repaired; and damaged tables are due to be repaired and replaced over the next few weeks. Although the heating system is working, it is quite old and doesn't always keep the hall as warm as we would like. Oil filled radiators are used as a temporary measure, but longer-term solutions will be sought.

I'm sure you will agree that it's been a busy year. We couldn't keep the hall running without the support of our volunteers and the support of the local community who contribute to activities and events. Thank you all.

If you have any questions or would be interested in becoming involved with hall activities, please feel free to speak to any member of the Committee after the meeting.