

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT y/e 31st DECEMBER 2017

The last 12 months have been a successful one for the hall in terms of lettings, with a number of new hirers, including music lessons and dance classes. It is good to see the hall being used more by the community which shows how important a hall is to village life.

As previously, the last year has been a busy one in terms of trying to finalise proposed plans for a new hall on Harrow Meadow. A sub-committee of Trustees and the Parish Council have been in regular contact with the architects and planners designing the location and layout of a new hall, plus landscaping the meadow to try and retain the football pitch and other amenities. This takes a considerable amount of time bearing in mind the obstacles. The views of regular hirers have been sought and draft plans have been shown to them for comment. Such comments have then been fed back to the architects. The next step is to have a preliminary meeting with the planners at Sevenoaks District Council and show them the proposals. The increasing popularity of the hall by Eynsford residents and others hopefully will prove to be an important factor.

Currently draft plans and layouts are on the hall's website, www.eynsfordvh.com, although further information will be given to residents by way of social media, posters, Trident etc.

The hall is a registered charity and could not operate without the Trustees and other loyal friends who all volunteer their time to run the hall and events that support the hall. We are also lucky to have a number of people who are not Trustees but who nevertheless support the hall in other ways - we now have a new Letting Secretary, Wendy Jackson, who has seamlessly taken over a difficult job from Helen Owen and is approaching the job with gusto. My thanks also to Helen for her dedication. We have a new cleaner, Julie Lovelock who has taken over from Shula Fitzgerald who has moved. Plus of course what seems like an army of supporters who organise social and other events to raise money for the hall - the world famous Jumble Sale (organised by the Jumble Monster), New Year's ceilidh, wine tasting evenings, comedy and music nights. My apologies for not mentioning everyone but the Trustees appreciate the time and effort that goes into organising such events. Any new proposals gratefully accepted.

It is an old hall and thus takes more time to manage than perhaps a newer hall - things go wrong, as most of us have probably experienced, especially with the more ancient aspects of the hall such as the heating, plumbing etc. We would ask for understanding of such issues where they arise but please ensure that any faults are reported either to the Letting Secretary or any of the Trustees.

Finally if you haven't already bought one, I would urge you to buy a lottery ticket - they are only £5 per month and the proceeds are split between ticket holders and the new hall fund - to date some £18,000 has been paid out in prize money. Application forms can be found on the website.

The hall continues to be an important social and support hub for many residents - we have a difficult task to raise the necessary finance for a new hall, assuming we obtain planning permission, but we hope that residents continue to support what the Trustees believe to be a vital community asset.