

Chairman's report for Eynsford Village Hall for the year ending 31st December 2022.

As over the last couple of years, the main focus of the trustees has been the drive to raise funds for a new hall to be built on Harrow Meadow. We have been hugely assisted by the Parish Council with grant applications and other support.

Formal estimates have been received from potential developers for both the construction of the new hall and the work to level the football pitch and it can now be seen that the total cost of the project is some £2 million. However there are some encouraging signs on fund raising. A number of potential sources have been identified and strong interest has been shown by potential purchasers for the existing site. It is hoped that work to the football pitch will start in early 2023 as sufficient monies have been raised, pending fund raising for the balance to allow the hall development itself to be commenced.

A number of fund raising in event have also been organised by both trustees and other residents and the Parish Council – my thanks to all those who have helped and supported the hall over the past year.

With regard to more day-to-day matters in respect of the running of the hall, the letting numbers are now approaching those seen prior to the pandemic, with numbers nearly back to 2019 levels. The hall however still relies on loyal local users or those that have been hiring for many years, as 'one-off' bookings have reduced considerably. This may well be because the hall is now showing signs of age and its facilities cannot match those of other local, and more modern halls. While matters could be improved to a certain extent by some relatively minor improvement works, such as redecorating parts, many facilities, such as the toilets would need a more substantial sum spent on them to bring them up to a better standard. This only demonstrates even more clearly the need for a new hall.

And so we enter into 2023 with optimism – the letting numbers are up (although expenses, mainly energy, have risen considerably) and fund raising for the new hall is heading in the right direction. I hope by the end of this financial year, we may well be in a position where we can hope that a start on the new hall is in sight.

Malcolm Richardson
Chairman
31st July 2023.