

**Belstone Village Hall AGM**  
**9 September 2020**  
**Chair's Report**

Good evening everyone and a very warm welcome to you all. Thank you for coming to support the Hall despite the current times.

I think I can safely say that the Hall has never had a year like the last one. For a start my year as Chair has been 18 months long and has included challenges never before encountered!

When I stepped into the role of Chair last year we were on a very positive trajectory. There were regular bookings each week for pilates, yoga and dog training, as well the Post Office, Art Group and Community Café. Other users included Compassworks, Garden Club and various committees in addition to numerous bookings for private functions. As you all know, the Hall Committee runs a number of events throughout the year and in 2019 these included the ever popular Dawn Chorus Walk, a Secrets for Belstone Tor Walk, the Summer Fair (our best to date), the Craft Fair, a quiz, an evening with One Foot in the Groove and Haytor, wreath making and 100 Club. A huge thank you to everyone for their part in all these successes. However I feel particular thanks are due to Edwina for all the work around the bookings and arrangements and also to Chris Walpole for his help setting out the hall for weekly events, so quietly done and so very much appreciated. And thank you also to Simon Hill for his support with the Village Hall email system.

It was all going so well until February.... we were looking forward to a Supper Theatre and the return of the Hummingbirds when Coronavirus derailed just about everything. The Hall Committee responded promptly and in a very considered manner to the multiple issues around Covid 19 and has been very mindful of the community it serves in the way that the Hall has started to reopen. We were eligible for a Small Business Grant Fund, which was invaluable in allowing us to continue to move on with our plans and to continue to be able to employ those who work at the Hall. Huge and particular thanks are due to Edwina and Eva for the vast amount of care and hours they have put in to ensure the users are able to return to using the hall in a Covid-safe way that complies with all government regulations and directives despite regular changes and updates.

This year and a bit has seen some significant changes in the fabric of the Hall and many thanks are due to Edward Currie who took time to generate a 5 Year Maintenance Plan to enable us to prioritise future works. There is now reliable fibre broadband in the Hall, which proved a big success, one example being at the Craft Fair when sellers were able to use card readers to assist with larger sales volumes. The splendid new bar was completed over summer 2019 and we are extremely grateful to last year's chair, Rona Gundry for carrying this through. This summer we have been able to redecorate much of the hall inside and out and the result is very impressive. Many thanks are due to Rowena and David Bishop and to Edwina for their high level of input with this. The kitchen has been

improved and the roof repaired. We have also worked with the Parish Council and made a contribution to the repairs to the Village Car Park.

In line with the improvements to our 'product', we have streamlined the booking procedure and revised our pricing structure. We have recently seen some different sorts of enquiries, e.g. for small wedding receptions and are excited to see how these ventures go.

A few things still 'in train', e.g. sorting better accessible access into the Hall, but writing this has made me realise what a lot of things have been achieved despite unprecedented circumstances.

Thank you, all of you, for all of the support and the way you contribute to the life of the community through your use of, and service to, this Hall. Several members of the committee are moving on and I would like to take a moment to mention them.

- Rowena and David Bishop: Thank you for your work this year as Secretary, Rowena, and to buildings David, and for running the Humming Birds event last year and all your support to the various other events and projects.
- And thank you, Jo Robison for your invaluable support regarding statutory documentation, your support with events and also for running the One Foot in the Groove evening.
- And thank you to Sue Cruickshank who has represented the Church of St Mary's on the committee for a number of years. Thank you for all your work, particularly around the café and the Village Fair and around the planning of the redecoration.

On a personal note, thank you to all of you and particularly Rona, Mel, Edwina and Robin for taking over while I was ill this summer and then recuperating. It meant a huge amount to me to know I did not have to worry about the Village Hall!

If I have omitted anyone or anything, please forgive me.

So onward we go into a socially distanced, masked and sanitized autumn!

Joanna Currie September 2020.