

Brandeston Village Hall & Recreation Ground

**2009 Annual General Meeting
Thursday, 19th November, 2009**

Present: **Darryl Morgan – Chairman**
 Sue Thurlow – Secretary
 Nick Holland-Brown – Treasurer
 Together with 17 residents of Brandeston

Welcome

The chairman welcomed all present to the AGM.

Apologies for absence

Peter Thurlow	Tony Ethridge	Tracy Wingfield
Jackie Hounsell	Marian Hutson	Anne Hayward
Ruth Garratt	Peter Rainbird	Philip Bays

Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the 2008 AGM were signed as being a true record.

Matters Arising

- Computers – Darryl reported that there had been no response to the hall's offer to give these to any parishioner who would like them. They will, therefore, be scrapped.
- Hearing Loop – details included in the Chairman's report.

Chairman's Report

In spite of the recession and the increases in fuel and other costs over the last twelve months, the hall has continued to prosper. Before I go into the details, the hall management committee, on behalf of all Brandeston people, would like to thank the family of the late John Elliott for his bequest of £5000 to the village hall. John made a lot of friends through the Coffee Morning and village lunches and we need to look at what we can do with the money; we'll spend some time on that in the Other Business section. Without John's legacy, income for the year was up by 5.5%; expenditure, on the other hand was up 17% before depreciation. Nick will go into the details in his report but, in short, we made a trading profit of about £5700 on the year (again without John's legacy). Thanks are due to all event organisers and hall users for the continuing success of the hall.

We have had no new village groups at the hall (although Brandeston Hall have started using it for karate and fencing classes). This is the list of regular clubs:

- Pilates
- Yoga
- Table Tennis
- Coffee Morning
- Hayward's Hoofers
- Tap Dancing
- Mothers and Toddlers Group
- Wine Club
- Village Lunches
- Film Club

- Whist Drive
- Parish Council Meetings
- Brandeston Hall Karate Class
- Brandeston Hall Fencing Class

The committee arranged, as usual, a variety of events to serve the twin purposes of bringing people together and raising funds for the hall. This year, the big event was last February's French Evening which was well received by a packed hall. Photos of hall events were on shown before the meeting started and will be on again after the meeting. The full list of events is:

- Ruby and her Horses
- French Evening
- Eastern Angles
- Arts and Crafts Exhibition
- Beating the Bounds
- Village Fete (with All Saints PCC)
- Bonfire Night
- Harvest Horkey
- Southwold Trip (on 12 December)
- Christmas Dance (on 28 November)

The village fete, our biggest, single fund raiser with the church, was held once again the Queen's Head. Despite the rain for the first hour, we raised a massive amount of money for the hall and the church – over £2000 each. A lot of thanks go to Alan Randall at the Queen for letting us hold the fete in his grounds again and we will be there again next year, all being well. Fete takings have just about doubled over the last two years and the Brandeston Weekend, which includes the Scouts Duck Race, the Beer Festival, the fete and the Hog Roast and Jazz spread over three days is now a huge event. The hall and the PCC have learnt a lot about running a fete over the last two summers and if or when it moves back to the village hall, it will look a lot different from when it was last here.

Ticket sales for the Horkey were slow but over 60 people eventually attended. The dinner was one of the best for a long time but we need to have a good look at this long-standing village event to keep it relevant and to try to get more people to support this celebration of Suffolk village life.

Two new events this year were the revival of the Beating of the Bounds – a walk around the parish boundary and the Arts and Crafts Exhibition which showed off the amazing talent of Brandeston people.

We also ran the bonfire night and brought back Eastern Angles once again. We intend to have a full programme of events for the next twelve months starting with the Christmas Dance on 28 November and the return of the Southwold trip.

We have decided to shelve plans for making the hall available for business use. From the financial summary I gave earlier and the detail from Nick which follows, you will see that there is no immediate need for an alternative source of funding at this time.

Communication within the village is through the web site and the Newsletter. We have had some technical and production problems with the Brandeston this year but we hope to be

back to bimonthly issues from now on. Sue Thurlow's former employer used to supply the paper and ink but when Sue retired, we had to look for ways of publishing it cheaply as research suggested that it would cost about £70 an edition to print commercially. The web site continues to be well used in the village and also by people who live elsewhere but who have links with Brandeston, The number of visits is 16% up on last year but as there were fewer photos published, there was a 13% drop in the number of pages - but I'm always looking for new content. Compared with the OneSuffolk village web sites we're still the most popular village web site. (We have a single page with OneSuffolk.)

We reviewed the hall's fees and increased the cost of hiring the hall for weddings. We also increased the hiring fee for occasional use and rounded up some other fees. We made no change at all to the fees for regular hirers. We will review the fees again for the year beginning April 2010.

The hall takes a fair bit of routine maintenance to keep it working properly and this falls on Fred Mugleston, our maintenance manager. We have had leaks, electricity faults, breakages and a lot of other problems over the year. Fred deserves a big vote of thanks for fixing everything as soon as he is told.

The Health and Safety statement for the hall was updated by Tim Randall and is available in the foyer for anyone who wants to inspect it..

Mark Hounsell manages the 100+ Club on our behalf and it involves a huge amount of effort in March. We have 122 members, three up on last year. We have not spent any 100+ Club money this year and the balance stands at just over £1400. The management committee thanks Mark and the Parish Council for running the club.

The village hall committee constantly looks at ways of improving the hall for its users. We have installed shelves in the boiler room which has tidied it up no end. Leaving the village hall and playing field has been increasingly hazardous because of the hedges on both sides of the gate and parked cars opposite. We decided to install mirrors on the post opposite the gates to help people leave the grounds safely.

We bought new wine glasses to complete the catering changes we started last year. After first deciding to offer the old crockery and cutlery to other village halls and organisations, we changed our minds and decided to keep it all for use in outside events.

Following suggestions from villagers, we have installed a hearing loop in this room thanks to a grant from the Big Lottery fund. It was installed on 3 November and first used last Friday for the film show.

For the coming year the committee will be looking at a number of possible improvements. We have already agreed to strengthen the path leading to the kitchen entrance. Catering cars and vans damage the ground when it's soft and we are going to install grasscrete – a concrete product that allows grass to grow through it – between the door and the shingle drive. We are also looking at what we can do to improve access for wheeled chairs of all forms. The thick shingle from the gate makes pushing wheeled chairs very difficult and we need to make access to the hall good for all residents and visitors.

We have always been short of storage space – the cupboards and shelving have been an improvement - and we are looking at ways of increasing space in the hall.

The hall is already wired for the installation of a generator. We are in the early stages of investigating acquiring and installing one so that electricity to the hall can be maintained in the event of a power failure.

There are two pcs in the committee room which have never been used. This is the last chance for someone to take them before we dispose of them. We have had no response since we advertised them in the Parish Magazine.

The old wooden trestle tables have served the village well over the years but they are awkward to store and heavy to move around. The hall and the church decided to replace them with more manageable lightweight tables and this process has almost been completed. Alan Randall is obtaining them at almost no cost to the church or the hall thanks to his fundraising lottery for his lost ducks. The new ones are stored in the container at the pub and the hall, the church and the pub share their use while Alan is at the pub.

Through the Parish Council, we have been made aware that there is money available from the Play Space Levy. The village's Children's Committee is looking at what can usefully be done with it especially in the playground.

Last year I talked about maintaining good links with the Parish Council; this year, our link with the church has improved with Mary Baker joining the management committee as the PCC representative.

While on the subject of committee personnel, Lucy Daykin has decided to stand down because of pressure of work so we are looking for a new hall manager. I'd like to thank Lucy for her work over the last year and I know that she will continue to support the hall and the fete. Also, Marian Hutson has decided to call it a day; she has been on the committee since the new hall opened and was one of the group that raised money for the construction of the play area. She has said that she will continue to help out whenever we need her at our events.

As with a lot of organisations, a large amount of the day-to-day work falls on one or two people. I've already mentioned Fred but I also want to mention Jacky O'Brien who does a huge amount of work in managing the bookings and the opening and closing of the hall. One final improvement we are looking at is better key management to take some of the burden off Jacky (and Lucy's replacement). One idea is the installation of a key safe so that private hirers and regular hirers who don't hold keys can look after the opening and closing of the hall without Jacky or anyone else being around. It is an incredibly large and antisocial burden and we have to come up with a workable solution. Perhaps we can talk about it when we come to Other Business.

Finally, I'd like to thank the committee members for their support over the year, everyone who runs a group at the hall, all the organisers of our fundraising events and, of course, everyone who has supported the village hall in the last twelve months.

Comments from the floor:

- Don Evans thanked Darryl for all the hard work involved in keeping the website up to date and running such a huge asset for the village.

- Mark Hounsell commented that the 100+ Club currently had £1,460 of funds available for the hall.

Treasurer's Report

Nick summarised the accounts which had been circulated to those present with a breakdown of fund raising and events on a separate sheet.

Further comments:

- Paper bank – this has now be sorted out and the income is now coming to the hall. Total monies received - £203.
- “Balance of other income” was for the hiring of the screen/projector with tables/chairs.
- Donations totalled £10 and there were no further grants or gift aid received during the year. However, there was a very generous legacy left in the late John Elliot's will of £5,000.
- The trading income from hall hire and events excluding interest received is up again this year by £1,578 due in a large part to an increase in the village fete, the success of the French Evening and the contribution from the film club.
- Interest received was heavily down despite the increased bank balance (£742 to £118) due to current financial situation.
- Trading expenses were up by £2,363 – the biggest increase being in energy costs and cleaning.
- Profit from trading before depreciation (excluding interest, legacy and donations) was £6,110 compared with £6,339 last year.
- Depreciation calculated at £8,909.
- Net surplus after depreciation was £2,327.

Key balance sheet indicators:

- Cash balance up by £10,140.
- Net current assets up by £10,401.
- Even if the legacy of £5,000 is excluded these indicate a healthy position.

Looking forward – we will no doubt incur higher maintenance and repair costs as the building gets older, but the popularity of the hall as a venue for events seems to be surviving the recession.

Nick thanked Steve Williams for auditing the accounts.

Comments from the floor:

- **David Risk asked for the treasurer to investigate the possibility of higher interest rates as it is very low currently. This to be discussed at the next committee meeting.**

Election of Officers

Sue Thurlow confirmed that Lucy Daykin – Hall Manager and Marian Hutson – User Groups Representative are resigning because of other commitment and we therefore have 2 vacancies on the committee.

Darryl asked for any volunteers as the committee have been unable to find anyone to fill these positions, but unfortunately none were forthcoming. The committee will therefore have to operate on fewer members.

Suggestions from the floor:

- **Investigate paying for a caretaker.**
- **The Hall Manager's role to be arranged on a weekly basis and the duties shared.**

- The need for helpers to feature in the next Brandeston.
- Investigate how other halls organise the running of their facility.

The vote was then taken and all current members of the committee willing to stand again were voted in with no objections.

Mark Hounsell thanked all the committee members for the fantastic job they were doing to run the hall so effectively which includes a very healthy cash balance.

Any Other Business

John Elliot's bequest – a suggestion has been made to buy an industrial dishwasher which would cost about £2,000 including installation. All agreed that this would be a good idea. To be discussed at the next committee meeting. A suggestion from the floor was to also purchase a water softener.

Extra storage space – Darryl explained that more storage space was needed as smaller round tables were required and there is nowhere to put them. The replacement trestle tables will be stored in the shed at the Queen's Head, but this arrangement may not last forever – so where do we put them?

Options for consideration:

- Converting the dog walker's shelter into a storage room but this looks complicated to obtain access from the main building.
- Taking some of the lobby space.
- Extending the current storeroom over the western end of the terrace.
- Extending the storeroom into the meeting room or having a cupboard in the meeting room backing onto the storeroom.

Comments from the floor:

- All agreed that a separate shed outside was not a feasible idea.
- Extending over the patio would exclude the west view and the sunsets.
- Extend by having a curtained off area backing onto the storeroom so what when hall space was needed of course the chairs etc. behind the curtain would be in use and so the curtain could be drawn back to give more space at an event.
- What about making the storeroom into the meeting room?

Village Fete – the 2009 fete had a big input from Radio Suffolk. Roy O'Brien suggested that Steve Western - in role as broadcasting weatherman - should open next year's fete.

Hall Entrance – it was suggested that a light be fixed on the pillars at the road entrance to the hall as that area is very dark.

Charity event – Mary Baker asked for assistance from the hall for an orphanage in Africa, but as David Risk pointed out that as a registered charity the hall could not contribute any of its own funds to this. However it would be possible to assist with organising an event to raise funds.

The meeting closed at 9.25 p.m. and was followed by a glass of wine and nibbles for those present.