

THURSLEY VILLAGE HALL CIO AGM
Chairman's Report
13 November 2023

The relevant period for this AGM runs from July 2022 to the end of June 2023.

The year in question was a good year for us - we put on three fantastic community events and hosted another; we gained a regular user of the Hall office in Alina, the nail lady from Ukraine; hiring for children's parties was up; and there was a wedding. We have increased the Hall's bank account considerably, and won a grant for almost £10,000 from the Lottery. We've done a lot of maintenance, and we think the Hall is in great shape for the future.

October 2022 saw our extremely popular Scarecrow Trail event, which brings in 100s of families from all the surrounding villages as well as providing excellent entertainment for residents of Thursley. With helpers slaving away to produce more than 300 hot dogs in the pop up cafe, as well as homemade cakes and mulled wine, this was a fantastic event, which raised much needed funds for our renovation coffers.

Our Christmas Fair in November (this year's is on the 26th, in less than two weeks' time) was its usual success, with lots of different stalls of local produce, perfect for Christmas shopping.

On 7th January, the village was treated to a feast of fabulous Ukrainian dishes to celebrate Ukrainian Christmas Day. A team of talented Ukrainian cooks worked for days beforehand to make hundreds of varenyky, special dumplings with different fillings which are traditional in Ukraine. They wanted to say thank you to the village for welcoming them so warmly. We were blown away by their generosity in raising money for our renovations, and their cheerfulness in the face of such an awful tragedy taking place back in their home country. All were agreed that they are a wonderful addition to the village community, and we are lucky to have them. The event ended with everyone wishing for peace and victory for Ukraine.

The biggest social event of the year was the Royal Ball in May, in honour of the coronation of King Charles and Queen Camilla. A sold-out crowd were entertained by the first ever performance of Thursley's

own Gods of Thunder, under the leadership of Michelle and Daniel from the pub, and a great evening of dancing, fancy dress and raucous carousing was had by all. Thursley definitely does these national celebrations and commemorations best!

The nursery school goes from strength to strength and now has a waiting list. Parents are always impressed with our lovely big garden, our proximity to the Common and the size of the main hall. The nursery is, unsurprisingly, our biggest source of income, and we very much look forward to our continuing excellent relationship with Butterflies.

We changed tenants in the flat, which is now occupied by a local couple, and were able to get a significant rent increase, as well as recouping all the money owed by the previous tenant over the ensuing months.

Once again, the Thursley calendar, produced by Neil McIntyre for the Village Hall, was a great success, raising funds for the Hall - the 2024 one is on sale now! Don't forget to submit your photos of the local area to us for 2025's calendar photo competition.

In terms of hall maintenance over the period, this was a fairly quiet year - we installed a new heating system in the office; we bought a big new fridge; we had an electric survey of the whole building for insurance purposes and carried out all suggested and required repairs; we repainted the disabled and reserved signs in the car park; and we replaced some of the gutters.

I would like to give a special mention to all the villagers who have volunteered to help us over the year. We on the committee are few, and it's great to know there's always a helping hand available, whether for our community events or for gardening and cleaning. Just a reminder - as a charity, we are always happy (and grateful) to receive help from anyone who wants to do local volunteering for their Duke of Edinburgh Award.

I would also like to say a massive thank you to all my fellow trustees. They really do work so hard to keep this place going.

I wanted also to update you all on our progress with our extension plans. In consultation with our special team of advisers from the village,

we have decided to scale back the hall extension somewhat to take into account the huge rise in the cost of living, which has meant our projected costs for the current plans have doubled. Instead, we have decided to tackle things on more of a bit-by-bit basis, by improving what we have and making everything more energy efficient, and then trying to free up the improved North Hall for community use in a more cost-effective way. We are currently looking for input from all interested parties, including the nursery school, to see if we can do a smaller building project around the area of the chair shed by the back door. We will update you as soon as we have any further news, and please do let us know if you have any ideas or input you would like us to consider.