

Ousden Village Hall Report to Ousden Parish Council

Annual Parish Meeting 9th May 2023

Since last May the committee has been busy, particularly during the summer months and the hall has been fully open all year to keep things on track with the usual maintenance tasks. The hall floor has deteriorated so badly since being closed during the pandemic that we had to cancel the Ceilidh in February. There are always small jobs to be done such as guttering, toilet repairs and door renovations and we now have found a local handyman who helps us out but is not cheap. Electricity and water bills have risen in price but, at least this year, we didn't have a huge increase in insurance cover. Our thanks to the Parish Council, once again, for their support with the costs of £1,665.84.

The play area is inspected regularly by the County Council and we have to monitor things carefully. A subgroup from the committee is looking closely at renovating certain items and they are working on a plan. In November, we had a big load of bark chippings (£1200) delivered which smartened up the area and made it safer for the children.

All through the summer months the Pop-Up Café was open to raise funds for the new hall and our village lottery continues to bring in some funding too.

The New Build Working Party has met every month on Teams to keep the momentum going and presently we're awaiting the results of the second planning permission to go ahead. It has been frustrating as well as expensive to get this through.

Last June we celebrated the Queen's Jubilee with a festive tea party and raffle. We were lucky to get a West Suffolk Locality Community grant to help cover costs and were grateful for this.

In January we held another village open evening to discuss plans for the rebuilding of a smaller hall. It was attended by around 20 people including Mike Chester our local councillor.

Yoga was held outside under the tree during the warm weather but transferred to a friend's home in Hargrave during the cold months as it's too cold on the floor. Plans for a new wellness hub to include more yoga sessions, barre and yoga chi are being made with a view to opening at the hall in July.

Bowls and cricket continue and dog training is another letting in addition to the usual birthday parties taking place.

At the beginning of December, we organised a Christmas Fair renting out tables to traders who sold Christmas goods whilst we provided children's games and teas gingerbread and mince pies. It was most successful.

In April some of us helped out the local church volunteering at Ousden House for their Spring Open Gardens event.

Now we're looking forward to the Coronation event on 7th May when we're providing free teas and cake for the community and organising games for adults and children. We have managed to get a small grant for this.

The following people remain on the committee:

Chris Ingham -Chair and Secretary

Jessamy Saltmarsh -Treasurer

Julie Pryke

Victoria Lindsell

Clare Brown

Celia Holt

Matt Lewis

Rebecca Alexander

John Gale (PC Rep)