

Ousden Village Hall and Playing Fields Report to Ousden Parish Council May 2025

At last, we have seen the end of the long winter but we have been able to use the hall throughout, in spite of the costs of heating. The Village Hall has been busy with regular dog training, yoga and bowls; the children's play area is well used every day, and the recycling bins are in constant use, bringing in a little revenue for the Hall. We are a popular village for many ramblers who meet at the Hall car park to enjoy the many footpaths and circular walk around Ousden.

Although we only have a small number of trustees (4) we were able to keep the hall running reasonably smoothly. We still do not have a cleaner or booking clerk. Regular monthly meetings have taken place during the year, either for the management committee or new build working party.

We were kept busy in 2024 organising our **Summer Fair** and **Christmas Fair** events but more recently an **Easter Chocolate Bingo** fundraiser was held in April this year. All these events were posted on our new website www.Ousdenvillagehall.org.uk and **Ousden Village Facebook**. The Village Breakfast is arranged for the spring so together with the Ousden Lottery and Café Stop there is a steady income but we are trying our best to put funds aside for the new hall.

The New Build Working Party has met every month led by Celia Holt and, although progress is slow, we are making headway. The new fundraiser was appointed in the spring and we are keen to get started with this. We are currently approaching big fund donors to support our new community hall and will keep you up to date with progress. All donations are welcome so please consider donating via the website at any time - we are grateful that some villagers have already done so. We are a registered charity, you/ your business could donate and take advantage of tax benefits whilst providing Ousden with a valuable new community space.

You may have heard about the newly discovered Roman Farmstead near Ousden which was excavated in 2024. Anglian Water, Headland Archaeology and Suffolk County Council Archaeology Service with support from the Lidgate Archaeology Group held a public talk in March at the Village Hall. During excavation in 2024 to support the AW Bury to Bexwell pipeline project, a completely new Roman and Prehistoric site was uncovered between Lidgate and Ousden.

Lidgate and Ousden Cricket Club have been busy encouraging new members to play and help with the running of the Club which has its beautiful cricket ground in our village. They are keen to welcome more new players and helpers for fixtures in this season's village cricket. Last year due to the weather and lack of players, only a couple of matches were played during the summer!

Café Stop our seasonal monthly café serving homemade cakes, fresh coffee and tea is returning again in May. Come along to our community café on the last Sunday of the month in summer and you will be supporting the fundraising for our new village hall.

The Ousden Village Hall Working Party continues to meet monthly to progress the project. We are currently approaching big fund donors to support our new community hall and will keep you updated on our progress. **All donations are welcome, please consider supporting your village.** *(We are a registered charity, you/your business could donate and take advantage of tax benefits whilst providing Ousden with a valuable new community space.)* The Committee is grateful for the support of the Parish Council, Joanne Kirk, John Gale and to West Suffolk Council's Rural England Prosperity Funding for their donations this year. With the help of the latter, we are able to renovate small areas of the playground with £3,000 grant replacing bark, a spinning pole and litter bins.

Chris Ingham - Chair of Ousden Village Hall Management Committee