



WIXFORD VILLAGE HALL

AGM – Monday 17 March 2025

Report for the period January 2024 – December 2024

Summary

The committee achieved an enormous amount during this period, overseeing the successful and timely completion and opening of the new Village Hall within budget. Generous funding has allowed the committee to fit out the building to the highest specifications and with the latest technology. The finished project has elicited fulsome praise from villagers, and from visitors further afield, for the attractiveness of the space and the warmth of the atmosphere that it has created. It is already proving a valuable resource for the Wixford community. We would wish to recognise the efforts, the helpfulness and the professionalism of our contractors – Mark Connolly Building Contractors – and of our architect, Julian Raxter, in overcoming the constraints of the site, of access, and the vicissitudes of winter weather.

Committee and Trustees

In August John Cain resigned as Chairman after over a decade of selfless service; his drive, persistence and leadership had kept the vision of a new Village Hall alive during challenging times. The committee has been very grateful for all he has done. He handed on the Chairmanship to Andrew Reekes, who also became a new trustee of the Village Hall. There were no new committee members across this period and the extant team proved to have a full complement of skills and strengths to carry the project forwards. There is considerable financial and administrative expertise, as well as experience in project management, in IT and digital areas, and beyond this there has been a remarkable sacrifice of time and effort to ensure glitches are ironed out, events are planned and successfully carried through, and that visitors are hosted and made to feel welcome. A feature of the team has been the willingness quietly and very regularly to take on unheralded catering, cleaning, resourcing and purchasing jobs with minimal fuss.

Funding

A Supporters' board, made of floorboards rescued from the demolished old Hall, is prominently displayed in the new Village Hall and, alongside the names of many villagers who rendered their support, it records the grantors who together contributed c.£600,000 and so enabled the project to be realised. The bulk came from central and local government sources, prominent among which were the Community Ownership Fund and Stratford District Council's Community Infrastructure Levy and the UK Prosperity Fund. Wixford's local charity, the Throckmorton Trust also helped significantly, along with a host of smaller but no less valuable donations from other trusts and charities. Just as the project neared fruition the Committee received the welcome and very surprising news that it had been

granted £75,000 from the People's Postcode Trust, to be spread across two years; it has enabled the fitting out of the Hall to be done to the highest standards.

Finances

For information regarding Village Hall finances for 2024, please refer to the separate Treasurer's report.

Parking

There are designated parking spaces in front of the new Hall, but they are insufficient for larger events. Efforts were made across the year in an unsuccessful attempt to try and arrive at an agreement with Church Fields to permit some parking immediately outside the Hall on their Private Drive; the Deed of Easement signed in 2023 permitting access to the Village Hall's parking spaces from Church Fields drive had specifically banned any parking on this drive. The Committee has therefore resorted to putting out cones along the drive to deter clients from parking when attending Village Hall events. The Fish and The Three Horseshoes public houses, however, have been very helpful in allowing visitors to the Village Hall to leave cars in their own car parks.

Opening of the Hall

The first event in the new Hall was only for Wixford residents, on July 4th 2024; some 70 attendees heard a talk *The Story of Wixford* which sought to place the building of the new Hall in the context of 2000 years of the village's history. August 31st saw the official opening of the Hall and of the Supporters' Board by Magnus Birch Throckmorton, whose presence symbolised some 500 years of association between the village and the Throckmorton family. The event was attended by supporters, and representatives of the funders.

Establishing the new Wixford Village Hall's profile

A feature of the past year has been the Hall's positive reception both in the Village and beyond. Wixford residents and visitors from Exhall, Oversley Green and Broom have enthusiastically supported opening events, talks and concerts in the first months of the Hall's operation. Visitors from other village halls, from WRCC and Halls Together have come to see the Hall in operation and been very impressed. Recognition has come from other sources too: an Early Day motion in the House of Commons, put down by Stratford's MP Manuela Perteghella, celebrated the village's achievement in creating a model community hub. The committee was nominated for the King's Award for Voluntary Service and was visited by the Vice Lord Lieutenant to see the committee's work for herself.

An excellent web-site, What's App and other social media developed by a committee member have spread the message of the Village Hall's facilities and programmes.

Activities

Booking is handled by an online booking system and the committee produces a calendar of events, classes and activities, all designed to provide social cohesion and wellbeing in the

community. The fortnightly coffee mornings act as a warm hub to help Wixford's older residents (and the Village Hall is affiliated to Warwickshire's Rural Warm Hub network); a computer clinic takes place at the same time. There are regular yoga, Pilates, Tai Chi and Table Tennis sessions. The Hall has hosted children's parties, Irish and children's dance groups, an opera concert, lectures on local history, the English Language, and on policing. There are plans for National Theatre Live productions.

The fully equipped meeting room has already been hired out and there are prospects of more bookings in the future.

Andrew Reekes
Chairman

28 February 2025