

Knowstone Parish Hall Annual Activity Report 2024

This has been another busy year for the Parish Hall Committee with a regular schedule of events and new exciting projects for Hall improvements. Financially the Parish Hall Trust is on firm footing. The operational account for the financial year ending in Sep 2024 showed a surplus thanks to the extra efforts taken by the Trustees. The rest of 2024 has been stable with the addition of the Batsworthy Fund grants for improvement projects. The projects will be detailed at the end of this report.

We are fortunate to have committed Trustees in our team who are willing to take time from their busy lives for the benefit of their community. We have had a few changes to the team. Cath Whatcott and Phil Dey have left the team after being valued team members for the past six years. I am sure you will join me in thanking both Cath and Phil for their service to our community. Also, Evelyn Fitzgerald who joined us at the beginning of 2024 sadly resigned during the year. The full list of Committee members (who are the Trustees) in 2024 is:

Chairperson: Tiina Paju-Pomfret
 Treasurer: Wendy Sweet
 Secretary: Liz Barrett
 Members: John Pomfret
 David Barrett
 Catherine Whatcott - resigned
 Phil Dey (maintenance) - resigned
 Gill Smith (communications)
 Martin Smith (maintenance)
 Kim Newton (kitchen upgrade lead)
 Evelyn Fitzgerald - resigned



Events

During the past year we successfully delivered the following schedule of events:

EVENT	DESCRIPTION
Coffee mornings	Coffee mornings have continued monthly and been well attended by locals and people from surrounding parishes. We have been commended for our excellent cakes baked by various trustees and parishioners. The proceeds went towards the Hall funds.
The Big Breakfast	In January we held our first Big Breakfast offering a full English and variations. Claire Cave from Ford Farm supplied the delicious sausages and helped on the day – thank you, Claire. Our cook extraordinaire, Kim Newton, masterminded the menu and cooked the dishes. The rest of the team members looked after the front of house service. We received lovely feedback and raised £199 for the Hall. In fact, it was so popular that we held another one in May combined with a coffee morning and raised a very respectable £329.74!
Spring Bingo	In April we held a second Bingo event with prices themed around Easter raising £353.66 for the Hall funds. It was well attended (and not so busy and hectic as the ever-popular Christmas one).
Summer Ceilidh	Following last year's success, we organised another Ceilidh with a new band – The Oogle Band. They were very entertaining and provided an excellent evening of dancing and laughter. Mike & Max's catering van served delicious food before the event. We also provided a licensed bar offering a selection of cider, beer, wine and non-alcoholic options. We also invested in a card reader to offer more payment options. Another Ceilidh is in the calendar for Jan 2025!
Cyber Security Talk	David Barrett organised a free Cyber Security Talk event for the parishioners in October. Sergeant Mick Harrison from the Devon and Cornwall Police came to

EVENT	DESCRIPTION
	deliver this and shared valuable insight into how to keep your personal details safe in an online world.
Autumn Fayre and Craft and Produce Show	Autumn Fayre and Craft Show was a great display of local creativity, cookery skills and produce. Scarecrow competition was back again, and we had another crop of fabulous entries. The event along with the Tea Room service resulted in over £400 for Hall accounts. We also received an offer of a £100 donation from the Tiverton Agricultural Association for keeping the tradition of local produce shows alive.
Quiz Nights	This year we had two Quiz Nights; the first one hosted by David and Liz Barrett and the second one was hosted by Kevin and Soo Tompkins from the village. The two events were a great success with a good turnout, lots of competitiveness and laughter.
Skittles Evenings Village Social with Pop Up Bar and Killer Skittles	Skittles evenings were back on the schedule for the wintertime and were popular with the regular fans. For this autumn/winter we decided to change the format to a Village Social with Pop-up Bar and Skittles.
Christmas Bingo	Our traditional Christmas Bingo had a good turnout again. In good community spirit 10 volunteers put together their versions of traditional Bingo Boxes. Our special prize meat boxes were packed with delicious local meat thanks to the Caves (Ford Farm) and Swanzys (Great Wadham)! A great evening of Christmas Cheer.
Coffee Morning & Children's Science Party	The Coffee Morning & Children's Science Party was a new event suggested by Kate Swanzy from Little Kidland. Kate kindly liaised with the Science Party provider and helped with the event on the day. We had 11 children attending and they all had a wonderful time learning. Coffee morning was also well attended, and the Committee room was full up with lots of chatter.
Together with the Parish Church Committee	
Harvest Festival Supper and Auction	The Parish Church Harvest Supper was again supported by the Hall team. We contributed to the food items, helped with setup & decoration, served the food and cleared out afterwards. A very pleasant evening raising vital funds for the Parish Church.
Christmas Afternoon Tea & Fair	We helped raise funds for the Parish Church and had a very successful day offering lovely cakes & refreshments. This year it was close to Christmas day as we had to reschedule due to storm Darragh. The stalls included Thelma's Christmas stall along with others offering handmade Christmas decorations, handmade jewelry and preserves. A lovely afternoon with the Hall full of chatter.

We use the Knowstone Facebook (FB) page for advertising and sharing posts across similar local FB pages. Gill Smith has also developed collaboration between all the local Hall Committees aiming to share knowledge and avoid scheduling prominent events at the same time as others. She also hosted the first Halls collaborative evening at our Hall. We had a useful evening getting to know people from other teams and sharing experiences and tips.

The Hall is also used for regular events organised by some of our parishioners. These include:

- Pilates
- Book club
- Line dancing – now discontinued
- Craft & Chat
- Yoga
- Pickleball

Parishioners have also used the Hall for other events such as meetings, parties, a children's Christmas party and wakes.

Projects

As the Batsworthy Fund finally opened for grant applications after a couple of years of inactivity, we were able to apply for several grants from the Fund. These grants will help to fund: a new kitchen, new lightweight staging and a new shed. Late in the autumn we received the acceptance, and the monies were paid in December.

New Kitchen

Over the past two years we have considered a couple of different options for a new kitchen. Originally, we thought of refurbishing the old kitchen space with a new layout. However, the new idea from Kim Newton to relocate the kitchen to the current storage space accessible directly from the main hall, was the agreed approach. Kim has used her kitchen management skills and experience to develop the layout and specification for the new kitchen. She was able to source the new kitchen furniture and appliances at a good price, so we already have all these in storage. The plan is to get the new kitchen space ready for installation and then have it fitted and ready for use. The old kitchen will then be dismantled and prepared to be used as storage space. We are currently in the process of finalising the costs for the required building and electrical works. Once that is all agreed, the project will proceed.

New Staging and New Shed

The old staging is proving cumbersome to manage as the main hall is regularly used for activities such as pickleball which requires the floor space to be clear. Therefore, Martin has applied for a small grant from Batsworthy to purchase modular modern lightweight staging. The staging has arrived and has been tested. Next step is to either dispose of the old staging or offer it to anyone wanting to purchase it for a small donation.

The second small grant Martin applied for was for a new larger shed. This is also part of the new kitchen project as we will require some additional storage space. It will also be an opportunity to review the contents of the old shed and dispose of any superfluous items. We have received the monies, and Martin is in the process of ordering the shed.

I would like to give Martin Smith special mention of thanks as he has taken on not only the weekly cleaning of the Hall but also the grounds maintenance in addition to looking after the general building maintenance. This has enabled us to make savings thus contributing the surplus mentioned at beginning of this report.

Here's to successful 2025 full of fun and beneficial activities for our community. We are looking forward to welcoming new team members and anyone who wants to come and get involved in any of our events and activities.

Tiina Paju-Pomfret

Chairperson