

Knowstone Parish Hall Annual Activity Report

May 2023 to May 2024

After a couple of years with highlights of key Royal celebrations, this has been a return to a more normal schedule of activities for our community. The Parish Hall Committee has been busy with both organising a variety of events, maintaining the premises, and planning two major projects to improve the front wall and the kitchen facilities.

We are fortunate to continue having committed members in our team who are willing to take time from their busy lives for the benefit of their community. We had a new team member, Evelyn Fitzgerald, joining the team. Booking Clerk responsibility has been transferred to Martin from Wendy. The current Committee members are:

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

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

EVENT	DESCRIPTION
Coffee mornings	These are always well received with delicious cakes on offer raising funds for the Hall.
Killer Skittles Evenings	Killer Skittles evenings are back on the schedule for the wintertime and have proven to be very popular drawing people from surrounding villages too.
Big Breakfast	In January we held our first Big Breakfast offering a full English and variations. Ford Farm supplied the delicious sausages and Kim masterminded the menu and cooked the dishes with some of the team members looking after the front of house. 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!
Autumn Fayre & Craft Show	Autumn Fayre was a great success with both the main Hall with its competition entries and stalls along with Tea Room being busy all day. Overall we made £639.20 profit for the hall which is a very good result. This consisted of takings from the Tea Room, Raffle, Tombola and Competition entries. The competitions were well attended and showed the creativity our villagers have. The scarecrow competition proved to be a real hit.
Quiz Night	Quiz night always draws a good turnout resulting in lots of competitiveness and laughter.
Christmas Bingo	We had a good turnout and raised a record amount of funds – just under £1k. In good community spirit 10 volunteers put together their versions of our 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.
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.

EVENT	DESCRIPTION
Together with the Parish Church Committee	
Harvest Festival supper and auction	The team was delighted to assist the Parish Church team again providing help with setting up and clearing up afterwards. Catering with delicious food and lovely service was this time provided by Corinna McBride.
Christmas Afternoon Tea & Fair	We helped raise funds for the Parish Church and had a very successful day offering lovely cakes & refreshments.

We have new and familiar events scheduled for the rest of 2024. These include:

- Sun 30 Jun Community Afternoon Tea
- Fri 12 Jul Chili Cook Off Competition & Social
- Sat 13 Jul Coffee Morning
- Fri 26 Jul Ceilidh with the Oogle Band
- Sat 31 Aug Autumn Fayre & Craft Show

We have continued to use the Knowstone Facebook (FB) page for advertising and sharing posts across similar local FB pages. Gill has also created a network of contacts across neighbouring parishes to share ideas and ensure we do not run events concurrently.

The Hall is also used for regular events organised by various parishioners. These include:

- Pilates & Yoga classes
- Book club
- Line dancing (new)
- Crafting afternoons (new)

Parishioners have also used the Hall for other events such as meetings, children's parties, and wakes. On a parishioner's request we also purchased Pickle Ball equipment resulting in weekly hall bookings.

Training for the Team

Devon Communities Together invited us to attend their new "Enterprising Halls" training which consists of an Essentials module followed by deep dive modules on Governance, Applying for Grants, Extending the use of the Hall, Sustainable Energy use etc. Some of the team members attended sessions on governance etc finding these very useful highlighting areas of improvement and ideas for further developing our services. We also get access to extensive collection of model policy and advisory documents to develop our own going forward.

Maintenance

Over the year there has been a lot of maintenance activity. The Hall fire security has been improved with new alarms system control unit, alarms and heat detectors installed in appropriate locations. Hall windows have been cleaned inside and outside in readiness for the festive season. Electrical works for the generator have been completed and the generator was successfully commissioned and used during the recent election day. To improve energy efficiency the boiler is now regularly programmed to come on/off when there are activities happening in the Hall. Some of the external doors have also been fitted with supplementary door seals. Also, the badminton court tape has been replaced.

Projects

It has taken a long time for the Batsworthy Fund open their applications process again, however it has now finally opened, and we are planning on putting in grant applications for both the front wall replacement and kitchen refurbishment projects. As so much time has lapsed between the fund opening and existing quotes being obtained, we will need to get revised quotes. Plus, we will need new quotes for the kitchen as the location has changed. We have also been told that we need three quotes for each bit of work.

The front wall project aims to replace the current walling around the right end of the building as it is slowly deteriorating. **The kitchen project** is looking to move the kitchen into the current storage space enabling us to have a larger kitchen with direct access to the main hall. The old kitchen space will then be used as storage space. We estimate each project requires funding around £30K.

The Committee strive to raise funds towards the halls maintenance and running costs whilst providing a variety of activities to appeal to as wide an age range as possible, to ensure support for the hall as a community asset from across the Parish.

Here's to a successful year ahead full of fun and beneficial activities. 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