

## **The Bourtons Community Hall - May 2023**

The Bourtons Community Hall entered the 2022/23 year just as Covid restrictions were finally ended and we were pleased to see an increase in bookings from regular hirers and for one-off events. There are now weekly yoga classes from three different teachers, plus other fitness and martial arts classes. There are regular activities for young children and new hirers are planning additional sessions for the coming year. Private children's parties continue to be popular, and visiting caravan clubs are regular hirers, too, especially during the winter months. Although the Meeting Room is still relatively underused, we have one frequent business user and another user is planning to book it regularly in summer 2023.

We were pleased to be able to offer the Hall and garden for the Big Lunch Jubilee Celebration in June 2022, and again very recently for the Coronation celebrations. With the recent closure of The Bell in Great Bourton, a trial 'Drop Inn', 'bring your own bottle' pub evening was held in March and repeated as part of the Coronation weekend. These evenings have proved to be a popular way of getting people together and we will explore ways of funding such events more regularly.

With the help of the Parish Council a number of longstanding maintenance issues have been dealt with and we were especially pleased with the resurfacing of the car park, which was arranged by the Parish Council and undertaken by a team of volunteers from the village. Replacement of a damaged blind over the patio doors was funded by the residual money from the acoustic panelling grant.

Our Secretary and Bookings Administrator successfully implemented the Hallmaster Booking System during the year. This has been tremendously successful, enabling our increased volume of bookings to be accurately recorded and invoiced. The bookings schedule is always live and can be viewed by potential hirers on the Bourtons website. As part of the Hallmaster exercise, our pricing structure was reviewed and simplified. Over the year, the hire income exceeded the running costs. In addition, we successfully applied for a grant to help with rising energy costs and received other grants and donations. The Hall is now in a good position to consider further investment, and we have recently received quotations for audio visual equipment for the main hall and meeting room.

However, our challenge will be managing energy costs as we come to the end of the three year fixed price electricity contract in early 2024. The possibility of installing solar panels is being investigated, together with more efficient ways to control the heating system.

Our small Committee of Trustees and volunteers have worked hard during the year to keep the Hall on a sound footing, complying with statutory requirements and developing the facilities. Special thanks also go to our cleaner who has enabled us to earn a reputation for providing a clean and tidy facility, and to our Bookings Administrator who has maintained a good dialogue with regular and one-off hirers and managed the new booking system so effectively.

We look forward to another year providing an excellent facility for the community.