ANNUAL GENERAL REPORT

for

ASHWICK & OAKHILL VILLAGE HALL

&

RECREATIONAL GROUND COMMITTEE

Tues 11th May 2022

Ashwick & Oakhill Village Hall and Recreational Ground Committee

Report of the Trustees for the year ended 31st March 2022

The trustees presented their annual report and audited financial statements for the year ended

31 March 2022

Reference and Administrative Information

Charity Name: Ashwick and Oakhill Village Hall and Recreation Ground

Charity Registration Number: 249510

Principal Office: The Village Hall, Zion Hill, Oakhill, Radstock BA3 5AN

Board of Trustees:

Andy North (Chair)

Kim hare (Vice-Chair)

Caroline Ambrose (Treasurer)

Chris Scott (Secretary)

Andy Scott (Lettings Secretary)

Bryan Wells

David Thorley

Martin Rymes

Tim Ambrose

Laura Rogers

Auditor: David Hirst

Report of the Trustees for the year ended 31 March 2022

Structure, Governance and Management

Ashwick and Oakhill Village Hall Committee is a charitable trust registered with the Charity

Commission under charity number 249510.

The charity trustees are responsible for the general control and management of the charity. The

trustees give their time freely and receive no remuneration or other financial benefits. The trust

meet as a body every month and are responsible for all decisions in relation to the

running of the Village Hall and community facilities and activities provided by the charity.

Our aims and objectives:

To develop and encourage the use of the Village Hall and Recreational Ground by promoting its facilities to the local and wider community. To promote opportunity for all, lifelong learning, family wellbeing, pleasant neighbourhoods by community cohesion and involvement. To regenerate the facilities as required and improve community spirit by doing so.

**Chairman’s Report** (Andy North)

What a fantastically successful year - one to be proud of considering the backdrop of a global pandemic.

Thanks to the COVID-19 pandemic over the last 2 years, the Village Hall has been impacted like no other in its history. Yet , despite being another very different and challenging year for the Trustees which has impacted all involved, their friends, families, neighbours and of course the community, we have somehow managed to turn it into probably one of our most successful years in terms of achievements - it just proves what can happen if you have a great team and a reasonable vision.

With the closure of the Village Hall for most of 2020 and through into May 2021 we had much concern about the long-term effects this would have on our finances and its viability as an ongoing concern particularly with most of the clubs, groups and societies that use it either deciding not to restart at all (eg. Mendip Rangers FC; Table Tennis club) or deciding to delay until the covid climate had stabilised and member confidence had returned.

Then there was the concern about our VHC development, improvement and rejuvenation plans which we have been processing for years aimed at strengthening community spirit and giving our younger generation somewhere to make memories. Whilst some of these plans have clearly been impacted, delayed or on hold, we have made the most of opportunities which will have longer term benefits for all as will become apparent later in this report.

With the invaluable support and guidance of the Community Council for Somerset (CCS) we continued to provide our users with uptodate information on the latest government Covid guidelines for their safety.

As Chair of the VHC, I feel we have made excellent progress in the last 12 months and thanks to the hard work, commitment and prolonged effort of the Trustees we have continue to have a welcoming, useable and safe facility. I’d like to particularly mention the following:

* Kim Hare – As Vice Chair Kim has been a massive support to me in my role as Chair – she is articulate, considerate, responsive and can always be relied upon to find another angle, consideration or line of approach to ensure we are fair and function effectively as Trustees and as a committee. Kim also covered as Bookings & Letting Secretary as well as organised Covid-friendly events including the ever-popular Halloween Disco and supported all other events. Kim also continued to ensure we had a substantial and valuable monthly update in The Beacon which is incredibly important considering it lands on 800+ doormats every month!
* Caroline Ambrose – As Treasurer, Caroline has been an absolute powerhouse and key to the financial transformation of the VHC. Not only has she managed to ensure we applied for, and gained, every covid-related or leisure and hospitality grant going, she has also led the charge on all funding applications for our new kitchen and community café with fantastic results (circa £70,000 at time of writing this report!) and more pending. In addition to this, Caroline also researched, ordered and collected and priced all stock for the bar for our Cloud9 event (a big task!); was the primary organiser for the Christmas Market and was my equal partner in our successful Hallmark Level 1 presentation and consequent accreditation (and recommendation to apply for Level 2 and 3!)– an important achievement that recognises our commitment to running community building using best practices for the benefit of all users and the community.
* Martin Rymes – As Facilities Lead, Health & Safety Lead and Fire Safety Lead, Martin has donated many hours in all weathers to ensure the safety of users and that the VH building is maintained, secure, safe, uptodate and has maintained the playground equipment (a never ending task) to meet RoSPA guidelines plus so much more.
* Andy Scott – As our new Bookings & Lettings Secretary, Andy has transformed our booking process, updated our Bookings Policy and T&C’s, produced signage and FAQs and owned the development of our online Hallmaster Booking System. He even sets the heating controls to match booking times thereby saving money on otherwise wasted energy usage whilst keeping our users warm!
* Chris Scott – Following the loss of our previous Secretary, Chris volunteered to take on the role of Secretary to support the running of our monthly meetings. This has been a huge help and minutes are always promptly produced and published within 2-3 days of the meeting – not an easy task.
* David Thorley – As Rejuvenation Project Lead, David has been a font of knowledge and through his persistence and vision over the last 3-4 years we are now starting to see the fruits of his labour. Noone quite knows how he manages to run a sheep farm, Chair the Local History Group, be a Parish Councillor and still give us his undivided attention on the VHC!
* Tim Ambrose – Tim’s keen eye for detail and desire to get the right outcome has proved invaluable over the last year in so many areas. He is not afraid to challenge and ask the difficult questions which has resulted in some excellent outcomes with the new kitchen/café, including its extension into the changing rooms which will provide a much more valuable and useful space. Tim has also been a huge support for Caroline with funding applications and both visited many local community cafes to assist with the development of our plans – we certainly know what we are getting into now! I should also mention the fantastic amount of money that Tim has raised through the sale of his home-grown plants at our events and also directly to members of the community.
* Laura Rogers – Laura is our newest member of the team and has already made a fantastic contribution and stepped us as our Safeguarding Lead as well as got involved in our Easter event and has great plans for an “Oakhill’s Got Talent” event later this year!
* Bryan Wells – Despite various health complaints Bryan, a founding member of the VHC in its current building of which he had the foresight and drive to design and build in the early 1980’s, has continued to attend meetings and support the efforts of the committee as much as he can.

All of the team’s incredibly efforts continue to put us in a strong position to deliver our plans and to develop our recreational facilities for future growth and to become a more widely used resource for the benefit of the community, run by the community.

**Last 12 months:**

Below is a list of some of the key activities undertaken (in no particular order):

* Agreement of new kitchen/community café designs
* Completion of tender for kitchen/community café for building works
* Hallmark Level 1 accreditation achieved. (Recommendation received by assessors to do Level 2 and 3 within next 12 months!)
* Hallmark District Award for Mendip 2021 – unexpected!
* Building & contents insurance reviewed and reduced, plus Hallmark Level 1 discount.
* MDC restart/leisure & hospitality grants = circa £17,000
* Fundraising awards/grants = circa £60,000
* VHC fundraising = circa £5,000
* 2 new benches installed (‘Rainbow Bench’ and VE75 Bench)
* Playground equipment maintenance
* Tree maintenance in playground
* New PVC double-glazed doors and windows throughout.
* Council rate reduced/removed!
* Events:
	+ Cloud9 Music Event
	+ Kids Halloween Disco
	+ Christmas Market
	+ Easter event
* Engagement with Binegar/Gurney Slade for combined Platinum Jubilee Celebrations in June 2022
* Engagement with Church and Oakhill Primary School for Oakhill Festival in July 2022.
* Car park gate closure rota
* Community Café research visits across Somerset to gain knowledge, documentation and operational working practices.
* New internal, locked noticeboard to display certificates and key information.
* Quotes arranged for rejuvenation/new kitchen/Community Café building works
* Clothes Bank, AmazonSmile and BoilerJuice charity donations continued
* …and many more.

As you will agree, this is a long list of significant achievements during a time where covid guidelines, user confidence and many other situations were changing. all of which is attributed to Trustees and local volunteers that have given their time freely. Without these people we would not be able to meet our aims and objectives and the hall and field would fall into disrepair.

The trustees of the Committee would like to thank the following individuals/companies who have helped and supported us over the last year:

Parish Council

David Hirst Kath North

Dawn Davies Dawn Davies

Ann Ralls Sarah Dalwood

Kirsty Baxendale

And All our “Friends of AOVH”

Our immediate focus following the 2022 AGM and the election of the new committee and the Trustee Roles (Chair, Vice-Chair, Treasurer, Secretary, Bookings) will be to confirm plans for the coming year.

**The next 12 months**

Below is a list of some of the key activities that need to be undertaken (in no particular order):

* Support the Oakhill Ukraine Support Group (Initially via informal coffee morning)
* Complete operating plans for new kitchen & Community Cafe
* Officially open our new kitchen & Community Café
* Work with local artist to create community project to paint a mural on an external wall
* Transfer VH and Local History Group archives to VH
* Achieve Hallmark Level 2 and 3 accreditations
* Community Survey to check we are meeting the needs of local inhabitants.
* Being Phase 2 of rejuvenation plan – Extension for changing rooms.
* Car park lineage to improve parking capacity and safety at busy times.
* Improve loft insulation
* Complete an environment energy audit and engage CCS to look at suitable investment options.
* Increase hall usage by proactively looking for and attracting new groups, activities, societies etc but at the same time ensuring availability for adhoc requests by local inhabitants.
* Update/replace BMX track
* Investigate options to implement to setup a Youth Group for teenagers
* Investigate options to improve outdoor leisure equipment

If I am re-elected as Chair, I have a clear vision for the next 12 months.

1. Open and operate a Community Café / Coffee shop
2. Achieve Hallmark Level 2 and 3 accreditations
3. Increase VH usage and hire potential by 25%
4. Improve/update outdoor leisure equipment
5. Fundraise for Rejuvenation Phase 2

The combined objective of the above is to ensure the longevity of the VH as a going concern and its value to the community thereby improving village life and increasing community spirit via engagement.

**Fundraising** is always going to a key activity for the Village Hall and this year will be no different. We need to generate new ideas and opportunities to increase income potential via local activities and in the search for government/parish/corporate funds and grants. We can no longer simply wait for bookings.

Whilst the holding of our regular and popular events (Easter Egg Hunt, Halloween Disco, Beer & Carols, Christmas Market etc) need to continue we also need to be looking at new and exciting opportunities to really make our VH a more appealing facility for all to enjoy for many more years to come.

List of ideas/opportunities in planning:

* Local, small band music venue
* Exhibitions of local talent – eg. Art Gallery, Craft Fayres
* Community Cinema - Moviola
* Community Library/Book Swap

**Use of Volunteers**

Volunteers are a critical resource in our community work. Volunteers are involved in most of

our community activities and we have 9 trustees regularly giving their time freely. One of our

objectives is to increase community engagement and involvement in the Village Hall. Although we have been restricted in our events and activities this year, we have increased awareness of the charity and its continuing needs.

**Community Involvement**

Wider participation of the Community and collaboration with other community organisations such as the Church and School are significant ways to improve the community spirit of the village. The Village Hall is committed to continue these relationships and has worked closely with these and other community groups, clubs & societies over the last few years. Whilst the VHC must ensure their events cover running costs and where possible generate a profit for investment in the facilities , the priority is a wider community involvement and engagement rather than to generate a profit.

It is hoped that we can soon encourage members of the community to organise and run events at the VH again with the support of the VHC. We also intend to extend the type of events offered and increase the accessibility of the venue to provide wider interest and benefit. We are actively in discussion with local talents and community groups for new ideas and to identify areas where continued improvements could be made. We are aiming to publish a community survey in 2022.

**Communication and Engagement**

The Village Hall has tried hard this year to maintain regular communication with the community and has used multiple methods to reach as many as possible. For example, monthly updates in The Beacon Parish magazine; the ‘Friends of AOVHC’ WhatsApp group; VH facebook page; Village Life Facebook page. In addition, we maintain our pages on the Ashwick Parish website and use posters on local notice boards and word-of-mouth to advertise events.

**Current Clubs/Groups/Activities**

The charity carries out a wide range of activities and hosts several clubs, groups and societies. The trustees consider the activities they provide a real and tangible benefit to their immediate users and the wider community. The hall and recreational ground provide a valuable educational and recreational resource to all in our local community. In the next 12 months we will be attempting to increase the use of the facility and extend its use to a wider number of the community

**Chair .. Last words**

As Chair of the AGM I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the Village Hall Trustees for their support, effort and time over the last year. It has been an absolute privilege to work with you and to see what we have managed to achieve!!

The volunteers who give their time to the community are a phenomenal and committed group, without whom, local community events and activities like we have had this year (and the mountain of other work behind the scenes!) simply would not take place. Thank you!



Andy North

**Appendix A – Audit Annual Account**

