

Report from the Chairperson of Frithelstock Village Hall Management Committee to the Annual Parish Meeting of 16th April 2025

As is our normal practice we will be having the very brief statutory AGM of the Village Hall at the end of this Annual Parish meeting so my report now concerns what has been happening at the Hall, and how our finances have fared, in the year to 31st March 2025. Copies of the financial statements for the Hall for the year just ended have been made available.

It has been a quiet year at the Hall with a modest increase in Hall rental income. The monthly indoor market at the Hall only lasted a few months and I think they are now trying their luck at Woolserly Hall.

Rental is therefore not quite back to where it was pre-pandemic. We have provided an unpaid venue for several parish organisations such as Parish Council meetings, the Church Carol service and the Friends of the Parish Playing Field fund-raising events. In addition there have been several other charity events. The Hall is however under-utilised, so if anybody has ideas for other classes or events please feel free to make suggestions or do some organising.

We held a successful Scrumpy Stroll in May and had a Xmas Fun Night in early December. We have tried to keep bar prices reasonable, despite inflationary cost pressures, but we may have to have some slight increases in the autumn.

As usual some of the other income figures are affected solely by timing factors. For example, we received two years' worth of donations from the 50 Club in the last financial year and one in this. Last year we also had the refund of over two thousand pounds from South West Water. Unfortunately we couldn't get any more back as their argument - that we would have had to pay the daily standing charge even if no water was used - was an argument that actually held water, unlike their pipes.

Our water usage figures since they installed the new meter are much more in line with our expectations but there is not much we can do about the annual £95 standing charge which is double what we pay for the water we actually use.

The 50 Club will give their own report but I take this opportunity to thank Colette and Maureen for taking over and running the club in the last year. In the end we didn't institute a card payment system as most participants were able to pay by other means.

On the expenditure side, again there are some anomalies caused simply by timing differences. Electricity is the most notable item. A £650 refund from EDF came into these figures after we switched to EON so this year's actual figure would have been nearer £1900 but that is still a very significant saving over the previous two years. Other recurring expenses have not changed significantly except that we are now paying Business Rates to Torridge District Council as some of the previous reliefs have been withdrawn.

We have kept general maintenance and capital expenditure to a relatively modest level with no major items. One of the large Noticeboards blew down in the wind and was replaced. The Hall facilities were audited by Devon Communities Together and

their only recommendation was that we have a few chairs with arms for people who have mobility issues. So now we have.

Current projects are, firstly, that we still have the issue of penetrating damp in the external walls of the Skittle Alley and the Kitchen to resolve; we need to have CCTV cameras wired in as light levels have been too low for solar to work effectively; we want to replace the ancient fluorescent light fittings so they all work with LED bulbs; and the exterior of the Hall needs painting, particularly the end facing the road.

As a result of being cautious with expenditure we were able to slightly increase our surplus for the year to just under £3,000. At the year-end we had reasonably healthy cash and bank balances of nearly £48,800 of which almost £46,000 is on interest-earning deposits.

We are so far planning one social event – a Scrumpy Stroll on the Sunday before the Spring Bank Holiday, so it will be Sunday 25th May and we are likely to hold a Quiz later in the autumn.

Regarding one other matter mentioned before, we now know that a further application was made with specific details for the construction of two new houses just up the road which if implemented will have a positive impact on visibility to the north when exiting the Hall car park. At the time of speaking, however, the application is still being considered by Torridge planners.

Finally, I would like to thank all the members of the Management Committee and the officers for their help over the last year. In particular I would like to thank Arthur Poole who has represented the Skittles Club for many years but has now stepped down. I would also like to thank Michael Short for taking over as Bookings Secretary in difficult circumstances and continuing for a period of time. It has now been agreed that Michael will relinquish this role to Penny Hearn which will have the advantage that as a key-holder she is living next door to the Hall and can also more easily schedule her cleaning tasks with knowledge of events. Thanks additionally to Penny and Stuart for all the cleaning and caretaking at the Hall.

If anybody has any questions about the Hall financial statements or anything else about the Hall I'll be happy to try to answer them.

Adrian Green

Chairperson