

## **Report from the Chairperson of Frithelstock Village Hall Management Committee to the Annual Parish Meeting of 15<sup>th</sup> April 2026**

My report covers what has been happening at the Village Hall, and how our finances have fared, in the year to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026. Copies of the financial statements for the year just ended have been made available. As usual, at the end of the Annual Parish Meeting we will have the very brief formal Annual General Meeting of the Village Hall charity.

In almost a repeat of my comments last year I note that the Hall is still underutilised and rental income not yet back to pre-pandemic levels, although the decrease from last year is largely accounted for by timing differences in receipts. There were a couple of actual differences, the Hall acted as a Polling Station less than in the prior year and the Indoor Market stopped.

The 50 Club will give their own report but I take this opportunity to thank Colette and Maureen for continuing to efficiently run the Club and I also thank those who participate and make a significant contribution to the Hall's funds.

We had a couple of one-off receipts, compensation from National Grid for a power cut that we don't even remember and a sum to capitalise a wayleave that had been paying us £3 a year seemingly forever. We also benefited from increased interest on our bank balances.

We continued to have a Social Night on most First Friday's, showed a couple of Six Nation's matches, had a successful Scrumpy Stroll in May and a Xmas Fun Night in early December and the Bar was well utilised by the five Skittles teams. Overall we were able to increase the contribution from the Bar and Events. After several years of trying to avoid increases in Hall rental rates and bar prices we raised them by modest amounts on 1 January 2026.

The outcome of all this is that total income was up by just under £1,000 on last year but, of course, that's only half the equation.

On the expenditure side, again there are some minor anomalies caused simply by timing. We did, for example, have all the fire extinguishers checked and a couple of outdated ones replaced but so far Chubb hasn't sent us an invoice. Our electricity bill hasn't really increased by over 35%, it's just that we got a £650 refund from EDF last year when we switched to EON so this year's consumption was actually slightly less costly than last. We fixed our rate for a year from 1 April which, at an increase of about 7% seemed expensive but with events in Iran causing chaotic energy prices at least it has given us an element of certainty. True to form EON, at the last minute, cancelled the appointment to install a smart meter but we'll get there eventually.

Other recurring expenses have not changed significantly except that with further reliefs being withdrawn we are now paying more significant Business Rates to Torridge District Council. However, the Parish Council has agreed to make a donation to the Hall which will cover most of this expense. Our bankers, Lloyds, decided to introduce bank charges on our charity accounts but so far – as can be seen from the £1 spent – we have managed the accounts to minimise the impact.

We have kept general maintenance and capital expenditure to a relatively modest level with no major items paid for in the year except for an external repaint of the Hall. However, shortly after the year end we spent just over £1,500 having electrical and decorating work done. A dozen ancient fluorescent light fittings were replaced in the kitchen, the skittle alley, the main hall and the storage room so that with modern LED bulbs we can reduce our electric consumption. A faulty light in the ladies toilet was replaced; the broken alarm for the disabled toilet was replaced; the redundant air source heat pump was disconnected so it can be safely removed; and the faulty switch box for the stage lighting was removed. Whilst we had a scaffold tower on hire over the Easter weekend Stuart painted the ceiling in the main hall and did other painting and repair jobs in the kitchen and elsewhere.

We still have a small list of additional electrical jobs, such as wiring in a CCTV camera; replacing the vintage heater and grotty extractor fan in the kitchen; and deciding whether to replace the hand-dryers in the toilets to ones which actually blow warm air. Due to the energy situation we are also revisiting the viability of solar panels for the south facing roof of the Hall now that the efficiency of panels has increased and the cost fallen. The electrician is organising a quote from a specialist.

Our surplus for the year therefore increased marginally to just over £3,000. At the year-end we had reasonably healthy bank and cash in hand balances of nearly £52,000 of which over £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 24th May.

I mentioned last year that a planning application had been approved in principle for two houses just north of the Hall that would have resulted in an increased visibility splay for exiting the Hall car park but the current situation is that the application has been withdrawn so we don't expect anything to happen soon.

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 Michael Short who acted as Bookings Secretary for several years and then briefly became a member of the Management Committee but has now decided to step down from that role.

Thanks additionally to Penny and Stuart for all the cleaning, decorating and caretaking at the Hall.

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

Adrian Green - Chairperson