

Horton and Little Sodbury Village Hall Committee

Chairman's Report for the AGM, 2024-25

This year's AGM comes just 10 months after the last one, as we move back towards a summer slot, after things slipped during Covid when we couldn't meet. It makes sense to have the AGM quite soon after our financial year end.

The hall is still getting a steady flow of bookings for fitness classes, coffee mornings, parties and wedding receptions, although attendance at, and income from, 'events' is still much lower than pre-Covid. Regular bookings at the hall include Pilates, Zumba and Boxercise. The school uses the hall every Tuesday for PE. The Scouts and the Sodbury Slog continue to rent storage space from us.

I'm pleased to report that our finances are in a much better state than they were at the last AGM. This is largely due to the fact that we haven't had much capital expenditure, but also because income from hirings is holding up well. No doubt Brian's Treasurer's Report will tell us more in a moment.

Please do support village events that we put on at the hall – it needs your support to remain viable.

So what has been happening at the hall over the past 10 months?

A local artisan bakery, KNEAD, asked if they could use our car park to stop their van and sell cakes, bakes and coffee. They come about once a month for an hour, and their visits are popular. The village hall gets a share of the profits – it works out at maybe £7 per visit.

In November we got a few more trees, free of charge, from the Woodland Trust to top up the planting after some of the earlier batch of trees we planted didn't make it.

There was an end of year cabaret in December last year, showcasing acts by villagers. The village Christmas card supported village hall funds.

In the New Year we reprised our Quiz Duo in January and February. We plan to do the same next year.

Rockhampton Wind Quintet came back to play for us in January and we have asked them to come again next February. The award winning folk duo, Ninebarrow, came to us for about the 7th time to play to a sell-out crowd in March. Ninebarrow are also coming back to play for us later next year. We're finding that matinee performances are proving popular, with not just the bar being open, but also tea and cake on offer.

The Horton Bull Run in April went very well, with good turnout of about 120 runners. As in the past, it was on the same day as the London Marathon, which we showed on our big screen.

In April a group of 12 villagers attended an all-day first aid course which was very well received. There seems to be sufficient interest to run further sessions.

Early in May, some villagers held a VE Day commemoration with tea, cake and nostalgic songs. It was very well supported.

In June we held a mini golf tournament round the village, with a golf hole in several people's gardens, followed by tea and cake back at the hall. We were a bit disappointed with the turnout for that event, to be honest. Maybe the heatwave put people off.

In July, in a first for the hall, we had Feria Orchestra, a 12-piece chamber ensemble, come to perform Saint-Saens' Carnival of the Animals and other classical pieces for us. The

music was played in various locations around the hall, as well as on the bench under the oak tree and under the rowan trees.

We're really grateful to our Entertainments Team, masterminded by Barbera Denton, Caroline Bannister and Alison Barlow, for their hard work, enthusiasm and good ideas for events. Many thanks also to everyone who attended or helped organise these events. Without your support, the village hall will not survive.

We'd really appreciate any suggestions for events that you'd like to see in the future and hope you'll support any events that we do run. We are also very grateful for offers of help at events – perhaps behind the bar, in the kitchen, or baking a cake. The Village Hall committee is very small, so help is always needed.

Coming up in the next few months we have another visit from KNEAD on 16th August, a Picnic in the Park in late August, plus a pre-Christmas event to launch the village Christmas card in December.

On 21st September a local author, Gareth Williams, is coming to tell us about his book on 'The Impossible Bomb', which describes the British contribution to the Manhattan Project. This will be another opportunity for tea and cake to be consumed.

In order to save on the standing charge, we are having the separate electricity supply in the Pavilion disconnected so that the Pavilion will run as a spur off the Village Hall supply. The Pavilion uses barely any electricity but we are paying a fairly hefty standing charge even when we use no electricity.

Tony Wake has continued to do a sterling job editing our bi-monthly village newsletter to keep everyone abreast of what's going on at the hall and in the village. Next year it's going to be 3-monthly. Many thanks to Tony for all his hard work on the newsletter and for his ample supply of jokes and puns.

We are also going to market the Village Hall to make better use of it on weekdays in the daytime. It's an ideal place for business meetings, training sessions, craft sessions and so on

We really appreciate the grants and support we get from the Parish Council and from South Glos Council. The Parish Council has kindly agreed to pay a larger share of the cost of our grass cutting in the forthcoming year, for which we are very grateful.

I would like to thank all the Village Hall Committee and other villagers for all their hard work over the past year. Special thanks to Brian Jarvis, Tony Wake and Mike Lea-Wilson for their work at the hall this year, keeping it maintained, doing odd jobs and manning the bar. Thanks also to Brian for keeping our finances in such good order, to Sue for keeping tabs on the regulatory and compliance minefield we have to navigate and to Judy for keeping on top of our paperwork such as meeting agendas, minutes and correspondence. And special thanks to Emma Cordy-Rugman for keeping the hall running so smoothly and for taking all the bookings.

The committee continue to give their time, their commitment, their enthusiasm and their support to ensuring that the village has a facility that it can be really proud of.

Thank you.

Katharine Lea-Wilson
Chair, Horton and Little Sodbury Village Hall, August 2025