

Report to Holbrook Annual Parish Meeting

From Holbrook Village Hall

Firstly, I wish to make mention of our previous long-standing chairman, David Rose. David had given over half his life to being involved with the village hall and his contribution over 42 years between 1982 and 2024 is unlikely to ever be bettered by anyone who succeeds him. As many of you know David was diagnosed with cancer early last year and sadly died in September. He was not only involved with the village hall but also played an active part in the wider community. He was very well liked and respected and that was typified by the huge number of people who attended his funeral service from far and wide. He is still deeply missed.

In the past 12 months the hall has been fitted with Wi-Fi. Whilst it was something the committee had been considering doing previously we had received feedback from some hirers that having that facility would be advantageous. We listened and reacted. We are grateful to Mary McLaren, our local district councillor, who provided a community grant towards the cost of that for the first 12 months. We continue to welcome constructive feedback from users of the hall and where appropriate we will always consider suggestions put forward to improve the hall and the experience of hirers.

The main part of the hall is now well over 90 years old. Inevitably, maintaining that tends to cost more money than a modern equivalent. As some of you will have seen, during last Autumn all the barge boards were repainted and the worn-out guttering replaced. The wooden windows at the rear of the hall were also badly in need of repair and this work was carried out at the same time by one of our local tradesmen. Also a new notice board, located adjacent to The Street, was erected so it is now much easier for people to see what's going on at the hall.

As to the next 12 months there is still much to do. Over 12 months ago the committee was approached by the Greener Holbrook, Greener World group to consider applying to join the Suffolk County Council 'Plug-In' scheme by having electric vehicle charging points (EVCP) erected on the community car park. We did so and owing to one or two unforeseen issues is taking longer than we anticipated but are currently still part of that scheme. We are also changing our Trust status to becoming what is referred to as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO). By doing so allows the trustees to enter into contracts, something particularly relevant with the EVCPs, employ staff and arguably most importantly remove any personal liability from trustees in the event of things going wrong. Once again, owing to unforeseen circumstances, that has not moved forward as quickly as we would have wished. It has required us to engage solicitors and for the first time the hall and surrounding land will be registered with Land Registry. That will come at significant cost but will ensure the trustees are safeguarded in future and ownership of the hall and land will be easier to prove should that ever be questioned.

Les Jolley
Chairman
Holbrook Village Hall