Loders Village Hall - Report to Loders Parish Council - Year Ending 31 March 2021

The objectives of the Loders Village Hall Charity as set out in the constitution are: -
To provide and maintain a village hall without distinction of political, religious or other opinion, including use for meetings, lectures and classes, and for other forms of recreation and leisure time occupation.

In January 2020 the Village Hall hire rates were increased for the first time since July 2014. Based on the income from previous years and taking into account a number of new users the income from hire was predicted to be in the order of £11,000. However, due to the Covid-19 pandemic the hall was closed for eight months of the year and, for the remaining four months, not all users returned, in part due to the restrictions at the time. As a result, the takings for the hire of the hall itself amounted to about £1,600. Also, the cancellation of the fete meant no income from the tea-tent which, in 2019, was just over £800.

In May 2020 the Village Hall, along with others, was awarded a Covid Support Grant of £10,000 for which the Village Hall Committee is very grateful. This covered the loss of income due to the closures and the only partial return of hirers when the hall was open.

The Village Hall is now over 20 years so the need to maintain and renew as necessary is recognised. Prior to the start of the financial year the Committee had resolved to carry out a number of improvements to the premises. The closures gave the advantage of making the work easier without inconveniencing the hirers. The cost of all of this was covered from existing funds with the help of one small grant. The works were as follows: -

- Acoustic panels fixed to the ceiling in the main hall have considerably reduced the much complained about reverberations which previously existed.
- The installation of disability handrails and vertical infills panels to the barrier on the terrace has improved accessibility safety and brought the fittings up to current design standards.
- The internal lighting has been upgraded and improve with more environmentally friendly LED fittings. A grant towards the cost this was successfully applied for from Low Carbon Dorset (LCD) in conjunction with replacement PVCu doors and windows but has not yet been received.
- The defective render to the face of the retaining wall for the terrace was replaced, the paving slabs of the terrace rejointed and minor repairs carried out to the roof.
- The hall floor has been varnished.
- The requirement for planning permission, because we wanted to change the doors and windows from ill-fitting/rotting soft wood to PVCu, means that investigations remain ongoing for the replacement/repair to the windows and doors. It also means that the LCD grant is not guaranteed. It is intended that this work is carried out in the 2021/22 financial year.

There is concern that with Covid restrictions and the understandable reluctance of some hires to return as soon as they are able, the bookings for the 2021/22 year will be well down on what otherwise would be expected. The Committee was therefore pleased to receive further Covid Support Grants in early 2021 which should cover this loss of income.

Loders Village Hall provides a pleasant venue in very pleasant surroundings for residents of the Parish, the surrounding area and in some cases from much further afield. It is hoped that as things return to “normal” it will, once again, be enjoyed to the full by all its users.

The Loders Village Hall Committee 16th April 2021