

## **Lord Thurlow Community Hall**

### **Report to the Parish Council**

**June 2025**

The committee have made positive progress in continuing to improve hall facilities and providing new events and activities for the benefit of the village. Significant areas to highlight are the 'Living Well in Winter Grant' which was secured in the spring of 2025. Thus funding allowed the provision of three 'Soup & social' morning's, four 'Spring Evening Talks', the purchase of additional items to support these events, plus a range of pub games to encourage more people to attend future events. All were well attended and we were pleased to see new faces or lapsed hall visitors coming along. In all, over 220 residents attended the new events. In addition, a survey of the village highlighted an interest in additional exercise classes. We now have secured a regular Pilates class on Tuesday evenings, attended by around 8 residents.

The new kitchen facilities have been very well used since installation and this is seen as a significant benefit to the hall hirers. New chairs have been purchased for the bar area.

The committee have worked hard to provide monthly pub nights with various themes which have proved popular, Quiz nights, Yoga classes on Thursday, WI meetings each month, PC meetings and a range of private bookings for parties, etc. The scarecrow festival in 2024 proved popular again, but does require a lot of work. Whether this can continue will be reviewed.

The grounds and hedges are now maintained on a monthly basis.

We are grateful to Cllr Richard Winch for supporting the installation of new electric bar heaters in the main hall area. The Calor gas heating system alone is expensive and proving inadequate to heat the hall efficiently in the colder months.

Funding the running of the village hall is an ongoing challenge as costs continue to increase, especially utilities and maintenance. In order to provide a small surplus, it's crucial that we continue to bring in revenues from pub nights and additional hires. The Village draw continues to provide vital funding. The committee are always looking for appropriate grant opportunities to provide a range of new facilities, activities and events to encourage social engagement in the village.

In recent years an important new source of local funds have been the joint events for the church and village hall E.g Plant Sales, Open Gardens and music nights. These are vital to maintain the viability of the hall for the future. The committee are grateful to Stephen and Petrina Miles and Roy Barker and village volunteers for their ongoing support with these events.

In terms of further hall improvements the main areas of immediate concern are the rear access, particularly for wheelchairs, and the car park. We will explore the options regarding re-working the pathways and ramps at the rear and seek funding if appropriate. The committee are considering replacing the current chairs and tables for stacking options, to save space. Other than that there are some minor exterior cosmetic improvements needed in places (decoration, pointing, etc)

Currently the committee stands at 8 members but we will unfortunately lose one member shortly. Committee resources is a limiting factor in determining what can be provided and going forward we need to encourage more volunteers to get involved!

Simon Laidler

Chairman