

Chair's report 6th May 2026

1/ Thank yous

To current committee members:

- Alison Walker – bookings secretary, kitchen lead, soup and puds organiser.
- Carol Windeatt – treasurer, publicity, & policy writing, which greatly contributed to the hall's Hallmark 2 and Somerset Foundation's decarbonisation awards;
- Jill Payne – lead on health & safety, fire safety, safeguarding, maintenance (organising hall redecoration & ongoing squirrel removal!);
- Rebecca von Bonsdorff for preparing and sending out meeting agendas and minutes;
- We are grateful; that our committee meetings are attended by representatives from other organisations in the village.
- Thank you to our cleaner, Valentyna, who keeps the hall looking spic and span;
- In addition a huge thank you to all volunteers who help with soup and puds contributions, opening up the hall & meeting workmen, putting up and taking down tables and chairs and marquees for events and other numerous maintenance tasks. We couldn't operate as we do without their help.

2/ The last year

- The hall continues to provide space for regular users for example the Pilates and Yoga groups, short mat bowls, the Hapless Sailors, the gardening club, Halse Players, the Parish Council and the choir.
- We have been very busy over the last year and struggled a little with resources. Some of the events we've been involved with are hosting a Hapless Sailors' concert & BBQ, running a quiz night, (thanks to Tim and Kate Paine our quizmasters), joining in the village sports day, support to the church summer fete, the Christmas fete, and a games night.
- We have recently held a line dancing session which could become a regular occurrence if there is sufficient interest.

3/ Awards.

- We were delighted to receive our Hallmark 2 award – apparently we passed with flying colours!
- **Somerset Community Foundation** gave us a much valued grant of £10,000 to enable us to carry out our planned decarbonisation work. We have been able to re-insulate the loft, replace the ill-fitting front door, fix leaky windows, replace the old water tank with under the sink heaters, which provide hot water as we need it rather than storing it unnecessarily. Last but not least we have replaced many of our energy gobbling

kitchen appliances – thanks to Alison, Jill and Carol for their research, planning and enthusiasm in spending the money!

3/ Community Council for Somerset (CCS) now called Thrive

We have renewed our membership with Thrive again, as we have seen many benefits. Alison and I attended this year's annual village hall conference (to collect our Hallmark award), the theme of which was staying compliant with legislation. We have grappled with the hall being categorised as a commercial waste producing site and are still working to understand our responsibilities to the public following the passing of Martyn's law, which was introduced as a result of the Manchester bombing. We learnt a lot at the conference plus it was an opportunity to network with other village halls.

As our team has been stretched we have decided to take a break before considering attempting Hallmark Level 3.

4/ Pop up repair café

We have been keen to try and arrange a pop up repair cafe in the hall but were unsuccessful in persuading local repair groups to come to us. We then met with representatives from other local village halls to see if we could collaborate. Unfortunately we weren't able to take this forward. I also visited a repair workshop in Norton Fitzwarren village hall but the workshop had only just got off the ground and was concentrating more on hall issues that needed fixing. We would welcome any suggestions from the village.

5/ Forthcoming events

- Garden Club plant sale 16th May
- Soup and puds will resume in the autumn
- We are planning a brunch in September - £12.50 for adults and £5 for children under 10.
- We hope to run another quiz, though unsure whether we spoken with Kate and Tim yet!
- Christmas fayre in late November.

6/ Website

We are in the process of updating our website and hopefully will put last year's signed off AGM minutes together with this year's draft AGM minutes.

6/ Thanks

Finally, thank you to everybody for their continued use and support for the hall. We had 31 responses to the questionnaires we sent out when applying for our decarbonisation grant. This resulted in more than 95 % of respondents saying that they felt the hall was an asset to the village.

Nick