



PRIORY HALL

Priory Hall Management Committee Annual General Meeting Monday 9th March 2020 Chair's Report

In opening my remarks, I would like to pay tribute to my predecessor, Lalage Hampson, who has led the Management Committee these past few years. She has injected additional enthusiasm and good humour into a highly-motivated group of local residents dedicated to make the very best of our community meeting place. Lally has been a hard act to follow indeed!

This has been a busy year. We held a successful summer craft fair and plant sale - despite the weather being distinctly wet. The generosity of Committee members in providing plants, prizes and cakes is much appreciated. As a fundraiser and promotional event it went really well. Similarly, the Christmas craft fair pulled in many visitors to the town and showed a profit. Apart from all the effort in ensuring every table was sold, which is a solid foundation, the Priory Café continued to satisfy visitors and exhibitors alike - and generated welcome income.

There was long-running debate about investing further in Priory Hall so that users got the best possible experience. The big and very visible investments were the kitchen and the tables. We'd talked about the kitchen for some time, but summer 2019 saw walls knocked about, counters moved, new equipment in and a major revamp of storage and work surfaces. New crockery has been purchased and cupboards are labelled so that, hopefully, one can predict what one will find when opening the door! We now have a fully functioning catering kitchen which has already served wedding receptions well.

Turning to the tables, those fixed square and oblong stacking items had served us well for many years, but were starting to show their age. They also demand a fair bit of effort to tidy

away. The new ones, with folding tops and castors look very classy, and require no lifting. We also now have a sound system that means music can be played directly from a mobile telephone.

Routine maintenance, as ever, occupied August, as painting and weeding took place. A largely unseen, but welcome development, has been the organisation of the Green Room for storage of tables and chairs, meaning that hall can be used by smaller events without the background of piles of chairs and rows of tables - a welcome development indeed.

We decided that there was no point in making the investment without telling potential users about it, and held an open evening in October, which was well-supported. We also managed to recruit two new members to the Management Committee and still seek more. Many hands not only make light work, but also create a pool of individuals who can take up the formal roles on the committee in the future. In this respect, I give notice now that I have no intention in retaining the Chair role for more than three years.

As a result of the Committee's efforts, our finances are in good shape, but we must continue to keep generating income through lettings and our events

Our website and social media continue to be a vital means of promoting the hall, along with the traditional monthly advertisement in the Wenlock Herald.

During the year, we've seen wedding and Christening receptions, funeral wakes, church services, meetings, drop-in exhibitions, rug sales, MP advice surgeries, elections - and a MacMillan breakfast. Most have complemented other activities around the town - Priory Hall continues to be the go-to venue for all. Our regular users, however, are the backbone of our income stream, and we are grateful to them for their loyal use of our facilities. My apologies for missing any other highlights.

In closing you will note that I haven't mentioned anyone other than my predecessor by name. To do so risks being partial, but all committee members know the valuable contribution that they make, and I pay grateful thanks to them for that.

David Turner
1st March 2020