



ALLENDALE VILLAGE HALL & RECREATION GROUND

AGM 23/4/25 Chair's Report

Welcome.

I start this year's report in the same way as last year – what a year it's been! We are still standing, and we remain upbeat and buoyant, but we may need a lie down and a gin and tonic shortly. Allendale Village Hall and Recreation Ground is the Trustee group responsible for running the hall and grounds for the people of Allendale.

The Trustees

We are 14 Trustees each with different skills and contributions and I wish to say a very big thank you to each of them. To Chris who is such an able Treasurer and my personal therapist, who cleaned up the CCTV to make it clearer and fixed and who painted the slide on the Rec; to Catherine and John for stocking and running the bar so effectively; to Liz who keeps us supplied with all the housekeeping goods and decorates the hall for us so beautifully for all the events (and painting the new cupboards in the loos) and is a leader in the Film Club; to Jan for organising and running the Northern Highlights events we have throughout the year and links us to the Drama Group; to Mandy for linking us to the Drama Group, running the bar, planted the hanging baskets and links us to the history of the Rec; to Sam for being our link to the Parish Council; to Andy our newest Trustee who makes sure we act sustainably and provides energy advice to users; to Margaret for being our link to Fawside, The Lions, The youthy, and the Drama Group (and for knowing everything we need to know), to Stephanie who provides sage advice and also links us to the Lions and youthy, and is the treasurer of the Film Club; to Kerry who links us to the Meet and Eat service and St Cuthberts Church; to Jen who also links us to the Meet and Eat service and the Community Church; and to Dorothy who links us to the History Group. Without their commitment we could not run the hall so effectively and I am very grateful to each of them.

I also need to mention Christina John who works for Fawside and sits in our building four days a week. She does so much for us which is unseen and we are very grateful to her.

The Users

Our regular users are Scouts, Yoga/qui gong, Zumba, Pilates, Clubbercise, Art Club, youthy, gardening society, history group, Meet and Eat, film club, Community Church, Farmers Network, and Parish Council; they are all brilliant and I thank them for their cooperation when we have to cancel for a funeral, or for the Panto. The use of the hall has increased and there have been a number of scheduling issues which has meant we had to lose the Eden children's dance school who used to meet on Fridays but then moved to Mondays which proved hard to manage. We also had Hadrian Clog for a while which was great fun, but it proved too far to travel for many of them.

We also have other users who bring in the different seasons and who we welcome as old friends. The Allendale Challenge in April - Mountain Rescue Team- are poetry in

motion, and the more recent Isaacs Tea Trail Run in August is becoming very popular. The many sales we have – the Christmas craft market, the plant sale, the Leek Show, the sports hall jumble sale the children's jumbo sale and of course the Persian Rug man, are great for the village. Then Alastair Myers regularly puts on well received first aid courses, and the North Pennines Landscape Partnership have had regular workshops and events.

We put on the Northern Highlights Touring events which pepper the year. Since last April we had 6 events which were very well received. This is our service to the community – if we break even we are happy! Our next one is on 22nd May.

Then we have the very successful Folk Festival at the end of September and the New Years Eve Ceilidh, which we are so pleased to support. We are grateful for the partnership we have built with them.

The Folk Festival has really put Allendale on the map and because of them we regularly receive requests to put on bands and events. Who can forget the Greg Chapman Psychic event (I was very sniffy about it but was proved wrong). We had bands – Eabhal, The Hightowns, Unthanks workshop, Saul Rose and James Delarre, the Monster Ceilidh Band, and the Pease Blossoms. And now we are also partnering with TWANGO, Phil Ogg, as he puts on some famous bands in the coming months.

Other fun events we had was the Museum of Classic Sci Fi conference in April – such a hilarious sight of Daleks on the skate park, the Tar Barrels Ball ably organised by Cordelia Harrison, in July we had the Coop 150th anniversary event which was a fantastic event for the whole community, and we all had so much fun. I particularly mention the fantastic display made by Jared Dunn of the history of the Coop which was so interesting and detailed. We had the staged event celebrating Libraries in Northumberland, the Tynedale Community Choir weekend, the fund-raising afternoon tea for the Church Clock, the Lions Christmas Disco, the Free Party, and No Limits Gym dance school put on two performances this year. And we put on our own Burns Night Supper complete with resident piper! But the biggest annual event by far is the Panto in February which we are so glad to support.

And then we get used for various other meetings for BT digital changes drop in, Northumbria Water drop in, a local solicitor, the jewellery exchange sales, Churches Together events, funerals, children's parties, parties, weddings (we have 2 coming up). I am constantly receiving emails and phone calls for people to use the hall.

The Building and Rec

As you heard from Chris Bonsall we have done a lot to the building this last year, mainly supported by £18,000 from the Lottery Community Spaces Partnership – administered via Community Action Northumberland, which are very grateful for. This money bought the new doors and windows, provided insulation in the small hall, put in a new bathroom in the green room, provided safe and secure shelving for our bar, and has paid for new lighting in the small hall and foyer (soon to be completed). This fund was only rolled out in Northumberland, Durham and Cumbria and was recently reviewed by

Newcastle University which resulted in this film, with thanks to Meet and Eat volunteers and users. SHOW FILM. On this coming Monday 28th April we have the heads of Lottery and CAN coming here to discuss the findings of the review and hear what plans they have for this award in the future across the country.

We brought the plumbing system into the 21st Century and we are very grateful to Dave Markey who only came to put in a new sink in the kitchen and stayed for 2 weeks doing a complete overhaul of all the plumbing. We now have hot water in the loos though.

I need to mention Glenn Nattrass and Jack Milburn too who provide us with ongoing and very responsive electrical support.

In recent weeks we have become the recipients of fibre broadband through B4RN which we hope will improve the wifi coverage in the hall, especially during the Folk Festival when the hall is rammed and we are trying to use the Sum Up machines! This has been a big piece work which we hope allows others in the village on this side of the road to access B4RN. We are grateful to Alison Atkinson for helping to facilitate this service.

Our Trustee group identified specific work which needs to be done this coming year – now on a very nice spreadsheet. The recent audit of the Rec has shown we need to replace so much of the equipment and so we are most grateful to the PANTO for raising £1,000 through their raffles which has bought 2 new benches which should arrive next week! The bark chippings were replaced at a cost of £5,000 which isn't sustainable and so we are looking at other sustainable options. We await drawings and costings for the new balcony. It is hard to find local builders who also carry insurance for public spaces.

The work to the youthy was completed in September last year and it's greatly transformed the building.

This coming year will see our focus being on the Rec predominantly, although we are keen to paint the small hall and main hall! We are seeking grants and partnerships to make this happen. The Drama Group (Panto) is working hard to raise funds for the stage and we will support that in any way we can.

The plans for Solar Panels continues and Fiona Knox from NCEL will bring us up to date with what's happening.

The building and recreation ground is so well used and the upkeep is continuous and for that we have the untiring contribution from our caretaker, Gary who is worth his weight in gold and Jane who uncomplainingly cleans the loos.

Volunteers

You will have heard from Chris Bonsall that this year we have raised £11,000 by provision of the bar and catering. This has only been achieved by the fantastic volunteers we have. We have found it is important not to overload people and to give clear distinct tasks. Therefore, we have the bar volunteers, the catering volunteers and what I personally call the Dream Team. The bars can at times become frenetic and very

busy and managing people's expectations can be fraught (we are not a pub) but our bar volunteers are so cheerful and enthusiastic – thank you. In addition, we have a wonderful crew who we call on for the Folk Festival to serve our food and take the money from customers – no easy feat in a cramped space. They are all so good and cheerful and don't ever complain! Then we have the Dream Team who I work with to provide the food – dreaming up the menus, shopping and then preparing, we work well together as a well-oiled machine.

On March 14th we held a combined volunteer evening with all our Village Hall volunteers, our Trustees (also volunteers) and the whole team of Meet and Eat volunteers. We shared food and drink and a quiz!

Our mission

Our aim is to provide a useable and flexible space for the whole of Allendale and the valley. It is the biggest venue in the area and should not be left empty. This year has exceeded expectations, and the use of the hall has grown significantly. We run The Hall and Rec on behalf of the people for the people. We hope we do this with a cheerful heart and a warm welcome. I have lived in this village for nearly 14 years, having previously brought up our family in Hexham. The last 2 years as chair has been some of the happiest and most fulfilling times of my life and I am so thankful to the Trustees, the users, the volunteers and the people of the Allen Valleys for their immense contribution to the Village Hall and Recreation Ground.

Christine Garner

Chair of Allendale Village Hall and Recreation Ground Trustees

23/4/25