

Chairman's report for AGM March 2020

Since moving to Huntshaw almost 3 years ago, one thing I have learnt was that village life and our community was very important to the people who live and work here. Volunteering to lead an emergency committee for the Parish Hall into the future was not something I had considered before, but something I elected to do because I felt as a community we could bring Huntshaw together.

As we all know the Parish Hall is facing some difficult financial times and there is no easy way to say that the inherited accounts do not read well, we have a significant uphill struggle ahead of us to restore the Hall to its former glory and a sustainable position which is not hand-to-mouth, where we find ourselves currently.

However, out of the darkness comes light – and the team of volunteers have got behind this challenge and given 100% over the past few months to sort out things such as licenses, accounts, safety checks and of course some excellent events. My sincere thanks to everyone in the emergency committee, specifically to Suzy and Jenny for putting huge amounts of time into getting things back in order with the accounts, procedures, and regulations as we entered uncharted territory. There have been many sleepless nights along the way. We could not have got this sorted without them.

I'd like to say a special thank you to Jim White, our 'external consultant' who worked tirelessly and dedicated huge amounts of his personal time researching and helping guide us in the early days on making this whole thing actually happen.

It was fantastic to see so many of you with such a huge turnout out at the Christmas Party. Thanks is due to the Friends of Huntshaw Church (Audrey, Lorraine and Lesley) for organising an entertaining evening of fun and games. It is great to be working with the Church – it's a key component to village life.

I spent a great amount of time working with the Torrington 100 organisation, part of One North Devon – a community focussed outreach program in Bideford who, along with The Plough Arts Centre meant that we had some great external help for National Village Halls Open Day. This was the success it always wanted to be and as a community we all did it proud. A huge thank you to our friends and neighbours, new and old, who attended and participated in an event which we pulled together in a matter of days, we even had the Deputy Mayor of Torrington come which was a true honour. Geoffrey Cox must not have got my email (!).

More recently we had the first of many Skittles/social nights which was another stunning success, we had so many of you come on the night we almost ran out of chairs! Praise to Adam and Les who delivered everything anyone could have dreamed of and more. We drummed up interest to revive the Huntshaw Skittles team, had a quiz, raffle, hot food – we even have our dart board now (thank you again Les for this!). Social events in Huntshaw are all systems go and judging by the turnout, something which has long been missing.

As the hall takes great strides forwards, we look forward to an exciting summer of events which will really put Huntshaw back on the map as the strong, determined, and driven community that it always was. I have no doubt that, as one amazing community, we will make this happen.

Simon Jessop
Chairman