

It has been a tremendous yet tumultuous first year of being Chair of Harlton Village Hall.

The Kings Coronation was my first social as Chair and lets be honest, it was a total washout. But supported by Village Stalwarts, we had a laugh and celebrated the accession of King Charles in his new role.

Due to the grants procured by Lon during Covid, we were able to take the definitive decision to replace the floor. The project ran smoothly, despite Victorian building techniques and complicated modern building compliance requirements. Thanks should go to the Structural Engineer (Gawn Associates) and Team Toucan for navigating all hurdles with ease, keeping to the limited time frame and working to a high standard, to Garry Johnson from the Parish Council, who was my engineering rock, to Tony Vernon Smith who took some amazing photos, which have now been framed and mounted on the meeting room wall, to match extension photos and to our neighbours Lyn and Tom, who were patient and understanding.

We look to the next project - we had thought about insulating the roof, but with an estimated cost of over £100k and the fact it serves us well and does not leak, we will simply continue to be custodians of our wonderful Victorian village hall and manage the building within our meagre budget but ever hopeful of cash windfalls!

Liaising with the Church, we hosted the village drinks post the Carol Service, which was a great success. We were cheered by the numbers attending and the feedback. Watch this space this Christmas.

Work behind the scenes continues, to my constant admiration and appreciation. From Lucie in her role as Health and Safety officer, temporary secretary, and catering co-conspirator. To Lon and Margaret, ever present and ever busy dealing with bookings conundrums and tiresome treasurer activities. To Tony VS who is always on hand to help with practical issues and a smile. To Linda, who is always on the end of the phone to help me make decisions and cheer me up. To Isabel, who living next door is often caught as she walks past, and acts as a sounding board and to Roger, whose wise words and advice has got me this far.

To Berrin, who keeps on top of the cleaning in such a cheerful manner.

But the gaping hole in our committee and our hearts is Maggie. For many years, our friend, our accomplice and our secretary. It seems impossible that less than a year ago, Maggie was taking our minutes. We look to the future, we look to encourage new faces to join us, but I want to finish my report, looking back on my first year as Chair, with a simple toast to Maggie Gibbons, for all that you gave to our community and our village hall.

Our hall's success is due to you the team. Thank you.

Roll on 2024; our aim is to maintain our beautiful hall, encourage community gatherings and raise a little money to help with ongoing maintenance.