

Mistley Parish Council Annual Parishioners Meeting

Report from the Village Hall. April 2025

The Village Hall has had a successful year, building on the hard work we did the year before. We are at the heart of the community's activities here on Furze Hills and we aim to join in with all the other groups and organisations who use the area, as well as providing specialist services of our own. We've enjoyed being part of the Pram Race and Fun on the Furze in past years and we look forward to the Rotary half-marathon this summer amongst other events. It's lovely, also, to see the back field developing, and the new car parking there is definitely helping to ease the pressure on the Council car park around the Hall.

We have a large new noticeboard on the wall outside the Hall, and we are very happy for other local groups to advertise their events in it. Just ring Suzanne on the Hall's number to arrange it.

We have a long and growing list of regular users in the Hall, and they range in interests from Karate to the Camera Club, from the Museum to the Parish Council. Mistley Kids Club are in the Hall every weekday in the daytime. They are now part of a County Council consortium providing services for children with special needs, along with their regular after school work for local families, and at the weekends we have not only constant bookings for parties and other celebrations, but we have Brad Rabett's amazing fundraising events, like the Charity evenings, Country and Western dancing and the ever-popular Faulty Towers Dining! Over the last couple of years these evenings have become established firmly in the heart of our community's way of enjoying ourselves.

To be able to provide the space and the facilities to support all this activity we have to be sure we're keeping the Hall in good order. This doesn't just mean maintenance; we aim to be constantly improving.

Last year, after far too long, we had the sprung wooden floor in the Main Hall thoroughly renovated. This year we decided to have it gone over annually so that we keep it in good condition all the time. It's the floor from the old Allied Brewery Social Club, and was installed in 1990 when the Social Club was disbanded, so it's doing pretty well. The FoxyRock club tell us it's lovely to dance on.

The Lounge has been repainted, and the Lobby will be painted soon, and the noticeboard in the Lobby has been moved, all making for a neater, clearer, more welcoming look to the Hall. In the next few weeks we shall be removing the big partition that slides across the Main Hall to divide it. It has been used only once in the last 20 years, so far as anyone can remember, so it's time to clear the space.

What we would like to do this coming year is to install solar panels on the roof to bring down our rising electricity costs, and to renew our kitchen. The solar panels seem to us the most urgent and we are looking for grants to cover the installation costs. Grants

seem very hard to come by, however, and restrictive, which we find surprising, given the encouragement we see everywhere to go solar. If anyone knows of grants that Philip has missed, please let him know.

At the end of last year, after some criticism at our AGM, we had a very successful Open Evening to show off the Hall and to showcase the activities of our regular users. We all thoroughly enjoyed ourselves and got to know each other better.

We've got a good team at the Hall and we're doing well.

Rosemary Smith April 2025