News + Views - Beatrice Drewe Trust September 2024

“Are we nearly there yet?” This must be a well known question from the younger members of the family on a trip away – often starting a few minutes after leaving home!

How are we doing with the renovations at the Hall/Village Institute and are we there yet? The answer is so close, but, as yet, not at the finishing post for Phase 1. As I write this in the 3rd week of August Neil and his team have been working their way through a few snagging points and Bill Talbot is putting the finishing touches to the final painting which will go under the other 9. Once done, it will be a unique piece of artwork reflecting Ticehurst through the ages and the wonderful area we live in.

What can the Aston Webb room be used for?

The Beatrice Drewe Trust had our last committee meeting using the very fine round table there. It can seat up to 10.

A bar area for weddings, parties, wakes, fund raising evenings and social events. We do have fridges and plenty of glasses. What we won’t have is a fully stocked bar left between events – rather too tempting for some!

A wonderful quiet room for small groups – users of the library perhaps or friends who want somewhere just to get together and talk. We are very keen that this should be a community hub. There are plenty of people who would enjoy somewhere where they could meet like minded residents just to get together and enjoy each other’s company. Loneliness is all too common these days. Families move away, friends pass on and suddenly you are left with Clarkson’s Farm and Catchphrase! People are social animals and, on the whole, we like to meet and mingle with others. There are already several groups which prove the point, the Friday coffee and cake sessions in St Marys room at the church and of course, the wonderful Tea Club run so efficiently by Mo Smith and helpers.

However, And there is always a But!, The Trust have been very fortunate to have some wonderful supporters who have donated money to the renovations and out heart felt and sincere thanks to them. BUT, we do need to buy the right chairs and tables plus some final soft furnishings for the room. If you can help by perhaps “sponsoring” some specific items, please let Sheila Jemmett or myself know.

What else are doing to raise funds? As part of the Community Hub we are planning Ticehurst Talks. Ideally a monthly event where we will have speakers and guests with a wide range of interests. So far, we have Lord Charles Moore, past editor of the Daily Telegraph and Spectator, Simon Lloyd who has done an enormous amount of research into the history of Ticehurst plus Patrick and Pam Watts who have recently completed the gruelling Peking to Paris Rally together in a Sunbeam Tiger (Several weeks and many thousands of miles later, they are still talking to each other and

remain married!) Other suggestions and introductions gratefully received. Dates will be published when confirmed.

Cinema Club. We have the projector and sound system. Other villages run them, so can we.

A musical Soiree evening. We have a local harpist, Chapel Down's award-winning Rose fizz and delicious canapes. What more could you want?

Quiz nights and fundraising events

What else has happened?

The newly decorated Lounge has blackout blinds and some fabulous curtain rails and newly refreshed curtains.

LED lighting in the main Hall. There was some concern that the new system would not provide enough light but as well as the rather pleasant uplighters for the more intimate events the main strips provide plenty of light. Perhaps not quiet enough if you were performing open heart surgery but enough for our users. Before anyone else points it out, the main Hall does need redecorating but, can I refer you to my comments above – we need to generate more income.

I hate the modern term of "Fake News", but I have been asked if/when the library will be moving to the Cellar. One of our long-term aims is to open up the vaulted ceiling to the right of the Pendentive Roof as you come into the building from the main doors. This would include removing the blackout paint from the windows and returning that part of the building to its original design. Perhaps an ideal spot for the library BUT, good old but, we certainly don't have the funds for this. So, please rest easy library users, it is not moving – yet!

Peter Reeves

Chairman Beatrice Drewe Trust.