Beatrice Drewe Trust - News and Views October 2024

I am occasionally asked how the Village Institute is funded and where our income comes from. A fair question. We have 5 main sources. We get an annual Precept from the Parish Council , the same amount since 2015. Approximately 75% of this goes on just paying the insurance on the building. In return, the Parish Council has use of the main Hall for its monthly meetings and when held with us, The Parish Assembly. We have some excellent tenants, Mark and Gill in Beatrice Cottage and Bill Talbot uses the East Wing as his studio. We have also rented out the very small Beauty Room for storage.

When you look at the footprint, it is a very large building and of course, Grade 2 listed, hence the extra costs involved with Phase 1 of the improvements to create the Aston Webb room. A large footprint entails and very large roof area. We have just completed a complete refurbishment of the cottage flat roof and need to do some serious work to stop the leaks between the East Wing and the rear of the stage. A 124 year old building with its later added extensions requires a lot of maintenance.

I have to thank all those who have contributed to the cost of the refurbishments. With you, we could not have possibly done it. We have plans for Phases 2 and 3 but not the funds at present! Also, a big thanks to all our users, who generate a good proportion of our income. We have to be competitive with the other 2 Village Halls in the Parish and of course, pay our hard working caretaker, John Brooker, as well as the usual utility bills.

As mentioned previously, we will be holding various fund raising events. The first of the monthly Ticehurst Talks will be on Thursday October 10, but in this instance, all money from the talk by Sir Sherard Cowper-Coles (past British Ambassador to Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia and Israel) and the excellent Kit Smith curry before the talk will go to the RBL. Please see the full page advertisement in this edition and book your places for the talk and if feeling peckish, the curry as well. Payment for both will be on the night. Will there be a bar at these talks? Yes! For local events such as these we will have beer, soft drinks and wine served from the bar. However, it will not be permanently stocked. For those looking for weddings and similar, we have details of an excellent firm who provide Pop Up Bars. They supply all the staff, glasses, drinks and take it all away at the end.

At present we are waiting for the final painting by Bill Talbot for the Aston Webb Room and will be sourcing more chairs for the Hall. As soon as we can, the main Hall will be repainted as well.

Come and see what we have achieved when you are passing and the front doors are open.

Peter Reeves

Chairman Beatrice Drewe Trust