

15 May 23

RVH AGM Attendees & Hall Users

Copies to:

RVH Committee

**RACKHEATH VILLAGE HALL BRIEF TO THE RACKHEATH VILLAGE HALL ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING –
15 MAY 23**

General Comment

Rackheath Village Hall continues to operate as a useful group and function venue for the Village and surrounding communities. Boasting a sizeable stage, large hall, meeting room and kitchen facilities, it is used by regular bookings and parties of a varied nature. Our regular groups include badminton, a range of fitness/keep fit groups, amateur dramatics, home education, young at heart, short mat bowls and, most recently, Wroxham Flower Club. Run by a small group of trustees and volunteers, its facilities are maintained and repaired, but, as previously mentioned to past AGM's and meetings, there are significant areas that need to be addressed going forward that will require planning and funding to achieve. The Village Hall is exploring funding from the Community Council, using money from the new developments to update and modernise the Village Hall which is identified in the Neighbourhood Plan as a 'Community Asset'.

Hall Improvement

Like all buildings, maintenance takes a significant sum to ensure the Hall's upkeep. During the last year, the RVH Committee has committed expenditure to redecorate the Hall internally – so far, the toilets, foyer and meeting room have been addressed. The main hall is due to be completed this year and the Committee aim to achieve that goal with the least disruption to our users – unfortunately, that will affect some of our daytime groups for 3 weeks in July and August. Additionally, the lighting has been much improved by the installation of LED lighting throughout, as well as new fans to help circulation of air in the main hall. A new ceiling has been put up in the foyer and that now looks much better, and we seek to do the same to the toilet ceilings as soon as we can. The Committee still has to consider the best way to tackle the main hall ceiling and the recovery of the floor which is showing increasing signs of deterioration. Finally, with the aid of an architect, the Committee is also progressing an extension to the Hall to provide better storage, reworked kitchen and toilets that meet current regulations. This plan was provided to the Community web page for comment (those comments that applied to the planned extension functions were noted) and will be brought to the Community Council for consideration as soon as the necessary building regulations and other measures have been addressed.

Areas Of Concern

As previously mentioned last year, the RVH Committee face a number of issues and concerns that impact the well-running of the Hall and the provision of the facilities it provides:

- **Increasing Longevity of Committee Members.** This situation is becoming critical as my fellow trustees and volunteers get to the point where age and ill-health preclude their continued involvement. We have recently lost Mr Bob Harris who looked after general maintenance and grounds – I'd like to take this opportunity to thank him for his sterling support over the years. The RVH is a charity. My Committee would benefit from an influx of new members who recognise the importance of the facilities the Hall provides for its users and how it should and can be used. Those who do help us are invariably involved already in other parts of the community. I shall continue to put messages on the Community webpage, but this will remain an increasing concern going forward.
- **Structure & General Fabric.** Maintenance of the Hall and its age is always a worry. My comments on improvements above indicate how we are trying to address some of the issues we face. Following on from my comment last year, we managed to employ a regular cleaner for one half-day a week and therefore rely on users to clean and tidy up after themselves. This is not ideal and it would be beneficial to utilise a volunteer caretaker to help to cover small problems that can arise. Additionally, It is evident that some users are using tape or other means to attach decoration to the hall walls. I would ask that due care is paid to the fabric of the hall to stop paint damage and deterioration. Users are also asked not to tamper with lighting, electrical fittings and especially emergency lighting and alarms. Any issues need to be reported to a committee member.
- **Energy Supply.** Energy bills have risen to more than double previous rates. Consequently, whilst the Hall remains one of the most cost-effective hires in the area, those costs have had to be passed on to our users – hire rates rose by 27% in January 23. The Committee have looked at alternative energy solutions, but have yet to find one that can be supported (constraints of the building – solar energy, cost, protection from vandalism etc.). The search for a viable, economic, long-term solution continues.
- **Security & Damage.** I previously highlighted the need to consider improved security surveillance due to a spate of damage and mindless vandalism. Although the Hall continues to see cases of minor vandalism, we have yet to determine a solution that is acceptable. The outside security lights have been repaired and the wider security needs remains on the agenda.
- **Respect For Property & Users.** I continue to push the aspect of respect for property. RVH and its grounds are private property. Whilst this is not strongly enforced, Hall users have continued to experience nuisance activities from members of the public and uncontrolled children on the grounds whilst the Hall is in use. I strongly urge the community to respect those who have booked the Hall and acknowledge that the rights of our hirers extend to the grounds as well as the Hall itself.

Minor Improvements

The RVH Booking Clerk has worked hard to make the RVH website a useful and informative focal point for those wishing to use the Village Hall. It provides details of when the hall is booked, functions and performances, and details of our main user groups. If you have any suggestions about the website, please get in touch.

Some of you will have noticed that around 50 new chairs have been purchased for the hall. This brings me to a point about looking after the chairs in general. We have 5 types of chair in use – they all need to be stacked according to type to ensure they are safe and do not get damaged. So, a plea from me – please stack the chairs properly – blue feet / green feet / orange seat / plain / red-banded leg.

Summary

RVH has an ongoing role to play in village life and amenities, providing useful facilities to a wide range of hirers. I hope you will be able to continue to enjoy its use. It needs continued community voluntary support to address its maintenance and development and the Committee will continue to seek help to progress and solve issues to ensure the Hall remains viable for all the varied activities it supports.

Thank you.

Steve Hands

Chairman

Rackheath Village Hall