

# **Brookwood Memorial Halls**

*Registered charity number 304981*

## **Report for the year ending 31st December 2020**

The Halls are managed by a Committee constituted under a Deed of Trust dated 20th February 1950 for the benefit of all Brookwood residents, elected at the Annual General Meeting open to residents. The Committee comprises 4 members elected by qualifying inhabitants and up to 14 members representing recognised Village organisations. A further 6 members may be co-opted by the Management Committee. The Management Committee comprised Mr J. Thornton (Chair), Ms L. Norris (Secretary), Mr A. Male (Treasurer), Mr C. Greenwood (Lettings Officer), Mr P. Goold (Scouts Association representative), Mrs J. Grimshaw (Art Groups representative) and Mr A. Gray. Mrs M. Cook (WI representative) resigned with effect from 7 December 2020 after over 20 years' service. Thanks Mary! The Hall's banker is the Charities Aid Foundation, West Malling, Kent. We maintained financial reserves throughout the year adequate to remain solvent in case the Halls become unlettable should major insured damage need repair. We review this policy annually.

The Coronavirus epidemic overshadowed our activities during the year, with our regular hire income falling by over a third, protected by our prudent reserves and in part by a single Governmental grant. Our insurance failed to cover lost income for non-specified diseases, in common with most other Halls. We responded well to late, incomplete and changing Government guidance and directives, which curtailed activities between March – July, November-December and from 20 December on. We ensured the Halls were Covid-safe for permitted small-group activities between then, and provided guidance, signage and assisted facilities to our hirers. We kept on our part-time Cleaner without furlough relief. We welcomed some new, small-group bookers displaced from other venues. Improvements committed during the first quarter included replacing the main entrance door, new stage curtains, main floor renovation and drainage improvements. Necessary repairs and replacements were completed during closure periods, to ensure the Halls were ready, safe and in good order for reopening. We enabled holding of regular Committee meetings by video conferencing. We introduced a new Internet-based booking system, and have recently improved our Website. We expect a good level of hires to return as restrictions hopefully relax from the second quarter of 2021.

We met all the challenges of the past year well, and present the Halls still in good, attractive order, safe for our staff, hirers and their guests. We adhere diligently to all relevant guidance and requirements for our activities and facilities, and maintain licenses for entertainment and sporting activities, reproduction of music, provision of catering facilities (to 100 table seated guests) and stage shows (to 220 seated audience). The Halls are a popular venue for dance and exercise, music and social activities. The Halls provide WiFi, Bluetooth music speakers in both Halls, and voice distribution through wireless microphones and an induction loop system. The Memorial Hall provides wide press-button access to wheelchairs and buggies, with a toilet for disabled guests.

The objects of our Trust, to maintain and improve the facilities of the Halls for the benefit of the residents of Brookwood and its immediate vicinity without discrimination, have again been well fulfilled under challenging conditions. On behalf of the village residents, I thank them all for their efforts. The Management Committee seeks new, younger volunteers with appropriate skills and interests to join us as Trustees and to assist in the development of the Halls. We invite interested parties to contact us for further information.

John Thornton, Chair - on behalf of the Trustees and Management Committee, Brookwood Memorial Halls

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