

## **Slaley Commemoration Hall report for Slaley Parish Council**

I checked to see what was in last year's report and a lot has happened since then!

It was dated February 2020 and we had just been awarded the £30,000 grant from the National Lottery via Community Action Northumberland (CAN). That and other grants and donations meant that we were able to complete Phase 1 of the Hall refurbishment over the summer. Phase 1 included changing the storage facilities to put them all on one level, adding new toilets, replacing the central heating boiler, and decorating the Hall throughout. A fantastic achievement by everyone involved.

Phase 2 fundraising is underway to build a new multi-purpose extension, as we now have no meeting/committee room.

### **Covid Closure**

Covid restrictions have meant that for most of the past year the Hall has been closed – though there was a brief period over the summer when the children's holiday activities could take place, the W.I. met and the Film Club were able to hold one event. Thanks to the grant support from Northumberland County Council, we have not suffered financially from the Hall being closed.

### **Committee/Trustee Changes**

Following the retirement of Margaret Weatherley, we now have a new Treasurer, Cllr Stella Douglas. In addition, our long-standing caretaker team, Dorothy and Reg Urwin retired at the end of April. Katy Stevens is taking over the role supported by her husband, Cllr Ian Stevens.

Bobby Robson, a longstanding and well-respected trustee also retired in 2020.

### **Parish Council Support**

The Parish Council continue to support the Hall and the Trustees would like to thank them:

- Internet access at the Hall continues to be funded by the PC and in 2020 we were able to reduce the monthly cost of that.
- The PC have also supported the online booking system. Due to the Hall being closed for most of the year and the type of bookings taken, it has been agreed however to put this on hold for a year and therefore annual costs for this have not been requested of the PC for 2020.
- The PC funded the "green" fixtures and fittings in the Phase 1 refurbishment.

### **Renovation: Phase 2**

Phase 2 fundraising has proved difficult this year – but there have been some innovative events: the SCH200 local lottery, a car treasure trail and the online silent auction have been the main successes.

The Hall grant team continues to apply to funders for Phase 2 grants and have had grants awarded so far by the Joicey Trust and the Barnard Sunley Foundation.

We continue to raise funds and review what is achievable for Phase 2 with the aim of completing this in time for the centenary in 2022.

### **The Lantern**

It has been of concern for some time that the lantern on the roof of the Hall required repair, but we were not able to access it to investigate. However, with the help of a local drone enthusiast who took close-up photos of the lantern, we could unfortunately confirm that it needs urgent repair. We have been successful in securing grants from the Catherine Cookson Foundation and the NCC Community Chest for this and await to hear the decision of the War Memorials Trust before commissioning the repair.

### **Portraits of Mr & Mrs Hunting**

Grant funding has also been received to have the two imposing portraits of Mr and Mrs Hunting renovated. These will be going to the Laing Gallery to be cleaned, repaired, and have new glass fitted in the coming months.

### **Re-opening**

Plans for opening the Hall are well underway and we look forward to getting back to providing a welcoming and friendly place for the parish to use, meet and socialise in and get back together after a long year of lockdown.

Debra Taylor

30/04/2021