

Shalbourne Club AGM 2021/22

Chairman's Report

We entered this financial year on the 1st April 2021 with a timetable set out by the Government for the easing and final ending of lockdown restrictions between March and June. Having fared much better financially than expected over the previous two financial years, it finally felt like life was returning to some sort of normality and a recognition that we will have to live with COVID. As such, we agreed with Dan (Thai Tuesday), that he would move his cooking and distribution from the pavilion to new premises in order for us to resume our schedule of activities and in the following few weeks we saw the regular fitness and yoga classes return as well as cricket. As people began to gain confidence, bookings for parties and delayed weddings started to come in as well. May saw the return of the Shalbourne/Ham match which was a fun day and very well supported and a belated May Day picnic. Going into June and July we hosted two of our regular cricket let days which, in addition to the regular and ad hoc bookings are an important source of income for the Club. However, as a committee we took the decision that due to people's availability and the strain it puts on individual's time, that with the agreement of the let day hirers, we would no longer provide the catering for these days but would get professional caterers in, supported by our Committee members. This has proved a great success and enabled us to concentrate on preparing the field, running the bar and hosting the day and is much less onerous on committee members. We once again hosted the Ford Model T run which has now become a regular fixture. For those who haven't witnessed this day it is well worth coming to the field as the sight of up to 30 Model T's in various guises is a sight to be seen. We decided again to hold the Classic Car Show on the Sunday of the August Bank Holiday as per the previous year which again was a great success and is now the permanent date. It was a dry day although somewhat chilly for August, but we had a fabulous turn out of cars, bikes and visitors and a big

thanks to the Hosier family once again for the use of the adjacent field for parking although they did make us sweat a little by harvesting the wheat literally the day before the show! As we moved towards Autumn, we decided to try something different for Bonfire night and have a fire, BBQ, bar and children's disco but with no fireworks. Fireworks are a financial risk for us as a charity as the outlay is large and as we found out on a previous year, if cancelled due to bad weather the costs to return were 'eyewateringly' high and as we are unable to store them this meant a loss for the Club. There are also always going to be divided opinions on fireworks when we are in an area with a lot of horses, dogs and thatched cottages. The evening was profitable but not in the same league as a normal Bonfire Night.

We were approached in December by AFC Bedwyn about using our football pitch and pavilion facilities. After a couple of meetings we agreed on a fee and what would be provided. Having had a grant from Sport England towards the cost of building the pavilion, they are looking to us to provide and host sporting events and clubs throughout the year, so seeing the return of a football team in the winter was a good result for us. They felt welcomed here and were appreciative of not only the support of Shalbourne Club but also those villagers who stood on the touchline and cheered them on. We ran our normal Carol's on the green in December and were delighted to welcome Jo Politt back with her trusty trumpet after a couple of years absence and a thanks to Alex for hosting us as well as heating our mulled wine and mince pies. After Christmas we decided to test the water for a Burns Night Supper. Although there was some support, there was still a reluctance from a lot of people to attend an event in an enclosed space as the COVID infection stats were starting to rise again leading to some nervousness, so we made a decision not to run that event. January also saw us wave a sad goodbye to the lovely Ash tree on our border with The Lynch as it had become diseased to the point where it would soon be dangerous.

That is a summary of our fiscal year and in a few minutes Larry will update us on how that looks from a financial point of view. However, there are two more points I would like to cover. As many of you will know, after the unbelievable fund raising efforts, like all building projects the pavilion build went over budget for various reasons. This meant that we had to ask for loans from individuals who were once again incredibly generous. The repayment of these loans was on an agreed schedule, but of course, when these arrangements were made no one could have envisaged two years of lockdown. But, due to the tenacity and hard work of the committee, the ongoing support of the whole village in attending and helping at events, plus some flexibility of the people providing the loans, in September 2021 after a very successful car show we repaid all the outstanding balance of the loans. This was an amazing achievement and a celebratory moment for us. There are so many thank you's needed for this that to list them out would take the rest of the evening, but just a huge thank you to everyone who in any way has helped us on this journey. This milestone then led us as a committee to be able to refocus our efforts from putting on as many events as possible to raise much needed funds, to returning to the original ethos of selective events with more of a focus on the village community whilst at the same time keeping ourselves in a positive financial situation. We hope to get back to the point where we can start helping out other good causes within Shalbourne as we used to.

Finally, as mentioned on the previous years report, our mowing woes continued. We struggled on for a while with the cricket club taking on the majority of the mowing. We then received a very generous donation of a mower which needed to be attached to a tractor. With our finances in a reasonably good state we then went on the search for a suitable tractor to pull the mower. After considerable efforts, a lovely restored Massey Ferguson was found and bought. It was delivered to the field to a welcome

committee who admired it's beauty and went about receiving driving lessons. However, our enthusiasm was a little premature as our application for the V5 to be changed into our name lead to a call from the Police who informed us that it was in fact stolen, and we had two weeks to return it. All parties we dealt with were totally innocent in this process and fortunately for us, we had not parted with any money. I know I ended last years report saying that we were close to finding a solution to our mowing woes, but as we ended this financial year we were literally within days of the conclusion to this long running saga. Look out for next year's instalment!

Philip Matthews, Chairman

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