



# TEES VALLEY VILLAGE HALLS NETWORK

self-governing • self sustaining • self help village halls support organisation

## Autumn 2021 Edition No 17

### WE'RE TOGETHER AGAIN



John Wilson

Community Matters



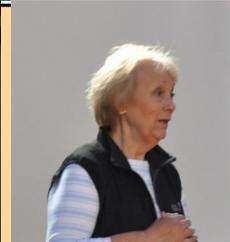
Barbara Braithwaite

Yarm Wellness



Ray Paris

Egglescliffe



Vera Ryder

Gleneagles



Julie Craig (with spirit)?

Charltons



Margaret Vaughan

County Durham Community Foundation



Sophie O'Connor



Three wise Monkeys



Who said that?

For those of you that attended our "We're Together Again" meeting at Saltburn, you will recognise these speakers. John, from Community Matters, gave us a stirring talk on why village halls and communities matter. Barbara, Ray, Vera and Julie explained how their halls have survived the Pandemic and how they are recovering. Margaret, assisted by Sophie explained how to apply for grant funding, what to include in an application, and application tips. She then also gave a comprehensive list of possible funders. Max May from Rural Arts then explained what his company can provide as live entertainment. One was a comedian that does a cooking show with power tools! I hope they provide PPE. Our Chairman, Brian, also gave a talk on "Who owns your Hall" - very important.

The results from our "exit survey" showed that the overall evaluation of the event was good to excellent. All in all a very good "get together".

A note for anyone attending our future meetings, bring a doggy bag!

### A PLEASANT SURPRISE

With the help of Janice McColm, our co-opted Committee member from Tees Valley Rural Action, we put in for a grant from the Arnold Clark Community Fund. Success depends on whether your name comes out of the hat. Our's did! We got £500. Thank you, Arnold Clark and Janice.

### INFORMATION, FOOD AND ENTERTAINMENT

Where? At the Network's AGM on 23rd November at Lazenby Village Hall starting at 7pm. Do come along.

## A shock story with a happy ending



[inglebybarwickcommunityhall.chessck.co.uk](http://inglebybarwickcommunityhall.chessck.co.uk)

On Wednesday 9th December 2020 Pauline Stainthorpe, Secretary at Ingleby Barwick Community Hall, received an email from BT to say that they were closing the free Community Webkit on 24th May 2021. Shock & horror!! In these days of Covid -19 it was certainly something the Hall Management Committee could have done without.

However, following contact with Peter Brown at the Network and consultation with members of the Hall Management Committee it was decided to go with Chess ITC who work with BT on the community website platform which meant that the website could be transferred in its present form. Cost was another important issue as, because of the Covid-19 situation, the hall had not been able to open from end March 2020 until the planned re-opening on 17th May 2021 and no income from hirers had been received.

Pauline contacted Chess ITC on 7th April 2021 by telephone and received a call back from them and also an email confirming the decision to transfer the hall website to Chess ITC. They host many hundreds of websites for village halls and community centres throughout the country on behalf of BT and so are well placed to continue to provide this service.

Following a telephone call and emails, on 14th May 2021 a bank mandate form was received and duly completed by the Hall Treasurer, countersigned by Pauline and emailed back to Chess. A further telephone call the following week between Chess ITC and Pauline went through all the details in a recorded conversation confirming an agreement for one year at a cost of £60 per annum. A support package was offered at an extra cost but this was not considered necessary. The account with Chess ICT was then set up.

Management of the website remained available through the BT website builder link and Pauline was able to make amendments to information about the hall timetable etc.

The migration of the website began at the beginning of June and the website was then off line until 5th June when the process was complete. There is information provided on the Internet giving the new website address.

There is now a different link to the Chess community website builder using the same login as before and also internet access via Chess ITC to the hall account to check payments or report a problem.

This was certainly a much easier process than anticipated and although it was a bit nerve-racking whilst the website was not available to the public, everything went through smoothly.

## GRINDON PARISH HALL TRANSFORMED - PART 2

### Chairman John Tait tells the story

The process of applying for funding, led by Gareth Rees, started in October 2018. Disappointingly the National Lottery rejected our first proposal despite the effort which had gone into it. However in preparing the bid we learned a lot. We were to get used to rejection letters.



In January of 2020 we finally had good news. The National Lottery Reaching Communities fund were going to fund our project to the tune of £75,000. The bad news was that we had to find funding for the other 50% of the project, and we had to complete the project within a year!

Shortly after that we heard that Action with Communities in Rural England (ACRE) would provide just under £25,000, and Augean Plc (A Hazardous Waste Management Company) would provide £27,000 towards the project. Together with £16,000 from our own fundraising events, maintenance and development fund, and other related sources, this gave us the confidence to start the actual building project, knowing that we could scale things back if no more funds came forward. Of course by now we were in the first Coronavirus Lockdown so rather than plan to reopen the Hall at the first opportunity, we announced the Hall would be closed until September 2020. Building work began in late May 2020, and with various delays, mainly due to CoronaVirus, we finally were aiming to reopen the building for regular use in Mid-November 2020.

In the meantime funding applications continued. In the end just six applications (for amounts from £1,000 to £75,000) were successful from over 40 submitted. Our eventual success is a tribute to Gareth's stamina and persistence. In the end we were able to



draw down the full amounts of the National Lottery Reaching Communities and ACRE funding, both of which were dependent on finding matched funding from elsewhere.

Of course the next thing which happened was that just when we thought we had everything ready

for a COVID-safe reopening (including socially distanced thank you events for the funders), first a local lock down then a national lockdown prevented us going ahead, and this remains the situation at the time of writing (March 2021), leaving us with possibly the best small village hall in the area standing idle.

Sadly Bob Mullen passed away suddenly in August 2019, so he didn't see the project he initiated come to fruition. It will stand as a lasting tribute to him and his colleagues for many years to come.

We are once again starting to plan for reopening, but that is another story!



John Tait

# Meet The Team

Our next committee member to be introduced to you is Pete Brown. Retired Engineer. He is both the Website Manager and the Editor of our Newsletter and in the peculiar position of interviewing himself.

## **Are you from the North East?**

I was born and raised in Darlington and now live in Eaglescliffe. I am also on the Executive Committee for Egglecliffe Community Centre. If you are wondering about the Egglecliffe/Eaglescliffe spelling please have a look at Egglecliffe Community Centre on the TVVHN website. Its a long story.

## **What attracts you to village life?**

My father's family came from Barton, North Yorkshire and that was my childhood playground. I remember the safety and easy going atmosphere of village life. As an example, I can remember my Grandfather looking for his front door key. Having never locked that door in over ten years he had lost the key. So I think my main attraction to village life is the friendliness and security.

## **Do you like working with committees?**

I am a bit of a comedian as you will have noticed, so as long as the committee I am involved with is run a little light-heartedly I have no problem (Brian take notice). I also seem to be lucky in that the committees I am involved with have never been asked to design a horse.

## **Do you have a favourite day trip/holiday destination in the North East?**

That will be Whitby. It's the history, the views, the shops, and the food. Never forget the food! Also the trip over the Moors is a big part of my enjoyment.

## **Do you have any time for hobbies and if so what?**

Photography is my main hobby but my wife will tell you that I love tinkering with anything that can be taken apart (putting it back together is the problem).

## **Do you think that rural life is threatened and if so by what?**

The balance between the population of a village and its facilities (shops/pubs etc.) is declining rapidly. My grandfather's village has reduced from two pubs, one post office and six shops to one shop. So the population works, plays and shops away; the village is just somewhere to sleep. This is where village halls can make a difference. They can bring people together and form a sense of community.

## **What event that you are associated with are you most proud of?**

I think that introducing technology and helping create the TVVHN website is what I am most proud of.

## **Do you think that TVVHN helps you with your work?**

With the running of our community centre definitely. With my job as editor, well Brian, our Chairman, just keeps adding to the list and he loves his red pen.

