Holton Village Hall Annual Report – 14th May 2026

This report is read on behalf of the entire committee. Our job is to ensure that Holton Village Hall is kept in good condition, which means constant housekeeping for us all – in many ways. With rising costs for all services – electricity, heating oil, etc we keep a watchful eye on our expenses. Our actual finances will be covered in the Treasurer's Report later.

Maintenance: I'm going to start with one of the most important areas that the committee deal with – maintenance. We regularly review the hall infrastructure eg floor, boiler, roof etc to ensure that the Hall is maintained in good order and is fully legal going forward. Last summer all of the gutter and soffit boards were painted and two external doors at the rear of the Hall were also repaired and repainted.
In preparation for the fitting of solar panels the whole roof was cleaned removing a large amount of moss. The roof was then treated to stop the moss recurring.
A meter was fitted to the oil supply to the boiler so that we can accurately monitor the oil usage in the Hall.
Recently we have had the 50-year-old electrical consumer units replaced with new ones to bring them up to date with current legal requirements and a third one added for connection to the solar panels when they are fitted. We have also had the 5 year electrical safety check done, an extensive process which involves testing every socket or fitting in the Hall. We are planning to get the old hot water tank in the boiler room replaced with a new pre lagged tank, fitted with an immersion that would enable us to use the solar panels to heat the hot water rather than the oil boiler.

Solar Panels In February of last year the committee developed an Energy Strategy titled Fit4 50 to combat climate change. Our prime objective of 2025 was to focus on raising funds for the installation of a Solar PV system. This will result in more insulation as well as solar panels being installed, now we have secured the necessary funding. These measures should considerably reduce our electricity bill and repay our investment in a few years. In view of world events on the energy front this is a good strategic move.

In December we were notified by the SODC that our July application for funding of a Solar PV system was successful and that we would receive the full 50% of the cost applied for. This was further supplemented by a grant kindly organised by Tim Bearder from his Councillor Community Grant Scheme, providing a supplement of £5k. We are therefore pleased to inform everyone that the system, consisting of 20 solar panels, will be installed during the 1st week of August by our preferred contractor 'EnergyMyWay'. They will be making a presentation to us of the system at the Village General Meeting on 21st May. As part of the SODC grant application we have committed to selecting a number of local charities, each year that will be offered the hall free of charge. The costs to us will be offset by the return we get by exporting excess energy generated from our Solar PVs to the grid.

Energy Strategy: At the start of this year and as part of our Energy Strategy, we commenced recording our CO_2 emissions by actively measuring our use of water, fuel oil and electricity. This information will be posted quarterly on the Hall's noticeboard and website. It is good to report also that keen interest has been shown by other village halls in *Fit^{4}50*. To date 3 presentations of our Energy Strategy have been made to a number of. other Oxfordshire Village Halls.

In addition to the above, we will be replacing all remaining fluorescent lighting in the hall with LED equivalents and installing additional insulation in the roof void above the bar/Lounge areas.

Events: Holton Village Hall Afternoon Teas were started by a couple of Trustees and a couple of volunteers in March 2022 as a way of people getting back together after the Covid Pandemic. They continue to be held in the Village Hall approximately every two weeks and continue to be successful with an average 25 people attending each event. The operation carries on due to the

generous donations made by villagers, as no charge is made for beverages or cake. Many thanks to all who help make these events successful.

The hall saw a 15% increase in use over the last year against 2024, with 38% of this increase coming from Private Events such as Family and Children's Parties, Wedding Celebrations, AGMs for other external bodies amongst others. Year on year our single major contributor to the hall's use comes from the CAA (Calvary Apostolic Assembly) that contributes 31% of our booking income; to whom we are greatly indebted.

The Parish Council meet monthly in the Hall and there are many 'one-off' bookings by local people for parties, weddings and other social events. Some bookings are for meetings or training days for various organisations from both near & far including a couple of local Charities.

Events over the last year include 2 quiz nights and a race night all of which raised funds for the Hall, Several film nights and a very successful 50th birthday afternoon tea. Committee members picked all the apples in the orchard which we then had pressed and the juice bottled. Over 200 bottles were produced, some used at the 50th birthday tea and the rest sold.

Looking ahead, our fore log of bookings remains strong, with regular Yoga, Table Tennis, Film Nights and WI events. On the 5th of June we are hosting a Jazz Night with tickets being available online - a new first for the hall. We will be hosting another Big Family BBQ in the Orchard on the 24th July and The Holton Players will return for a production of Agatha Christies 'The Mirror Cracked' in late November.

The majority of these events have been organised by the Committee members themselves. We would like to encourage villagers to organise their own events. The committee is always here to help with logistics – but there must be groups of villagers with interests that we have no idea about – that could use our village hall and orchard. Because it is OUR village hall.

Hall Charges: Despite the booking situation being buoyant the situation remains challenging due to increased running costs across the board, especially energy costs. We regularly benchmark our prices against other village halls in the area and although our prices have increased, they remain competitive. We will continue to review our costs and prices going forward.

In June we will be reviewing the hire charges against the current market costs (Elec, Water, Fuel Oil) whilst being mindful of our competitiveness against other similar halls. A study conducted by the Committee in February showed that out of 21 village halls within a 14-mile radius, we are 6th lowest on cost and 2nd lowest on value, taking account of space and facilities offered.

Publicity: The committee has been concerned for some time that it was getting a bit behind the curve with technology especially its on-line presence and perhaps an over-reliance on traditional media such as the Village Mag. Many of you will already have seen that we have a new website that was built specifically to be easier to access and use, whilst giving us greater control on the content we can include. We are still getting to grips with using it and would welcome your feed-back. Many thanks to both Andy Murray and Clive Ganczarski for their time and effort in getting this up and running. In addition there is now a Facebook page (started by Clare) for the Hall which has already been used to advertise the Jazz evening in June for example.

Finally, thanks to all the committee members for their dedication and hard work and a heartfelt thank you to Clive who valiantly stepped up as bookings secretary when Dave Holmes moved on after a five year stint.