

High Halden War Memorial Hall

Daytime use of the hall is at a good level with few slots available during the working week, this despite a modest price increase for 2024. There are occasional evening bookings but private bookings for weekend hire are still not at a level we would like. Friday coffee mornings continue twice monthly thanks to a small group of regular volunteers and the catering efforts of Liz Wheeler. Average attendance is 20 to 25 villagers which consists of a regular hardcore and the occasional new face. The Post Office is in attendance every Friday morning, the Citizens Advice were attending on the third Friday of every month but seem to have disappeared this year and for a while we had a member of the Parish Council available at coffee meetings. Unfortunately the popular Helping Hands free lunches did not return in 2024.

A defibrillator has been installed outside the hall as a service to the village, financed by the Parish Council and our county councillor. There is also a box to post Ivy Court prescriptions in.

We would like to thank Ted and Helen Checksfield for maintaining the attractive garden in front of the hall and also the Hortsoc for re-invigorating the wooden plant troughs at the front of the car park.

Our finances are sufficient to cover our day to day running costs. Our deficit income/expenditure for last year of almost £5k was entirely due to the asbestos work which needed to be done.

Following the building survey carried out previously our priority is to replace/repair the flat roof. We have enlisted the help of Kent Design centre to move this project forward. We will need grants to help finance this as our own funds are insufficient. Some assistance has already been received for Ashford Borough Council and Councillor Pickering.

We continue to seek new trustees who will take an active involvement in running and maintaining the hall. At least one trustee who has experience in the construction industry would be welcomed. The current chairman, who has been a trustee for many years, has indicated his intention to step down this autumn and there are other long serving trustees who also would like to pass on the baton to fresh faces.

The hall is a valuable village asset and it would be a shame to lose it though lack of support.

