

# OLD SCHOOL NEWS

Dallington Village Hall January 2021



## Looking ahead to a brighter 2021



This is our third annual newsletter, published to mark **National Village Halls Week (January 25--29th 2021)**, which this year celebrates 100 years of village halls.

It's safe to say that 2020 did not turn out the way that any of us were expecting. Sadly, due to Covid and related government restrictions, our hall has remained closed since March 2020, apart from some permitted use for careworker training. However, members of the management committee have been working behind the scenes to keep things going and we plan to re-open to the public as soon as it is safe and legal to do so. Spring is on its way.....



### What has been happening?

In the first weeks of 2020, we continued to run as usual until Covid became a threat, then closed the hall as a precaution a few days before the official lockdown. We were already committed to a long overdue programme of external redecoration and repairs, and as many of you have noticed, our decorator Stephen has done a terrific job. Fortunately, with the help of Action in Rural Sussex, of which we are a member, we were able to access a grant from Rother District Council designed to cover halls and small businesses for loss of income due to Covid. This has enabled us to go ahead with vital repairs to the Snooker Room ceiling and roof, due to start shortly. Providing the closure does not go on for too much longer, we should be able to manage financially.

But the impact of Covid has been far more than financial. The hall is usually a venue for all kinds of community activities and clubs as well as fund raising events such as quiz nights. The weekly community library café had become a popular place for residents to drop in, exchange books and enjoy a friendly chat over a cup of tea. Speaking at the launch of the latest ACRE Survey of Village Halls, our treasurer described the frustration so many of us have felt this year. Historically village halls have been a place for people to come together at times of crisis – but that could not happen this time. Our priority in 2021 must be to start bringing our community back together.

### Planning for the future

We have carried out Covid risk assessments and developed procedures so we can re-open safely and confidently when permitted. We are continuing to improve the fabric of the hall and to implement new safety requirements. We will be completely refreshing our library collection, having received so many kind offers of books once we can accommodate them. We hope most existing societies will return and perhaps some new ones will emerge. Now that we have fast broadband installed, perhaps people working from home might like to drop in for some coffee and company? You may have other suggestions.



**If the hall is to survive it needs a new generation of residents to breathe life into the space. Do please let us know what you have missed while we've been closed and what you would like to see happening once we re-open. Meanwhile we wish you all a safe, healthy and happy 2021.**

## About Dallington Old School

Dallington Old School is a registered charity (No: 289652) managed by a committee of trustees, all of whom are local residents. The object of the charity is to maintain *“a village hall for the use of the inhabitants of the Parish of Dallington..without distinction of political religious or other opinions, including use for meetings, lectures and classes, and for other forms of recreation and leisure-time occupation.. with the object of improving the conditions of life for the said inhabitants.”*

That has not always been easy. The fabric of this 19th century listed building (the former village school, hence the name) requires regular maintenance and occasional costly repairs. In the 21st century there are many competing demands on people's time, so it takes a bit more effort to come along to events or volunteer to help. But we think our community would be poorer if the Old School was forced to close. For over 150 years, it has provided a vital space for all kinds of village activities, a place to come together, meet your neighbours, and perhaps learn something new. Please help us to ensure it continues to do so.

## How you can support this community asset

### Once the hall is able to re-open:

- ***Do come along to one of our events***

Once restrictions are lifted, we hope to re-open the library café on Monday afternoons 2-4pm and on the first Saturday morning of each month. No entrance fee, no commitments, just a chance to browse and perhaps chat over tea and biscuits. For other events, most people find out what's on through word of mouth or noticeboards, parish magazines and the village website at <https://dallington.org.uk>. The site also covers other village news. To be sure you don't miss anything, subscribe to the website to receive an email whenever a new announcement is posted. If none of the current activities appeal, then please let us know what else you would like to see happening. Even better, perhaps you could organise something yourself - we can support you if you have a good idea.

- ***Book the hall for your own use***

The hall is available for hire at £10 an hour for private functions such as parties or staff development events, or £5 for regular voluntary groups. This covers use of all facilities including the kitchen and free fast broadband. The Snooker Room will also be available again once current repairs are complete. Please contact Karen Gillingham on 01435 831563 for all booking enquiries.

- ***Get involved***

We are always looking for new volunteers, whether to serve on the committee or in a more informal capacity, for example to help with small maintenance tasks or to contribute refreshments or raffle prizes or ideas for events. Please contact Judy Jeremy on 01435 830460 if you might be interested.

## Meanwhile...

***You are warmly invited to attend our Annual General Meeting.*** This year it will be online - date and joining details will be posted on the village website as soon as they are confirmed. This is a chance to hear reports and plans from the trustees, to voice your own ideas for using the hall and to elect next year's committee.

## Could you help with fundraising?

If none of the above are currently possible, but you would still like to help the hall to remain viable for future generations, then perhaps you might be willing to contribute in some other way - for instance, by a one-off or regular donation to the Old School charitable trust or new ideas for fundraising? Please contact our Treasurer, Pauline Ridley, on 01435 830152 or email [p.ridley@brighton.ac.uk](mailto:p.ridley@brighton.ac.uk) if you can help - and if you can Gift Aid your donation, HMRC will give us an additional 25p for every £1 we receive.

**We are very grateful to all those villagers who have generously donated small or large sums or given their time to the Old School in the last few years. Thank you.**