

Hallmark Level 1 & 2 Assessment: Rotherfield Village Hall

13th November 2018

The visitors Alan West (Ringmer Village Hall) and Duncan Sanders (Groombridge Village Hall) were met by the Chair-person Jeff Thomas, the treasurer Mark Howard and user representative Andy Miller (representing Rotherfield Players).

The building is leased from the Parish Council who also look after the adjacent field. The Village Hall offers first class facilities for a wide variety of functions. The main hall and stage has a capacity of 170 seated at tables and 200 for stage performances. It has a sprung wooden floor with full sized badminton court and has recently had a new lighting system installed. The Lingen Watson Room and Parish Council Room are smaller rooms available for meetings and functions.

There is a new fully fitted kitchen and adjoining bar with serving hatches, which provide excellent facilities for cooking, and serving food and drinks. A wide variety of audio and visual equipment is available to hirers including electric piano, loudspeakers, DVD player, portable projector and screen, laptop computer, Wi-Fi facility, plasma screen TV, Wii console, white board, PA system with hand, lapel and headpiece microphones.

Having toured the building, it was apparent that it is kept in a very clean and in a well-maintained condition; we discussed the proposed upgrade to stage facilities which has Planning and Building Regulation approval. An indication of the cost was established (£150,000) and they now propose to start seeking tenders and source fund raising opportunities; £30,000 has been raised by the local Dramatic Society.

The Charity has four unrestricted funds, comprising of a General Purpose Fund and designated funds covering the Village Hall, Equipment Renewal and Major Repairs. We discussed the requirement to keep a reserve fund which is not ring fenced.

The payments are wholly by cheque (CAF Bank) that requires a second authorisation before the payment is passed. An objective of the Trustees for 2018 was to increase income from bookings which had dropped during 2017; the Treasurer showed that this was being achieved. No account submission to the Charity Commission has been required for the past year.

The Trustees provided copies of their last AGM minutes, Final Accounts, Chairman's Report, Committee Meeting Minutes prior to the AGM, Charity Scheme, Hire Agreement, Fire Risk Assessment, Health & Safety Policy and Premises Licence.

The visitors having had early sight of these documents were able to partially complete the assessment form before the visit. This enabled a fuller discussion on areas which needed clarification and for potential development. We were pleased to be able to confirm all the various sections of the questionnaire were completed satisfactorily and we were able to point out items of good practice that we had gleaned in our past experience.

We have no hesitation in granting a renewal of Hallmark Level One and Two status and look forward to them going further on completion of their modernisation.