

Report to the Annual Parish Meeting: May 2025

Introduction

The use of the village hall has reached a consistent level, although more regular bookings would always be welcome. The operation of the hall cannot be sustained solely on current bookings and we need to supplement this with regular fund raising events to boost income.

New members from other villages continue to join classes through referrals and we contact new residents to Westhorpe with a welcome pack to make them aware of the calendar of events.

The organisation of the company Westhorpe Village Hall Ltd has moved on to improve efficiency: This year we have set up a new Hallmaster booking system and set up Ticketsource to simplify ticket purchasing. Our accounts system is now established with Quickbooks which allows easier interrogation of costs and invoicing.

Committee members and other volunteers

We now have a very active committee plus village members involved in the operation and maintenance of the building, cleaning and running the village lottery which is a vital component of our income. The hall would not be sustainable without this team. Their support and enthusiasm is invaluable.

Regular activities

Regular activities are well supported and continue to draw in more attendees from surrounding villages. These are: Yoga; Line Dancing; Art Club; Carpet Bowls; Craft Club; Singing for Pleasure; Keep Fit; Pilates; Exercise Workout. A new Sounds Fun evening open for a range of music/singing/poetry participation is now also established and meets once a month.

The regular Westhorpe Café continues to be a huge success and funds have been raised for a range of charities including the village hall. This year the café has been combined with an antiques valuation by Bishop and Miller. The Rural Coffee Caravan continues to visit every month.

One-off birthday parties have been held. A singer/guitar duo also hire the hall on a regular basis for practice.

One off events

The committee endeavour to organise a range of events so that there is something for everyone. Since May 2024 there have been the following events: Display of Antique Toys combined with the regular Café; Westhorpe Photographic Competition culminating with the production of the 2025 Westhorpe calendar, copies of which were sold out; History Tour of St Margarets church and Westhorpe Hall; a Quiz; Rock and Roll bingo; Race Night; two-person well attended theatrical production of The Christmas Carol; a hugely enjoyable Live Music night involving performances from a range of Westhorpe residents and from neighbouring villages. A series of Pub Nights have also started in response to requests from village residents and this will be supplemented by a BBQ in June to test interest.

A range of events is planned for the remainder of 2025 including: History talk on the Longship; Family Bingo; Race Night; Elvis impersonator; Cactus Club; Quiz Night; The Miracle theatrical production.

The Westhorpe calendar photographic production will take place again as will the Café and Art/Craft exhibition on 1 November.

We now run a bar at most events, thanks to the support from a range of committee members. Not only does this supplement income but it helps to provide a welcome to all visitors.

Village Website

The village website and hall booking system are now more heavily used. The website features publicity on forthcoming events on a regular basis. Work on upgrading the website will take place when time permits.

Financial performance

The building is now over eight years old and our outgoing costs have increased significantly due to replacement parts for the air source heat pump, under sink heater and hot water boiler plus a range of smaller items. Redecoration of the hall will need to take place soon to ensure that it is well presented.

We still maintain the same hall charge out rate despite increasing costs to ensure that hiring our hall is still attractive to members of Westhorpe and surrounding villages. Our financial accounts are just being finalised for 2024-2025 and we are preparing our forecasts for the next year. We hope that, with support from the community, we will just about break even for the financial year.