**Shalbourne Recreation Society**

**Chairman’s AGM Report 27th June 2021**

Good evening and welcome.

As Bob noted in the previous years Chairman’s report, the Pavilion has now become very much a fixture of the village used for many regular classes and sporting events as well as gaining a reputation as a great venue for parties, lunches etc. and a seemingly increased interest for weddings. As we entered this financial year going into April 2020 we were beginning to understand that it was going to be a year unlike any other. As most of you know, we rely solely on income from the events we stage and hiring the pavilion with nothing from local or county councils. Having just stepped into the Chairman’s shoes and facing a then unknown period of lockdown with no fixed roadmap out, I was deeply concerned about how the year would pan out. Even if the pavilion is not being used there are still considerable costs for electricity, water standing charges and the cost of machinery maintenance to keep the field in the state we are all proud of (machinery maintenance being a subject we will return to later in this report).

As summer approached there was some light at the end of the tunnel with lockdown easing, subject to all sorts of restrictions depending on the venue/event. We immediately took advantage of this combined with some fine weather and staged a family picnic on the 10th July which was a lovely evening with a bar, BBQ and some live music. Polly organized two Polecat & Lurcher pop’s giving us very generous donations from the takings in exchange for our help running the evenings. At this time, not knowing what was happening next with COVID, everything had to be done a relatively short notice. I suggested at a regular committee meeting that we have a go at staging a Car Show Lite, and the amazing committee sitting in front of me took it from idea to staged event in 4 weeks, something that is normally months in the planning. And what a glorious day it was. It was also a lesson for us as a committee. In the last few years we have been very focused on maximizing profits to pay for the pavilion, but being forced by restrictions to run a smaller event, we as a committee found it much more manageable and therefore, enjoyable. This has set the tone as we move forward. Whilst we will always have an eye on the income as this facility is not cheap to run, we want to get back to more village focused events. This is also the perfect time to mention the amazing army of volunteer helpers who step up to the mark every time we ask. The car show and indeed any event we put on, simply could not happen without them and the unanimous feedback from the helpers was that the smaller car show was so much more enjoyable to work at. A big thank you from all of us to all of you.

As we moved towards Autumn and the COVID situation began to worsen again we found ourselves having to cancel Bonfire Night and Carols and didn’t even consider the possibility of Burns Night. However, we did get approached by Dan leFevre, probably known to most of you as Thai Tuesday, who was looking for premises to cook and distribute from. This is obviously not what the pavilion was built for, but we were looking at an unknown period of time with no events, no classes and therefore no income over winter when traditionally run a fairly high electricity bill in order to prevent pipes freezing, so we agreed to trail the idea. After a few adjustments we agreed that he would pay rent, pay for electricity used and the fee for the large waste bin, but he ended up doing most of his cooking elsewhere due to the high cost of electricity at the pavilion. We also had a nice surprise in the form of a donation from the Tennis Club at the end of the calendar year in return for us opening up the toilets for the children’s tennis lessons. Nothing then changed and we exited the financial year in March in full lockdown with no events and classes and Dan as our only paying resident.

As mentioned earlier in this report and Bob’s report from last year, we continue to be plagued by mower problems. We had two great additions to the committee last year in Bill Bird and Steve Morrell who between them have the tools and knowledge to fix pretty much anything and if they can’t, they know a man who can. Bill, by some miracle and to his personal cost, has somehow managed to keep the John Deere going, but it has had a fault literally every time we took it out of the garage this year and I believe it is just getting to the point where the effort and cost of keeping it going is not worth it. The Cricket Club have stepped up and serviced the gang mowers which they are currently pulling round with their own vehicles. We do believe we are within sight of a solution to this but unfortunately I am not at liberty to disclose what that is right now until a few details are firmed up.

One final point from me before I hand over to Larry for a financial update. You may have noticed how neat and pretty the entrance to the field from The Lynch always is. The Club can claim absolutely no credit for that and I would like to thank Andrew Blake for his continuing maintenance of that area.