

Carlops Village Centre AGM 9.6.2023 – Chair's Report

It is a pleasure to welcome you all here, in person and online, and apologies for the change of date.

It seems ages since it has been possible to make a really positive report of the hall's year, but the past one has been busy, with many regular hires and a fair number of events and entertainment, largely provided by an impressive array of local talent – we are so lucky here.

Carlops Village Centre is still inching towards being fully transferred to the SCIO, progress is being made, but we will cover that in the second part of the evening.

Throughout the winter months we had regular hires 5 nights a week, as well as less frequent ones and single events like parties and group hires. One long standing group, the Bowlers, are struggling for numbers somewhat and would very much welcome new players – they run from October to April. Pentland Film Society has had a change of leadership as Kate stood down as Chair after an unbelievable 20 years and you may have seen the request for suggestions for films for the upcoming season. Both are sociable ways to spend the darker evenings.

Our regular events were back up and running properly this year, as detailed in a rather hastily compiled Yellow Card. The first of these was the Rural Products Show and it was lovely to see the hall filled with the products of our kitchens, gardens, and creativity again. One sobering aspect is the 2 year gap in the dates engraved on the cups, which will forever record the lockdown years. Thanks go to everyone who helped and to Peter and Wendy who hosted the judges for lunch in the absence of the Allan Ramsay.

We also saw a return of the children's Halloween and Christmas parties (does anyone know where the Santa suit is??), the Hogmanay ceilidh and, at last, a real Burns' Supper. The latter was very well attended, so much so that we had around a dozen 'drop-ins', which stretched both the seating capacity and the catering somewhat. Our haggis bearers were young Joshua and Tom, who are about to emigrate to the other side of the world, so it was especially lovely that they were able to take part – just a shame that 'someone' had burst the haggis (my apologies). Joshua is also the Whipman Barony Herald this year, so he really is departing in style!

In September we were lucky enough to be invited to host an Eastgate on Tour event again, which brought the excellent Gness to the hall – 4 very talented

young musicians who drew quite a crowd from further afield. If we can persuade them back we should perhaps leave room for dancing.

We have also had excellent entertainment of all varieties from our friends and neighbours, all of whom deserve thanks not only for the pleasure they have given and time they have invested, but also their generosity to both the hall and other charities. We have been treated to Contrappuntistica, The Bus Pass Boys, the Carlops Jazz Band, the Odd Couple (and Friends) and The White Rose of Gask to name but a few. The latter was an afternoon performance, which worked well on a short winters day and something we should consider for future events.

In January the hall was honoured to be asked to host the sad, but uplifting painting of Aonghas's casket. The meeting room was transformed into a place of creativity and fond memory. Taking our cue from Galina's vibrant painting of the cover, close to 90 friends and family participated in creating a beautiful farewell to our much-loved friend and former Chairman.

One of the discussions we have had repeatedly at committee meetings is the need to provide more informal opportunities to get together. This triggered the monthly potluck suppers – with everyone bringing something to eat and drink, and many hands on the tidy-up, it's an easy, inexpensive way to have an evening in good company. We're on the look out for more ideas, though, so do let us have your thoughts.

We would also like to thank everyone who came to help at the maintenance days, clearing/sorting the attic and taking part in general maintenance and spring cleaning. Those who have been in the hall recently will have noticed that we now have CO2 monitors, and new FIR heating panels on the ceilings of the main hall and meeting room, we would appreciate your feedback on these.

Looking ahead we have this year's Rural Product Show in August and a visiting theatre show, Miss Lindsay's Secret, in September. The hall is, as always, available for short and short-notice hires if you need a bit of extra space for something.

Which just leaves thanks to all who give their time and expertise to make this possible, who attend events and lend a hand. Special thanks go to Peter Raine, who is stepping down after many years on the committee, not least for all the funds he raised through running the market. We have several vacancies on the committee now and would welcome new members who could bring fresh ideas and vigour to planning the years ahead. The hall, Carlops Village Centre, soon to be CVC (SCIO), is currently in a solid position financially, so now is a good time for all you creative thinkers to get involved!