

## **Kirkby Malzeard Mechanics Institute Village Hall Annual General Meeting**

### **Chairmans Annual Report to Members 2023 -24**

Firstly, a brief explanation as to why I am reading the Chairmans Report.

Back in September/October last year our elected Chairman Gerry Mass informed us that she was standing down, due to illness and I have been acting Chairman up to this AGM.

It is important that we give Gerry a big vote of thanks in appreciation for all the hard work she has put in over the years at all levels – all the organisation, catering, working behind the bar, and being totally involved with everything. I am pleased to say that Gerry is now on the mend, so hopefully we will continue to see her joining in again soon.

We also need to thank two other retiring committee members for similar stoic service, namely Clive Robson and Mike Smith, both of whom have given years of loyal service.

Clive has been a past joint chairman and most of us remember all his hard work on the Players productions – sound, lighting, set and stage building, curtains, treasurer and part time actor. Clive has also worked tirelessly on keeping the building maintained.

Mike always volunteers to help and was the Mechanics Treasurer for a few years.

If you include Pam and John Collins from the last year, we have lost 5 committee members over the past just over 12 months.

At the beginning of 2023 we were joined by Emily Roberts and just after Christmas by Linda Moore. Both are great additions to our team and hopefully we can add to our numbers in the coming months. Geoffrey Berry has kindly offered to take on the position of Chairman. This is an important role and needs our total support.

2023 was a big turnaround year for the Mechanics following Covid and it is testament to all the hard work put in by the current committee that we are back to normal with facilities and functions.

The finances are very healthy at the moment, as I am sure Bryan will clarify later. We are reasonably confident that we can cope with potential future expense. It is important that we keep a large contingency as a reserve for the unforeseen.

My dearest wish for the Mechanics is that we can resurrect the Players. As we know our excellent mentor Pam Andrews stepped down following many successful productions. We desperately need someone to fill Pam's role and take advantage of the enormous pool of talent that exists in the village. It is very important that we give the village children an opportunity to be in a production and experience the thrill of appearing in front of an appreciative live audience. It would be amazing if we could kick start the process with a talent contest open to all ages.

Our current ambitions include replacement stage lighting, and we are looking at the possibility of solar panels to future proof the building. Personally, I would like to see the large, grassed area at the back of the Mechanics transformed into a usable space with a

canopy and paving. It could possibly be used for children's parties, BBQ and Pizza evenings or even a summer music venue.

I am stepping down from the chairman position, as there are two areas I wish to concentrate on.

- Updating the Constitution, which is currently based on a document written in 1852. The committee believed a document written in 2010 was the current document. However, the Charities Commission have advised us that this document was valid as a bylaw linked to the original 1852 document. Certain elements that contradict some of the old clauses in the 1852 Constitution have been removed by the Charities Commission. The document as it stands needs clarity, especially in respect of liabilities and the intention is to adopt a template model produced by the Charities Commission and now used by most village halls. Complications arise from the fact that we are a Mechanics Institute. Any proposed changes need to reflect the 1852 document and will be formally notified to the membership, prior to an Extraordinary Meeting and a vote.
- Updating the Health and Safety document for the safe management of the building.

Finally, I would like to thank all the committee members and Mac, Julie and Steph for their help and support, keeping this place running.

It is a thankless task sometimes and when you see the hours people are putting in, especially over the Christmas period behind the bar, trying to cope with several functions.

Any additional help will be greatly appreciated.

Paul Cookson