

Knowstone Parish Hall Annual Activity Report

May 2024 to May 2025

It has been a busy 12 months for our Parish Hall Committee and the Hall has been in good use by the parishioners. Over the past year there have been visible improvements to the Hall – most notably a new larger weatherproof shed, lightweight staging, a modern sound system, retaping of the Hall floor for badminton and skittles, and work progressing on the kitchen relocation project.

We are fortunate to have committed Trustees in our team who are willing to take time from their busy lives for the benefit of their community. We have had a few changes to the team. Cath Whatcott and Phil Dey left the team after being valued team members for the past six years. We were extremely grateful for their service to our community. Also, Evelyn Fitzgerald, who joined us at the beginning of 2024 sadly resigned during the year. However, we welcomed Paul Stevens and AJ Wilson into the team. The full list of Committee members (the Trustees) are:

Chairperson: Tiina Paju-Pomfret
Treasurer: Wendy Sweet
Secretary: Liz Barrett
Members: John Pomfret
David Barrett
Gill Smith (communications)
Martin Smith (maintenance and bookings clerk)
Kim Newton (catering lead)
Paul Stevens (maintenance)
AJ Wilson (maintenance and cleaning)
Catherine Whatcott (resigned in 2024)
Phil Dey (resigned in 2024 due to relocation)
Evelyn Fitzgerald (resigned in 2024)

We have improved our service by offering a licensed bar in certain events, and we are now able to take card payments. We also offered some new events such as a Parish Council supported Community Afternoon tea for the parishioners but sadly we had to cancel due to lack of interest. Similarly, the Chili Cook Off Competition and Social event did not gain enough interest to run. Maybe summertime was not the right time. However, we have successfully delivered 27 events during the past 12 months.

EVENT	DESCRIPTION
Coffee mornings	These have continued monthly and been popular by locals and people from surrounding parishes. These result in steady income for the Hall helping with ongoing costs. We continue to be commended for our excellent and varied cakes baked by various trustees and parishioners.
Killer Skittles & Village Social Evenings	We added a licensed bar and made the Skittles optional. They are on the schedule for the wintertime and have proven to be popular drawing people from surrounding villages too.
Big Breakfasts	Big Breakfast events (May 24 & Jan 25) continue to be very popular raising funds for the Hall. A big thank you for our chef extraordinaire Kim Newton for master minding the events and to Claire Cave from Ford Farm who provides the delicious sausages and helps Kim on the day.
Ceilidh with the Oggle Band	People are really enjoying our Ceilidh events hosted by the fabulous Oggle Band (Jul 24 & Jan 25). The licensed bar along with Max & Mike's Street Food add to the evenings' enjoyment.
Autumn Fayre & Craft Show	Autumn Fayre was again a great success with a good amount of delicious and

EVENT	DESCRIPTION
	creative competition entries. The stalls generating a nice buzzy atmosphere for the day. The Tea Room was busy all day and the Raffle and Tombola proved popular too. The scarecrow competition proved to be a real hit again. We also received an offer of a £100 donation from the Tiverton Agricultural Association for keeping the tradition of local produce shows alive.
Coffee Morning & Children's Science Party	This was Kate Swanzy's idea, and she kindly helped us to organise this – thank you, Kate. The Children had a great time whilst their parents could enjoy coffee and cake
Quiz Night	Quiz night always draws a good turnout resulting in lots of competitiveness and laughter. This time it was hosted again by Kevin and Soo from the village.
Christmas Bingo	We had a excellent turnout and raised a good amount of funds. Again, in good community spirit 10 volunteers put together their versions of our traditional Bingo Boxes. Our special prize meat boxes were packed with delicious local meat thanks to the Caves (Ford Farm) and Swanzys (Great Wadham)! A great evening of Christmas Cheer.
Spring Bingo	In April we held our second Spring Bingo event with prices themed around Easter. It was reasonably well attended and not so busy and hectic as the ever-popular Christmas one.
VE80 Day Celebration	David Barrett suggested that we organise a celebration for the war ending in Europe 80 years ago. The Parish Council kindly gave us a grant for this event. As we have gained more experience over the past couple of years, this event was admittedly our best so far. Over 60 people came to enjoy war time savoury and sweet delights, watch Winston Churchill's famous speech, listen to music of the era, raise a glass and listen to Reg Howe's memories from that time. The Hall was full of chatter and laughter. People clearly enjoyed the afternoon, and the team received many compliments.
Together with the Parish Church Committee	
Harvest Festival supper and auction	The team was delighted to assist the Parish Church team again providing help with setting up, catering and clearing up afterwards.
Christmas Afternoon Tea & Fair	We helped raise funds for the Parish Church and had a very successful day offering lovely cakes & refreshments.

We continue to use the Knowstone Facebook (FB) page for advertising and sharing posts across similar local FB pages. Gill has also created a network of contacts across neighboring parishes to share ideas and ensure we do not run events concurrently. Last September she organised and hosted a **Communities Together Event** at our Hall to share ideas and knowledge. The evening was very successful and was attended by trustees from Molland, Oakford, Anstey, Brushford and Rackenford.

Other uses of the Hall

The Hall is also used for regular events organised by various parishioners. These include:

- Pilates, Yoga and Keep Fit classes
- Book club
- Craft and Chat
- Gardening Club
- Pickle Ball

Parishioners have also used the Hall for other events such as meetings, a Halloween party and a Children's party. Sadly, over the winter months we had four wakes for much loved parishioners held at the Hall.

Kitchen Project

After the Batsworthy fund reopened and our grant applications for the kitchen project were approved, we are finally making progress. A big thank you to Kim and Martin for submitting the applications and leading the project. The old storage space is now empty and works to transform it into a new kitchen have started. Kim secured the kitchen units and appliances at a competitive price, so these were purchased in December and stored in the Committee room. The external doors have been replaced, and the floor is prepared for plumbing and flooring installation. In addition to Martin, both Paul and AJ have been putting a lot of hours to get this – a big thank you! They continue working alongside contractors who will do the building, electrical and kitchen installation work. We hope to complete the works early autumn 2025.

Other Improvements

We have also been successful in securing grants from the Batsworthy Fund for the following improvements:

- Metal shed replacing the smaller old wooden one. This was essential as part of the kitchen project allowing a safe space to store the contents of the old store room.
- New lightweight staging to replace the old wooden staging. This is modular and can be stored in the new shed leaving the main hall space free.
- New sound system replacing the old one which required considerable effort to set up and, space for storage. The new one has eight speakers installed around the Hall with a control unit in one corner. We are donating the old system to our Parish Church.

The library corner in the Committee Room is moving to the Parish Church. This way the books are always accessible to parishioners and not dependent on the Hall being open.

The Committee strives to raise funds towards the Hall's maintenance and running costs whilst providing a variety of activities to appeal to as wide an age range as possible, to ensure support for the hall as a community asset from across the Parish.

Here's to a successful year ahead full of fun and beneficial activities. We are always looking forward to welcoming new team members and anyone who wants to come and get involved in any of our events and activities.

Tiina Paju-Pomfret

Chairperson