

# COUNTESS WEAR VILLAGE HALL

JANUARY 2020

NEWSLETTER



## A message from the Chairman...

It's been a rollercoaster few months for the new team managing your Village Hall. Several resignations last year resulted in major changes to the Trustees, Committee and Officers. Nevertheless, we've tried to ensure 'business as usual' continues with a full programme of courses running, community events happening and private bookings being taken. This newsletter will give you a brief insight into these changes, followed by an overview of 'what's been going on' and 'what's happening in 2020'. Our final news is a report about the new building project, alongside some information for new residents about the Hall's history and governance.

## Changes to The Committee

Alan Suter and Iris Nicholson stepped down from the Committee last year and we thank them for their many years of service. They both continue to give their support at events and we're delighted that Alan continues his work as a Trustee. In July 2019, the Committee received the resignation of Gill Tippins and Jon Kirkham as both Trustees and Committee Members for the Village Hall. As a community, we owe sincere thanks to Gill and Jon for their massive contribution to the success of the Village Hall over many years. It was 20 years ago, when Gill and Gordon Bess saved the Hall from possible closure through organising courses and events. In recent years, both Gill and Jon have given much time and expertise to keeping the old and new buildings functioning. Gill also worked tirelessly as Treasurer as well as managing the bookings. Most significantly, working with the Chairman, Tim Davies, Gill played a significant role in raising funds to build our new modern Hall; we all agree this is a great Community asset and we say 'thank you'.

These Committee changes led to a series of contingency plans to ensure the programme of events went ahead for the autumn months. The new Committee represent different groups in the neighbourhood and are keen to secure the legacy of previous Committees and ensure the Hall serves all sections of the Community. They plan to work collaboratively with residents, other community groups and businesses in Countess Wear in order to offer a wide range of activities for all residents.

After a busy three months thanks are also offered to Sarah Brimblecombe and Jess Startin who, at short notice, took on officer roles, thus ensuring no break in operations. In December Jess also took on the part-time administrator role to help manage the increasing enquiries about courses, events and private bookings.

**Village Hall AGM**  
**Friday 6<sup>th</sup> of March 7pm**

## **CALLING ALL RESIDENTS**

We'd love to see you at the annual general meeting in March so please pop the date in your diaries!

Did you know, volunteers play a huge part in everything we do at the Village Hall? Without the support of the community, we couldn't do what we do. If you'd like to get more involved, please talk to our administrator about how you can volunteer at various events or join the committee, any and all help is appreciated!

## **CURRENT COMMITTEE VACANCIES:**

Six committee members, a Deputy Chairman and two Trustees.

Come and join a lively team with great ideas for the future about how to maximise the use of our community venue. If you have any questions or would like to express your interest in joining, please email us at: [countesswearvillagehall@gmail.com](mailto:countesswearvillagehall@gmail.com)

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# What's Been Happening?

The village hall has been hosting some exciting and varied events over the last few months. The new committee are focused on appealing to and serving the whole

community and these events are all run by volunteers. Please get in touch if you would like to join our friendly team or if you have any ideas about more things you would like to see at the Village Hall!

## Industrial Heritage Exhibition & Talk

Last September the village hall committee worked with Topsham Museum to put on an exhibition about the Industrial Heritage of Countess Wear. Exhibition boards were borrowed from the museum and more were created by local residents with a keen interest in our local history. Tickets quickly sold out for a talk by local archaeologist Andrew Passmore. A big thank you to Andrew for giving up his time for this event. There are plans underway to follow on the success of this event with other local history events.



## Macmillan Coffee Morning

As luck would have it, the Industrial Heritage Exhibition weekend coincided with the annual Macmillan Coffee morning. People were able to wander around the exhibition boards, chat to our resident archaeologist and then sit down for a coffee and a cake. We made a fantastic £200 for Macmillan! Thank you to Tesco for contributing flowers for the raffle and to all our cake makers for your delicious contributions. We will be holding more coffee mornings this year; bakers please get in touch through the village hall email if you can provide cakes. (You don't need to be a Nigella or Nadia...!)



## Craft and Gift Fair

In October we put on our first ever Craft and Gift Fair and it was a huge success. Local designers, makers, artists and potters - many from the village hall catchment area – booked tables to sell their wares. Once again there was a coffee bar area provided by the committee and both buyers and sellers had a great day. It was brilliant to receive such positive feedback about both the event and the hall as a venue. We're looking forward to the next one!



## Kids Workshops

These were ones for the children! In the Summer, children were able to come and try their hands at lots of new skills in the Circus Skills Workshop, children (and their grown-ups!) had great fun. And in the Autumn, over thirty children rolled up their sleeves and got stuck in to making Autumn tree paintings and wreaths to take home at the Creation Station Workshop. For both events, the kitchen was open once again, offering hot drinks and treats with the kids enjoying free fruit and squash and the great news is Creation Station will be back again soon!



## Bring & Share Community Lunch

December saw our first ever community lunch at the hall. This was a free event, everyone brought along contributions of food and drink. We had to restrict the number to 50 local residents but many more would have liked to attend. The eldest attending were in their nineties and the youngest just a few weeks old. There were people there who are completely new to the area and people who have lived here for over 50 years. People were talking to neighbours they had never spoken to before. This event couldn't have gone ahead without the help of local residents Karen Mander, Alison and Sam Green and just about everyone else who attended and got stuck in to the washing up and clearing away. A big thank you to the St. Luke's Church Rooms who lent us plates and bowls and to Parkside Garage who donated a lovely hamper for the raffle.



## New Website

The village hall has a fabulous new website ([www.countesswearvillagehall.co.uk](http://www.countesswearvillagehall.co.uk)) and Facebook page where you can keep up to date with everything going on and you can even book onto events online now through TicketSource. A huge thank you to Matt Startin for volunteering to create the new website and for doing such a good job.



A huge thanks to the Tally Ho! Inn for helping us manage all of the offline bookings for these events, it's really appreciated!

## Hiring the Hall

Why not hire this super venue for your event! Please feel free to get in touch so we can chat about your requirements.

Main Hall - £15 per hour

Meeting Room - £12.50 per hour

Use of Kitchen - £5 per rental

# What's On This Spring

We're pleased that the regular classes are returning to the hall for 2020. They run throughout the week and include Ducklings, Yoga, Painting, Gentle Exercise, Pilates, Aikido,

Line Dancing and Twirly Tots. The volunteer committee are also hard at work organising some exciting and interesting events to offer to the community throughout the year, with more being added to the calendar regularly. To keep up to date about classes or events, please check the website or let us know if you'd like to be added to our email mailing list.



## February 9<sup>th</sup> – The Tales of Robin Hood

**A fun, family show brought to life by The Angel Heart Theatre.**

Join England's greatest outlaw as he and his merry friends take on the dastardly Sheriff of Nottingham! Be swept along in the adventure as dynamic puppetry and colourful acting bring these much-loved tales to life. With comedy, derring-do and even interactive archery, The Tales of Robin Hood is a quiver full of fun for both young and old alike.

Fully booked – we look forward to seeing you there!



## March 6<sup>th</sup> – AGM & Illustrated Talk with Ludwell Life

**Annual General Meeting followed by an interesting talk with Q&A.**

Come along to our annual general meeting to hear about the latest Village Hall news and updates as well as about the upcoming plans for 2020. Laurie and Lynn from Ludwell Life will also be joining us to give an illustrated talk titled "Ludwell Life; the Story of the Valley Park". Plus, there will be free refreshments and a chance to have a chat and catch up with the neighbours so please do come along.



## April 4<sup>th</sup> – Kids Creation Station Workshop

**Suitable for all ages, Spring and Easter themed crafts with free fruit & squash for kids.**

The lovely Kat from Creation Station is returning to the hall this Spring to offer two more brilliant makes for children to get stuck into and enjoy with their grown-ups. There will be hot drinks and treats for sale during the workshop as well as free fruit and squash for kids.

£4 per ticket, will be available soon; online from TicketSource or from the Tally Ho!



## April 17<sup>th</sup> – Robert Davy, an Extraordinary Man in Countess Wear

**An illustrated talk by Ed Williams-Hawkes, a local historian.**

During our Industrial Exhibition, we celebrated the history of lime burning in our neighbourhood and mentioned how influential the Davy family were in the area. Ed has researched the life of Robert Davy and will bring to life key aspects of this extraordinary man's life and his impact in Countess Wear, Topsham and across the world. Ticket price to include refreshments.

£5 per ticket, will be available soon; online from TicketSource or from the Tally Ho!



## May 2<sup>nd</sup> – Craft & Gift Fair

**This Spring sees the return of the fair, there'll be lots of stalls, hot drinks & cakes and free entry.**

There'll be a variety of fantastic locally crafted items and gifts at the fair, from organic soaps, ceramics and needlecraft to plants! We're so pleased that so many of the stall holders from the Autumn fair are able to return and we're looking forward to welcoming the new stall holders as well. There should hopefully be something of interest for everyone, so please feel free to pop in for a look around and a cuppa!



## June 6<sup>th</sup> – Guided Industrial Heritage Walk

**Led by Andrew Passmore and following on from the Industrial Heritage event last Autumn.**

Enjoy a leisurely walk with Andrew as he leads us around some of the key industrial sites in Countess Wear. His guided walk follows on from our Industrial Heritage Exhibition and will help us understand more fully the rich history in our neighbourhood.

This event is free, booking is recommended. Available soon online from TicketSource or from the Tally Ho!

We've got lots more great events in the pipe line for the community, if you aren't able to keep up to date with news on the website then please let us know so we can arrange a paper copy update for you!

# Serving the Community For 98 Years!

The first Village Hall, a former army dormitory was erected in 1922 when land in School Lane was leased to the village of Countess Wear by Lady Granger, of Northbrook Park. Its purpose was a Village Hall for the well-being of the villagers and a memorial to those who took part in WW1. In 1965, Lady Granger's family gifted the land to the village, to be held in Trust by 4 Trustees via Deed of Gift and Declaration of Trust. The Village Hall has served the community for 98 years, looked after by residents through the Trustees and a Management Committee who have ensured its continuation for successive generations. As we approach the Hall's Centenary celebrations in 2022, what a wonderful legacy for Lady Granger and all those people who worked so hard to fund and manage the building of the new Hall.

In 2000 the old Village Hall, creaking and leaking, did not meet modern standards and regulations. At this time, the Trustees and Committee recognised that if it was to continue serving the Community a new building was needed; a dream they pursued for 16 years! The 'new' building was opened in November 2016, with the lift and upper floor fittings completed in April 2017. Full details of Stages 1 and 2 of the building project are published on the website.

In 2015, a new Constitution for the Village Hall, as an unincorporated association, was adopted and later amended in 2019. These changes embodied the provisions of the Trust, and reflected 21<sup>st</sup> century practice and Charity Commission guidance. It also established that the ownership, control and management of the Village Hall, land and assets lie with the Trustees and Committee and the Community. Residents of Countess Wear area, aged 18 years plus, are members of the Village Hall and eligible to be trustees, committee members and vote at the AGM.

The Village Hall we all enjoy is a community venue fit for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Built as a light and airy building it; meets all of the latest regulations and standards, maximises best value and functionality and is designed to last at least a hundred years. Every inch of the site was used effectively to provide a traditional Village Hall that includes a big hall, meeting room, kitchen and office/storeroom with some disability and baby changing facilities. It's also well equipped, making it suitable for various events, with tables, flexible staging, exercise mats and 2 TVs. Finally, the building has a very high energy rating due to its insulation, green electric heating from solar panels and an air source heat pump. Plans are also underway to reduce the carbon footprint and costs of running even further.

## A FINAL BIG 'THANK YOU' TO THOSE WHO FUNDED THE NEW BUILDING:

The new Village Hall continues to serve the community because of the dedication and help of many people and organisations. Although their endeavours were celebrated with personal thanks in our opening leaflet (published 2016, now available on the website) we also need to thank our County and City Councillors, Andrew Leadbetter, Jill Owen, Andy Hannan, Kate Hannan, Percy Prowse and Olwyn Foggin, Howdens (Sowton) fire doors and Mike Shapland for their valued support and generous grants.

The final cost of the new building was £323,866. Funded by; Devon CC £100,000; Exeter CC £75,000; 2 Big Lottery grants £18,595; Resident & Business donations (materials, equipment and furniture) £6,477; Local fundraising (Events, the Buy a Brick scheme over 15 years) and County & City Councillor Grants £123,794.

## Trustees, Management Committee and Officers 2019-20

**Trustees:** Alan Suter, Tim Davies

**Officers: Chairman** – Tim Davies, **Deputy Chairman** – current vacancy,

**Treasurer** – Sarah Brimblecombe, **Secretary** – Helen Laws

**Committee Members:** Anne Pagliero (retiring in March), Carole Raymond, Helen Laws (co-opted in November), Jess Startin, Jo Dew-Jones, Sarah Brimblecombe, Tim Davies.