

BUCKLESHAM VILLAGE HALL

HELD IN TRUST BY BUCKLESHAM PARISH COUNCIL



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BUCKLESHAM VILLAGE HALL ANNUAL REPORT 2025–26

In this, our 50th year, there have been many significant changes.

The Committee agreed to change the name of the Hall and revert to the original name of Bucklesham Village Hall, rather than the name adopted in the 1970s which added Foxhall Village. The decision was taken as there were no longer any representatives from Foxhall Village on the Committee, and Foxhall Parish Council did not recognise the Hall, and would not support it financially. As all the original Trust Deeds and Charity Commission documents were in the name of 'Bucklesham Village Hall', the process was very easy. The Committee purchased a brand new sign for the front of the Hall which received a lot of positive feedback.

We welcomed a new regular group in July – Silver Swans Ballet now hires the Hall every Tuesday morning. This has proved to be a popular group and the organiser added Zumba classes to the morning schedule later in the year.

The new refundable Cleaning Charge of £50 has been working very well and it was only necessary to retain the charge twice in the whole year – despite having over 100 private bookings. On both occasions the hirer had not abided by the Hire Agreement and had not left the Hall clean and tidy; in both cases the Hall had been left in a very poor state indeed.

In January we had solar panels fitted to the Hall roof. The process was not as seamless as we'd have wished, but we got there in the end and all is working well. The panels were paid for in their entirety by grants: £10,000 from East Suffolk; £3,000 from Cllrs Lee Reeves and Mike Ninnmey; and the final £2,000 from the Village Halls Jubilee Fund administered by Suffolk Acre. This meant the Committee did not have to cover any of the costs at all. It is hoped that the revenue generated will help the Committee to keep the costs of Hall hire down in the coming years.

The Parish Council agreed that they would apply for a large grant from Valenica LCF on behalf of the Committee, to revamp the kitchen and knock through to the Committee Room. The Committee should hear in May if we have been successful. It was a mammoth application and a great team effort.

I am thrilled to report that Community Action Suffolk have willingly accepted the Committee's invitation to host the Annual Village Halls and Community Buildings conference. This is due to take place on Wednesday 10th June 2026. The honour of hosting these conferences is usually reserved for much larger venues, but the delegation from CAS had been so impressed with the enthusiasm of the Committee and the wonderful facilities at the Hall that they picked Bucklesham as their first choice over all the other possible locations.

The 50th Anniversary of the Hall celebrations has been advertised in the Bugle and a lot of interest has been shown. The 100 Club, being organised to fund the celebrations, is already proving to be a big success and only 27 numbers remaining unsold, despite the draw not being until November.

We will be hosting the following celebratory events later this year -

1. 1970s Night with 70s rock band on Friday 31st July 2026

Thin Wild Mercury, will provide a rock band with two 45 minute sets played, starting from 7.30pm to 8:15, with a 30 minute break, and then again from 8:45 to 9:30. All music played will be from the 1970s, with a gimmick ticket price of £1.50 (as it would have been in 1976). It will be a bring your own drinks and nibbles event.

2. Children's party on the afternoon of Friday 21st August 2026

All village children and grandchildren of primary school age are invited to a traditional 1970s party – traditional games to be played and retro food to be served – 2pm to 4pm.

3. Hall Open Day on Saturday 26th September 2026

All Hall user groups are invited to have a table at the Open Day (10am to 3pm) promoting their activities, complementary teas and coffees to be served, the whole village invited to show-off the Hall and advertise the space.

4. Beetle Drive Friday 23rd October 2026

The final fun event of the year, a retro Beetle Drive, evening entertainment for all the family.

After considerable careful deliberation, a very momentous decision was taken with regards to the future of the Hall. For several months discussions have been had between the Village Hall Committee and the Parish Council as to whether the Council would consider becoming Sole Trustee of the Hall. Extensive legal and professional advice was sought and received from Community Action Suffolk. A public meeting was held in the Village Hall in February and all residents of the village were invited to attend. The overwhelming majority were in favour of this change, and the Parish Council accepted the request. As of 8th April 2026, the Parish Council are Sole Trustee of the Hall, with the Village Hall Committee continuing to manage the Hall on a day to day basis. A Resolution to the original Trust Deed was proposed by Evelyn Bloomfield. This was very significant as Evelyn's father gave the village the land for the Hall.

I would like to express my gratitude to a very hardworking Committee who have worked together extremely well again this year. Huge thanks also go to Terry and Lynda, our Hall caretakers, who have kept the Hall in excellent condition and gone above and beyond on numerous occasions. My biggest 'thank you' is to Ruth who has done an amazing job as secretary, chief money-getter, and punch bag to some, but still comes through smiling. It's safe to say without her the Village Hall would be in a very precarious position so thank you for all your hard work and long may it continue.

I very much look forward to working with you all as your chair in the year ahead.

David Riddleston, Chair of Bucklesham Village Hall Committee.