

# **Bishop Monkton Village Hall & QEII Field Chairman's Report 17<sup>th</sup> January 2024**

## **This is my 12th Chairman's Report**

As always try to keep my reports upbeat and positive and whilst I mention the lows I tend to concentrate on the highs and expand upon on those and this report is no different. However, we do have to address some serious issues.

In my report last year, I noted that we were concerned about the future of BEMEG, unfortunately our worries did materialise, and the group folded in July of last year. Martin, Katheryn and Frank tried as hard as they could to generate interest from villagers, however there just wasn't the enthusiasm there.

In the end it was agreed by Martin Bethel and myself that all of the assets held by BEMEG, which consisted of £5,115.54 cash in the bank and all of the props, lighting equipment and costumes would transfer to the Village Hall for safekeeping. However, it was also agreed that if ever a group of people wanted to put on a production, then these assets and money would be made available. The exact wording of the agreed resolution is:-

"The Bishop Monkton Entertainments Group having transferred its funds and ownership of its property to the Village Hall, it is resolved that in future if a village organisation is seeking to put on entertainment at the Village Hall, at the discretion of the officers of the Village Hall, have access to those funds and that property."

I would like to thank Martin, Katheryn and Frank for all their endeavours in trying to keep the interest alive.

## **Moving on to our clubs**

### **Cricket**

Our cricket club also found 2023 to be a difficult season, with some of the juniors leaving for a variety of reasons. Following this, it was decided to only field one team. Even after this drastic decision some games had to be conceded and ultimately, we were relegated to Division 6

However, they have arranged to loan 7 players from Harrogate CC for the 2024 season to bolster the numbers and keep the club going, but more members are urgently required.

This lack of players is not just a Bishop Monkton problem as it is quite well widespread throughout the Harrogate League with many clubs finding themselves short of players.

The remainder of the juniors have been playing U15 and U18 cricket as well as for the 1<sup>st</sup> team. Thanks must go to Phil Alcock who coaches the 5 to 8year-olds and Alex Higham for the U9 coaching, and between them they coach around 40 youngsters, so there's lots of future talent coming through.

Once again, thanks must go to Alan Wigby for his work on the wicket, which has been fantastic and regularly commented upon. however, Alan would now like to take a long-earned rest from his wicket duties, and we are now looking for someone to take over from him. Alan is more than happy to train this person or persons up and anyone interested is asked to speak to Rick or myself.

### **Bowls**

With 53 active members and in their 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary year our bowling club had a year to remember, we were runners-up in Bateson Dalesman Harrogate Ladies League and also the York Private Clubs Division One.

In the Eldson Metcalfe pairs competitions we had the winning team and also the runners up. Our ladies were also runners-up in the Janet Harrow County competition.

In the Men's Senior Pairs we lost in the semi-final but our ladies were crowned champions in the Yorkshire Ladies Senior Fours competition, which entitled them to represent Yorkshire in the National Ladies Senior Fours competition at Royal Leamington Spa. which I'm assured is the equivalent of playing football at Wembley!

They won their first game but were eventually knocked-out by a strong team from Bedfordshire.

And next year Pauline Beecroft will be elected as Yorkshire Bowling Association Ladies President! And I think we should congratulate her for that very impressive accolade and for putting Bishop Monkton firmly on the bowling map!

And a note for everyone's diary, over the weekend of 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> July the Ladies County Finals will be held at Bishop Monkton.

### **Tennis**

This has been a very good year for the BM tennis club, which is fast becoming the BM tennis and pickleball club!

The introduction of pickleball sessions, with coaching, has been extremely popular and membership has increased significantly as a result.

They still have tennis club nights but also run two or three pickleball sessions each week. These have continued into the winter and have proved to very popular with villagers.

I would like to congratulate Jon and his team for the work they have done in turning the Tennis Club round and it just shows what a bit of creative thinking does.

### **Table Tennis**

The Table Tennis club continues playing every day apart from Saturday, with the 90 odd playing members clocking-up some 800 hall hours each year.

However, the club is an aging club and has member's well into their 70's and also 80's, and ideally a few younger members would be most welcome. And anyone wanting to play in this friendly club should contact myself or Martin Minett.

### **WI**

It's also been a good year for the Bishop Monkton WI with more members joining and events and visits taking place each month, and I understand that the visit to Planetarium in Grewlthorpe organised in conjunction with Chris Higgins was most interesting, so well done to Katie and her team for rejuvenating the WI

### **Croquet**

The club welcomed Jill Barraclough as their new chair, taking over from Jack Upsall who we thank for running the club so well to this point.

The club are looking for new members and play from about April through to October each year and pride themselves on being a friendly and inclusive club. Coaching is available for new players and for those who want to improve their skills.

They have club afternoons and, for those who wish, can compete in friendly competitions in the northeast. They are also members of the Yorkshire Federation and in 2023 three of our members were very successful at national level.

I'm sure Jill will do a fantastic job and as always, she will have the full backing and support of the Village Hall management team

**Web site:** Yet again, on behalf of all villagers near and far I would like to thank Richard and Pat Field, Martin Minett, Roger Parrish and Colin Philpott (amongst others!) who update the web site and keep our village current with what's going on.

Last year I mentioned that we had "amassed a staggering 981,934" hits, and I am delighted to announce that they have now passed the million mark with the count now standing at 1,098,620, which I'm sure you'll agree is some achievement!

**Finance:** Income and expenditure is broadly in line with expectations, we have seen big increases to gas and electric partially due to more hall hire but also increases to supply costs, however our overall hall expenditure is down 5.65% to £21,886.

This is offset against an increase in income (net of BEMEG funds) to £25,207 which is an increase of just over 16% on the previous year.

The result is an increase to our reserves of £3,300 and takes our total reserves to £64,152 (net of BEMEG funds)

Given the positive results above I would suggest we keep the affiliated costs the same as last year.

#### **Hall:**

After many years on the committee, we saw Mervyn Beecroft relinquish his role as treasurer having been replaced by the more than capable Victoria Sargesson, Victoria brings fresh thinking and new ideas to the team, and I can honestly say that's it's been a pleasure working alongside her these past few months.

In my very first year as chairman and in my Chairman's Report of that year back in 2012 I said "What comes across very firmly is the one-for-all, all-for one mentality" between the clubs, and I still believe this to be the case, by helping each other out we have grown stronger together, a prime example of this was Bowls and Croquet with regard to irrigation.

When I took over from Richard Houseman as Chair, I said that we had passed the "building stage" and were now entering the maintenance phase for our facility, well I got that very much wrong as we have continued to grow and evolve.

Over the past 12 years we have added new clubs such as table Tennis, we gained countrywide recognition with our 'QE field award in 2013' built new buildings, managed a pandemic, held numerous weddings, birthday parties, Jubilee and coronation celebrations, and dare I say wakes! And all the time we have added to our reserves, back in 2012 our cash reserves stood at £28,514 they now stand at over £60,000. The list is endless as to what we have done and achieved together.

However, it's not been all plain sailing, we have seen some lows, the demise of Bishop Monkton Football Club, our Gardening Club and most recently BEMEG, however as we have seen with football and Nidd Utd and to a certain degree with tennis and the Worldwide popularity of pickleball, something will always come around to take its place.

The last 12 years has been a very exciting period for the village, and personally Lesley and I have found it to be very rewarding, however, after much deliberation we have decided to formally stand down. We have been in our respective roles for more than 12 years, far longer than we ever envisaged.

Over the years we have seen the Village Hall evolve into the fantastic facility it is today, it is without doubt a remarkable success story and one that we would like to think we have contributed towards.

We are prepared to stand at the Co-opt meeting and run a last year, however this will most certainly be our swansong and if anyone wants to discuss or take over our respective roles please contact me directly. We are more than happy to give advice and help wherever possible.

### **Thanks**

I would like to record our appreciation as always to Alan Wigby who continues to ensure that our cricketers, footballers and croquet players enjoy playing on a surface second to none, to Mick Jackson, Bob Upton and John Binns for the many hours they spend up there tinkering round the Hall and also on the outfield in so doing making our grounds a most beautiful and picturesque facility, to Lesley Shervington our booking coordinator and secretary for production of our meeting minutes and letter writing.

And to Victoria Sargesson who having taken over Mervyn's calculator is now running our accounts.

### **Finally**

I would like to read again the dedication that I read out last year concerning Mervyn Beecroft, as follows:-

I think it would be remiss of me if I did not formally acknowledge and thank Mervyn for his dedication and sheer determination in getting these fantastic facilities to a point where they are now worth £2.4M and are enjoyed by many, many people in our village.

It was 19 years ago when a 'youngish' Mervyn walked the Chief Planning Officer for Harrogate around the village looking for a site to build a new hall, not only was there a location problem but also financial issues which needed addressing.

Mervyn leading a small team of villagers took it upon themselves to find the location, the money and coerce as many people as possible to volunteer and together they started on the road to build what we have today.

The WI ladies agreed to sell their hall which raised approx. £120k, the Mechanics was sold for £115k and the annual hog roast started, all this money was generated by the people of Bishop Monkton and channelled into the building of our VH which was led by Mervyn Beecroft.

What started out as a farmer's field 19 years ago has grown into a huge hub of village sport and entertainment and who would of dreamed that one day it would be worth £2.4M

Mervyn once said to me that 'building this facility has been one of the most rewarding things in his life' and I agree, it is something to be rightly proud of.

So on behalf of this committee and the many people who use these facilities I would formally like to thank Mervyn for firstly his vision for dreaming up such a hairbrained idea and secondly for all his determination, hard work and endeavours over the past 19 years building a facility that all our village can be proud of.

We really do have the best Village Hall and QEII Field in Yorkshire

Gerald Shervington  
Chairman  
Bishop Monkton Village Hall & QEII Playing Field  
17<sup>th</sup> January 2024