Avonwick and North Huish Community Hall Project
Report to Annual Parish Meeting 2017

The last 12 months have been a challenging time for the Project and whilst some progress has been made the challenges of lack of volunteers for Committee and for the Apple Pie Fair have led to committee members taking a well earned rest from November till April.

During the year the conclusions of the Feasibility Study were drawn together.

In addition to the Community Survey previously reported to the Parish Council, the remainder of the work related to a Capital Funding Plan (a Sustainable Revenue Plan awaits in the next stage of Grant Funding application requirements, see below) and to site suitability for development.

It appears that the site for a community hall offered by the developers of Higher Moor to secure their permission was not tested by South Hams District Council for suitability before being accepted. In particular no advice was sought at that time from the Highway Authority who, it now transpires, require a larger site to accommodate their parking requirements.

Discussions with the Landowner are ongoing but another site, and a whole new feasibility study, may be required if these cannot be concluded successfully.

If no site is available the project will be unable to proceed and will leave the parish without this community facility which so many had hoped for.

Assuming the site issue can be resolved the Committee will then face the next stage of Grant Funding requirements, a major task of investigating whether there is a sustainable future for a Community Hall in the Parish. The tests for this next stage are rigorous, as they should be, and a large volume of evidence will be required. No advancement to the next stage of application for funding can take place until this is satisfied. Clearly, if there is insufficient evidence of a sustainable income to support the Hall there would be no point in proceeding as any Hall would quickly become a ‘white elephant’, which no one would want to happen.

On a more positive note, last September saw another successful Apple Pie Fair attracting more than 300 people and raising more than £1400 for the work of the project.

With monies raised from previous years a new marquee was purchased for the event which proved very successful and gave a larger amount of undercover space for the event. The marquee will now be available for future community events without further cost.

However, plans are on hold for another Apple Pie Fair this year as the project’s future is uncertain until community hall site issues are resolved. Assuming the project proceeds then a date of 24th September has been set for the event.

Whilst this is a tremendous community event run for 3 years now, unfortunately, last year the whole event was carried by a committee of just 6 people and on the day there were only 10 manning the stalls and running the whole event. This is a huge burden on so few and is unsustainable. It will require more help this year if it is to be possible to run the event again.

We welcome the endorsement from the Parish Council for the work so far achieved by the Project and we look forward to further progress in the year ahead.

P. Tyler

Chairperson