

Cuddington Annual Village Meeting 2022

Bernard Hall Update

This is my first update having succeeded Markus Bolton as Chairman at the beginning of this year. Markus retired as Chairman after 23 years due to his move away from the village. Under his Chairmanship the Bernard Hall has been much improved which has included Disabled access and a new kitchen and toilets. There has also been upgrading and renovation within the hall including new windows, heating and redecoration. He was also responsible for instigating the Village Picture House which has been a great success.

As in 2020 the Bernard Hall was adversely affected by the Pandemic. It continued to be closed for the 1st four months of 2021 and only started to reopen in May 2021. During the remainder of 2021 it operated under the COVID guidelines. The rules were eased during the latter part of 2021 and early 2022 but we continue to be careful at Hall events by restricting the audience to 50 for Village Picture House productions and the wearing of masks at these productions.

The VPH originally reopened cautiously in June 2021 with a fortnightly programme across June and July. Across the Autumn a cautious return was made to regular weekly screenings. Ticket sales were restricted to around 40 which was felt to be the right thing to do with wider spacing of the rows adding tables on each row to improve the distances between groups and improving the ventilation. In January 2022 the Omicron variant was still quite prevalent so we cancelled the first two film screenings in January but decided to open up again with the first National Theatre Live production for almost two years on January 27th. Ticket sales were limited to 40 and we were delighted to achieve a full house on that basis.

With the Government's relaxation of Covid rules in February the limit on tickets was increased to 50, but we maintained the policy of wider row spacing and tables. There has been a steady increase in numbers for recent screenings. Highlights were the screening of the latest James Bond film "No Time To Die" and two National Theatre productions. There is a very strong upcoming schedule including on 21st April the National Theatre Live's new production of Henry V.

Chris Long and John Cooper are in conversation with Voneous about the free installation of fast fibre broadband in the Hall, and they have also expressed an interest in sponsoring our marketing and print costs in return for their logo on our redesigned flyers. Final agreement is still awaited but it looks promising. If it happens this will greatly benefit the facilities in the Hall for many events, but also in the not too distant future the screening of our films will switch to delivery by streaming & downloads rather than the purchase of Blu-ray DVDs.

Once again in 2021 the Management Committee has done a great job of running the Hall in these difficult circumstances. Chris Luckett, Brian Woodford, Caroline Winnicott, Jessica Ecott, Charlotte Cooper, Brian Woodford and Zoe Gibson have all made full contributions and I am very grateful for their support. I would also like to thank John Cooper and Chris Long and their band of helpers for running the Picture House so well. Also a big thank you to Jayen and Sugi from the Village Stores who continue to sell our tickets, and supply refreshments each week. This is proving very popular, particularly now we make use of the tables.

Unfortunately I will be unable to attend the Village Meeting but if you have any questions / suggestions you can email me on robmojo65@hotmail.com or message me on 07767 436892.

Rob Morris-Jones

4th April 2022