**SHRAWLEY VILLAGE HALL – REPORT FOR PARISH MEETING 18TH MAY 2021**

Since the village hall has been closed, due to the Pandemic, for the vast majority of the past 12 months I want to take this opportunity to pay tribute to my fellow trustees for their hard work, loyalty and support during several testing years.

During that time, we have had to find a way to hold our major fund-raising event, the Shrawley Bluebell Walks, when due to insufficient car parking space we have been unable to run them from the village hall. With the support of many village residents keen to support a village initiative we have done that very successfully having been able to fund various improvements to our hall while also supporting the church and other charities. Sadly, for Covid reasons, the walks have not been able to run this past two years but we are optimistic that 2022 will see their return.

The fund-raising mentioned above was vital when we lost the use of the septic tank on neighbouring land that had served the village hall well for many years even when it was a school prior to conversion to the village hall, a period of some 50 to 60 years in all. £25,000 was needed and with the assistance of many willing volunteers and a lottery grant that large amount was raised to enable a new tank to be installed on the village hall’s own property.

Fundraising was also vital to raise part of the funds required to install, recently, a new and modern fire alarm system throughout the village hall and nursery, the rest coming from a further lottery grant.

At the start of the lockdowns in March 2020 the village hall trustees were pleased to join with Shrawley Parish Council to offer support for Shrawley residents who had problems getting their shopping. A wide range of goods were stored at the village hall and dispensed as required to Shrawley residents.

Recently, the trustees were surprised that a second children’s nursery was being proposed in the village and even more so that our Parish Council was supporting the initiative in principle when it would have been, so obviously, detrimental to the Shrawley community as a whole, threatening the future well-being of Little Squirrels nursery and therefore also the village hall which depends to a large extent on the income from that nursery.

While it is not to everyone’s liking our car park is there for the good of the village. As trustees we allow, what is in effect, a small amount of car parking rather than allow those cars to park inconsiderately, and sometime dangerously, along the B4196 from the first access to Rectory Lane along to the New Inn Bank. Also to be considered is the unrestricted access to the defibrillator sited in the entrance porch to the hall where the loss of seconds to gain access could be the difference between life and death!

This past 12 months the trustees have been very pleased to encourage a service to the village of two different fast-food vans which have parked close to the village hall on land owned by it.

Looking ahead, the village hall and its trustees are well positioned to cope with further challenges although it would be nice to have a problem and hassle free period of calm and normality.