

## EARLSWOOD VILLAGE HALL

This year has been like no other year – not just for the Village Hall but for us all personally. Little did we think that our income from room hire for January-March would be our last until well into 2021. Thankfully, the Local Restrictions Support Grant (LRSB) from Stratford District Council Business Grants Section, has helped to keep us afloat. Our utility bills throughout the year have remained pretty much the same as freezers, fridges, low level heating, flushing of toilets etc have all had to be maintained and remained operational. All of this is expensive in a building the age of our Village Hall.

However, on a more positive note, the Committee and friends have taken advantage of the closure by carrying out much routine maintenance and improvements to the building and grounds. Our kitchen refurbishment was completed at the end of March so that we now have a fully functioning industrial style kitchen.

Our smart new signs, based on a design from local artist Peter Bayley, have been erected at the front of the Hall and the village flagpole is being installed in April 2021.

The Village Hall has tried to support the local community by moving the book swap outside each day and setting up another in the telephone box on Malthouse Lane. Feedback and use have been very positive so that we now have over one thousand books in stock!!! The telephone box book swap will continue and the Village Hall box will move back into the entrance lobby.

May saw the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of V.E. Day and, whilst we could not open the Hall to the public, it was well decorated and raised spirits and formed a backdrop to many outside, socially distanced gatherings along Shutt Lane. Christmas Eve again saw carols, songs and drinks outside at the front of the Hall with many locals dropping by to share season's greetings, all socially distanced.

We look forward to slowly reopening from April 2021 and are delighted that all but one of our regular groups will be returning plus a couple of new groups.

Once more, thanks to the continued support of the committee and friends as well as the local community. We approach re-opening in a better position than we were at the beginning of lockdown 1 with EVH continuing to be at the centre of the community.

Rob Parlett (Chairperson).

