

## **ANNUAL TOWN MEETING : Thursday 12 May 2011**

### **REPORT FROM GRANGE HALL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE John Gwillam – Chairman**

Overall, this last year has been an average one for the Grange Hall, in spite of it continuing to be very well used, with bookings already into 2013.

We have continued to run a wide variety of concerts, although the quantity has been reduced, primarily due to poor attendances, which are still disappointing. A lot of money, time and effort go into putting on these live entertainment events and we are a little disillusioned on how to improve attendances – good quality professional entertainment, on the door step, at a reasonable price – what could be better? In general, attendance at all events has been poor. For example, the Coventry Savoy Opera Company's performances over the last few years have generated an audience of over 100 on both nights; unfortunately, their concert in April this year was down by half - maybe it was the change of style or the change of date. However, next year will see a return to the original format with a full performance of a Gilbert & Sullivan Operetta, so we shall wait to see what happens. The Katch 22's Pantomime continues to be well attended with over 500 children enjoying their Christmas outing, as well as a well-attended public matinee (in spite of the weather). The other successful new event was John Kirkpatrick of Victorian Farm fame, whose performance was particularly well received, so we are hoping that his Christmas concert this year, "Carolling and Crumpets", will also go down well. After many requests for a "Tribute Band", we will be trying a Beatles Tribute later this year.

The hall finances continue to give us some concern as a building of this age is high maintenance. Current income at present just covers our day-to-day running costs, leaving no surplus for investment in the hall on decoration, replacement furniture, etc. Although generally bookings have been up this year, bar takings have been down, probably reflecting the current economic climate, although we do have several potentially large bookings coming up. Although the Management Committee decided, two years ago, to try to apply for charitable status (as this will have a number of financial advantages, none the least opening some doors to various grants), progress has been very slow; although Southam Town Council have been supportive, after initial support, Stratford-on-Avon District Council are now less enthusiastic.

We are grateful to Southam Town Council and Stratford-on-Avon District Council for their continued capital investment in the hall. We were lucky enough to obtain a grant from "20:20 Vision" which enabled us to purchase an automatic electric shutter for the bar to replace the heavy wrought iron grilles, and we are very grateful for this assistance. We were disappointed to be turned down in our application for a grant to have the floor re-varnished, so this will become a priority in the coming year, together with re-decoration of the Hall, and we are hoping that funds may become available in the next year to achieve this.

Finally, I should like to thank Mrs Louise Neil (our Caretaker), Mrs Carole Gwillam (our Administrator) and the Management Committee members for their continued support. New Members are always welcome, so please feel free to have an informal chat if you think you may be interested!