

Annual General Meeting Aberthin Village Hall Committee

Chairs Report presented by Bethan Bruce

17th March 2026

Welcome everyone.

On behalf of all the Aberthin Village Hall Committee I would like to thank you all for attending this evening's AGM. We all, I'm sure, recognise how lucky we are to live in such a friendly village, with not just a vibrant community hall but 2 pubs as well!

Before I update you on the events that we have had this year and give you a flavour of what is to come, I wish to thank all the committee members for their tireless efforts, enthusiasm and good humour. The committee meets every first Tuesday of the month; guided by our most proficient secretary Laurie Golden, we ensure that our governance responsibilities are discharged and plan our next events. The meetings usually last less than 1 hour. As a group, we share out tasks and responsibilities in an attempt not to overburden any one individual and would welcome new members to further share the load. That said, if being on the committee is not for you, but you'd be happy to help out on the odd occasion, we can always do with an extra pair of hands. Please let us know.

We have had 6 Village Hall events this year, which feels like a good number for a such a small village. I'm hoping that you'll agree that there has been something for everyone.

We started the year off with our annual Duck Race. With our 500 or so ducks sold, this is an important fundraiser for us and one for which we couldn't let a little thing like the stream having no water in it put us off. So, after postponing the original race, the ingenuity of the committee members alongside a helping hand from the likes of Peter Bruce, Chris Watts, "Fred" (Haydn Jenkins) for mowing the common and Colin Brimble for lending us his bowser, we fashioned up a plastic luge and the show went on. Our "engineers" have made notes and should, or most likely when, we have another dry stream, we will be able to use this alternative racing course without delays. This year's duck race is April 12th ... please buy your ducks soon.

We chose not to hold a Village Day this year and will instead alternate it with an Autumn Harvest Tea moving forward. It takes a lot of behind the scenes work to make a success of Village Day and we don't always secure enough sales ahead of the day itself, which makes the planning challenging as you will appreciate. That said, our 2026 Village Day is planned for June 28th. This year, we are going to try something a little different by holding it late afternoon. Our current thinking is that we will have a BBQ and dig out the stocks... a nod to days gone by. We hope that this will make it easier for people to commit knowing that it isn't for the whole day.

Our Autumn Harvest Tea was a great success, with prizes for best pickles, jams and children's painting of the village hotly contested. Thanks to Jenny Hughes for leading on this.

November was a busy month. On the 5th, we held our Bonfire Night, which as one of the few remaining local bonfire events seems to be growing in popularity. Nikki James' mulled wine was once again a sellout and Peter Bruce's vats of hot chocolate and hot dogs kept the crowds happy. We will need volunteers to help us on the sales this year as we try to make the service quicker.

I'd like to take a moment here to formally thank Laurie Golden for his service to the village as Fireworks Starter. Laurie has been doing this important role for over 30 years.

Laurie is stepping down this year and we are extremely grateful to Leighton Dobbs and Dan Williams, who have kindly agreed to take over this role. I truly believe that they have saved our proverbial Bonfire Day.

In mid November, we held our inaugural Wine Tasting event courtesy of Peter Bruce. Ticket sales were rapid and we sold out in just a few days. 50 wine enthusiasts tasted 11 wines from all over France in an evening which resulted in a few sore heads in the morning. The evening was ably supported by Ian Howells and Dan Patterson who demonstrated their superb waiter skills without barely spilling a drop. The next wine tasting event is being planned as we speak@ will it be Italian or Spanish wines? Will have to wait and see...

In December we had our Christmas Carol Concert, which once again was compassionately led by Rachel Jones with Jenny supporting. We changed the event to an evening one, recognising that many children have sports on a Sunday morning which we thought may have been preventing our younger villagers attending in previous years. Although there was not a huge number of children, overall the carol concert was better attended and all agreed that the atmosphere at dusk, with candles lit, got us into the christmas spirit. This year we had the pleasure of being serenaded by Chris George and Huw Lloyd, members of Cowbridge Male Voice Choir and Martha Curtis. Thankyou all.

It's at this point, that I'd like to thank Scott Alford and Nick Mitten for leading on the purchase of the audio-vision kit. Thanks also to Serkan from CMC Electrics for donating his time and expertise in helping us to install the system.

As a village hall, it's important that we remain attractive to potential new bookings and we decided that we needed this kit as an extra string to our bow. Scott has put a lot of time in developing "fool proof" instructions on it's use which has already paid dividends by augmenting both the wine tasting event with maps of the French wine regions and the Christmas concert with photos of Aberthin.

This leads me nicely on to news of our most recent event: "Memories of Aberthin" by Mike Baker. Mike treated about 40 of us to an evening of photos of years gone by; pantos, duck races and so on. Each set of photos was accompanied by music chosen by Mike. Although I was unable to attend myself, everyone has said how successful the evening was and very much enjoyed by all. Thankyou Mike.

In addition to our events and installation of the projector kit, this past year has been busy in many other ways for which I would like to thank those involved.

We were fortunate to receive a sizeable donation from The Allotment and Recreation Ground Charity, Ystradawen. Kevin will provide further information in his finance update.

We would like to thank Ian Howells who painted the outside of the hall for us. It was a very generous offer.

Those of you who have been on our website lately will notice that it has been updated thanks to Nick Mitten and his much admired IT skills.

Our continued thanks go to Vanessa for tending the raised garden bed by the main entrance and Camilla Hopkins for printing the village newsletters.

The eagle eyed amongst you will note that we have dementia friendly signs for key locations within the hall. As a committee we are moving towards becoming part of Dementia Friendly Cowbridge. Doing so includes a commitment that we will ensure that at least some of our events are suitable for our friends with dementia. If yourself, or a guest of yours has dementia, or any other need that requires support in order to attend a village hall event, we would be honoured to accommodate you as best we can.

Finally, on behalf of the Village Hall committee and Trust members, our condolences to the families of Brian Corkery and Colin Hopkin, two of our holding trustees who have sadly passed away. We would like to extend our thanks to Nick Schoner and Huw Lloyd for taking up position of Trustee members for the Aberthin Village Hall Charity.