

## **Braunston and Brooke Village Hall**

### **2025 Annual Report – Buildings and garden**

#### **Summary**

During 2024 we focused mainly on repairs and maintenance, with help from all committee members to ensure that the hall is kept clean, tidy, and presentable. The weekly inspection schedule by committee members was again successful in catching any minor issues.

We are still waiting on our regular trades to undertake the internal insulation of the external walls, but we have now replaced the failed soffits around the toilet block, and dug in a new armoured cable to replace the electricity supply to the gate lights.

The gardens were maintained very well, with Lee Cooper cutting the lawns and Janet keeping the shrubs under control and ensuring an abundance of fruit and vegetable supply from the plot at the back of the hall. The churchyard hedge was pruned right back at the end of the year.

A major project was undertaken to investigate and repair potential leaks in the septic tank outlet; we will continue to monitor effluent discharge.

#### **Repairs and Maintenance**

##### **Flat**

New switch fitted to immersion heater.  
Dormer ceiling repaired.  
Doorstops fitted.  
Full paint job completed.  
Thorough clean, including carpets, before new tenant occupied in March.

##### **Hall**

The area over the main doors has been filled.  
New flush valves were fitted to ladies toilets by Chris Cogan.  
The fascia boards around toilet block replaced by Toby.  
The Oil Boiler service was completed, and a new expansion vessel and isolation valves were fitted.  
The boiler flue cap was removed after its mounting bracket failed. We will need to replace it, but it will need scaffold.  
Shelving in the main storeroom was modified to accept the new round tables.  
The hand drier and its ELCB were replaced in the disabled toilet.  
A blown fuse for the outside lights replaced and the toilet lights were added to the remote switching App.

##### **Brick Store**

External woodwork repainted.

Interior walls filled, primed and painted to allow the room to be used for additional secure storage. Shelving racks have been fitted to store the consumables for village hall events.

## **ECO Project - Insulation, PV panels, Heat Pump, MVHR**

A full survey was completed by an MCS registered technician  
This demonstrated a large potential benefit available from fitting insulation.  
Both doors at South end of main hall have now been blocked up and insulated.

The heat demand after insulation could be met by a heat pump. We will source a contractor to do the insulation of the external walls before considering a switch from oil to heat pump.

The estimate to install a full heat pump system with new radiators and hot water tank is around £28k for the hall, excluding the flat. A government grant of £7.5k is available; however, the cost benefit does not look worthwhile as long as oil is relatively inexpensive and electricity is very expensive. We will continue to investigate potential grants to move us to a greener status.

## **Garden**

Large tree root dug out from under garden seat (Chapter Farm's felled beech tree). Slabs re-laid.

Rear fence repaired.

Broken paving slab outside main entrance repaired.

Hedge reduction completed and sprouting nicely - new privet plants planted to fill in gaps.

New armoured cable dug in from hall to gate by Lee Cooper and Jim, and terminated by LOL

## **Septic Tank**

Concerns were raised early in the New Year that some contamination of the Gwash may be caused by leakage from the village hall septic tank, via the Cedar Street culvert. The system has been upgraded over the years:

1. When the hall was built all sewage effluent passed directly into the Cedar Street drainage culvert, together with that from many of the properties along Cedar Street.
2. In the 1960s a septic tank was installed in the village hall grounds, with treated effluent passing into the culvert. Cedar Street properties were similarly upgraded.
3. In the 1990s a soakaway was installed to take the effluent from the septic tank and the tank was disconnected from the culvert.

Dye tests showed that a small leak at the invert of the septic tank exit pipe had been allowing small volumes of fluid to escape into the culvert. The septic tank was emptied, and any potential leakage was corrected by renewing or repairing all entries and exit pies to the septic tank. The original septic tank connection to the culvert was also uncovered and securely plugged.

To reduce the amount of surface water entering the soakaway, we plan to divert existing roof drains away from the septic tank; four water butts have been procured, with one fitted so far. More work is planned to fit the other butts and direct some roof water into the disused well to the rear of the hall.

Testing at the culvert outfall will continue until we are satisfied there are no further problems. If the repairs do not remedy the issues, we have investigated installation of an additional modern aerator plant, placed downstream of the existing septic tank. The existing tank would then act as an accumulator, allowing higher throughputs during larger village events. The new plant would discharge directly into the culvert with the option of a diverter valve back into the soakaway if there were any issues; the cost would be around £10,000.

Jim Atack  
17mar25