

The
SMARDEN
Charter Hall

For many residents, Smarden Charter Hall is an essential part of village life, whether it be to keep fit, work out at pilates, play bowls, enjoy 'Toddlers', or simply park the car to walk the dog or take the children to the village school. Many local groups, clubs and societies meet here, and the Hall is regularly used by Smarden Primary School for whole school events such as Prize Giving and parent-teacher evenings. The Parish Clerk has her office in the Dadson Room, and monthly Parish Council meetings are held here. The History Society stores its documents and artefacts in enormous fireproof cupboards in the corridor, and the Heritage Centre works from the Dadson and Hamden Rooms.

The Charter Hall brings the community together on a regular basis for weddings and parties, and on less joyous occasions to mourn the passing of those we have held dear, and to celebrate their life.

Sadly however, we are not exempt from the financial pressures brought on by a reduction in income during and since the pandemic, despite generous government support. Recovery has been slow, and bookings reduced. Everyday maintenance of the building, grounds and car park, administrative costs, and much needed improvements in several areas have taken their toll on financial reserves. This year's exorbitant utility bills have brought us to a point where we have no option but to make you aware of the challenge we are facing, and to ask for your support.

We have put measures in place to reduce costs where possible, and we aim to promote the Hall and increase new activities by raising our profile on social media and with a campaign of advertising by any means possible. We will be actively fund-raising in the months to come and will welcome your support.

The Charter Hall only exists thanks to a huge fund-raising effort by the local community which enabled it to be built in 2007. We need to ensure its continued existence for future Smarden generations. Please therefore support us if you can, however you can.

We have produced a short paper, "Can You Help.", with some ideas for ways residents and friends might respond to the challenge we are facing.

Best wishes

Geraldine Dyer (Chair)

On behalf of the Trustees