

## Combe Reading Room – Chairman's Report 2022

2022 was the year in which we began to emerge from the restrictions of the Covid pandemic. These, although lessened, still impacted on our activities, particularly in the first half of the year. Many of our fundraising efforts had to be outside and thus at the mercy of the weather. We were fortunate that on quite a few occasions the weather gods looked down kindly upon us.

Our income was £8444, which, unsurprisingly, was nicely up on 2021, but still well down on 2020. Our main sources of funds remain coffee mornings, cream teas, the 100 Club and hire of the premises. All these income streams were an improvement on the previous year, with cream teas and coffee mornings increasing by £900 and premises hire by nearly £1700, continuing a very welcome trend. On line banking and electronic payments continued to play a greater part in facilitating our fundraising.

Our expenditure was, as to be expected up on the recent past. As you will be aware energy costs have risen significantly with little relief for charities and businesses. Another significant increase, experienced we know by other village organisations, has been insurance costs, up by over 50%. Not all of our expenditure was ongoing, we did manage to replace all the lighting in the barn, install an outside light to illuminate the path, mothball the very bright security light and purchase a sturdy gazebo to enhance outside fundraising events.

The outcome of all this is that we generated a surplus of some £1800. When added to previous reserves we now hold a positive balance of a little over £22,000. This we are trying to build up knowing as we do that the roof will require attention in the not too distant future. It is hard to be definitive but the cost is likely to be in excess of £100K.

The Reading Room relies largely on the efforts and professionalism of its trustees. That these are given so feely and competently makes the management of this special village amenity so effective, not to mention the job of the Chair so much easier. As is usually the case personnel come and go. In 2022 we saw the sad departure of Jo Mckechnie and the welcomed arrival of four new trustees: Janet Robinson-Wood, Leanne McKean, Jacqueline Morrison and Gini Beavis. This brings us up to our full complement of 12, something we have not enjoyed for a number of years. We thank them all most warmly for all that they do and have done to ensure that the Reading Room remains a significant village asset. There is, of course one person without whom we would most certainly flounder and that is our hard working and much loved caretaker Sue Golder. Thank you Sue.

Finally the Reading Room only functions because of the support it receives from our wonderful community. This can come in a variety of ways, for example by attending fund raising events or hiring the facilities – in whichever way this may be thank you.

*10<sup>th</sup> May 2023*