

Rathmell Reading Room

## **Annual General Meeting**

Tuesday 26 October 2021

### **Chairman's Report for the year 2020 -2021**

The Covid-19 pandemic resulted in the closure of the Reading Room and the cancellation of all planned activities and lettings. In normal years, such a complete closure would have resulted in zero income as well as a loss of community activities that in the past have brought villagers together. While community cohesion and fun were lost, we were fortunate in receiving grants, as the Treasurer's Report will show, that enabled us to maintain the fabric of the building and pay the bills.

We were able to fund the replacement of the west-facing window frames in the upstairs billiard room that had rotted, and the easing of the windows in the main hall enabling them to be opened. Deep cleaning of the Reading Room meant that we were able to open for the elections in May. Similarly, deep cleaning and the easing of government restrictions meant that the first face-to-face meeting for over a year of the Reading Room committee was held in August.

It was at the August meeting that many members indicated their intention to stand down from the committee. (See item 7 on the agenda) A variety of reasons were given: illness, moving away from Rathmell, and a general feeling that, after years of service, it was time to retire. All those standing down indicated their strong support for a new committee and their willingness to help with any future activities. Our thanks are due to them all for the sterling work they have done.

There was considerable concern amongst trustees and remaining committee members that we did not have a viable committee and new members were urgently needed if the Reading Room was to function as a village hub for community activities. A questionnaire was circulated in order to gauge village reaction to the possible closure of the Reading Room and a meeting held with the trustees of the Old School in order to explore ways in which there could be co-operation between the two village hubs. On 31 August an Open Meeting was held in the Reading Room, attended by over 30 villagers. Ideas were buzzing and a huge amount of support for a continuation of Reading Room based activities was clear. A core committee emerged (see item 7 on the agenda) and many people gave their names as willing to be called upon to help with activities.

We can now look forward to the future with confidence and in the expectation of many, and sometimes very different, activities that will re-create the pre-pandemic community spirit.

Rosemary Rees  
Chair, Rathmell Reading Room Management Committee