

Rustic Volunteers Chairmans Report March 2021

As has been said so many times over the last months, these are unprecedented times and although this is a report, I will begin by expressing a hope that all volunteers have kept safe and well during this difficult period.

The first lockdown began only a week after the last AGM and it was not until early July that volunteers were invited on site, initially to prepare the museum for opening and then, after the opening on July 15th, to carry out the normal volunteer activities. Sadly it was not possible to meet in the numbers that normally attended pre lockdown or to hold tea break in the Village Hall, as social distancing had to be observed. In order to limit numbers each day on site and make the living museum look 'lived in' our director wanted a presence of a few volunteers each day rather than on just two days of the week and some volunteers were able to change their day of attendance.

In the period between lockdowns and despite the Covid related restrictions, project work and events did happen.

The builders completed the new toilets and concrete path (do I hear cheers?) in the week before reopening and the toilets have received many positive compliments from visitors and volunteers.

The builders also completed the bus shelter and the 'woodies' got the new and very popular picnic area ready to be used but the front roof section will later be tiled to match Madges waggon shed. The ironmongers shop was also completed, ready for fitting out.

All of the above have been supported by money earned by volunteer fund raising efforts which have continued. One car boot sale was held and a very successful fund raising tea party (outside, socially distanced and blessed with sunshine) was held on the Village Green. In addition the carpentry shop volunteers have been making various wooden items and several others have made masks and other craft items. All of these items went on sale in the shop.

The children's activity days were renamed Family days and proved very popular and well attended within the Covid restrictions and a Rural Craft day replaced Rustic Sunday. These were followed by an outdoor cinema and vintage market and nearer Christmas a craft market and a two day vintage Christmas market, in weather which was a disappointment after the good summer we had enjoyed for earlier events.

A particularly popular event, and deserving of special praise to the volunteers involved in its preparation, was Halloween. Parents were very complimentary about the very well decorated and scary museum and so pleased that the event was being held when so much else in the area had been cancelled. Our large site is a real asset when spacing between people is required.

At the time of writing we have no director and the latest update from the Trustees mentions restructuring and different ways of working. We shall have to wait and see what that means, how it affects the Volunteers and how our skills, knowledge and goodwill are employed as we move forward.

Meanwhile, thank you to all volunteer efforts in whatever form.

We'll meet again. We know where, but don't know when. Let us hope it is soon.

Keith Mortimer

Chairman, Rustic Volunteers