

This review looks at the hall's 99th year since being built; 2026 will be the hall centenary. Firstly, I would like to record my personal thanks to all the trustees, the secretary and the management committee.

Our current key focus is to replace the current hall with a new hall suitable for the next one hundred years. Discussions have been ongoing with the local authority, who would support any redevelopment of the hall, and we have also been taking informal advice as to how we could achieve the most cost-effective project. Current thinking is that we will replace the existing hall with a similar style building with a slightly larger footprint (making the internal space approximately 50% larger) and as environmentally friendly as budget allows. Putting in the ownership framework is the first step on the path to the new hall.

It's been a very busy year, the busiest this century. Apart from the ever-popular Pop-Up-Pub, which is run by the Church, we kicked off the summer with the Repair Café, our first sellout event. That was followed in the Autumn by the sellout, in fact over-subscribed, Race Across the World with Caroline and Tom. The Winter brought our first Christmas Cracker and as someone remarked, shame the hall isn't a bit bigger for more stalls. Finally we inaugurated the first Hargrave Christmas tree with its lights. Carols ably led by Roger kicked off the festive season.

The other major development of note was the gaining of an alcohol licence.

Our work on regularising the position of the current trustees (in terms of the validity of their appointment) was completed when the Charity Commission issued an Order dated 4th June 2025 confirming their appointment.

Following that, we have been making progress with applying to register the land on which the hall sits and the land around it. The land is currently unregistered and we need to register it as part of our plan to convert to a CIO (see below). We have agreed the extent of the land that should belong to the Village Hall Charitable Trust with the neighbouring owner of the field, and we have had a proper boundary plan drawn up. We hope to file the application shortly. We have been fortunate in securing the services of Mezzle Law to assist with the registration application. These services are being provided on a *pro bono* (i.e. free) basis, and were kindly offered via the 'Suffolk Pro Help' arm of Community Action Suffolk. Suffolk Pro Help is a countywide network of businesses which provide professional and strategic support free of charge to voluntary organisations.

We have also taken preliminary steps towards converting the structure of the Charitable Trust to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO). This is a relatively new structure introduced about 10 years ago which has certain advantages from a legal point of view over a trust structure. For example, like a company, a CIO has legal personality and can enter into contracts in its own name. We understand that grant-giving bodies prefer this structure. Mezzle Law will also assist us with this, once the land registration has been completed.

Plans for 2026 include the games club, the idea coming from Jennifer Ellis; the Christmas Cracker will return with a Christmas tree and more lights. With Glastonbury having a rest year, Hargrave is planning its own festival in August with live music, dancing, a car show and open gardens. If you have a car(s) you wish to show, or are willing to open your garden, do please let us know. This will be a whole village event.

Simon de Laat
Chairman Hargrave Village Hall Charity
May 2026