



## **PDCC Chairperson's Report 2021**

### **Governance**

Our financial year began with lockdown restrictions in October, which lifted briefly and were then reinstated in January. So, from October to May the PDCC held our monthly Trustee Committee meetings via Zoom. You may remember that our last AGM was held virtually and did not take place until March 2021. I was elected Chair of the PDCC at that meeting and what a term it has been! Thankfully, from June onwards we were able to hold Trustee Committee meetings at the Centre.

This year, several of our policies have been updated and reviewed (Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy and Disciplinary Policy) and the documents are available via the PDCC website. Thanks go to Phil Dyer for his help with this. We have tried to keep our suite of policies to a minimum while at the same time complying with official guidelines and regulations.

I was finally notified in October that the Charity Commission had given us permission to allow our Centre Coordinator to stand as a Trustee, previously our constitution had forbidden an employee to also be a Trustee.

### **Personnel**

The PDCC Trustee Committee has remained fairly static this year. Sadly however, we have four Trustees who will not be seeking re-election this year.

Peter Humphries, who has been Treasurer since his election in 2019 has decided to step down and the Committee would like to give thanks for his excellent work and his enthusiasm. Peter will still be helping with the accounts behind the scenes which is much appreciated.

I am most grateful for the energy, enthusiasm and dedication of each of the Trustees. Special mention must be made of Jean Potter, a founder member of the PDCC and our longest standing committee member who has been a valued Trustee since before 1986. Thank you, Jean, it is because of you and your contemporaries that we are all sitting here now!

### **The year's highlights**

The Centre opened its doors again in May and bookings for classes and events have escalated – in September we took more than 70 bookings. Our community Centre is now a regular venue for fitness classes, carpet bowls, musicians, an art group and the friendship group. The playing field is used by a fitness bootcamp, the school, dog walkers, and latterly by the Palgrave Wanderer football teams. These activities have been facilitated by Jane Lockwood, our Centre Coordinator and by Carol Hardstone, our Bookings Secretary. Thanks go to them both for their diligence and industry.

The cinema has also been extremely popular and we have had capacity attendance since its return. Thanks go to Michael Rogers for organising and managing the cinema evenings.

This year the PDCC have hosted several very successful village events; Open Gardens in May, the Garage Sale and a “Newcomers Welcome” Barbeque in September and I would like to give special thanks to Jane McClintock and Helen Thorburn for coordinating these events and for their fabulous catering skills.

Many new residents have moved into Palgrave over the year and I’m sure we would all like to extend a warm welcome to them. We would be delighted to have additional trustees and/or volunteers for specific projects and events.

Unfortunately we were forced to cancel our annual firework event because larger than usual crowds were expected and we didn’t have enough volunteers to steward the event safely. However, much work had been undertaken before it was cancelled and I would like to thank all those involved and particularly to John Kilgannon who has overseen the lighting of the fireworks for 25 years.

The Palgrave All Stars children’s sports activity has also returned to the playing field most ably led by George Georgiou – his enthusiasm and commitment is very much appreciated.

You may remember that two years ago the Charity Commission required us to run the bar as a separate entity, the Community Club. Nevertheless it continues to provide a significant financial contribution to PDCC funds. The Community Club Bar reopened in August with regular Friday evening sessions and serving for events. Our appreciation goes to each volunteer on the bar committee and in particular, to bar manager, Lee Lockwood.

Lee must also be thanked for the many hours he spends dealing with maintenance contractors at the Centre and the Sports Hut, as well as the maintenance work he undertakes as a volunteer.

The Palgrave Star magazine is wholly funded by the PDCC. A copy is delivered to every household in the village. I give thanks to Heather Goddard and Jane McClintock for producing it and also to the members of our community who deliver it each month.

I would also take this opportunity to thank Laura Foster for her work administering the PDCC Facebook page and to Phil Dyer for managing our website.

Thanks to Pete and Eric, the Centre is now Wi-Fi enabled which allows us to take card payments, a necessary and much welcomed facility.

We celebrated 10 years of pollution-free electricity generated by the playing field wind turbine. Throughout the various lockdowns and restrictions on activities at the Centre the only reliable and consistent source of income has been from the turbine. We may not have used as much of our pollution free electricity as normal but the Feed-in Tariff from the utility company will contribute to the essential planned updating of the Centre together with unforeseen remedial work to the heating system and on the field. We produced nearly 20,000kW in the year generating gross income of around £6,600 It

also means that we will be shielded from the proposed utility cost increases which are likely to place major strains on other community centres.

The rewilding of the periphery of the playing field is at last completed and the area has been sown with wildflowers. Thanks go to all the volunteers, led by Ian McClintock and Phil Dyer, who worked so hard on this project and to Mid-Suffolk District Council which awarded the PDCC a Locality Grant to cover costs.

Sadly the Palgrave Gardening and Social Group has ceased running but they kindly voted to donate their cash reserves to be divided between three organisations in the village – Palgrave School, St Peter’s Church and Palgrave Community Centre. The donation was gratefully received and I would like to thank Pat Leigh and the other members of the group for the kind gesture.

## **Financial Review**

The effect of Covid over the previous two years has had a significant impact on the operational activities of the Centre; however the Trustees have managed funds prudently over this period. Like many small businesses and charities, the PDCC has been eligible for COVID-19 support grant funding and the Trustees have been successful in securing this money, which seemingly leaves the Centre in a strong financial position. However, this has to be tempered against the costs associated with the toilet refurbishment, the rerouting of the water supply to the Community Centre, the replacement of the heating system and refurbishment of the sports hut and maintenance of the playing field. These are all costs which will have to be covered in the coming year.

A full overview of the PDCC financial performance is available in the accounts, which have been independently examined and have been made available to the members along with the Treasurer’s Report.

## **Future Plans**

We are eager to continue to develop Palgrave Community Centre as a hub of community activity for everyone in the village. A facility which offers opportunities for the whole community to meet, stay active, learn new skills and volunteer. A thriving asset, at the very heart of our rural community.

Unusually perhaps, Palgrave Community Centre is run by a charity and we do not receive local authority or parish council funding towards our running costs. This means that we have to be self-sufficient. We have plans to enhance and improve our facilities and the PDCC has just embarked upon a complete refurbishment of the toilet facilities at the Centre – we must ensure that the building is in a good state of repair, it was built in 1986 and is now showing signs of wear and requires updating. The playing field also requires regular maintenance. All this comes at a cost and we must therefore explore the available funding options. Our efforts will safeguard the future of the Centre and ensure that it provides a high-quality, affordable and accessible community facility.

We want to know more about what people think the Centre should provide in terms of activities, events and services, so that we can shape our offer accordingly.

Clearly then, we must continue the work started in 2019, consulting and engaging with as many of Palgrave's residents as possible to find out what the local community wants from the Centre. We had planned to undertake this exercise during 2021 but it has been delayed because of the volume of work this year and will now take place in early 2022.

### **Conclusion**

We are looking forward to another active year and encourage the community to support events at the Centre. We are looking to the whole community to find people who are able to help, either as Trustees or as volunteers for specific tasks so please contact me if you would like to get involved. Finally I would like to thank every one of the Trustees for the time and commitment that they give to the Centre, to all those who volunteered at village events and to our members who provide much valued support.

Sharon Cousins-Clarke,  
Chairperson, Palgrave and District Community Centre