**LOVER COMMUNITY TRUST**

CHAIR’S REPORT 2023

2023 has been both a busy and very positive year for us. Although on one level it might seem fairly mundane, the building of the new toilets has been a very significant achievement in our being able to make full use of the building. Now, toilets can be accessed from both the Queen Elizabeth and Valentine Rooms without disturbing other users. This will allow us to market the building more effectively and to make full use of the space. Following tenders for the toilet contract we have been working closely with Jim Butt our contractor and are pleased with the outcome. We are now in discussion over the final phase to complete this stage of the building’s development. This is going to prove very difficult as, since acquiring planning permission for a new entrance and reception area, further investigation has shown that it will be very expensive and cannot be achieved easily. Members may have a view, which can be discussed at the AGM. Furthermore it is now clear that some remedial work to the building is urgently required. This includes flat roof repair and heating alterations, to add to our pressures.

The Board of Trustees continues to work on your behalf and is now starting to look at designing and implementing a community programme. It is the intention that this will eventually be a wide-ranging programme that has the widest possible appeal for the community. To begin this process the Trust has formed an Events Committee of volunteers to formulate ideas and implement plans. Our goal is to have a full programme of events throughout the year but to do so we have to have more volunteers. One idea being discussed is the opening of a regular Sat morning Darling Café. To do this we need more “ Darlings “ willing to help. Please let us know if you are interested.

This year the Valentine Post was a pleasing success. Whist the financial result will be known in due course, we do know that the important aspect of community involvement and enterprise was one of the best to date. This was our 8th campaign and discussions will soon begin not only for 2025 but also for the very important and special 10th anniversary in 2026. In the meantime the Trustees wish to express their thanks to all those involved from baking to decorating and from Darlings to Cupids and everything in between. Success in all things is a product of hard work and a willingness to be involved and we extend our thanks to all those that contribute willingly to making The Old School a true community asset. Thank you all.

Mention has to be made of the wonderful and essential work carried out by the Lover Green Committee under the leadership of Ali Clark. This village relies heavily on the Green to help retain its community spirit and Ali only has a very small team to do the necessary work. We desperately need more volunteers to help and I ask that all of you consider giving a small amount of time to help out when required.

On April 13th we are holding an Open Day to showcase all the improvements we have made to the building. We are inviting a number of important guests who have helped us get this far. We will look forward to seeing you there.

An organisation like ours can only survive and grow if it is, and does, the things the community wants. We are always looking for ideas, activity leaders and volunteers. If you would like to join us then please let us know. We definitely need you.