



Chairperson's Report

It is my pleasure as Chairperson to present the 48th Annual Report of the Cracroft Community Centre for the year ending December 2020.

2020 was the year when we all learned to live somewhat differently - covid entered our lives and, naturally, had an effect on our bookings as it did on every part of how we live. The venue was closed from late March until early June, a total closure of approximately 2 months, which inevitably affected revenue. A further change in alert level in August cost us a couple of bookings also.

2020 also marked 150 years since the Old Stone House was built – a really significant event that was the theme of our Heritage Festival Open Day and which we also marked by the offer of a discount to members for the indoor winter Jazz series.

Maintaining links with our history is very important and I thank to Lin Roberts who has graciously agreed to continue in the role of Patron, providing a vital link with our founders.

Nic Falloon joined us as our Booking Agent in mid-June and is proving a wonderful ambassador for the venue. We continue to make steady progress with our community bookings. Non-community hires, which subsidise the community bookings, are increasing: in 2020 there were 17 weddings/birthdays/jazz and tastings. Just looking ahead, so far this year we have had, or have bookings for, 20 “commercial” events, so 2021 bookings are robust.

We have been very fortunate to continue, and build on, our relationship with Katie Martin who has hired the Old Stone House for many events - not just the Jazz series, both indoor in winter and outside in summer, but also for tastings and a free Christmas carols evening in mid-December. It has been great for our profile to have her introducing the facility to many who might not already be aware of it.

We received a proposal to hold a Farmers' Market in the grounds. This seemed like an excellent idea and a lot of time was spent investigating and supporting it. Unfortunately, it proved too difficult to offer ideal conditions for the market as well as meeting restrictions on the use of the Reserve. That said, we will continue to support any activities that can assist with the use of the building and environs.

Plans are well advanced to turn what was formerly the Craft Room into an additional meeting room which will be particularly useful in the winter months. We intend for it to have both the possibility of a hard floor or carpet and to that end have had edges bound on the very large carpet offcut.

As part of increasing our appeal as a meeting venue we have installed wifi and are now considering what improved AV facilities would help in this regard. A baby change station has also recently been installed in the toilet on this floor. Otherwise, the building is functioning very well and smoothly thanks to the watchful eyes of Peter Rogers and Dean Johnstone. Minor issues are dealt with promptly and efficiently. Thanks to you both, and to all the committee members who share the task of looking after this wonderful venue: our Treasurer, Anne Burns, Secretary, Mabel Ch'ng, (and as Mabel has signalled her intention to step down as Secretary, I'd like to thank her especially for her work over many years), former chair Olwyn Rudd, a mine of information with superb community contacts, and Anne Wilson – who lives very close by and can always be relied on to help where needed. We also welcomed David Burke onto the committee in 2020 - but there's always room for new people and new ideas.

The Old Stone House is managed entirely by volunteers - where would we be without them. In the past there was also a group of volunteer gardeners and sadly last year, Merv Osborne, who was a volunteer gardener for around 25 years, and also a life member of the Cracraft Community Centre, passed away. As a memorial to him and in recognition of his long-standing association with the Old Stone House his widow Jean, gifted a garden seat in the reserve in his memory; a wonderful acknowledgement of his close association with the Old Stone House. Thanks to Jean both for the seat and the lovely ceremony that accompanied the dedication.

Ursula Ryan

15 March 2021