



SEPTEMBER UPDATE FROM THE TRUSTEES OF THE LEIGH AND BRANSFORD MEMORIAL HALL

Harry's Game

It may be hard to believe, but July 19th this year marked the third anniversary of the final lifting of covid lockdown restrictions. I know, how the time flies . . . Since then, the country and our community have gradually got used to what became known as 'the new normal' – and most of us have now learned to live with the ever-present threat of another strain of the virus 'doing the rounds'. As I write this, there appears to be yet another spike in the number of people contracting a new variant of covid so, of course, we must all continue to stay vigilant and try to keep safe.

But regardless of the ebbs and flows of covid outbreaks, the rising cost of living and (for the most part) the generally unseasonably dull and damp weather, the Hall is having a busy summer. At the end of August, we will have hosted 9 weddings – which is 8 more than at this time last year. I have already shared with you the wedding story of Tammy and Brian in a previous edition of the Sphere, and no doubt there will be other wedding celebration stories to share with you in future editions. The last time we hosted 9 weddings over the summer period was in the pre-covid days.

But it's not just the number of wedding hires that have increased, there have also been many other joyous family celebrations taking place, like Fahad and Mehvish and their wider family getting together at the Hall to celebrate the festival of Eid. And just last month (August) there were 3 further family get-togethers – such is the desire to make the most of their time together, that some of the invited guests (who had travelled from far and wide) pitched their caravans, motor homes or tents to stay overnight.

So, all the signs are that people, once again, have the confidence and financial wherewithal to make plans to celebrate significant family events. But by far and away the most popular celebration taking place since we emerged from lockdown continues to be children's birthday parties.

In past updates you've heard about Sophia's *Unicorn and Princess-themed* party, Toby's *Magic party*, and only a couple of months' ago, Henry's *Cars-themed* party. The trend is definitely to have a party theme – and, it seems, bouncy castles and fairground activity games as well if you can cram them all in!!

Well, step forward young Harry.



He recently celebrated his 12th birthday with a *Football-themed* party on the Hall field. That's him in the photograph above blowing out the candle on his chocolate birthday cake.



Harry invited most of his teammates from The Nunnery Wood Hurricanes, and friends from his school to the football-themed party. It began with a penalty shoot-out, (oh dear!) after which they organised themselves into two teams and had a match. And, as well as chocolate cake, (as you can see in the top photograph) everyone had barbecued hot dogs at the end. Now I'm not quite sure what the new England Team Manager might have to say about the dietary choices for young, budding footballers, but Harry's dad tells me they all had the best time!

It's a joy to see that the Hall still plays a central role at the heart of our community. Long may that continue.

Jon Gamble, Chair of Trustees