

13. Hindon Village Marquees

Many Villagers won't be aware that Hindon owns a pair of marquees that are used for the benefit of the village. Run as a not for profit organisation and led by a small committee, the village marquees include a number of options including a frame tent of 6m x 16m, a second option of 6m x 8m and a third of 4m x 8m. In all we try to support 10 – 15 events per season, charging minimal fees for Village events like the Flower Show, a little more for use by Villagers and offsetting both by slightly higher charges when hired outside the Parish boundary. With a little furniture and a sensible pricing structure, tents are up to two to four times cheaper than commercial options, which we hope fits with our aim of providing a service to Villagers.

During the 2023 season we supported a wide variety of events ranging from the Coronation weekend, the Charlton Fete, a number of private events in and around Hindon, the Flower Show and then a fantastic 'Hindon' wedding at Ashley Wood. The diary for 2024 is not as busy so there is still space for bookings. And of course, like many of the activities reported on in this meeting, provision of the marquees is only possible if Villagers step forward to join the team putting up and taking down the tents. It takes between 3 -10 of us to put up or take down the tents with the work usually scheduled during evenings and at weekends. We always try and reward our helpers with a free drink or two post their labours and really love this second aspect of volunteering, namely getting to know other Villagers, over a common endeavour and subsequent drink.

But here is the rub. Despite repeated requests, and with some notable exceptions, the committee are finding it increasingly difficult to attract fresh volunteers to the endeavour. In particular we need people with 4x4s able to tow the Cattle Trailer that houses the tent and whilst all 'shapes / sizes / ages' are welcome, previous appeals in the Newsletter have not generated a single volunteer! Instead we have adopted tactics that some have compared to that of a Naval 'Press Gang'. But whilst the Village benefits from the marquees, without fresh volunteers our operation just isn't tenable. We hope that 2024 will be different but later this season the committee will take a view as to our future viability. The last thing we want to do is to wind up operations, dispose of the tents and hand over the funds to Village causes, but unless people step forward to share the burden this could well be the course we have to take.

So we are most grateful for the Village's continued support, whether hiring our marquees or coming forward to volunteer. Whichever it is, do please get in touch at hindonmarquees@gmail.com