

Arkell Community Centre Charitable Trust

"The Heart of Forest Green"

Arkell Community Centre

Annual Report 2023-2024



www.arkellcommunitycentre.org.uk

Decision making and Administration

The Charity is run by Nailsworth Town Council as sole trustee and the management committee (Trust Board) is made up of all town councillors. The Secretary role is undertaken by the Town Clerk and the Treasurer role is undertaken by the Deputy Clerk. Facility bookings and day-to-day issues of the building are dealt with by Nailsworth Town Council, supporting the Arkell Community Centre Trust. The Trust contracts out cleaning and caretaking duties.

Aims of the Trust

The aim of the Trust is to maintain a community centre, to provide a central point for community support, facilities for children, young people and older people, social and leisure activities particularly for the Forest Green area. The Centre is a place where people can make new friends, volunteer, receive advice, learn new skills and get support. The Trust works with partners to meet those needs and respond to the needs of our community, and to use the centre to target support during emergencies such as covid-19 and the cost-of-living crisis.

Our partners

The Trust works with; Stroud District Council, Home Start, Nailsworth Health Partnership, Nailsworth Youth Club, Gloucestershire Rural Communities Council (GRCC), Community Roots, SDC's Neighbourhood Warden, FGR, the Police, Nailsworth Primary School, PSALMS and The Long Table. Commercial hirers and community groups form a valuable part of our community, and the Trust is open to collaborations with them to support the people of Forest Green.

Report of the year's activities

Hall users

There is a mix of community and business hirers. More community groups use the Centre than businesses, it is a popular venue for children's parties. The Community Café, overseen by the Community Development Worker, provides a twice weekly offering, one including Stroud Food Bank.

Hire charges

The Arkell has two rates of hire charges, a business rate and a community rate.

Our building

The Arkell Centre is bright, warm and well-equipped, with two halls, a kitchen, a lobby and a small paved secure outdoor area. There are service plans in place for the lift, air conditioning units, intruder and fire alarm.

Finance

The income from hirers in 23/24 was £21,888. This comes from long term hirers and occasional bookings for parties and events. It is therefore expected income will remain the same or increase slightly (approx. £2,000 more).

There is a marked difference in the income for 22/23 (£42,391) and the predicted income for 24/25 (£36,200). This is due to a payment received from Ecotricity for an error in their billing. The Trust was refunded £6,442.12. Expenditure for 23/24 was £40,816.27. Had the refund not been paid to the Trust there would have been a loss of £4,866.77

There were significant outgoings in 23/24. These were;

- Kitchen repairs and maintenance £1,167.47. Significant expense in repairing the warming cabinet; new fridge and service inspection on the catering equipment (dishwasher and fridge freezer faults). These assets are in regular use.

- A scheduled electrical inspection was carried out and found significant electrical repairs that needed to be carried out to ensure the centre was safe for continued use. These repairs along with additional property repairs came to £2,500. These electrical inspections are now every 3 years. Therefore, this additional expenditure is not expected for 24/25. A reserve has been created for Electrical Inspection costs and the funds will be spread over 2 years.
- Racking was purchased to improve the storage capacity in the roof storage area at a cost of £600.

The Upper Hall is only used three morning a week. A publicity campaign might encourage more hirers for this area. A selling point is that it has separate toilets from the Lower Hall.

The Youth Club café use the lobby for one hour on Thursday which stops the use of the Lower Hall on that day – so this is being used by Foodbank (free session).

A business hirer (Dance) wanted to hire both Upper and Lower Halls in the Arkell, which would have increased income. However, this would have clashed with the Youth Club café use of the lobby. There is an opportunity here for the Youth Club café to seek funding for hire of the Arkell Centre Lower Hall, bringing more income to the Centre.

This demonstrates the fine balance between the centre's purpose in serving the community (Youth Cafe and Foodbank) vs generating income to 'keep the lights on' (Dance Club).

Challenges

A new caretaker will need to be recruited as the current caretaker is planning to leave in the near future (date unknown).

Into the future

The Arkell Community Centre continues to show its worth as a strategically placed asset for the town.

Section 2 - Statement of accounts - English version

Arkell Community Centre

	Annual return last year	Year ending 31 March 2024 £	Variance
1. Balances brought forward	32,858.86	15,888.56	
2. (+) Annual precept	0.00	0.00	0.00%
3. (+) Total other receipts	31,620.78	42,391.62	34.06%
4. (-) Staff costs	0.00	0.00	0.00%
5. (-) Loan interest / capital repayments	0.00	0.00	0.00%
6. (-) Total other payments	48,591.08	42,082.98	-13.39%
7. (=) Balances carried forward	15,888.56	16,197.20	
8. Total cash and investments	18,456.23	19,628.81	
9. Total fixed assets and long term assets	637,227.00	637,227.00	0.00%
10. Total borrowings		0.00	

Signed _____

Chair

Clerk / Responsible Financial Officer

THE ARKELL COMMUNITY CENTRE

INTERNAL AUDITOR'S REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31.03.2024

I have examined the accounting records and vouchers for the year ended 31.03.2024 and can confirm that the records are accurate and well kept and that the annual accounts prepared from those records represent a true and accurate record of the Centre's financial activities during the year under review and the balance sheet is an accurate statement of the Centre's financial state as at the end of that year.

I have, however one or two observations which I should like to draw to the Trustees' attention. I apologise in advance if any of the assumptions on which my comments are based are incorrect.

The Arkell Community Centre is a "stand alone" unit and whilst it is supported financially by Nailsworth Town Council it is not owned by or the responsibility of the Town Council. The Town Council is however the sole Trustee. Responsibility for the day-to-day management of the Centre theoretically rests with a Management Board, but in reality that function is carried out by the Town Clerk's Office.

The Centre runs at a loss and this is funded solely by a combination of income from hirers and a slowly depleting a pot of money. What happens when that pot runs out appears to be unclear. I would recommend that each year a proper budget be prepared for the Centre and consideration be given by the Trustees as to how they will meet the Centre's costs. The Trustees might consider external funding applications for example, if they wish to make improvements.

The Trustees will benefit from drawing up a plan for the next five years to set out how they intend to manage the demands of a building with limited sources of income and increasing maintenance costs. Consideration needs to be given on how much time the Secretary and Treasurer (Town Council staff) can devote to managing the building, and whether this is sustainable long term.

Ian Crowe FFA.

Date. 31st May 2024