

Charities Report 2023

Cwtsh continued to recover from the disruption caused by Covid. As the Library function had not proved sustainable the charity changed its name from Handpost Community Library Association to Cwtsh Community and Arts Centre.

Tiny Rebel had kindly agreed to extend their sponsorship of First Fridays presentations for another year in 2023. In the first First Friday presentation Peter Finch and John Briggs talked about their book 'Walking the Valleys' on February 2nd.

In the Open Mic on April 19th at the Murenger Adele Cordner read her verse and in the open mic on May 17th Gareth Writer-Davies read from his latest book Wysg.

A membership scheme was mooted as a way of generating some extra income and involving users more with Cwtsh. The Secretary mentioned that the membership forms would need to be printed he also suggested that a checklist would be useful to monitor progress before the event.

In May an open day was held with musical and literary performances to gain more footfall and show the sort of events that Cwtsh can hold.

Jim Calvert and John Briggs met and work began in making changes to the website. Rhys Webber, who maintains the website, has also been consulted; some of the changes being only be carried out by him. It was hoped that the revised website will be up and running soon.

John Briggs reported that the launch of the new exhibition had been successful with one painting worth £150 being sold on the day and with interest being expressed in others. John also mentioned the possibility of showing a film about John Sherwood, perhaps on the afternoon (2pm-4pm) of May 21st. The proceeds would go to Cwtsh funds. John also reminded the Committee that music would be available at the launch and promised to work on timetables for the musicians involved. He also asked the artists taking place how they want to set up etc. As for future exhibitions, Rhys Webber's wife was interested in putting on an exhibition next year in January and February. In addition, there was also a disabled artist who had been in touch and might be a possible exhibitor later in the year.

The Chairman introduced Sue Beardmore who volunteers at the Cwtsh and is also Secretary of the Newport and Gwent Literary Club. The two had been in conversation recently and it became obvious that both the Literary Society and the Cwtsh faced similar problems. In the light of this the Chairman invited Sue to share her experiences with the Committee, especially given recent discussions about using Zoom and she had generously agreed to do so. It was decided in the end that using Zoom was impractical for Cwtsh in view of the smaller venue and smaller number of attendees such that the use of Zoom in any professional way would not be cost effective.

The Chairman thanked all who were involved in the Open Day in May which was very successful. The exact numbers of those who have joined as members are not yet clear. The Secretary expressed some disappointment that the take up was not more. The names of new members would be added to the contact list.

The Open Mic on June 14th featured Marcelle Newbold who brought quite a number of people with her. There was some discussion about the location of the Open Mic sessions and whether it would be

more appropriate to meet at the Cwtsh itself. But it was generally felt that the atmosphere at the Murenger was better, not least because people wanted to read their own poetry. It was important to have a mic that works since speakers often vary in volume. The next poet at the Murenger will be Robert Minhinnick on July 14th. He would like to show a short film and the Chairman will make inquiries about this.

There was a Street Fairy workshop (the exhibition will also be open at the same time) and on Wednesday 5th July there was a session on mosaics. The charge would be £60. In response to a question from David, John thought that an attendance of 6 or so would be needed to make it viable.

The next First Friday featured Alis Hawkins, a crime writer. Interest in this has been expressed by Beechwood Women's Institute, some of whose members were expected to attend. There was discussion about publicity for the event. If the information is with the Argus on the Friday before the event, it will then appear for a whole week. A picture is also a useful addition. The Open Mics could also be reported in the same way. Either Pam or the Chairman will try to do this. Pam also sends information to her U3A contacts.

Robert Minhinnick appeared on July 12th. Robert Minhinnick had wanted to use music and film but the Chairman had to explain to him that would go against the pub rules. Pam wondered if he would be willing to do a First Friday in the future.

The University of Wales Press was going to publish a book of Welsh Ghost Stories in September. There would be a launch in Cardiff with a similar event in Newport. This took the form of an extra First Friday event on September 29th. Copies of the book were for sale. Lucy Ramsey has been the contact for this. Andrew asked how much was raised at First Friday and Open Mic events but amounts varied from event to event.

On the question of hiring, Jim agreed to look up the Newport Council website which advertises places for hire and see what is required to take part. The fact that the Cwtsh is for hire has been mentioned in Grassroots. The major challenge in terms of costs would be the heating bill in winter.

The next First Friday would be on September 1st and would feature a talk about the Tiny Rebel brewery. Publicity will be needed and a reasonable audience - some 10 to 12 – would be desirable.

There had been complaints that there was insufficient information on the website about First Fridays and Jim has made some corrections to information on the website and will include more details of talks in future. The Chairman promised that he would check that all relevant information had been passed on to allow this to happen.

The trustees will have to meet to make changes to the Constitution regarding the membership scheme. There was also some discussion about what to combine with the AGM to make the evening more attractive. Musical entertainment seemed to be a possibility.

In view of the new Management at the Murenger there was discussion about holding open mics at Cwtsh. The Chairman pointed out that people who do not know Newport might find it hard to get to the Cwtsh and this would mean that someone would have to meet them. It was in the end concluded that The Murenger was the better and more established venue.

The Chairman suggested that it might be possible to run a series of films at the Cwtsh, perhaps on a Film Noir theme.

In November the Cwtsh again served as a hub for attendees for the “Art on the Hill” series of exhibitions at various places in Newport. However very few members were present, despite there being entertainment available. The weather was admittedly very bad that evening. It might be more successful if it was held in June which would be quite feasible in terms of accounts etc.

Classes taking place at Cwtsh were poetry classes, creative writing classes, French classes and watercolour painting classes.

In December there had been a First Friday presentation by Arthur Turner regarding the new nature reserve at “The Twmps” – an area behind the barracks in /Newport.

The membership had now reached 65 in December.

The Chairman had shown ‘Laura’ as the most recent film in the film noir series. There were five people present in all. It was suggested that a matinee on Monday afternoon at 4 pm might prove more popular. There was one more film- the Blue Dahlia- to be shown in the series and David suggested putting out some more posters. Pam had also sent details to the Argus for Grassroots and she offered to distribute some of the posters.

There had been concerns over the heating. The ever-present need for economy with the recent sharp rise in electricity costs had to be balanced against the need for Cwtsh to be heated comfortably. There was a continual need to adjust timings of when the heating goes on and off.

As ever with an old building there were issues with leaks in the skylights. It was difficult to see what was causing this but it may be that one of the windows in the roof was not properly shut and this was allowing the water in. Since there has been a change in our insurance arrangements, the new insurance firm wanted a roof inspection which took place on a pro bono basis.

Jim Calvert

Trustee

Cwtsh Community and Arts Centre Accounts 2023 (Charity number 1157225)

Introductory notes

These accounts cover the period from 1st January 2023 to 31st December 2023.

'Restricted' income must be spent on the specified items for which it has been donated or provided.

Unrestricted income can be spent on anything that supports Cwtsh Community and Arts Centre's objectives.

Income

Income source	Restricted	Unrestricted	Total
Murenger Open Mics		563.30	
First Fridays etc		526.40	
Tiny Rebel First Friday sponsorship		330.00	
Cwtsh room rental		2,480.00	
Gallery income		221.00	
Rotary Club raffle		130.00	
Coffee money		10.30	
Donations		75.00	
Membership		630.00	
Maindee Festival appearance (AR)		100.00	
Total		5,066.00	5.066.00

Expenditure

Rent (Newport City Council)	1625.00
Welsh Water / Dwr Cymru	102.00
Virgin (WiFi Rental)	772.80
Electricity (British Gas)	1,473.70
Insurance	677.74
Webber Design (website hosting)	168.00
Annual Premises Licence Fee	70.00
Posters and bar supplies	350.68
Contribution to Art on the Hill	200.00
Donation to Salvation Army in memory of Sara Crerar	75.00
Plaque in memory of Leighton Long	55.00
Directory advertisement for Open Day	55.00
Bank charges	94.16
Miscellaneous (keys, paper towels, business cards, window display wallet)	122.65
Total	5,841.73

Bank Reconciliation

Opening balance		3,035.60
Add income	5,066.00	8,101.60
Subtract expenditure	5,841.70	
Closing Bank Balance		2,259.87

All restricted funds have been used for the benefit of Cwtsh Community and Arts Centre.

These accounts are a true and accurate record.

David Osmond (Treasurer, Cwtsh Community and Arts Centre) June 10th 2024.