

**Blindcrake Village Hall CIO**  
**Registered Charity no 1171226**

**Trustees' Annual Report for the period 1 April 2020 – 31 March 2021**

Treasurer: Rosalind Berry  
Holm Farm, Blindcrake, Cockermouth, Cumbria CA13 0QP

## **1 Introduction**

The operation of the Village Hall during 2020-21 was dominated by the national Covid-19 restrictions and our major refurbishment work, which took place from 1 June to December 2020. The project has been substantially completed, with redecorating now being undertaken by volunteers.

On average over the previous five years, our total income including grants and donations has been just over £8,000 and our payments just under £6,800. On average we normally make a surplus of about £1,700 each year, but unusually in 2019-20 we made a small loss of just over £300, as professional fees relating to the building project became due ahead of draw down of grant funding.

In 2020-21, due to receipt of grant funding, Covid support grants and spend on the refurbishment project, we have had receipts of nearly £165,000 and total spend of just over £134,000. As at 31 March 2021, the final completion certificate was awaited; final invoices for fees and from the main contractor will be covered by the remaining grant funding. The accounts are prepared as receipts and payments accounts but we have added a note in section 16 regarding sums committed but not yet invoiced by contractors.

As our gross income exceeded £25,000 but was less than £250,000 for the year ended 31 March 2021, we are not legally required to undertake a formal audit of the annual accounts, but they must be submitted for independent examination.

## **2 Trustees**

Our CIO constitution requires at least three charity trustees (committee members), of whom up to six may be elected at an AGM; up to nine appointed following nomination by a user body; and up to three co-opted at any meeting of the charity trustees. During 2018-19 our Trustees were:

Neil Pilling	Elected	Chairman
Ros Berry	Appointed	Treasurer
Rachel Hecht (McConkey)	Elected	Bookings Secretary
Cathy Keough	Elected	Secretary
Helen Marrs	Appointed	
Graeme Forrester	Appointed	
Phil Allison	Elected	Until 03.09.2020

We were sorry that Phil Allison resigned his Trusteeship in September 2020; the Management Committee would like to thank him for his contribution to the Charity.

### **3 Meetings**

Although our constitution requires an AGM to be held annually, within 15 months of the previous AGM, we did not hold one in 2020 due to coronavirus restrictions. We therefore did not hold new elections. The 2019-20 annual accounts and annual report were agreed in the normal timescale by a simple majority of charity trustees signifying their agreement to the resolution to accept.

The Management Committee usually meets four to six times a year. Our last in-person pre-pandemic meeting was in March 2020. In accordance with section 11 of our constitution, decisions that would normally have been agreed in a face to face meeting were agreed by email correspondence. We resumed meetings in November 2020 using a remote meeting platform, and have held subsequent meetings in January and March.

### **4 Sources of advice and support**

Banking: Cumberland Building Society, Station Road Cockermouth

Surveyors: R Hayward Associates, Cockermouth

Valuers: R Smeaton, Cockermouth

Architects: Day Cummins, Cockermouth

Charity: Action with Communities in Cumbria (ACT)

### **5 Objectives of the CIO**

The objects of the CIO are to establish and run a village hall and to promote for the benefit of the inhabitants of the civil Parish of Blindcrake ("area of benefit") without distinction of sex, sexual orientation, age, disability, nationality, race or political, religious or other opinions the provision of facilities for recreation or other leisure time occupation of individuals who have need of such facilities by reason of their youth, age, infirmity or disablement, financial hardship or social and economic circumstances or for the public at large in the interests of social welfare and with the object of improving the conditions of life of the said inhabitants.

The Trustees consider these objectives to be consistent with Charity Commission guidance on providing for the public benefit, and these objectives have been pursued in the activities of the charity this year.

### **6 Structure, governance and lease**

The Hall was converted from a row of three cottages and given by the Rev Sharpe, Vicar of Isel, to the Church of England Carlisle Diocesan Trust and Finance Association (now Board of Finance) by deed of indenture dated 5 July 1897.

Blindcrake Village Hall was established as a charity by a Trust Deed and Lease on 1 December 1988. It was registered as an unincorporated charity with the Charity Commission on 20 September 1993. The Lease of 1 December 1988 expired on 30 November 2016, and a new 50 year lease was signed on 12 June 2018. Land Registration was also completed.



The charity was converted to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) with a new Governing Document and registration with the Charity Commission on 20 January 2017 and a formal merger of the two charities at our 2017 AGM. This is the fourth annual report of the CIO.

The building was professionally valued in 2016 as a community building by R J Smeaton MRICS at £10,000. The lease is a full repairing lease which means that, although only a peppercorn rent of £1.00 per annum is payable, the Management Committee is responsible for keeping the building in a good state of repair.

## **7 Principal activities**

The hall is normally in use most weeks for a variety of activities, including Pilates classes, meetings of the Parish Council, and local groups such as Isel Cricket Club, Wigton Motor Club and First Responders. It is used for coffee mornings, concerts, fundraising social events such as Burns' supper, Garden Safari, Christmas carol concert and prize draw, and the Evening Inn quiz, and private hires such as children's parties and funeral teas.

Naturally none of these events has taken place during the last financial year; due to the refurbishment we had planned to hold the Garden Safari at the end of June using a marquee for refreshments, but this was cancelled completely due to Covid-19 restrictions.

## **8 Funding strategy**

Whilst our objectives are to provide a village hall for the purpose of recreation of our inhabitants, the revenue budget needs to be managed on a self-financing basis. The hire fees and other contributions made by users of the hall, in addition to fundraising by the Management Committee, are set to achieve this.

The new lease allows the Church of England and the Binsey Team ministry to use the Hall free of charge for up to 21 days per annum. There has also been a long standing practice of not charging certain groups with a charitable purpose such as the First Responders for use of the hall.

Management costs are kept to a minimum by use of Trustees and volunteers to take bookings, ensure heating is set etc. However we do use the services of a paid cleaner, window cleaner and local tradespeople for repairs and maintenance.

The Hall incurs a number of ongoing costs such as insurance, heating, regardless of the level of income.

## **9 Policies**

The Village Hall has adopted a hiring policy. It has updated its Hiring Agreement, which is sent to the hirer by the Bookings Secretary when booking. The hiring agreement identifies the responsibilities of each party when booking the hall.

During 2019-20 we also adopted an Environmental Policy, an Equal Opportunities Statement of Intent and a Protection Policy for Children and Vulnerable Adults. We are working towards the Hallmark 1 quality award for village halls.

## **10 Licences**

The Hall has a Premises Licence for designated entertainments, including the sale of alcohol. The Hall is also licensed by the Performing Rights Society for live and recorded music. We continue to renew our lottery licence annually and December 2019 was the first time for four years we held a raffle requiring this licence. We did not hold a raffle during 2020-21 but expect to do so as part of our re-opening events in 2021.

## **11 Insurance**

The Hall is insured by Allied Westminster, underwritten by Aviva. We agreed a five year term policy in July 2020. We took out additional insurance cover for the period during which the site was handed over to our main contractors Michael Thompson Ltd, which has totalled £767 over and above our annual premium of £772.

## **12 Reserves policy**

Trustees have agreed to hold £5,000 in the bank as unrestricted reserves, this being equivalent to 100% average annual expenditure excluding cost of events. This cash is available for running costs in the event of being unable to raise income from our normal activities, and for unforeseen expenditure eg in relation to building maintenance or urgent furniture or equipment replacement.

## **13 Investments**

The M&G Charifund has yielded useful dividends including £639 in 2019-20. However we are aware that due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the value of our stocks reduced considerably, from £12,700 to £9,200 due to the impact of Covid, and the annual income was reduced to £494. The latest valuation from March 2021 has recovered somewhat at £11,272.82.

## **14 Bank accounts**

As advised by ACT, we opened a new building society deposit account for the CIO. All routine payments and receipts should now be made through the new account. We kept the old account open for the receipt of grant funding and payment of items relating to the refurbishment project. We intend to close this account when the final project bills are paid.

Account signatories at the start of the year were Ros Berry, Neil Pilling, and Helen Marrs. Graeme Forrester replaced Rachel Mossop as an account signatory.

An increasing number of payees request electronic payments, but the Cumberland Building Society only offer internet banking on business or personal accounts. It is possible to request the CBS branch to make electronic payments from our account. We



are investigating options for opening an account with a bank which would offer us the facility to make internet payments with two signatories.

## **15 Refurbishment Project**

A number of shortcomings in the current building have been identified over the past few years, and during 2017-18 we obtained planning permission for improvements to the building. We appointed architects Day Cummins to prepare detailed costed plans. As we were unable to secure enough funding to cover all the elements, we agreed to adopt a phased approach, with the first phase covering replacement of roof and roof timbers, insulation, profiled ceiling, acoustic panels, LED lighting in the main hall, and refitting the kitchen with the creation of a serving hatch.

During 2019-20 we were successful in obtaining a number of grants including £17,500 from the Village Hall Improvement Fund, £49,000 funding from the National Lottery Community Fund, £29,530 from Tallentire Windfarm fund, £32,500 from United Utilities West Cumbria pipeline legacy fund, £6,522 from Robin Rigg Windfarm fund, £1,770 from the Parish Council and £400 from the Parish Quarry charity. We are indebted to Hellen Aitken of ACT for her help and guidance in these grant application processes.

Added to our own funds, we started with a budget of £139,000, enough funding to proceed with the roof and ceiling, and to refurbish the kitchen. Our preferred contractors Michael Thompson Ltd (MTL) were expected to start on site in early May 2020, but Covid-19 restrictions meant that the start date was delayed to 1 June.

During the course of the main contract a number of issues arose, including the need to replace more roof timbers than expected, the need to completely rewire the building, and to replace the fire alarm system. The early issues were covered by the contingency provision in our budget. Dry rot was also discovered in some of the original walls; part of this was treated whilst MTL were on site, with the remainder carried out in late December and early January 2021. The hall was also treated for wet rot, and a damp proof layer applied before replastering the main hall, meeting room and part of the corridor. Costs were also incurred in taking off and replacing radiators, and remedial joinery. Our electricity usage increased considerably during the building project between June and August, and drying out of plaster in January and February 2021.

We were fortunate to obtain additional funding of £4,000 from the Tallentire Windfarm Fund to substantially contribute to the cost of the new fire alarm system. Cumbria Community Foundation also transferred some outstanding grants that we had not yet claimed from the Robin Rigg Windfarm fund, totalling £8,478. We were grateful to receive £1,000 from the Parish Charity and a further £4,900 from the National Lottery to help with the cost of rot treatment.

The number of issues and the difficulty of obtaining materials during Covid lockdowns resulted in the contract period continuing until the first week of December instead of mid September as expected.

During the third lockdown we were fortunate to receive a further tranche of Covid funding, totalling £10,637, which has greatly eased our financial situation.



## 16 Notes on the 2020-21 accounts

### a) Invoices

The majority of transactions relate to the refurbishment project and grant funding. We received no income from hall hire; one invoice was issued relating to two weeks' hire in the first half of March, which remains outstanding and will no doubt be paid once activities resume in May. We made a refund in respect of a booking by Friends of Bridekirk Dovenby School cancelled due to Covid.

We had one invoice (number 143) left unpaid from 2019, for £27 which relates to a Christmas market. However the same hirer also paid invoice 146 for £28 for a children's Halloween party, and the Committee agree that the fee for this community event should have been waived. It is therefore proposed to set the payment for the Halloween party against the hire for the Christmas market and cancel the outstanding invoice.

### b) Business Rates and Covid support

During the first lockdown we applied for a Covid business support grant and became aware that we had never been registered for non-domestic rates; this appears to be the case in a number of village halls. We duly registered for rates, and our rateable value was given as £1,375. We subsequently applied for and received a £2,000 discretionary grant.

We received a bill of £405.91 for business rates backdated over the past 4 years. As a charity we qualify for 80% mandatory tax relief, but have to apply for 20% discretionary relief. However we only received the discretionary relief for the most recent two years, and therefore have paid a net £267.31.

During March 2021 we received further Covid support grants totalling £10,637.

### c) Financial position

We prepare our accounts as receipt and payment accounts, rather than accruals. However given the impact of the refurbishment project, it is relevant to note the expected outturn once all commitments have been paid for.

As at 31 March, we have remaining committed costs of around £28,900 relating to the original building project and fees:

Main contractor including 2.5% retention	13568
Architect fees balance	8000
Remedial joinery	3348
Carpet fitting (approx.)	2300
Building control fees	688
Plumbing (est)	500
Paint and materials (est)	500

In addition to £44,478 held in our Building Society accounts at 31.03.21 we expect a further £4,220 in agreed refurbishment grants still to be claimed. This will leave an expected balance of around £19,800, against which we must keep a reserve of £5,000 for running costs and contingencies. £1,000 is restricted by the ACRE/DEFRA Village Hall Improvement Fund. This leaves us in a healthy financial position, with almost

£15,000 against which to consider other improvements such as double glazing and new furniture, and with the possibility of additional Covid Restart funding in the new financial year.

**17 Future plans**

Once the redecorating is complete, we plan to raise our profile within the local community and via social media, and increase the number of events and bookings. We have made a start on creating a webpage as part of the Blindcrake Parish web site, which will help raise our profile and assist with making documents available.

We hope to attract some new Trustees at our May AGM as a result of interest in the refurbishment project within the parish. We intend to hold a launch event once easing of lockdown restrictions allows the reopening of village halls and other recreational spaces; this is to be funded by £1,000 of the VHIF grant given for this purpose.

We will complete the work required to apply for the Hallmark award and have commenced review of our health and safety policy and procedures.

**Ros Berry, Treasurer**  
6 May 2021

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**Declaration**

**The trustees declare that they have approved the trustees' report above.**

**Signed on behalf of the charity's Trustees**

**Signature** 

**Full name** NEIL ROBERT PILLING

**Position on Management Committee** CHAIRMAN

**Date** 15.5.21

**Receipts and Payments Account Year Ending 31st March 2021**

<b>Receipts</b>	<b>2020-21</b>	<b>2019-20</b>
	£	£
Donations	82	50.00
Room Hire	0	1394.00
Interest received	513.28	652.82
Garden Safari inc float	0	1760.05
Burns Supper	0	606.50
Evening Inn	0	590.00
Special events	0	1102.00
Grant funding	151380	0.00
Sundry	12775.17	0.50
<b>Total Receipts</b>	<b>164750.45</b>	<b>6155.87</b>
<b>Payments</b>		
Gas	783.36	1469.99
Electricity	377.17	322.73
Insurance	1538.93	783.34
Repairs & maintenance	1600.00	342.00
Sundries	1121.89	242.01
Cleaning	32.50	270.84
Special events expenses	0.00	407.81
Deposits returned	30.00	80.00
Professional expenses	540.00	2556.00
Contractor payments	128090.00	
<b>Total Payments</b>	<b>134113.85</b>	<b>6474.72</b>
<b>Total Receipts less Payments</b>	<b>30636.60</b>	<b>-318.85</b>
<b>Movement of Reserves</b>		
Balance brought forward	13841.30	14160.15
Total Receipts less payments for year ending 31/03/21	30636.60	-318.85
Transfer from/to reserves	-	-
	<b>44477.90</b>	<b>13841.30</b>
<b>Statement as at year ending 31st March 2021</b>		
Balance at Cumberland Building Society / Bank	44477.90	13841.30
M&G Investment Account brought forward	9152.55	11782.63
Transfers to current Account	493.80	639.27
Closing Value of Investment 31/03/21	11272.82	9152.55
<b>Accumulated Fund</b>	<b>55750.72</b>	<b>22993.85</b>

Ms R J Berry Treasurer  
Holm Farm, Blindcrake  
Cockermouth, CA13 0QP

Signed:  
Date:

*Rosalind Berry*  
15.08.21

Examined and found correct:

Signed:

*A. J. Purvis*

Independent Examiner

Date:

7-10-21





CHARITY COMMISSION  
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Independent examiner's report on the accounts

Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees/  
members of

Blindcrake Village Hall CIO

On accounts for the year  
ended

31 March 2021

Charity no

1171226

Set out on pages

Page 8 of Trustees' Annual Report

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended **31/03/2021**.

Responsibilities and basis  
of report

As the charity's trustees, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent examiner's  
statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination (other than that disclosed below \*) which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; or
- the accounts did not accord with the accounting records; or
- the accounts did not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair' view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

*\* Please delete the words in the brackets if they do not apply.*

Signed:

*A. J. Purvis*

Date:

*7-10-21*

Name:

ALAN YOUNG PURVIS

Relevant professional  
qualification(s) or body (if  
any):

Address:

BEECH FARM, SUNDERLAND  
COCKERMOUTH  
CA13 9SS

## Section B

### Disclosure

Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight material matters of concern  
(see CC32, Independent examination of charity accounts: directions and  
guidance for examiners).

Give here brief details of  
any items that the  
examiner wishes to  
disclose.