

**Tolpuddle Village Hall
(Charity No: 257403)**

**Tolpuddle Village Hall (Charitable Incorporated Organisation)
(Charity No: 1195647)**

Annual Reports 2023-24

Introduction

This annual report covers the two charities that currently control Tolpuddle Village Hall. The Tolpuddle Village Hall (Charitable Incorporated Organisation) – now the recommended form for village halls – assumed responsibility for running the Hall in 2021. However, the land and buildings remain vested in the old charity (No 257403) until the process of transferring them to the new charity is complete.

As the charities are inter-dependent, have largely the same Trustees and virtually the same object, it makes sense to present a single annual report covering their activities and accounts for 2023-24.

Charitable Object

The object of the Tolpuddle Village Hall (CIO) is: “the provision and maintenance of a village hall for the use of the inhabitants of the Parish of Tolpuddle without distinction of *sex, sexual orientation, age, disability, nationality or race* or political, religious or other opinions, including use for meetings, lectures and classes and other forms of recreation and leisure-time occupation, with the object of improving the conditions of life for the said inhabitants”.

With the exclusion of the words in italics above, the object of the old charity (No 257403) is the same.

Trustees and Constitution

The charities are run by committees comprising virtually the same Trustees – the variation is simply because Trustees recently appointed to the CIO were not also appointed to the old charity since it will be wound up following transfer of the estate, will be wou.

Current CIO Trustees are: **Peter Walton** (elected Chairman), **Jonathan Van Baars** (elected Secretary), **Andrew Turner** (elected Treasurer), **Sue Adams** (whom we were delighted to welcome as a new Trustee at the start of the year), **Fiona Cope**, **Penny Ruddock** and **Margaret Walton**. Two others – **Nick Batchelor** and **Barbara Holtom** – were Trustees for part of the year until they stood down in Autumn 2023. I would like to thank them for their considerable help in running the hall.

The following are also Trustees of the old charity: Peter Walton (elected Chairman), Jonathan Van Baars (elected Secretary), Andrew Turner (elected Treasurer, Penny Ruddock and Margaret Walton.

The duty of the Trustees is always to act in a way that is most likely to further the purposes of the charity; and they have powers to do anything that is calculated to further its object.

New Trustees of the CIO are appointed by resolution of existing Trustees having regard to selecting people with skills, knowledge and experience needed for effective running of the charity. The Trustees recognise that such appointments will almost inevitably be from the community and regard the Annual General Meeting, in particular, as an opportunity for the community to make known its views on membership as well as other Hall issues.

Trustees of the old charity, while it continues to exist, are appointed annually by election at the AGM.

The CIO charity's founding document makes clear that the property and income of the Hall *must be applied solely towards the promotion of the object*. This means that the Hall is unable to give grants to other bodies or charities unless by doing so it is advancing its own object.

Over the course of 2023-24, the Trustees of both charities met on 6 occasions and the AGM for both was held on 6 June 2023.

The deeds for the Hall and its land have long been lost and the property is not listed with the Land Registry. Work has been in hand since 2021 to arrange for the land to be registered with the Land Registry and for ownership of it to be transferred to the CIO. This has been a lengthy and expensive process but our lawyers have now lodged papers with the Land Registry and we await registration and transfer in due course. At that point, we will wind up the old charity.

We have also taken the opportunity to log with the Land Registry a Caution against First Registration in relation to the car park, which we have always understood to have been set aside by its owners for use as a car park for the village hall. This would enable us to intervene in the event that any other party makes claim to the land.

Hall Activities

The Hall is a key facility in the village and is well used by the community. Several groups are regular, weekly users, including toddlers, pilates, yoga and table tennis. Since February 2024, we have had a regular Sunday booking by a charitable church group.

Until June 2023 when the Martyrs Inn re-opened after being closed for two years, the Hall was also regularly used on Friday evenings for community drinks – on a bring your own basis. In doing so, it provided a much-appreciated stop gap facility and was well attended. The Hall also provided the focus for village discussions on how to acquire and re-open the pub which is itself an amazing story. And it is the polling station for village when needed.

During the year, various community events were staged at the Hall. These included “Quiz and Chips” nights, musical evenings with live bands and the Harvest Supper in October which is always oversubscribed. Most recently, film nights have been added to the calendar of events. Many of these are now organised and run by the Tolpuddle Events Committee which works tirelessly mainly on behalf of the Hall and St Johns Church, helping us both to raise much needed income. Usually, proceeds are split equally between the two.

Every July, there is the Martyrs Festival, organised by the TUC. This is a music and political event focused on a field next to the village but the several thousand who attend each year also make use of village facilities, including the Hall, which arranges lunches and refreshments on the Sunday and puts on breakfasts Saturday to Monday at the main Festival site. It brings in several thousand pounds each year to the Hall, the Church and the pub. Sadly, for the first time ever, the Festival in 2023 had to be cancelled at the last minute because of high winds and exceptionally wet conditions. As a result, the Hall, the church and the newly re-opened pub had to forego substantial income. We all hope that the 2024 Festival will experience kinder conditions.

Finally, as mentioned, the Martyrs Inn re-opened in June 2023 having been closed for over two years. The pub is now owned by a company whose 192 shareholders mainly comprise members of the local community. This was an amazing feat, but of course it has implications for the Hall as it offers an alternative venue for entertainment. Happily, the Inn is working in harmony with other village interests to minimise competition and cooperate on ventures where we can.

Finances and Accounts

The Hall’s business plan continues to be based on:

- prioritising community use (in line with our object) and, in doing so, keeping charges for local use as low as possible, while seeking to maximise private and commercial hires, at a higher rate, when the Hall is free;
- expecting all activities at the Hall to make some financial contribution to its running costs, whether through hire charges, voluntary donations or a share of surpluses on events; and
- investing when we can to maintain the Hall as a modern, well-presented and well-equipped facility that everyone will be happy to use.

We aim to keep hire charges simple – an hourly rate with a 50% discount for local users (unless they are income-earning) and a one-off charge for full use of the well-equipped kitchen (ie including range cooker and commercial dish washer) because additional cleaning is needed.

This model is working with hire income contributing nearly 60% of annual revenue requirements. However, like everyone else, we have been hit hard by energy prices. The

Hall is entirely dependent on electricity and we have faced a trebling of our annual bill. As a result, we were forced to increase hourly hire charges in [January 2024] from £14 to £16. The Trustees believe this still offers excellent value for money given the product and of course those from the community continue to get a 50% discount.

The accounts for 2023-24 are attached. Main highlights are:

- overall, we remain in a reasonably healthy financial situation with around £10,000 in our accounts.
- a distortion this year, exceptionally taking our income over £20,000, is the transfer to the CIO of the funds of its predecessor charity which, as described elsewhere, will be wound up when the building and land is transferred to the CIO.
- income from hiring is well up on the previous year and remains a key part of our business plan. Against that, the cancellation of the Martyrs Festival in 2023 meant the loss of £2-3,000 in income.
- expenses have risen. In particular, we have had to settle a deficit on our electricity account in excess of £3,000 deficit, which had built up as a result of the meter not being read regularly by the supplier. We have also paid in excess of £4,000 to in legal charges associated with the land transfer. Both of these can be regarded as one-off items which should not affect future years.

Energy prices will continue to be a major challenge for us in the years ahead, although we are now on a new contract under which payments are made monthly based on actual use. Sadly, the Hall – a Victorian school building, sited in a conservation area, and with a high pitched roof supported internally by an impressive hammer beam structure - does not lend itself to easy insulation or the installation of solar panels. However, we plan to seek advice from an energy consultant on whether affordable improvements can be made. Any major investment would require fund-raising.

Improvements/Maintenance

2023-24 has been a year of maintenance rather than major improvements. We have had to replace an outside flood light, renovate the water butt, replace some electrical components and so on.

We are currently getting estimates for re-decorating the interior of the Hall and we have quotes for upgrading the water heaters in the toilets. We will need to see how revenues go before we can decide to proceed with these.

We invested in a further shed to enable us to store external equipment, including new gas cylinders required for events at the Hall and elsewhere in the village. We will also need to consider carrying out some work on the cherry tree in the garden which is now becoming overgrown. We are fortunate to have volunteers to maintain the garden and cut the lawn

which not only keeps it looking tidy but provides a delightful outside space that hirers can use in good weather.

Concluding Remarks

It has been quite a tough year financially for the Hall, with some major expenses and shortfalls in expected income. However, thanks to having a strong balance sheet to start with, we have been able to weather this storm. On a more positive note, Hall usage – both by the community and more widely – is as good as it has ever been and that, in many ways, is the true measure of whether we are meeting our charitable object. The Trustees feel we can look forward to the coming year with a good deal of confidence.

Peter Walton
Chairman of Trustees

Profit & Loss

Tolpuddle Village Hall

Accounting Year 2023/24

	Debit	Credit
Turnover		13,703
Hire of hall and equipment		7,879
Fundraising events - Martyrs Festival		1,509
Fundraising Events - Village Hall CIO		1,398
Fundraising events - TEC		2,400
Fundraising events - 100/150 Club tickets		510
Fundraising events - Sale of surplus stock		8
add Other Income		855
Interest Received		183
Grant Income		672
less Cost of Sales	3,104	
Cost of fundraising events - Martyrs Festival	1,347	
Cost of fundraising events - 100/150 Club prizes	570	
Hire of hall and equipment - Refunds	161	
Cost fundraising events - Village Hall CIO	711	
Cost of fundraising events - TEC	315	
Gross Profit		11,454
less Administration Expenses	21,163	
Light and heating - electricity	6,249	
Hall cleaning	1,674	
Cleaning materials	173	
Affiliations	30	
Water and sewerage	184	
ACRE Loan	2,635	
Repairs and maintenance - grounds	85	
Repairs and maintenance - equipment	125	
Repairs and maintenance - buildings	1,354	
Honorarium	200	

Computer software	371
Computer hardware	193
Hall equipment	801
Telephone, internet and postage	636
Licences and permits	346
Miscellaneous	363
Legal and professional fees	4,659
Insurance	1,086
Operating Profit	-£9,709
<i>less Drawings</i>	£0
<i>less Profit & Loss journal entries</i>	£0
Retained Profit this period:	-£9,709
Retained Profit brought forward:	£19,837
Distributable Reserves / Retained Profit carried forward:	£10,128