

Held at the Village Hall on Wednesday 26 April 2023

on Wednesday 26 April 2023

**Independent Examiner's Report (overleaf)**



**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**

Charity Name  
Alstonefield Village Hall

**On accounts for the year  
ended**

2023

**Charity no  
(if any)**

228929

**Set out on pages**

(remember to include the page numbers of additional sheets)

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended 31 03 2023.

**Responsibilities and  
basis of report**

As the charity trustees of the Trust, 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 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 (other than that disclosed below \*) in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Act or
- the accounts do not accord with the accounting records

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn 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:**

*Rebecca Anne Longdon*

**Date:** 05/01/2024

**Name:**

Rebecca Anne Longdon

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

IAgSA member

**Address:**

Hope Fields Farm, Alstonefield, Ashbourne, Derbyshire, DE6 2GE

**Financial report**

Deborah Railton (DR) presented the accounts, which have been inspected and approved (and co-signed) by Rebecca Longdon, Independent Examiner.

Comments on Income

Income has remained steady with lettings at a fairly normal level now and some grants continuing. Refunds and compensation have provided a significant source of income in the last few months. (Gross) concert revenue has again been the greatest source of income.

### Comments on Expenditure

Concert expenses were the greatest outlay, but generated overall profit of over £4,000. Given the relatively high capital balances, projects have already begun to make improvements to the kitchen (with over £3,000 already paid in advance) and the Old School Garden (the initial planning costs were grant-aided, and now paid). There are still other grant aided reserves not spent, i.e. the balance of c£1,5000 for heating oil/electricity costs and £1,000 for the generator project.

After her report, DR confirmed she is stepping down from the committee.

---

### **Chair's Report**

Martin Snodin (MS) thanked DR *for her hard work as Treasurer and as a committee member, and Rebecca Longdon for her independent examination of the accounts again. He went on to state:*

*This time last year, having none of the café income we had in the previous year, and with COVID grants coming to an end, he reported that we should be realistic in looking ahead and that we may well see a fall in our capital balances by the next year end. So it's good to hear from the Treasurer's report that we remain as financially sound at the end of the year as we were at the start.*

*At the same time, as a charity with specific constitutional objectives, the money we have must be used towards those objectives, and not accumulated for its own sake or for an undefined 'rainy day'. It's all about maintaining this place for people to be able to use, nothing else. And for this reason, we have a Reserves Policy that sets a limit of what we ought to hold. That limit is £46,000. It's only a guide for us, but we are clearly above that threshold. Hence we have a couple of projects happening now that we feel are a good way to enhance the facilities – improvements to the kitchen and the Old School Garden, which we do, of course, own.*

*The kitchen improvements and associated carpentry work could cost somewhere close to £10,000, depending on how far we wish to go. Already you can see the way this is going to look and how it should be more attractive to hirers, as well as addressing some important H&S aspects.*

*The Old School Garden is a potentially really exciting new project, which we want to see involving as many people as possible in the implementation phase. We already have a provisional plan [visual] but we intend holding a village meeting when everyone will be invited to contribute ideas and thoughts. With some fundamental re-design ideas, hard surfaces, seating and new planting, it's not going to be a cheap project, but we think it's a good use of our funds.*

*It's time to thank a few people. In terms of committee members, there aren't many of us, which makes it even more appropriate I record our thanks for everyone's efforts. But we also rely on help from others, and I'd like to put on record again our thanks to Pauline Hambleton, who despite her busy life, manages to clean whenever we ask - and sometimes when we don't. There are others, too, such as our partners and people who help with jobs such as concerts, and I personally want to thank Kate, Claire, Mandy, Colin and Jon in particular here.*

*I confirm I won't be continuing as Chair after this meeting. After 8 years on the committee in general, I feel proud, justly I hope, of playing a part in us becoming far more financially sound, with some significant improvements such as the floor refurbishment and the car park re-surfacing, an important investment costing some £30,000. With Dave and Val's help, we've benefited hugely from the good level of fund raising income from concerts, which have also provided an obvious community benefit.*

*There have been challenges - COVID being the obvious one – but we met that challenge better than some, not just financially but also in encouraging user groups to return, with a community café proving hugely popular while it lasted.*

*Aside from these obvious projects, and more prosaically, I'm equally glad to have set in motion a much better governance system for the committee to take forward, with a set of policies and procedures in a user-friendly online Handbook that ought to avoid misunderstandings and confusion in future about 'how we do things around here'. Linked to that, we've a much stronger basis for complying legally with Health & Safety rules, with a better risk assessment framework, leading to a recent confirmation of a good standard from the Staffs*

---

*Moorlands Fire Safety Officer.*

*One disappointment to me is that I was unable to get traction to the idea of moving us towards a different kind of charitable status, i.e. the Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO), so we remain, I feel, seriously constrained by our 50 year old constitution. It's not fit for purpose and even a re-draft of its wording can't address all of the issues – it's something I recommend the committee returns to at some stage.*

*Looking ahead, I'm sure there are plenty of initiatives that our future committee, with a new Chair, will be able to think of, to help secure this place for the future.*

---

#### **Committee membership for the following year:**

The meeting had been advertised expressly as an evening for Parish residents (as beneficiaries of the trust) with 'cheese and wine' available. It was successful in attracting a good number of locals, several of whom offered to join the committee. Elected and co-opted members were provisionally allocated by the Chair as below, subject to confirmation at the next general meeting, when the Chair and any officer positions can be finalised.

---

#### **i) Nominations for (max 6) Representative Members**

| <b>User group</b>        | <b>Nomination</b> | <b>Note</b> |
|--------------------------|-------------------|-------------|
| Parent & Toddlers        | Lois Adams        |             |
| Friendship club          | -                 |             |
| Bowls                    | -                 |             |
| History Group            | Martin Snodin     |             |
| Cricket Club             | Charlotte Jordan  |             |
| Parochial Church Council | -                 |             |
| (Parish Council)         | -                 |             |

#### **ii) Elected members (maximum 4)**

|                  |                |
|------------------|----------------|
| Jo Griffin       | Kevin Stockton |
| Dave Littlehales |                |

#### **iii) Co-opted members (maximum 4)**

|                 |                |
|-----------------|----------------|
| Val Littlehales | Mark Smith     |
| Liz Power       | Duncan Scroggs |

Notes on adequacy of committee, if any

The committee is essentially complete, although this is as a result of co-opting members rather than having all 6 Representative members (underlining the need to review the constitution to mitigate any future problems).

---

#### **Any other business**

- Several users thanked the committee for its work in maintaining the premises for their use.
  - DL thanked MS for his work as Chair over the last few years (MS confirmed he is staying on the committee at least until such time as new members are in place and responsibilities passed over.)
  - Date of next general meeting confirmed as **Tuesday 23 May**.
-