

Woodmancote Village Halls Committee

Woodmancote, Cheltenham.

Registered Charity No. 284 222



Chairman's Report to the AGM on 9th September 2021

National life was virtually brought to a standstill before the hall's financial year for 2020-21 had started, because of the succession of national lockdowns imposed by the government, in response to the COVID 19 pandemic. Like so many other community facilities, our village hall was closed to almost all hirers right through the entire year. The only exception to the rule was the Pre-School Group, which was authorised to operate for part of the year. They did so for June & July 2020 and then from September onwards (after the school holidays) and they chose to make their own COVID-secure arrangements, as Donna, the caretaker, had been put on furlough leave since March 2020. So, the receipts from the Pre-School Group were almost the only source of regular income, as all other planned hirer slots were cancelled, much to everyone's frustration and disappointment. A notice was displayed on the external doors to indicate to all that the halls were closed for business until further notice.

In addition, the committee faced its own internal crisis during the year, as, for a variety of personal reasons, some of the committee members resigned after the last AGM in June, which was conducted via email. Crucially some of those resignations were from three of the four officers - Nick Ebdon (chairman), Maggie Vinson (vice-chairman) and Angela Gibbins (secretary). The other remaining officer, Keith Woodman (treasurer), agreed to stay on the committee only up until the next AGM (which is planned for Friday evening 10th September 2021). None of the remaining committee members was willing or able to step up to any of these vacant officer positions and so the committee was in danger of becoming non-viable.

The chair of the Woodmancote Society, Steve Barnes, came forward and offered to join the committee and, if elected, become the VHC chair, which is what duly happened, by the unusual step of an email approval among remaining committee members. After some discussions with the PC and on close examination of the lease and trust deed between the PC and the VHC, it became apparent that it was the VHC's responsibility to find new committee members from the wider community, who would be prepared to fill the vacant officer positions; under Charity Commission rules, failure to do so would have meant that the charity could be wound up and its funds transferred away from the area.

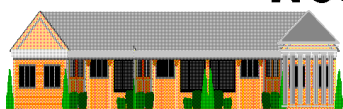
In March 2021, after some discussion with GRCC on the wording of the text, a public appeal for new committee members was launched locally,

chiefly in the Spring edition of the Woodmancote News. Happily, about a dozen people came forward to volunteer in response to the appeal and, after the new chair had contacted each one of them, a meeting was called in his garden, at which Sally Ferrers, Teresa Ames and Alison Bamford were co-opted onto the committee as secretary, treasurer designate and health & safety officer respectively. There will be further volunteers co-opted before the AGM, who will take on shadow officer roles. The full committee, which has not met face-to-face since March 2020, has been kept up to speed during the pandemic with what would normally be committee business, but it is unlikely to have the next face-to-face meeting until the pre-AGM meeting on Monday 2nd September 2021.

The only major work at the hall that took place in the year was the complete replacement of external soffit boards, which was necessitated by vandalism to some of the existing boards, which turned out to contain asbestos. The contract was funded by the PC, which will also fund the complete replacement of security cameras, a second major piece of work that became necessary as a result of another act of vandalism on existing cameras. The work was due to be done during the year 2020-21, but there was a contractor delay and was due to be done during August 2021, to minimise disruption to hall activities, but it has now been further delayed by labour shortages.

As mentioned, the hall re-opened to hirers on Monday 19th July 2021, in line with government pronouncements, and, although the number of expressions of interest from irregular hirers was high during lockdown, there were a number of regular groups that folded or decided not to return – a Keep Fit class, the Bridge Club, an Art Workshop, a Yoga class – and there were others that were slow to return. Nevertheless, funds were in a reasonably healthy state at the point of re-opening, thanks to a local authority grant, so hopefully business will pick up in the coming months.

Steve Barnes, Chairman 14.8.21



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Finance Report on Annual Accounts for 2020-21

Summary

Under this unique set of national circumstances, the hall's annual accounts for 2020-21, which are prepared on a receipts and payments basis and which I am presenting for approval at the AGM, show a net surplus of £9,140 for the financial year ended 31st March 2021. This result compares favourably with a budgeted net surplus for the year of £1,398, but the COVID 19 pandemic has meant that the previously approved annual budget for 2020-21 was dumped in the litter bin.

Type	Actual 2020- 21	Budget 2020-21	Variance 2020-21		Actual 2019-20
	£	£	£		£
Receipts from Regular Hirers	8,889	27,668	(18,779)		27,745
Receipts from Irreg. Hirers	0	4,500	(4,500)		4,450
Sub-Total Normal Receipts	8,889	32,168	(23,279)		32,205
COVID 19 Grant from TBC	10,000	0	10,000		0
Job Retention Scheme	13,934	0	13,934		0
Sub-Total Abnormal Receipts	23,934	0	23,934		0
Total Receipts	32,823	32,168	655		32,205
Caretaker / Cleaner Costs	15,171	18,000	2,829		19,788
All Other Payments	8,512	12,770	4,258		12,384
Total Payments	23,683	30,770	7,087		32,172
Net Out-turn	9,140	1,398	7,742		33

The effect on the reserves balance @ 31 st March:	Actual 2020- 21	Budget 2020-21	Variance 2020-21		Actual 2019-20
	£	£	£		£

B/forward from prev. year	16,064	16,064	0		16,031
Year's out-turn	9,140	1,398	7,742		33
Carried down to next year	25,204	17,462	7,742		16,064

Receipts

There were no receipts from irregular hirers in the year and in fact some previously paid deposits on future irregular hirings had to be refunded. The only regular hirer during the whole year was the Pre-School Group, which was able to resume its activities, with the government's blessing, from June 2020 onwards. They used the large hall exclusively and imposed their own COVID-secure measures, without any need to recall Donna, the caretaker / cleaner / booking secretary, from furlough.

We were successful in securing a Retail Hospitality & Leisure grant of £10,000 from Tewkesbury Borough Council, to help the hall to survive the COVID crisis. The caretaker / cleaner / booking secretary was put on furlough leave in March 2020 and was throughout the financial year, only returning to her normal working hours in July 2021. Our payroll provider managed on our behalf the monthly claims from the Job Retention & Support Schemes and for most months of the year was able to recover the majority of the 80% of salary costs that we were incurring – compare the receipts of £13,924 against a cost of £15,171.

Payments

Despite the lack of activity, there were a number of fixed costs that could not be avoided, including utility bills, that were paid by monthly direct debits on estimated readings, because there were no opportunities to take meter readings. As a cost-cutting measure, it was agreed with the PC that the field gate should be left locked and the security company's attendance suspended, but the arrangement was reversed by the time came for the VHC to pay its share of the monthly charges (Nov 20 to Feb 21). As there were no hirings, there were no PRS & PPL charges.

Closing bank balance @ Lloyds

The excess of receipts over payments of £9,140, when added to the opening bank balance of £16,064, gives a closing balance @ 31st March 2021 of £25,204. This gives a falsely inflated view of the hall's financial affairs, as those funds will drain away until the point is reached when total hall bookings return to their pre-COVID levels. It was agreed that the hall should not re-open until 19th July 2021, so nearly four months' worth of earning potential was already lost and the indications are that some regular hirers will be slow to return; others never will. The prospects on irregular hirers are somewhat better and Donna has been inundated with enquiries during lockdown, but it is the regular hirers who have traditionally generated the lion's share of total receipts.

Appointment of Independent Examiner

The annual accounts have been independently examined and no changes were required to the draft. The examiner has indicated that he is willing to be re-appointed for the year ending 31st March 2022, so I would recommend that his appointment is approved.

Resignation

I am standing down from the committee at the AGM, having served as treasurer since 2011. I wish my successor, Teresa Ames, every success and I will be available to support her through the learning process, as and when required.

Keith Woodman, Treasurer 14.8.21