

Chair's Report year ending 31 March 2024

Charitable status

The charity was first constituted by Deed of Declaration of Trust in 1923 and by a Scheme made /;by the Secretary of State for Education and Science in May 1965.

Charity Objects

Digswell Village Hall exists to provide a facility that is a Hall for the local area and its inhabitants, without distinction of sex or sexuality or of political, religious or other opinions and for use for meetings, lectures and classes, and for other forms of recreation and leisure time occupations with the object of improving the conditions of life for the inhabitants.

Statement on public benefit

In deciding which activities, the charity should undertake during the year, the Trustees have paid due regard to The Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit. The Trustees consider that the objects for which the Trust was registered as a charity, and the activities during the year, are for the public benefit.

In particular, the Trustees consider that the range of activities that Digswell Village Hall is used for regularly provides benefits for people of many ages and interests thus providing activities to enhance lives. Hirers include a range of exercise-based classes aimed at the young and not so young; creative, dance, singing and drama groups; specific interest groups; local societies and public bodies as well as a wide range of one-off events and celebrations. From the Digswell Players youth group, Expressions to the Dementia Friendly Café, we are able to host a great range of activities that benefit the local public.

Serious Incidents

There have been no serious incidents to report.

Activities and Achievements

The Trustees remain very aware of their responsibilities for keeping the Hall in good repair and to keep facilities up to date. This has continued this year with regular maintenance and repairs carried out by local contractors as well as by Trustees and friends of the Hall. With no paid staff this relies on Trustees being very aware of issues as they arise and having excellent relationships with local companies who can be called upon to respond to works needed. We are grateful to Zahid Ali, our cleaning contractor, for his excellent work in keeping the village hall clean and tidy. His attention to detail and reliability is greatly appreciated.

The Trustees aim to keep local resident user charges as low as possible to enable equality of access at a time when many are facing increasing costs. However, the Hall, like many other premises, is facing rising overhead costs, particularly in its energy charges. Two years ago, it was agreed to improve the insulation of the Hall as the first step in reducing our reliance on fossil fuels. This was carried out during the 2022-23 financial year with major work being contracted for the insulation of the roof. The insulation has had an impact on the amount of energy needed to keep the Hall at an acceptable temperature for hirers.

During this reporting financial year, a second step was agreed to address the rising energy outgoings by investigating the potential savings of adding solar panels to the Hall whilst also helping to reduce the Hall's environmental impact in the local area. Quotes from reputable solar panel providers were sought and it was agreed to use Eco Greenenergy Solutions Ltd (a Company identified by Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council in partnership with the Solar Together 'Organisation Group Buying Scheme').

We had raised around £10,000 through fundraising events but were unsuccessful in seeking grant support from several local and national bodies. Hertfordshire Community Foundation did research on our behalf to see if there were any other grants we could apply for, but they also drew a blank. Fortunately, we were able to go ahead with the installation during August 2023 at a cost of £15,500 with minimal disruption to hirers with funds coming from reserves and a successful local fundraising drive that raised around £3,700 from our supportive residents. The Trustees would like to record their grateful thanks to all those who have supported the installation.

The solar panels combined with our recently added roof insulation are already helping to reduce our energy consumption; especially as we also installed a battery that allows us to use stored energy from the day to provide electricity for our evening activities.

Digswell Village Hall was built in 1923 and celebrated its centenary in April 2023. During the day there were displays of local history provided by Alan Sparshott and a local school art competition with prizes organized by Sharon Palmer. Refreshments were provided by the Digswell Women's Institute organised by trustee Kate Stabler. In the evening there was a 1920's themed film night showing 'The Roaring Twenties' with a fish and chip supper attended by around 60 residents. During the interval trustee Peter Holt showed a local film archive that was very interesting to all attending. My thanks to trustee Claire Westlake who oversaw the Centenary Celebration and to Pam Rendell who obtained an external banner to advertise the event and arranged the internal evening decoration of the Hall.

As we enter our second century as a local charitable organisation, we plan to continue to improve and preserve both the inside and outside of the Hall with further work, as funds allow. We are pleased that the Hall continues to be available to provide our local community with a low-cost space, suitable for a wide range of activities. Our aim is to ensure that the hall is a welcoming and comfortable place for the community to enjoy.

As Chair I would like to personally thank my fellow Trustees who do a wonderful job and for the work they continue to do to support this important community facility: Claire Westlake, Kate Stabler, Peter Holt, Joanne Grant, John Strawbridge, Pam Rendell and David White (new trustee from October 2023). Each one has played an important role as part of the team, using their expertise and time as appropriate to take the lead or contribute to the activities that are needed to keep the Hall running. Their ongoing commitment is particularly significant; we are always keen to recruit new Trustees, and anyone interested can be assured of a welcoming team to join. Recruitment remains an ever-important matter for this charity, and for many other charities. I also wish to thank both Sharon Palmer and Ruth Kearns who

both resigned from their trustee roles in October 2023.

Trustees take their responsibilities seriously in relation to the constitution, the hire agreement, and policies such as Safeguarding, Privacy and Equality and Diversity that have all been given due consideration during the year and updated. A less visible but essential ongoing task is the management of bookings which has continued to work efficiently both for bookings and invoicing.

I would also like to thank all those who continue to book the Hall, particularly the regular hirers whose loyalty to the Hall is greatly appreciated. Bookings across the week remain strong and varied, with excellent usage given that the Hall can only accept one booking at a time.

I would like to thank Jo Grant for her management of the Hall's finances and day-to-day budgeting as well as her diligence, transparency and accountability. She has provided the brief report below. We, along with our fellow trustees, are very grateful to Charles Rendell for providing us with the Independent Examination of the Accounts.

Finances and reserves policy

The income in this financial year is £25,748 (2022-23: £25,036).

The Trustees have an agreed policy to keep £7,000 in reserves to enable it to cope with unexpected costs which might reasonably be associated with a building that is over 100 years old.

Reserves at the end of this year are at £26,234 (2022-23: £32,663). The additional money will be used for funding essential work to keep the Hall running and major works.

It is the Trustees intention to use funds as available to keep the Hall in good shape and able to work to benefit the community, whilst taking account of environmental concerns.

Responsibilities of the Trustees regarding the accounts

Charity law requires the Trustees to prepare a receipts and payments account and a statement of assets and liabilities for each financial year. In addition, they are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which are sufficient to show and explain the charity's transactions and to disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Shaun Reason
Chairman
July 2024



CHARITY COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Independent examiner's report on the accounts

Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees

Charity Name

DIGSWELL VILLAGE HALL

On accounts for the year
ended

31 MARCH 2024

Charity no
(if any)

302361

Set out on pages

1-3

(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 MARCH 2024.

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

[The charity's gross income exceeded £250,000 and I am qualified to undertake the examination by being a qualified member of [insert name of applicable listed body]]. Delete [] if not applicable.

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:

Charles Rendell

Date:

10/11/2024

Name:

CHARLES RENDALL

Relevant professional
qualification(s) or body

INSTITUTE OF CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS ENGLAND AND WALES

(if any):	
Address:	31 HAMMER GREEN LANE
	WELWYN.
	ALG OAS

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.

NONE

Digswell Village Hall
Income and Expenditure Account for the year to 31 March 2024

		2024	2023	2022	2021	2020
				£	£	£
Income						
Hall hire - regulars	1	17,674.67	16,824.05	13,185.76	4,734.67	16,998.69
Hall hire - ad hoc	2	3,411.37	2,664.75	1,828.50	235.00	1,145.00
Grants received	3	3,732.00	5,000.00	10,672.00	20,240.93	
Other income	4	414.00	360.00			549.12
Tax refund						2,458.31
Bank interest		516.50	187.97	4.97	5.38	18.80
Total income		25,748.54	25,036.77	25,691.23	25,215.98	21,169.92
Expenses						
Gas & electricity	5	(5,015.59)	(1,886.88)	(2,119.09)	(1,442.79)	(2,938.66)
Waste		0.00	-			(831.31)
Water	6	(1,024.70)	-	(828.03)	(196.05)	(239.35)
Cleaning inc. materials		(5,096.96)	(4,876.17)	(4,233.09)	(1,804.67)	(2,537.47)
Misc. expenses		(1,393.73)	(467.24)	(432.04)	(184.49)	(99.88)
Insurance		(1,686.76)	(1,561.02)	(1,485.71)	(1,456.05)	(1,822.78)
Broadband	7	(299.10)	(282.05)	(316.80)	(155.26)	
PRS licence		(201.89)	(149.48)			(289.96)
Bank fees		(60.00)	(72.00)	(96.00)	(69.00)	(60.00)
Booking secretary						(1,368.00)
Covid related expenses				-	(387.30)	
Maintenance	8	(1,899.63)	(5,120.47)	(5,528.79)	(10,119.57)	(1,711.89)
Refurbishment	9	(15,500.00)	(16,480.00)		-	(15,479.53)
Total expenses		(32,178.36)	(30,895.31)	(15,039.55)	(15,815.18)	(27,378.83)
Net income for the year		(6,429.82)	(5,858.54)	10,651.68	9,400.80	(6,208.91)
Total cash bfw'd at 1 April		32,663.84	38,522.38	27,870.70	18,469.90	24,678.81
Total cash cfwd at 31 March		26,234.02	32,663.84	38,522.38	27,870.70	18,469.90
Value of Land and Buildings		1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Total net assets		26,235.02	32,664.84	38,523.38	27,871.70	18,470.90
Cash held as:						
CAF cash account		2,699.02	4,138.85	5,179.52	15,200.12	5,886.05
CAF gold account		23,437.64	28,427.63	33,245.50	12,573.22	12,567.84
Petty cash		97.36	97.36	97.36	97.36	16.00
Total cash balance		26,234.02	32,663.84	38,522.38	27,870.70	18,469.89

Digswell Village Hall
Income and Expenditure Account for the year to 31 March 2024

Notes to the Accounts

- 1 Income from regular hirers continued to improve past pre-covid levels
- 2 Adhoc lettings continue to be strong with the hall in use for parties etc most weekends.
- 3 In the year to 3/24 grants received relate to Gift Aid donations from members of the local community. A gift aid declaration will now be submitted to HMRC to obtain the relevant tax rebate on this amount. Grants in prior years relate to various grants from public bodies to fund hall improvements.
- 4 A centenary event was held in May 2023 and tickets were sold for an evening film showing. Income for these tickets is shown in both 2022-23 and 2023-24, totalling £774. Costs associated with this event are included in the miscellaneous costs line. Overall there was a small profit on this event of c.£108.
- 5 Gas and electricity contracts have been re-fixed this year, unfortunately at significantly higher rates than previously. Both contracts renewed until 31.3.26.
- 6 The 2023-23 water bill was disputed so took some time to agree. As a result, both the 2023-23 and 2024-25 bills were paid in this year.
- 7 A broadband contract with Plusnet was taken out in October 2020 partly to enable our regular hirers to stream class content from the Hall. There is a monthly charge of £26.40 for this utility. This has been retained as a vital improvement post covid. Contract terms have just been renegotiated, a very small increase on original cost.
- 8 Spend on maintenance during the year can be broken down as follows:
- | | £ |
|---|---------------|
| Abbots Heating - Servicing and Repairs | 618.46 |
| Fusion Electrical Services - lighting PIR sensors for external lights, additi | 550.00 |
| PAT testing | 165.00 |
| Gardening services | 380.00 |
| Incidental expenses | 186.17 |
| | <hr/> |
| Total | 1,899.63 |
| | <hr/> |
- 9 Refurbishment costs relate to the installation of solar panels. This cost was partly funded by the gift aid donations, leaving overall cost to the Hall of c.£11K.

Cash position at 31/3/24

Cash Account	£
Bal b/f at 1/4/23	4,138.85 ✓
income from rentals	21,086.04
Interest income	6.49
Other income	414.00
Hall expenses	(32,178.36)
GiftAid donations	3,732.00
Transferred from Gold account	5,500.00
Bal c/f at 31/3/24	<u>2,699.02</u> ✓
Gold Account	
Bal b/f at 1/4/23	28,427.63 ✓
Interest income	510.01
Cash to current account	(5,500.00)
Bal c/f at 31/3/24	<u>23,437.64</u> ✓
TOTAL BANK BALANCE	<u>26,136.66</u>

Bank Balance	26,136.66
Petty cash	<u>97.36</u>
Total cash at year-end	26,234.02

MOVEMENT IN CASH	
Change in current account	(1,439.83)
Change in gold account	<u>(4,989.99)</u>
Reduction in cash during year	(6,429.82)

Net income - year to 31 March 2024

Regular lettings	17,674.67
Ad-hoc lettings	3,411.37
Other income	<u>414.00</u>
Total income	21,500.04
Hall expenses	(14,778.73)
Maintenance costs	<u>(1,899.63)</u>
Net income pre-refurbishment project	4,821.68
Gift Aid donations	3,732.00
Roof insulation costs	<u>(15,500.00)</u>
Net income after roof insulation	(6,946.32)
Interest received	<u>516.50</u>
Net income	<u>(6,429.82)</u>