

**Castor & Ailsworth Village Hall Management
Committee
Trustees' Report and Financial Statements
Year Ending 31 March 2024**

Summary

The hall remained very busy with a good mixture of regular users and one-off events. Overall utilisation was slightly down, due to a drop in wedding bookings over the summer months and refraining from booking multiple events at weekends as this lead to challenges in cleaning and preparation.

Hire rates were held at the same rates for our regular users, Preschool, Scouts and Evergreens and one-off village resident bookings. The hall was used for a number of village events and fundraisers throughout the year, notably Village Festival, Coronation Weekend, Conkers and Xmas Tree Event. Running a pop-up bar at these events is a key contributor to fundraising and we are also grateful for the share of fundraising for the Festival and Coronation events.

However, there has been a significant increase in costs over the year most notably in utilities. We had secured favourable long-term rates prior to the post-Covid rates, however, these have not come to an end and we saw big increases in our Gas and Electricity contracts. There was also a material increase in our insurance costs, despite checking with a number of providers.

The combined effect of the slight drop in hall hire and increased costs, led to a trading deficit of almost £3.5k. This was offset by fundraising activity leading to a net surplus over £3k. In addition the hall holds large cash reserves, which help to cover any swings in trading performance. However, the Committee noted that the trading environment will continue to remain challenging and whilst there is no immediate concern have started discussions with key user groups and the parish councils to discuss the long-term structure of the hall organisation.

The hall is leased on a peppercorn rent, with the committee responsible for maintaining the listed building. For this reason the Committee undertakes regular fundraising to cover any building works required and a large contingency fund. Areas of the hall that were showing signs of wear were repainted during the school holidays and a project was started to investigate upgrading the lighting in the main hall area. No other projects were undertaken, however, the Committee did identify that the flooring is likely to need major repairs and this has been scheduled for Summer 2025.

The Trustees undertook their statutory duties and obtained all necessary licences including the premises licence issued by Peterborough County Council and music licence issued by PPL PRS Ltd and also arranged suitable insurance.

Report of the Trustees

1. Reference and Administrative Details of the Charity, its Trustees and Advisers

- (a) The name of the Trust is Castor & Ailsworth Village Hall Management Committee
- (b) The Trust is a registered charity, number 302632
- (c) The administration address of the Trust is: 1 Peterborough Road Castor PE5 7AX
- (d) The following Trustees served, unless otherwise indicated, for the full year to 31 March 2024:
 - John Morris
 - Claire Pickett
 - Martin Chillcott
- (e) The Trust has no employees but engages the services of cleaners and a caretaker on a

self-employed basis.

(f) Other relevant organisations are:

- Castor & Ailsworth Village Hall Ltd (dormant) – c/o Azets Lynch Wood PE2 6FZ Peterborough
- HSBC Bank PLC – Cathedral Square Peterborough
- Independent Examiner: Simon Bicknell – Samworths Close, Castor, PE5 7BQ

2. Structure, Governance and Management

(a) The Trust's governing document is Declaration of Trust dated 15/3/1961

(b) The management committee comprised the 4 elected members (3 Trustees and the caretaker). In addition, representatives from Castor and Ailsworth Parish Councils and regular users (Preschool, Scouts and Evergreens) who attend on an advisory basis

All members serve until the next annual general meeting.

Under the Scheme:

- Elected members are appointed at the annual general meeting
 - All management committee members will serve until the next annual general meeting and may serve further terms.
- (c) The management committee appoints a Chairman, a Treasurer and a Secretary. It meets at least four times a year and actively undertakes the management and administration of the Hall. It engages a cleaning contractor on a paid basis and other building and maintenance services as needed. Trustees and the caretaker are not paid for their services.
- (d) The Trust has no connections with other charities. Trustees and the management committee have been scrupulous in ensuring that anyone with a close tie or interest absents him or herself from the consideration of the terms and conditions of any relevant contracts and the management committee has satisfied itself that those contracts offer excellent value for money.

3. Objects and Activities

(a) The object of the Trust is the provision and maintenance of a village hall for use by Castor and Ailsworth residents and surrounding Peterborough neighbourhoods without distinction of 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 residents

(b) The Trust seeks to fulfil its objectives:

- by maximising bookings from as wide a range of users as possible while prioritising local and regular hirers;
- by maintaining the attraction of the Hall in a competitive market;
- by preserving the security, safety and cleanliness of the Hall;
- by the good upkeep of the Hall's decoration, plant and fittings.

4. Hiring Agreement

Use of the Village Hall is subject to a hiring agreement which must be confirmed by email by the hirer when booking. The hiring agreement sets out the conditions of hire and identifies the respective responsibilities of each party to the agreement.

5. Licences

The Hall has a Premises License, from Peterborough City Council and is also licensed by PPL PRS Ltd (Phonographic Performance Ltd and Performing Rights Society) for live and recorded music.

6. Insurance

The Village Hall is insured with a comprehensive policy by Ansvar Insurance in respect of:

- buildings and accidental damage with a sum insured of £1,140,00
- contents (up to £10,000)
- public liability (£10,000,000)
- employers' liability (£10,000,000)
- business interruption up to 24 months (£12,000)
- trustees' indemnity (£250,000)
- legal expenses (£250,000)

The management committee recognises that it is under a legal obligation to protect the building, its users and employees through adequate and appropriate insurance.

7. Building and External Works Issues

The management committee carries out regular maintenance checks on the condition of the building and surrounding hard and soft landscapes and arranges for works to be undertaken, following quotation, by using local labour, wherever reasonable. Regular annual checks, such as having fire-fighting appliances checked and the fire alarm tested were undertaken. In addition during the period of this report the following activity was undertaken:

- The main area of the hall was repainted where there were signs of wear and tear
- A project was commenced to replace the current lighting with a more cost-effective and attractive LED system

8. Achievement and Performance

This financial year has seen a constant stream of hirers using the hall. It is very busy in term time during both the daytime and evenings due to the many regular hirers that use the hall for a variety of activities. Weekends have also generally been busy with many different village and one-off events taking place. There was a drop in wedding party bookings over the summer months.

Hall hire rates are at market rate, with utilisation at maximum, especially during term time. Therefore, the opportunity to increase hire income is limited. However, increased costs are starting to have a material impact on the overall finances.

9. Financial Review

The trading environment has become more challenging with a slight drop in hire income and a significant increase in utility costs. As a result, the year ending 31 March 2024 produced a trading deficit of £3,429. However, supported by fundraising activity the Hall and an overall surplus of £3,470

The Hall is rented from Milton Estate on a peppercorn basis, however, Trustees are required to ensure that the hall is well maintained and in good repair. As it is a Grade 2 listed building, funds are held to support ongoing repairs and refurbishments, whilst maintaining sufficient amounts to cover any emergency works. This year works of £3.5k were undertaken.

The Committee undertakes regular fundraising activity to support the fund. This year £12.8k was raised through a variety of events. The hall has strong cash reserves of just over £60k.

All funds held at the year end were unrestricted. The Committee does not currently invest any funds held in reserve.

In line with Charity Commission guidelines, reporting has been amended to include contingency fund activity, covering fundraising and refurbishment. Although checked this was not included in prior annual Charity Commission returns.

10. Future Plans

The Committee will maintain their ongoing programme of repairs and refurbishments. It is intended that the lighting in the main hall area will be upgrade to new LEDs, which will be more cost-effective and offer different lighting options depending on the user requirements.

In addition, it is expected that the flooring of the main hall will need to undergo significant repairs and potentially replacement. Such a project is likely to be material in cost and will be discussed with both Parish Councils and the landlord before progressing.

11. Public Benefit

The Village Hall is a community building for the pursuit of art, culture, recreation and sport, and a facility in which the community is able to hold events, celebrate personal milestones and allow clubs and societies to flourish, which benefit not only people in the villages but also the wider community. Residents of Castor and Ailsworth enjoy a discount on hire prices.

12. Trustees' Responsibilities in relation to Financial Statements and Accounting Records

The Trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the Trust and enable them to ensure the financial statements comply with the Charities Act.

They have a general responsibility for taking such steps as are reasonably open to them to safeguard the assets of the Trust and to prevent fraud and other irregularities.

The Trust's incoming and outgoing resources fall below the limit set in the Charities Act for requiring the financial statements to be audited, and the Trustees have decided not to have them audited. They are examined by an Independent Examiner whose report is included.

The Trustees have taken advantage of the exemption available to the charity in preparing accounts in the receipts and payments format.

Castor & Ailsworth Village Hall

Receipts and Payments Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2024

	Total 2024	Total 2023
	£	£
RECEIPTS		
Hall Hire	13,484	15,887
Bank Interest	0	0
Fundraising, Grants & Donations	12,823	31,149
Total Receipts	26,307	47,036
PAYMENTS		
Repairs & Refurbishment	3480	17,455
Operational Expenditure	16,914	12,579
Fundraising Costs	2443	4328
Total Payments	22,837	34,362
Surplus for the year	£3,470	£12,674
<i>Opening cash at bank and in hand</i>	£57,288	£44,613
Closing cash at bank and in hand	£60,760	£57,288

Castor & Ailsworth Village Hall

Statement of Assets and Liabilities at 31 March 2024

	2024	2023
	£	£
ASSETS		
Cash at bank and in hand	60,760	57,288

Fixed assets:

None

Current assets:

None

LIABILITIES

None

Approved by the trustees and signed on their behalf by:

Trustee:



John Morris (Co-Chair)

Date: 27/1/25

Trustee:



Claire Pickett (Co-Chair)

Date: 27/1/25

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF CASTOR & AILSWORTH VILLAGE HALL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of Castor & Ailsworth Village Hall Management Committee (the Charity) for the year ended 31 March 2024.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the trustees of the Charity 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 Charity'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 giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the Trust as required by section 130 of the Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records.

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.

Signed: *Simon Bicknell*

Name: Simon Bicknell

Relevant professional qualification or membership of professional bodies (if any): ICAEW

Address: Samworths Close, Castor, PE5 7BQ

Date: 28/01/25