

Leigh and Bransford Memorial Hall and Recreation Ground

Sherridge Road, Leigh Sinton, Malvern, WR13 5DE

Leigh and Bransford Memorial Hall Committee of Trustees

ANNUAL REPORT 2024-25

MARCH 2024 – FEBRUARY 2025:

A YEAR WHERE BOOKINGS INCREASE BUT SO DO OUR OVERHEADS – BUT NEVERTHELESS A POSITIVE YEAR

INTRODUCTION

One of the benefits of looking back over previous reports together with sound record keeping is the point of reference they can give as we look forward to identifying our hopes, ambitions (and sometimes fears) for the year(s) ahead.

The annual report for 2022-23) was characterised by a period of prolonged and exponential rises in inflation. Soaring inflation, like the pandemic before it, if not strategically addressed, would have posed a serious threat to our Hall's short and long-term financial viability. In the event we were able to stabilise the potential threat and impact of our rapidly rising overheads and, as that year progressed, the trustees managed to re-set our financial strategy to create a sustainable platform for the future, which we then described as our "new normal".

Last year's annual report (2023-24) reflected on what turned out to be our first full year experiencing this "new normal" – a year when, thanks to the determined effort of all our trustees, we were able to consolidate, and slightly improve, the relatively healthy financial position we had managed to achieve by the end of the previous year.

And so, to the year just ended – 2024-25 – which also marks the 105th anniversary of the opening of the Memorial Hall on January 20, 1920. Although much has changed since those early days, what hasn't changed is the mission of the charity, set by our founding trustees 105 years ago. Their original purpose statement is clear about how the hall and its grounds should be managed

"in the interests of social welfare, to improve the conditions of life without distinction of political, religious or other opinions by the provision of facilities for recreation and other leisure-time occupation."

As trustees our over-arching objective each year is to uphold those values which, in practical terms, is reflected in our published pledge to *"maintain and improve the Hall, its grounds and*

facilities as a financially viable and welcoming safe place for all hirers and their guests to use and enjoy”.

So, how did we do last year? Here are the headlines.

LAST YEAR’S HEADLINES

- In total bookings last year were up by 12%. That translates as 376 bookings or slightly more than one a day throughout the year. Included in that number were 8 weddings – 5 more than the previous year
- Our financial viability goes from strength to strength. Last year our accounts showed a net positive balance of income over expenditure of almost 15% while maintaining a rolling reserve in excess of £25,000.00
- We had, however, initially expected to generate a larger surplus than this, but as the months progressed, we experienced higher than average emergency maintenance issues. This meant we had to increase our contingency budget to cover those additional costs. Inevitably that also meant we had less to spend on planned improvements and replacement of old equipment
- Despite having to allocate more of our annual surplus to cover those unplanned maintenance costs, we were still able to purchase new furniture (tables and chairs) and achieve some re-decoration in the Small Hall
- Our end-of-year carry forward surplus (taking account of maintaining our rolling reserve) is being used to purchase a new CCTV hard-drive and to replace the industrial oven and microwave in the kitchen
- Additional prioritised improvements for the (2025-26) year ahead were also identified – these will be implemented as and when funds become available.

OUR OBJECTIVES FOR 2024-25

Our two, over-arching objectives for 2024-25 were, as in the previous year, very straight forward and served us well as both strategic and tactical priorities. They were:

- To maintain an environment that would give hirers a good, value-for-money experience
- To improve and sustain the Hall’s continuing financial stability and security
- To implement an agreed schedule of improvements to the Hall and its amenities as finances allowed.

HOW DID WE DO?

MEASURING SUCCESS: OBJECTIVE 1

To maintain an environment that would give hirers a good, value-for-money experience

As in previous years we triangulated our measurement of success against this objective by asking ourselves whether:

- our rates continue to be competitive
- we are ensuring that the building and grounds are clean and safe, and its facilities continue to be in keeping with hirers' expectations, and
- whether the number of hires per year is decreasing, increasing, or holding steady

Are our hourly rates competitive?

We had previously undertaken an analysis of the advertised rates for hiring village or community halls in the surrounding area. A like-for-like comparison is not straight forward as the Leigh and Bransford Memorial Hall is the largest community space available for hire and so we would expect our rates to be generally higher than the other halls. But that was not always the case. It is also interesting to see how others advertise their rates – for some halls the hirer needs to book the kitchen space separately whereas our business model always includes the use of the fully equipped kitchen with crockery, cutlery, glasses and so forth, together with use of any of the tables and chairs we keep in our furniture store.

Many of the surrounding halls also require a deposit of between £50.00 to £100.00 – we, on the other hand abandoned this practice some years ago as it was costly and cumbersome to administer. We now require all hirers to acknowledge their acceptance of our Terms and Conditions at the point of hire, which gives us the ability to require additional payment for damages or failure to leave the building in an acceptable manner.

All that said, and allowing for the annual inflation-linked rate increase on 1 March 2024, our hire rates are broadly comparable with other local halls and similar public venues.

This analysis when contextualised against year-on-year hire numbers (see below) suggests that our hourly rates are set within market expectations – or to put it another way, what the current market will bear.

Are we ensuring that the building and grounds are clean and safe and its facilities in keeping with hirers' expectations?

In order to keep our overheads manageable, our Terms and Conditions require all our hirers to work through an End of Hire Checklist before finally leaving the building. We have a self-clean and tidy away system with which all hirers must comply. This checklist requires hirers to clean up and clear away at hire end to ensure that the building is left clean and tidy for those that follow. Failure to comply may trigger an additional payment from them.

We also employ the weekly services of a professional cleaner, which in 2024-25 was our second largest overhead, next to our energy costs, accounting for almost 19% of our planned operating expenses.

Every year we also endeavour to update our facilities in line with hirers' expectations and the 2024-25 year was no exception – despite unusually high extraordinary unplanned maintenance costs. A more detailed list of improvements and other works is given later in this report under the review of our third objective.

Are the number of hires per year decreasing, increasing, or holding steady?

We constantly monitor the number of hires being booked over the course of each year, as the raw data helps to give us a year-on-year comparison of activity. But the number of hires on their own needs further triangulation to determine more meaningfully how we're doing.

For example, we categorise our hires into three groups, namely the number of hires booked by our regular weekly or monthly groups; so-called 'one-off' hires (although these can also be 'repeat business' hires; and wedding or other weekend bookings more than 12 hours). We then look at the revenue generated by the regular hires compared to the one-off hires and weddings etc. In any one year, these 3 data sets will vary so it is important also to know the income generated by these different groups.

In 2023-24 we reported that while the total number of hires (before taking into account cancellations) fell by just over 7% compared with the previous year – 336 hires compared to 364 hires – gross income from all hires was actually up on the previous year.

In the year just ended the actual gross number of hires increased to 376, which is better than both the previous years. Year-on-year hires were up by almost 12% and our hire income also correspondingly rose by just under 10%. The two-year gross average number of hires is now 356.

Hires by our regular groups (excluding ground rent, fund-raising, grants and payments from recycling textiles collections and the renewable heat initiative payments) generated 56% of our hire income. We had 8 regular groups, clubs or organisations that met regularly at the hall for most of the past year – and although we lost one of those groups in February, we have since had 4

more groups start, which means we now have 11 groups hiring the Hall regularly (either once or twice a week or once a month). We therefore expect to generate more income in the year ahead as the net number of regular groups hiring the hall has increased by 3, and their combined weekly meeting hours exceeds by some margin the weekly duration of the regular hire that has since been discontinued.

A fuller analysis of hire income is given below under the narrative for our second objective, but the above headline analysis and narrative suggests that, while we will always operate a policy of striving to continually improve, we met our first objective to provide value for money for our hirers.

MEASURING SUCCESS: OBJECTIVE 2

To safeguard a sustained return to financial stability

The UK's inflation rate in March 2024 (the first month of our financial year), measured by the Consumer Price Index (CPI), was **3.2%**. This was significantly lower than the 10.1% we experienced in the previous year. We were therefore able to limit any increase to our standard hourly hire rates (that took effect on 1 March 2024) to a modest amount in line with the lower inflation figure. Our hope and expectation being that keeping our rates affordable, in a period of increasing consumer confidence, would see our hires increase over the year. When coupled with the modest rise in hourly rates, our annual hire income could increase by 6% or more.

In the final analysis our hire income alone increased by almost 9.5% (or £1,971.00 more than the previous year). When other income from ground rent, fund raising, textiles recycling and renewable heat initiative (RFI) payments from Ofgem were added in, our year-on-year income total improved by £2,075.00 or just over 8%.

Grant income in the year was just £304.00, compared to £10,229.00 in the previous year – but as grant income is always used to fund improvements to the Hall's amenities and not for maintenance or other running costs, funds obtained through grants does not directly affect our day-to-day and year-on-year financial viability.

Analysing our expenditure over the year, we know that our single most expensive overhead is the cost of energy. We had installed over 20 solar panels and a back-up battery storage system two years ago, and in January 2024 when our commercial contract came up for renewal, we were able to fix a much lower price for the next three years. We started to feel the benefit of those price cuts during the 2024-25 financial year. Our annual energy costs fell dramatically by 48% from £7,266.00 in 2023-24 to £3,748.00 in 2024-25. Nevertheless,

energy remains our largest annual overhead, closely followed by professional cleaning costs (£2,901.00) and buildings insurance and public liability (£1,143.00). Taken together, these three annual overheads accounted for 46% of our budgeted expenditure.

Overall, our annual overheads (operating expenses) reduced by £3,819.00 or 18% compared to the previous year. Although there were 'swings and roundabouts' across the other operating budgets, the total saving is almost entirely due to the massive £3,518.00 reduction this year in our energy costs – which completely justifies the investment the trustees made in fitting solar panels and a battery storage system. The cost of the investment made in financial year 2022-23 was £26,000.00, of which almost £7,000.00 was offset by grant funding. That meant that the trustees committed £19,000.00 from its reserves to fund the purchase and installation of the system.

We have calculated that without the solar panels and battery storage system the exponential rise in electricity costs that began at the start of our financial year 2022-23 would have seen our annual costs rise from £3,062.00 in 2021-22 to around £12,000.00. In the event, our annual electricity costs in both 2022-23 and 2023-24 came in at £7398.00 and £7,266.00 respectively. Based on these figures (and even allowing for the high contract price in both of those years) the solar panel system saved us around in 2022-23 rise to £12,000.00. In the event our solar system saved us around £9,336.00 in energy costs over those two years. If we then add the further savings of £3,518.00 made in the year just ended (2024-25), that shows that in the first three years of operation, the system has saved us a total of at least £12,854.00. Based on these figures we expect to have recouped the initial expenditure of £19,000.00 by the middle of financial year 2026-27.

Financial Summary: 2023-24

At the beginning of the 2024-25 Financial Year (FY) our total opening balances were as follows:

Lloyds: £27,166.49 (in the previous year it was £27,795.54)

PayPal: £7,861.78 (in the previous year it was £5,065.94)

Total Available: £35,028.27 (in the previous year it was £32,861.48)

At the close of business on Thursday 28 February (the last day of our Financial Year 2024-25) our balances at Lloyds and PayPal were as follows:

Lloyds: £32,060.62

PayPal: £6,265.17

Grand Total: £38,325.79

These figures show that we ended the 2024-25 FY with an improved, year-on-year balance of 9.4% or **£3,297.52**. This is an improvement of 2.4 percentage points on the previous year's outturn measured against the opening balances.

Since 1 March 2024, our Lloyds' account has seen the following amounts paid in and paid out:

MONTH	PAID IN	PAID OUT	INCOME v EXPENDITURE
March	£298.00	£1,573.64	-£1,275.64
April	£2,870.00	£1,573.20	+£1,296.80
May	£1,587.02	£3,586.47	-£1,999.45
June	£547.50	£2,253.39	-£1,705.89
July	£2,091.70	£930.68	+£1,161.02
August	£3,199.32	£1,593.66	+£1,605.66
September	£1,693.16	£2,081.40	-£388.24
October	£312.96	£2,726.84	-£2,413.88
November	£1,799.01	£1,202.05	+£596.96
December	£1,980.00	£2,180.06	-£2,000.06
January	£952.00	£1,219.91	-£267.91
February*	£13,305.70	£4,921.44	+£8,384.26
TOTAL	£30,636.37	£25,842.74	+£4,793.63

* February income includes £7,500.00 hire income transferred from our PayPal account

This shows a positive balance of income over expenditure in the year just ended of +£4,793.63 as measured by transactions on our Lloyds account.

The February transaction shows the transfer of end-of-year PayPal funds for hires that took place during the year, so this table is a true reflection of our annual income over expenditure. The opening PayPal balance of £6,275.16 (carried forward to the 1 March 2025) represents advance hire income for the next financial year and beyond.

We had hoped to reach a target surplus of income over expenditure approaching £10,000 by year end, but during the year we encountered several unplanned maintenance issues that required us to commit more funds from our projected margin (surplus) to cover those emergency works. This is detailed further below.

Most of these high additional costs had one thing in common: WATER!

- The torrential rainstorms we experienced at various times over the year caused two separate leaks in the roof
- in December rainwater got into the external lighting units which caused a complete circuit to fail just as a family party was starting . . . those of you who have had to call out emergency electricians will know that their fees are not cheap!!
- the hot water immersion heater located in the roof space above the small hall toilets also spectacularly failed over the Easter holiday weekend last year – which went undiscovered for at least 4 days. We had to replace the old cylinder, redecorate the stained ceilings and dry out all electrical wiring
- we also discovered and dealt with a large wasps' nest in the eaves above the kitchen window
- additional costs were incurred by having to replace the locking handles on the main entry doors
- add to this a very expensive annual service on our Fire Safety Alarm system and we quickly found we had incurred additional unplanned expenditure approaching £9,000.00 over the year – in addition to our planned overhead costs.

MEASURING SUCCESS: OBJECTIVE 3

To implement an agreed schedule of improvements to the Hall and its amenities as finances allowed.

We had initially planned to replace the ageing thermoplastic tiled floor in the Small Hall Lobby, do some internal decorating, order some additional tables and chairs and begin the process of refurbishing the original porch (which is in urgent need of attention). But as it became clearer that our available surplus would be less than hoped, we had either to scale back our plans or find additional ways to fund the improvements. Emma, one of our trustees volunteered to refresh the paintwork in the Small Hall and in November we made a grant application to the Parish Council to cover the cost of additional furniture, which, we're delighted to say was subsequently approved – and we are indeed most grateful to both Emma and the Parish Council for this support. The decorating and the delivery of new tables and chairs have now been achieved. Then at the very end of the financial we had news about a new, local funding opportunity open to us that would allow us to plan for the refurbishment of the original porch in 2025-26.

All that said, as we did manage to end the year with a modest surplus, we subsequently committed some of that surplus to fund the replacement of the ageing and inefficient catering oven and microwave in the kitchen.

And finally, as the new financial year will also be the 80th anniversary of VE Day, we made a forward commitment to restore and replant the two 'Memorial Garden Planters' either side of the original porch. A local resident, Barry Thornley, an experienced gardener with an impressive record of achievements in the gardening world volunteered to completely redesign the planters and Bransford Webbs Plant Company then agreed to sponsor the work by providing some, if not all, of the new plants and shrubs. Work will commence in May 2025 and will be completed in good time for the gathering outside the hall on Remembrance Sunday, 9 November.

Needless to say, we are all very excited about this new project which, when completed, will bear testimony to everything that is positive about our local community – where such selfless acts as volunteering your time, influence, expertise and skills really do make an important and lasting difference. In remembering and honouring our past we also build our hope in the future.

Jon Gamble, Chair of Trustees

May 2025

Leigh and Bransford Memorial Hall and Recreation Ground
Income and Expenditure for the period ended 28th February 2025

<u>2023/24</u>		<u>2024/25</u>
<u>INCOME</u>		
10,627.70	Hire of Buildings	12,491.60
10,295.84	Hire of Buildings (PayPal)	10,403.39
2,239.00	Ground rent	2,354.60
1,240.00	"200" Club	1,240.00
-	- Advertising	-
-	- Fund Raising	-
-	- Bank interest - CAF Bank	-
10,229.00	Donations & Grants	304.40
977.25	Heating rebate	1,011.15
425.50	Clothes recycling	75.44
<u>36,034.29</u>	<u>TOTAL INCOME</u>	<u>27,880.58</u>
<u>EXPENDITURE</u>		
2,618.00	Cleaner's Wages	2,901.50
323.88	Cleaning Materials	275.88
1,015.11	Waste Collection	998.83
7,265.69	Electricity	3,747.73
366.36	Water	681.13
1,204.50	Insurance	1,143.51
274.32	Heating servicing	274.32
893.52	Telephone	767.47
500.00	Rent of Lease for Car Park	500.00
3,000.00	Ground Maintenance	942.00
-	-	-
2,190.00	Website	2,563.76
174.38	Fire Equipment Maintenance/replacement: Inspections/Testing	1,573.50
332.64	Licenses	80.48
662.12	Administration and sundries	551.87
<u>20,820.52</u>	<u>Total Operating Expenses</u>	<u>17,001.98</u>
-	Fundraising expenses	-
11,577.99	Extraordinary: Maintenance/repairs	6,394.90
-	Pest Control	60.00
908.99	Improvements including equipment	460.78
560.00	"200" Club prizes	665.40
<u>33,867.50</u>	<u>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</u>	<u>24,583.06</u>
2,166.79	Surplus/deficit of Income over expenditure	3,297.52

Signed.....
Chairman

Dated..... 20.05.2025

Signed.....
Treasurer

Dated..... 20/5/2025

Leigh and Bransford Memorial Hall and Recreation Ground
Year ended 28 February 2025
PayPal Summary

Balance	Date	Payments Received	Refunds	Expenses	Withdrawals	Fees	Balance
7,861.78	Mar-24	204.00				3.26	8,062.52
8,062.52	Apr-24	836.00				13.10	8,885.42
8,885.42	May-24	888.00	234.4			13.63	9,525.39
9,525.39	Jun-24	799.00				11.59	10,312.80
10,312.80	Jul-24	409.00				6.32	10,715.48
10,715.48	Aug-24	2,605.00	775			26.62	12,518.86
12,518.86	Sep-24	365.00				5.71	12,878.15
12,878.15	Oct-24	1,095.00				16.93	13,956.22
13,956.22	Nov-24	240.00				3.96	14,192.26
14,192.26	Dec-24	1,120.00				16.48	15,295.78
15,295.78	Jan-25	1,992.00				30.29	17,257.49
17,257.49	Feb-25	1,023.00			12000	15.32	6,265.17
		11,576.00	1,009.40	-	12,000.00	163.21	

Leigh and Bransford Memorial Hall and Recreation Ground
Year ended 28 February 2025
Bank Reconciliation

Lloyds Current Account

	Dr	Cr
Opening balance		27,166.49
Income per summary	29,477.19	
Expenses per summary		24,583.06
Closing balance		32,060.62
	56,643.68	56,643.68
Reconciliation:		
Balance per statement		32,060.62
O/S cheques:		
O/S receipts:		
		32,060.62

PayPal

	Dr	Cr
Opening balance		7,861.78
Income	11,576.00	
Refunds through PayPal		1,009.40
Charges		163.21
Expenses		
Paid Out		12,000.00
Closing balance		6,265.17
	19,437.78	19,437.78
Reconciliation:		
Balance per statement		7,861.78
		7,861.78

Leigh and Bransford Memorial Hall and Recreation Ground
Year ending 28 Febtuary 2025
Summary of Maintenance Expenditure

<u>Date</u>	<u>Supplier</u>	<u>Detail</u>	<u>Cost</u>
13/05/2024	Colin Breeze	Replace Hot Water Cylinder	1,402.20
13/05/2024	Prosser Electrical	Reconnect Immersion Light lad	132.00
23/05/2024	Kevin Oliver	Replace Ceilings	660.00
23/05/2024	Shaun Stoker	Repair Ceilings and paint	534.00
23/05/2024	Joe Whatmore Elect	Disconnect /Reconnect light	175.00
09/04/2024	Prosser Electrical	Call out to to immersion	108.00
14/05/2024	Travis Perkins	Materuals re repair ceilings	155.14
25/10/2024	A.E.S. Roofing	Replace Slate Clear Gutterin	912.00
02/12/2024	Plumbing DV Ltd	Emer call out Eleci repair	850.00
22/01/2025	george	Replace Lamp Disable Toilet	6.97
07/02/2025	Emma	Painy for main hall	59.97
13/02/2025	Worcester Renewables	Heating Antifreeze	1,295.33
16/07/2024	George	repait toilet lock	8.29
13/12/2024	ABM Glass	Repait front door lock	96.00

6,394.90



**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

Leigh and Bransford Memorial Hall and Recreation Ground

**On accounts for the year
ended**

28th February 2025

**Charity no
(if any)**

523163

Set out on pages

1

(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 **28/02/2021**.

**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:

Date:

1st October 2025

Name:

Louise Ruane

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

FCCA

Address:

Pear Tree Cottage, Yarrington Road, Alfrick, Worcs, WR6 5EX

Section B**Disclosure**

Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight 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