

UPTON VILLAGE HALL ANNUAL REPORT 2008 / 2009 'Our 80th Anniversary'

This report concentrates principally on the financial year ended 31st March 2009, with a few comments to bring the picture up to date for the 2009 AGM in November.



Upton Village Hall operates at virtually full occupancy of its main hall from September to May except during holiday periods. Occupancy declines during the summer months allowing for more casual bookings. Hire of the refurbished meeting room (independently let from the main hall) is improving but still has further capacity. Over 30 different user groups use the facilities, covering ages from babies to the elderly, and for a great range of sporting, cultural, personal-care and specialised interests. The five year refurbishment project, Project 4-SCORE, has been completed and an autumn season of events celebrated our 80th year. The image above features the anniversary dinner held on the 8th December 2008. The Hall is excellently managed, maintained and promoted – building up high esteem within the local community.

User Base, Activities and Special Events



The main use of the Hall continues to be by the Regular User groups, most of whom meet weekly. The majority operate back-to-back throughout the 7 day (85 hour) week. Enjoy-a-Ball had to leave us in the summer, since they needed a longer session which we were unable to accommodate. The Tuesday after-school ballet has expanded to take on the Friday after-school slot from 4pm, but the rest of Friday afternoon remains available. The children's ballet class now holds concerts and examinations. The previous Monday after-school class closed due to the ill-health of the organiser, but there is now a Karate class for one hour with hopes that this can

build-up. The Monday evening Meditation class, that ran alongside the use of the main hall for indoor bowls, has unfortunately ceased. Recently other Meeting Room classes have started.

The traditionally void lunchtime periods have now been largely taken up. Baby Sensory has expanded beyond its morning use to take the whole day through to 4pm. Line Dancing started on Monday lunchtimes in September and by March had expanded to also take Tuesday lunchtimes. Lunchtime on Fridays were taken from September by the Primary Care Trust for referred patients on exercise classes. These have recently ceased - our only casualty of the recession.

The long established community groups continue to flourish, with the Upton Dramatic Society celebrating their 75th year and with plans to stage their most ambitious performance to date in December 2009.

The number of concerts and other special events, ticketed for the general public, continues to grow and these are generally sold out. The Hall's 80th Anniversary was celebrated with events staged by user groups and by the Hall's management; ranging from the hosting of BBC Radio 4's *Any Questions?* through to events showcasing our local community talent.



Some availability at weekends has allowed promotion for private children's parties and this is seen as a useful community offering. Rehearsals for youth bands have also been accommodated over holiday periods.

Financial

We started the year with a balance brought forward of £19,669, built up over the previous few years to help fund the last stage of our refurbishment, Project 4-SCORE. Over the year we received £21,766 income from hiring out the hall and meeting room (including some bank interest). Notwithstanding income lost during the extended shutdown period, this was 3% up on the previous year, helped by buoyant user numbers and the increase to the hire charge for commercial users to £12/hour that came into effect on 1st March 2009.

We very much appreciated receiving a grant of £2,000 from Chester City Council for the refurbishment of the hall floor, and also donations from two user groups - £300 from the Upton Dramatic Society and £200 from Leisure Activities. In addition we raised £747 from the three Rural Touring Network productions, Bridges, Judy & Me and Phileas P Souper.

In planning for the last stage of Project 4-SCORE, it became clear that we would not have sufficient funds available to carry out all the necessary work on the main hall in one go, which would clearly be the most cost effective and least disruptive way of proceeding. As a result the trustees agreed to obtain a bank loan of £8,000 repayable over two years at an annual interest rate of 9.99%. This was drawn down in August 2008.

The chart on the right illustrates the incoming and outgoing flows of funds as itemised in this report. It should be read by starting with the Balance Brought Forward and going up the INCOMING column and then going across and down the OUTGOING column, culminating in the Balance Carried Forward.

Project 4-SCORE expenditure this year was £31,678, which was £2,013 over budget. This excess over budget was solely on the electrical work which cost significantly more than expected. We have since changed our electrical contractor.

The total cost of Project 4-SCORE

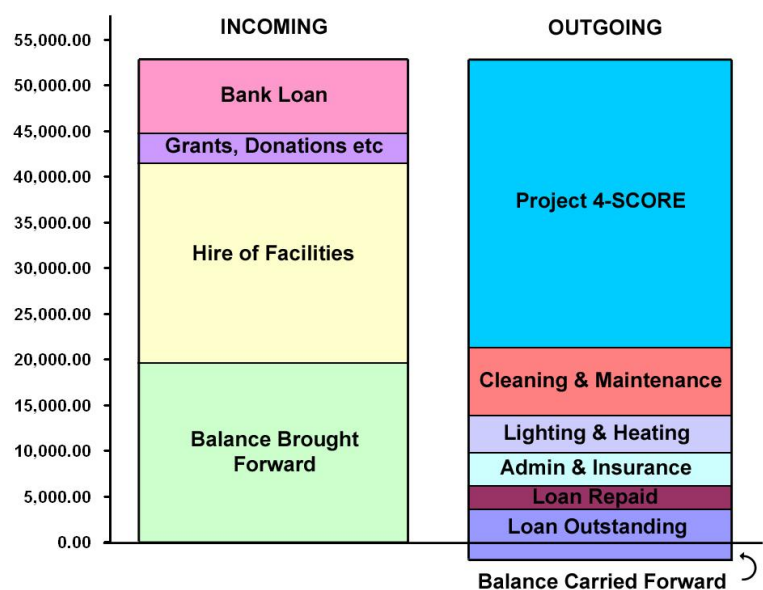
since the start of work in July 2004, has been £135,080, of which £68,535 was grant funded with the majority of the rest from income from hire of facilities. Over the years, about a third of user groups' hire charges are ploughed back into refurbishment and major renewals.

Cleaning costs at £5,443 were £498 higher than the previous year due to wage increases. Maintenance & Renewals costs were £1,922. This was down by £1,797, largely because in the previous year we had spent £1,530 on the new fence at the rear of the property.

Lighting & Heating and water charges were just 1% up on the previous year. Our annual insurance premium was £1,617, up by 7% in line with industry trends. The 80th anniversary celebrations cost £252, the celebration dinner having been significantly subsidised by the two highly successful 80 Years of Dance evenings. Administration was £1,762, 79% up on the previous year. The main contributor to this increase was the interest on our loan, £474.

In the course of the year we repaid £2,554 of the bank loan, leaving an outstanding liability of £5,446. This led to a negative balance carried forward at year end of -£2,075. However, this negative balance was cleared by the end of June 2009. Notwithstanding the further electrical work carried out this summer, we are currently on target to repay the whole of the bank loan in

UPTON VILLAGE HALL FUNDING 2008-2009



January 2010, 6 months ahead of schedule, and are forecasting a year end balance in April 2010 of about £9,500. This is a firm indication of our resolve to now rebuild our reserves to prudent levels.

Operations

Only one personal accident was reported. This was a slip and fall but nothing was identified that could prevent a recurrence. The Cheshire Fire Service no longer carries out routine inspections and new statutory legislation requires us to have our own procedure. This has been established by David Hart as our new Health & Safety Officer.

We have been assured by our local Council (CWaC) that we will be included in the new refuse collection system, including recycling, but as yet we are still awaiting delivery of our new bins and so are still using black bags. When these bins arrive we plan to acquire and install 'mounting posts with opening restrictors' to secure them and reduce our risk of vandal-induced fire.

When regular users cancel a booking at short notice, there is little opportunity to enable alternative use. For this reason users have been informed that a booking charge may still be invoked. However, the key intention is to encourage Users to give us adequate notice through better planning.

Our co-operation with other community venues in the area has been increased and this significantly reduced disruption to users during our long summer refurbishment closure. In making best use of facilities we were able to encourage one group to relocate to the Golf Club and we then re-used the slot to better advantage. Requests for private adult parties are also referred to the Golf Club.

In recent months a **Lost Property** policy has been introduced with a list of 'held items' posted on the Hall Management notice board. The Village Hall has now successfully applied for a full **Alcohol License** following amendments to statutory legislation that simplified the procedure. This means that Temporary Event Notices (T.E.N.'s) are no longer needed, but the UVH secretary must still be informed when users plan to supply alcohol at events. A revised **H&S Policy** has been introduced and a monthly 'walk through' H&S check instigated. **Following these changes, the Board has decided that user groups should sign a new Hiring Agreement for 2010.**

Refurbishment & Enhancements

Summer 2008 saw the final phase of Project 4-SCORE. The Hall was closed for 6 weeks, during which the main hall underwent major refurbishment. The old fixed skylights were replaced with four sets of 3 double-glazed Velux units. Each unit incorporates a black-out blind and the central unit opens and has an automatic rain sensor closure. All aspects can be remotely controlled as required by nominated members of our user groups. The internal main hall walls (previously a mix of different painted brick surfaces and boarding) were lined with plasterboard and emulsion painted. After long deliberation and user consultation, the colour was finally settled on as the long-established favourite of Magnolia! A major eyesore of the main hall was the externally mounted and draped electrical cables. These are now concealed behind trunking. Finally, the floor was fully cutback to the bare wood, new badminton lines painted and the floor sealed. This proved a success with both the dancers and the badminton players as well as being cosmetically appreciated by everyone.



One key area of refurbishment work was held over until after the defined 5 year 4-SCORE project. This was the updating of our electrical installation. This has now been completed and the whole

building now meets the regulation standards of 2008. We are currently in the process of documenting our circuits and in 2010 all sockets and switches will be marked up with reference nomenclature.

As a result of all the work carried out over recent years the Hall now has a team of 'partner contractors' covering our major trade requirements. They are all familiar with the facility and are providing us with excellent service. The Hall expresses our gratitude, in particular, to Bob Dodd who has carried out a number of small emergency repair roofing jobs without charging us.

Key Maintenance Issues over the Period

While the physical installation of the Velux skylights was a success we had a prolonged period of commissioning their remote control features. This is now virtually solved but not offering the robust easy-to-use solution we had been led to expect. Similarly our public address system has been troublesome, but responding to advice from a BBC engineer during the Radio 4 visit, a piece of equipment was relocated and the problem now rectified. Clearly, the facilities in the Hall are getting ever more complex and we are indebted to our Maintenance Manager, Norman Draper, who luckily enjoys his 'gadgets'. With longer term succession planning in mind we have been seeking an Assistant Maintenance Manager – await an announcement shortly.

Anyone using the Hall during heavy rain would have noticed overflowing gutters. This has now been largely resolved with rerouting of downpipes however we still have the effects of surrounding trees. The car park and drives have been surveyed and we have been advised that resurfacing can be held back for a few years if potholes are repaired as they occur. During summer 2009 several potholes and areas of subsidence were filled in and future funding has been earmarked for the complete resurfacing.

Trustees

The Board celebrated the 80th birthday of two of its Trustees, Nancy Turton and Norman Draper, both of whom have served for many years. The Board also welcomed two new members, David Hart (taking on Health & Safety) and Sandra Clarke. The remaining members of the Board are Phil Pearn, Phil O'Neill, Bob Parker, Liz Case, Jill Smith and Geoff Newton. Contact details are on our website. The ten trustees cover a wide range of relevant skills and experience and operate very effectively as a team.

The Board of Trustees met formerly on four occasions during this 12 month period (19th May 2008, 8th September 2008, 10th November 2008 and 9th February 2009) along with the AGM on 28th November 2008.



The Board would like to express their gratitude to our caretaker, Jane Jones, who looks after all our ad hoc users and keeps the Hall and its grounds superbly clean and tidy.



Future Plans

Following the completion of Project 4-SCORE, the Board is now rebuilding our reserves fund, but at the same time is planning for the future with a number of projects under consideration.

Re-design of the stage frontage

Container for additional storage capacity

New chairs and associated storage trolleys

Car park resurfacing

Collapsible staging

Finally – the website is frequently updated with all the latest information – but any suggestions for enhancements are very welcome on uptonvh@hotmail.co.uk