

# UPTON VILLAGE HALL ANNUAL REPORT 2009 / 2010

*Our AGM has now moved to July to better align with our financial year (ending 30 April) and a slacker period of Hall usage. This report therefore covers the 12 months from July 2009.*

**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 meeting room (independently let from the main hall) is improving but still has further availability. Over 30 different user groups use the facilities, covering ages from babies to the elderly, and for a great range of sporting, leisure, cultural, personal-care and specialised interests. Having recently completed our major 5-year refurbishment project, the Hall now meets the expectations of today's user-base, although we continue to enhance facilities as finances allow. Income exceeds our outgoings allowing for good upkeep with regular enhancements. 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.



Many of our User Groups have been using the Hall for many years, with two notable anniversaries having occurred during the period of this report. Upton Drama Society celebrated 75 years, and their last two productions of 'Allo Allo' and 'Jane Eyre' reached new heights in both the ambitious sets and the whole theatrical production.

The Flower Club celebrated their Golden Anniversary in style with a dinner – naturally with impressive floral displays. Their committee is shown here with an insert showing their cake.

Both these groups are of great benefit to the Hall community, the Flower Club often preparing floral arrangements for other major Hall events.

As for newcomers, we have had a small turnover. A computer class now uses the meeting room for two mornings a week and a new painting class has been spawned from our existing group. A new group working with toddlers, 'Little Kickers' has started on Friday afternoons and is hoping to grow to be fully sustainable.

'Baby Sensory' use the hall for much of Wednesday and these sessions introduce a large number of the 20–35 year age group to our Hall. The proprietor Stephanie is to be congratulated on the national awards she and her enterprise have received.

The usually busy December broke all records this year with a run of sold-out concerts with a strong World War 2 Anniversary theme. The Drama Society's 'Allo Allo' turned the Hall into Renee's café and they put on an additional evening performance. This year we experimented with an evening of local singing talent with songs from the last 70 years. Local schools started with a 'mini-X-factor' competition with the winner finally selected by the audience. After the break there were a number of local acts, concluding with Bing Crosby and the Andrews Sisters, accompanied by Upton's own 'Songbirds' singing 'White Christmas' as shown below.

Our usual Carol Evening was then followed a few days later with the final night of Matt Baker's production 'Home for Christmas'. Again this was sold-out and was arguably the most professional stage production that the Hall has hosted. We hope to stage their 2010 offering.



## Financial

This past year has been one of consolidation as we sought to pay off the loan taken out for the completion of our refurbishment project, Project 4-SCORE and start to rebuild our reserves. In the event we were able to pay off our loan in April 2010, 4 months ahead of term.

We started the year with a negative balance of £2,075, as we were still in hock to the bank with our outstanding loan.

Income from hiring out the Hall and Meeting Room totalled £24,908 which was 15% up on the previous year. In addition we had probably our greatest ever year of fund raising, with £3,943 having been raised from staging eleven different events involving a variety of entertainment including drama, cabaret, dancing and music.

Cleaning & Maintenance expenditure was £1,114 (15%) up on the previous year in large part due to repairs to the car park carried out to arrest deterioration of the surface pending planned resurfacing in a few years' time.

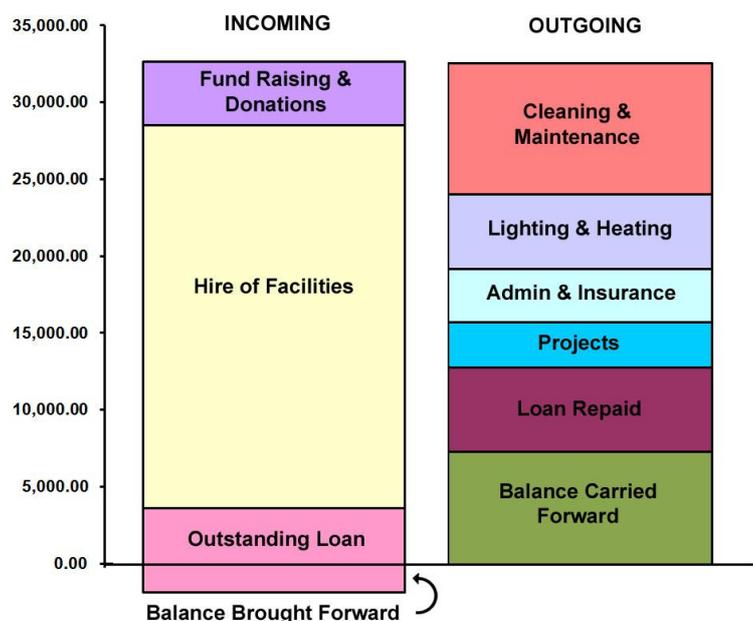
Lighting and Heating and water charges were up by £791 (22%), almost entirely due to an increase in the cost of gas and higher usage during the cold winter.

Administration and Insurance was down by £180 (5%) on last year, interest on our bank loan having decreased as the outstanding principal reduced over time. The cost of our new Premises Licence (£235) offset the net cost of 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary events the previous year.

Project expenditure consisted of the electrical upgrade (£1,776) and the new container storage (£1,165).

Our reserves policy, updated in May 2009, states that the current minimum level of reserves that we wish to maintain, for unexpected major costs or loss of income, is £20,000. Year end reserves stood at £7,283, and with current project plans and income and expenditure projections we expect to reach the target minimum reserve level in 2013.

**UPTON VILLAGE HALL FUNDING 2009-2010**



## Operations Maintenance & Enhancements

The Board has revised the *Hiring Agreement & H&S Policy* and has decided that all user groups should sign and return the Hiring Agreement at the start of each new calendar year. A number of new operational policy statements have been produced and others reviewed. One new policy relates to the extreme wintry conditions experienced during the period. All policy documents can be viewed on the website under the menu item '*facility management*'.

Two personal accidents have been reported this year. One, a fall, had no learning points but the other incident was caused by a drawing pin. We have removed all the old style drawing pins and urge everyone to only use drawings pins of the style that lay flat if dropped on the floor. Where ever possible please recover pins that are now stuck firmly into the board.

One issue that has not been resolved this year regards our rubbish. We still dispose of rubbish via black bags, as despite much lobbying, the local Council have still not given us the means of recycling using different wheelie bins. When we acquire these then we can dispose of our refuse in a more acceptable and safer manner.

Our aging piano has been replaced with an excellent Edwardian 'Broadwood'. This was kindly donated to the Hall and is now being well cared for. The keyboard is locked and the piano mounted on a strong and stable mobile platform. It is stored in the furniture store under a strong cover.



John Gough, who helped us by selecting the piano following our donation appeal, gave us a sell out Valentines Day Serenade concert which showed off its quality and fully funded the costs of this significant enhancement to our facilities.



Several of our concerts and shows use the raised stage as an audience balcony. This has given us cause for concern over safety, which we have now fully resolved. We have a selection of decorative planters filled with plastic floral displays and a wide mobile stairway. These can be arranged to

meet safety requirements while offering an attractive and functional access to the balcony.

Necessary electrical work was completed with an upgrade of the consumer units and several circuits, providing us with certification that all electrical systems at the Hall now comply with current legislation. This has led to a few 'trips' which can be annoying at the time but are due to the safer conditions. Some trips will in due course identify hard faults in our older circuits, which can then be fixed.

Many users will have noticed the occasional unpleasant smells in the toilets' corridor. After a thorough investigation we have resolved to change the urinal flushing to a direct flush via a movement sensor. This is being installed during the August 2010 shutdown. If the corridor still requires forced venting then we have already prepared the electrics and a vent can be added.

Everyone has been very pleased with the sealed surface of what is often referred to as 'our new floor'. It is catering for a multitude of purposes. However, it does take a beating around the circuit of the sequence dancers and we have accepted that each year we will need to at least patch reseal certain areas where we are 'down to the timber'. It is this activity that requires a full 7 day shutdown (9 – 15 August) for which we have had good User co-operation.

The plastered main hall is a great improvement over the gloss painted brick finish but is less resilient to abuse. We urge all users to refrain from using sticky tape and Blu-Tack on the emulsioned walls as these can easily peel off the paint. Adequate notice boards exist.

Storage is a major limitation at the Hall, but this is now being addressed following the kind donation of a very good quality container. This has fitted perfectly onto the previously rather wasted hard-standing bay to the side of the carpark. This has been done with the full co-

operation of our neighbours who have been consulted over the colour scheme and associated planting. Once the container is fully painted and kitted out then we will be drawing up strict proposals for its use. It will NOT become a glory hole for hanging onto rubbish! It will enable us to acquire such bulky items as portable staging and to enlarge the Hall Users broom cupboard by relocating some of the Drama Society's props. Jill Smith, our Storage Czar, will be controlling its usage.



from  
arrival  
to  
settled in



The next area of improvement we will be tackling is the whole of the stage frontage. There is a strong consensus now that the main hall looks good but is 'let down' by the general image of the stage frontage and surrounds. To this end the user base has been surveyed so that we understand the full extent of our stage usage, where the problems are and what improvements people would like. A subgroup of the Board, headed up by Sandra Clarke, is looking at our options and preparing a proposal. Some ideas will be tabled at the 2010 AGM.

### **Board of Trustees & Employees**

The Board comprises Phil Pearn, Phil O'Neill, Norman Draper, Bob Parker, Liz Case, Jill Smith, Geoff Newton, Nancy Turton, Sandra Clarke and David Hart. 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. Some of these members have given many years of service and their experience invaluable. However we are mindful of the need for good succession planning.

The Board of Trustees met formerly on four occasions, 10 September, 9 November, 19 February and 21 May during this 12 month period. The last AGM was on 28 November 2009.

Part of Norman Draper's Maintenance Manager role is to provide an 'on call service' to handle emergency failings. This is recompensed with a modest annual retainer. We are pleased that Ian Hughes has recently agreed to take on the role of Assistant Maintenance Manager and is understudying Norman to tap into his many years experience of the Hall. Ian is project managing this summer's shutdown tasks. Being very practical and 'handy' he is doing many of the jobs himself.

We are indebted to Phil O'Neill for not only having been treasurer for nearly 10 years but he has also handled the secretarial role for the last few years. Clearly these are two major roles.

Our caretaker, Jane Jones, is employed by the Board and contracted for 10 hours per week. She cleans and cares for the Hall and grounds to a high standard that is appreciated by our user base. She also handles the casual one-off bookings, which includes the induction to the hall, often receiving and checking out these users. Jane's dedication to the life of the Hall, supported by her husband Carl, is of the highest standard leading many to wrongly assume that she is our full time member of staff. Our sincere thanks to her.

**Finally** – the website is frequently updated with all the latest information – but any suggestions for enhancements are very welcome on [uptonvh@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:uptonvh@hotmail.co.uk)