

# UPTON VILLAGE HALL ANNUAL REPORT 2010 / 2011

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. The refurbished meeting room is now let regularly and independently of the main hall without any conflict over facilities. Over 30 different user groups use the facilities, covering ages from babies to the elderly, and a great range of sporting, leisure, cultural, personal-care and specialised interests. Since completing our major 5-year refurbishment project in 2008, 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. We are now accredited to the national quality standard Hallmark level 1 and are ready to demonstrate that we meet Levels 2 and 3 when examiners are available.

## 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.

Several new Classes have started up during the year. Of particular note are Tina's computer classes operating five half-days a week with small tailored classes for all ages and abilities. The refurbished room was designed to cater for such use and now with BT's shared FON internet service the room is ideally suited. With the new evening class 'All About Weight' and with two established Art classes and various committee meetings and play readings, the room is now well used but still has some further availability.



The most crowded event of the year, celebrating the Diamond Anniversary of the former Upton Manor school, saw visitors waiting patiently outside and looking in through the windows while we had to enforce our maximum capacity of 230 plus a choir on the stage.



Our most ambitious professional concert was held after UVH Secretary, Phil O'Neill, managed to book Katie Setterfield (winner of the 2008 BBC talent competition 'The One and Only') for the Sunday evening after her appearance at Bodelwyddan Castle. Katie was Dusty, Cher and Tina Turner and the sell-out evening was a financial success despite the high cost gamble.

We are now established as the 'last night venue' for the annual pre-Christmas production by locally-based 'Theatre in the Quarter'. Their 'Forgotten Fortress' was an excellent piece of musical theatre and we are looking forward to future years with them.



Unfortunately the toddlers' 'Little Kickers' sessions only survived a few months but otherwise our afterschool classes are all booming. Of particular note is the Karate class. While all afterschool events are for boys and girls – the dancing classes mainly attract the girls and so we are pleased to redress the balance with these successful Pee-Wee and Karate classes.

As well as afterschool classes the Hall offers a venue for private children's parties. With 50 this year, they are clearly wanted and utilise some of our spare weekend capacity. Entertainers are often booked and this year one of our 'Cheshire Rural Touring Arts' productions by Chinese company 'Yellow Earth' thrilled local children and their grandparents with a play about the lion dance.

The Thursday morning Stroke Association session has been experiencing dwindling numbers and they have now relocated to smaller and cheaper premises. As yet we have no confirmed new user for Thursday morning. In October 2010, the Modelski Orchestra chose to relocate to a venue that could offer Saturday mornings with more consistency than we were able to. We are seeing an increasing demand for full day community events on a Saturday and hence have opted not to take on another regular booking, but to retain Saturdays for Community events while offering private children's parties as in-filling.

## Financial

This past year has been one of further consolidation as we sought to build up our financial reserves following the completion of our major refurbishment projects. In the event we made a surplus of £7,611.

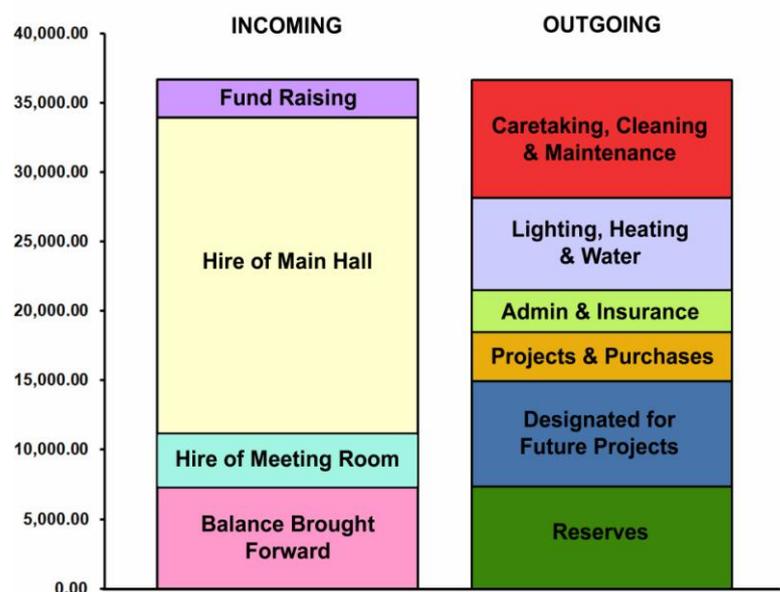
We started the year with a balance brought forward of £7,283 (see the bottom of the left hand column on the chart).

Income from hiring out the Hall and Meeting Room totalled £26,501 which was £1,593 (6%) up on the previous year. Of this the Meeting Room contributed £3,800. We have now gone a long way towards repaying the £9,250 cost of the Meeting Room refurbishment in 2007. In addition, fund raising and donations totalled £2,693 mostly raised from staging nine different events through the year, involving a variety of entertainment including drama, cabaret, dancing and music.

Caretaking, Cleaning & Maintenance expenditure at £8,422 was £562 (7%) up on the previous year due to a number of maintenance projects including electrical work and the external painting.

Lighting, Heating and Water charges at £6,643 were up by

**UPTON VILLAGE HALL FUNDING 2010-2011**



£1,821 (38%). £1,490 of this increase was due to higher gas usage and costs, which were £4,728 this year, and £287 was due to increased electricity costs, which were £1,421.

Administration and Insurance at £3,022 was down by £429 (12%) on last year, principally because our bank loan had been paid off and so there were no interest payments this year.

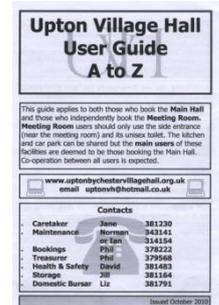
Project expenditure consisted of the extended store cupboard (£1,318), the automatic flush in the men's toilet (£463) and further container costs (£354). The main purchase during the year was the twenty café tables (£1,032), for which we received a grant of £500.

The balance carried forward at year end was £14,894. This consisted of £7,600 designated for future projects, specifically the stage refurbishment, and £7,294 of reserves available for unforeseen eventualities. It is this latter figure that we are aiming to get up to £20,000 in line with our reserves policy. With current project plans and income and expenditure projections we expect to reach this target in three years time.

## Operations, Maintenance & Enhancements

Our preparation for Hallmark 1 accreditation prompted some new policy statements and the formalising of Trustee appointments. These are available for inspection on the website.

Hall operations have gained in complexity over recent years with many more facilities. We have frequently found that many users are unaware of, or unaware how to make use of, many of these facilities. That has now been resolved with the issue of an A5 8-page booklet '**A User Guide A-Z**'. This has been widely circulated and updates can be readily made at modest publication cost. A specific piece of complexity is our remote control skylight system. This is not as robust as we would hope and we are indebted to Maintenance Manager, Norman Draper, for his frequent resetting of faulty controllers. Luckily Norman likes gadgets and he has a job for life here!



One personal accident, a fall while dancing, has been reported this year, but this did not result in any learning points or any failings in our H&S procedures. The monthly 'walk-through' undertaken now by a different Trustee each month has proved very useful and worthwhile. In the light of feedback, Sandra Clarke is progressively modifying the checklist to great effect. Responding to a request at the AGM, we have revisited the issue of holding a UVH first-aid kit. This has been agreed and it is now located in the bar area and regularly inspected.



After many successful shows using hired café tables, we have now invested in 20 of our own, drawing on the new storage capabilities of our container. We gratefully acknowledge the grant from RSA Insurance Group that helped this purchase. We are now able to operate the local Council's recycling system, having acquired the coloured wheelie-bins. The brown and blue bins are each held in clamp devices that ensure the lids fall closed. These clamps were installed by us following recommendation by Cheshire Fire Service. We do ask that hirers take any bulky rubbish away after their hiring. Unfortunately not everyone does and this puts the onus on our caretaker to make a special trip to the Council's Waste facility.

The annoying occasional odour in the toilet corridor has now been resolved with the installation of an automated urinal flush. This has the added advantage of reducing our water usage.

We have undertaken two significant projects this year, the first significantly improving our much needed storage facilities. The Drama store has been halved in size by allocating the Drama Society space within our new container. This has enabled the former 'User Broom Cupboard' (opposite the kitchen) to be much enlarged. It now has a bank of lockable units for UVH management use and also stores the ladders, wheelchair and other sundries that previously 'cluttered' the Utility room that is frequently required as a waiting room or changing room.

The second project has been the design stage of our Summer 2011 refurbishment project on the stage frontage. Sandra Clarke has lead a team with Liz Case, Norman Draper and David Hart, joined by Drama Society members Simon Booth and Ian Hughes, to evolve a design which meets both the functional and aesthetic requirements for the stage frontage and its surrounds. All User Groups were surveyed for their thoughts and the final results will be seen after 1 September when the new curtains are hung. The project is also addressing the glory hole under the stage and all User groups are helping identify what stored items are still required.



Colour has been returned to the front of the building. Not only has the Monica garden had some regeneration but the flagpole and Union Jack have been reinstated after an absence of some half a century. The cost of some £750 was raised within the friends of UVH and all within a month or so. The flag was raised for the first time by local schoolgirl Katherine Dewar, aided by Stephen Moseley MP, on the occasion of the 'History of Upton in 100 objects' exhibition. The Union

Jack was flown on the royal wedding day and hall users are invited to suggest other occasions. Other flags that could be flown on major Village Hall events are being considered, such as a UVH flag denoting our Hallmark Level 3 status once achieved. Two of our partner contractors generously contributed to our flagpole fundraising. Both caterer Sophie Fearnall and builder Bob Dodd have been of great service to the Hall over recent years and we hope these relationships will last for many more years.

The exterior of the Hall has been much improved over recent years with the boundary fence and upkeep of the garden areas. This autumn the exterior woodwork was repainted. We continue to monitor the car park and now have a satisfactory DIY method of filling small potholes.

## 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 our caretaker Jane Jones. David Hart resigned during the year and we convey our thanks to him particularly for his H&S role, which Sandra Clarke has now taken on. Ian Hughes, who became our Assistant Maintenance Manager last year has contributed significantly through the year and is now well acquainted with much of the fabric of the building. All necessary skills exist within the Board, but we are mindful of the need for good succession planning.

During this last 12 month period, the Board of Trustees met formerly on four occasions; 20 July 2010 (the last AGM), 18 October 2010, 25 February 2011 and 1 June 2011.

Our caretaker, Jane Jones, is employed by the Board and contracted for approximately 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 include our many private children's parties. These bookings include a formal induction to the hall with its safety requirements and she is frequently required to receive and check 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)  
Video clips can now be viewed on youtube by search on 'Upton Village Hall'. User Groups are invited to submit clips provided copyright issues have been satisfied.