

# UPTON VILLAGE HALL

## ANNUAL REPORT

### 2011 / 2012

**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. Major refurbishment started on our 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary and we are now in our 84<sup>th</sup> year with a Hall that delights everyone, readily meeting the expectations of today's user-base. The finishing touch is imminent when our new chairs arrive. We are mindful of potential unexpected costs or loss of future income but we have a sound financial reserves policy and currently our income exceeds our outgoings. 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 whenever examiners are available.**

### User Base, Activities and Special Events

The User base has been very stable over the last year but with some users expanding their bookings as their demand grows. Our long established major user groups such as the Drama Society and the Horticultural Society continue to flourish. The production of 'Spanish Lies' saw Simon Booth transform the usual stage to the extensive creation shown here. The Society has helped with hall and stage lighting for the many variety shows put on by the UVH Board over the years and they are now gradually updating the lighting technology.



The Horticultural Society shows have in recent years been getting more & more successful and Summer 2011 was no exception with a record number of entrants, 48 with a total of 559 entries plus 7 children with 16 entries. The Spring show is now a full day event and all three annual shows are packed out during their peak times.



As well as these large events, the extent of our hall floor does encourage the healthy activities such as dancing and various sports. Line Dancing is now held 3 times a week with regular Sunday evening socials. The membership of Thursday afternoon badminton is up to capacity but the Tuesday evening session welcomes new members and restarts in October. Since the orchestra rehearsals moved to a new venue in 2010, we have resisted the booking of regular weekly use for Saturdays. This has ensured that we can give priority to special full day community events such as the 'Upton/Arradon' Twinning 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary where our French visitors

were entertained by a local Ukulele band as shown here. This has allowed us to offer very occasional commercial 'sales' events which pull in a big attendance. Also we continue to be an ideal venue for private children's parties, which we accept up to 2 months in advance. This has been much appreciated by the local community and such parties now average one a week throughout the year.



Our 'Afterschool' classes also continue to flourish but have informed us that the lack of dance mirrors and barres is diminishing what they can offer. Having established that other classes such as Adult Line Dancing would also benefit from this enhancement, we have carried out a successful feasibility study identifying that these can be safely incorporated without adverse effect on other users. Fund raising is now underway. The Jubilee Dance Festival is to be followed during next winter with a concert performed by our dance schools. We then plan to submit an application for an Arts Council grant.

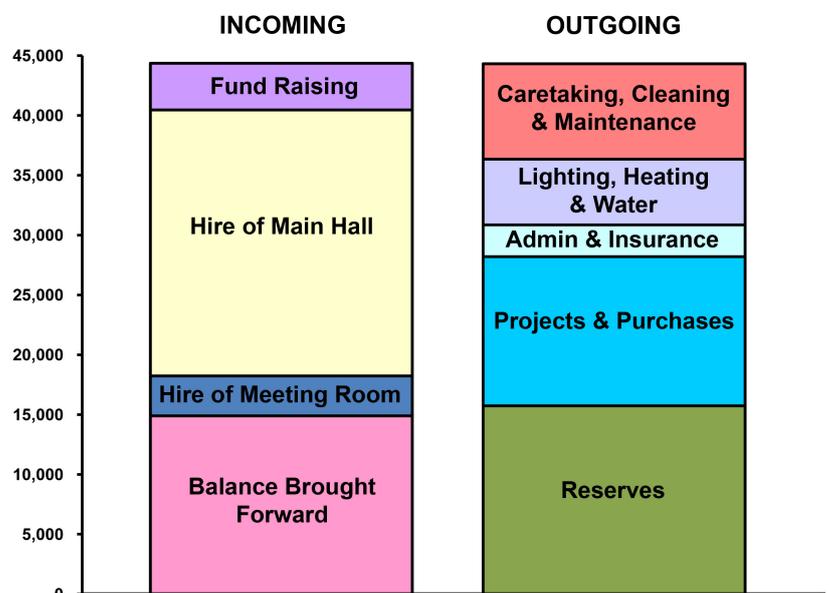
### Financial

Notwithstanding some significant project work and purchases we made a surplus of £857. We started the year with a balance brought forward of £14,894, of which £7,600 was designated for the stage frontage refurbishment. The chart below 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 Reserves carried forward.

Income from hiring out the Hall and Meeting Room totalled £25,568 which was £933 (4%) down on last year. This was mainly due to the loss of three groups from the previous year, the Modelski Orchestra, Little Kickers and the Stroke Association, partly offset by income from additional Computing classes. The Meeting Room contributed £3,339 compared to less than £700 in the year prior to its refurbishment. This facility has now more than repaid the £9,243 refurbishment cost. In addition, fund raising and donations totalled £3,901 mostly raised from staging ten different events through the year, involving a variety of entertainment including drama, cabaret and music.

Caretaking, Cleaning & Maintenance expenditure at £7,977 was £445 (5%) down on the previous year with £760 less needed on maintenance jobs offset by an additional £315 on Caretaking and Cleaning costs following a pay rise for our caretaker. Lighting, Heating and Water charges at £5,503 were down by £1,140 (17%). £969 of this reduction was due to lower gas usage on account of the exceptionally warm winter and a new contract from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2012, which is 18% cheaper than the previous one. Electricity was down by £82 (6%) and Water charges were down by £90 (18%) following the installation of a more efficient toilet flushing mechanism, the payback for which now looks like being about 5 years.

**UPTON VILLAGE HALL FUNDING 2011-2012**



Administration and Insurance at £2,650 was down by £372 (12%) on last year, having secured a much cheaper but at the same time more comprehensive insurance policy.

Project expenditure consisted entirely of the remodelling and modernisation of the stage frontage (£9,487), helped by a donation of £500 from Upton Dramatic Society. The main purchase during the year was the portable staging (£2,650).

Reserves carried forward at year end were £15,751. With current project plans and income and expenditure projections we expect to reach our target minimum reserve level of £20,000 by the third quarter of 2013.

## Operations, Maintenance & Enhancements

Two minor accidents have been reported, both caused by users cutting themselves on their own scissors. There was one 'near miss' incident where a 'tealight' candle got so hot that it began to scorch the tablecloth, despite being in a proper container. Consequently, use of lit candles as part of table decorations will no longer be permitted. The contents of the First Aid box are checked and replenished regularly. Only plasters and wipes are being used (but not always reported as accidents). Monthly health and safety inspections are continuing, helping to promptly identify and resolve any potential problems. In addition, annual Fire Risk assessments, PAT testing of UVH equipment, and servicing of Fire Extinguishers also contribute to the provision of a safe environment for our users.

A major feature of the hall is our large sprung wooden flooring which is now believed to be over 50 years old. The demand on it is high, from the volume of footfall to the sliding of dancing feet and the dynamics of sports such as badminton. Over the years we have struggled to identify how best to maintain it. Each time we sand it back prior to retreatment we are concerned that this may be the last opportunity. This year we are reasonably confident that we have identified the best maintenance regime and if the next 12 months proves us right then in summer 2013 we plan to sand it back again, repaint the badminton lines and religiously maintain it with this proven technique. This demand has led us to acquire a new floor buffer, much improved on the old heavier model we had previously.

Bringing the Hall's facilities up to modern expectations has inevitably meant an increase in sophistication. We now have remote control automated skylights, radio microphones, modern electrical trip systems and movement detectors, amongst other things. Currently we have a competent volunteer support team but we need to be mindful that our facilities are now at a level where you would generally find technical employee(s) support. Without a permanent on-site caretaker it is not easy to ensure that all Hall users use these facilities appropriately and that adds to the demand on maintenance. Over recent years we have established partnerships with local competent tradesmen and they are now familiar with the Hall's facilities. All this is focused on long-term sustainability and we recognize the need to involve younger technical expertise.

Enhancements this year have focused on completing the main hall. The whole stage frontage has been revamped with transforming effect. The curtains, complete with improved winding mechanism, were replaced and the 1950's style hardboard enclosures and pelmet totally eliminated. The opportunity was taken to totally clear the under-stage area and establish that it is sound and reasonably dry and ventilated. The only items re-stored were those that are still wanted and used. The stage area itself has now been painted black and where possible the various fixtures have been discretely relocated.



We are very proud of the various productions that are performed and the final crowning of our refurbished venue will be the 200 new chairs when they arrive shortly. These have been 50% grant funded by WREN after an extensive consultation driven by our Hall

Secretary/Treasurer, Phil O'Neill. Hall users had a prolonged opportunity to trial eighteen different chairs, often using them for a few hours before casting their vote. Thus we were able to demonstrate to WREN maximum community involvement and commitment to the project. Our old chairs, which were second hand back in the 1980s, still have some life in them for short periods of sitting by the more younger element! They are all going to good homes with local scouts and similar outlets.

For some events it is appropriate to use the main stage as a balcony and to perform from a portable stage erected in the main hall. Now that we have fully resolved the safety aspects of seating members of the audience on this balcony, we have invested in a strong collapsible portable staging system which has



proved to be a great success. Being modular we can construct the size and shape we require. A subset was used for the Ceilidh band during our Jubilee Dance Festival.

With no major refurbishment work planned for summer 2012, we do not need a prolonged shutdown. We have a long list of minor jobs from cosmetic to maintenance and updating, but these are being allocated to odd days and part days generally allowing continued usage by those users who do not take a break over the summer.

## Board of Trustees & Employees

The Board comprises Phil Pearn, Phil O'Neill, Norman Draper, Liz Case, Jill Smith, Geoff Newton, Nancy Turton, Sandra Clarke and our caretaker Jane Jones. Sadly we had to accept the resignation of Bob Parker (Chairman 2004-2008). Bob has moved to Great Sutton and is now virtually full-time caring for his wife Pat. We thank Bob for his years of service to the Hall and our best wishes go to him and his family. Succession planning is a key concern and we are seeking to ensure that the Board has all the necessary skills for the long-term. We were pleased to welcome Jane Jones onto the Board and we are looking for other dedicated younger people.

During this last 12 month period, the Board of Trustees met formerly on five occasions, 19<sup>th</sup> July 2011 (the last AGM), 31<sup>st</sup> August 2011, 21<sup>st</sup> November 2011, 20<sup>th</sup> February 2012 and 6<sup>th</sup> June 2012.

Our caretaker, Jane Jones, is employed by the Board and contracted for approximately 10-12 hours per week. These hours have been increased recently due to increased demand from private children's parties and our new floor care arrangements. Although the hall is kept clean to a very acceptable standard, many of the changeovers between user groups have to be carried out without a clean through by Jane. We encourage our users to leave the hall in the state they find it and we are now maintaining brooms and the vacuum cleaner in a more reliable state. Our Maintenance Manager, Norman Draper, is paid a modest retainer since he is viewed as 'on-call' and is occasionally called in to remedy urgent problems. The effort put in by other trustees is both extensive and unpaid but everyone is very committed and team spirit is high.

**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.