

UPTON VILLAGE HALL

ANNUAL REPORT

2013 / 2014

Upton Village Hall is managed by local volunteer trustees. It 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 meeting room is 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 offering a great range of sporting, leisure, cultural, personal-care and specialised interests. Major refurbishment started on our 75th anniversary and we are now in our 86th year with a Hall that delights everyone, readily meeting the expectations of today's user base. 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 full set of Hallmark standards – levels 1, 2, & 3. Although this is a national quality standard we are the only Hall in Cheshire holding this level of accreditation and we have offered our service in assessing other Village Halls.



User Base, Activities and Special Events

Hallmark 3 challenged whether we were doing enough for the current needs of the Upton community. With very little spare availability we did not want to canvass the wider community and then be unable to deliver. However, despite our wide range of activities, two issues were apparent. No new 'community run' regular activity had been started since 2002 (the Local History Group) and for the older generation we were only offering daytime activities of a physical exercise nature. With some Sunday evening availability, a group of people have now formed a 'Strictly' Dance Club. In January, the Friday lunchtime period became available and we ran a consultation to sound out the demand for a Luncheon Club. Potential members and helpers came forward and a taster session (shown here) was held in June. The club will be underway from September with wide support from our local high school and from members of the wider community who do not already use the Hall.



Over recent years, we have experienced a rise in the number of people trying to start their own business by running classes. We try and encourage these where availability allows but it does sometimes mean such ventures are short-lived through lack of demand despite our help

with publicity. One recent success story is RugbyTots (shown here) who meet most Sunday mornings. This has helped redress the balance where we have previously had more young girls than boys using the Hall.

There has been a fair number of bookings by 'Frack Free Upton'. We have invited Dart Energy - other side of the argument - through our local CWaC Councillor, but had no response.

Our established regular users continue to flourish. This summer, Chester Heart Support have celebrated their 25th anniversary and Upton Drama Society their 75th. Our congratulations to both.

We are frequently contacted by charities wanting to run fairs and we try to accommodate these where possible. One of these was a very well run Christmas Market. This was a welcome addition to the Hall's Christmas offerings and we would welcome it annually.



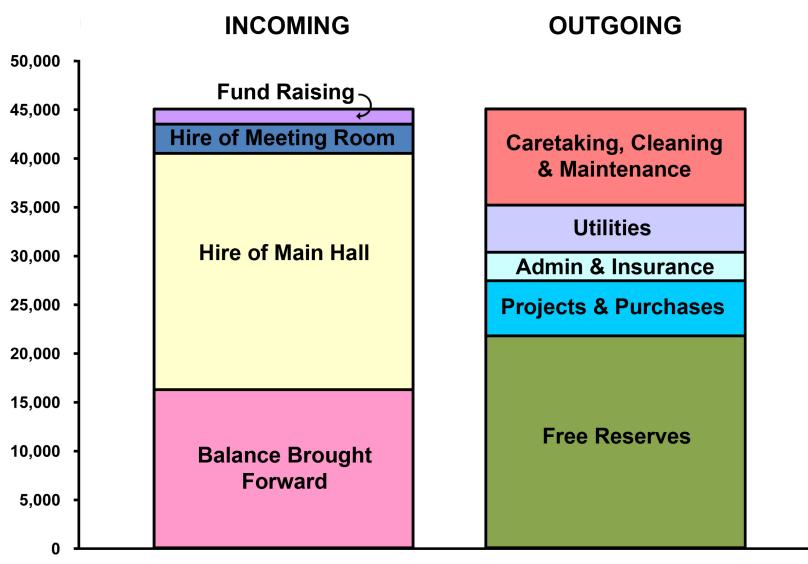
Financial

Over the course of the year we made a surplus of £5,515. We started the year with a balance brought forward of £16,203, of which £2,079 was designated to the Mirrors & Barres fund. 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 to and down the OUTGOING column, culminating in the Free Reserves carried forward.

Income from hiring out the Main Hall totalled £24,226 which was £133 (1%) up on last year. Ad hoc Users of the Main Hall at £2,478 were £461 (16%) lower than last year, largely due to there being 11 fewer children's parties, probably resulting from there being less availability. Regular Users brought in £21,749 up by £595. This was largely due to the new Sunday morning group, Rugby Tots, who started in January, and the two art groups, Stroke Art and Artful Codgers joining forces to become Artful Strokes and moving from the Meeting Room to the Main Hall, also in January. Income from the Meeting Room was £2,998 which

was down by £564 (16%) on the previous year. This was mainly due to the loss of All About W8 at the end of last year and the aforementioned art groups moving to the hall.

UPTON VILLAGE HALL FUNDING 2013-2014



Fund Raising totalled £1,539. This consisted of £361 from events to raise funds for the Mirrors & Barres and £1,178 from other Village Hall events.

Caretaking, Cleaning & Maintenance expenditure at £9,850 was £399 (4%) up on the previous year due primarily to a pay rise for our caretaker at the beginning of the year.

Lighting, Heating and Water charges at £4,841 were down by the considerable margin of £1,426 (23%). Electricity was down by £98 (6%), but the main saving was in gas which was £1,326 lower than the previous year, having used just 70% of last year's gas usage on account of the exceptionally warm winter. There was no change in Water & Sewerage costs.

Administration and Insurance at £2,904 was virtually the same as last year.

The main items of Project expenditure were the upgrade to our sound system (£972) and the installation of the mirrors and barres (£3,018). The latter came in almost £1,000 under budget after we discovered an excellent supplier offering very good value for money. The project was financed by £2,440 of funds raised over the last two years, with the remainder being contributed by the Village Hall. Purchases consisted of the new water boiler (£320) along with several items of equipment and fixtures & fittings.

Reserves carried forward at year end totalled £21,718 achieving our objective of reaching our target minimum reserve level of £20,000 by year end. With current income & expenditure and project plans we should now be able to maintain this level through to the end of our 10 year long term forecast horizon.

Operations, Maintenance & Enhancements

Hallmark 2 and 3 triggered us to further improve our administration and accounting. Several new schedules such as 'assets' and 'routine tasks' were established and existing procedures reviewed. The 'Vision' statement from 2003 was totally reworked as a 'Values & Roles' statement and we frequently ensure that all our operations conform to this high standard we have set ourselves. The CWaC Senior Access Officer was invited to review our progress on his 2005 audit. While congratulating us on many improvements he still encouraged further work and Trustee Jill Smith has accepted the role of prioritising and driving these through. The Hallmark assessment also revealed a need to improve processes around the locking of the side door. This requires additional user co-operation which does seem to be working.

There were 4 reported personal accidents during the period. One of these resulted in a course of medical treatment and the Hall reimbursed the person concerned for their out-of-pocket clothing and travel expenses. From our follow-up assessment, lessons were learnt leading to stricter car park maintenance and to floodlighting enhancements. At least one of our monthly inspections will now be carried out during the hours of darkness.

Two significant electrical items failed and were replaced – the dishwasher and the water boiler (urn). The sound system has been upgraded both in functionality and quality. Many of our bookings are 'back-to-back' and this demands a reliable clock as arbiter. We have successfully replaced the old Hall clock with a modern accurate 'time signal' clock mounted on the previous clock's cabinet such that cosmetically the change won't be noticed.

During summer 2013 the Dance Mirrors & Barres were finally installed. The wall area was cleared first and Diana Wellerman commissioned to design a temporary wall mural. This was then painted by her Upton Art Group, assisted by members of the Stroke Art Group and Artful Codgers. It was widely appreciated before being covered with the mirrors and their curtains.



The recent warm winter meant reduced energy consumption but we are ever mindful of making further energy savings from operational changes and from technology. A 'smart' room temperature controller was installed and then tuned over the following weeks. It is set to

temperatures that reflect the regular user's activities. We continue to seek advice from energy saving consultants for all aspects of the facility.

The most troublesome maintenance over many years has been the floor; coping with its multi-functional use. Evidence over the last year or so suggests that the right process has now been identified and it is holding up successfully. This does require a daytime shutdown every couple of months but we are managing this without disruption to users.

There will be no shutdown during summer 2014 with no significant projects. Car park potholes are being filled on a 'make do' basis with quick set concrete. We plan to carry out a major remake of the car park significantly improving the run off and drainage. Over the next year we are planning feasibility studies into various options.

Upkeep of the Monica garden had been in decline when attention was focused on major Hall refurbishment, but over recent years our caretaker Jane with husband Carl have put loving care into it and the Hall funds have replaced some shrubs and further bulbs have been added. The garden is now a credit to the Hall throughout the year looking both tidy and often colourful. Cheshire judges spotted it in summer 2013 and awarded Upton a 'Little Gem' award. Jane and Carl collected the certificate from Parish Council Chair Pat Lott.



Traditionally, the Hall is seasonally decorated after the December drama production. This year we established icicle lights around the front of the building, cheering the building and extending the period of seasonal decoration.

Board of Trustees & Employees

The Board comprises Phil Pearn, Phil O'Neill, Norman Draper, Liz Case, Jill Smith, Geoff Newton, Nancy Turton, Sandra Clarke, Jane Jones and Kathryn Travis. Kathryn, who has run some afterschool classes with us for several years, was welcomed onto the Board at the last AGM. Succession planning is a key concern and we are seeking to ensure that the Board has all the necessary skills for the long-term. During this last 12 month period, the Board of Trustees met formally on four occasions, 9th July 2013 (the last AGM), 6th November 2013, 5th February 2014 and 14th May 2014.

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. 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.