

# UPTON VILLAGE HALL ANNUAL REPORT 2019 / 2020

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. This successful arrangement allows us to keep our hiring fees at a low level, benefiting our organisations and local users. Over 30 different groups use the facilities, covering ages from babies to the elderly and offering a great range of sporting, leisure, cultural, personal care and specialised interest activities. The Hall is excellently managed, maintained and promoted, building up high esteem within the local community. We have this year renewed our accreditation to the full set of Hallmark standards – levels 1, 2, & 3. Hallmark is a national quality standard for village halls. We are still just one of two Halls in Cheshire holding this full set. Two of our trustees, Phil Pearn and Phil O’Neill, are trained assessors.

## User Base, Activities and Special Events

After a busy 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary time last year, this year has been significantly quieter, although our user groups continued to be as busy as ever. Early in the year, Vicky Britlin stepped down as teacher for the line dancing



but fortunately Daniel Whittacker agreed to take over without any disruption to the schedule. Classes are run on Monday and Thursday mornings and continue to be very well attended, as this photograph shows. There is still one gap in the Hall’s timetable, which is Sundays from 11.00 am till 12.30 pm for any local organisations to fill. Our regular interest groups, the Horticultural Society, the Flower Club, the Chester P’s & Q’s and the Upton Village WI meet monthly on Wednesday evenings and have again enjoyed their usual presentations, displays, exhibitions and trips which have all been well attended and well received.

The Friday Luncheon Club (FLC) continues to be enthusiastically supported by its members who, twice a month, enjoy a first class meal followed by excellent entertainment. However, numbers have reduced somewhat over recent years and effort is being put in to increasing the membership. Thanks must go to Phil Pearn who organises the FLC and the willing band of volunteers who make it happen. We are pleased to see that the Tuesday evening badminton club has increased its membership and so secured its future, and so together with the Thursday afternoon group we have two thriving badminton clubs. Upton Dramatic Society’s December production of “Thanks for Having Me” was well received and raised £500 towards the upgrading of the stage lighting, planned for the Summer of 2020.



We thank Phil O'Neill for organising two entertaining evenings - the Cheshire Rural Touring Arts (CRTA) sponsored Kiriki Club and the very funny satirical sketch show 'From Here to Absurdity', who returned by popular appeal. Also, the Male Voice Choir day organised by Phil Pearn and Geoff Newton's Carol Concert were both a great success. The Carol Concert raised £628 for the Salvation Army.

Sadly, the activities of all of our clubs and societies were curtailed when the Hall was closed on 22<sup>nd</sup> March due to the Coronavirus lockdown. Two CRTA shows had to be cancelled along with the Dramatic Society's production of "Dangerous Corner" for which they had been preparing since the New Year. They hope to stage this play in the Autumn if circumstances permit. Unfortunately, a number of childrens' parties also had to be cancelled due to the pandemic.

## Operations, Maintenance & Enhancements

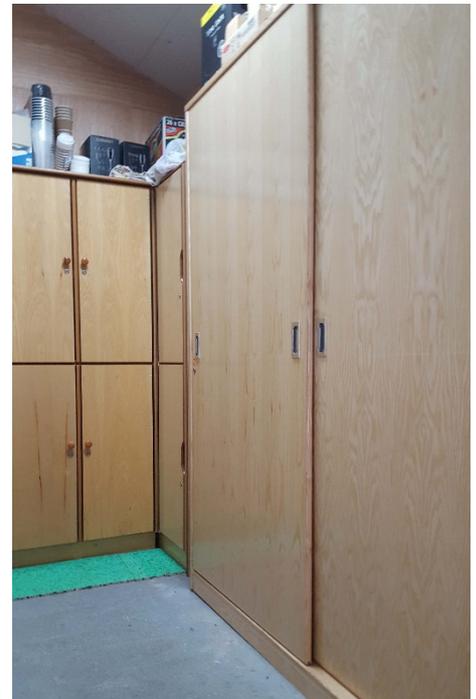
Several jobs have been carried out or were planned for the Summer 2020 closedown. The container in the car park has been painted to preserve it for a few more years, thanks to Phil O'Neill and Ian Hughes. The Hall floor has had a complete makeover which has renewed the badminton lines and improved the longevity of the timber. The floor's condition will be checked annually by the company that treated the floor.

After a review of the non-LED lighting in the building by the Chester Community Energy Company, it was concluded that the savings they were predicting were not achievable and their quote was too high. So Phil Pearn and Ian Hughes took it upon themselves to replace the fluorescent tubes in the kitchen and bar area with LED panels, as these would produce the most electricity savings. They did this at far less than the quoted cost. The few non-LED lights still in place will be monitored and possibly replaced in the future.

Karl Kinson, one of our new Trustees, has undertaken the task of updating the UVH website. He is also producing a smart phone booking facility for future casual bookings.

Work on the storeroom is now finished with the completion of the new cupboards for the bar and FLC. We are indebted to Jane O'Neill who has donated a microwave, which has already proved useful. We have also replaced the water heater in the unisex toilet and bought new flags for the Hall.

During an electrical check it was discovered that the casing on the emergency lights had become brittle, so all emergency lights have been replaced with modern LED versions. We thank Norman Draper for overseeing the annual checks and servicing on the boiler and the dish washer and his work purchasing items needed in the building.



After a review of the casual bookings for children's parties, the hire charge has been increased and a deposit of £60 is now levied on such bookings. This was to encourage hirers to leave the Hall as they found it and so reduce the need for Jane Jones to clean up after them. We are pleased to say that this appears to be working. Jane is also now hiring a chair cleaning machine, which does a much better job than the one we have. Our machine will now be sold.

Every three years we have to be audited for our Hallmark 1,2 & 3 accreditation. This took place in January and was attended by Phil O'Neill, Sandra Clarke and Ian Hughes. Angela Lloyd joined the team as an

observer. Sandra was well informed about every aspect necessary for dealing with H&S. Phil brought all the documentation needed to demonstrate that we were meeting the required standards. His ability to produce every piece of paper at the time required was magical! The check on our work was quickly completed, with only a few recommendations for improvement. Our auditor, Claire Jones, from Cheshire Community Action had also done a great deal of background preparation and was thoroughly efficient and professional.

Most of the Hall policies have now been reviewed and we thank Phil Pearn, Phil O'Neill and Sandra Clarke for carrying out this arduous task. These cover Fire Safety Risk, Health and Safety Policy, Terms and Conditions of Hire, Booking Policy, Environmental Policy, Acquisition of Goods & Services, Financial Policy, the GDPR policy on holding personal data, Key Holders Policy and the Disability Access Review carried out by Jill Smith. We congratulate all those doing the spade work.

We realised that work was needed to be carried out during the summer close-down, some of which might have been carried out as this report was being compiled. The tarmac on the exit and front of the building needed to be replaced. Quotes were acquired and the work was given the go ahead.

The improvement to the stage area and the stage lighting, agreed last year, has been given approval and was scheduled for completion in July 2020.

During the wet weather in the early Spring it was found that the floor joist at the rear of the hall was in poor condition, so that needs to be replaced as well as the strip of flooring above it along the back wall.

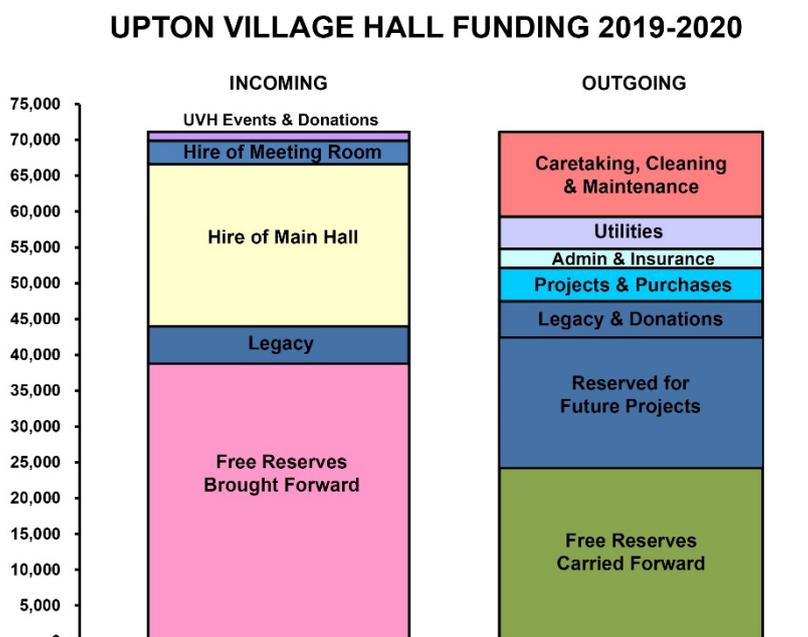
We thank the Trustees for their support in making the Upton Village Hall a valuable community resource.

## Financial

We started the year with a balance brought forward of £44,054 of which £5,000 comprised the legacy from Mrs. Gillian Price which is earmarked for the stage lighting project. Over the course of the year we made a surplus of £3,486. As a result, we finished the year with a balance carried forward of £47,540. Our year was curtailed when we had to close the Hall on 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2020 due to the Covid-19 crisis, resulting in a loss of income of about £4,500. At the time of writing this report, the Hall has not yet reopened.

The chart illustrates the incoming and outgoing flows of funds as itemised in this report. It should be read by starting with the Free Reserves 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 was £22,651, £3,945 (15%) down on the last year. Within this, Ad Hoc Users of the Main Hall at £2,846 were £767 (21%) lower than the previous year, as a result of a considerable number of cancelled bookings. Regular Users brought in



£19,805, down by £3,178 (14%) on the previous year. Income from the Meeting Room was £3,253 which was down by £459 (12%) on the previous year, again due to the closure of the Hall.

UVH Events, Legacy & Miscellaneous totalled £1,277, which included a donation of £500 from the Upton Dramatic Society towards the Stage Lighting and Refurbishment project. Village Hall staged events were down on target as both the Spring Cheshire Rural Touring show and the Dramatic Society production of "Dangerous Corner" were cancelled.

Caretaking, Cleaning & Maintenance expenditure at £11,848 was £347 (3%) down on the previous year, largely due to the Hall closure. Maintenance expenditure continues to be relatively high due to the quantity of equipment that requires regular servicing and repair.

Lighting, Heating and Water charges at £4,531 were £56 (1%) up on the previous year. Electricity at £1,483 was £22 down on last year. Gas at £2,586 was £19 (<1%) up on the previous year. Savings from the closure of the Hall were offset by colder weather at the beginning and end of the 2019 summer, which had resulted in higher gas consumption than in the previous year. Notwithstanding the Hall closure, water at £462 was £59 higher than the previous year, which had been artificially low due to a final invoice from Dee Valley Water that could not be paid after Severn Trent took over our supply.

Administration and Insurance at £2,630 was £200 (7%) down on the previous year. Of this total, Licences & Fees amounted to £598 and our insurance premium was £1,292.

Expenditure on Projects totalled £3,761. This comprised £1,877 on the hall floor resealing and renewed badminton court lines, £1,157 on the new storeroom cupboards, £373 on the prevention of condensation dripping from the skylights, £189 on LED lighting in the kitchen and bar area and £165 on sound system upgrades. Purchases totalled £925, comprising £580 on a new carpet for the stage, £272 on new UVH flags and £73 on miscellaneous equipment.

This leaves a total balance carried forward of £47,540. Along with £5,500 legacy and donations, a further £9,000 is designated for the Stage Lighting & Refurbishment project and another £9,000 for retarmacking the exit drive and front of Hall area. This leaves just over £24,000 free reserves carried forward, just under our minimum reserve level of £25,000.

Shortly after the end of our financial year, we received a totally unexpected but very welcome donation of £7,000 from Simon Turner in memory of his recently departed mother Pat, who had been an enthusiastic member of a number of clubs at Upton Village Hall over many years. £2,000 was donated to the Friday Luncheon Club and the remaining £5,000 was for general Hall funds. We have decided to dedicate the Stage Lighting & Refurbishment project jointly to Pat Turner and Gillian Price, whose generous contributions to our funds have enabled the project to go ahead.

More recently, the hole in our finances caused by the continuing closure of the Hall has been largely plugged by a government grant of £10,000 to small businesses in the leisure and hospitality sector impacted by the Covid-19 crisis.

## **Board of Trustees & Employees**

There has been a change in our ranks of Trustees. Kathryn Navas stepped down and we have been lucky to gain two new members, Angela Lloyd and Karl Kinson. Both have been involved in activities at the Hall over the years and are very welcome additions to the Board. Karl is bringing his IT skills to our team and some youthful vigour!