

# UPTON VILLAGE HALL

## ANNUAL REPORT

### 2015 / 2016

**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 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary and we are now in our 88<sup>th</sup> 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 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

Despite the increase in venues within the area, our spare availability is probably the lowest it has ever been. However fashions change and unfortunately dwindling attendance at the Monday afterschool karate eventually forced them to cease in April. Nevertheless, Travis Academy is thriving and was able to immediately expand taking on the Monday afterschool to meet the increasing demand for dance-based activities while endeavouring to attract more boys. Our suspended floor and dance mirrors make us a highly desirable dance facility and we have welcomed Emma Birkett



with her lively swing dancing. She has started monthly tea dances (shown here) and a summer months Monday evenings teaching class 'Vintage Kicks'.

Very sadly, our Art class tutor, Diana Wellerman, died suddenly this year and she is missed not only by the class but also by the Hall trustees and the wider Hall community. Our sympathy goes to her husband Terry and their family. We are delighted that the class has now been able to restart thanks to one of its members, Meryl.



Recently, use of the Meeting Room has increased with a Tuesday morning 'French for Fun' and a 'U3A German class' on some Wednesday mornings.

Badminton has been played in the Hall ever since the opening in 1928 and currently we offer both an afternoon and an evening session. Recently the white lines have been repainted as shown here.

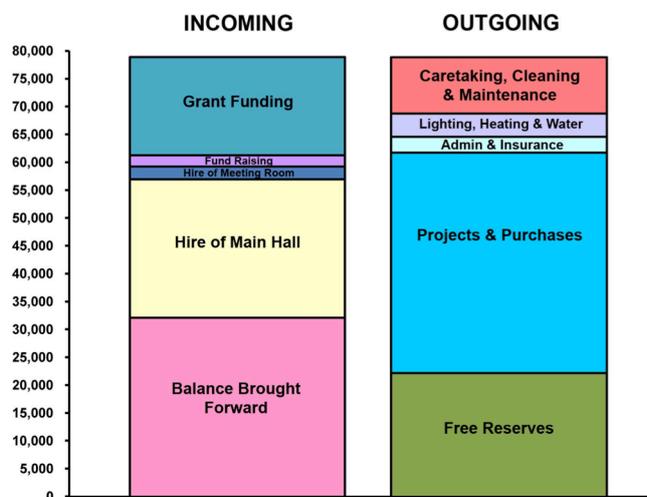
As ever, our set of evening shows has been very varied – *Amsterdam*, a one woman show with poet Chanje Kunda which was preceded by a meal; a lively Canadian folk group *The Fugitives*; a comedy string quartet *Graffiti Classics* and finally a 'Night at the Opera' – all performing to full houses. Most of these shows are arranged through Cheshire Rural Touring Arts but still involve considerable effort on the part of several of the trustees, their partners and friends. As ever when food is also included we turn to the excellent reliable provisions of professional caterer Sophie Fearnall.

## Financial

Over the course of the year we made a deficit of -£10,014. We started the year with a balance brought forward of £32,413, just under £9,500 of which was earmarked for the car park resurfacing project. 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 was £25,004, down £1,338 (5%) on the last year. This was very satisfactory considering we were shutdown for the whole of August. Within this, Ad Hoc Users of the Main Hall at £2,507 were £252 (11%) higher than last year, following buoyant usage over the Christmas period. Regular Users brought in £22,497 down by £1,590 (7%). This decrease was almost entirely due to the August shutdown. Income

**UPTON VILLAGE HALL FUNDING 2015-2016**



from the Meeting Room was £2,322 which was down by £264 (10%) on the previous year, although usage had picked up by year end with the return of the WI committee meetings and two new language classes.

Fund Raising totalled £1,787. This was all raised from seven Village Hall staged events and was £437 (32%) over target. Grant Funding consisted of £14,912 from WREN towards the cost of the Hall insulation project and a donation of £2,871 from Sanctuary Housing for the LED lighting and destratification fans. We are extremely grateful to both organisations for their support.

Caretaking, Cleaning & Maintenance expenditure at £10,236 was £516 (5%) up

on the previous year. This was largely due to additional caretaker wages.

Lighting, Heating and Water charges at £4,206 were £561 (12%) down on the previous year. Electricity at £1,256 was £193 (13%) down on last year due in large part to savings from the LED lighting. Gas at £2,443 was 12% lower than the previous year following another warm winter, coupled with a contribution from the new insulation. Water at £507 was £30 (6%) lower than the previous year, again due to the shutdown.

Administration and Insurance at £2,850 was just 2% down on the previous year. Of this total, Licences & Fees amounted to £1,100 and our insurance premium was £1,118.

Expenditure on Projects totalled £38,278. This comprised £22,344 on the internal energy saving work and £15,934 on the car park resurfacing and improved drainage. Purchases totalled £1,622, the main item of which was the reconditioned upholstery cleaning machine (£1,080), which is proving to be a great success with a less than 3 year payback compared to having the chairs cleaned by a contractor.

Free Reserves carried forward at year end totalled £22,399 comfortably above our target minimum reserve level of £20,000.

## Operations, Maintenance & Enhancements

We had three incidents of minor cuts or bruises – no common cause and no new learning points. There were five falls all during the autumn period – at different events and in different parts of the hall – again with no identified common cause. As the floor surface deteriorates we have been increasing the frequency of buffing. Following the recent painting of the badminton lines and floor resealing this should have given a better slip free surface. Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service paid us an informal visit and concluded that there were no resulting actions. We have held one *Basic First Aid and use of defibrillator* training session and another session; open to all; is planned for 5 August.

The higher than expected demand on cleaning our chairs has resulted in our decision to buy an upholstery cleaner which is now being used periodically by our caretaker, Jane. Chairs needing attention are separated out into the utility room and cleaned in batches. Enhancements have been made to our PA sound system although the radio mikes still experience annoying drop-out on occasions – a problem that is proving difficult to fully resolve. Users are reacting well to our energy efficiency procedures and our regular pattern of user activities has enabled the establishment of an efficient temperature profile through our smart controller. Although there have been occasional issues with the boiler, we are continuing with our maintenance strategy and together with its 82% efficiency does not yet justify any replacement. With increased demand on the dishwasher, we now have a good maintenance contract providing reliable availability. The extent of technical facilities within the hall places a high demand on maintenance. Our current in-house resources are managing the first-line maintenance but we need to ensure that none of this expertise is vested in just one person. Externally we continue to 'keep up appearances – varnishing external doors and keeping the grounds smart. Having good relations with our neighbours, we have contributed towards the costs of boundary hedge maintenance. Despite increased use of the meeting room, co-operation between user groups has enabled the smooth running of shared facilities with two independent groups using the building.



The shutdown was a major event of nearly 5 weeks – running from 29 July to 1 September.



The car park was re-surfaced with improved drainage and edging as well as line marking. This improvement should end the regular pothole maintenance but is dependent on monitoring and clearing of the new storm gully which has adequately handled the extreme downpours. The 'IN' and 'OUT' drives as well as the frontage are deemed adequate to survive a few years before such full attention.

In parallel with attention

to the car park, the main hall interior was fully scaffolded and the ceiling rebuilt to provide a good standard of insulation while retaining the architectural heritage. Our builder, Bob Dodd, and his team worked hard throughout and they left the building in a very clean state with all used areas repainted to a high standard. LED lighting and destratification fans have further improved our energy saving. The project was completed on time and the result was met with praise from the user base. Heat retention has



been much improved – during well attended evening events in winter, heat is retained without further radiator heat input.

Unfortunately, in early January it became evident that the design and implementation for roof venting could not cope with the worst of the weather conditions and water ingress was suffered for about two weeks. A number of inspection holes have now been cut into the ceiling and are regularly inspected. These will be 'tidied' during the summer. Improvements to the venting and to extraction of internal moist air are under consideration both in specification and in costings. An independent professional surveyor has been engaged to advise on a 'pecking order' for implementation. It is likely that the most beneficial improvements can be implemented before next winter; with very little disruption to users.

We have also been busy on various other smaller enhancements to the hall's facilities. As noted in last year's report, our external noticeboard has presented a poor image as well as being functionally inadequate. A new maintenance-free weather-protected noticeboard is now on order and will be installed over the summer along with much improved access and visibility. A window blind has been installed in the accessible toilet and the storage facility for our catering equipment has been much enlarged and improved. The on-going enhancement of facilities has led to a growing number of keys. The previous arrangement for storage of a full management set was proving unworkable and so a new key cabinet and index has been established and is working well. During last year's AGM, one of our users, Joan Draper, requested that the Board consider the acquisition of a UVH flag to fly from our flagpole when appropriate. This has now been done to a design and colour scheme - shown here.



## Board of Trustees & Employees

The Board comprises Phil Pearn, Phil O'Neill, Norman Draper, Liz Case, Jill Smith, Geoff Newton, Sandra Clarke, Jane Jones, Kathryn Travis and Ian Hughes. We warmly welcome Ian (pictured here) who was only co-opted in January although he has been actively assisting in various tasks for the hall over many years. Following the 2016 AGM the intention is for Ian to become Vice Chairman. During this last 12 months, the Board of Trustees met formally on five occasions, 14 July 2015 (the last AGM), 2 September '15, 11 November '15, 3 February '16 and 11 May '16.



Our caretaker, Jane Jones, is employed part-time by the Board. 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 in a more reliable state as well as providing a good working reliable vacuum cleaner. We have now introduced a small 'cleaning' deposit for private children's parties but as yet all parties have been left acceptable and the deposit returned. 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. Their range of skills is exemplary and everyone is fully committed and the team spirit is high.

This year Peter Stirrup is standing down having examined our annual accounts for eleven years, and we thank him very much for his services. We are most fortunate to have secured the services of a new auditor, Colin Hedley, who we look forward to working with.



We must note the passing of Frank (Don) Whaley in his mid-90s. Frank was present at the Hall's opening ceremony in 1928 and has been our guest of honour at recent anniversaries, including the 80<sup>th</sup> dinner – as shown here with Jane Jones.

**Finally** – we are grateful to '*Inside Upton*' magazine for their continued support in our marketing. To view our calendar and all up to date booking and other information visit our website [www.uptonbychestervillagehall.org.uk](http://www.uptonbychestervillagehall.org.uk)