

**Aston on Clun Village Hall**  
(reg charity no.702020)

## Annual Report 2020-21

Aston on Clun Village Hall is governed by a lease and trust deed dated 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2003 and is registered charity no. 702020. The lease is given by, and the freehold is held by, Hopesay Parish Council. The lease has an original term of 50 years. The charity trustees are the members of the Management Committee who were (from 8<sup>th</sup> July 2020 to 21<sup>st</sup> July 2021)

David Jones	Elected at Annual General Meeting. Chairman from June 23 <sup>rd</sup> 2011
Jeff Else	Nominated by Aston on Clun Community Shop. Treasurer from June 23 <sup>rd</sup> 2011
Jude Bowers	Nominated by Hopesay Parish Council
Liz Tucker	Nominated by Hopesay Women's Institute
Ray Heighway	Users Representative
Chris Vaughan	Elected at Annual General Meeting. Secretary from July 2020
Paul Sweetland	Nominated by Hopesay Parochial Church Council

Replacement trustees are identified by the current incumbents who ask other residents for ideas. In the past advertisements have been placed in the Parish Magazine etc. but these have not been successful.

### **Objective**

The objective of the charity is to provide and maintain (and if possible improve) the Village Hall for the benefit of the residents of the parish of Hopesay.

### **Progress and Achievements**

#### Cash Reserves & Reserves Policy

At the start of 2020 cash balances stood at £41,315 and by December 31<sup>st</sup> these had increased to £44,986. At July 1<sup>st</sup> 2021 the cash reserves stood at £52,750. All of these include £2,136 which are donations specifically provided for improvement of facilities for the disabled. The Trust has no liabilities other than its obligations under the lease. The Trustees have established a reserves policy as follows.

1. The Village Hall Trust needs to build and maintain an adequate level of reserves for the following purposes:
  - a) to meet the cost of repair, refurbishment and renewal of the existing Hall structure (including the grounds) and the fixtures and fittings therein;
  - b) to meet the cost of complying with changes in regulations;
  - c) to further develop the Hall and to consider extending it and to improve disabled access to meet the needs of Parish residents, and other users

d) to act as a cash buffer in the event of a fall in the Hall's income, or in the event that a fund raising event does not cover its costs

The Trustees believe that the level of reserves in aggregate should be in the range of £40,000. In setting this number the Trustees have considered that the following work on the Hall will be required in the next few years:

- a) resurfacing the car park
- b) extending the Hall and providing an additional ground floor room
- c) refurbishment of the toilets
- d) providing disabled access to toilets
- e) replacing the curtains in the main hall
- f) replacing/repairing the video and projection equipment
- g) refurbishing the kitchen and replacing kitchen equipment
- h) improving the insulation

The Trustees also took into account the risk of unforeseen significant expenditure on repairs to the utility services and the roof.

#### Maintenance, Repair and Additions

The Trustees continued to review alternative arrangements for heating the main hall bearing in mind both environmental concerns, operating costs and installation costs. However, the Trustees were not comfortable with installing air source heating or ground source heating without getting reliable information on the level of operating costs. The Trustees therefore decided to replace all the electric radiators in the main hall with newer models and to add two additional radiators. Also two destratification fans were added to push down warm air from the upper levels.

The Hall's entire electricity system was tested in March 2020. Some additional works were identified as a result of this survey and the electricians recommendations were carried out in June 2020. The Trustees have decided to keep using the same electrician (as long as quotes remain reasonable) to build an understanding of how the system works following a number of years of changes by different electricians.

In the winter of 2019/20 The Hall experienced major problems with the septic tank serving the Hall toilets etc. There had been prolonged rainfall leading to very high groundwater levels resulting in the soakaway not functioning properly and water flowing in the reverse direction. The tank had to be pumped out on two occasions. When the Hall was built the rainwater from the roof was directed into the soakaway as there was no alternative choice at the time. The Trustees therefore temporarily diverted the water from the roof onto the Green and then put in place a new soakaway to take just the rainwater. At the same time a gulley drain was installed between the paving slabs and the car park to deal with the run off of water from the car park which was otherwise pooling on the slabs.

The Trustees are also trying to get Shropshire Council to deal with the problem of the water running from the road across the car park.

The closure of the Hall resulting from the coronavirus pandemic offered the opportunity to redecorate the Hall. Polycarbonate panels were placed below the screen to reduce the damage being caused by the storage of the fabric chairs. These and the walls were then emulsioned after some significant plasterwork repairs had been made. This work was done by the Trustees but the lobby, stairwell and upstairs room was taken on by a professional firm in view of the need to work at height.

Partly because of the pandemic and the need to lock internal doors and partly because the lock on the front door was becoming difficult to operate the Trustees engaged the services of a locksmith to fit new locks on the front door, store room door and upstairs room with the keys being identical.

The Trustees decided to improve the look of the lobby area by concealing the electricity distribution boards etc behind a hanging curtain. It was necessary as a result to put in a false ceiling to close off the large void above the level of the curtains: this will have the additional benefit of making the lobby easier to keep warm in winter.

The Trustees have accepted quotes from contractors to:

1. Build and install new doors for the serving hatches
2. Repair and recover the skirting board and the dado rail in the main hall.

The Trustees are seeking competitive quotes to:

1. Install a disabled toilet
2. Repair the doors to the kitchen cabinets
3. Install new kitchen heating
4. Install a new water heater over (or under) the main sink in the kitchen
5. Sanding and oiling the floor in the main hall.

### Village Shop & Occupational Licence

The Community Shop was placed on the edge of the Hall car park in March 2013 and opened for business in April 2013. The Occupational Licence was renewed in December 2018 for a period of 2 years. Based on a surveyors valuation the Hall receives an annual income from the Occupational Licence of £1,500. The Hall also benefits from the sale of solar panel electricity to the Shop. The Hall and Shop have agreed in principle to put in place a 10 year lease in place of the Licence arrangement and the documentation of this is being dealt with as at the date of this report.

### Management & Administration

Jeff Else and David Jones continued as Treasurer and Chairman respectively. Chris Vaughan was elected as Secretary. In addition to the AGM the Committee meets four times a year and in the interval between meetings there is regular dialogue between Trustees. In 2020 and 2021 some meetings took place online.

The Hall's hiring fees were unchanged. There were minor amendments to the Hall's documentation. The Trustees intend to review the Hall's hiring charges later in 2021. The Trustees believe that in normal times the use of the Hall compares favourably to

other halls in the area. The Hall's hiring charges are competitive – particularly during the summer when hirers do not need to pay for heating. The Hall trustees keep under review the balance between earning sufficient revenue to maintain the Hall and keeping the Hall free so that it can be booked by local residents.

The Hall's website is stored on One.com. At the present time the Hall makes no use of social media. The cost of maintaining the new website is £160 per annum (excluding VAT).

### The Coronavirus Pandemic and Impact Upon Hiring, Social Activity and Fund Raising

From the middle of March 2020 the Hall trustees decided to cancel all events sponsored by the Hall itself and that was shortly followed by full closure of the Hall in accordance with new regulations. Since then there have been no activities within the Hall organised to raise funds. In September 2020 the Hall started to run coffee mornings again to facilitate social contact – particularly for those living on their own, but these had to be discontinued between December and May 2021.

Hiring recommenced in September 2020 but was discontinued again in December and recommenced in mid May 2021.

The Steam & Vintage fair was cancelled in 2020 but was put on in June 2021. This event mainly takes place on the Green but makes use of the Hall facilities. The Hall does not charge for this event which is for the overall benefit of the Parish. The opportunity cost to the Hall for this is £65 in aggregate.

No showings of Flicks or National Theatre have taken place and there is some doubt about audience enthusiasm given the rise in infections in July 2021.

The Trustees have made arrangements to hold a Parish Hog Roast party on August 8<sup>th</sup> where the cost of the food will be met out of Hall funds partly recouped in part by the profits from a pay bar.

As noted in more detail in the accounts the Hall's hiring and Arts revenues were sharply impacted by the Coronavirus pandemic and the effect will be just as marked in 2021. The Hall was fortunate in being supported by grant funding from central government to the extent of £11,334 in 2020 with a further £16,097 in 2021.