

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

Annual Report 2021-22

Aston on Clun Village Hall is governed by a lease and trust deed dated 3rd 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 21st July 2021 to 28th June 2022)

David Jones	Elected at Annual General Meeting. Chairman from June 23 rd 2011
Jeff Else	Nominated by Aston on Clun Community Shop. Treasurer from June 23 rd 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
Cynthia Hartas	Co-opted on 26 th October 2021

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 2021 cash balances stood at £44,985 and by December 31st these had increased to £48,548. At June 1st 2022 the cash reserves stood at £45,032. 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 £35,000. 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/repairing the video and projection equipment
- f) refurbishing the kitchen and replacing kitchen equipment
- g) 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 following works were undertaken since January 1st 2021

In January 2021 the rainwater run off from the roof was diverted to a new soakaway constructed (with Parish Council permission) on the Green. At the same time new ACOS drains were installed along the edge of the car park adjacent to the Hall to deal with the rain water that was pooling across the paved path. Both installations have worked as there has been no further requirement to pump out the septic tank and the puddles over the pavement no longer occur.

The car park surface continues to be of concern and during 2022 the surface was swept to reduce the amount of loose gravel and a temporary repair was made to a number of potholes in the centre of the car park using cold lay macadam. The trustees are considering a more complete repair to the centre of the car park as this area gets the most wear.

A related issue is the water which runs from the road across the car park which has started to happen since a repair by Shropshire Council of the road has led to water pooling in the road outside. The trustees have approached our local councillors to ask for Shropshire Council action to rectify the situation but this has not been forthcoming. As an alternative to taking expensive legal action the trustees have sought quotes from local contractors to install a drain across the mouth of the car park at a cost of just under £2,000.

During the course of 2021 the trustees involved with the cinema and National Theatre noticed that the picture on the screen was not as bright and colours were faded. In April 2022 the situation became much worse and the film showing of Cruella had to be cancelled as well as an NT Live showing of Henry V. It was not completely clear what the problem was as the projector lamp was less than half way through its expected life. The trustees decided to buy a new lamp at a cost of £157 rather than replace the projector and that has thankfully solved the problem. Additionally the trustees repositioned the central speaker to improve the audio quality.

The Hall floor was sanded and lacquered at a cost of £2,390. The trustees decided to go with a harder wearing lacquer as there are doubts whether the floor will stand a further sanding.

The painting and staining of the Hall woodwork was completed in February 2022 with the painting of the dado rail and skirting board and the staining of the entrance doors into the main hall at a cost of £980.

To complete the redecoration of the Hall the trustees decided to replace both curtains and curtain rails. An extensive exercise was undertaken by two of the trustees to produce suitable fire resistant choices and the trustees held a special meeting to make the final choice. The curtains were professionally made. The new curtain poles and were put up by a trustee team (and relatives). The cost of the new curtains and poles was £2,044.

The sliding doors that covered the serving hatches were becoming increasingly difficult to move and looked out of place against the newly redecorated interior. The trustees therefore decided to replace the doors with outward opening hinged doors custom made to fit the opening. These were completed and installed in August 2021 at a cost of £1,466.

The Trustees are seeking competitive quotes to:

1. Install a “unisex” disabled toilet
2. Install new kitchen heating
3. Install a new water heater over (or under) the main sink in the kitchen

There is a disabled facility within the ladies toilet but this is unavailable to men and is also not compliant with current standards. There is room within the ladies to make the disabled toilet a stand alone facility available to both genders. A quote has been received from one local builder and a second quote has been promised by early July.

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 continued 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.

The Hall's hiring fees were increased by 50p per hour. There were minor amendments to the Hall's documentation. The Trustees believe that 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

The Hall opened again in May 2021 once the Government's pandemic restrictions were lifted. Special measures relating to ventilation and sanitising were kept in place and these continue to be available to hirers who wish to take advantage of them.

At first, hiring activity was slow to pick up. Regular hirers only gradually resumed their former activity - the last one returning in Spring 2022. With the decline in the level of coronavirus infection there has been a recent sharp increase in activity and hiring levels have probably benefited from the investment in the Hall's appearance.

Revenues were down in 2021 as a result of the pandemic – both from hiring and use of the Hall for entertainment. While revenues are now increasing this will probably impact the Hall in 2022 as well.

The Trustees held a Parish Hog Roast party on August 8th 2021 where the cost of the food was met out of Hall funds recouped in part by the profits from a pay bar. The net cost was £611. The objective was to bring the parish residents back together following the difficult times during the pandemic and the event was judged a great success.

The Trustees also held a hog roast lunch on June 5th 2022 as part of the parish celebrations of the Queen's platinum jubilee. The trustees received enthusiastic support – including finance – from the Parish Council and the Community Shop. The Hall applied for, and was given, a grant of £1,000 from Making a Difference Locally a Tuffins related charity. The trustees spent £700 of the Hall's own resources.