

Aston on Clun Village Hall

(reg charity no.702020)

Annual Report 2022-23

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 28th June 2022 to 28th June 2023)

Paul Sweetland	Elected at Annual General Meeting. Chairman from June 23 rd 2022 – also Nominated by Hopesay Parochial Church Council.
David Jones	David stood down on the 28 th June 2022 after 10years of loyal service to the community as Chairman of the Hall Trustees. The Trustees wish thank David for his dedication to the care of the Hall, and his vision of the way forward. David has continued as a Trustee as per the date above.
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 (Chris stepped down as Secretary, and Trustee on May 3 rd 2023)
Cynthia	Hartas Trustee
Ron Church	Co-Opted on 6 th May 2023

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 2022 cash balances stood at £48,548 and by December 31st these had decreased slightly to £45,529. At June 1st 2023 the cash reserves stood at £41,000. 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:

1. a) resurfacing the car park
2. b) extending the Hall and providing an additional ground floor room
3. c) refurbishment of the toilets
4. d) providing disabled access to toilets
5. e) replacing/repairing the video and projection equipment
6. f) refurbishing the kitchen and replacing kitchen equipment
7. g) improving the insulation
8. h) improving the hot water and heating in the Kitchen and Toilets.

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 have been undertaken since January 1st 2022

With more and more comments forthcoming on how difficult the large tables in the hall were to handle because of their weight, the Trustees looked at different scenarios to help combat this. After much thought it was decided in July 2022 to purchase a further eight lightweight tables at a cost of £1,022 and are consequently much easier to handle. Eight of the heavier ones have been put into storage, these are used when people wish to hire tables from the hall and for large events.

To help widen the appeal of the Hall, and meet growing requests, it was decided we would install a Wi Fi connection. After much deliberation, and a lot hard work by Chris Vaughan – our then secretary – we settled on SWS Broadband. The installation went ahead In September 2022 at a cost of £100, with no monthly fee's for 30Mbs. The installation also required a surge protected socket, this was fitted independently by the halls electrician at a cost £177.

Having replaced the lamp in the projector in April 2022 the picture quality was markedly improved, but towards the end of the year the picture seemed to again lack colour and brightness. To ensure we provided a quality experience at Flicks in the Sticks and National Theatre, the Trustees thought it prudent to invest in professional technical help. In January 2023 SMS Installs of Shrewsbury were contracted to fault find our projection systems at a cost of £225. From this inspection it was found that one of the HDMI cables to the projector was faulty, and the Blu-Ray player had an intermittent fault, a new Blu Ray was purchased for £300 and the spare HDMI cable put into use. The picture quality is now back to levels we would expect and we have received many positive comments on this.

In March 2023 there was a need to freshen up the paintwork in the Hall. The walls were given another coat of emulsion, and the skirting, dado, window sills and surrounds of the new kitchen hatches were repainted with a more durable paint – Dulux Satinwood. This task was completed by the Trustees, with the paint costing £136.

The car park surface continues to be of concern, and although the surface was swept in 2022 to reduce the amount of loose gravel, it will need to be done again before this winter. Over the year several more temporary repairs have been made to a number of potholes in the centre of the car park using cold lay macadam, this has been carried out by the Trustees.

A related issue has been the water which runs from the road across the car park, this started to happen following a repair by Shropshire Council to the road and has led to water pooling in the road outside. In April 2023 B.S.Robinsons (Broome) fitted ACO drains across the car park entrance, and a soakaway just the other side of the notice board for the run off to disperse in. We have had several heavy storms since this was installed and so far it is coping well. The was done at a cost of £2,784.

To help improve safety at night in the car park the Trustees agreed it wise to have a light fitted on the south end of the Hall, this was done in August 2023 at a cost of £177 and has greatly improved visibility in this area.

In March 2023 work was due to commence on a “unisex” disabled toilet, but due to the contractor falling ill it had to be rescheduled for w/c 17th July 2023. This will take in part of the ladies toilet and will cost £5,280. As noted earlier in the cash reserves section of this report we have £2.136 of donations to put toward this project.

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. The Hall also benefits from the sale of solar panel electricity to the Shop.

The Hall and Shop had previously agreed in principle to put in place a 10 year lease, in place of the Licence arrangement. A great deal of work has been put into this, and we now have a lease that is based on a heads of terms which was approved by the trustees in September 2020. The lease runs for a period of 10 years from the date when the documents were exchanged and therefore is likely to expire in March 2033. The lease rental is £1,500 per annum and there is a rent review provision after 5-years. To protect the Shop in the event of a fall off in trade or issues with planning the Shop has the right to break the rent at the end of a succession of 2 year periods with the first break date being in 2025.

In negotiating the lease we have been advised by Aaron's, a firm of solicitors experienced in property and charity law, in respect of the valuation we have also been advised by Halls GB.

Management & Administration

Jeff Else and Paul Sweetland continued as Treasurer and Chairman respectively. Chris Vaughan continued as Secretary up until May 2023 when he stood down from this role and as a Trustee, the Committee would like to take this opportunity to thank Chris for his dedication and hard work during his time as a Trustee. In addition to the AGM the Committee meets four times a year and in the interval between meetings there is regular dialogue between Trustees.

There have been minor amendments to the Hall's documentation, especially of note is the Halls Risk Assessment being updated. The Trustees believe that the use of the Hall compares favourably to other Halls in the area.

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).

Social Activity and Fund Raising

In order to provide social activity for the parish the Trustees arranged a number of events across the year.

The fortnightly Coffee Morning is well supported with an average of 18 plus people regularly getting together. Whilst this activity is not intended to be a significant source of income, the Trustees are looking into new ways of advertising the dates it is held on.

On September 24th 2022 the Hall held a MacMillan Coffee Morning, that was open to all in the local area. We received many donations of cakes, biscuits, kind help from volunteers and amazing prizes for the raffle. The event was an unbelievable success raising a total of £840.

We have continued to show theatre performances from National Theatre Live, and our policy of taking a more selective approach in booking these shows still stands, in all but a few instances we have maintained a steady following.

Flicks in the Sticks has had a very good year, with good audience figures. In March 2023 we took the opportunity to show a documentary film on the life of Eric Ravillious – renowned British artist – this proved very popular, with an audience of 91 people, it also brought a lot of 'new' people to our Hall. We have also introduced a regular bar at each show, and this has also proved popular.

On May the 8th the Hall, Community Shop and Parish Council came together once again, this time to take part in the Big Help Out initiative, which was part of the Kings Coronation Plans. To make it open to all of the parish we decided to do the Big Clean Up and Donating to the food bank. This was a resounding success with around 30 volunteers picking up around 25 bags of rubbish in the Hopesay Parish. The food bank donations table was also groaning

under the weight of goods donated, and this was very much appreciated by the food bank in Craven Arms, who asked all who donated to be heartily thanked for their generosity. Tea, Coffee, biscuits and soup was available to all who came.

The Hall does not charge for two events which are for the overall benefit of the Parish, these are Arbor Day on the last Sunday of May and the Steam and Vintage day at the end of June.

Hiring.

The Hall continues to be hired out on a regular basis for classes, exercise and social activities for local people and outsiders.

The following are regular bookings:

Ballet
Line Dancing
Tai Chi
Yoga
Dog Training
Sewing group
Women's Institute
Monthly Dance Night
Monthly Marches Book Art Group
Craft Fair

In addition the Hall is used for one off events such as weddings and birthdays.

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.