

Chairman's Report for 2012/13

Our activity as a managing committee must be viewed against the objectives stated in the 1960 Trust Deed:

To provide a Village Hall for the use of the inhabitants of Tiverton and neighbourhood, particularly for

- Meetings
- Lectures and Classes
- Other forms of recreation and leisure-time occupation with the object of improving their conditions of life.

Any income that the management committee raises is used in the following order of priority, as required by the Trust Deed:

1. Expenses of administration
2. Hall maintenance, upkeep insurance and other operating expenses
3. Furthering the objectives of the Trust Deed

Any money not needed for working purposes will be treated as capital and invested.

These objectives are delivered through a management committee which has maintenance and the good appearance of the Hall as its priorities. Where necessary, the committee promotes and organises events to raise funds for maintenance of the Hall.

To this end, the following activity was promoted by the committee in 2012/13:

- WREN came through with full funding for the Kitchen Refurbishment Project and the hall was closed for most of July to allow the work to be completed. Internally, the central heating system was replaced and the kitchen enlarged and re-equipped; a nice touch was lowering the kitchen ceiling to give a cosier feeling in the servery. The old bar area was ripped out and now serves as a storage area for tables and chairs, effectively giving us more floor space for larger events. Externally, windows, guttering and fascia boards were replaced and a new front door fitted.
The hall has been completely repainted in a lighter shade of magnolia, to make it feel lighter and more spacious, especially in the toilets.
The external boiler house has been emptied with the installation of an internal, wall-mounted boiler, so we have extra storage space for chairs that had been cluttering the gents' toilet.
This all contributes to making the refurbished hall not only more energy efficient but seeming to be more spacious, light and airy.
- The hall was officially re-opened in October with a small ceremony around a wine and nibbles evening. All the principal funders managed to attend the event and were complimentary about the end results; the WREN representative, Richard Smith, seemed to think they had good value for their money.
- There was a continued programme of maintenance inspections to satisfy the requirements of licensing authorities and our insurers, for instance the annual Fire Extinguisher Inspection and monthly Emergency Lighting checks.

- Regular committee meetings were held through the year, approximately every 4 months.

The Committee is the poorer for the death of Norma McLauchlan on 11 Oct 2013 who represented the Garden Club.

We continue to find it very difficult to attract new committee members who will play a full part in the management of the village hall, so the current committee has to work that bit harder to manage the hall in way our users have come to expect.

The Drop-In Coffee Morning continues to run on a monthly basis with steady attendance and makes a modest contribution to Hall funds (£42).

Income from hire of the hall at £1986 has fallen significantly compared to last year (£2762). The loss of £778 in income is in part due to closure of the hall for the kitchen work (estimated loss of £224 in income) and cessation of the hire by Age Concern (£385 in the previous year). The Parish Council annual donation of £100 towards operating costs was not made this year; in its place the PC funded the kitchen project to the amount of £600.

We would expect around £324 of this loss to be restored next year when we are available for the full year.

Energy costs at almost £886 are more or less in line with last year, as there would have been little heating used in July (when the hall was closed) in a normal year. We continue to preheat the hall for selected users.

Along with energy, the cost of cleaning at £772 dominates the hall expenditure, but MollyMop continue to provide an effective and reliable service.

The contribution from interest on deposits (£138) has fallen in line with national interest rates.

Despite taking out £5,045 (rather less than the £6,177 committed to the project last year) to fund the refurbishment project, we still have a healthy balance sheet which enables the committee to ride out what we anticipate is a temporary loss in income and still meet our revised Reserves Policy commitment which requires a balance of £6500.

The Committee continues with its policy of not undertaking an external audit of its accounts as the base turnover is well below the £25,000 threshold at which the Charities' Commission requires independent examination of the accounts (CC31).

To summarise, 2012/13 has been about improving the hall facilities to make it competitive in its offering against the surrounding halls that have been rebuilt or refurbished to a high standard in the past few years and have thus raised the bar for what users expect from a community facility. Other work has attended to normal wear and tear, so that the hall is now in a very good position for the next decade or more in terms of major maintenance activity.

Continuing to control costs becomes ever more important to make up for the loss of a long term user, but we are hopeful that our improved facilities will attract new users and we can continue to offer the hall at a very competitive rates.

S A Armitage
Chairman