

Chairman's Report for 2015/16

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 2015/16:

- Managing an on-going 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.
- In the absence of any project work, we have held 3 committee meetings during the year, including an AGM.

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. We currently have vacancies for 2 committee members (out of a total committee membership of 10)

Income from hire of the hall at£3,013 is significantly down on last year (£3,526) and unfortunately the two most recent long term users (Keep Fit and Pilates) have given notice that they are ceasing to use the hall in the next financial year. Casual hire at£488 has doubled compared to the previous year, in part due to the activities of the newly reformed Village Society and support from a Scottish Dancing group. We believe our policy of offering up to date facilities at a modest rental (subject to a£20 minimum charge) is paying off as the message gets out into the wider community. The Parish Council annual donation of£100 has not appeared this year.

The cost of cleaning at£803 dominates the hall expenditure, and after a rather bumpy period around The expenditure on gardening has increased by 30% during the year to£210, which will need careful control as projected income falls.

We are currently benefitting from the very low fuel oil prices, so heating costs at £290 look very modest this year but the trend is for an increase in oil pricing, so we can expect a significant increase in costs when we need the next oil refill.

The Drop-In Coffee Morning continues to run on a monthly basis with steady attendance and makes a modest contribution to Hall funds (£20).

The contribution from interest on deposits (£127) continues at a low level in line with national interest rates. Our Premium business account at Barclays has recently announced a cessation of interest payments on deposits, so this modest income will not be present into next year.

Altogether, we are looking at a loss in income of around £1000 next year (£740 long term hire loss, £125 lost interest, £200 increase in fuel oil). So we are probably looking at breakeven at best next year. With substantial funds to back us, we could continue at our present hire charge rates with close monitoring of the financial situation. Raising rental charges will be a key committee decision at the forthcoming AGM.

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, 2015/16 has been about maintaining the hall in the good condition by following up promptly on any significant items of maintenance, and trying to attract more users. Continuing to control costs will ensure that we are able to offer the hall at a very competitive rates to those new users.

S A Armitage Chairman