

Chairman's Report for 2021/22

This report covers the first full year since the Covid-19 restrictions were lifted, but sadly we have not returned to pre-Covid levels of usage and income. There is little indication that we will return to the levels of usage that allow us to feel comfortable that the hall is running at least at breakeven. For instance, History Society dissolved because of lack of support at their committee level, and casual hire is well down on pre-Covid levels. Bridge has struggled to maintain its Wednesday afternoon sessions, resulting in a big loss in income (approx. £430 on the year).

Regular inspections were carried out to ensure the fabric remains in good order and to pick up on any maintenance issues. In particular a leaking radiator joint has been repaired for the third time and now looks permanently sorted, but at significant cost. The five-yearly electrical inspection this year revealed several issues that must be sorted out before too long. Additionally, the step lighting is in poor condition due to atmospheric corrosion and will need replacing shortly

The Sundries items at £210 are mostly down to dealing with a cooker radiant hob problem. An accidental switch on very nearly resulted in a fire. The solution was to disable the hob and provide an independent induction hob and suitable pan.

Other items such as insurance and utility costs are running close to pre-Covid levels. Happily, we are still running on fuel oil bought at the Covid-depressed price, now already almost quadrupled. An expensive tank refill is anticipated next year along with a significant rise in the cost of electricity.

Donations show a large, one-off increase due to Parish Council delays in payment for their 2020/21 annual grant and a generous disbursement from History Society as part of its winding up process.

The garden received a thorough work over last year and we have been able to hold off expense in this area with some help from the Committee ensuring the escape route is kept free of moss and overhanging vegetation. Gardening is likely to be another expense for next year.

The accounts show an operating deficit for the year of £300, which closely mirrors the reduction in income from Bridge Club. The loss this year is expected to recur next year, swollen by the future increases in energy bills.

Whilst it might seem unusual to appear comfortable with an ongoing loss, we do have the resources to remain solvent for several years to come due to the generous government Covid support grants. The village hall has the remit to provide a resource for the village, not to make a profit.

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). The Chairman, who carries out the internal audit, has no access to money or bank accounts; this clear separation of responsibilities enables the Committee to have confidence in the process.

S A Armitage, Chairman