

**OTHERY
VILLAGE
HALL**

Registered Charity 304604

Annual Report

**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30TH
JUNE 2021**

otheryvillagehall.org.uk

TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT

1st July 2020 - 30th June 2021

Secretary to the Management Trustees

Bridget Gander

Othery, Bridgwater, Somerset.

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Management Trustees:

Stephen Richards Bond	Chairman
Andy Savva	Vice Chair and Health & Safety
Bridget Gander	Secretary
Janet Savva	Treasurer
Ella Jennings	Booking Clerk
Andy Wright	Maintenance Officer
Neil Anderson	
John Cole	

The expressions *Management Trustees* and *Committee* are used interchangeably in this document and are the same thing.

Bankers: Charities Aid Foundation Bank Ltd, 25 Kings Hill Avenue, Kings Hill, West Malling, Kent ME19 4JQ

Independent Financial Examiner: Isobel Davies, West View, Fore Street, Othery, Somerset. TA7 0QQ

Insurers: Ansvar Premier Way, Romsey, Hants, SO51 9DF

Governance

Othery Village Hall was established by a Declaration of Trust dated 17th June 1958. The grand opening of the Hall was believed to be at a ball on 20th October 1962 after a fundraising campaign to recoup the money involved in the original purchase of land and building costs.

The Hall was extended and improved in 2005 with help from The National Lottery, Viridor Credits, Sedgemoor District Council, Othery Parish Council, and many private donations. The Hall and land are held nominally by The Charity Commissioners Custodian. The committee take responsibility for all aspects the operation of the Hall, its finances and for its upkeep and development. The Hall has been awarded Hallmarks 1,2 and 3 by the Community Council for Somerset in recognition of the quality of its management, administration and compliance with legislation relating to community buildings. The Hall comprises of the main hall, foyer, storage rooms, toilets, catering kitchen, bar, changing room, stage, chair store and car park.

Appointment of Trustees

The Trust Deed governs the appointment of trustees and the management of the charity. Trustees are elected at the Annual General Meeting which is to be held in October upon at least one week's notice. The Parish Council have the right to nominate one of its members to be a committee member before the AGM and that person will form part of the newly formed committee of nine management trustees. The other members are voted in at the AGM. The committee shall have the power to co-opt not more than three additional members to represent interests in Othery and the neighbourhood not represented by any organisations. The committee meets monthly, at present, on the third Tuesday of each month, in person or by Zoom, inter-committee member communication, information sharing and occasionally decisions are made by using Whatsapp and email communications.

Objectives of Trustees

The Deed of Trust requires the charity to provide "a Village Hall for the inhabitants of Othery and the neighbourhood without distinction of sex or political, religious or other opinions and in particular for the use for meetings, lectures and classes and for other forms of recreation and leisure time occupation with the object of improving the conditions of life for the said inhabitants"

Principal Activities in pursuit of Objectives

The Hall is normally used throughout the year for a variety of activities including Dance Classes, Craft Group, Tai Chi for Health, Astronomy Group (Sowy Stargazers), Waggy Tails Children's dog training classes, Gardening Club , The Somerset Branch of The Western Front Association, Short Mat Bowls, Youth

Club, Playford Dance Group, Sticky Church, Othery Society Lectures , Church events, Parish Council, School performances, PTA, Community information events, music nights, Arts and Craft fair fundraising activities, charity bingo, music, hobbies day, harvest suppers, plays, training events, elections, and Annual Street Fayre parking.

The Hall is available for hire for private functions including wedding receptions, anniversary and birthday parties, funeral wakes, community social functions and fundraising events.

The scale of activity has been limited throughout the year, it being substantially curtailed as a result of Covid-19.

Hiring Agreement

Booking use of The Village Hall is accessed via the website the hirer acknowledges they are bound by the standard hiring terms. The hiring agreement states that the hirer has read the Halls terms and conditions and forms a contract between the parties setting out their respective responsibilities.

Licenses

The Hall has a premises license issued by Sedgemoor District Council governing the provision of entertainment to the public and sale and supply of alcohol. The licence is held by the Trustees who are collectively responsible for its administration. The hall is licensed by the Performing Right Society for live music and has a PPL licence.

3.

Risk Management

Covid-19 risk assessments have been carried out and the outcomes implemented. Within the terms of the restrictions imposed by law the use of the hall, if at all, was limited to events involving no more than 30 people. Other mitigations and procedures were also put in place to make the use of the Hall as safe as possible. Limitations on numbers have been removed and returned to the user limits previously in place. Users must carry out their own risk assessments and are advised to limit numbers and keep the Hall well ventilated. Hygiene signage and facilities remain in place as do social distancing markers.

Insurance

The committee recognises that it is under a legal obligation to protect the building, its hirers, and employees through adequate and appropriate insurance

The Hall is insured with respect to property damage (buildings insurance) by Ansvar Insurance (£518,628) through the brokers Norris and Fisher. It is also insured with the same company for contents (£31,313) electronics (£9,105), stock (£516) public liability (£5 million), employers' liability (£10 million), trustee indemnity (£250,000) and legal expenses (£250,000)

Subject to certain conditions, hirers who have no public liability cover of their own are included under the Hall's public liability insurance. This cover does not extend to commercial hirers.

Maintenance Matters

All portable electrical appliances are tested by qualified personnel periodically as required by law.

Safety Risk Assessments are carried out regularly

Fire Fighting equipment is checked annually, and the certificate displayed on the notice board.

The Health and Safety Officer carries out weekly checks on the fire exits, firefighting equipment and alarms, contents of the first aid box and accident book and replaces anything needed. He also checks the defibrillator provided by the Parish Council.

The Maintenance Officer and trustees carry out regular maintenance checks and hirers are asked to note any faults and defects in the maintenance book in the hall or telephone/email to the Committee if urgent so it can be rectified immediately (leaks etc)

Hirers are asked to record all accidents in the Accident Book

The hall employs a cleaner

Financial Strategy

The committee have adopted a formal Financial Policy which sets out their responsibility for the prudent management of Hall funds. The trustees set a hire charge which ensures the basic running costs of the hall are met. The electric charges are reviewed, and companies changed if a better deal is found as are insurance costs. A minimum reserve of £5000 is to be held in the bank.

Volunteer's Effort

The running costs of the Hall are kept as low as possible by the voluntary work of the trustees

Routine tasks include meet and greeting hirers, updating social media, checking the hall and car park, buying bar stock, and manning the bar, putting out recycling and rubbish bins, bookings, processing payments, raising invoices, correspondence, changing key codes, management Committee administration, maintenance matters, monthly parish magazine reports, marketing fundraising and answering enquiries.

During the year, we are pleased to say we were able to recruit Gordon Soutar to manage our website and media output.

We also have a core group of volunteers of all ages who help with events working behind the bar, making cakes, helping put up tables, selling raffle tickets, serving teas and coffees etc

2020/2021 A New Normal

Last year this section of the report was headed 'A New Normal' it seems prudent for the time being to keep that title. The opening words were *The Trustees work has been overshadowed by the Covid -19 pandemic*. I am afraid that this remains the same.

Our commitment remains the same as well, namely

To promote the use of the Hall and to make it as affordable and attractive to as many users as possible. The committee want to make the Hall the obvious first choice venue for residents in the village and to give each a sense of ownership of this resource.

In keeping with this commitment the committee have introduced initiatives to encourage village users back to the Hall.

This has involved offering, use of the Hall for a Birthday party free of charge.

to each child in the village

In order to attract new and old users, offering activities in the hall for villagers to attend, a scheme making available initial use, at no cost has been implemented.

The bar has now been used for some private events in this connection we have new stocktaking and monitoring software and facilities to take contactless payment.

In the absence of the usual Christmas Fair and Christmas party for the village the Committee kept the presence of the Hall alive by its Christmas light display encouraging the *Twinned with Las Vegas* vibe. We organised a well-received Father Christmas parade around the village where we managed in a small way to bring a bit of Christmas to the village as a whole and the children in particular. Many thanks to F.Christmas and his tractor driving Elf

The Committee also held a successful Christmas raffle to raise funds in the absence of user income. The engagement of the Village and the contributions of those that made it possible particularly the efforts of Masieys in displaying the prizes and selling most of the tickets needs to be acknowledged. Over £1000 was raised through these efforts.

The hall has agreed to house the village archive much of it assembled by The Othery Society history group. The committee commissioned the conversion of existing carpentry into an enclosed and lockable cupboard to receive the material. The cost was covered by donations.

The Committee has been prompted by the current circumstances to consider ways in which the Hall buildings and grounds can be adapted to make them more useful in the context of covid especially the use of outside areas.

Grant funds have been obtained to purchase outside furniture and a gazebo.

A funding application has been made for the cost of fencing along the low wall facing the A361 to make the site more secure for children.

A general programme of refurbishment of the internal arrangements in the Hall are under consideration by the committee additional funding over and above that secured last year in the sum of £ 17,669 will make some this possible.

Emergency lighting and regulation compliant exit lights have been installed. Some tap fittings and grab rails in the toilets have been replaced.

More ambitious plans for solar panels to be installed with the benefit of grant funding are being considered.

Overview

The picture is one of incremental improvements to fabric at the same time as seeking to promote additional use of the hall. We remain mindful of the difficulties and concerns around covid -19 and committed to address this challenge to ensure the Hall continues to be the first-choice venue for village events.

Acknowledgement

The trustees would again like to thank the residents of Othery for their support for the Hall. Most of the Hall bookings come from the parish and its many and various clubs, societies, and organisations. Our Hall, unlike many other Village Halls, receives no regular grant support from the parish council towards running costs.

Thanks also go to Mark Horton and Nina Smith who have hung up their Marigolds after sterling work over many years cleaning the Hall. We give particular thanks for their readiness to embrace the additional work and challenges that Covid presented. Your efforts were appreciated.

The trustees would like to thank our volunteers for their efforts to help the Hall run smoothly throughout the year and make the Hall a welcoming place to come to.

The trustees declare that they have approved the trustees' report above.

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees:

Signature

Full name Stephen Richards Bond

Position Chairman

Date

