

Tibenham Community Hall - Trustees' Report 2023

Charity No. 1064012 Pristow Green Lane, Tibenham, NR16 1PX

This report sets out the Objectives of the Trustees in managing Tibenham Community Hall and describes how we have gone about delivering and meeting these objectives in 2023.

Trustees

The Hall is managed by a Board of Trustees. Normally four Trustees are appointed, who also form part of the Hall Management Committee (HMC). As at 31 December 2023, Tracy Lilley, Alan Harris, Lorna Pyke and Julie Lipman were registered as Trustees with the Charity Commission. Additional members of the Committee were Trudy Thomas, Julie Harris and Heather Fowler.

The Committee normally meets on a six-weekly cycle, although actual meeting timings vary according to the needs of upcoming events. It is part of our management style that the Committee is a democratic group where everyone's views are respected and taken into account.

Objectives

- To manage Tibenham Community Hall for the use of all inhabitants of Tibenham and the surrounding area without distinction.
- To provide a welcoming environment for people to gather for Socialising, Learning and Well-being.
- To provide a wide range of opportunities for leisure and Well-being for all, through both our own resources and bought in services.
- To provide a venue for Events, Parties, Weddings, Teaching and Conferences and a range of sporting activities.
- To provide a Hub of information relating to Health and Well-being for the use of everyone in the Village and the surrounding area.
- To increase the footfall and demographic of people using and visiting the Hall.
- To maintain the new playground at the Hall to provide a facility for children and adults.
- To widen the age range of people using the Hall, using the Arts as a medium for expanding the range of activities on offer.
- To offer services which allow those who are feeling lonely and isolated to have a safe space to meet and socialise with others from Tibenham and the surrounding villages.
- To offer support and advice on the use of computers, laptops or mobile phones for engaging with digital platforms.
- To provide support and the opportunity to learn and operate lighting and audio systems.

To achieve these Objectives, the Management Committee uses several paths.

Regular activities provided by the Hall:

Note: we believe that all events and activities contribute to the well-being of all users of the Hall.

- Sports – Weekly sessions are provided by the Hall for Badminton, Short Mat Bowls and a Light Exercise Class to help improve fitness, strength and mobility.
- Leisure – Quiz nights, Bingo, Craft Club and other events throughout the year.
- Live Music - engagement of bands and singers to provide musical entertainment from a broad range of genres. Annual Musical shows.
- Saturday Café - a monthly café, which is one of our larger regular events, brings in good numbers of people and provides a wide range of snacks and light lunches, including vegetarian/vegan meal options.
- Open-Door Coffee Morning - This runs weekly as part of our identified well-being activities. It includes a well-established and growing 'Digital Buddies' group which aims to assist people with accessing digital services, as many have limited knowledge or experience of how these operate.
- Social Nights - Offering a safe and welcoming social space for both family and friends to meet on a regular basis (introduced in response to the closure of the village's Public House in 2022).
- Annual Events - Events to promote social gathering, including a Produce Show and Harvest Supper, Family Fun Day, Craft Fayres.

Other regular events run by private groups/hirers at the Hall:

- Camera Club, Stained Glass Class, Line Dancing, Yoga Class, Choir Group and Private Badminton.
- Tibenham WI is well established in the Hall and sometimes assists with Hall events, as well as running its own programme of meetings and events.

It is still the case that community support is vital for many of our residents and those from the surrounding communities. There are very few facilities in our village - no shop, post office or doctors surgery, no bus route and at present no pub - just the Community Hall and the Church (and the latter currently only holds services once a month).

Partners

There continues to be a good working relationship with the Parish Council, who own the land on which the Hall is built. The Parish Council also provides financial support to the Committee for maintaining the grounds and this year supported us with a grant of £500 towards the cost of the new footpath and lighting project. A representative from the Hall Management Committee regularly attends Parish Council meetings. The Parish Council also provides a grant each year of £300 to assist with the cost of grounds maintenance.

A twice-yearly leaflet "Tibenham Tidings", jointly written by the Hall Trustees and the Parish Council, is circulated to all residents of Tibenham to inform them of what is going on in the village. A member of the Committee also edits the Parish Newsletter covering Tibenham and two adjacent villages. The HMC regularly contributes to the Parish Newsletter to inform people of what is happening at the Hall.

Maintenance

The Facilities Management Officer normally provides an updated report on maintenance to every Committee meeting, ensuring a well-kept and safe environment. This role has been carried out by the Chairman in the absence of a Maintenance Officer, with an independent person carrying out maintenance inspections. A spreadsheet-based maintenance system helps keep everything up-to-date. All services are maintained in line with the relevant legislation and all regular servicing is carried out as required. There is a programme of Capital Maintenance to keep the Hall in good condition.

The Hall currently contracts a cleaner who maintains the cleanliness of the Hall to a very high standard.

The Committee are actively seeking to find a volunteer to take over the full Maintenance Officer role.

Finance

The Treasurer ensures that the Management Committee runs a sound and compliant finance system, while seeking value for money on expenditure. Reports are made to the Committee at every meeting to provide a transparent system that keeps everyone up-to-date. The Treasurer and/or Chair ensure that items that are bought in - Insurance, Electricity, Oil, Gas etc - are price-checked at renewal to ensure value for money.

The Capital Programme spreadsheet is revised annually to reflect works completed and reprioritising future works. This is read in conjunction with the Financial Strategy.

The Committee makes an Annual Report on Finance and an Annual Return on the Charity to the Charity Commission. The accounts are independently checked by an external source when necessary.

Grants/Donations Received

The Hall received a grant of £200 from Norfolk County Council (via Tibenham Parish Council) to support its Coronation celebrations.

The Parish Council also contributes £300 annually towards the cost of grass cutting.

As part of the Government's Warm Space scheme, we received a grant of £1,500 which enabled us to extend the length of our weekly Well-Being sessions through the Winter and provide a light lunch of soup and rolls to our visitors.

We also received a private donation to cover the cost of the external lighting to the Car Park and several smaller private donations throughout the year.

Challenges

The Hall is lucky that it has a very motivated Committee at present, but it still relies heavily on a regular team of volunteers to allow us to operate all the services and activities we currently offer. Our main concern is the increasing age of the current members and we recognise the need to attract younger members to continue the work that we are currently doing. The Committee is always actively seeking for additional help and could possibly do more if we had more active supporters. Attracting new and younger people who are willing to be involved in the running of the Hall is our priority, to safeguard the Hall for future generations.

Economic challenges in 2023 proved difficult - the current economic climate has put pressure on maintaining the Hall with the cost of electricity, oil, gas, food and all general supplies continuing to be unpredictable. We continue to monitor these costs and try to achieve 'best value for money' where possible. Unfortunately, it has been necessary to increase costs for hire of the Hall and charges for some events during 2023, to ensure that these costs are being covered sufficiently.

The Open-Door Coffee Morning, held every Thursday, has grown in popularity throughout the year and continues to provide a welcoming space for those who need support and social contact. However, well-being remains a challenge as the format of NHS and other voluntary sector services constantly changes. Many people have concerns over the growing need to access services via electronic means, rather than face-to-face, and the digital skills of many of our users are often very limited. The Digital Buddies group continues to thrive and, with the help of local volunteers, has set up regular sessions as part of our Drop in Coffee mornings, to assist people with, for example, online banking, NHS appointments or online shopping via their smart phones, laptops and tablets.

The group have recently purchased a range of computers and equipment from its Well-Being reserves to assist with this programme.

Access to a reliable broadband service has been a challenge for many years. A Starlink Satellite broadband facility is being installed in 2024, provided free of charge by Norfolk County Council for 2 years, which will allow us to offer free internet connection to all users of the Hall. The need for hyperfast full fibre broadband is becoming more and more critical and we continue to campaign to enable this to become a reality for the whole village in the future.

Capital Expenditure

We believe the Hall is on a very sound financial footing and, with the benefit of recent Government grants and some very successful fundraising events, we have been able to undertake some major improvement works to further enhance the facilities that we are able to offer.

In September we installed a much-needed footpath and external lighting to make access to the Hall easier for some of our less mobile visitors using trolleys/wheelchairs and also for parents with buggies. Crossing the gravel/grass area at the Hall and also having to negotiate the Highway (with no footpaths or lighting) had become a real problem. With the help of local businesses, volunteers and contractors, a new path and lighting was installed, partially funded by a private donation.

The need for more storage space, highlighted in last year's report, had become ever more pressing in 2023. Although Planning Permission had been granted for a new extension, it has proved very difficult to obtain the necessary funding to build it in a realistic time frame. A temporary solution was sought with the installation of screens protecting chairs at the rear of the Hall, but unfortunately this proved to be far from ideal and an alternative option had to be sought. It was therefore agreed to build a range of cupboards at the rear of the Hall to allow for the storage of chairs, tables and some sporting equipment. This has been warmly welcomed by many of our regulars, negating the need for heavy lifting of furniture on a regular basis. As part of this construction, we have also been able to incorporate a new audio/lighting area, thus freeing up further space in other areas of the Hall. Although we have slightly reduced the floor space, it still allows all our activities and events to take place comfortably.

We have continued to invest in the audio and lighting equipment which supports many of the events we are able to offer. This has also provided us with the facility to be able to offer training in the operation of the equipment to local teenagers. Not only is this supporting their current education, but it is allowing them to get involved with and actively take part in many of our community events. This will hopefully encourage them to continue to be involved in the future. The new equipment is also available to hire by any of our users, giving us an additional income stream.

General Statement

Footfall in 2023 has continued to be high. On average, each week over 160 people attend our different groups and activities, with many more attending our one-off events throughout the year. We are a small village with an approximate population of 480, so these attendance figures are very encouraging.

The Committee has been working hard to provide an enhanced programme of events throughout the year, introducing new musical events and lectures, which have been extremely well attended and enjoyed by all. We have increased numbers attending our regular Bingo nights and the Quiz nights continue to be popular. The Autumn Produce Show and Harvest Supper were again very well supported.

Summer 2023 saw a fantastic celebration day for the coronation of King Charles III. We were able to live-stream the event on our large screen and our volunteers provided a free light lunch for all those attending. It was a chance for those who may otherwise have been on their own to meet up with friends to watch this momentous occasion together.

The Family Fun Day was once again well attended and enjoyed by all the Community. On the same day we celebrated our 20 years anniversary with photos, memorabilia and a cake!

Our regular sporting activities of Badminton, Short Mat Bowls and Light Exercise continue to thrive with numbers increasing. We have been able to invest in new equipment for the Light Exercise Class and also purchased a new mat for the Short Mat Bowls group. The Craft Club continues to meet four times a month.

The opening of our licensed bar on a twice-monthly basis continues to be popular, giving the space and opportunity for families and friends to meet up following the closure of the village pub. We offer a safe place for everyone to get together and we have board games, toys and table tennis for both children and adults. In the Summer months we also make use of the outside space.

Our playground offers additional space for children to play - it is open all year round, weather permitting, and offers free access for all.

We continue to offer our Saturday Café, serving light lunches once a month and have recently welcomed two new regular volunteers to help in the Kitchen. We freshly prepare and cook, where possible, all meals on the premises, and try to offer a varied menu, including a vegetarian option. The Hall has a 5-star Rating for Hygiene from the local Council.

Summary

In summary, 2023 has been a very successful year at the Hall and we have welcomed many new visitors of all ages and backgrounds.

We have had a few challenging hurdles to overcome this year but believe that the enthusiasm and dedication of both the Committee and its volunteers has allowed us to provide a strong platform to further develop and grow in the future. We would like to thank everyone for their continued support.

Tracy Lilley

Chairman, Tibenham Community Hall Management Committee

23 April 2024