

Draycott Memorial Hall
Report for Annual Parish Meeting of Rodney Stoke Parish Council – 21st March 2024

The management committee meet monthly. There are currently 11 people on the management committee and each person is responsible for a part of the running the hall, e. g. minor maintenance, electrics, plumbing etc. which seems to be working well with each person reporting back to the meeting any progress or work done during the month. There are 4 officers (Chairman, Vice Chairman, Treasurer and Secretary) and 5 members who are all trustees of the Draycott War Memorial Institute plus 2 co-opted members representing the Community Cinema Group and Mendip Players Drama Group.

Income for the financial year ending 30th September 2023 was £44,283.88 (£37,579 last year). The income came almost entirely from hires and fund raising. Expenditure was £51,263.03 (£24,038 last year). Expenditure was higher due to increases in running expenses (gas and electricity), general renewals and maintenance. There was also 50% deposit paid on equipment for the cinema group.

Figures for the first 5 months of the current financial year show income at £21,950.21 and expenditure at £33,145.26. These costs do include the annual insurance premium. We have lost the services of our 2 local cleaners and despite advertising locally no one came forward so since November we have used a professional company to carry out regular general cleaning.

Our 100 club is still popular with local residents and currently has a membership of 111 for the 2023/24 season.

We have run two large events during the year, a summer spectacular attended by 100 guests and a historic film evening in February which was attended by 152 guests – both events were well supported and raise a good contribution to hall funds.

Charges were increased by 10% from 1st October 2023, increases in energy costs, cleaning and general running expenses being reasons why we had to raise fees.

The hall's regular user groups now are: - Parish Council, Mendip Players, Draycott Bowls Club, Rodney Stoke & Draycott WI, Cheddar Bowls Club, Cheddar Male Choir, Cheddar Valley Community Church, Cheddar Judo Club and Whist Drives. Sessions of Pilates, dance classes, Zumba and an art class are other weekly run events. The Draycott & Rodney Stoke Village Show, School PTA, Lazy Lunch and Royal British Legion's Remembrance Day are annual events which also use the hall's facilities. We also hire out the Corrick Room four times a year to Bouquet of Cheddar who make up flower arrangements for Valentines Day, Mother's Day, Easter and Christmas.

The Community Cinema Group (CCG) was formed to run films shows on a regular basis, this group operates under the overall control of the management committee. Applications for funding did not prove successful so with the help of donations from locals and a grant from the parish council, we bought a superb film/sound system which has enhanced the facilities that the hall can offer. We also now have a very large screen to round off the facilities. Costs of the equipment installed was circa £22k and the shortfall was made up from hall reserves. To appeal to all sections of the community, we run a good selection of films for both adults and children. To date all showings have been well supported and the CCG retain a small profit which they use as working capital.

Other progress made during last year

- Our website continues to be a good source for enquiries and we use the services of a local social media expert to keep promoting our facilities and events taking place. The committee feel that this is a great way of keeping the community updated.
- Bookings continue to be managed via the Hallmaster software, this enables users to make their bookings on-line and invoices for hires to be sent out automatically at month end.
- Heating is now controlled via the Hallmaster booking system and after a few hiccups initially and some great input from a couple of committee members, the system seems to be working well. This is showing significant savings on gas energy costs as the heating only operates when there are bookings. Another bonus is that the system can be operated remotely, another saving on committee members' time in having to visit the hall to make changes.
- The bottom windows in the main hall were replaced during the year and blinds to assist the darkening of the main hall were installed recently, again another facility that the hall can offer.

Plans for the future

- The hall is now 23+ years old and needs regular maintenance to keep it fit for hire, the committee have re-painted the radiators in the toilet corridor area. Maintenance is now a regular part of the running of the facility.
- Other items which will need to be replaced in the near future are the boiler which is as old as the hall. The roof is showing signs of paint flaking on the southern side so we are bearing these major expenditure items in mind for future expenditure.
- We have started looking into re-vamping the toilets and have received a first quotation for the upgrade, we are now going to look at different options and once we have decided on the equipment and costs have been confirmed we will look at means of funding part of the cost.
- Mendip Players and the management committee plan to look at the stage lighting currently in place with an intention to upgrade when funds allow.
- We are actively looking at applying for a Hallmark accreditation which will give the Memorial Hall prestige in moving forward. It is hoped that the application will be completed by mid-summer.

Proposed development of land to the east of the Memorial Hall

The recent proposal to develop the land to the east of the hall and a public meeting to discuss using the overflow car park area as an entrance to the development highlighted community views on the application. This would have a tremendous effect on the hall and it's operations – initially reducing the number of car parking spaces, making the driveway a through road, and also making a new entrance into the hall via the overflow car park. The down road would also be very close to the building and could have a serious affect on it's structure and foundations, it would also increase the danger to users of the hall and playing fields with the close proximity of vehicles. If the overflow car park was used it would effect any further expansion or plans that the parish council or hall management committee had for use of that area.

The management committee are definitely not in favour of any attempt to use the overflow car park as an entrance to the proposed development and would oppose any application to use it.

Stephen Young

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Secretary – Draycott Memorial Hall Management Committee

19th March 2024