

Blockley Little Village Hall

The Elisha Smith Institute – registered charity number 1042374
Bell Bank, Blockley GL56 9BB

ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

Trustees:

Caroline Bond
James Henderson
Sue Wareham
Oliver Lincoln (Secretary)
Derek Luff (resigned 10/11/2022)
Susan Salmon (Chairman)
Brenda Samuels
John Seddon
Shirley Seddon
William Wilkinson (resigned 21/09/2022)
Brenda Williams
Robert Willott

Activities and achievements in the year

During the last 12 months we have seen a gradual increase in Hall usage and, therefore, income. In addition to regular users such as the Blockley Ladies Choir, Blockley Art Group and Cakes & Company, we have been able to attract a number of private dining events plus weekly courses for Blockley Church and pre-diabetic courses for the NHS. We also obtained funding from Blockley Parish Council to run a series of eight Souper Mondays over the winter months to provide hot soup and a warm space for local people to gather and socialise. We been a venue for two very successful exhibitions – photography and art/pottery. These showcase events generated further bookings. We have taken positive steps to promote the Hall via The Voice and on Blockley Facebook Noticeboard as a venue for a wide range of events and have put Blockley Little Village Hall on the map (Google that is).

At the same time our core operating expenses (maintenance, licenses etc.) have increased. The Trustees have also been concerned about the need to manage our energy usage better and the potential impact on our business going forward of significant increases in the cost to businesses of electricity and gas. Our fixed rate energy deal came to an end on February 1st 2023 and a replacement 12-month dual fuel deal was nearly 3 times as expensive. Trustees took the decision to instal a Hive Temperature control system to better match hall heating to hall usage and to increase Hall hire charges by 25% from 1st January 2023.

We are grateful to Gigaclear for continuing to provide free business broadband at the Hall and need to promote the Hall for business use for offsite staff training, meetings and workshops etc. in order to generate some business income going forward.

Finances

Thankfully, income levels have now virtually returned to pre-COVID levels. However, the charity faces much higher utility costs than previously and we have continued to invest in the upkeep of the

hall to maintain its excellent condition. Therefore, we released in the year £1,546 of the COVID support grants we had received during the pandemic to offset these additional costs which meant we essentially finished the year with a break-even performance. Our cash position is very strong, enabling the charity to be able to put aside £40,000 in the final quarter into a one-year fixed deposit.

The charity is in a sound financial position and we look to the future with optimism.

As a small charity, our accounts are not subject to audit.

Personnel and changes in Trustees

On October 14th our loyal Custodian, Diane McCaul, resigned due to ill health. We are extremely grateful to Diane for her efficient handling of all our bookings and for looking after the premises for us. Diane was the “face” of Blockley Little Village Hall for 15 years. She met and greeted potential new hirers showing them the facilities at our heritage Hall and always did that “little bit extra” for users of the Hall.

During the year Bil Wilkinson (BAD Company representative) and Derek Luff (Safety specialist and business adviser) resigned. We thank them for their considerable input to the Hall over a number of years.

Our Trustees have continued to support and maintain Blockley Little Village Hall as a heritage asset within the village. Thank you to them all.

Susan Salmon
Chairman
31st July 2023