

OTHERY VILLAGE HALL

Registered Charity 304604

ANNUAL REPORT

For the year ended 30th June 2024

otheryvillagehall.org.uk

TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT 1st July 2023 – 30th June 2024

**Secretary to the Management Trustees: Rachael Selway who succeeded
Bridget Gander on 18th June 2024**

Email : othervillagehall@hotmail.co.uk

Management Trustees:

Stephen Richards Bond	Chair
Ian Philip	Vice Chair
Rachael Selway (co opted 18/06/24)	Secretary
Rochelle Soutar	Treasurer
Ella Jennings	Booking Clerk
Andy Wright	Maintenance Officer
Neil Anderson	Health and Safety Officer
Hannah Pinder (co opted 18/06/24)	
Kate Croucher (co opted 18/06/24)	
Chris Shepherd (resigned 20/02/24)	
Bridget Gander (resigned 18/06/24)	

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: Jodie Maisey

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 of the operation of the Hall, its finances and for its upkeep and development. The Hall comprises of the main hall, foyer, storage rooms, toilets, catering kitchen, bar, archive 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 used throughout the year for a variety of activities including a children's pre-school group, pilates, astronomy (Somerset Levels Stargazers), gardening club, the Somerset branch of the Western Front Association, short mat bowls club, Playford Dance Group, church events, Parish Council meetings, school performances, PTA, community information events, music nights, fundraising activities including quiz nights, brunches and music performances, children's Christmas party, harvest suppers, plays, training events (including CPR and Defibrillator), elections and annual village Street Fayre parking.

The Hall houses the village archive. The current location has a mixed use, it is hoped that in time the location can become a dedicated Archive room.

The village pub closed in 2022. The Hall now runs a pub night each Friday as a service to the community within its fundraising activities.

The Hall is available for private hire and has been used amongst other things for wedding receptions, anniversary and birthday parties, funeral wakes, community social functions and fundraising events.

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 Hall's terms and conditions and forms a contract between the parties setting out their respective responsibilities. One off hirings are paid for online at the time of booking and no deposit is taken,

Licenses

The Hall has a premises licence 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.

Risk Management

The committee are conscious of its wider risk responsibilities and reviews its risk assessments periodically. The Halls fire risk assessment was reviewed and amended in December 2023 and is available to hirers.

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 by Ansvar Insurance through the brokers Norris and Fisher. with respect to property damage (£642,126) for contents (£40,078) electronics (£11,654), stock (£662) 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

An important comprehensive inspection of the hall's electrical installations was undertaken this year. The issues raised have been addressed or are to be addressed shortly. The main take away from the report is that on the next inspection (in five years' time) the recommendation will likely involve a total overhaul. The committee will need to create a reserve to cover this cost.

A substantial capital and maintenance project was completed this year when the hall roof was refurbished and at the same time fitted with solar panels. This substantial project was in part grant aided. In addition energy storage batteries were installed and an EV charger.

Portable electrical appliances are periodically inspected and tested by competent personnel.

Safety Risk Assessments are carried out regularly.

Firefighting 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.

The H&S Officer is the "Single Guardian" of the defibrillator provided by the Parish Council and checks it monthly, updating its status information to "The Circuit" for ambulance service use.

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 pays for the services of a cleaner and a gardening company.

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 electricity charges are reviewed, and companies changed if a better deal is found, as are insurance costs. A minimum reserve of £5,000 is to be held in the bank.

Volunteer's Efforts

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

Routine tasks undertaken by the Committee include meeting and greeting hirers, updating social media, checking the Hall and car park, buying bar stock, staffing 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.

We also have a group of volunteers of all ages who help with events, which include preparing food, working behind the bar, making cakes, helping put up tables, selling raffle tickets and serving hot drinks. Our website is maintained by one of our volunteers. Volunteers are encouraged to attend and to contribute at Management committee meetings.

This July a valuable member of the team left the village to make a new home in Bath.

Bridget Gander had worked as Secretary to the Trustees since 2019 and shouldered a large share of the responsibility for the administration of the hall. She also made the operation of the bar, especially in its early period, her own particular project. Much of its success can be attributed to her. She had a hand in many of the improvements and developments at the hall over the period of her tenure and gave her time selflessly to make the Hall a success. For this we thank her.

2023/2024

The Committee's mission is 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.

The Friday pub night represents the corner stone of the committee's promotion of the Hall. Many of the new events promoted by the Committee are based around it

In the period covered by this report theses have included a Summer BBQ, a Halloween party, quiz nights, a Coronation celebration. Other events have included a children's Christmas party and a New Years Eve party. In March, Ali and the Swing Cats played for a cabaret evening. In broad terms, the Committee would like to hold at least one event each month to augment the other activities for which the Hall is used.

One innovation has been periodically inviting food vendors on Fridays. Pizzas has been a notable success

A general programme of refurbishment of the internal arrangements in the Hall, remains in progress. The hall has had new led strip lights installed in the main hall and an enlarged water heater to serve the kitchen

A new dishwasher is to be purchased for the kitchen.

In the bar a tambour security screen has been installed and lockable display fridges have been purchased together with a new ice making machine.

New round tables have been purchased for the hall to give an additional table and seating arrangement.

Unfortunately, the Youth Club has disbanded during the year as a result some of its equipment has been donated to the Hall. it is hoped this can be used as a resource

for hirers particularly the table tennis table. This can only be achieved if the hall storage arrangements can be improved. Moving the archive cupboard to the archive room has made space for high level storage to be created in part of the foyer and hopefully when this is constructed, we can promote this resource more freely.

Externally the Sedgemoor Battle sign has been refurbished and the Parish Council covered the cost of replacing the old damaged acrylic display.

A gate has been commissioned to match the fencing and is currently under construction.

An electronic Keysafe has been installed, this represents a significant security improvement enabling the generation of multiple codes and more detailed monitoring.

Efforts have been made to restrict parking on land outside the village hall on the junction with Little England we have asked the Parish Council to fund the cost of some concrete bollards in the meantime we have installed a sign and placed cones on the relevant area

The committee will continue to seek grant funding to underwrite the cost of improvements to the Hall where possible. An application for lottery funding for replacement equipment in the bar was declined

The Hall has been awarded Hallmark Level 1 Accreditation and will be aiming to obtain levels 2 and 3 in due course

What we plan

The rise in the cost of living has impacted on the activities of the Hall in the same way as it has on any other organisation. We will prioritise resources and make economies where necessary.

We will do all that we can to continue to provide the same service to the community and to meet your expectations. We have increased our fees from the 24th March 2024 to help defray rising costs.

An important additional cost which has arisen because of the success of the operation of the bar is a potential liability for tax

We have retained accountants to prepare and submit Tax Returns this work will be undertaken during the latter part of 2024.

We could avoid any tax if the management of the hall was operated by a charity with a different structure This Charity does not have the flexibility to access such arrangements but a new Charity operating as a CIO (Charitable Incorporated Organisation) would.

A new Charitable Organisation has been incorporated whose objects are to manage a Village Hall for Othery .In the first instance this organisation will to operate

alongside the Trust Charity and in due course take over in a seamless way the management and operation of the hall. This intervention will mean that the Hall can avoid further Tax liability with almost immediate effect and as a consequence enable all the income earned from the operation of the bar to be used to support the Halls activities

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.

The trustees would like to thank our volunteers for their efforts to help the Hall run smoothly throughout the year and in making 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: 13/09/24