

## **Catbrook and District Memorial Hall**

### **Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on Tuesday 3rd October 2023**

#### **Present:**

**Trustees:** Simon Westwood (Chair), Andy Pullan, Shirley Lawton, Richard Cobourne, Ronnie Hext, John Gooding

**Committee:** Andy Pullan (Chair), Fiona Wilton, Craig Bridgeman, Mark Loveday

**Local Residents:** Pat Gooding, Justine Pullan, Pete Stevens, Dawn Cater, Malcolm Wilton, Martin Routh, Wes Hext

Prior to the meeting everyone was invited to join the Trustees in a glass of wine.

The meeting started at 7.00 pm and Simon welcomed everyone and thanked them for coming and their support of the Hall and its activities. A handout comprising the Agenda, Trustees Report, Minutes of the last AGM Meeting on 14.11.2022, Hall Income and Expenditure Account and Balance Sheet was provided to everyone.

Simon also confirmed that minutes of all previous meetings were available on the Hall Website.

#### **1. Apologies**

Jill Westwood, Phil Robinson, Stephanie Spragg, Marion Griffin, Rose Stevens.

#### **2. Previous Minutes of AGM held on 14th November 2022**

##### **a. Matters Arising**

Simon brought a minor point to the attention of those attending, in that there is only a small residual amount left in the Ukrainian Bank Account, and the level will continue to reduce slowly over the coming months.

##### **b. Approval of Minutes**

Fiona Wilton proposed the minutes and Andy Pullan seconded them.

#### **3. Report of the Trustees**

Simon confirmed that since the last AGM, we have sadly lost two Trustees. Marcus Watkins passed away in December 2022 and Stuart Chapman has moved to Christchurch to be near his son. An extract of Marcus' eulogy is included in the Trustees Report, which the Trustees felt was an appropriate tribute to his long-standing involvement in the Hall's activities. Stuart's first association was back in 2003 when he became Chairman of the Hall and ran the administration very

efficiently. Stuart and his wife Liz, now sadly departed, were very active in running and organising events.

Simon believes that we have moved successfully out of the post-Covid period and that the activities and events are now well attended, possibly even more than prior to Covid.

Simon thought the installation of Broadband in the Hall was a great initiative.

The Hall website is maintained by Justine Pullan and Sarah Bowden, and the Trustees are very grateful for their efforts and involvement with this. There is a lot of useful information on the website where it is possible to sign up for the Hall's Newsletter and for updates on the Hall's events.

Richard confirmed that there are currently 186 people on the Hall mailing list.

The building remains in a good state of repair and the garden is well looked after by Pam Hudson, for which the Trustees are extremely grateful.

#### **4. Accounts for the 12 months to 30th June 2023**

Simon thanked Dawn Cater for her 'pro bono' work on the Hall Accounts and ensuring we are meeting all the regulations. Dawn was presented with a bouquet of flowers as a gesture of thanks. Thanks were also expressed for our Treasurer, Rose Stevens, for her hard work in keeping the financial records and book-keeping.

The Trustees are extremely grateful for the efforts of all Committee members and other residents of Catbrook and the surrounding areas in supporting the social functions which are well received.

There has been a big increase in the income received from social functions due to the significant increase in events during the year.

Trellech United Community Council (TUCC) have generously provided grants for repairs and running costs. It is very worthwhile keeping abreast of what support is available from TUCC. We have received a further Grant recently from AONB (which will be accounted for in next year's accounts), which was gratefully received and allocated towards the renewal of the Hall lighting.

The 100 Club is an enormous success providing the Hall with a net income of approximately £1,200.

Simon confirmed that we have moved onto a variable electricity tariff now, which the Trustees will continue to monitor for competitiveness.

We also had the exterior of the Hall decorated recently in May 2023 which accounted for most of the repairs expenditure.

The Hall accounts show that we are approaching a break-even status, but the deficit includes a large quantity of depreciation and donations. We should be in profit next year.

Richard proposed acceptance of the Accounts, and Pat Gooding seconded them. Simon then signed the accounts provided by Dawn.

## **5. Memorial Hall Committee**

### **a. Chairman's Report for the year**

Firstly as Chair I would like to say a big thank you to all of the Committee members and community volunteers who have helped out at the hall in various ways during the last 12 months. As we have sought to move on from the restrictions of Covid it has been good to see the use of the hall returning to some degree of normality.

#### 2022-23 Events

2023 has seen the use of the hall returning to near pre Covid levels in terms of the number of events and the number of people attending events.

#### Night Out Scheme – 2 events

16th June 2023 – Glowing in the Dark, Alison Neil 45 tickets sold

5th Oct 2023 – Mountain Music, Maltings Farnham. 60 tickets sold

Both events proved popular and the hall made a profit on each occasion. Very favourable reports were received for each of the performances and it was good to see some new faces coming along to the events.

#### Film Nights

Film Nights have been held during the year. Attendance levels for 2023 have been very disappointing even though the films were popular titles. In light of the attendance levels we are looking at the current arrangements and how we can increase attendance. The majority of films are available on the various streaming services and people seem to prefer to watch films at home. An experiment to show an older classic film proved unsuccessful. Thanks to Richard for arranging the film nights.

#### Pub Nights

Pub Nights have been held every 3 months and always prove popular with good attendance. A number of games have been put at the hall for the use of everyone at pub nights such as darts and a pool table. Thanks to Mark, Mike and Phil for arranging the evenings.

Remembrance service – 13th November 2022 (12th November 2023)

Carol Services / Carols – There was the Christmas Carols walk from Broadstone back to the hall on 11th December 2022 and the Christmas Service at the hall on 17th December 2022.

#### Charity Events

A plant sale was arranged by Fiona and Jill which raised £750 which for 2023 was donated to the Welsh Air Ambulance. A great effort by everyone who donated plants and by everyone who supported the event. Welsh Air Ambulance has extended an invite to go and visit the helicopter in 2024.

#### Other Events

##### Craft events

A Coffee and Craft club has been set up to meet once a month and this has proved very popular. Going forward it is planned to organise a children's craft club for local children once a month at the hall.

##### Quiz Night

Thank you to Fiona and Jeremy for organising the village hall quiz night which took place on 29th Oct 22. Due to the popularity of the event a 2nd quiz night was organised for 30th Sept 23. I hope all of your brains have since recovered!

##### Phil's Mum - The Housekeepers tale – 26th November 2022

Christine Robinson, the head housekeeper at Chatsworth House for 40 years gave an excellent talk on what was involved in running a major stately home.

Christine proved so popular she returned to the hall on 19th Sept 2023 to give a talk on the history of Ice Cream which proved equally as enjoyable with the added bonus of free ice-cream to taste!

##### Battle of the Bands

3 local groups played at the hall and were very well received. It is planned to arrange this event again for 2024 as it showcased what a talented lot you all are!

##### Clubs and Groups

The Book Club has continued and for 2023 the club managed to attract a number of published authors who gave talks on their respective books and stories. Even Mel C made a "video appearance" when the book club discussed her biography.

##### Taking the Mat Yoga

A new yoga teacher has started classes at the hall which are proving popular

##### 100 Club Lottery

The lottery remains well supported and provides an income to help keep the hall running. If anyone wants to purchase new numbers please contact Justine Pullan.

##### New Year Eve 2022

2020 was the 100 year anniversary of the hall being opened in the village and it had been planned to celebrate this at New Years in 2020. However Covid prevented this so a belated 102nd Birthday Party for the hall was held on New Year's Day 2022/23 involving a music and video compilation of 100 years of music and dance.

#### The Inaugural Catbrook Scarecrow Competition and Summer Party

A big thank you to Stephanie Spragg and Sarah Bowden for organising the inaugural village scarecrow competition which saw 18 artistic creations appear around the village in August. A total of 640 votes were cast which saw Wurzel and Daisy crowned the winners. Already there is talk of people "upping" their game for 2024 and Stephanie has put her thinking cap on.

The Village Summer party took place on 25th August where the scarecrow winners were announced and I think everyone enjoyed themselves!

#### Future Events

28th October – Magor Amateur Dramatics – "How Killed the Headmaster" A murder mystery night with a bring your own school packed lunch

10th November – Jigantics, a very popular music group mixing Cajun, folk, blues and foot stomping music

17th November – Kate Humble talking about her life in TV, wildlife and books

2nd December 2023 - Children In Need Quiz with Alan Dediccoat

6th December 2023 – Christmas Wreath Making

15th December 2023 – Pre Christmas Pub Night at the hall.

20th January 2024 – A return to the hall of the popular Caldicot Male Voice Choir

March / April 2024 – A talk on the finding and salvage of the Medieval ship remains in the Severn and a visit to the ship remains in Newport – Further details to follow

#### COMMITTEE MEMBERS

After a number of years as Chair of the hall I have decided to stand down this year and pass the baton on. I have thoroughly enjoyed my time as Chair and I hope that I have been able to improve and develop the hall for the community. Phil Robinson has kindly volunteered to take on the role and he will have my full support going forward.

Stephanie joined the committee this year and has already found her feet in suggesting and organising activities. It has been good to have new ideas put forward that appeal to the "younger" people of the village.

A big thank you to Rose for being the hall treasurer and for keeping the accounts in order and for paying the bills. I am happy to say she is happy to remain in post.

Another big thank you to Craig for taking on the role of Hall Secretary and for keeping and circulating the minutes of hall meetings, again Craig is happy to stay in post.

My personal thanks go to all of the committee members, new and old who have helped during my time as Chair as their work often goes unnoticed and without their help and commitment the running of the hall and events would become impossible.

There have been a number of new families moving into the village over the last few years and I hope the community has seen the value of the hall. If anyone would be interested in joining the committee in helping to run the hall and events please get in touch. The Committee meets on the first Monday of each month at 7pm for about 45 minutes.

Committee Members:

Election of committee members - Phil Robinson will replace Andy as Committee Chair and Craig Bridgement is taking on the role as Hall Secretary, Stephanie Spragg also joined the Committee this year.

Simon said that it's the end of an era. We owe Andy a great debt for all he has done for the Hall in the past 10 years, but is happy to report that Andy will be remaining a Trustee of the Hall. There was a round of applause for Andy from all those attending.

## **6. Any other business**

There were no requests from the floor.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 7.45 pm.

**CATBROOK AND DISTRICT MEMORIAL HALL  
TRUSTEES REPORT  
FOR THE YEAR ENDING 30 JUNE 2023**

**Address for Correspondence:** Pennyfarthings  
Catbrook  
Chepstow  
Monmouthshire  
NP16 6NQ

**Trust Deed Made:** 7<sup>th</sup> December 1928

**Registered Charity No:** 220456

**Trustees:** Stuart Chapman ( Retiring )  
Richard Cobourne  
John Gooding  
Ronnie Hext  
Shirley Lawton  
Andy Pullan  
Simon Westwood ( Chair )

**Bankers:** Lloyds  
Bristol City Branch

### **Trustees Responsibilities**

Charity law requires Trustees to prepare financial statements each year. They are also responsible for keeping proper books and records in connection with the activities of The Catbrook and District Memorial Hall. In addition to the Trust Deed the Trustees have agreed a set of Regulations to assist in defining the Governance of The Trust. These documents together with minutes of meetings may be viewed on the Catbrook Memorial Hall website: [catbrook.org.uk](http://catbrook.org.uk).

### **Jurisdiction and Objectives**

To hold and maintain a village hall for the benefit of those residing in Catbrook and District.

## **Review of Activities**

During the last 12 months we had eight Trustees representing the Charitable Trust. Unfortunately during that period one of the Trustees, Marcus Watkins, died in December 2022. Marcus had long been associated with The Hall and his service and endeavours in looking after The Hall are very much appreciated and his presence will be missed. Attached is an extract from his Eulogy outlining his association with The Hall.

Another Trustee, Stuart Chapman, is retiring having moved out of the area.

Stuart had been associated with The Hall since the renovation in 2003 when he became Chair of the Trustees. Stuart reorganised the administration of The Hall into the form in which it now is today. Until latterly, when unable to do so due to ill health, Stuart was an active Trustee, and with the help of Liz, his late wife was very involved in the affairs and events of The Hall. We are very grateful for his service and wish him well in his new surroundings.

Arrangements are in hand for the Trust Deed to be updated in relation to these changes.

This is the second year the hall has been opened since the covid pandemic. As expected the first year was a little quiet but now there seems to be an almost full calendar of events, perhaps even exceeding the pre covid years. The Committee Chair will report on this later on. This situation is very encouraging and is a result of the work of the Committee and volunteers under the enthusiastic leadership of the Chair, Andy Pullan. The Trustees are very aware of those who contribute towards the success of The Hall and express their grateful thanks to all concerned.

We now have broadband and access to the internet which is readily available to anyone. This is essential in the digital age and obviously gives a very wide source of information and communication at The Hall. This has already saved one film night when the supplied DVD did not work and Richard was able to immediately acquire the same film via the internet.

The garden, which looks bright and cheerful, continues to be maintained by Pam Hudson to whom we are very grateful.

The annual leaf cleaning is done by volunteers in the late autumn and they will be called upon again this year. Many thanks to all those who help.

The Hall website is a very useful source of information and The Trustees would urge the community to take full advantage of this to keep informed of the various events and activities. There is a facility on the website to subscribe to the regular Hall newsletter. Many thanks to Sarah Bowden and Justine Pullan for all the hard work



they do in keeping the website up and running and to Richard Cobourne for circulating the newsletter via Mailchimp .

The involvement with the Ukrainian refugees is lessening as they become integrated into the local community and become more self sufficient. It is pleasing to see how the local community responded to the needs of the Ukrainians at a desperate time.

The Fire and Risk Assessments and Fire Fighting Equipment are checked annually.

The Hall building is checked regularly and this ensures that problems are kept to a minimum. There are no major items outstanding. The lighting has recently been upgraded to LED fittings which will be more economic and aesthetically pleasing. Andy Pullan ,Wes Hext and Richard Cobourne have installed this thus saving on installation costs so many thanks to them .The cost of the fittings will be funded by The Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

The electricity supply is now on a fixed business rate for one year from 1st July 2023 which is cheaper than the previous variable rate. This will be reviewed in July 2024.

## **Financial review**

Many thanks to Dawn Cater for auditing the accounts free of charge and our Treasurer Rose Stephens for doing the bookkeeping.

### Income

Due to the increase in activities social function income has significantly increased and is well over half of pre pandemic levels. This is expected to be further reflected next year when all monies are received and accounted for.

Grants have been received from TUCC and help towards the annual insurance premium and repairs. TUCC are very generous with their grants to village halls and it is important to make ourselves aware of what is available.

Hire of the Hall is variable and very much dependant on local demand. It would be good if more clubs and societies used The Hall as well as private parties. It is not expensive and provides a very good facility for a range events.

The Catbrook and District 100 Club is obviously a significant and regular contribution to funds and we look forward to the quarterly extravaganza of Andy's lottery ball machine ably assisted by Justine.

### Expenditure

The regular outgoings such as utilities and insurance do not vary greatly from year to year. The electricity bill reflects the change from the old fixed rate to a variable rate which was in place until we were offered a new fixed rate.

Repairs are higher this year as The Hall was decorated externally and Andy built a new external notice board with good quality materials - his labour was provided free of charge,

The remaining outgoings are fairly routine.

The negative entry for rates is a Monmouthshire County Council one off reimbursement.

### Summary

The deficit between income and expenditure is £2056 of which approximately half is depreciation. Donations out are over £1000 so bearing this in mind we are almost at breakeven point this year. Whilst this is satisfying in the circumstances we would like to see a net gain in the future which should be achievable with the support of all those involved with The Hall and the local community

### **Reserve Policy**

The Trustees consider that the Free Reserve of £27,940.00, net of the Ukrainian Fund is adequate to meet all foreseeable liabilities.

## Eulogy Extract

Marcus had a long association with Catbrook Memorial Hall. The Hall meant so much to him, and still does to all of his family. Some of his relatives are remembered on The Roll of Honour displayed on the west wall of The Hall, having paid the ultimate sacrifice serving their country.

The Hall used to be run and managed by a Committee who were also Trustees. Marcus's involvement as Committee member and Trustee goes back to the 1960's and he was still a Trustee up to the present time. He was originally involved in arranging events and functions and also maintaining the building to make sure it was available for the use of the community of Catbrook and District.

The Hall was renovated to a very high standard in 2003 with the added luxury of a modern kitchen, rebuilt toilet facilities and installation of central heating. This work was done entirely by voluntary labour to which Marcus was able to contribute in no small measure employing his skills honed in the building industry. The stone memorial in the Hall was actually built by Marcus himself who was a stonemason.

The central heating would have been welcome during the very cold winter of 1963. There is a note in the Committee Minutes of the time recording a request from The Naturists Society, who hired The Hall for their meetings, for extra coal to be made available for the furnace!

Nowadays the Committee run events, and the Trustees, a separate body, are responsible for maintaining the building. Marcus, continuing in his role as Trustee, has been able to provide invaluable advice and local information to the current Trustees who are indebted to him for his support. He also had quite a few stories to tell during Trustees meetings which sometimes meant they lasted a little bit longer than intended!