

“It was a good year. What's next?”

We started this past year facing a financial crisis, with our reserves depleted and less than £1000 in resources (discounting grants received but not yet defrayed). Even with projected income, it was clear that we would have to cut our expenses in order to survive, so we decided to embark comprehensively upon a volunteer ethos throughout the entire premises. From the beginning of this fiscal year, after redundancy payments and an honorarium for emergency treasurer service, every component of the hall's management has been facilitated by volunteers. We had, years ago, reduced our staff expenses by eliminating honoraria to our regular Treasurer and Secretary, but during this year we also dramatically cut caretaking and cleaning staff costs.

This strategy has brought some challenges, but on the whole, I hope the facility has been maintained to a useful standard. The main result of this effort has been a return to financial solvency, with modest profits accruing throughout the year, so that we are now operating in the black with a positive outlook ahead, as our year-end accounts demonstrate (we are not holding any grant monies yet to defray). Of course our charity must be self-sustaining, as we receive no operating revenue from any source. Meanwhile, we have been delighted to welcome Jane Hughes, our new Treasurer since the last quarter of the year, while very much appreciating the efforts of Doug Ness who took over from Margaret Bowes at the beginning of this year.

We accommodated four wedding receptions and one folk festival, this past year, in addition to our regular user groups (both intrinsic and extrinsic) and the normal annual events: Pantomime; Allendale Challenge; Charity Auction; Farmer's Ball; NYE Ceilidh. We're very grateful to Pauline Robson for stepping in and coordinating our annual fundraiser, the Xmas Market. We are looking ahead, for 2015, to hosting our user groups as normal along with the same annual events, including the second folk festival, and two wedding receptions booked to date.

Apart from our operating expenses, ie the ongoing revenue/costs part of our charity, we have been busy with capital projects that have been financed with a variety of grants and donations. The renovation of the Old Kitchen, into bespoke office accommodation for the *North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty* partnership, was financed by the tenant. Near simultaneously, the renovation of the skate park came to fruition thanks to grantmanship effort by our partners *Ground Work North East* [the final skate ramp was installed at the end of March, 2015, with Housing Developer Fund monies we acquired from the county]. In addition, during the past autumn, thanks to a donation from the Dan B. Leeming estate, as well as county contributions, we were able substantially to renovate the Bowls Pavilion and improve the last wooden surround on the Bowling Green. Everyone seems to be delighted with the new signage throughout the premises. Just in time for the Pantomime, the Allen Valley Drama Group installed fire-retardant stage curtains that draw properly and hang straight and fully.

Looking ahead to 2015, inevitably there will continue to be financial challenges in terms of our operating expenses and revenue. We may need to replace our very old hot air boiler in the Main Hall (thanks to rental income received in advance, we have sufficient resources in hand to accomplish this). But our capital project efforts look to be nearing a natural repose, as we consolidate within the various renovations. Perhaps there is room for 'A Finessing Touch' which could involve new cushioned banquet chairs, discrete access between the two offices, picnic tables and litter bins in the Recreation Ground, and a comprehensive renovation of the Green/Store Room.

Over this coming year, our management, the charity's Board of Trustees, must look forward to enhanced contemporary good practice in terms of the hall and premises management, perhaps involving ourselves in the *HallMark* scheme, as we work to devolve responsibilities and information sets from one person to members of the committee.

Larry Winger

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22 April 2015

Allendale Village Hall & Recreation Ground

Auditor's Certificate

I certify that I have examined the Books and Vouchers of the Allendale Village Hall & Recreation Ground and find that the aforementioned are in accordance therewith and, with a few irregularities in the recording of transactions, represent a true and fair position as at the 31st January 2015.

Signed



Richard A D Snowdon