

# The Narth & District Village Hall

Registered charity number: 524389



## Trustees' Annual Report

For the period from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2019 to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2020

### Objectives and Activities

#### Charitable Aims

The Narth & District Village Hall Committee has the responsibility of providing and maintaining the Village Hall on The Narth for use by the residents of this area. The members of the Committee are the Charity's trustees and act according to the objects of our Charity Scheme (our constitution).

#### Objectives of the Charity

Our Charity Scheme specifies that the hall must be provided for the benefit of all inhabitants of our area, without distinction of political, religious or other opinions, for uses including "meetings, lectures and classes, and other forms of recreation and leisure-time occupation, with the object of improving the conditions of life for the inhabitants". Our area covers the village and hamlets of The Narth, Pen y Fan and Maryland in the Trellech United ward of Monmouthshire.

The main purpose of the Charity, therefore, is to maintain the hall and to make it available for community use. This involves maintaining the fabric of the building, ensuring it is safe and clean, and providing appropriate facilities such as a fully equipped kitchen, furniture, wifi and other amenities. In addition to the hall and its land, the Committee is licensed by Natural Resources Wales to make use of the woodland clearing opposite the hall, known as The Glade, for community activities.

We actively encourage community use of the facilities, and while we must cover some of our costs by charging a hire fee for use of the hall, we subsidise this rate for community groups and residents to ensure the cost is affordable. To do this, we undertake various fundraising activities.

#### Providing Public Benefit

The Committee have considered the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit, and the three aspects of this: understanding public benefit, running a charity and reporting.

**Understanding public benefit:** All of our activities are undertaken in order to provide and maintain a hall which is available to use at an affordable cost to all members of our local community. The benefits of this range from social cohesion (a well-integrated, supportive community), education and learning (through arts events such as plays and concerts, and via village groups who hold meetings with invited speakers or self-help groups promoting various topics) to a physically active community (by promoting exercise classes and other activities that support well-being). We seek to ensure all sectors of the community are engaged, particularly targeting activities at all age ranges, focusing on accessibility (particularly physical accessibility) and covering a range of interests. The ethos of inclusivity is reflected in our written policies, including our charging policy, and we encourage communication and feedback from village residents and hall users via newsletters (digital and paper versions), a regularly updated web site and consultation processes via questionnaires.

**Running a charity:** We focus on good governance, and have policies in place, regularly reviewed, covering most aspects of running the Charity. New Committee members are introduced to the policies with an induction session, which covers our charitable aims, the concept of public benefit and how it features in decision making, and our policies including financial procedures, health & safety, equality, safeguarding, managing conflicts of interest, data protection and other aspects of governance. These written policies are made publicly available on our web site.

The Committee takes financial probity very seriously and the importance of good fundraising practice is stressed in our discussions. Health & safety, safeguarding and equality also feature, with nominated Committee members (or in the case of safeguarding, an experienced resident acting as a consultant) overseeing each aspect.

**Reporting:** As a small charity our legal reporting requirement is minimal and our submissions record to the Charity Commission is good. We go beyond the legal minimum at our Annual General Meeting, at which we report our activities, achievements, and our financial situation in detail, and this is produced as a document posted on our web site. Transparency is important to us, as it helps to keep the good will of the village and to maintain open communication with all residents. Without the support of the whole village it would be difficult to sustain the finances and volunteer work force that is necessary to maintain the building and the activities that take place there.

## **Fundraising Activities**

In a normal year, approximately a third of our funds comes from fees for hire of the hall. The remainder is gained from fundraising activities, donations and grants.

Our fundraising mostly takes the form of events which are, in addition to raising money for the hall upkeep, designed to benefit the residents by providing opportunities for socialising, an entertainment or educational activity or a form of exercise or activity for personal well-being.

In normal times, we hold a monthly bar night (the Glade Tavern), a monthly film night, twice-yearly arts events with professional performers, supported by the Arts Council of Wales under their Nights Out scheme, and seasonal events such as a Christmas social. In most years our main fundraising event is the Village Fete, normally held on the last weekend in August but this year cancelled due to the Covid-19 emergency.

In addition, we operate a village oil buying group which includes an element towards hall funds, and a community 100 Club lottery.

## **This Year's Achievements and Performance**

The overriding story of this year is, of course, the hall's closure due to Covid-19. The last event at the hall was a meeting of Wye Valley Women social group on Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> March. Prior to that, however, the hall was well used. In a typical week the hall was occupied for between 15 and 20 hours. This year the hall was used for the following purposes.

### 1. Regular activities:

- Meetings of community groups: Wednesday Social Club; The Narth Garden Club; Table Tennis club; The Narth Singers; Whist Group; Wye Valley Women
- Weekly exercise classes: Ladies Keep Fit; T'ai Chi; Yoga; Zumba
- Monthly hall events: The Glade Tavern; Films on The Narth

2. Other events organised by the Committee or by other volunteers in conjunction with the Committee:
  - The Village Walk, 20<sup>th</sup> October 2019, organised by the Footpath Project, with a guided walk around the area ending with afternoon tea in the hall
  - The Invisible Woman, 22<sup>nd</sup> October, a play performed by professional artists and supported by the Arts Council of Wales
  - The Glade Tavern Christmas Party, 6<sup>th</sup> December, with live band the Black Pearls
  - A Victorian Christmas Trial, 14<sup>th</sup> December, a performance by Gwent Magistrates based on transcripts from trials from the past, put on as a Christmas event
  - Christmas Carols, 15<sup>th</sup> December, organised by Wye Valley Women
  - A performance by Mabon, 22<sup>nd</sup> February, a well-known and popular Welsh band playing a blend of contemporary and traditional music, supported by the Arts Council of Wales
  - A Dawn Chorus Walk, 8<sup>th</sup> March, also organised by the Footpath Project with a professional guide, followed by breakfast in the hall
3. Hire to residents, community groups and other organisations for private events such as children's parties, business meetings and training sessions

Events that had been arranged that were postponed or cancelled included live streamed rugby from the Six Nations championship, the Spring Quiz and the Village Fete. Other regular events that could not be held included the Big Breakfast on May Bank Holiday (in which local children serve food at the hall, raising money for the hall and another charity nominated by the organisers) and the annual Quiz and Curry Night.

Following the hall's closure in the Covid-19 emergency, the garage has been opened as a drop off and pick up place for food deliveries to vulnerable people, run by a team of volunteers under the Help on The Narth banner.

Various fundraising activities have been undertaken, including our ongoing 100 Club and Oil Buying Group, the village Christmas Card delivery, and this year we have held a photography competition to create a calendar which will be sold for 2021. A group of volunteers have also been making face masks and requesting donations to the hall in lieu of payment.

Hall maintenance undertaken this year included:

- Work on the garden: this has been tidied up and improved a great deal recently, largely by volunteers supported by some professional cutting of the severely overgrown hedge
- Installation of an emergency phone with a direct dial to the emergency services (following a couple of incidents when it was necessary to call an ambulance to the Wednesday social club, and the use of a mobile phone outside proved to be difficult)
- A full electrical wiring check (undertaken every five years) and PAT testing
- Maintenance work on some crumbling roof tiles and an inspection of the roof's condition, contracted to a local builder (who kindly came at short notice to ensure the hall was in a safe condition)
- Other small improvements to health and safety: replacement door handles where the old ones had caused a couple of minor injuries to people moving equipment; a handrail for the stage steps

## Volunteers

Our village has a strong community spirit, and the Village Hall is at the heart of that. We consider the hall as 'belonging' to the village and that everyone has a share, and a say, in its activities and its future. According to our constitution, the Committee is elected by the village residents to run the hall on their behalf.

All Committee members are volunteers; we have no paid staff. We employ contractors for some cleaning and maintenance work as necessary, but the majority of work done in maintaining the hall and raising funds is done by volunteers, both those on the Committee and the large number of village residents who help. These includes working on hall repairs, housekeeping tasks, maintaining the garden, distributing the newsletter, maintaining the web site, managing the hall bookings and room hire, and organising or assisting with fundraising activities such as running the bar, the village fete and many other events.

Everyone on the Committee is grateful to the team of helpers, and for the support of the village as a whole. In particular this year we should mention:

- The organisers of The Whist Group, Sue Stocker and Kay Bowen, assisted by Marg Jones. The group was started in 1983 by Dot Vaughan, Kay Bowen and Kay's mother and has held a regular Whist Drive at the hall for 11 months of the year since then, contributing all the takings to hall funds and raising an average of over £50 a month. Sue and Kay have decided it is time to retire and will not resume the sessions when the hall re-opens. The Committee sends their grateful thanks and best wishes for everything they have done.
- The Glade Tavern volunteers who each month, prior to lockdown, set up and ran the bar and cleared the room afterwards, and organised the Christmas Party
- Jane Brackstone and Rosemary Thomas, who have taken on the task of welcoming newcomers to the village with a 'welcome pack' including a copy of the History of The North (compiled by Gordon Casson).
- Jane Gilliard for taking on the role of Safeguarding advisor for the Committee, and being instrumental in running Help on The North, providing support for the village when the lockdown occurred.
- Graham Agg and Steve Gilliard for their assistance with keeping the garden and outside areas of the hall in good condition.
- Brian Mahony and the Footpaths Group for their work maintaining the village footpaths, and in particular liaising with Natural Resources Wales (NRW) over safety and facilities in The Glade.
- Linda Snowden & Alison Pugh-Jones, for taking over responsibility for the Wednesday Social Club when Age Cymru had to withdraw their services to the group.
- The village delivery team, who regularly distribute the Village Hall Newsletter to each house in the district, and undertake the annual village Christmas Cards delivery which raises donations for the hall each year.

## **Financial Review**

Despite the lockdown the hall's finances are in good shape, but the Committee is aware of the danger of complacency given the major repair work that is likely to be needed on the roof in the near future. At the start of the year we had accumulated £13,287 unrestricted funds over and above our basic reserve of £10,000. Until lockdown our finances were on budget and we were planning to use the surplus for a series of capital improvements to the hall. However, the hall has been closed since mid-March and is likely to remain closed through the winter, and most of the capital improvements have been delayed.

Our current balance is £34,391 of which £10,000 is our reserve, leaving £24,391 available to spend on ongoing expenses and the planned hall improvements.

We normally aim for an excess income over revenue expenditure of between £1,000 and £3,000 per year, which is earmarked for capital improvements. Our income from normal activities this year was £9,561, significantly less than our initial target of £11,000 because of the cancellation of planned fundraising events. This almost exactly equates to our expenditure of £9,383. However, our general income has been supplemented significantly by a Covid-19 support grant of £10,000 from Monmouthshire County Council (MCC), and a number of donations given to the hall in appreciation of the actions organised by members of the Committee to support village residents during lockdown (under the banner of Help on The Narth). These latter donations comprise £675 unsolicited donations, and £252 donated via the Mask Making Group, volunteers in the village who made face masks for village residents and asked for donations to the hall in lieu of payment. Thanks to these unexpected amounts, our total income this year was £20,488, representing an excess of income over expenditure of £11,105.

The grant from MCC, awarded to all village halls in the area on application, is intended to support halls affected by a reduction in income since the Covid-19 lockdown. Other than the grants and donations, our income has fallen significantly with the hall's closure, but our expenses have decreased also. However, the winter will see a rise in expenses, as the hall will have to be heated to a certain extent. The grant is a safety net to cover loss of income over winter while the hall is closed, and reduced income longer term which will result from the reduced capacity of the hall necessitated by social distancing restrictions. It will also enable us to purchase additional equipment required for the health & safety measures needed when the hall re-opens.

### **The Committee's Reserve Policy**

The Committee consider that a reserve of £10,000 is appropriate, to fund any emergency expenditure that may be required for unplanned maintenance issues, in particular should any major repairs to the roof be required at short notice to prevent deterioration of the structure of the building.

The remaining surplus funds are earmarked, largely, for the major capital projects planned, including replacing the flat roof over the kitchen, supplemental heating, and improvements to the car park, outside seating area and garage storage areas. It is anticipated that the amount held will have to be supplemented by further grant funding to cover the cost of the full improvements project.

A copy of the end of year financial statement is included as an addendum to this report.

## **Structure, Governance and Management**

The Charity is an unincorporated organisation, first registered with the Charity Commission in 1968, with an amended Charity Scheme dating from July 1998. The Village Hall and the land in which it stands is controlled by the Committee but, as the Committee is an unincorporated organisation and cannot hold land in its own right, it is vested in the Charity Commission's Official Custodian who hold the land on behalf of the Committee.

The trustees of the Charity form the Committee, the majority of which is elected each year at the Annual General Meeting with residents of The Narth and District (defined as The Narth, Pen y Fan and Maryland, comprising approximately 360 adults) entitled to vote. Other committee members are appointed by Trellech United Community Council and the Parochial Church Council (although the latter position has been vacant for some years). The Committee has the power to co-opt up to two further members.

The Committee elects its own officers, none of which are mandatory under our Charity Scheme but currently comprise a chair, secretary and treasurer. Other Committee members are allocated specific roles, including booking clerk overseeing hall rentals, health & safety officer, safeguarding officer and other roles as required.

The Committee have adopted a number of written policies, reviewed regularly (annually if possible although this year the difficulties of holding meetings has resulted in a less frequent review). An induction programme has been devised for new members.

Communication channels with village residents include frequent updates via email to residents who have opted in to the mailing list, the web site and a hard copy newsletter distributed, approximately five times a year, to each household in the district (around 200 households).

Communication links with neighbouring villages and their respective village halls are also maintained, largely with those in the Trellech United ward.

### **Members of the Committee**

The Committee gained three new members at the start of this year: Lisa Dorel, Maria Ricketts and Rachel Widdicks. For most of the year the Committee has comprised 11 members.

During the year the Committee lost two valuable members when Larry Stoter and Pam Manfield (formerly chair and secretary respectively) resigned in August. Both contributed greatly to the hall's activities over the last four years, and will continue to assist the committee as volunteers contributing to the maintenance of the building and garden.

Officers of the Committee (chair, secretary and treasurer) are elected by the Committee each year immediately after the Annual General Meeting in October. On Larry and Pam's retirement, Clark Atkinson was elected chair and Marie Ricketts secretary. Maria will also take over Pam's role as newsletter editor. Marilyn Dunkelman has remained as treasurer to the Committee.

Two further committee members will retire at the end of the year:

Stephen Dix who has served on the committee for six years as a very active member, with particular responsibility for organising the Night Out events (professional performances supported by the Arts Council of Wales). Stephen has booked two Nights Out each year, which have resulted in some memorable performances of a very high standard, as well as raising significant funds for the hall.

Gwen Reid who leaves after almost two years of service. Gwen has been looking after housekeeping aspects, ensuring the hall was well stocked and lost property returned, when possible, to its rightful owner. Lisa Dorel and Rachel Widdicks will take over Gwen's housekeeping role.

The remaining committee have all agreed to serve in the next financial year, if elected.

In addition to the officers, other Committee members are allocated specific roles. The most substantial of these (in terms of workload) is the Booking Clerk, responsible for hiring the hall and maintaining the booking diary, which Sue Goodlass has undertaken for the last four years.

Other roles include Health and Safety officer (Wendy Atkinson), Safeguarding officer (Rachel Widdicks with the support of non-committee member Jane Gilliard) and Data Protection officer (Marilyn Dunkelman).

### Reference and Administrative details

Charity name	The Narth & District Village Hall
Other name the Charity uses	The Narth Village Hall
Registered charity number	524389
Charity's contact address	c/o The Treasurer The Beeches, The Narth, Monmouth NP25 4QL
Village Hall address	The Narth Village Hall The Narth, Monmouth NP25 4QN

### Names of the Trustees who Manage the Charity

	Trustee name	Office (if any)	Dates acted if not for whole year	Name of person (or body) entitled to appoint trustee (if any)
1	Alan Clarkson Atkinson	Chair (from 12/8/20)		
2	Wendy Jane Atkinson			
3	Gwendoline Ann Bethell			
4	Stephen Dix			
5	Lisa Dorel			
6	Marilyn Dunkelman	Treasurer		
7	Susan Goodlass			
8	Pamela Joan Manfield	Secretary (to 12/8/20)	Resigned 12/08/2020	
9	Ann Maria Ricketts	Secretary (from 12/8/20)		
10	Laurence Paul Stoter	Chair (to 12/8/20)	Resigned 12/08/2020	TUCC*
11	Rachel Widdicks			

\*Trellech United Community Council

## Declarations

The trustees declare that they have approved the trustees' report above.

Signed on behalf of the Charity's trustees

Signature .....  .....

Full Name: Marilyn Dunkelman

Position in Charity: Trustee and Treasurer

Date: 5<sup>th</sup> October 2020

Signature .....

Full Name .....

Position in Charity .....

Date .....