

WINSCOMBE COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

TRUSTEES' REPORT FOR THE YEAR TO 30TH APRIL 2011.

President's Report

The replacement of Chairman partway through the year brought a perceptible change of direction. Previously there had been emphasis on the centre itself, trying to increase use, promote book sales and considering in detail the fabric of the building.

It seems to me now that we are more outward-looking, with our Fair Trade, ecological interests and the coming of Localism. I include the choice of the AGM speaker, pylons being a subject of countryside importance.

If we can clearly demonstrate to the community our outgoing attitude we may avoid the ever present danger (a symptom of our success) of being taken for granted and even persuade volunteers to come forward to join our committee, new members being essential to maintain the Centre's efficiency.

Finance

Financially we had a positive year.

Total **Income** at £41,693 was the highest ever, boosted by Rental income, which was up 6.7% to £22,119 and a further instalment of £3,200 from the legacy of the late Miss Majority Lennox.

However, the high point was the performance of Fundraising bringing in £13,046, some £2,500 more than the record of the previous year.

Our running costs, ie total **Expenditure** excluding Repairs & Renewals and Depreciation, were at a similar figure to five years ago meaning that those costs as a percentage of rental income have fallen from near 100% down to 65% during this period.

We spent £20,953 on Repairs & Improvements and when that and the Depreciation are added to those other costs, the above percentage rises to 168%. This figure has remained stubbornly at that level for a number of years.

The **Excess of Income over Expenditure** was £4,473 and it was agreed that we would apportion £2,000 of that to increase the Special Building Reserve.

The **Balance Sheet** showed an increase in our Bank balances of £5,358 to £43,461 and the increase in the Special Building Reserve previously referred to. We will review this reserve annually in future.

Summary. While we had a good year, the cost of maintaining and improving our elderly buildings continues to use up a substantial proportion of our income. With a Victorian main building and three others, each of which is beyond its original planned life, it is difficult to see that figure being reduced and there is always the worry of a major issue. With those points in mind, we intend to commence a review during the coming year to ensure the facilities that we offer will continue to be available in the long term.

Fundraising

We have a great team without whom nothing would happen. There have been the usual fund-raising events plus some new ideas like a Fashion Show and Pamper Evenings. In the year a record amount of over £13,000 has been raised. This included the net proceeds from the Michaelmas Fair which is our main fund-raising event, much loved and attended by a great number of village residents. New fund-raising ideas are always welcome, as are new people to join our dedicated and friendly team.

One activity which is making a significant contribution to our income is bookselling. Thousands of books are donated to the Community Centre where a small team of helpers sort, clean, check and decide how best to sell them. It is a wonderful example of village re-cycling, in a good cause. Some are now sold on the internet [Amazon] where we can obtain higher market prices for them. We have 3 Big Book Sales annually which are well attended, also attracting customers to the Freecycle event held on the same morning. It has been a steep learning curve in the last year but the hard work seems to have paid off, as more money has been raised for WCC. We are always looking for more help with this, especially at the time of the 3 Book Sales. Books, in large numbers, are heavy!

Premises

Following the AGM in 2010, a Premises Group was set up in order to undertake an audit of the buildings to ascertain what maintenance and improvements were needed and to bring to them to the attention of the Management Committee for consideration. Over the past year, the front and side of the main building has been re-rendered and painted, electrical safety has been reviewed and updated as required, the Link Room and Wilf Weeks have been redecorated and carpeted as part of an insurance claim and the main drains have been repaired. However, a serious problem has come to light over the past winter and it is now necessary to install a complete re-placement of the antiquated central heating system that services the main building. Advice and design is being obtained from specialist consultant engineers but it is clear that this project will cost in the region of £17,000. In addition to these projects, the usual maintenance is ongoing and our thanks go to Darren Jenkins and Ronnie Morgan for their invaluable help in this regard.

Chairman's summary

On reading the foregoing paragraphs of this report, one may get some idea of the amount of dedicated voluntary work that must have been involved. But these few sentences tell only a small part of the full story. Very many necessary tasks, not mentioned here specifically, are undertaken quietly and diligently by Committee members, working groups and other individual friends. If these jobs were not done supplies would run out, systems would fail or necessary administration would not be done, and the Community Centre could not function. It can be so easy to take such work for granted. Sadly, we are likely to notice only when a system or facility fails.

A number of the people who keep things running have been doing so for many years. Indeed, some are the same folk who thirty years ago, with vision and enthusiasm, secured and equipped the premises for the parish community. Their continuing service has been essential to maintain this facility. However, the average age of the Management Committee and teams of voluntary workers is increasing and the Committee needs to consider employing paid labour to perform some of the caretaking tasks which up to now have been done voluntarily.

We celebrate with gratitude the first thirty years in the life of Winscombe Community Association: but what of the future? Recently raised concerns about governmental and public institutions ask about "fitness for purpose". Before such questions can be answered one has to be clear about the purpose. What are the present and likely future needs of our community which might be served by this Community Association, and how might our Community Centre be developed and equipped to meet them? The Committee is considering how it might address some of the desires concerning the Centre that were expressed in responses to the local Parish Plan questionnaire. It will require not only money to fulfil them. It will require people with the vigour and vision to carry such development forward. We need input from younger people in this community if we are to serve the needs of tomorrow.