

Report of the Armstrong Hall Management Committee
held on Thursday 1st September 2016
in the Committee Room at the Armstrong Hall Complex

Present: Shirley Holloway (Chairman)
Alan Carman
Clive Parkinson
Angela Symonds

Barbara Ray (Armstrong Hall Advisory Committee)

Clare Nelmes (Hall Manager)
Sandra Richardson (Deputy Hall Manager)
Mary Sealey (Administrator)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Bob Griffin
Maggie Tyrrell
Helen Harrison
Benj Emmerson
John Smith
Martin Brooks
Bernard Fennell

2. MATTERS ARISING FROM REPORT OF 16TH JUNE 2016

(a) Christmas Lights 'Switch On'

Shirley Holloway reported that her initial enquires for a local celebrity to perform the switch on of the Christmas Lights had not come to fruition and she now understands that Helen Harrison, Chairman of the Armstrong Hall Trust is willing to approach the recent Olympic bronze medal winner, Sally Conway to ask if she would be prepared to carry this out and we eagerly await her response.

(b) Replacement Ladder

The Hall Manager reported that a new ladder has now been purchased.

It was agreed to take item 4 on the agenda as the next item of business in order to tour the Complex.

4. Report from Hall Manager on Building Condition and Maintenance Issues

Armstrong Hall

Floor: The greatest concern is the floor popping up in places, this is happening more frequently now and it is worse in the summer months. Probably due to the fact that no expansion joints were put in when the floor was laid. It is proving difficult to find someone with the skills and experience to give advice on it and the utilities run underneath.
Action: Glue and weight over a long weekend when the hall is not in use as a temporary solution.

Fire Exit: There is no seal between the floor and fire exit doors and therefore water is ingressing.

Lighting: The Hall Manager has requested an audit of the stage lighting with ownership details.
Action: Brian Haley to carry out an audit of stage lighting.

Side Columns: The wooden side column by the rear fire exit is rotten at the base.

Toilets

The toilets are working and functional, the only issue is there are not enough when there are large performances being held at the Complex. The Installation of automatic air fresheners' is being investigated.

Kitchen

The Hall Manager commented that the kitchen could be updated for a relatively small expenditure and there is a possibility that a separate grant would be available for this.

There are ongoing problems with the hot water boiler.

The units need upgrading and stainless steel worktops installed.

The solid hotplates are very dated and the oven temperature very variable.

The rear exit door is not compliant with fire regulations as there is no push bar or signage.

There is a cracked window above the rear door.

Excell Room

The bar is very tired and the Hall Manager has arranged for staff to refurbish over next few weeks.

Action: Hall staff to deep clean the bar area and repaint. Tony to box in radiators

The lighting is not very good and could do with updating, but as the fixtures are quite retro they may have some second hand value.

The fire exit door is not compliant as there is no push bar and the outside sill is rotten.

The windows are single glazed and have been repaired.

Action: The Hall Supervisor has been asked to obtain quotes for new UPVC windows and fire exit doors.

External

Outside the Excell Room, there are conifers overhanging from the neighbouring property.

Action: The Hall Manager will contact the neighbour to ask for the trees to be cut back.

The fascia boards at the side and back of the building are in a very poor state of repair.

Action: The Hall Manager to obtain quotations for replacement fascia boards.

There are broken drains outside the kitchen.

Damp proofing is needed at the side of the hall and the wall is unstable on the end return by the stage door.

The dressing room windows at the rear of the building are in a poor condition.

The side wall of the Armstrong Hall (adjacent to The Wheatsheaf), part of the lip of the damp course has broken off. The boundary wall with the Wheatsheaf is bowing and in a poor condition, there is uncertainty about the ownership of the wall but the trees in the Wheatsheaf garden are undermining the wall.

The door to the shed that contains the raised seating is in a poor condition.

The barrier outside the disabled toilet is unstable.

The fire exit doors from the Cossham Hall open straight out onto steps and into the road, going forward the fire exit should be from a side door, which would be generally more usable

Bakery Annexe

The store underneath has an asbestos ceiling.

Action: The Hall Manager to obtain quotations for the removal of the asbestos ceiling.

Committee Room

The carpet tiles are in a poor condition.

On return to the meeting the Hall Manager said she would recommend that quotations are obtained for the asbestos removal, fascia boards and new fire exit doors in the kitchen as a matter of urgency. We also need a specialist to give advice on the Armstrong Hall floor.

5. OPERATIONAL MATTERS – Report from Hall Manager

- (i) Clare Nelmes requested authorisation to mothball the Bakery Annexe as only one group now use it for band practice and she will endeavour to find an alternative venue for them. This should give a significant saving in energy costs.
- (ii) Clare Nelmes reported that she has looked at the roof of Miss Saises Cottage, the front appears to be sound but the back is bowing and she will investigate.
- (iii) At present the office is looking into options for a new online booking system and website in order that potential hirers can check availability and make a provisional booking. Therefore, the regular hirers have been informed that the option to book for 2018 on 1st October 2016 with the hand written diary has been postponed to the New Year so that the new computerized booking system can be set up during the autumn.
- (iv) Clare Nelmes informed members that she is in the process of being made the designated licensee for the premises, in the interim period Judith Payne is still the designated licensee.

3. FINANCIAL MATTERS

(a) Financial Statements and Approve Accounts for Payment

The financial statements for April, May, June and July 2016 were tabled. Members commented that it was helpful to see several statements at once which demonstrated the monthly fluctuations. Shirley Holloway asked if it would be possible to have some notes to accompany the financial statements in the future to explain the fluctuations. The Hall Manager said she is looking at the presentation of the financial statements with the temporary RFO, Graham Smith to see if they can be presented in a more user friendly format.

The following accounts were paid out of meeting:-

South Glos Council	Rates (June) - Hall	124.00
South Glos Council	Rates (June) - Museum	53.00
South Glos Council	Rates (July) - Hall	124.00
South Glos Council	Rates (July) - Museum	53.00
South Glos Council	Rates (August) - Hall	124.00
South Glos Council	Rates (August) - Museum	53.00
Bristol Old Vic Theatre	Midsummer Night's Dream Performance	1110.00
Biffa Waste Services	Wheelie Bin Rentals	36.38
British Telecom plc	Telephone Bill – AH	34.61
EKE Security Ltd	Replace Monitor & DVR	350.40
British Telecom plc	Telephone bill – Hall	102.00
Bablake Wines Ltd	Drink stock	119.48
Biffa Waste	Glass collection & disposal	17.14
Envirochem Laboratories Ltd	Bakery Annexe Roof Analysis testing	30.00
Horders (Thornbury Press)	Printing letterheads, compliment slips etc	182.40
Midland Ladders Co Ltd	Ladder	268.00
EDF Energy	Electricity Bill	987.58
British Telecom plc	Telephone Bill	39.16

It was proposed by Clive Parkinson, seconded by Alan Carman and unanimously agreed that the following accounts now due for payment be approved:-

Basic Disclosure Online	Basic Disclosure	25.00
Newey & Eyre	Light fittings	72.44
Biffa	Wheelie Bin Rental (Glass Waste)	17.14
Unitary Engineering Ltd	Annual heating service	182.40
Leafline	Artificial Plant Rental	93.60

(b) Income and Expenditure Accounts for 2015-16

The draft income and expenditure accounts for 2015-16 were considered, they showed a total income of £116,916 and a total expenditure of £104,679. The redevelopment fund which is ring fenced in a separate bank account showed a balance of £60,812.

Shirley Holloway asked how we are placed to tackle the maintenance issues highlighted in the tour of the complex at the beginning of the meeting. The Hall Manager said we need to plan carefully to keep the building safe and working alongside the plans for redevelopment.

(c) Review of Fees and Charges and Debtors Policy

The Hall Manager said it is generally agreed that our pricing policy is quite complicated and prices will need to be displayed as part of the new website, therefore, she would like authorisation to work with staff to simplify the fees and charges. It was unanimously agreed for a review to be carried out.

It was also pointed out that at the present time we do not have a Debtors Policy in place and there are a few regular hirers who are consistently late in paying. It was proposed by the Chairman, Shirley Holloway that a Debtors Policy is put into place, then after one month a reminder letter is sent out and if no payment is received all future bookings are cancelled until paid up in full and after that time any future bookings are paid for in advance. It was noted that private hirers and new hirers are always invoiced in full and asked to pay in advance of their function.

(d) **Redevelopment Project – Fundraising Update**

Clare Nelmes updated members with the fundraising total which stands at £63,576 and we have also just received a donation from Thornbury Art Club from their Midsummer Night's Dream exhibition.

Barbara Ray gave details of the following forthcoming fundraising events. On 17th September Michael Lunts will be presenting 'A Meeting of Minds' performed on the new baby grand piano. Roger Huckle and Bristol Ensemble will be performing a Classical Music Concert on 21st October. There are two events planned for November, an afternoon tea on Saturday 12th November and on Friday 18th Three Men's Company' will be returning to the hall. To round the year off Gareth Williams will be performing a Woodwind Concert on 6th December. The Chairman thanked Barbara for organising so many fundraising events.

6. REDEVELOPMENT PROJECT

Clare Nelmes reported that she has met with the fundraising consultant, Caroline Taylor and agreed that before any bids for funding are made there is a lot of work needed on business plans etc. Clare stated that before she was appointed as Hall Manger it had been agreed to apply for a Heritage Lottery grant. However, having spoken to Caroline she agrees that we are not ready to apply and we may be able to use Caroline's expertise in a different way in the meantime. During the next six months we need to have a clear business plan for the current function of the complex, i.e. customers, usage etc. and having a new computerised booking system should make this information easily available. It was agreed that going forward we need to have the following in place to give a solid foundation:

- A clear vision plan for the future, i.e. what we are bidding for broken down into fundable chunks.
- How the redevelopment is to be phased, showing a working plan around the redevelopment.
- Demonstration of community support.
- A project delivery plan.
- A marketing/communications plan.

It was reported that the Redevelopment Working Group will be meeting next week and will be looking at all the options and involving the Museum. Barbara Ray commented that she is much happier with this approach of breaking the work down and doing it in stages is more realistic.

7. REQUEST FROM THORNBURY PICTURE HOUSE

Barbara Ray gave details of a request from Thornbury Picture House asking the Armstrong Hall Charitable Trust to support their application to the British Film Institute (BFI) for a new projector. Barbara informed members that they received a lottery grant for their current projector 11 years ago and now feel that it needs updating. Shirley Holloway proposed that the Trust supports this application and this was seconded by Clive Parkinson and unanimously agreed.

8. RESIGNATION OF HALL SUPERVISOR

The Hall Manager informed members that Brian Haley has tendered his resignation as Hall Supervisor, giving 3 months notice and therefore will be finishing at the end of November. The Staffing Committee will be meeting next week and will be considering the recruitment process and job description with the Armstrong Hall going forward.

9. CORRESPONDENCE

- (i) A letter of complaint has been received from the occupier of a property neighbouring the Armstrong Hall pointing out the poor appearance of the fascia boards at the side and rear of the property.

- (ii) A copy of the annual report for the Heritage Trust including the accounts has been received and it states that they are reapplying for their accreditation. This information was noted.