

The Heritage Chapel and Halls



Park Road,
Rushden,
Northants,
NN10 0RW

Annual General Meeting

22nd January 2019 7.30pm
held in the Heritage Chapel

Annual Report was presented by
Chair Gill Crow

The Heritage Chapel and Halls was registered with the Charity Commission as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) on 13th September 2017 (number 1174622). This achievement was built upon four months of intensive work by the Trustees to develop an approved Constitution, structure and governance framework and to agree on the purposes for the Charity.

The objects of the charity are two fold:

- To advance the Christian faith in accordance with the statement of faith and mission for the wider public benefit by the provision of space for prayer, public acts of worship, the teaching of Christianity by bible readings, sermons and courses, pastoral work, both locally in Rushden and impacting globally.
- The provision and maintenance of The Heritage Chapel and Halls for the use of the inhabitants of Rushden without distinction of political, religious or other opinions, including use for:
 - (a) meetings, lectures and classes, and
 - (b) other forms of recreation and leisure-time occupation, with the object of improving the conditions of life for the inhabitants.

With the registration of the Charity the management of the Chapel and Halls passed from the former Limited Company to the Trustee Board on 1st October 2017 on behalf of the then owner of the buildings Dennis Dangerfield.

A grant from East Northants Council Community Facilities Fund of £50,000 had been made to the Limited Company towards capital purchase and refurbishment works in February 2017. The Trustees negotiated with the Council to transfer these funds to the charity to be used towards the proposed purchase of the site, which Dennis Dangerfield had agreed to sell to the charity at the original 2013 auction price plus legal expenses. The balance of the funds came from two generous loans, donations and church accounts.

On the 9th March 2018 the premises passed into the legal ownership of the Charity.

I would like to pause here to thank some people without whom this would not have been possible.

The individuals who worked together to save these wonderful buildings from the Auction. The Directors of the Limited Company and their supporters who started all this up from scratch. Those involved in securing the Community Facilities Fund. Dennis and Wendy for their generosity and all of you who have been a part of this project from the start.

With the incorporation of the charity and the purchase of the buildings comes a new era in the life of the community who gather here. We plan to safeguard and preserve these fine buildings for the future and to develop the life and witness of the church fellowship to benefit this and future generations in the town.

The Trustees for this initial period have been Greville and Karon Watson, Janine Musson (Treasurer), John Black, Cheryl Tompkins, Melanie Coleman, Gillian Crow (Chair), Tony Garrard and Paul Clarke. Paul stood down in October 2017 and Tony Garrard, much missed by us all, remained in post until his death in May 2018.

The Trustees have had 23 Trustee meetings to date and 194 Actions have been documented as completed in our Action Log since May 2017. The Trustees have shown tremendous commitment and effort during our intensive first year. I would like to take this opportunity to thank them.

Here is a summary list of the headlines, outside of the day to day running, that have taken their time and attention:

- Charity Registration
- Setting up of Committees and Working Groups
- Purchase of the premises
- Fire, Health and Safety audits and resulting action plans
- Asbestos Survey
- Keyholders and security
- Safeguarding Policy
- Grant Applications
- Data Protection under new GDPR legislation
- Website development

The Trustees work has been supported by three Committees, Finance, Premises and Worship and Pastoral. Thank you to all who have been involved in whatever way. I would like to invite a representative from each Committee to review their activity this year.

Finance

(read by Greville Watson Finance Committee)

We decided that the Bookings and Treasurer role should be combined, with our Treasurer, Janine Musson setting up, streamlining and overseeing accounting, diary, bookings and invoicing systems with the support of the Finance Committee.

We hope that you have all benefitted from the transparency of the financial situation being published monthly in the church booklet. Janine will present the 2018 accounts later during this meeting. The Finance Committee has organised themselves to oversee both general finance matters and fundraising.

There are ten regular hirer groups using the halls and during 2018 there were 38 one off bookings. The RATS have held 2 Pantomimes and 1 Play at the Heritage. We are very grateful to our diverse range of regular hirers for their commitment to us and how they work around each other when required.

Considerable negotiation has been involved in getting good rates for utilities and insurance cover.

As a Registered Charity we are now able to apply for Gift Aid on donations and this has been set up with HMRC and is actioned quarterly. If you are a tax payer and have not already registered with our Treasurer for your donations to be Gift Aided please speak to Janine as these additional funds make a big difference to our income.

There is a lot of work involved in applying for grants. This year we applied to the Garfield Weston Anniversary Fund for refurbishment plans to the hall, kitchen and foyer but with over 2,000 applications we were sadly unsuccessful. However, we are through to East Northants Council Community Facilities Fund Stage 2 for a grant to refurbish the hall and should hear in February. We have also applied to the Big Lottery Fund Awards for All.

Premises

(read by Melanie Coleman Premises Committee)

The premises are huge and wonderful but they have been in need of quite a lot of TLC.

The toilets have been upgraded and a disabled toilet re-positioned to enable easier use for patrons, we are very grateful to the generous donations that made this possible. We initially had a painting party but since then members have been involved painting the bulk and this task will be completed as soon as possible.

We now have Lisa Dunwoody as our cleaner twice a week, helped by Paul Clarke, and I'm sure you will agree we can see a vast improvement in the cleanliness. Also we have a handy man in Allan Dunwoody who carries out minor repairs and has built the new fencing at the side of the building.

A huge thank you to Tony and Eileen Ward who continue to tidy the gardens and borders and plant seasonal flowers outside the foyer to create a warm welcome as people come in and Eileen also cleans the Chapel.

The RATS have had a lighting truss installed as well as the Stage Curtains.

We are in the process of tidying and changing spaces. A Heritage Office has now been set up and the basement has been cleared out.

The Bowls Club kindly donated the Pink chairs which have certainly made a difference to a 'theatrical look' for shows and comfort for our patrons.

We are continuing to work towards improvements and have over the last 2 weeks had an external building survey and electricians in to quote for a new consumer board to update our rather tired one.

What a lot of people may not be aware of is the issue of Conservation. Whilst it is wonderful to have a listed building, it creates its own problems. Every change we make, be it to the toilets, the fencing outside, the Porch, to name but a few, all have to go for approval to the county Conservation officer and he decides if we can or can't proceed.

Trying to get quotes for grants and projects is also proving challenging as Contractors seem unwilling or unable to help, but we will continue in our search.

We are grateful to everyone who has helped us, those who hire the premises, the volunteers who unlock the building, those who watch over and report issues. You make it possible to keep the Heritage going and we strive to improve this wonderful building as we move forward together.

Worship and Pastoral

(read by Karon Watson Worship and Pastoral Committee)

The Minister diary and Services Calendar is planned for and speakers are booked well in advance. We are grateful to our 17 Ministers and Preachers who give of their time and inspiration to lead our weekly Sunday services. There have been some new Preachers as well as members of this congregation this year too and we value their input to the Spiritual life of the chapel.

Our organists are supported by teams of individuals who greet on the door, bring flowers, read the lesson and lead the prayers, as well as provide refreshments after the service for a time of fellowship.

The Rushden Mayor David Coleman held his Celebration of Christmas Carol service at The Heritage in December which included South End School choir and It's My Life.

A Study group and Alpha Course have been running fortnightly and 12 people have been attending regularly. In the Study Group we have followed a series looking at Jonah and another on The Parables as well as having gained a better understanding of different faiths' beliefs.

We have followed the church calendar celebrating Christmas, Easter and Harvest and are grateful to those who have decorated the chapel through the seasons.

The church booklet is produced every week and I am sure that you will agree that the quality of the publication is much appreciated by us all, for the pictures, information and events contained within it. Thank you to those involved in the production.

There have been 5 funerals and a wedding and a christening that have taken place here this year and it is good to be able to provide this service to our community for life events within our Chapel.

Conclusion

(read by Gill Crow)

We are aware that there is still a lot of work to do, but I hope that you will have gained an insight into the amount of work that has been ongoing this year, often behind the scenes. There are many issues that face us moving forward, refurbishment, funding, the presence of rough sleepers which is a town wide problem, ensuring that we can pay our bills – you will see how much is needed to run the site and we still need to develop the life of the chapel and halls in so many ways.

We need and value your support, we cannot do it without you. People involved with the Heritage are passionate about it. We recognise that we cannot please everyone all the time, but we are always open to hear what you have to say. This will be a long-term project, but based on the progress we have made and the commitment of individuals that I have witnessed, I have faith that, with God's help, these buildings will remain in trust for the future. That townsfolk will be served with affordable rooms to hire for community activities and clubs and that God will continue to be worshipped here, with individuals finding faith and growing closer to Him and in fellowship with one another. (End)

Questions were invited from the floor – there were none.

The Trustees recommend approval to the Charity Commission. A unanimous show of hands voted approval of the Annual Report for submission to the Charity Commission.

Treasurer's Report

(read by Janine Musson)

On 1st October, 2017, when the Trustees took over management of the premises there was a balance of £0 in the bank. This was quickly rectified by generous donations being received and the Gift Aid scheme being set up which together with the weekly offertory plus the invoicing to the hirers for the use of the Hall and rooms, provides steady income. This has been a very busy year due to having to negotiate from 1st October for reduced prices for gas and electricity, a new insurance policy and in order to comply with the insurance having to undertake some surveys i.e. asbestos, fire and safety.

The insurance policy negotiated covers all that the previous one did and in some cases is better than the previous policy and the annual premium was considerably less by £4k. However the insurance company provided us with a list of actions which we undertook and have complied with.

Annual payments have been made for the Music CCLI Licence and CCPAS now renamed as Thirtyone:eight which covers Safeguarding for churches and charities.

Funerals and weddings are available here and this also provides a good source of income as well as the hiring of the Hall and rooms which are booked and used every day. Invoicing is carried out immediately after the 1st of each month for the previous month.

Payments for gas, electricity, water and insurance are made monthly by Direct Debit. Smart meters have now been installed for the electricity and water.

For the future it is intended to develop the budget forecasts further and recommend to the Trustees the possible financial way forward.