

**BURTLE VILLAGE HALL**  
**Registered Charity 1164684**

**TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT**

1<sup>st</sup> January 2020 – 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020

**Correspondence address:**

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**Trustees:** Stephen Allen, Ieuan Day, Lyn Goodliffe, Tracy Fear, Natasha Bloor

**Management Committee:**

Chair	Lyn Goodliffe
Vice Chair	Helen Jones
Treasurer	Bharti Baron
Secretary	Lyn Goodliffe
Bar Manager	Tracy Fear
Bookings Secretary	Natasha Bloor
Hall Manager	Ieuan Day
Media/Publicity	Jayne Murray

**Community Group Representatives:**

Parish Council Chairman	Richard Dallimore
Harvest Home Representative	Steve Allen
Burtle Babies Representative	Lorraine Simmonds
Friends of Burtle Church Representative	Vacant
Burtle Silver Band Representative	Philip Hamlin

**Bank:** Santander UK

## **Governance**

Burtle Village Hall is a registered Charity original number 269598 governed by a scheme dated 30<sup>th</sup> June 2003 which replaced a conveyance dated 28 February 1948. The 2003 scheme was incorporated on 25<sup>th</sup> November 2015 to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) Charity number 1164684. Amongst other things this enabled the Trustees/committee members to regularise the bar trading and it also limits the personal liability of Trustees/committee members. In 2016 a commercial arm, Burtle Village Enterprises Ltd, was established. Assets from the bar (stock) were transferred to the commercial arm which traded separately during 2017, 2018, 2019 and early 2020 - in order to separate profits made from the bar from those of the village hall itself. It was resolved that any profits made by the bar would, at the end of each year, be transferred to the Burtle Village Hall as a donation. In 2020 it was decided that there was no need for a separate commercial arm and that the bar accounts, although still being kept separate, could be incorporated into the main Burtle Village Hall accounts. The bar is no longer being used extensively, although still a major part of the running of the hall and events. The Director of this commercial arm was also standing down from the Committee. After much discussion, the commercial arm was closed in March 2020. This makes the accounts simpler as they do not have to be sent to Companies House. The Burtle Village Hall accounts will continue to be externally audited for good practice.

## **Background**

The original Burtle Village Hall was built in 1939 to serve as a meeting place for residents of the village. Major Luttrell of Edington donated the plot of land and villagers themselves raised the money for the building.

The Church administered the Hall for the first few years but it was soon passed over to an elected Management Committee an arrangement that continues to the present day.

The original Hall was a simple single skin wooden building with a shingle roof. Over the years walls and ceiling were lined in an attempt to insulate the building but it remained cold and draughty.

The Hall was extended in the 1960s and the ladies' toilet was moved from the back of the stage to the old kitchen area on eastern side of the Hall. A new kitchen extension was built on the same side of the Hall in line with the front wall and another entrance door was made on the front. This arrangement remained until the major refurbishment in 2008/9. In the 1990s it was realised that the Hall was in serious need of a complete replacement or major updating and fund raising was started. Many events were held in the Hall but it was a long process as the amount required was considered so large.

A planning application was submitted to Sedgemoor District Council in 2004 and permission was granted to demolish the existing Hall and replace it with a steel framed modular building. Following this an application was made to the Lottery Fund for a grant but hopes were dashed when the application was declined because it was deemed there were sufficient local halls to satisfy the community. The people from the lottery had obviously not realised that Burtle was a very strong independent community. During all this time the Hall was still well used but was deteriorating rapidly. Just as the prospect of a new Hall seemed further away than ever a local man, Robin Howell, who is a retired builder, came forward with an unusual plan for an affordable solution. He proposed an innovative design using straw bales, sheep fleece and old wine bottles to construct a new Hall around the old one. The first step would

be to 'drop' an agricultural type roof over the old Hall and extensions. This new roof would be supported on metal posts and the new walls constructed from compressed straw bales with an exterior cladding of clay and wood.

With the help of Community Council for Somerset match funding grants were secured from Somerset County Council and Sedgemoor District Council. Planning consent for the revised design was obtained by Burtle Parish Council and work was set to begin.

The work took almost eighteen months to complete during which time the Hall never closed and activities carried on amongst the building work. The project came in on budget of £150,000. This could not have been achieved without the support of the whole community both young and old many of whom brought their skills or a willingness to learn new skills. The 'new' Hall which comprises a main Hall complete with large stage with a small room/store, a separate small meeting room, well equipped kitchen, separate bar and up to date toilet facilities, was opened on 20 June 2009. The Hall is fully accessible to those with disabilities. The new roofing arrangement also made a large upstairs storage area. The Hall is energy efficient with its thick straw bale walls and sheep fleece insulation in the loft and a heat exchange system for ventilation and heating. An outside ramp with rails was added in 2014 for disabled access.

### **Trustees**

The Trustees are responsible for the overall management of the Hall, its finances and for keeping the building in a good state of repair. This responsibility is made easier by the fact that the innovative design, the generosity of local people and businesses and the use of so much voluntary labour kept costs to a minimum with the result that there are no loans or mortgages to service as all the costs of the building work were covered by fundraising, donations and grants. In 2017 the Trustees delegated responsibility for the day to day running of the hall to an elected Management Committee.

### **Appointment of Trustees**

The 'Trust Deed' governs the appointment of trustees and the management of the charity. Trustees are elected at the Annual General Meeting each year. In addition, certain local organisations that regularly use the hall have a right to appoint a trustee. Trustees appointed by local groups are full trustees with all the same rights and responsibilities as elected trustees and when voting or acting as a trustee of the Hall are required to act in the best interests of the Hall. Not all of the organisations elect to appoint a trustee. There is one ex-officio trustee, the Chairman of Burtle Parish Council.

The Trustees have delegated day to day running of the Hall to a Management Committee made up of Trustees and other committee members elected at the Annual General Meeting and non-elected representatives from the designated community groups. The Management Committee are required to carry out the duties involved in running Burtle Village Hall and are accountable to the Trustees. The Management Committee usually meets on the third Wednesday of each month in the Village Hall. These meetings are open to the public.

## **Objectives of the Charity**

The trust deed states that:

‘the object of the charity is the provision and maintenance of a village hall for use by the inhabitants of the area of benefit without distinction of political, religious or other opinions, including use for 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’

## **Principal Activities in pursuit of Objectives**

The Hall is the social hub of the village and is fully licensed with a well-stocked bar, run and staffed by volunteers from the Management Committee and other villagers. The Management Committee control and run the bar, even if it is hired by an outside group, and the Bar Manager is a member of the Committee,

Many different types of events organised by local groups take place in the Hall and the Hall is well used for private celebrations such as birthday parties, wedding receptions, funeral teas, and anniversary parties.

The long standing Cafe Burtle is held in the Hall once a month on a Saturday morning giving villagers the opportunity to meet up with friends and neighbours over a cup of tea or coffee and homemade cakes. There are local craft stalls, and regular attendance by the Community Police Officer, Councillors and even the local MP. A new initiative, the Community Coffee Shop, was started in 2019 and is held once a month on a Wednesday morning. This provides another gentler social environment for people to meet and chat with refreshments and cakes. It raises funds for local charities as well as the Village Hall. The Grumpy Men’s Breakfast Club, was started in 2017 providing a full English Breakfast to men of Burtle and surrounding villages. This was changed in 2018 to allow men, women and children to attend the Breakfast mornings. Later in 2019 it was decided to restrict this monthly breakfast to a few times during the year linked with certain themes, and this is still popular.

The Hall is the home of Burtle Babies Mother and Toddler group, and to the Burtle Silver Band. Weekly dance classes for children, Pilates and private dance bookings are also run in the hall providing both community services and much needed regular income. Monthly Parish Council meetings are also held in the Hall.

The Management Committee fulfils its primary objective of the provision and maintenance of a Village Hall and also organises regular events for the benefit of the village and to raise much needed funds for maintenance and refurbishment.

## **Hall Bookings**

These are made primarily by telephone and email at the moment. A new village website has been developed and it is hoped to incorporate an electronic booking system in the future. An ‘Events Calendar’ is in place helping prospective hirers to see when the Hall is available. A Booking form, Booking rates, Health and Safety Policy, and Terms and Conditions are sent to each prospective hirer – all of these were reviewed and updated in 2018. The Bookings rates were reviewed again at the end of 2020 and a slight increase was made with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2021.

## **Publicity**

The Management Committee prepares, publishes and distributes a free monthly Newsletter to every household in the village. There is a dedicated Facebook page which is very popular, especially with the younger residents, and this is used to advise about upcoming events and community issues. There is also a Village Hall website page as part of the Burtle Village website. In 2018 the Committee also prepared a 'Welcome Booklet' to be given to all new residents in the village introducing them to the various groups and facilities in and around Burtle. There is also a regular email sent to those that have 'opted-in' to receive it, the email list was updated following the new GDPR regulations introduced in 2018. A new Data Protection Policy (GDPR) and Privacy Notice were put in place in 2018. The Management Committee have made a concerted effort to increase publicity and marketing which has resulted in new rental income and generally more awareness.

## **Licences**

The Hall has a Premises Licence issued by Sedgemoor District Council governing the provision of entertainment to the public and the sale and supply of alcohol. The licence is held by the trustees who are collectively responsible for its administration.

The Hall is registered with Sedgemoor District Council under the Food and Hygiene Ratings Scheme and has received a 5\* grading, the highest. The hall is not registered as a 'food business', as limited food and refreshments are prepared and served on the premises. The main two women who organise the kitchen for events renewed their 'Food and Hygiene' Level Two Awards in 2019.

The Hall holds a combined Music Licence - Performing Rights Society (PRS) for live music and Phonographic Performance (PPL) for the playing of recorded music such as CDs – Licence Account 01628866.

## **Risk Management**

The Management Committee recognises that it is under a legal obligation to protect the building, its hirers and volunteers through adequate and appropriate insurance.

The Hall is insured with respect to property damage (buildings insurance) with ANSVAR - Insurance (£650,705 buildings cover).

It is insured with the same company with respect to contents (£18,082), Public Liability (£5 million), Employers' Liability (£10 million), Property Ownership Liability (£5 million), Public and Products Liability (£5 million), Trustee Indemnity (£250,000) and Legal Expenses (£250,000).

Subject to certain conditions, hirers who have no public liability cover of their own are included under the Hall's public liability insurance. This cover does not extend to commercial hirers.

A new and more comprehensive Risk Assessment of the Hall was undertaken in December 2018. This Risk Assessment was subsequently updated in August 2020.

## **Maintenance Matters**

The Hall Manager as well as dealing with day to day maintenance issues, ensures that:

- Portable electrical appliances are tested by qualified personnel periodically as required by law

- Safety Risk Assessments are carried out as necessary
- Fire Fighting Appliances and Fire Alarm System are inspected and serviced under their respective contracts
- Security Alarm System is regularly inspected and serviced
- Pest Control is activated and regularly maintained, as rodents are a problem in this rural setting
- Regular monthly Maintenance checks are made
- A log is kept giving the name of company with whom the Village Hall has a contract and details of all visits both routine and call outs are recorded with details of the outcome
- A new comprehensive Maintenance File was put in place in 2018 which includes all aspects of maintenance, all logs, all details of tradespeople used, all assessments, and all documentation
- Hall users are required to record all accidents in the Accident Record Book. The Accident/Injury forms were updated in 2018
- A Complaints procedure and form was added in 2019

In 2019 the front of the hall was given a ‘facelift’. The original wooden front had weathered since the hall refurbishment in 2009 and was badly stained in some parts. The work was done with only the cost of the materials needed, as all the labour was provided by Committee members. Local villagers supplied the scaffolding and the use of an industrial power washer. The front of the hall was prepped and washed and it looks like new! Hopefully this will last another ten years. New Security Cameras with active 24 hour CCTV were installed in Autumn 2019 following security issues in some other village halls.

### **Compliance**

Throughout 2018 and 2019, the Management Committee has reviewed every one of its existing Policies and Procedures. New Policies and Procedures have also been put in place to make sure that Burtle Village Hall is compliant with new legislation. Policies and Procedures are no good as paper exercises and so it is important to monitor them to make sure they are working practice. All Policies and Procedures are reviewed every three years or earlier if required by practice and/or change of legislation;

- Terms and Conditions for Hirers – updated May 2018
- Hire Charges document - updated June 2018
- Booking Form – updated and new receipt Form – June 2018
- Data Protection Policy (GDPR) and Privacy Notice – June 2018
- Health and Safety – updated August 2018
- Risk Assessment – December 2018
- Safeguarding and Protecting Children and Vulnerable Adults – January 2019
- Equality and Equal Opportunities Policy – March 2019
- Complaints Form – May 2019
- Media Policy – December 2019

Due to the unprecedented Coronavirus pandemic in 2020, further compliance policies needed to be put in place;

- Terms and Conditions for Hire – updated August 2020
- Special Conditions for Hirers Covid-19 – new August 2020
- Coronavirus Risk Assessment – new August 2020
- Risk Assessment – updated August 2020
- Checklist for opening and closing the Village Hall – new August 2020
- Hire Charges document - updated December 2020

### **Financial Strategy**

The trustees have agreed a formal Financial Policy which sets out their responsibility for the prudent management of Hall funds. It is the objective of the trustees to maintain income at a level which ensures that basic running costs are met – this is approximately £10,000 per year. Any surplus is transferred to the reserves. Finance is an item on every monthly agenda and statements are regularly produced for all the Committee – transparency is considered very important. Trustees make regular checks to ensure that hire charges remain comparable with other halls in the area and in 2017 the discounts for local groups and for individuals from the village were reviewed. From June 2018, all users of the Hall are now paying the same hire charges with a 20% discount for local resident groups. The Committee aims to ensure that local residents and groups benefit from discounted charges on a fair and equal basis and to particularly assist groups that will enhance village life during their ‘start up’ period. The hire charges were reviewed in December 2020 and a small increase was set effective from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2021. The same level of discount for local users was kept in place.

### **Volunteers’ Efforts**

The running costs are kept as low as possible by the continuing generosity of the village and the voluntary work of trustees and other villagers. The Hall now employs a professional Cleaning Agency which has improved the standard and consistency of cleaning. A new detailed cleaning schedule has also been agreed and put in place. The Management Committee ensures all statutory regulations regarding fire, electricity and other services are maintained by professional contracts.

### **Hallmark**

Hallmark is a nationally recognised Quality Standards scheme for village halls. It recognises good quality of management administration and practice and ensures compliance with legislation relating to community buildings. The Hall had been awarded Hallmark One in 2014 but unfortunately this Award had lapsed. The new Committee appointed in April 2018 made this a priority and worked hard to meet the assessment criteria and external validation. The Management Committee applied for Hallmark One and Hallmark Two accreditation in February 2019, with a subsequent visit and report in June 2019. They were rewarded for their hard work by achieving Hallmark One and Hallmark Two. In addition to these Awards, Burtle Village Hall was surprised and delighted to being awarded the ‘District Hall of the

Year' for Sedgemoor in 2019. The Management Committee applied for Hallmark Three early in 2020 but due to the Coronavirus pandemic, all visits and assessments were cancelled for the whole year. Burtle Village Hall has been asked to be the first village hall in Somerset to trial Hallmark Three assessment via Zoom in 2021.

### **OVERALL VIEW OF THE YEAR**

In 2020 we were delighted to be able to keep mostly the same Committee which gave both continuity and progression in their roles and responsibilities. The group works well together and operates within the constitution. This Management Committee is made of representatives elected at the AGM and representatives from the community groups.

The AGM was scheduled to take place in April 2020 but was obviously postponed due to the Coronavirus pandemic and the first lockdown. The virus situation had not eased by the autumn, so the Management Committee took the decision to hold the AGM via Zoom in November. It was felt important to hold the AGM actually in the year 2020! Members of the public were invited to attend via Zoom. Two members of the Committee who had been going to stand down at the April AGM stayed with the Committee until the AGM was held in November and for this the Management Committee was extremely grateful. We had co-opted a new Bookings Secretary in April and there was a change of Vice Chair from the November AGM. The rest of the Committee stayed in place with the same Chair.

**Well, what a year 2020 was!** After all the superb Christmas activities in 2019, the year started with a lovely 'Best of British' meal at the end of January and a 'Leap Year Breakfast' at the end of February. There was a talk about the 'Classic Monte Carlo Rally' and a Barn Dance was held. The monthly Saturday morning Café Burtle was buzzing and the monthly Wednesday morning 'Community Coffee Shop' was flourishing. The Hall hosted regular weekly bookings; including the Burtle Silver Band rehearsals, the Burtle Babies mother and toddler group, young children's dance classes run by Hannah's Hoofers, a Pilates group and various dance practices. Meetings were held and the year was set to be another full and busy one – there were lots of plans.

As part of the on-going improvements and projects, at the end of January the Management Committee installed a built-in Projector and Mobile Screen. This was to support internal visual displays and meetings but also to attract further bookings – many users of the Hall request these facilities. An Energy Audit of the Hall was undertaken. The curtains covering the fire exit and those covering the foyer doors were old and had been patched continuously and it was felt they would not withstand dry cleaning. These were replaced with new curtains and the stage storage area which is a prominent feature in the Hall also had new curtains and tracks fitted.

It was all looking so promising!

### **Then..... Coronavirus happened and 2020 changed beyond recognition.**

The Burtle Village Hall was closed in a National Lockdown from March 20<sup>th</sup> until 14<sup>th</sup> September. It reopened safely and successfully but only for a small number of groups who could comply with the rules and regulations. The Burtle Village Hall was then forced into a

second lockdown from 5<sup>th</sup> November. It did not reopen again in 2020. It was a very difficult time for everybody. The Burtle Village Hall Management Committee also faced difficulties, with four of its members being front line and other key workers. Their time was severely curtailed for volunteer work, although they continued as best they could. This meant that the other members, particularly the Chair, had to try and pick up the pieces. Even with no social events or activities, there was a great deal to do.

The Management Committee had to plough through the new Legislation and Government guidance, guidance and information from ACRE and the Community Council for Somerset, and adhere to strict Insurance regulations. All of these changed frequently with subsequent implications. The Committee was bombarded with information and paperwork, attended County Zoom meetings and was involved in frequent phone calls. They applied for and were grateful to receive a £10,000 Government grant for the first Lockdown which helped to make the village hall safe and Covid-19 compliant and also helped towards the severe loss of income. An investment was made in new chairs and tables that could be wiped easily, fixed and mobile hand sanitisers and sprays, new locks and keys for doors, new posters, signs and floor markings.

A new Covid 'Risk Assessment' had to be written, 'Terms and Conditions' for hirers and users was updated, 'Special Conditions' for Hirers Covid-19 and paperwork for users to adhere to was produced, a new 'one-way' system for reopening had to be introduced, new cleaning arrangements had to be organised and put in place, and everyone from user groups to residents had to be kept informed. All of this was happening in an atmosphere of uncertainty and unknown conditions, along with changing pandemic circumstances.

At the same time, the maintenance of the Burtle Village Hall continued. The Management Committee has to ensure the hall complies with all relevant legislation and is up to date with all the necessary checks and assessments – whether the hall is open or not. All appliances have to be tested and serviced regularly by qualified personnel, and all equipment inspected and serviced under respective contracts. Once again, there were visiting rodents and the Pest Controller was a frequent visitor. All of this maintenance had to be scheduled and paid for. The Chair was persistent with the Electricity Company and with the Water supplier and eventually received welcome rebates. A Water Meter was fitted in October 2020, so the bills will now be more accurate. It has all been quite a struggle, time consuming and without any of the social benefits!

As a result of the Energy Audit in February, the Management Committee considered the installation of Solar Panels and discovered a one-off Somerset 'Climate Emergency Community Fund' which if the bid were successful would cover all the costs of the project. Four energy companies were approached and a full proposal was put to the Burtle Parish Council in November 2020 through whom the application had to be made. Unfortunately, for various reasons, the Burtle Parish Council did not support the Burtle Village Hall proposal and the opportunity was lost.

As a result of prudent housekeeping and more accountability over the last three years, the hall reserves were in good shape which was fortunate when Coronavirus pandemic descended. However, the income from rental hire accounts for almost half of the annual £10,000 running

costs and the remainder of the income comes from fund raising events and bar receipts. From March 20<sup>th</sup>, there has been very little rental income, no fund raising or social events and no use of the bar. The Management Committee runs the Burtle Village Hall 100 Club which adheres to the gambling rules and regulations, with a one-off yearly payment for a number and monthly cash prizes. This raises funds for the Hall and was continued all through the year 2020. The Government Grants were extremely important in being able to keep the hall financially viable and to help with the severe loss of income. The Grants were also used to make the hall Covid-safe and be able to comply with all the rules and regulations. The Management Committee applied for and was lucky enough to receive a small discretionary grant from Sedgemoor District Council of £1334 at the end of the 2020 year which helped the hall finances.

**So, 2021** – we need to be positive and hopefully can now see some light at the end of the tunnel. Vaccines have started and are still being delivered and slowly we should be able to progress towards some ‘normality’. It is hoped that the Burtle Village Hall can reopen in April or May and welcome back a small number of user groups. Gradually it is hoped that more groups will be able to return and that social and fund raising activities can resume later in the year after restrictions are eased. It will be so good to meet and see people once again in our lovely Village Hall but this will only happen when it is safe and legal to do so. The Burtle Village Hall is the social hub of the village and it has been sorely missed.

### **Acknowledgements**

The Trustees would like to thank the residents and friends of Burtle their continued support of the Hall. The majority of Hall bookings come from the Parish and local clubs, organisations and individuals who either live in the village or have links with Burtle. Unlike many village Halls, Burtle Village Hall does not receive regular grant support towards running costs and has to be self-supporting.

The Trustees acknowledge the continued advice and support received from the Community Council for Somerset (CCS). This year in particular we have appreciated the guidance, help and support of both ‘Action with Communities in Rural England’ (ACRE) and CCS – this has taken the form of numerous emails and information sheets with updates as the situation constantly changed. There have also been Zoom Webinars on various topics concerning the pandemic and the running of village halls which have been informative and helpful.

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

Signed on behalf of the charity’s trustees

Signature:

Name:

Date:

Trustee – Burtle Village Hall