# **Burtle Village Hall - Chair’s Report 2023**

# **OVERALL, VIEW OF THE YEAR**

**2023 - another challenging year for Burtle Village Hall**

The majority of the Hall Committee members were new to their roles in 2023/4. The need to balance family and work commitments with the voluntary work to keep the hall itself and its finances in good condition proved challenging. This led to several changes in the committee positions mid-term and the remaining members took on additional roles and to keep the hall running.

Due to constraints on time, and work commitments, it has become clear that some people would prefer to take on roles without the pressures of being full committee members and trustees. To this end, the committee welcomed the idea of Friends of the Hall taking on some roles and reporting to the committee.

**The Burtle Village Hall Management Committee** continued to hold monthly meetings at the hall to plan for the future. The largest task has been to plan for the replacement of the loft insulation, a process that will be on-going into 2024 and will be biggest single expense for the Hall since its construction.

**Bookings Report**

The Hall has retained its regular rental groups and is slowly recovering from the loss of bookings following Covid 19. The regular weekly users include The Burtle Siver Band, Burtle Babies and a rock group that uses the hall for rehearsals. The Hall continues to host the ever popular and long-standing monthly Saturday Café Burtle and Wednesday Community Coffee Shop. I would like to extend my thanks to those who put so much dedication into running these village institutions and raising money for both the hall and charities.

Occasional hirers of the hall have begun to return for one-off events. These include the Somerset Wildlife Trust, Young Farmers, and several family events such as birthdays and weddings.

Thanks to the hard work of the committee and Friends of the Hall, we were able to put on a number of wonderful events, which raised much needed funds as well as allowing the local community to come along and enjoy themselves at these events.

**Treasurer’s Report**

**General**

After a year of changes on the committee of the village hall, in October 2023 I found myself in the position of understanding the finances of the village hall and dealing with, amongst others, how the hall booking and invoicing procedures worked, how to manage the various monthly transactions and working out the intricacies of the nominated online banking system.

**Reporting**

As a committee we realised that it was not necessary for us, a small village hall, to use a commercially available financial software package which was also an additional monthly cost and at a time when we were looking to reduce costs. A simpler system using MS Excel has since been successfully used and gives a clearer, brief, overview of the village hall finances.

**Financial Position**

The financial situation, despite concerns earlier in the year, has finished on a reasonably sound footing with no major losses and this was with some careful housekeeping and reduction in monthly costs. Credit must go to Laura our previous treasurer who worked hard in reducing the electricity & broadband costs and negotiated with new suppliers who provided the same services but with lower prices.

We worked to always keep the heating on throughout the colder periods and this still cost less than the previous years due to the savings being made.

As has been mentioned previously the regular bookings of the hall have been maintained and we have worked hard to ensure that all groups that use the hall are invoiced in a timely manner and that any outstanding charges are invoiced correctly and paid in line with our terms.

With the above in mind, we are pleased to report that with a starting balance in 2023 of £24006.76, we ended up with a balance of £23418.20, which represented a loss of only £588.56 across the year, equivalent to approximately 2.5%.

This loss was due to the payment of the loft clearance cost, and if it wasn’t for this we would have been in a stronger financial position.

**Costs**

Costs to run the hall in 2023 were just under £14,000 but with the ongoing cost reductions with the electricity and broadband, for example, which were only set up part way through the year, we would expect costs to reduce further in 2024.

Our insurance costs are still high, mainly due to the non-standard construction of the hall and the cost is just under £2,300 p.a, however instead of paying the insurance in one lump as has been done previously, we now pay this monthly which means that there are no surprises and we manage our cashflow more efficiently.

With an increase in interest from various individuals and groups looking to rent the hall, we are positive that the financial situation of the village hall can only improve.

We will make public the accounts once the external auditor has signed them off.

**Bar Manager’s Report**

The Bar Manager continued to keep a careful eye on stock levels to avoid stock going out of date.

Full accounts have been provided to the treasurer of cash and card sales, and stock purchases.

The bar has catered for a number of different functions and events; wedding, anniversary, birthday, bingo, Harvest Home, Christmas concert, BBQs etc.

It has been observed that tastes vary greatly between different events and stock has been varied accordingly. The Bar Manager always ask if there are any specific requirements when the bar is proved for an external booking.

**Maintenance and Upkeep**

Regular maintenance of the hall infrastructure and internal facilities was undertaken including.

* Regular monthly maintenance checks on the internal and external areas of the hall
* Regular running of the water system (taps and toilets) to help keep the system fresh.
* PAT testing of all electrical devices to maintain safety standards.
* Annual servicing of the Air Conditioning, Burglar Alarm and fire alarm system
* Fire extinguishers and fire exit lighting
* General external ground maintenance – hedges, weeds and rubbish collections
* Rodent control within the loft area and external locations
* Monitoring access using alarm fob data
* Reprogramming the heating controls for efficient use.
* A large ‘fat-burg’ that blocked the drains has been cleared.
* The septic tank has been emptied.

**Areas of issues**

* Loft insulation – The on-going matter of loft insulation continued to be a major area of discussion, but a firm plan has been made and made for the clearance of possessions and rubbish, professional removal of the contaminated fleece and installation of new insulation.
* Hall Clock – This clock, of great sentimental value to the village, will be repaired or replaced following the replacement of the insulation.
* Floor – The floor will be professionally cleaned following the installation of the new insulation.

**Hallmark Accreditation**

The Hall will seek to renew its Level 1, 2 and 3 in 2024 when the new criteria are made available. In the meantime, every effort has been made to maintain the standards required.

**Thanks**

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the BVH 2023 Committee members andFriends of the Hall for their continued support, especially as most have extremely challenging and full-time jobs, as such any little piece of volunteering work they do on behalf of the hall is extremely welcome, and I do appreciate all of their hard fought efforts.

In particular, I would like to thank:

Neil Haigh and Sarah Seago for taking on additional roles mid-term.

Jayne Murray for producing the monthly newsletter.

Laura Dixon for securing better deals on the electricity and broadband services.

Nigel Morris and the Burtle Silver Band for their fund-raising performances, and help clearing the loft of rubbish.

The Committee would also like to thank Maureen, Jenny and Zac for running Café Burtle and to thank Heather and Elaine for running the Community Coffee Shop.

Finally, The Burtle Village Hall Management Committee would like to thank the residents, families, and friends of Burtle for their continued support and generosity. Unlike many village Halls, Burtle does not receive regular grant support towards running costs and has to be self-supporting.

The Committee also acknowledges the continued advice and support received from the Community Council for Somerset (CCS). Once again in 2023 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.

**2024/5** will, I am sure, continue to provide challenges the Hall and the Committee. It is abundantly clear that Burtle is not alone in this, for almost all village halls are finding things difficult in comparison with pre-Covid days.

Despite the difficulties, I have every confidence that the Hall will survive with the good-will and generosity of Burtle’s residents, new and old.

## Simon Parry – Chair - Burtle Village Hall