

HILTON HALL COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION: CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT 2017

HILTON HALL COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

Private Company Limited by Guarantee without Share Capital
Registered in England & Wales, Company Registration No. 06838077

Registered Address in the UK
HILTON HALL COMMUNITY CENTRE
HILTON ROAD, LANESFIELD
WOLVERHAMPTON, WV4 6DR
WEST MIDLANDS, UK.



HILTON HALL COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT

For the Year ending 31st March 2017

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Hello and Welcome to this Year's Chairman's Annual Report. This is my opportunity to share with you all 'a summary of the main activities, community events & occurrences' (both positive & negative); that have been held at / or affected; Hilton Hall of Lanesfield. Thereby sharing important moments in time re: various community events we have organized, participated-in (or collaborated with others) throughout this period, as well as an update on work and progress made this year. These Annual Reports then form the basis for our 'TIMELINE' plotting 'Our History' as we go. As usual, the starting date for this Year's 'timeline preview' begins at the start of April 2016, leading right through to the end of March 2017.

APRIL 2016:

I am pleased to report that Hilton Hall Community Association is still serving the local community, just as in previous years, by ensuring Hilton Hall of Lanesfield remains solvent and sustainable. We are still hanging on in there, by the skin of our teeth, with dogged-resolve. This could not happen without the vast amounts of Volunteer Hours from the HHCA Management Team & 'Others' helping to keep things going, and keeping the Hall & Facilities 'Open to the local Community' and maintaining the whole site and facilities for the use of our regular community groups (and their members) and the general public.

We are proud to announce that we are still very much 'up and running' still and managing to survive in these very difficult financial (& ever-changing political) times. This is even more impressive when you consider that the majority of new start-up businesses fail in the first year of trading, with many more falling by the wayside in the second year and third year (according to recent Government figures and Chamber of Commerce Business Reports). This is our eighth year at Hilton Hall and we are still working as hard as ever to meet our aims and objectives as set out in our original constitution (& displayed on our web site).

"Hilton Hall Community Association is a Company Limited by Guarantee without Share Capital. Registered in England Company No. 6838077. HHCA was set up with the sole aim of 'Saving Hilton Hall' from permanent closure and to secure its place in the community for future generations to enjoy. This is reflected in Article 3 of our Constitution (below).

Article 3.1 of our Memorandum of Association states our Objects as:

". . . to further or benefit the residents of Lanesfield and the neighbourhood without distinction of sex, sexual orientation, race or political, religious or other opinions, by associating together the said residents and the local authorities, voluntary and other organisations in a common effort to advance education and to provide facilities in the interests of social welfare for sport recreation and leisure time occupation with the objective of improving the conditions of life for the residents . . ."

We operate very much as a not-for-profit community based social enterprise, a Community Association with charitable aims, working to provide services and facilities for community use (much as before the Hall closed in October 2008) for the benefit of local community groups and sports clubs to provide opportunities for the social, educational, and recreational needs and wellbeing of local people."

One Spring Vale Ward 'Community Casualty' came at the beginning of April 2016 when Lanesfield Community Centre (situated in Ward Grove, Lanesfield) was finally demolished. I reported in last year's Annual Report that Lanesfield Community Centre had been sold-off at Auction, but obviously since then the whole site has been fenced-off and completely levelled.

This is sad news, but pertinent in so many ways to very own 'Story' because Hilton Hall also faced the very same threat of demolition way back in October 2008.

The real shame of this type of Loss is that once a facility is gone, it is very rarely replaced. This was, and still is the main reason and driving force behind WHY 'We' went to so much time, trouble and expense to 'Save Hilton Hall' from closure and to save Hilton Hall from the same inevitable fate as Lanesfield Community Centre (and so many more such Halls & Centres City wide).

Firstly, ALL throughout the Year – April 2016 to end of March 2017 - as in all previous Years, the HHCA Management Team Opened-up & Closed-up for each and every Hall Hire Letting for our regular Community Groups each and every week (even over the Easter & Christmas Holiday periods. We have to be there every day, including weekends, to ensure Hirers can gain access to the Hall & facilities. This means we have to open-up & close day & night, week-in / week-out, often at odd (unpredictable hours) which clash with our own personal work commitments (because, Yes! We do also actually work for a living as well as looking after Hilton Hall). We have to do all of this as well as holding down our own day-time Jobs (including our evening & weekend work commitments elsewhere). So, we have to be resourceful and work to a very flexible timetable set between ourselves – with the 'Team' and taking it in turns to open & close. It proves to be quite challenging at times but with the help of supportive Family and a lot of juggling of our time, we somehow manage. They say: "Where there's a Will, There's a Way".

MAY 2016:

Moving on to a more positive aspect for our local community, Hilton Hall hosted the following events and activities, starting in May 2016. On Thursday 5th of May, Hilton Hall was once more used as a Polling Station by the City of Wolverhampton Council (CWC) for local Ward Elections and the Crime Commissioners Elections. As with ALL Polling Stations on this occasion Hilton Hall was open to the Public from 7am for VOTING and closed promptly at 10pm. Using Hilton Hall as a Ward Polling Station represented a massive cost saving to the Rate Payers and to the City of Wolverhampton Council because Hilton Hall Venue Costs are much lower than paying for 'Four or Five' smaller Venues as Polling Stations, as was the norm before the CWC started using Hilton Hall as their Spring Vale Ward 'Base'. Plus, by using 'One' Polling Station is also easier to police and far more economical with regards time, logistics and personnel costs – being all in one place. The other positive benefit to Hilton Hall is that all 'Revenue' generated through 'Lettings' (such as this one) goes directly back into HHCA to pay for the upkeep, maintenance, repair and overhead needed to keep us 'afloat' and open to the local community.

On Saturday 7th May 2016: As part of the GB National celebrations in readiness for this Year's '2016 Brazilian Olympics' build-up, HHCA in partnership with Wolverhampton Youth Judo Centre hosted an inter-club Judo competition for school-aged children. This pre-Olympics Inter-Club Judo Championship was well attended with children representing over twenty different schools (and three other judo clubs). The day went well, without incident and feedback from parents and competitors alike was very positive. This was yet another successful event organised and run in partnership with Hilton Hall Community Association.

On Saturday 20th May: Hilton Hall was used by Dudley Town Youth Football Club (DTYFC) for their Annual End of Season Football Presentations. This event was sponsored jointly by HHCA and by DTYFC. This Presentation Night was well attended by club members and family of the DTYFC and by members and families of several partner-football clubs that also use Hilton Hall Playing Fields as part of the DTYFC Football Partnership.

With regards to Football & Hilton Hall we continued our community development programme throughout the year by working closely with Dudley Town Youth Football Club (and their Partners), and with their help have managed to use the Football Pitches all year round, with regular Matches taking place during the FB season and regular weekly training sessions held 'out of season'. Denis & Michelle (who run DTYFC) use Hilton Hall & Pitches as their 'Club Base'. Denis & Team have been maintaining the Football Pitches in perfect condition (working all year round – Cutting and Trimming the Grass on a regular basis - not just during the football season). As well as the work done 'on the pitches' (grass seed-sowing, cutting and marking-up) Denis & his team of Volunteers have also chipped in and helped us with some of the work to the Football Changing Rooms. This is very much appreciated as many hands make light work (of such a big and daunting task).

On Saturday & Sunday 21st & 22nd May: HHCA sponsored a 'Whole Community Family Fun-Weekend' on Hilton Hall Playing Fields. The main attractions were the Disney themed Inflatable Bouncy Castles & Slides, various Fairground Rides & Stalls, accompanied by hot food & refreshments vendors. Unfortunately, the weather on Saturday was 'wet & windy' so the attendance was lower than expected, but the weather brightened up on the Sunday the 21st and remained sunny for the rest of the day. Obviously, the 'warmer & drier' weather encouraged a better attendance and it was busier than the Saturday. Unfortunately, on this occasion Hilton Hall didn't receive a donation from the Event Organisers due to the takings not meeting their overheads & costs to put on the event. However, this was yet one more Community Activity that we (HHCA) supported and provided facilities for, for the benefit of local residents and their families & friends.

Unfortunately, the heavy machinery & vehicles used to run said Fairground Attractions caused some damage to the Football playing areas as well as damage to the entrance Gate Security Post, so we are not sure if we will continue with this type of event next year (because we need to way-up the community benefits – in proportion to the damage that caused us time and money to put right).

JUNE 2016:

Thursday 23rd June; The EU Referendum Surely; the most important 'National Referendum' since the UK first ventured into the European Common Market and ALL that followed. Hilton Hall was once more chosen by CWC as the venue for this 'Unique & Historic' Democratic Vote. We all now know the outcome of the Referendum Vote and yet another WORD made it into the Oxford English Dictionary (i.e. BREXIT).

The Returning Officers obviously couldn't give me any details or statistics of the Day's Polling but at the end of the night – just as I was closing up the Hall - they said it appeared to be one of the busiest Polling attendances they had experienced.

As with the earlier Polling event held this Year at Hilton Hall, Voting commenced promptly at 7am for the general public, and the doors closed promptly at 10pm. Hilton hall Community Association, and the City of Wolverhampton Council as well as ALL Tax Payers once more benefited from this 'Hiring' in exactly the same manner as stated above for the May 5th Polling Day.

JULY & AUGUST 2016:

Our HHCA Management Team remained as busy as ever behind the scenes; working on the Downstairs Areas of the Hall in preparation for the 'scheduled' complete Electrical Re-Wire of the Changing Rooms, Toilets and other Rooms on the Lower Ground Floor. Most of this work was carried out (as usual) by the HHCA Management Team as unpaid volunteers - working through the Schools' Summer Holidays (as in ALL previous Years – The HHCA Management Team / Volunteers worked throughout their six week summer school holidays). All of this work took place alongside the usual 'Opening & Closing' for our Regular Hall Hirers & Community Groups throughout the summer (because if we didn't do it – it wouldn't happen!).

As well as all of the above work we had to carry-on our normal day-to-day routine of cleaning work, general repairs to fixtures & fittings that get accidentally broken by hirers (or due to general wear & tear).

Friday 5th August 2016 we received a letter from CWC Legal Dept. saying we were in breach of our Lease due to a sign we had allowed the Football Club to put up. They said the wording was open for interpretation and was therefore misleading. Within five minutes of reading this letter I personally removed said Sign and then contacted said CWC department. However, the most significant part of the Letter (and subsequent conversations) also stated that CWC was to withdraw ALL Grass Cutting Services at Hilton Hall Playing Fields with immediate effect. Obviously I replied to their Letter emphasising the 'Promises' made by Wolverhampton City Council; by the Chief Executive, by the Ward Councillors, by the Head of Parks department, by the Head of Property Management and by the CWC Legal Team, who all agreed that this work would be carried-out as long as we had the Lease and as long as we continued to operate for the benefit of the local community. However, the outcome was that the CWC withdrew their Grass Cutting Services stating that because this agreement was made verbally (by all of the Top CWC Officials and representatives from each of these departments) and unfortunately was not included in the terms of our lease and therefore the CWC would no longer honour this promise made to us. They said that as so many of these 'People / CWC Officials' had now left the employ of the City Council (including the Chief Executive and Head of Parks, and the Property Managers who helped draw up the Lease, etc. Etc).

As it happens, we had already put into place provision to cut & maintain the community open spaces ages ago, BUT. . . as a matter of principle we felt aggrieved and very disappointed, and let-down by the CWC. We are also extremely disappointed in

the elected Ward Labour Councillors who actually raised the issue of the 'Football Sign' in the first place that set the ball rolling into the Legal Department being asked to 'Look into the HHCA Lease' that generated the initial Legal Letter in the first place.

The Labour Councillor who instigated this course of action caused us a lot of concern and disruption and led to CWC services being withdrawn – all because they (the Labour Councillor for Spring Vale Ward) did not pick up the phone (or pop-in to see us personally) – to ask us to remove the Sign in the first place. This would have saved us so much 'Hassle'.

Quite often, we are asked by locals "Why on earth do you bother"? And . . . We quite often ask ourselves "WHY ON EARTH DO WE BOTHER SOMETIMES" especially when we 'Get little or NO support from so-called Council-based Community Workers or Elected Officers???? "Shame on You ALL". There! Now I've had my 'rant' I'll get back to a more objective report.

SEPTEMBER 2016:

Thursday 1st September 2016: Heather (our Co-Director of HHCA) informed us that she was no longer willing to be a Director of HHCA and said that she could no longer continue supporting HHCA volunteer work (both as an unpaid director and as an unpaid Volunteer) as it was having a detrimental effect on her earning potential and this Legal Letter (mentioned above) was the 'Last and Final Straw'. She informed us that she decided to have a complete change of career and staying 'Active & Involved' with all that is associated with being a Director of Hilton Hall would be too much of a 'Conflict of Interests' with her future plans.

We reluctantly but understandingly accepted her resignation and contacted Companies House to inform them of this Company Change.

Who can blame Heather after all that she (& we) have done for this Community. Who needs this type of hassle and harassment? Heather has committed eight-long-years to Hilton Hall, working side-by-side with us, working hard to save & refurbish Hilton Hall for the benefit of Our Community. All I can say (and I am also speaking on behalf of Debbie my remaining Co-Director of HHCA) that we are extremely saddened to be losing Heather from our Team. Heather has freely given so much of her time, effort and money to this project and to this community since 2008, and she will be sorely missed.

I would like to take this opportunity to 'Officially Thank Heather' for all she has done for us personally, and done for Hilton Hall especially, and selflessly done for the benefit of the local residents of Lanesfield and Spring Vale Ward. We wish her well for the future and hope that she enjoys her new career-path (outside of the World of Hilton Hall of Lanesfield).

On 29th September 2016: Work finally began on the Complete Electrical Re-Wire of the whole of the Ground Floor / Downstairs Rooms. With New 'A' Rate Lights and fittings used everywhere. All of the lights are automatically operated by PIR Sensors to ensure that 'Lights' cannot be accidentally 'left On'. And only 'Come On' when someone activates them with their presence. All of the Electrical Materials for the rewire was provided by one of Denis & Michelle Robinson's Sponsors and the actual rewire and installation of all of the electrical equipment & work was completed by Michael Wesley and the rewire & installation was completed on 10th October 2016. HHCA paid for the electrical installation work out of a kind Donation from Wolverhampton Youth Judo Centre (our resident Judo Club).

For the whole of this period (just as in all other cases) the HHCA Volunteers / Management Team had to open up early each and every morning for 'Trades' to gain access and be available during the day to lock-up after each day's work (yet more unpredictable hours) when needed at the drop of a hat. September was hectic, but somehow, 'We Do Hectic quite well'.

OCTOBER 2016:

On Saturday 1st October: HHCA Volunteers put on a Macmillan Coffee Morning Charity Fundraising event. We would like to thank everyone who came to support us on 1st October. The amount raised on the 'Day' was £330.00 with a further £25 donation made a few days later, therefore the total raised this Year was £355.00. Thank You to Debbie & Peter Jones, and to all of the family members, for organising and running the event. And thanks to all of the local community & general public who attended and supported this charity fund-raising event. Many Thanks to everyone who made cakes and other treats to eat and sell on behalf of the Macmillan Charity. HHCA's contribution was the cost of the venue for the day's activities.

On Saturday 8th October: Local Historian Matt Mills' delivered a photographic slide presentation and talk celebrating the Servicemen of Coseley and Commemorative Trees that were planted as part of the Coseley Avenue of Remembrance project. These Commemorative Trees were meant to be a permanent and living war memorial of Remembrance of those who gave their Lives during World War One (350 soldiers from Coseley. Their individual 'Names' placed on a plaque and attached to each of the 350 Trees.

On Thursday 13th October: We began work on clearing-out & tidying the remaining Changing Rooms & Toilets ready for a complete refit of the Toilets and Showers (work expected to commence in the New Year). Also in Mid-October, members of the Football Club run by Denis & Michelle Robinson came down and cleaned the wall tiles in toilets & showers. The HHCA Team have been equally active all through September & October working on the Lower Ground Floor Area clearing out various rooms as well as opening-up & closing to allow access for all of the volunteers carrying out essential work.

On 27th October 2016: Following the completion of the electrical rewire; Dodd Group Ltd provided one of their contractors (Adam from AJG Electrical) to carry out an independent Electric Inspection and Test to sign-off the work carried out. We were given the All Clear and Safe to Use 'Go-Ahead' from Adam and finally received our official 'Signing-Off' Certification for the Electrics. Yeh! We have Lights & Power, and it's all signed-off now.

During November & December 2016, and January 2017, not much repair work was done downstairs in the Changing Rooms due to other commitments, but we continued to *manage and caretake* at the Hall, as ever with normal community club lettings – and all that goes with that – such as opening & closing after each hiring, cleaning and generally maintaining the Hall for public use.

Friday 24th February 2017: Storm '**Doris**' Hit Wolverhampton and sadly a woman was killed and another seriously injured in the Wolverhampton City Centre High Street. Sections of 'Roofing' was blown-off surrounding buildings and many streets was closed / cordoned-off.

Storm Doris also affected Hilton Hall, but unfortunately for us, we didn't discover the problems that this severe weather had caused us until we opened-up the store Room two weeks later. The effect was that the Roofing Felt on top of the Lower Store Room Roof was blown off the roof. We use this room as our Office as it is the most secure Room at the Hall, and therefore, we keep all of our documents, expensive equipment and tools in that room. Unfortunately for us, the following two weeks it rained almost all of that time (with the exception of the occasional sunny spell here and there) and the whole of that Room (our Office come Store Room), was totally flooded. The severe ingress of water (through the unprotected wooden roof) had caused the ceiling plaster-board to come down and in-turn had caused quite a lot of damage and mess (everywhere) in the process (with water everywhere). Obviously because everything was soaked it has caused us loads of damage that we could have done without (damage mostly to electrical equipment such as printers, computers and other equipment too).

Monday 6th March is when we actually discovered the effects of all of this water damage, so, we went to collect a very large Tin of RoofFix from Toolstation (the same materials we used three years ago on the main hall roof) and we painted said RoofFix onto the damaged Storeroom / Office Roof. It needs a couple of coats after the first coat is applied, so at our very nearest 'Dry' spell, we will re-apply further coats of RoofFix to finish the job off.

On Friday 17th March 2017: MP Pat McFadden held a Community Coffee Morning from 10am till 12 Noon in preparation for the forthcoming CWC Mayoral Elections scheduled for Thursday 4th May 2017. Pat's Team expressed how impressed they were with Hilton Hall & Grounds and with the work and effort that had gone into the refurbishment and renewal of 'Our' lovely Hall.

And this brings us to the final weeks of this Trading Year ending 31st March 2017. We have made a small financial trading Profit this year and therefore have sufficient funds-in-hand to remain 'Afloat' - much as we have in previous years - which will enable us to maintain and continue the same levels of service and commitment we have been providing ever since we first started at Hilton Hall in 2008. So, on behalf of my HHCA Co-Directors (my trusted colleagues and sincere best friends) I would like to Thank EVERYONE who has supported us, and who have helped us with this Year's Successes & Challenges. I would also like to offer my gratitude to all of the Volunteers, Friends & Relatives for helping us to save and maintain Hilton Hall of Lanesfield.

Keith Jones, BA (Hons) Director & Chairman HHCA
31st March 2017