



**DOLPHINS HALL MANAGEMENT
COMMITTEE**
New Church Street, Tetbury, GL8 8DS
Charity Number: 274956 / 1201602



DOLPHINS RECREATION CENTRE AGM CHAIRS REPORT
THURSDAY 25th July 2024

THE GENERAL STATE OF THE TRUST

The last few years have been challenging for the trust. There have been multiple issues to deal with that have all made managing the trust anything but easy sailing.

Issues have included.

- Transitioning to a CIO.
- Handling the change in booking and usage patterns based on peoples change in social attitudes and activities since COVID.
- Dealing with an aging asset infrastructure.
- Trying to manage a building project at a time when inflation was over 10% and building materials have gone up by over 40%
- Managing a large green space asset with virtually no income.

I will attempt to deal with each of these subjects in this report.

TRANSITIONING TO A CIO

The Dolphins Recreation Centre CIO has officially been registered with the Charity Commission with charity number 1201602. Bank accounts have been opened and the constitution is in place.

An application has been submitted to the charity commission to transfer all the assets of the old trust (274956) to the new CIO. Unfortunately, the Charity Commission has a huge backlog of applications and we have been informed that it could take up to nine months for this to happen. Based on this timeline we would expect the transfer of assets to the new CIO to happen sometime around October or November this year. Until then most of the daily activity is being transacted through the old charity as it is still the owner of all the assets.

Once the application to transfer the assets to the CIO has been approved, title of all the lands and buildings will be transferred from the official custodian who currently hold the deeds on behalf of the charity to the CIO itself.

Until the full move to the CIO is complete all meetings of the trustees, including the AGM, are now considered a meeting of both charities. Once the transfer to the CIO is complete the existing trust will be closed.

HALL USAGE

Weekday usage of the hall is back to pre-covid levels and maybe even slightly up. There are a good number of daytime events in the hall, and it is in use on most weekday evenings. In fact, the weekday evening demand outstrips availability, and we are having to turn requests for regular bookings away.



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Weekend bookings are still down from pre-covid levels. Weekend daytime events such as children's parties are frequently booked into the hall but the evening events such as adult birthday parties are still sporadic. We think this is mainly down to the new social pattern that is being seen everywhere rather than something specific to the hall. However, as these events are normally good revenue earners for the hall from bar takings, we would like to see these bookings increase over the next 12 months and will be looking at ways to encourage people to hold a party at the hall.

THE BUILDING PROJECT

Trying to finish phase one of the building project in 2024 with a budget that was set in 2018/19 is proving to be a challenge. Due to there being many delays to the build being started, for various reasons, by time we received the initial quotes from builders they were already coming in well over £900k which was much more than the budget would allow us to spend. It was for this reason the trustees decided to run a self-managed build to attempt to bring the project in for less. Of course, when this decision was made there was no provision in our planning for a world-wide pandemic, as well as a new war in Europe, which has seen material prices and labour costs increase by up to 40%.

Managing the build ourselves has meant it has been very slow. We have tried to use local contractors, who have often given us very good rates, as well as whenever possible, i.e. it's safe and the quality could be assured, the trustees have done the work themselves. While most of the work is now complete, we find ourselves about £50,000 short to finish phase one. This is of course very frustrating for everyone, and it delays the completion of the new building further. However, we still need to point out that as far as budgets are concerned, we are still way under any price we were quoted by any builder and feel under the circumstances, considering the budget was already tight when we started, to only be around £50,000 short is a reasonably good achievement.

At this moment in time, we are seeking to find grants, investment from local authorities and working with community partners to acquire the funds to complete the build. We are still hoping to complete the build in 2024 but obviously this will depend on how long it takes to obtain the required monies.

Obviously, the huge increase in costs has also affected the expected price of doing phase two of the project. We now think the expected cost of phase two will have risen from the 2018/19 estimate of around £950,000 to probably closer to £1.4 to £1.6 million pounds. This is a significant cost increase and requires serious reflection. The trust is currently in the process of looking at how to proceed with phase two and what all the possible options to deliver future assets for the town might be.

Whatever the outcome of the phase two investigation is, I think it is reasonable to say that things will not be as fast as everyone would have liked them to be. It is also clear that the current hall is on its last legs. For the last 8 years minimum amounts that have been required to keep it going has been spent on the hall as the new build project has been in the pipeline and the expectation was the building was going to be torn down soon. If there is to be a longer than hoped for timeline for phase two, then we probably need to show the current hall a little TLC to nurse it through the interim period.



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THE RECREATION GROUND

The “rec” is one of Tetbury’s greatest assets. A large area of green space in the middle of the town, available to all the community is an incredible thing for the town to have and in my opinion should be protected and defended to ensure it remains an asset for the town for generations to come.

Over the years the state of the soil and ground structure had become incredibly poor. This could often be seen through large cracks appearing when it was dry and flooding when it was wet. Over the last five years, through several grants we have spent tens of thousands of pounds on ground maintenance to combat the damage and we are pleased to say the ground is now in the best condition it has been for decades.

Considering how important the rec is, it often surprises people to discover that it has no income outside of what the trust charges the sports clubs to use it and a small grant from Tetbury Town Council which for 2024/25 has been reduced to the smallest amount it has ever been (£2,500).

Maintaining the recreation ground just based on grass cutting and hedge maintenance can cost well over £10,000 a year. This does not include looking after any of the play equipment or other facilities such as the Multi Use Games Area (MUGA).

The reality is the rec is struggling. The income from the sports clubs and the TTC grant do not cover the basic maintenance let alone all the improvement work that needs doing. The assets on the recreation ground such as the playpark are decaying and showing all the signs of lack of fundings.

We do benefit from the work the cricket club put in to make the area playable for cricket but there is a lot of work beyond that that just can’t be done.

We would like to thank Warren Hateley and his team who have recently started carrying out some essential playground repairs and to the people who have donated to this work. Our thanks also go out to all those that do various other tasks on the rec throughout the year, whether it is litter picking or spotted urgent repairs. Any help given is greatly appreciated. We also acknowledge the enthusiasm in the community from people to raise funds and see the playground improved. We are always looking for volunteers to help keep the recreation ground in great order, so if you would like to volunteer, in any way you can, please get in touch at contact@dolphinshall.org You do not have to be a trustee to get involved and help out.

If the people of Tetbury wish to see the rec remain the vital asset it is in the long term, then over the next few years the trust and the town need to seriously consider how this is funded and it’s future ensured.