
Fawkham Village Hall - Annual Report for 2024

The Parish Council became the sole trustee of the village hall charity in November 2019 following the retirement of the previous Management Committee. As a registered charity, the hall submits an annual return to the Charity Commission.

Refurbishment/Repairs/Maintenance

A major structural issue forced the hall's closure from November 2023 until the end of April 2024. The structural repairs and associated reports cost a total of £22,749. FPC's CIL funds contributed £13,500 towards this, with the remainder coming from the hall's reserves. Unfortunately, the hall's insurers refused a claim due to the issues relating to faulty workmanship when the replacement windows were installed some years ago. The business which undertook this work had since closed, so it was not possible to pursue repayment from that source.

Extensive internal refurbishment took place during 2020, with external redecoration undertaken in 2021.

The hall continues to regularly receive great feedback on its fresh appearance and facilities, so it is important to maintain this. The opportunity was taken to refresh the paint in the main hall following the structural repairs.

In addition, new wireless controls for the infra-red heaters were installed at eye-level, meaning a stick no longer has to be used to turn each one on.

As a result of the structural repairs, the curtains, which were believed to date from the hall's opening in 1989, would have required alteration to fit. Instead, the decision was made to install new curtains.

As a public building, the hall received a portrait of King Charles III.

The annual fire inspection was undertaken in December with necessary tests being carried out/equipment replacement being made. An annual electrical inspection is also due to be undertaken.

The hall is cleaned weekly and the windows are washed every other month.

Review of Prices

Hall hiring prices remain competitive. The trustee reviewed the hall fees against other local halls in May 2024. It was decided that regular hirer fees, for current regular hirers, would not be reviewed again until May 2025. New regular hirers would be charged at £15 per hour. It was also decided that the hall would have two flat hourly rates for Summer (April to September) / Winter (Oct to March), £20 and £25 per hour respectively. The hall lost some of its regular hirers because of the closure for repairs and so efforts will continue to be made to advertise the hall to seek new regular hirers. Full details can be found here: <https://fawkhampc.org.uk/village-hall/>.

A new online booking system is now used, which means less time is needed to be spent managing the booking process by the Clerk and that the hall's availability can be viewed by prospective hirers at any time.

Website

The hall has its own pages on FPC's website, covering information about the hall and how to hire it, plus the regular clubs and classes which use the hall. This can be found here: <https://fawkhampc.org.uk/village-hall/>. This includes a short video which can be viewed here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OBNd-45BYqU>.

Policies and Procedures

The adopted Neighbourhood Plan for Fawkham includes a policy which seeks the retention of Fawkham Village Hall as it is a valued community asset.

The Clerk passed a safeguarding training course during the year which is valid until March 2027.

A risk assessment is carried out annually. A risk assessment was carried out in May 2024. Following the hall risk assessment a number of action points were identified and actioned, namely:

- refreshing white paint on outside wall as faded;
- external signs added to outside walls of building highlighting hazard;
- maintenance carried out to side area of hall - moss treatment/removal; sign added to disabled toilet noting that children should not use facility without supervision;
- sign added to regular hirer cupboard noting that storage items are to be left tidy so there are no hazards for other users;
- old light fittings removed from locked regular hirer cupboard;
- sign added to storage cupboard to ensure users lift chairs/tables with caution e.g. not to trap fingers.

The hall is insured for buildings, contents and public liability with Hiscox Insurance Company Limited. This insurance policy expires on 29/05/2025. All regular hirers have their own public liability insurance.

Water Meter Readings

Following, the continuous issues with the reading of the water meter for the hall, South East Water advised Everflow that they would not move the water meter onto private land and instead exchanged the meter to one where wireless meter reads could be obtained. This means that South East Water can obtain the reading remotely and not open the chamber. Everflow noted that readings will be obtained on a 6 monthly basis. Everflow confirmed in January 2025 that the meter was read on the 22/09/24 with a reading of 1 and that the meter would be read again in March 2025.

Accounts for 2024

With the hall closed for the first four months of the year, income from hirers totalled £3495.50. Nearly £2000 of this was from ad hoc hirers, including SDC paying £800 to use the hall as a polling station.

The income and expenditure accounts for 2024 show that expenditure exceeded income, with a shortfall of £2873 incurred. The hall had a bank balance of £11,753.26 at the year end.

Regular Hirers for 2025

A number of different clubs and classes are now running at the hall:

Adult Dance classes
Furniture Restoration
Karate

Plus FPC pays to hire the hall for its meetings, and SDC pays to hire the hall as a polling station when required.

Unfortunately, some of the hall's regular hirers found new venues while the hall was closed and so income from this source is now lower than in previous years, although one dance hirer has now returned. There is capacity for further regular hirers to use the hall and the Clerk continues to publicise the hall to try to get new hirers for further income.

Forecast Income and Costs for 2025

The running of the hall is anticipated to cost around £4,000 over the next year. The trustee is dedicated to doing all they can to retain a healthy surplus and endeavours to secure as many regular hirers and ad hoc bookings as possible.

Laura Evans
Chair of Fawkham Parish Council, sole trustee of Fawkham Village Hall registered charity
number 802536
April 2025