



Crathes Public Hall Trust (SCIO 043007)

Annual Report

1 April 2021 – 31 March 2022

The year began with only the regular user groups in the hall on a weekly basis with Covid restrictions still in place – spacing, masks, hand sanitising, open windows and weekly cleaning in addition to user groups cleaning after themselves.

These groups were: – Yoga, TRX, Core strength, Table Tennis, Footstars, Morris Men and HIT fitness.

The small group pursuing the fundraising required to build a new hall were meeting fortnightly and a Spring Challenge was promoted to raise money and engage the community in an outdoor feel-good activity.

The following publicity went out to the email list of 180 subscribers.

Crathes Hall 50/100 Mile Challenge

Run or walk 50 Miles or cycle 100 miles in May to help raise funds for the new Crathes Hall!

This is a fun challenge for everyone to take part in: Mums, Dads, Kids, Grans, Grandpas!

We thought we'd kickstart our fundraising for the new Crathes Hall by getting fit and being outdoors.

Let's Spring into Spring!!

The Challenge raised £1872.50

Participants

  Walked: 1,415.51 miles

  Ran: 100 miles

  Cycled: 882.2 miles



In addition, a Crathes resident took on a personal challenge to run from Benachie to Banchory which is over 50 km to raise funds for the hall and succeeded in raising £1263.32

In June the Trust held its AGM outdoors followed by a board meeting. One trustee resigned at the AGM and another agreed to take over the 200 Club role but to make it from April 2022 to March 2023 to avoid having to sell tickets in the run up to Christmas.

In August Covid restrictions were eased and a board meeting was held to discuss the implications.

The secretary gathered information from Government websites and the council.

The main regulations remaining were enhanced cleaning, ventilation and wearing of masks.

It was decided to allow all events in the hall (parties, ceilidhs, craft fairs etc.) to resume. The maximum capacities to be the same as pre-Covid.

The vice convener updated the Risk Assessment and the Covid information form.

The ladies and gents' toilets and the kitchen were reopened, and all users were told of their responsibility to make sure everything touched was cleaned before leaving the hall.

It was agreed to restart the famous Crathes Fly (seen mentioned in Estate agents' info about houses for sale in the Crathes area) in October with a craft table for the older children.

Also, in August the Trust agreed to change its constitution to a more democratic membership organisation, which has resulted in 67 members to date. Links were made with Victoria and Albert Halls, Ballater who had undergone a similar change to their constitution. After the new constitution was agreed by a majority of trustees it was sent to OSCR and approved.

A Hogmanay Ceilidh was also planned but unfortunately due to the Omicron variant emerging before Christmas the sold-out ceilidh was postponed until March 2022 and raised £1274.00 towards the new hall funds.



Station Wood

The hall trustees begun discussions with the National Trust for Scotland about purchasing Station Wood, the 2.2 acres of woodland that surrounds the hall and car park to create a community woodland. We approached the Scottish Land Fund to support the purchase of the wood and in our stage one application to SLF, they agreed to fund a tree survey. The NTS asked us for a valuation of the wood and the Mid Hill Wind Farm Fund paid for Aberdeen and Northern Estates to do this. The valuation is £15,000. We then applied to SLF stage 2 and at the November Fly we held a community consultation event in tandem with an online survey with 76 responses and 97% in support of the purchase of station Wood. Thanks to local resident David Smart for doing the survey and drone footage of the wood for the consultation.

(Drone footage still available on the hall website.)

The SLF agreed to fund the purchase and our legal fees, though not the legal fees of NTS. They also granted money to erect a fence and hedge for aesthetic and safety purposes. Currently the sale is with both sets of lawyers.

In mid-November there was the launch of a book at the hall: Prehistoric Communities of the River Dee: Mesolithic and other lithic scatter sites of Central Deeside. This was attended by 60 people. The Mesolithic Deeside group are occasional users of the hall when they survey local fields for flints etc.

There was also a concert by the group Dowally.

In late November Storm Arwen cut off the power in the hall and led to the cancellation of a puppet show. The community council used the hall for people to come and charge their devices.

The small fundraising group which has met fortnightly over the year have achieved a lot despite the considerable difficulties of accessing funding for our £700,000 plus project especially with the National Lottery ceasing to fund capital projects, as they have been the major funder of new halls in the past.

Achievements over the year have been:

- May fundraising challenge
- March Ceilidh raised £1274.00
- Promotion of Amazon Smile and easyfundraising
- Completion of the business plan after a year of work on it and consultation with Zero Waste Scotland



- Consultation with others – Aberdeenshire Council, Heritage trust, Business gateway
- Looking at other local business plans - Alford Railway and Torphins path group
- Regular communication through email list of 180, website, Facebook page, articles in local newsletters and Deeside Piper.
- Planning achieved in perpetuity by:
 - a) Fulfilling the planning requirement to photograph the existing hall (thanks to local resident and community councillor David Morrish)
 - b) Digging a 3x3 metre trench with advice from structural engineers Fairhurst (thanks to hall trustee Bert Macintosh)

Sadly, several funders we have approached have indicated that they cannot fund us now but could perhaps fund us further down the line. These are:

- EB Scotland
- Fife Environment Trust
- VattenFall
- Place Based Investment Programme via Aberdeenshire Council (who want to help complete the project)
- Levensat

Applying to these funders has been time consuming in writing applications and by phone. Clearly a major investment is required to then attract other funders. The search goes on with a list of prospective wealthy individual donors to be targeted and hope for the Community Ownership Fund's third cycle in May 2022 and a black tie ball will be held in October this year.

At a hall meeting in February, it was decided to increase the hall charges as follows:

To increase charges from 1st April, 2022 to: -

£15 an hour for regular weekly hires

£16.50 an hour for one-off hires on Monday to Friday

£20 an hour for one-off hires on Saturday and Sunday

£200 for an evening hire (from approx. 2.30 pm on one day to midday on the next) plus a £100 returnable deposit

£500 for a 2-day wedding hire, plus a £100 returnable deposit



The treasurer had supervised and mentored a school student as part of his business studies course and the research on other hall charges informed the board's decision.

It was also agreed to keep a reserve of £10,000 in the ordinary account and to move any surplus to the redevelopment account for the new hall.

A lot of time was spent trialing an online booking system, Hallmaster, but ultimately it failed as it came up with error messages at user log in and this was felt to be unacceptable and seriously off-putting to users.

The hall remains busy with regular user groups and children's parties most weekends. Since the decision to open to private hires in August there have been 13 children's parties, 11 band rehearsals, 3 drumming workshops, 1 singing workshop, a Sinterklaas event (Dutch Christmas event for children) and a Crathes Primary School Spring Fair and Easter disco.

Despite its imperfections in lack of insulation and high heating costs, Crathes Public Hall remains an important and well used community resource.

Moira Hamilton
Convener
Board of Trustees
Crathes Public Hall Trust
SCIO 043007

May 2022