



**SCIO 043007**

**Annual report 1 April 2020 - 31 March 2021**

This of course was a year like no other and we started the year refunding ticket money for our fundraising ceilidh planned for 28 March 2020.

The hall was then closed and all hall groups, classes and events were cancelled until Covid restrictions lifted later in the summer, when 2 board members attended a council webinar with advice on reopening halls and the board agreed that we would reopen for our regular user groups.

We then undertook a risk assessment, a checklist for reopening, a special conditions sheet for groups to sign. Trustees marked out the hall floor in 3 metre squares for exercise groups. We closed off the kitchen and toilets, leaving only the disabled toilet available for use. We also supplied hand sanitiser at the hall entrance along with a thermometer for groups to use if they wished.

We provided cleaning materials for groups to clean before and after use and arranged for weekly cleaning of the hall after a deep clean before reopening on Monday 28<sup>th</sup> September. Reopening was delayed by the need for a legionella test, which took longer to be returned than we had anticipated. Thankfully it was negative.

Groups returning were TRX, Core Strength, Yoga, Table Tennis and Footstars. We were also approached by Grace Church for a Sunday booking and after taking Council advice and after much discussion in the board, they met on a Sunday from November until lockdown in December. Following a request from the Yoga group we installed Wifi in the hall, which enabled the Yoga teacher to use online payment and also stream his classes.

One of the trustees ensured that the 200 Club was drawn each month and results were posted on our Mailchimp email, which has 170 subscribers.

Several Board meetings were held over the year on Zoom including the AGM on 27<sup>th</sup> October with the accounts independently examined by a local resident who is an accountant.

The final documentation was completed for the LEADER programme in December and we contacted the Council about the developer obligation funding which we wish to access for our new hall. This funding is provided by the developer of the recently built 45 houses in Crathes and has to be accessed via the Council.

This led to a meeting with Nick Mardall from the Council and a subsequent meeting of our board in late November with him and Kate Redpath from Marr Area Partnership about our new hall project. A small steering group was then formed of 4 trustees meeting on a fortnightly basis with Kate and Nick to pursue funding for the construction of a new hall.

They advised us to meet with representatives from Aboyne Men's Shed and Deeside Rugby Club who have both recently built new premises. Both were very friendly and supportive, sharing their ideas for sources of funding.

In January we sent out a communication via Mailchimp, Facebook, the hall website, the Deeside Piper, the Drumoak and Durriss newsletter, the Community Council and the Banchory Fly newsletter to say that Phase One of the project is complete with the Leader funded feasibility study having been finalised and that we are now looking to raise the funds to build the new hall.

A second update was sent out late February to the same recipients.

Some early approaches to trusts and funders were disappointing, with many concentrating on supporting recovery from Covid and The National Lottery deciding to no longer fund capital projects, which was a major blow as most new hall buildings have previously benefited from large amounts from the Lottery. However, the small group has not been inactive on the fundraising front and set up a Virgin Money page for donations and a May Challenge to involve the community in walking, running or cycling. We also joined Easyfundraising and Amazon Smile. Along with our 200 Club this has kept the funds trickling in.



Much work was done on a business plan for the new hall project and this work is on going with the need to refine the aims to address climate change with an energy efficient hall.

The board convener attended the Community Council in February and their chair attended one of our meetings to suggest ideas for funding including the Mid Hill Wind Farm, which the community council administer. This led to a discussion about the possible purchase of Station Wood, an area of woodland that surrounds the hall, owned by the National Trust for Scotland. An initial approach has been made to the NTS and contact made with the Scottish Land Fund who can help us if we change our constitution to a type 2 membership SCIO. The Board is currently considering this potential change.

An application was also made in January to the Meikle Carewe Wind farm for £464.51 to replace the fridge and buy new tables and cutlery for the existing hall. This was successful as were grants for Covid support.

In September we received the sum of £838.30 from Kincardine and Deeside Partnership to cover the costs of cleaning, cleaning materials, Legionella test & WiFi in response to COVID19. A small business support grant of £10,000 was received with support from Marr Area Partnership.

Given the year of Covid and lockdowns we have had, there was still s surprising amount of hard work done by the committed members of the Board of Crathes Hall in 20/21.

Moira Hamilton

Convener, Board of Trustees

