

**THE JUBILEE INSTITUTE
ROTHBURY
Registered Charity No: 227913**

Objective of the Charity

The objective of the charity is stated in the new scheme adopted on 15th October 2009. This is the provision and maintenance of the Jubilee Institute, Rothbury, for use by the inhabitants of the area of benefit without distinction of political, religious or other opinions, including use for:

- (a) meetings, lectures and classes; and
- (b) other forms of recreation and leisure-time occupation

with the object of improving the conditions of life for the inhabitants.

The Jubilee Institute is a large building with a variety of rooms and facilities, ranging from the 250-seater Angus Armstrong Hall through three meeting rooms for up to 50 people down to a number of smaller rooms and storage areas. There is a kitchen and further kitchen facilities in two other rooms. The main hall has a stage, film projection and surround sound. The building is right at the centre of Rothbury and has provided a social centre for the area for many years.

Management of the charity

The charity is managed by a group of trustees, currently 12 in number and listed earlier in this report, who are elected or re-elected annually in accordance with the terms of the new scheme at an AGM open to all local inhabitants. The trustees then choose officers from among their number. All trustee time is given voluntarily and no trustee receives remuneration or other benefits. There is a part time caretaker and booking clerk who is paid for her employment with the aid of a professional organization.

The premises are licensed for public entertainment and the licence has recently been extended to cover the sale of alcohol. The main source of income is from the hiring of rooms for individuals and organizations to use. There is also a Patrons Scheme that encourages regular donations from local inhabitants. Social events of various types are run to raise funds. Grants for capital expenditure are obtained whenever possible. The trustees receive regular advice on our charitable operation from CAN and are seeking to achieve Hallmark status to recognize our compliance with management standards.

Report of trustees for 2009-2010

The chairman's report on the past year at the May AGM summarises some of the activities of the Jubilee Institute trustees over the past 12 months in pursuit of the objective above, as follows:

The most remarkable and exciting achievement of the past year was the Queens Award for Voluntary Service, given to the trustees for their charitable work in Coquetdale.

Anyone who contributed in any way to the renovation and redevelopment of the Jubilee Institute over the past 10 years or more should enjoy the glory provided by this award. That is why we arranged a party to celebrate the Queens Award in November last year. Thanks to our social secretaries and to all their helpers, the excellent refreshments were fit for the royally inspired occasion. The trophy itself was unveiled by patron Eric Howarth, who spoke humorously and movingly about the Jubilee Institute's past and present. The trophy was then installed in the showcase generously constructed by Alec Swailes. In September, most of the current trustees had been able to attend the presentation of the Award by the Lord Lieutenant of Northumberland at Alnwick Castle, and four had also attended a Buckingham Palace Garden Party.

This is the first AGM conducted under our new constitution or 'scheme' as the Charity Commission calls it. The development of this has been a very long and testing piece of work, with numerous and repeated setbacks and difficulties, involving extensive negotiation with the Charities Commission and the agent of the Duke of Northumberland over a period of years. We were fortunate in having very valuable advice and guidance from Alan Hedley of CAN and Bill Flett. We are happy that the new document now properly reflects our objectives and activities and provides a tried and tested framework for our operating practices. Together with associated legal papers, it eliminates old and irrelevant restrictions and breaks the outdated links with the Duke of Northumberland's estate. I am very grateful to my colleague Clive Wilkinson who has worked tirelessly on this complex endeavour.

This year, although there were a number of shows in the hall, the trustees staged just one of them, namely 'Swingers in Suspenders' sponsored by Highlights Rural Touring Scheme. It was undoubtedly enjoyed by the audience but did not achieve the high standards to which we have become accustomed. So far we have declined further offerings from Highlights on the grounds that they would not represent good enough value for the time we have to invest in them.

The trustees responsible for facilities management have had a busy year and I should like to thank them here for their work. The most substantial matter concerned external and internal cracks in the fabric of the building. We have had sound advice from the architect Nigel Jenkins in deciding the appropriate actions. First we conducted a survey of the drains to rule out this source of subsidence. In fact we found some damage to the drains that needed repair, and this work will shortly be carried out. In addition a stone window lintel has been replaced and external stonework has been pointed. We will monitor the cracks in the future to ensure that there is no long term issue. Other work that has been carried out includes repair of the outside rendering in the passage, lagging pipes in the cellar, treating woodworm under the stage, installing extra handrails on staircases, improving the stage facilities, and decorating the outside woodwork, the Simonside Room and the side entrance and hallways. This list is not comprehensive.

The sound systems have also been improved to ensure that the Hearing Loop operates whenever any audio facilities are used. A simpler public address system has also been made available.

Ian Armstrong has kept an eye on our compliance with the rules and regulations that govern our activities. He has encouraged us to apply for Hallmark, an award for high standards of compliance. This has helped to stimulate various pieces of work concerned with ensuring that we control our affairs properly.

One such activity relates to the sale of alcohol. New legislation has made it easier for us to license the Jubilee Institute fully rather than relying on the Temporary Event Notices system. The responsibility can now be shared by the trustees instead of designating an individual to take responsibility and endure penalties, if incurred. If successful, we shall no longer have awkward limits on the number of licensed events we can host each year, but as a *quid pro quo*, we shall have to ensure that we take our new responsibilities for alcohol sales very seriously. As a result of this application our treasurers have had to re-design our booking system and forms so as to facilitate the proper control of the sale of alcohol.

What should our priorities be for the coming year to ensure the future of the Jubilee Institute? First we need to pay attention to our income. At the moment this does not appear critical, but it is noticeably down and there is no reason to suppose that the financial climate for us and our typical users will improve – quite the opposite in fact. So we should seek to encourage additional uses wherever possible. Perhaps we could also try to expand our Patrons scheme. Secondly we should be looking for new blood for the trustees, preferably young blood. Given the length of service of some trustees and the average age of us all, we may anticipate increasing turnover and also greater difficulty in finding people willing to serve as officers. Younger people have greater demands on their time from their employment and their families, so this is not an easy matter to resolve.

As long as we retain the goodwill of the people of Coquetdale and as long as they see the Jubilee Institute as an important part of their heritage, we can remain optimistic. We have experienced some golden years. Let us keep the memory of these warm as we deal with the future.

Users of the Jubilee Institute Premises

The Jubilee Institute is only successful if it is regularly used by local organisations and individuals. Each year at our AGM, we are provided with a comparative summary of use by our current Vice Chair. Some extracts from his report follow:

This year we have some good news and some bad news. First the good news. Over the past few years there has been a steady increase in the number of community organisations using the Jubilee Institute, as chart number 1 shows. Here you can see that in 2006/7 just over thirty organisations used these premises. This figure rose slightly the following year, but by 2008/9 it had increased to over 45. By last year, however, the number of organisations using these premises had doubled on the 2006/7 figure to more than 60.

As you will be aware, our rental revenue comes from two main streams: long term bookings in which clients take out a contract for several months or longer, and short term

or occasional bookings, for what are usually one-off events . I want to look at these short term bookings first. For almost every month in 2006/7 occasional bookings were at a relatively low level compared with the three subsequent years. Good news indeed.

However, there are also clear signs of a falling away of demand – the beginnings of the bad news. Since May last year (2009) occasional bookings have been lower than for the corresponding month in the previous year. The upward trend has stopped. Why has this happened? A look at the types of organisations making these occasional bookings helps to get a better picture. There has been a marked decline in health and fitness bookings since last year. This category had about 300 bookings in 2008/9 but only 200 in 2009/10. There has also been a decline in public organisations using the Jubilee Institute and also of adult/continuing education classes.

This year I have introduced a new category, namely charitable organisations. There has been considerable activity in this area over the past year, sufficient to merit special mention. This category includes meetings of the flood victim support group, MacMillan Cancer Support, the National Trust, RNIB and Sustrans.

But where exactly have the main losses been? AA's meetings have more than halved since last year. Adult education has virtually ceased its operations in the Jubilee Institute and most of its classes now take place in the Middle School or at other designated venues. With the reorganisation of local government, Alnwick District Council has disappeared and with it the regular meetings they held here. With the advent of the Otterburn Mill outdoor clothing shop to Rothbury's High Street, we have also lost the regular sales of outdoor clothing that used to be a good source of income for us on a fairly regular basis. The Rothbury Traditional Music Festival has been going through organisational changes and this seems to have resulted in reduced meetings in the Jubilee Hall. The elephant in the room, however, if this is not an inappropriate term given the circumstances, is the loss of Slimming World and Weigh Watchers, both of the latter having fallen away completely. This, surely, is taking slimming too far! Although we are delighted at this evident sign of increasing health in our community, we regret the loss of income this entails. Health and Fitness bookings started from a small beginning in 2006/7, grew to a peak in 2008/9 and have now begun a rapid decline.

Nevertheless, despite these losses, health and fitness activities still account for the greatest use of our facilities in terms of hours. This category spent over 400 hours here last year and by far the most important activities within it were yoga and keep fit, which between them met for 198.5 hours in 2009/10.

Clubs and societies spent over 300 hours here. The biggest users in this latter category are: CADS (Coquetdale Amateur Dramatic Society), the Over 60s and the uniformed organisations (scouts, etc.). Of the long term users, by far the most important is Alnwick Adult Training. This uses the Simonside Room for two days a week from 09:00 to 17:00 all year. The Youth Project occupies two rooms upstairs (the Debdon and Thrum Rooms) exclusively and the Blaeberry Room on a regular, though not exclusive, basis. CADS, with its week-long annual performance in February of each year, crams most of its

activities into the autumn and winter months and the scouts and cinema operate regularly throughout the year.

If we add all the hours up, this is the picture we get – overall decline in use, despite the fact that we have more organisations than ever using our facilities. So we have a situation in which more organisations are using the Jubilee Institute but for shorter periods of time and there are fewer regular (long term) bookings.

Report compiled by: Professor John A Lewis

Signature:

Position: Chair of Trustees

Date: 20th September 2010