

THE STITHIANS CENTRE TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT

1st November 2023 (including financial year May 2022/April 2023)

Charity Name: THE STITHIANS CENTRE

Other name: The Stithians Centre Management Committee

Registered Charity Number: 1010543

Principal Address: The Stithians Centre, Church Road, Stithians, Truro, Cornwall, TR3 7DH

Charity Trustees:

Denis Nightingale (Chair) (elected)
Cllr Phillip Blease (Vice Chair) (Parish Council)
Mrs Wendy Whittaker (Secretary) (co-opted)
Gp Capt. (Retd) John Colgate (Treasurer) (elected)
Jeremy Lucioni (elected)
Mr Andrew Moss (co-opted)
Mrs Ann Nicholls (Women's Institute rep)
Mr Mike Tatnall (Royal British Legion rep)
Mrs Judith Twigger (elected)
Mr Neil Hamilton (Scout Association rep)
Ms Caroline Bolitho (until August 2023)
Mrs Rita Wood
Mrs Emma Cook (appointed March 2023)

Trustee for the Charity: Charity Commission

Advisers:

Account Examiner: Mrs Claire Morgan, Champion Accountancy
Solicitors: Thurstan Hoskin Solicitors
Architect: CAD Architects, Mr Roger Hocking
Quantity Surveyor: Ed Crossley and Associates
Bankers: Lloyds Bank & CCLA Investment

Type of Governing Document: Trust Deed dated 30 Mar 90, as amended 28 Jul 04 and 19 Jan 07, 6 March 2014, amended 7 December 2016, as amended 4 November 2020

How is the Charity Constituted: Trust

Trustee Selection Methods: Four trustees are elected for one year by the beneficiaries at the annual general meeting, six may be co-opted, and the rest are appointed by some of the charity's regular user groups. All serve to promote the aims and objectives of the charity.

Additional Governance Arrangements:

Licences- The hall has a Premises Licence (including alcohol). The hall is licensed by the Public Performance Licence-Performing Right Society, PPL-PRS, for live and recorded music.

Insurance

The Management Committee recognises that it is under a legal obligation to protect the building, its users and employees through adequate and appropriate insurance.

The Stithians Centre is insured with respect to property damage (buildings insurance) by Ansva Insurance (£1.6M cover). It is insured with the same company with respect to contents (up to £35,000) public liability (£5M) employers' liability (£10M).

The Centre's disabled person's platform lift is covered by a combined inspection and damage insurance policy (up to £500,000) with Allianz Insurance.

Summary of the Objects of the Charity: To manage the premises upon Trust for the purposes of a village hall and community centre for the use of the inhabitants of the Parish of Stithians in the County of Cornwall without distinction of political, religious or other opinions, including use for meetings, lectures and classes, and for other forms of recreation and leisure time occupation, with the object of improving the conditions of life for the said inhabitants.

The Stithians Centre November 2022-2023

The last year has seen The Stithians Centre really bounce back from all the lockdowns. The hard work of all the trustees is reflected in more bookings and a return to the building's role as the centre of much of village life. The increase in rents last year has not put people off and indeed hirers have commented on what they see as reasonable rates.

The building is in use for activities including Beavers, Cubs, Brownies and Rainbows, Lunch Club, Art, Stithians W.I., Parish Council, Coffee Drop In, Foot Clinic, Messy Church and Ukulele Group. Various NHS sections regularly use the Centre for away days which is a great boon. Children's parties are flourishing and there have been a number of wedding receptions. Three times a year the Centre is used for music exams. Sadly, the Baby and Toddler Group has folded after five years due to a lack of volunteers.

Major work is about to be undertaken on replacing the kitchen roof which has leaked from time to time in recent years. A Building Development Group is drawing up a list of priorities which will be submitted to the management committee.

In common with other village halls we need even more bookings. The trustees will continue to explore new avenues of revenue and ways of attracting even more people to use The Stithians Centre.

What clubs are new from November 2022 to present:

There are currently 28 clubs and activities on offer covering a wide range of interests and age groups, from Art, Ukulele, Slimming World, WI to Lunch Club, and 8 different Fitness Classes.

Youth groups (Rainbows, Brownies, Beavers and Cubs) continue to have weekly meetings. One off full day bookings from major organisations have been strong in the past year contributing significantly to the income of TSC. Other regular events organised by our events team are growing in popularity.

The Stithians Produce Market has been held monthly apart from August and been well attended. Christmas markets were especially busy and most enjoyable. The Centre is very grateful to the organiser, stallholders and the public who attend. All their contributions are greatly valued.

The Community Library continues to be a much valued service in the Centre. This is run by a lead volunteer and her team, and their commitment is also much appreciated by everyone. Stithians Parish Council uses the Centre to host public meetings as well as its regular council meetings. The Centre has been used a number of times by the exciting Heat the Streets green energy for presentations etc to promote the project to install heat pumps in many homes in the village. They also displayed a semi-permanent display and information point in the entrance porch.

The Centre is also available for hire for private functions including children's parties, wedding receptions, funeral teas, community social functions and fund-raising fayres/events.

What has The Stithians Centre achieved since the last annual meeting in November 2022?

Following the significant building improvement works conducted in 2020 to 2022 no significant work has been undertaken this year although several potential improvements have been identified and are currently being researched and prioritised. The largest and most important of these is the replacement of the roof covering Foundry room & the kitchen. Work on this is scheduled to start soon.

Further increasing our green credentials, we are looking to reduce our carbon footprint by increasing insulation and possibly replacing our ancient oil boiler with an infrared heating system. We are also investigating carpet replacements and increasing our use of LED lighting. Our solar panels & Tesla batteries have continued to significantly reduce our electricity bills. The enormous amount of work that the Stithians Energy Group, and especially their lead Brian Piper, put into this project, winning the funding from Cornwall Council, cannot be overestimated. The Stithians Centre is indebted to him.

The introduction of Hallmaster for room bookings online remains very successful and the bookings officer has managed the new system brilliantly.

TicketSource: The Centre has set up this user-friendly online dashboard for promoters and ticket purchasers to manage bookings for events.

Zettle: The Stithians Centre has also set up a Zettle account for contactless card payments. This is a useful facility as less and less people carry cash. It also reduces risks associated with cash payments.

There is also still a need for more volunteers to help at events and for more people to come forward with sparkling, original ideas on how the Centre can be better used. The Trustees are all volunteers. They are dedicated and hardworking, but they cannot be expected to do everything themselves. The Centre exists for everyone in the parish of Stithians and we all have a responsibility to ensure it is successful.

We would like to thank everyone who uses The Stithians Centre and supports our events.

Publicity and Promotion –

The Stithians Centre makes active use of website marketing and social media to promote events, regular clubs and activities, and venue hire to a wider audience. Events are still advertised by poster and in The Stithians Times.

Website: The website continues to support the aims and objectives of TSC with 42832 hits since it was set up.

Newsletter: The Newsletter now has just under 600 subscribers who are updated on events and activities through a monthly email newsletter, and special event bulletins.

Facebook: TSC promotes through its own Facebook page (499 followers) and shares posts with Stithians Community Stithians Noticeboard Facebook group (6600 subscribers), as well as neighbouring village pages, e.g., Lanner, Carnkie, Four Lanes, Perranwell, Frogpool, Carharrack, Devoran, Rame Penryn, Ponsanooth. A new volunteer has recently been recruited to manage and expand social media content.

Instagram: The Instagram account opened in September 2020 to promote TSC as a hire venue as well as events now has 251 followers.

Stithians Times: The closure of one of the village shops has affected sales of the Stithians Times but advertisement revenue remains strong. Printing costs have stabilised but are very high. The Times remains an important revenue raiser but trustees are keeping a close eye to ensure it remains viable. It must never become a financial burden.

The Stithians Directory: This is being updated on TSC website providing contact information on community groups and vital service. The Directory continues to bring in a small income through advertising.

Advertising Leaflet: The annual combined parish leaflet drop, which provides TSC with a cost effective means of reaching all c.1000 homes in the parish, took place again in 2022 and is expected to go ahead in 2023. TSC are one of the key organisers of this community service.

Policy on Reserves: The Trustees seek to hold in reserve a minimum of six months' operating costs of the facilities which they manage. This is primarily to allow for seasonal variations in use and to safeguard against any period when the facilities might be wholly or partially unavailable due to damage or maintenance works. Accrued reserves are invested in bank deposits to best advantage in terms of returns and risk minimisation whilst ensuring access, if required. In addition, there are reserves being held for major capital expenditure such as the roof.

Details of Any Funds in Deficit: Nil.

Further financial review details:

The accounts for FY22/23 have been examined formally and approved without adverse comment nor recommendation.

The Centre's overall funds at the end of the FY stood at just under £83.5K, a growth in our overall funds of over £18K during the last FY. Whilst over £8K of this was attributable to windfall donations, for the first time we achieved an underlying growth approaching our target of around £10K. The main reason for this was an almost doubling of our income from room hire. This can be attributed in part to an increase in general hire rates in Sep 22 (the first for many years), but there is also an underlying improvement in occupancy, especially commercial hires. Against this increase, we managed to keep overall expenditure for the year down to the same level as previously, whilst maintaining the level of general maintenance. A key factor in this was the contribution of our solar panels, reducing our electricity costs by some 30% less than expected.

Fund-raising income overall has been disappointing. Although income from events was much better last year, related costs were up too and overall profit from our main fund-raising activities was only about £600 up on the previous year's poor results. Profit from Stithians Times has fallen, due mostly to vastly increased printing costs, and the closure of one of our two main retail outlets affected sales. Our other main fund-raising effort, the production of greetings cards linked to a photography competition, has produced a disappointing outcome so far, with poor sales resulting in a loss during the year, although we still hold stock, sales of which should offset some, if not all, of this during the current year.

Donations made a significant contribution to our funds this year. By far the most significant came from GML, a British, formerly Russian, company, which makes donations to UK charities under the guidance of a former MP, Dudley Fishburn. After extensive due-diligence checks, TSCMC accepted Mr Fishburn's offer of a donation and were delighted to receive £7.5K. Other donations included contributions from two village events: £750 from the profits of the Jubilee picnic and over £200 from the Wellness Fair.

In the six months since the end of the FY, figures remain encouraging. Letting income remains high and look set to beat last year's figures. Sound letting income means that we need rely less on fund-raising, which is just as well as those figures remain disappointing. Stithians Times is unlikely to make much profit and events so far have raised little, due to poor attendance and reduced bar income, so our fundraising events, whilst performing a useful social service, show little prospect of contributing significantly to our finances.

In summary, The Centre remains on a secure financial footing and, for the first time, we are seeing signs that our letting income might be sufficient to meet most of our running costs, including a reasonable level of routine upkeep and preventative maintenance. This then gives

us the confidence to spend some of our capital balance on more major renovations or improvements. We have already committed to around £17K to replace the roof over the Kitchen, but if things continue as present for the rest of the year, we should be able to invest in some others of the many improvement projects we are considering. We must still be prudent, but there is scope for optimism.

We look forward to seeing you all over the next year and welcoming you to The Stithians Centre.

Signed:

Date:

D Nightingale
Chairman