

**ANNUAL REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES OF PATCHAM MEMORIAL HALL (PMH)** for year January 1st to 31st December 2022**TRUSTEES' ACTIVITIES, ACTIONS and EVENTS in 2022****1. Committee Work In 2022**

The PMH Management Committee continues to comprise four Charity Trustees elected by the participants during the 2021 AGM, and three Trustees appointed by two Brighton-based branches of national charities: University of the Third Age (U3A) and the Confederation of Women's Institutes (WI), both being long-term supporters and users of the Hall. A number of clauses in the Memorandum and Articles relate to rules around the latter's appointment, duties and resignation, and they are eligible to vote, though required to abstain if there is a conflict of interest between the Hall's agenda and that of the organisation represented. In addition, the estates manager (who is not a trustee) and another local resident make up the nine volunteers in total. We contract a self-employed caretaker to cover the maintenance of the Hall.

The Officers, namely Chair, Treasurer and Secretary, are appointed by the whole committee from the publicly-elected group, after the AGM at which they are elected, for three years. Six members of the committee are residents in the Patcham area covered by BN1/8 or BN1/5 postcodes (previously Patcham parish).

In the years under UK government Covid-19 restrictions, the committee met using the Zoom platform. By the beginning of 2022, restrictions had been raised, and initially the estates & officers group met in March 2022 to deal with urgent correspondence related to specific matters and expenditure. This included preparing a formal contract for taking on the new Caretaker, especially as full transparency is required owing to family connections between management committee members (this does not involve the trustees). Discussion of, and approval by, the full Board was carried out by email, and two further full Board meetings happened over this year.

Trustees and attendees are asked to declare any conflict of interest in agenda items, and no conflict of interest has been apparent or declared this year. We continue using a standardised agenda, with Standing Items of Finance, Bookings, Estates, Discussion points and AOB. The Charity's Annual Return was completed, and accounts submitted on time, as required by the Charity Commission.

Unfortunately, in September 2022 the committee's Chair, Elizabeth Storey, died. Lizi was a longstanding member of the committee, first volunteering as bookings secretary in 2007, becoming a Trustee in 2008, acting chair in 2011, and overseeing the new charity constitution adopted by the committee in 2012. The committee has yet to appoint a permanent Chair from the Officers that are left, John Williams is nominated as Deputy Chair for the time being, and a 'revolving' chair happens in practice.

**2. Enhancement of Facilities in 2022**

The officers and the estates committee also met to progress completion of the hall's redecoration following the ASHP heaters' installation from the previous year. Curtains that had been in use for a couple of decades were replaced by less bulky and cleaner roller blinds. These can also be used for daylight blackout purposes, as we also purchased a drop-down screen and data projector for use by the committee and hall hirers. This is enhanced by the installation of a free WiFi system, to future-proof our hall's facilities and bring them up to what is now the raised technological expectations of hirers, to include the use of online platforms such as Zoom, Teams, Face Time for distance participation in courses, meeting etc. Some of the costs associated with these improvements were met from the government grants paid for business interruption during the Covid-19 pandemic. Positive feedback from Hall users has supported our brighter colour scheme and facilities.

The Trustees would like to thank John Hogg for leading on the management of the refurbishment programme, commissioning tenders for work, and monitoring the progress of the work.

The 2019 'rewilding' of the garden areas has developed well, thanks to an active gardening taskforce of Jan Mulreany & Maria Hogg, helped by Lesley Brown, a local Scything expert. The front garden was damaged quite extensively during September 2022 however, when Brighton & Hove City Council contractors used the lawn and flowerbeds as an unauthorised access route to manage the demolition of elm trees on the neighbouring council land, in front of the Downsview Life Skills Centre. Despite several letters of complaint from both organisations to local Conservative councillors and the council's parks department, the year ended with no resolution, nor reparation.

### 3. Bookings

Hiring fees being our main source of charitable income, our bookings management has gradually consolidated during 2022, thanks to the persistence and patience of John Williams in dealing with private and corporate hirers alike. The establishment of electronic (BACS) payments as standard has reduced the administrative load somewhat, as there is little need now to deposit paper cheques and cash, especially as banking facilities across the suburbs of Brighton have been reduced, and in-person banking requires travel to the centre.

It was decided that hire rates needed to increase, in line with various aspects of local and national financial viability. A modest increase for community and private hourly hire charges was agreed (£10 and £12 per hour), and the cost of hiring for evening events was made more consistent. Increases were to begin at the beginning of 2023, which would enable groups who had paid in advance to be covered, and help to plan to rebudget.

### 4. Financial Stability

As will be seen in the appended Treasurers report for the year, any negative financial impact of the Covid restrictions has lifted, and we have benefitted from government and other grants related to business interruption. Our thanks are extended to Treasurer Hugh Woodhouse for keeping us going through the emergency and restoring us to good financial stability. EoY cash balance Dec 2022 £65815.

### 5. Planning for 2023 and beyond

- Resolution of the garden damage issue, engaging with new councillors after May 2023 elections, and asking for local support.
- Consolidation of the Committee – recruitment to restore the number of ordinary committee members, preferably by engaging the Patcham resident and business community. Gaining more general support in running the Hall is our main objective: up to two positions are vacant at the moment. This would be especially useful to supplement some of the other work we do, such as representing the PMH charity at local events and, when invited, to contribute to consultations, eg. planning committees etc.
- Our Centenary Celebration will be on 3 February 2024, 100 years since the opening of the Memorial Hall. We intend to invite the Hall's regular groups to contribute an activity, a stall, an exhibition, etc. and will use our contacts with the PCA, the Patcham local history group, Guides, etc. to make it a day to remember.
- We would welcome more Patcham residents on the Managing Committee so that we can have more local people to help us with planning, researching and presenting a suitable display for that celebration. The role is voluntary, and doesn't involve having to become one of the legal Trustees, although we would welcome eligible people for this too. Younger members of the community and those with marketing, fundraising and social media skills, would be ideal!

Written by Jan Mulreany, Charity Secretary & PMH Trustee /endorsed PMH Management Committee, 27/6/23

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### **TRUSTEES AND OFFICERS for 2022**

Trustees are appointed for three years, in order to maintain continuity in decision-making and locus of responsibility. The following people continued in their service to our community in 2021:

Elizabeth Storey, Chair [elected, resident] until 7 September 2022

Hugh Woodhouse, Treasurer [elected, resident]

Jan Mulreany, Charity Secretary [elected, contracted user group]

John Williams, Bookings manager

Mary Taylor, WI representative

Pamela Hubbard and Christine Eden, U3A representatives

John Hogg, Estates Manager and local resident

Maria Hogg, local resident and gardening workforce

Sophie Hogg, contracted caretaker