

NEW VICTORY HALL: TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2011

Introduction

2011 was a terrible year financially for many small businesses and our community was not exempt, suffering the sad loss of both the Saddlery Restaurant and our local shop. The fact that our community spirit remains strong despite these setbacks is in no small part due to the many and varied activities that are carried out within the welcoming environs of the New Victory Hall. The range of activities, services and functions carried out in the hall continued to increase during 2011, with a corresponding rise in user numbers. The building is becoming increasingly important locally and is now the main focal point for a large number of the social clubs and activities within our community, so the Trustees are delighted to be able to present this up-beat report for 2011 and outline some of the plans under consideration for 2012.

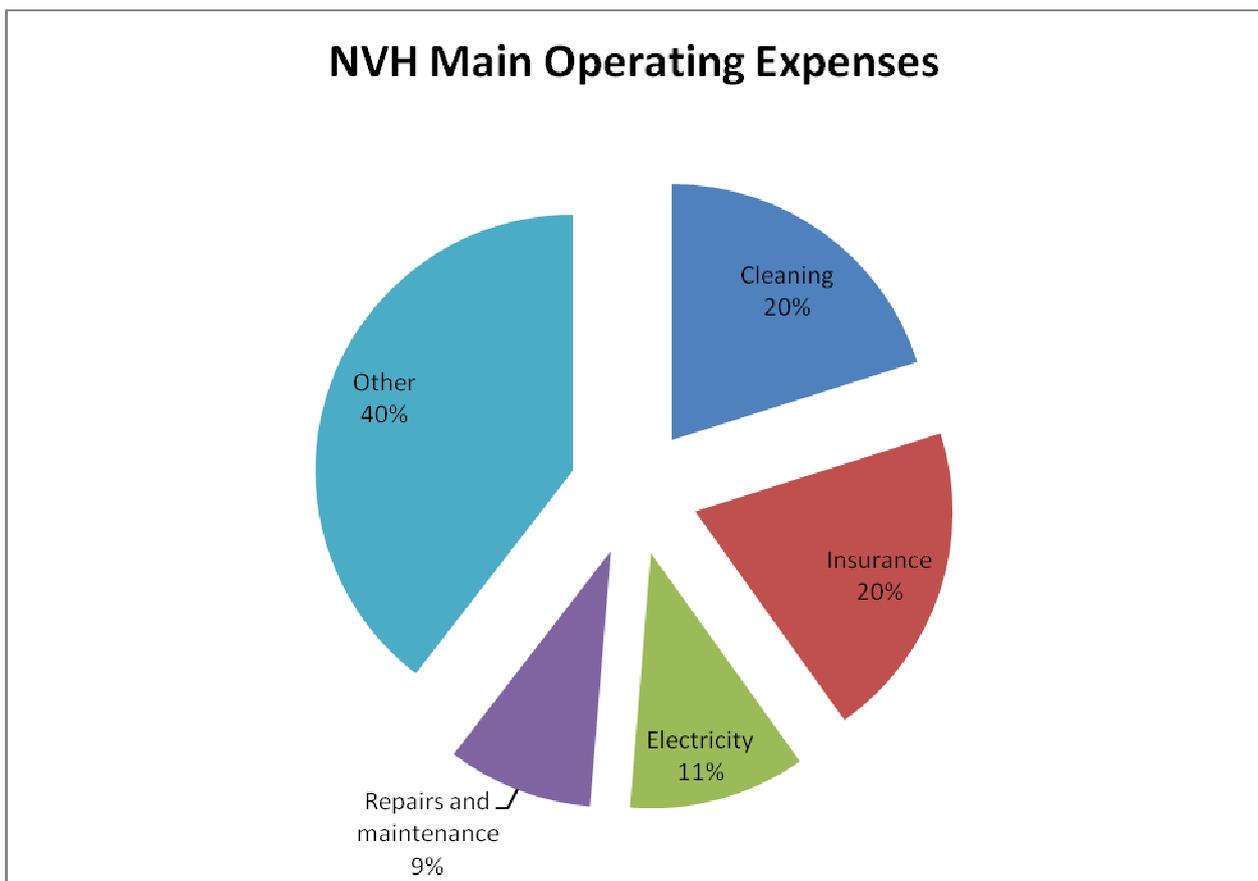
Finances

The New Victory Hall made an appropriate operating surplus in 2011 and this will be put into a fund to cover future replacement, maintenance and repair costs. Detailed information relating to the 2011 accounts is available separately but the main numbers are summarised below:

| | 2011 | 2010 |
|--|------------------|------------------|
| Opening Balance* | 12,592.23 | 45,316.64 |
| Operating Income | 15,887.50 | 11,035.00 |
| Donations | 2,370.27 | 10,425.22 |
| Fund Raising Events | 6,275.47 | 5,421.36 |
| 200 club (net) | 894.00 | 896.00 |
| Other Income (interest & rates refund) | 721.20 | nil |
| Total Income | 26,148.44 | 27,777.58 |
| Operating Costs | 12,161.50 | 9,885.38 |
| Project Expenditure | 12,337.38 | 42,155.36 |
| ACRE loan repayments | 5,253.12 | 5,289.23 |
| Improvements | 1,924.57 | 3,387.62 |
| Total Expenditure | 31,676.57 | 60,717.59 |
| Closing Balance | 7,064.10 | 12,376.63 |

* there is a small unresolved discrepancy between the 2010 closing and and 2011 opening balances.

The balance (£12,337) of the outstanding sum from the construction phase was paid in full during 2011. We are grateful to John Youngs Ltd. for allowing us to pay in instalments as cash became available. We continued to make quarterly repayments to ACRE (Action for Communities in Rural England) and at the end of 2011 the loan amount stood at £ 15,283.38. The loan is on target to be repaid in full by late 2014 at the rate of about £5,000 each year. The hall is financially sound and adequate funds are now being generated to ensure that the building, fixtures and furnishings can be properly maintained into the future.



Fund-raising and Donations

During 2011 there was, on average, one fund raising event each month and the impressive sum of £6,275 was made in total from all the events. The Xmas Fair raised a record £1,563.69 and the sale of tea, coffee and bacon rolls at the monthly Farmers' Market raised over £1,100. The monthly market is a now a well-established social event where many of us meet to catch up with local friends.

The Events Committee deserves particular thanks for organising all these events, which contribute significantly to the hall's finances and also, very importantly, allow us to meet the loan repayments to ACRE. Thanks are also due to a significant number of other users and supporters of the hall, including the Norfolk Wherry Brass Band, the Barn

Dance Committee, the WI, quizmasters, film organisers, chefs, washers-up, cleaners, flower arrangers and too many others to mention each one individually.

Private donations, in cash and in kind, form an important part of the hall finances, too, allowing us to make valuable improvements to the hall facilities. Almost £2,400 was donated to the hall in 2011 and this money was used to buy new tables and crockery for the hall, erect a new fence and improve the external signage. Neatishead Parish Council kindly secured funding for a new walkway to improve access for pedestrians and wheelchair users and this work was successfully completed in 2011. Other in-kind donations were received for the food sold at the Farmers' Market, the community display in the meeting room, external taps, storage cupboards and a number of smaller items within the hall. Our 'Money for Mints' scheme is also proving to be remarkably successful. All such contributions help make the building and grounds safer and even more pleasant to use so our thanks goes to all the donors, including 200 club sponsors, who contributed to the hall in any way during 2011.

Five silver birch trees were planted in the grounds by the Royal British Legion during 2011 to commemorate the 5 local men who gave their lives during WWII. The New Victory Hall is a fitting place for such a memorial and we look forward to seeing the trees grow over the coming years.

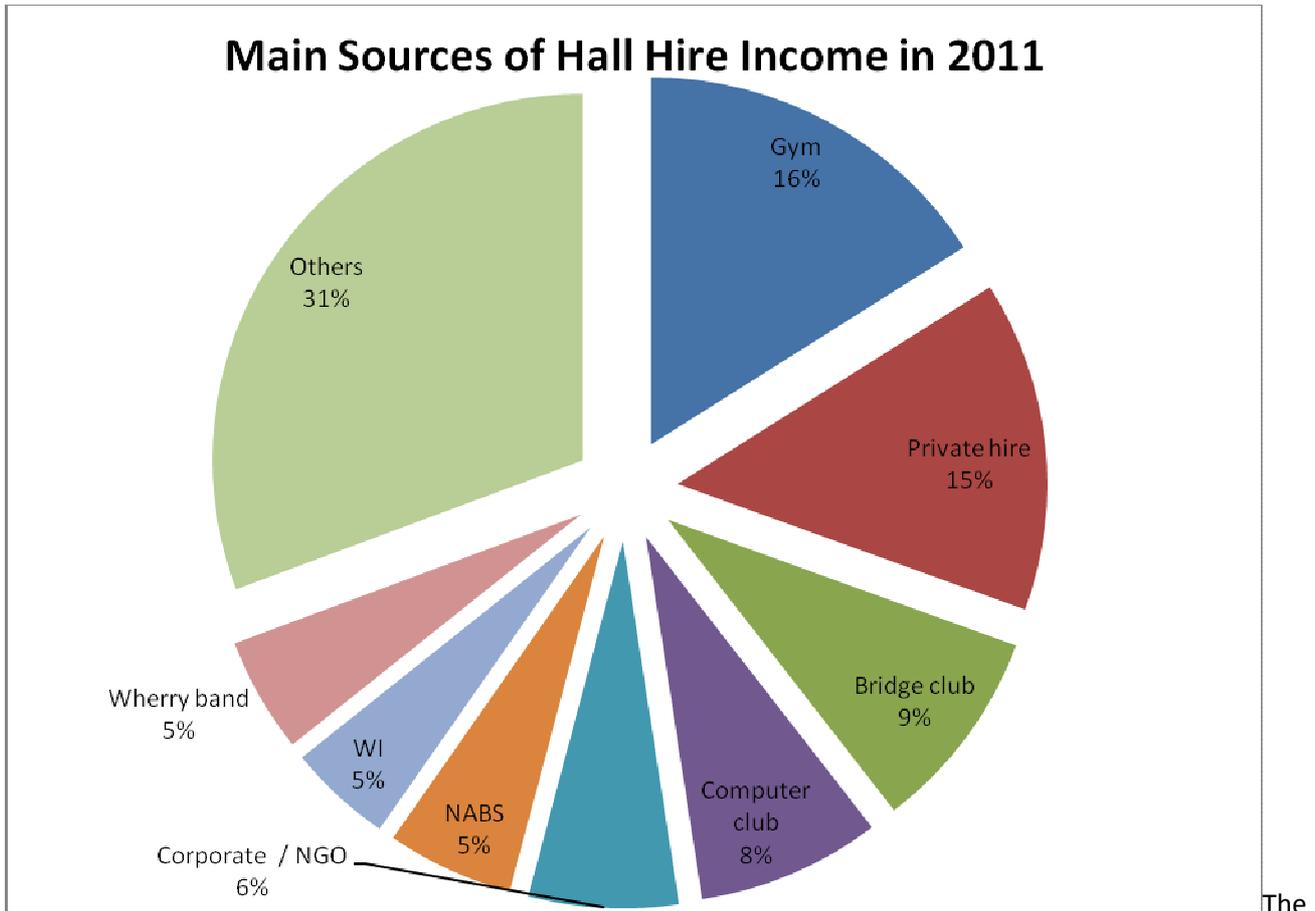
Hall Hire

Hall hire charges were increased in 2011 to ensure that the building remains financially sustainable in the long term. A review of other similar facilities in our area indicates that our charges are still very reasonable. The hire fees are currently fixed until the end of 2012 and Trustees will review the 2013 charges in summer 2012.

We are pleased to report that several user groups substantially increased their use of the hall in 2011, including the Neatishead Community Gym (now the single biggest hirer of the hall), the Bridge Club, the WI (exercise class) and the Indoor Bowls Club. Other user groups such as NABS, the Gardening Club, Yoga, Pilates, Youth Club, Norfolk Wherry Brass Band, Friends and Neighbours, WI and the Computer Club all continue to benefit from the pleasant surroundings and excellent facilities of the New Victory Hall. Private bookings for weddings and children's parties have also increased as word has spread about the quality and pleasant environment of the hall.

Trustees want to ensure that the hall continues to be available for use by as wide a cross-section of the community as possible and that hire charges remain affordable for local users. This is achieved partially by trying to maximise the use of the hall and partially by marketing the hall at more 'commercial' rates to outside organisations such as the Broads Authority and Norfolk Rural Community Council, amongst others. This strategy continues to bring in valuable revenue, enabling hire rates for local users to remain relatively low. We have, however, noticed a recent tendency amongst a few users to cut back on the length of their hire session, conveniently disregarding the fact that payment should be for the full period of use, which includes preparing for the session and tidying up afterwards. This sometimes leads to frustration between over-lapping user groups and it also deprives the hall – and therefore the community - of revenue. The Trustees work hard to treat everyone as equally and as fairly as

possible and we must please ask that users do the same and, unless agreed otherwise with the Bookings Secretary, pay for the actual time that they use the hall.

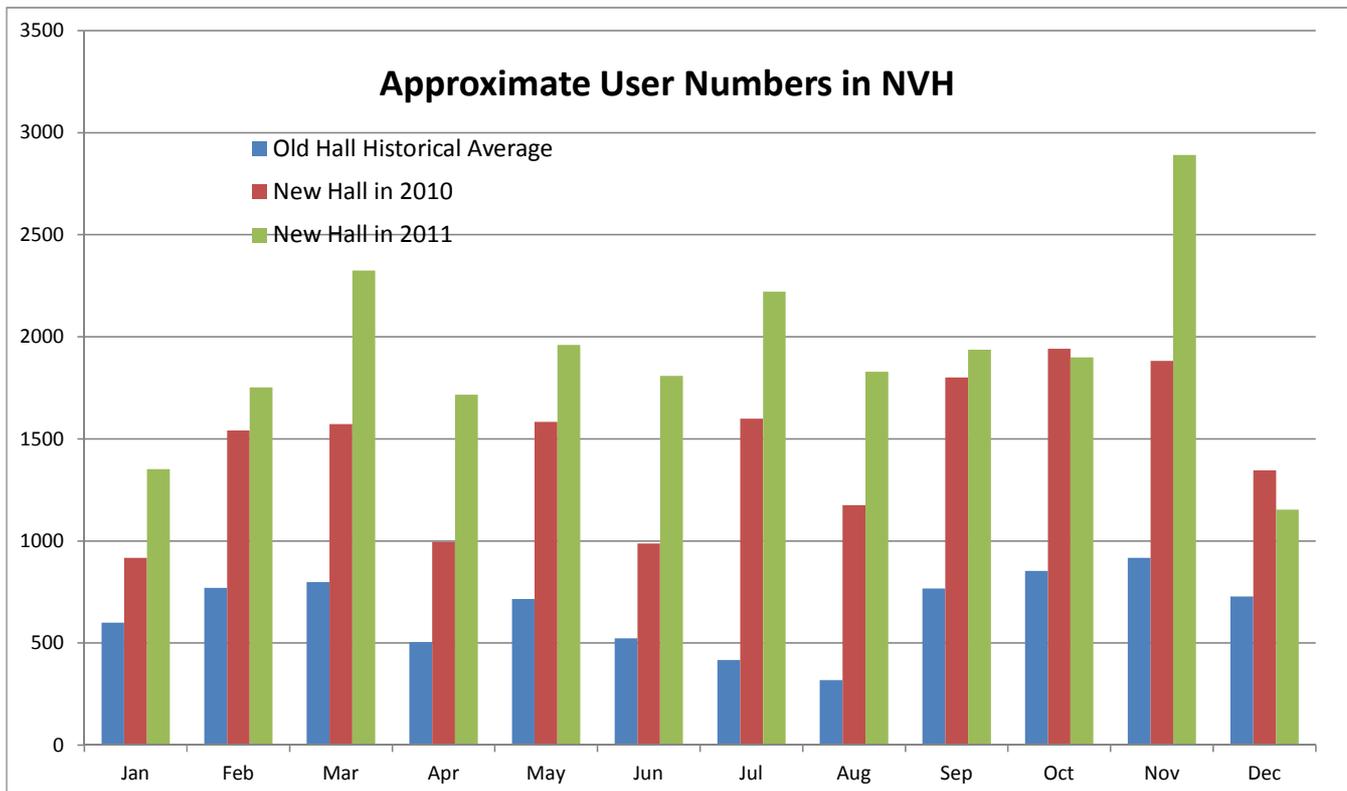


Bookings System

We estimate that almost 23,000 visits were made to the hall in 2011, an increase of about 40% (6,500 visits) over 2010, which emphasises how important the hall has become to our community. The demand for the hall is such that the role of 'Bookings Secretary' is probably the most onerous of all the management tasks. Doreen Dean has done a fantastic job of handling this for us, sometimes in quite difficult circumstances when she has to be as diplomatic as possible in handling conflicting demands between users. To help her in this task we have successfully implemented a computerised bookings system and just recently made the bookings form available online. We strive hard to keep the website up-to-date and most details about hall availability and cost are available online.

In 2011 we also sought agreement from our main users to amend the terms and conditions of hire, to ensure that occasional users of the hall can gain access to it, or to allow special one-off events to be held. After much debate

and negotiation the changes were eventually agreed and the Trustees are pleased to report that this new, more flexible, system appears to be working well in that we now have an agreement that allows ad-hoc hirers to use the hall in a fair way without unduly penalising regular users.



Premise Management

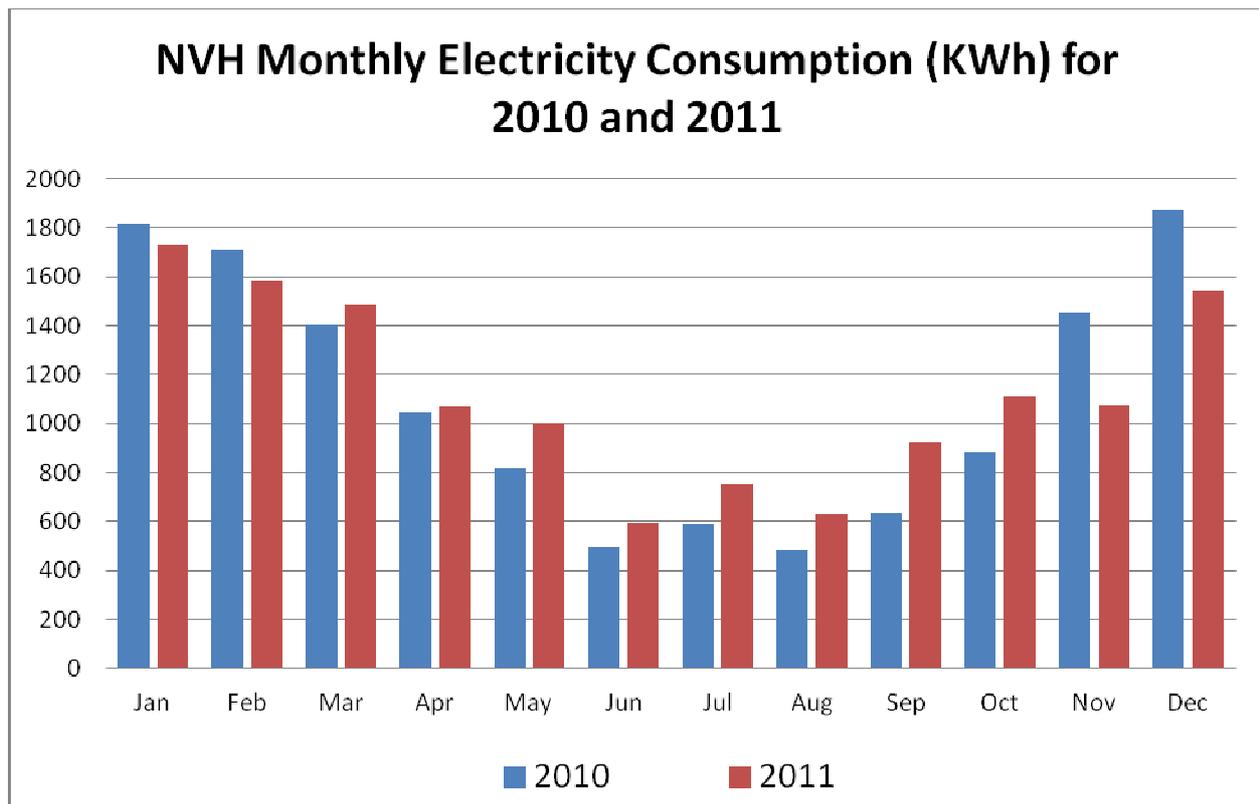
2011 was much less hectic than 2010 for the Premise Management Committee but constant efforts are still required to ensure that the hall is kept clean and in a good state of repair at all times. The task of cleaning is greater than ever before but our cleaners, both paid and unpaid, performed admirably. Garden maintenance was carried out by a combination of professional (grass cutting) and unpaid help (tidying flowerbeds and borders) and we are very grateful to the Gardening Club and others who assisted with this on a voluntary basis.

A number of improvements were made in 2011, including shelving one of the store rooms, the 'History of the Victory Hall' display in the Community Room, installing two outside taps, fencing the car park boundary, better signage at the entrance to the hall, installing a light in the car park and finishing the pedestrian walkway to make access to the hall safer and easier. The Community Gym kindly donated an outside shed for additional storage space and, just recently, we worked closely with Neatishead Parish Council and NCC Highways to smooth out the ruts at the entrance to the hall.

Almost all the tasks and issues associated with the physical operation of the hall were handled cheerfully and willingly by a small group of dedicated volunteers who, often unnoticed, have given generously of their time and expertise. The hall quite simply couldn't function without them, so thank you to everyone who has played a part in helping keep the hall running so smoothly.

Energy Monitoring

We market our hall as 'eco-friendly' and we therefore monitor our energy usage. Even during the coldest months the building uses less energy than a two-bar electric fire, running constantly, for heating, so it is extremely energy-efficient. Overall energy use in 2011 was 13,507 KWh – a small increase on 2010. However, the increase was due to the much higher number of visitors using the hall. Energy use per visitor dropped from 0.76Kwh per visit to 0.59 Kwh per visit, a 22% reduction. This is still above the target of 0.41 that we specified in our Lottery application so the Trustees will continue to seek ways to further reduce energy use. If we install PV solar panels we could potentially generate about 30% of our own energy needs so this remains a future possibility.



Plans for 2012

The Trustees are aware that storage space within the hall is an issue and we are currently evaluating how to address this. The shed provided by the Community Gym has created more space but we can only store things in there that are easy to move, so it is not practical to use it for most large items. As an initial step we intend to alter the children's toilet facility to create more storage space. These toilets have never been used (they were intended for the Playgroup but they moved to a Surestart facility at the primary school as the hall was being built) so it makes sense to take such a step. We are also evaluating options for more store room shelving, and under-stage storage and hope to resolve this issue during 2012.

During 2011 we evaluated the practicality and financial viability of installing an electronic door entry system (to improve the security of the building and reduce the workload of Trustees). We are not yet convinced that this would provide an adequate solution so have held off buying such a system pending further consideration.

The government's sudden and unexpected changes to the renewable energy Feed-in Tariff in late 2011 took us by surprise and the Trustees were unwilling to commit, at short notice, to the £13,000 needed to install solar panels on the kitchen roof. This option will be explored further in 2012 as solar panels could provide a valuable source of additional revenue whilst simultaneously reducing our carbon footprint.

The Bookings System is working well but we are looking to make it even more accessible online during this year. Car park lighting is an issue that we aim to address in 2012. Trustees are striving to provide sufficient lighting to make it safe at night for users without unduly impacting our neighbours. The hall has now been open for 30 months and it is starting to show some signs of wear and tear so we intend to initiate a painting programme in some areas during the coming months.

As you can see, these are exciting times for the New Victory Hall and we expect to move forward positively again in 2012. The Trustees are delighted with the progress made in 2011 and we are grateful to all the donors and sponsors who made it financially possible, to the dedication of those who help run it so ably, and the support of those who use it as we strive to make it even better.

Ian McFadyen
Chairman, New Victory Hall
22nd March 2012