



# The Lopping Endowment Chairman's Report to the Annual General Meeting 2022

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**This report covers our Financial year to December 2021.**

## Hall usage (Room bookings)

For the second year, the pandemic has seriously impacted our income from bookings. We were able to reopen on 17th May and bookings came in at reasonable levels.

As we lost four months of trading, our final room bookings turnover for the financial year was only £34,779.51. However, this still means that our average monthly turnover was similar to 2019 (Non pandemic year)

For this financial year (Ending December 2022) our budget is £65,000.00.

2019	£53,982.00.	Actual.	(Pre-pandemic)
2020	£24,058.49.	Actual.	
2021	£34,779.51.	Actual.	

## Room letting rate review

The Board of Directors agreed that the modest increases to our room letting rates, that were to be applied from April 2020, would not go ahead until "normal activities" could resume. (Pandemic was controlled).

Our room letting **base** rates (Before any agreed discounts are applied) were increased and came into effect on **January 1<sup>st</sup> 2022**.

These increases amounted to £1.00 - £2.00 per hour, dependent on the type of user.

Rates for Commercial Organisations are agreed separately and dependent on such factors as the required room package and whether a day or an evening booking.

Discounts for a small number of "historical users" were reduced from 50% to 40% and will again reduce to 30% when we next review rates. It is likely that the discount rate will then remain at 30%, indefinitely.

Our rates have remained static for three years and during this period fixed and semi fixed costs have increased and at the same time we have made considerable progress in modernising and renovating our facilities

### **Commercial Tenants Rent review**

We continue to receive rents from Whitney's Carpet Shop and we now have an additional tenant, Badshaw News Ltd (Waterlows News Agents), who took over the unit previously occupied by "The Gallery". We have tried on at least three occasions to find a way forward for the Gallery, but we were not successful.

Our other commercial tenant was HSBC Bank who decided to close their Loughton branch in August 2021. This was part of a UK wide reduction in their high street network, covering 82 branch closures.

At the time of writing this report, we are negotiating with a Company that wishes to use this unit as a small, luxury cinema during the evening and a mixed-use workspace during the day.

We are confident that subject to contract, that the new tenants will start the strip-out and refurbishment on or about March 1<sup>st</sup> 2022.

Given these changes, our income from commercial rents will increase over those in 2019 and 2020.

### **Marketing and LH new website.**

We are currently marketing Lopping Hall activities using our website, the two High Road facing monitors, together with social media and other advertising spaces on the internet.

These not only advertise LH rooms to rent, but Theatre events (and ticketing) and the activities of all of our regular users.

We are seeing a definite increase in both enquiry and booking levels, which are well up on those we experienced in 2019.

Now that activities are likely to cover both Theatre and Film, as well as the twenty or so Classes covering everything from dance, fitness and Yoga, the Lopping Hall estate has entrenched its position as the centre for entertainment in Loughton.

Lopping Hall Management would also like to hold other events, such as Comedy and Jazz nights.

### **Works Completed**

#### **Changing rooms and toilets.**

These were in a very poor condition.

In the last (AGM) report we stated that these facilities might be upgraded in 2021. I am pleased to report that this was completed in December 2021.

This also allows us to use the main Gents changing room as another room for hire, when not in use during theatre weeks.

#### **PA System**

A new PA system connected to all rooms used by the Theatre groups, has been installed.

The previous system was functioning intermittently and was not connected to certain rooms.

The loop hearing system in the theatre has now been reinstated.

As well as the PA microphone, there is also a professional wireless microphone which is connected to the loudspeakers in the auditorium. This can also be used to pick up sound from musical instruments etc.

## **Works Future**

### **Stone work 191 High Road (Previously HSBC Bank)**

Damage caused by HSBC removing the night safe and other items. Paid for by way of a dilapidations claim on HSBC (CBRE)

Stone work will be replaced and repaired and the frontage will be DOFF cleaned.

This will be completed in March / April 2022

### **Repairs to Stone, brickwork and Terracotta - Station Road entrance. 2022.**

This area, mainly around the large rear door on Station Road is now considered to be essential maintenance as this area has deteriorated further. Mortar and brickwork have crumbled and the 1895 terracotta needs cleaning with some repairs / replacement to the base of two columns.

Given that this is the original entrance to Lopping Hall and is of historical importance, we are trying to obtain funding for this project estimated to cost somewhere in the region of £13,000 - £18,000.00.

### **Front door. 2023**

The entrance will be re-designed to include an automatically operated sliding door. This upgrade is desirable, if not essential, given the difficulty of accessing the property using the swing doors, especially for those with children, prams and the infirm.

The window and door set will be moved further out towards the pavement and the cost is therefore considerable. As a result, this may not be possible until the summer of 2023.

Current signage and monitors can be reused in this design.

### **Stage Lighting and sound. 2022 - 2024**

Because of the costs involved, this will happen in two stages. The first part will involve the installation of a basic lighting set and control board that will be sufficient for small performances. This will allow LH staff and those so authorised, to quickly set up and operate stage lighting, without the need to bring in a professional lighting and sound Company.

A sound system suitable for Jazz evenings, other small performances and Corporate events, will also be installed.

The second part will involve the upgrading of the old lighting patch panel which uses 3 pin round sockets to control lighting via a DMX controller and replace this with a modern lighting control system. This will integrate with the system installed in the first stage upgrade.

Full lighting and sound set-ups for major stage performances will still be handled by outside contractors, such as Terry Tew Sound and Lighting.

## **Financial reserves.**

Our end of year (2021) reserves are good and The Board of Directors consider that this, together with increased earnings in 2022 will allow us to fulfil most of our upgrade commitments, allowing us to continue to operate the best activity and entertainment centre in Loughton and the surrounding area.

## Board and Hall Management.

I would like to thank my fellow Directors and Hall Management for their help and support over the past year.

There have been no changes to the Board of Directors since the AGM's held in 2020 and 2021.

### Directors

Alan Martin	Chairman. Estate Management Group / Works	Elected
Martin Howarth	Treasurer	Assumed
Paul Mercer RIBA	Lead – Estate Management Group / Works	Assumed
Jayna Jogia	Website Editor	Local Council representative
John Orgar	Board Member	Elected
Becky Ford	Publicity & Events Management.	Elected
Lindon Barr	Covid-19 Safety and Social Media Management	Elected
Garett Fitzgerald	Estate Management Group / Works	Elected

### Company Secretary

Stephen Radley

### Hall Managers (Employees)

John Mahoney	Hall Manager
Les House	Deputy Hall Manager (Health & Safety, Security and Child Protection).
Diane Peters	Assistant Hall Manager

Alan Martin. April 2022.

Chairman.

The Lopping Endowment Corporate Trustee Ltd.

The Lopping Endowment.

Charity 228236