



The Lopping Endowment Chairman's Report to the Annual General Meeting 2020

PLEASE NOTE – CORONAVIRUS IMPACT.

This report has been changed from the version that appears in the audited accounts for the year ending 31st December 2019.

This particularly relates to the estimated income for the year ending 31st December 2020 together with room letting rates and future works.

This is my report covering the period April 2019 to date.

OUTGOING CHAIRMAN

At the outset I would like to thank Mike Walker, who resigned as Chairman in July 2019, for the outstanding work carried out during his tenure as Chairman of LH. This includes the design and project planning connected with the refurbishment of both the Kitchen and Bar.

Mike has agreed to assist us with further projects and we will certainly be using his expertise in the future.

Hall usage

The income from booking has been a little lower than last year.

2018 £ 60,200.00

2019 £ 53,982.00

However, this was a reasonable result, given the disruption caused by refurbishment works and also because late payments and some potentially bad debts, which were accumulated in 2017, were cleared and credited to the hall rental account in 2018.

As confirmed in the 2019 AGM report, users are now required to pay in advance and this has resulted in outstanding debts decreasing to virtually zero.

Given increased marketing and the introduction of our new website, together with better facilities, I would expect that the income from Hall rental will increase to approximately £65,000.00 for the 2020/21 financial year.

Covid-19 note -This is now expected to be approximately £20,000 to £25,000.00 lower given cancellations and lost forward bookings, together with a slow recovery into 2021. This should produce room rentals of £40,000.00, if bookings in Q4 2020 and Q1 2021 recover as expected.

Room letting rate review

Given essential room upgrades and increased running costs, room letting BASE rates (Before any agreed discounts are applied) have been increased by between £1.00 - £2.00 per hour dependent on the type of user – For example, not for profit Groups, or small organisations.

Rates for Commercial Organisations are agreed with individual users and dependent on such things as the required room package and whether a day or an evening booking.

Covid-19 note - The Board of Directors have decided that room letting rates will remain at current rates (Revised April 2018) until at least December 2020, when we will review again. Rates will not be increased before January 2021.

Theatre complex and Theatre Suite.

The base rates for the *Theatre complex (Theatre productions)*, which includes the Main Hall (Auditorium), Stage, Backstage and Changing rooms and the *Theatre Suite (Parties and conferences)*, which includes the Main Hall, Kitchen and Bar, are also negotiated with individual users.

Increases became effective April 1st 2020.

Covid-19 note -The Board of Directors have decided that room letting rates will remain at current rates (Revised April 2018) until at least December 2020, when we will review again. Rates will not be increased before January 2021.

Rent review

The rent that we receive from our two tenants is reviewed every 5 years. There was no increase in the last year.

Marketing and LH new website.

Our new website went live in December 2019. I would like to thank Jayna Jogia for the many hours of work she has put into this project.

It is now much easier for users to book theatre seats and rooms at LH using the links available.

What we and our users have on offer, is now much clearer and the connections to social media sites will improve our marketing and reach to the community at large.

Works Completed

Roof – Repairs to the roof above the rear fire exit and light well near the Ladies toilets have been completed. Various old down pipes and gutters were replaced.

Kitchen

The full refurbishment of the kitchen has now been completed. A new automatic fire door has also been installed.

Bar

The Bar, now called “Buckley’s” after a generous donation from the Buckley family, is completed. A new automatic fire door has also been installed and a Bar security shutter.

Chairlift - to The Willingale room has now been installed.

Main Hall (Auditorium)

Sanding and the surface protection of the main Hall hardwood maple floor was completed in February 2020.

The three main hall doors are now fire rated and the Station Road fire exit crash bar door has also been replaced.

Some minor repairs were made to the walls and the hall was painted in August 2019. This is “holding action” ahead of a full refurbishment of the main body of the Hall, which includes the stripping and replacement of the plaster on all walls, new cabling and the replacement of ceiling panels.

Future Plans 2020 / 2021

In some cases, these plans may not be completed if matched funding cannot be agreed. In other cases, works will be carried out using reserves.

Covid-19 note – We are replacing the stairs to the basement (Housing the central heating system) as the current sandstone stairs have been severely damaged by water running down the stairwell over many years. This has been an action point since 2013, but we now consider that the stairs are potentially hazardous. They have been braced / reinforced ahead of a new structure being built by contractor during June 2020.

We have taken the opportunity to paint and repair the Small Hall and lower entrance lobby. We are in the process of making good the upper interior display window and replacing the main Lopping Hall signs and hanging sign. The interior and exterior woodwork in this area will be repainted to match the new LH logo and signage. A second commercial grade monitor will be positioned under the current one and will advertise new shows and our rooms for hire. (Above June 2020 . No labour costs as voluntary work).

Changing rooms will be completely refurbished to include the toilets.
We hope to carry this out during July / August 2020.

Covid-19 note – Pushed back to 2021

Stage re-design

The stage and Proscenium Arch will be stripped out and the new design will allow us to construct a large under stage storage area, accessed using trollies on tracks.

This will allow us to increase the use of the Hall by Theatre and other groups requiring storage.

Front door and information screens.

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 2021.

Covid-19 note – Pushed back to 2022.

A further high luminosity monitor will be placed in the current upper window panel. This will advertise future theatre performances and rooms for hire. This, together with new signage, is currently in the 2020 works programme.

Any upgrades in this area can be used with the new sliding door frontage.

Stage Lighting and sound.

Because of the costs involved, this will happen in two stages. The first stage 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 and other small performances will also be installed.

The second stage 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.

Financial reserves.

Covid -19 note

The Board of Directors considers that our current financial reserves will allow us to re-open and operate effectively during the balance of 2020. This takes account of current hygiene and operating requirements, as outlined by central Government and the projected reduced income over at least that period.

Board and Hall Management.

We now have a further three Directors on the Board - John Orgar, Becky Ford and Lindon Barr.

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

Current Directors

Alan Martin	Chairman & Works Committee	Elected
Martin Howarth	Treasurer	Assumed
Paul Mercer RIBA	Works Committee	Assumed
Jayna Jogia	Website Editor	Local Council representative
John Orgar	Board Member	Elected
Sonia Lard	Publicity, Events & Social Media	Elected
Becky Ford	Publicity & Event Management	Elected
Lindon Barr	Social Media Management	Elected

Company Secretary

Stephen Radley

Current Employees

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

Alan Martin. February 2020.

Addendum – Covid-19 June 2020.