

THE BARTONS VICTORY MEMORIAL HALL FUND MANAGEMENT
COMMITTEE (REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER 261459)

ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30th NOVEMBER 2025

The main item of expenditure this year has been the installation of the new playground. Towards the end of 2024 the state of much of the old play equipment had deteriorated to the point where it was decided that the replacement needed to go ahead even though we had not raised the full sum required so the project was split into two phases and phase 1, costing £52,306, was completed in the spring of 2025 against a background of very wet ground conditions. To enable this to happen the Fund had to use £11,906 from its own funds. We would not have been able to do this without the help of Mark Johnson and Brian Crowdy, who dismantled the old equipment, and Albert Beale who drove the excavator loaned to us by Morrells Farms so that the cost of clearance was minimised. The very wet conditions during clearance and installation were followed by a very dry summer that meant that the grass seed that had been spread did not germinate so all did not proceed as hoped and re-opening was delayed. Meanwhile, fund raising for phase 2 continued but when this was seen to peter out in the late Summer it was decided to go ahead before winter set in with two of the four remaining items at a cost of £17,886, which was totally met from the sums raised. The other two items will be added at some point when more funding can be obtained. The Zip wire was also refurbished by installing metal post supports and a new ramp, and the sand pit was given a new surround and two tonnes of sand.

We would like to thank all those individuals and organisations that donated towards the costs of the new playground and/or organised fund-raising events. There is not room to list everyone who donated and raised funds for all the play equipment but special mention must be made of the dinner at the Alice Marshall Hall which was the brainchild of Richard Schuster and was organised by Jackie Hinton and Kate Carter-Windle with the food being prepared by a volunteer who is a professional chef: James Hinton.

Other works undertaken were a new boiler for the oldest part of the main building, replacement of the panels in the doors to the public toilets (for which Steeple Barton PC donated 50% of the cost), a new cistern, an outdoor light for the Bowls Club, plastering inside the Bowls Club, various minor repairs to electrics and plumbing. The sum of £3715 was spent on maintenance of the Bowls Green, however the Bowls Club raised the money to cover this expenditure. The five yearly electrical testing was completed (costing £1500) which found nothing of immediate concern but a number of recommendations were made which are currently being addressed. We have also just purchased a set of Rugby posts for erection at one end of the bottom part of the playing fields so that there is an area for rugby practise.

The Accounts show the fund as making a surplus in this year, and in 2023/24, but this is an accounting surplus rather than actual cash we can spend. This is because the expenditure on the Playground is treated as an asset and is depreciated over 10 years so the funding raised shows in full as income but the expenditure only appears in the figure for depreciation. If you look at total receipts and payments recorded in the books of the fund over the two years the figures are: Receipts £134,554 and Payments £129,230 so in cash terms the fund is just about covering costs. The Funds income came from rents charged (£10,206) and donations & grants (£45,456). The main expenditure was split between Grounds Maintenance (£4,196), Building Maintenance (£4,864), Playground Maintenance (1,547), Insurance (£7,446), and Other Expenditure (£ 5,427), which was mainly metered water charges and the costs of the Seniors Christmas Party.

The year-end balance held in the bank was £38,672, however the final payment to Wicksteed of £8,943 was made shortly after the year end, and £14,468 is committed to the installation of solar panels which are scheduled to commence the last week of February.

The contributions from membership of the Cherwell Lottery were sufficient to cover the zip wire and sandpit repairs so thank you to all those who have joined. The agreement with Longford Park FC was extended for another year and their First Team is using our pitch as their home ground. Sadly, matches in the last three months have largely had to be cancelled due to the effects of the weather.

On the 11th November a short ceremony of remembrance was held at the War Memorial Garden and it was good to see those that attended; it is hoped that this will continue as an annual event. This year's Tree Lighting Ceremony, just after the year end, was again marred by rainy weather, nevertheless there was good support and we thank everyone who came, the stallholders and exhibitors and most of all Chris Raworth who was the driving force behind the event.

Finally, we would like to thank the other members of the Management Committee for their support and give special thanks to everyone who has volunteered to assist us over the year: in particular Brian Crowdy, Richard Johnson and Scott Peedell for their work on the playground and the fence; the litter pickers who keep the field tidy; those on the playground inspection rota; those who answered the appeal for assistance in getting the playground ready to open; Abbey Farms for hedge cutting and other assistance; and our groundsman Robert Johnson.

Trevor Payne, Charity Secretary

Andy Hinton, Charity Treasurer