



Mildmay Club

Annual Report 2020

Your Club Committee agreed that we should publish an annual report to members. Being the first there is a bit of catching up to do so we will be reminding you of all that has been happening though not necessarily started this year.

This has been a year that many of us would probably rather forget. It was a year where the Club went from really picking up speed on events, the bar offerings, with filming and with repairs to a screeching halt when Covid-19 stopped us (all) in our tracks.

Our membership has increased from under 200 in 2012 to over 650 now. Welcome to all our new members and thank you to everyone else for sticking with us.

Before reporting on what has happened and what we have achieved we should pause to remember those Club members lost to Covid as we remember all members who have passed away this year. We hesitate to give names as it has been so long since we all saw each other properly that we fear we will have others lost who we have yet to know about. Our thoughts are with their loved ones.

Repairs

Our Club house was opened 120 years ago this October. And repair-wise it feels like it! Whilst previous committees carried out much needed emergency repairs and remedial work there is only so much we can do holding things together. We can't sort the electrics or do any more than patch the roof and in the snooker hall the ceiling collapsed! Patching up is no longer an option and so we have been reviewing the condition of the whole building.

The Club is now Grade II listed, which means we have to have permissions in place before we carry out work, and certain standards of materials have to be used.

In 2017 we commissioned a much needed phased electrical upgrade and we have since rewired and upgraded the lighting in the members bar, the cellar, the small hall, in the staff room and the preparation room, in the main hall bar and the stairway. And now we are rewiring the snooker hall. It's cost over £26,000 so far and we still have the main hall to go to but we can now at least feel confident that we have a system that is safe and complies with the latest safety regulations.

Mildmay Club

Annual Report 2020

Stripping out the old electrics and rewiring has allowed us to renew the Club security alarm and the Club burglar alarm. Again, not cheap at a total of £26,800 but again we can be confident that it works and is up to date and in accordance with current regulations.

We have undertaken additional work to strengthen the main hall stage to allow larger groups of performers and have renovated the staff and artistes room to bring it up to modern standards expected of our staff, film and TV hirers.

We have taken the opportunity to install 3-phase power for filming which means we avoid diesel generators at the front of the Club and we can charge the film companies to use it instead. In fact we have already recovered the nearly £1,500 cost already in this way.

The electrical renewal also meant that we could replace the existing stair lift up to the main hall, and add a further one up to the small hall (at a cost of approximately £5,000) which pre-Covid ensured that all members could continue to use and enjoy the Club. By competitive tendering we managed to have the two stairlifts for around the cost of one from the dearest quote.

The snooker hall ceiling has been a long and tricky job. One Saturday night in July 2018 movement in the sprung floor in the main hall saw a section of the original lathe and plaster ceiling collapse onto a snooker table and an inspection revealed that the entire ceiling was ready to go the same way.

Putting in a new ceiling that allows 'give' from the floor of the main hall above has involved hours and hours of research and testing but eventually a solution was found and the new ceiling is up and painted and now the electricians are in. After spending £69,000 (new ceiling, electrics, decorations, fire doors and having found a 'light doctor' to refurbish all the lights) we are looking forward (Covid permitting!) to a grand reopening in late January 2021. We are very confident you'll be impressed.

And then there's the roof...well in fact there are nine and all of them are leaking or in a poor state. We have had builders crawling all over them to quote for repairs and currently have four quotes for the front half of the building - and the guttering at the rear and some new fire doors and a new fire exit onto the street - coming in at not less than £250,000 a piece. And that is only the front half of the Club's roof...

Mildmay Club

Annual Report 2020

If we are going to complete all the essential work that needs doing and cannot be put off much longer (or we face even more damage), we are either going to have to massively fundraise or take out loan(s). We will come back to the members on this with a plan.

Whilst evaluating all the repairs that need doing we have been looking too at the empty flats at the top of the Club and have applied for planning permission to bring them back into use so that (after again further expense of at least another £250,000 for refurbishment) we can get regular rental income from them into the future - rental income that would have protected the Club in recent times and can do do into the future.

Entertainment

Since the last AGM there has been a massive increase in live entertainment and events including discos, comedy nights and monthly live music from Bikini Beach Band, Honey B Mama and King Toadfish to name a few. John Hegely performed a one man show to a capacity crowd of 190. For the first time in many years ticketed events open to members and their guests have proven to be both popular and financially beneficial. In April/March 2020 entertainment generated £20,000.

Mercury Music prize 2020 winner, Michael Kiwanuka and also, Amy Macdonald chose the Mildmay as the venue from which to launch their latest albums. Amy Macdonald performed a live streamed event from the main hall to her fans. COVID19 has slowed things down a bit but the club is now in the happy position where entertainers and bands are approaching us and requesting to be included in the forthcoming schedule.

We have purchased a new flexible sound system for live performances in both halls, converted all the club's CDs into a digital music box for auto-DJ playback and playback over our network into the upgraded members bar sound system. We upgraded to upstream internet (20Mb) for live performances as this is helping to drive up our revenue and promote the club to a much wider audience.

Games

Bingo was still available every Friday evening until Covid-19 stopped play but it will be back.

Mildmay Club

Annual Report 2020

We have had, kindly donated by the former South Acton Club (Est. 1871), their dardboards and dart stands (and lots of chairs and tables for the members bar and halls) allowing, when circumstances permit, larger darts tournaments.

The Bar

We have gone from four beers and only one wine on offer to thirty beers (including twenty five new bottled beers) and more than fifteen wines to buy by the bottle. There are grand plans for more including changing guest beers and even, when the electrics allow it, re opening the tartan bar in the main hall.

In September, we hosted our first ever traditional beer and cider exhibition back to back with our first time as part of Open House 2020 both events were successful in terms of income and awareness of what the club has to offer.

Membership

We have continued to grow the membership and plan to launch later this month fully on-line management of your membership, this will allow automated recurring renewals, self updating of address and contact details.

Filming

We now have a freelance manager for film and TV coordination and it's going well. Since the last AGM the income from filming has been £86,000. We have hosted a variety of diverse cross platform media projects including commercials for Levis and Dominos Pizza, fashion shoots for Prada music videos for Mae Mueller and James Blunt, successful Sky Atlantic franchises Save Me, Save Me Too and Gangs of London and a feel good feature film due for release early next year starring Mark Rylance.

Since the end of the first lockdown in July and during the second lockdown (when filming has been exempt from restrictions) the Club has earned £47,000. It is a major income generator and has allowed us to carry on with many of the repairs listed above.

Finance

Mildmay Club

Annual Report 2020

Our accounts show that we remain in the black but it's clear that we don't have enough to do all the repairs that we need. And for as long as Covid restrictions continue we are losing money every week.

Being owned by the members and being open only to the members and their guests means we cannot apply for grants like the National Lottery. Our options - if we are to keep our current ownership structure - are (in the absence of a sugar daddy!) private bonds or commercial loans.

The committee has embarked on pulling together a business plan for the Club which is going to be necessary to get any finance. It's going to involve a vision for the Club for the next five to ten years and we want your input. If you have expertise or ideas *please* get in touch.

And then there was Covid...

We have taken advantage of every government support available. That has seen the Club staff furloughed with the government paying 80% of their wages and (until this latest lockdown) the Club paying 20% on top so the staff didn't lose out through no fault of their own. In the second lockdown we have had to cut back and whilst we have again taken advantage of the government's Job Support Scheme staff have taken a 20% wage cut whilst furloughed.

But there is a future...

There is so much still to do but the potential of the Club to serve the members and engage with the local community is huge. We look forward to welcoming you all back and seeing it in full use again as soon as we are allowed.

Thank you to everyone whether you have drunk a beer, sipped wine, come along to an event, helped tidy up or given us your time. Together the Mildmay Club will go from strength to strength.