



## Trustees' Annual Report for the period

Period start date			Period end date		
01	April	2015	31	March	2016

### Section A Reference and administration details

Charity name

HITCHIN TOWN HALL GYMNASIUM & WORKMANS HALL TRUST

Other names charity is known by

CHARITY FOR A GYMNASIUM AND OTHER PURPOSES FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE INHABITANTS

Registered charity number (if any)

233752

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

COUNCIL OFFICES, GERON ROAD

LETCHWORTH GARDEN CITY, HERTS

Postcode

SG6 1JF

#### Names of the charity trustees who manage the charity

	Trustee name	Office (if any)	Dates acted if not for whole year	Name of person (or body) entitled to appoint trustee (if any)
1	North Hertfordshire District Council	Corporate Body (represented by Sub Committee consisting of the trustees named below)		
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14				

#### Names of the trustees for the charity, if any, (for example, any custodian trustees)

Name	Dates acted if not for whole year
Councillor Bernard Lovewell	
Councillor Peter Burt	
Councillor Julian Cunningham	

## Names and addresses of advisers (Optional information)

Type of adviser	Name	Address

## Name of chief executive or names of senior staff members (Optional information)

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## Section B Structure, governance and management

## Description of the charity's trusts

Type of governing document (eg. trust deed, constitution)	TRUST DEED
How the charity is constituted (eg. trust, association, company)	TRUST
Trustee selection methods (eg. appointed by, elected by)	THE COUNCIL AS A CORPORATE BODY IS THE TRUSTEE, COUNCILLORS SIT AS TRUSTEES AND ARE ELECTED BY THE ELECTORS OF NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE

## Additional governance issues (Optional information)

You **may choose** to include additional information, where relevant, about:

- policies and procedures adopted for the induction and training of trustees;
- the charity's organisational structure and any wider network with which the charity works;
- relationship with any related parties;
- trustees' consideration of major risks and the system and procedures to manage them.

The Trust comprises of an element of the Hitchin Town Hall comprising the Gymnasium and Workman's Hall. The remainder of the building is in the ownership of North Hertfordshire District Council, which is also the Trustee of the Trust part of the property.

Both parts of the property are managed by the District Council (the Trust property under formal agreement) and are used for community purposes, in line with the objectives of the Trust.

To affect management of the Trust and ensure separation from the Council, a Sub-Committee with full decision making powers in the interest of the Trust has been set up comprising of three Members of the Cabinet, whose Portfolios have no direct interest in the Council's part of the building.

Since local government re-organisation in 1974, when the Trustee changed from Hitchin Urban District Council to North Hertfordshire District Council, until 2009 the distinction between the Trust owned element of the building and the Council owned element has been lost. The arrangements explained above have been put in place to correct this omission.

## Section C Objectives and activities

## Summary of the objects of the charity set out in its governing document

The objectives of the Trust are set out as:

*"Upon trust to use or permit it to be used as a Gym for the benefit of the residents of Hitchin and for other purposes mentioned in s6(3) Museums and Gymnasiums Act 1891 and also for any other (charitable) purpose for the benefit of the North Hertfordshire District for which North Hertfordshire District Council can lawfully use building and land vested in them".*

The whole of the Hitchin Town Hall complex, including the Trust part of the property was closed at the end of October 2012 to commence work on converting the building to a refurbished community facility, substantially incorporating that part of the building owned by the Council, and a District Museum substantially incorporating the Trust part.

Work continued throughout 2014/2015 and 2015/2016 with the fully refurbished building expected to open to the public in January 2016.

The project to create the new museum in the Trust part of the building has been fraught with problems during 2015/2016. There has been a protracted dispute between the Council and Hitchin Town Hall Limited, the partners in the project and the body responsible for the management and running of the community hall and cafeteria part of the building.

Hitchin Town Hall Limited breached the terms of its funding agreement with the Social Investment Bank, which subsequently withdrew its funding and demanded repayment of loans made to the company. When the repayment was not forthcoming, the Investment Bank intended to put up for public auction, the land known as 14 and 15 Brand Street, which had been purchased by Hitchin Town Hall Limited and subsequently demolished to create the entrance to the new museum. At the eleventh hour, a new company called Hitchin Town Hall Finance Limited cleared the debt of Hitchin Town Hall Limited and therefore the land known as 14 and 15 Brand Street remains in the ownership of Hitchin Town Hall Limited, despite the Development Agreement between the Council and Hitchin Town Hall Limited stating that this was to be leased to the Trust. Hitchin Town Hall Limited's position is that the Council breached the terms of the Development Agreement, an assertion that the Council denies.

The result of this is that what was intended to be the entrance to the new museum cannot currently be used because Hitchin Town Hall Limited refuses to allow the Council access over it. Furthermore, this also restricts access to certain rooms within the Trust property, which require access over the former 14 and 15 Brand Street to gain entry.

There is an alternative access point, which can be used to gain entry to the Trust property and therefore the new museum.

During the course of this activity, the company engaged to carry out the refit of the new museum went into liquidation causing delay to the project whilst an alternative refit supplier could be engaged.

There is no anticipated opening date for the Museum at this moment in time. The majority of the refit is expected to be completed by February 2017 and negotiations are continuing with Hitchin Town Hall Limited to seek a solution to the matter of access through the original entrance comprising 14 and 15 Brand Street.

**Summary of the main activities undertaken for the public benefit in relation to these objects (include within this section the statutory declaration that trustees have had regard to the guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit)**

**Additional details of objectives and activities (Optional information)**

You **may choose** to include further statements, where relevant, about:

- policy on grantmaking;
- policy programme related investment;
- contribution made by volunteers.

**Section D****Achievements and performance****Summary of the main achievements of the charity during the year**

The Sub-Committee Members acting on behalf of the Trust ensure that through the management of the building its objectives are met in the use of the Trusts areas for the provision of as much community benefit as may be possible.

This is achieved by making available unrestricted use of the building to all members of the community, regardless of gender, sexual orientation, race, age, religious belief or disability for a range of purposes.

Through policies and practices employed in the operation of the whole building by the District Council on behalf of the Trust, the Trust benefits the public in the establishment and promotion of community cohesion and development.

Following the operational closure of Hitchin Town Hall at the end of October 2012, the Trusts areas of the building were cleared of equipment and furniture by the end of March 2013.

This enabled those areas, together with remainder of the building, to be transferred to the Council's Property Services Department. This allowed the department, from the start of the reporting period, to make the necessary arrangements for the whole building to become suitably available to the NHDC project team for the commencement of refurbishment activities towards the creation of the new community hall and museum facility, which has been delayed due to the factors described in Section C.

## Section E Financial review

### Brief statement of the charity's policy on reserves

The Trust's reserves total £160,080 at 31 March 2016 and mainly consist of restricted funds. These funds represent the property asset (Gymnasium and Workman's Hall), which is retained for actual use rather than to be expended.

The Trust has no unrestricted funds as at 31 March 2016 that can be expendable at the discretion of trustees in furtherance of the charity's objectives. The Trust's general expenditure is typically greater than general income. As a result North Hertfordshire District Council provides a contribution to the Trust and unrestricted funds are maintained at a zero balance over time. If the financial situation was to change and the Trust's level of income significantly increased the Trust would need to adopt a policy on an appropriate level of reserves.

### Details of any funds materially in deficit

No funds are materially in deficit.

### Further financial review details (Optional information)

You **may choose** to include additional information, where relevant about:

- the charity's principal sources of funds (including any fundraising);
- how expenditure has supported the key objectives of the charity;
- investment policy and objectives including any ethical investment policy adopted.

Income from activities for generating funds is earned from the hire of the Workman's Hall and Gymnasium. The facility was closed during financial year 2015/16 and so did not generate any income. The Trust received a contribution from North Hertfordshire District Council to cover all resources expended.

Expenditure incurred during 2015-16 was general running expenses of the Workman's Hall and Gymnasium.

The Trust does not have any significant assets or liabilities other than the tangible fixed asset.

## Section F Other optional information

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## Section G Declaration

The trustees declare that they have approved the trustees' report above.

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees

<b>Signature(s)</b>		
<b>Full name(s)</b>		
<b>Position (eg Secretary, Chair, etc)</b>		
<b>Date</b>		