

BUCKLAND NEWTON VILLAGE HALL COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held at the Village Hall on 6th July 2021 at 4.00 pm

ATTENDANCE

Nicki Barker [NB] (*in the chair*), Jeremy Collins [JC], Katharine Hayens [KH], Vinny McKenna [VM], Susan Moring [SM], Kate Parish [KP], Ian Scott [IS], Sandie Stout [SS], Caron White [CW].

1. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies.

2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD ON 1st SEPTEMBER 2020

The minutes had been circulated prior to the meeting by the Minute Secretary. The Minutes were agreed unanimously as a true record by those at that meeting and signed by the Chair.

3. MATTERS ARISING

Restoration of area to north of entrance for parking or landscaping. No action to date, but see Agenda Item 15.

4. CHAIR'S REPORT

The Chair's Report had been circulated prior to the meeting; as follows:

Under Government Covid-19 Guidance the hall had been closed to all users throughout this last year except for 2 relatively brief periods between the 1st and 2nd wave in November/December and currently in the post 2nd wave period from April. The only exception to this had been use by the outreach post office operating on Monday, Tuesday and Friday mornings occupying the cloakroom and entrance hall areas only. The Post Office, as an essential and valuable village service, had been diligent in ensuring that customers only entered the hall lobby singly and that masks wearing and hand sanitising was observed. The toilets had remained out of bounds, with the disabled toilet only available in an emergency.

Thanks to continuously updated guidance by ACRE (Action with Communities in Rural England), the committee had been well briefed on how and when we would be able to open the hall. At the previous AGM in September 2020, the Committee had taken the decision to only allow hirings to regular users when an easing of restrictions permitted, and only to allow use of the main hall and stage area, but not the kitchen, committee room and toilet areas. The hall cleaner had been retained on half pay and the hall had been thoroughly cleaned prior to restricted reopening. The

cleaning rota had then been designed to be pre-cleaned immediately before all booked usage. During the November/December reopening only the Monday Yoga classes had restarted with class numbers restricted to 10 places based on the floor area available, along with a one-off hire for number-limited health demonstrations. Post the April easing, both Yoga and Pilates had returned with restricted numbers, and a one-off village hiring (limited to 6 persons) had taken place. Although there had been enquiries about hirings, it had been difficult to safely accommodate larger groups of villagers such as the Luncheon Club until lockdown restrictions were completely eased.

The period of closure had allowed the Committee to bring outstanding safety issues up to current specification.

Under the guidance of Kate Parish as the Hall's Fire Safety representative and Emergency Services contact, a Fire Risk Assessment had been carried out. Pascalle Wells from the Fire and Rescue Authority had inspected the hall on the 13th October 2020 and found all met current requirements. It remained the intention to install a more robust fire bell system than the current bell in the kitchen. The fire extinguishers and fire blanket had been given their annual inspection in May 2021 by Vale Fire Safety.

Caron White, the hall's Electrical Safety representative, had organised an initial inspection of the work required to bring the hall up to current electrical safety standards, particularly the stage spotlights and Emergency lighting. She had overseen P N Gray Electrical carrying out the necessary upgrades along with a NICEIC inspection and PAT testing of all equipment on the 7th/8th April 2021. She was now carrying out a monthly check on the emergency lighting. The fire alarm system in the lobby had been permanently disconnected (with the approval of the Fire Officer) and the red "break-glass" boxes in the hall had been removed.

The grounds had continued to be mown by Ricki Edwards the gardener, with spraying and tidying up of the patio and tarmac weeds and shrub clearance by Ian Scott and Nicki Barker. Clearing of the path through the wilderness area remained an outstanding issue along with consideration of how to make the best use of the north corner of the parking area, next to the road.

Financially the hall was in a sounder position than it had been for many years thanks to a generous initial Covid "Shut-down" grant of £10,000 received from Dorset Council in May 2020. Although rental income had been extremely curtailed, this had been offset by a large reduction in heating and electricity expenditure. The grant had allowed not only for the installation of Covid safety equipment (hand sanitisers/sanitising trolley) but had given the flexibility to bring electrical and fire safety equipment up to date.

Further grants of £7,335 and £2,096 had been received in February and March 2021 respectively when the hall had been required to fully re-close again during the second Covid wave, and a grant of £8,000 in May 2021 to assist reopening (this being in the 2021-22 financial year).

With this unexpected and very appreciated financial help, the management committee now had the funds to implement other outstanding improvement needs for the hall and grounds that would enhance its hiring potential on reopening. However, it remained prudent to retain a certain proportion of these funds against a continuation of the pandemic disruption.

5. TREASURER'S REPORT

The Treasurer presented the accounts for the year and reported as follows:

The Covid-19 pandemic had resulted in Hirings being drastically reduced. However, offsetting this, expenses had been reduced and generous grants (totalling £19,431 in the financial year) had been received from Government and other sources. These grants had formed the majority of income for the Hall. Electricity and Oil costs had been less than the previous year, although still relatively substantial, believed in part due to the oil tank now being full. A replacement defibrillator for the Hall had been purchased and subsequently re-charged to the Defibrillator Committee. Repair and Maintenance work had included repairs to the front roof, padded armchairs (primarily for the Lunch Club use), and a new heating programmer. Sundry expenses had been the cost of an ex gratia gift to Jan and Trevor Marpole, a goodwill payment to the Yoga teacher for loss of heating for a number of classes and Covid protection costs. As a result of the grants and reduced expenses, a substantial reserve had been built up and the Committee would need to decide how the surplus funds should be best utilised. It was agreed that a reserve of at least £10K should be held against unforeseen future costs relating to the pandemic. It was noted that a further £8K in grants would be received in the new financial year. A new auditor (Jacqui Cuff) had been employed to audit the accounts for 2020-21. The Auditor had not accepted any payment for this work, but it was agreed that an ex gratia payment of £100 be made.

Adoption of the Accounts was proposed by Ian Scott, seconded by Katherine Hayens and agreed unanimously.

7. RESIGNATION OF EXISTING REPRESENTATIVE, ELECTED AND CO-OPTED MEMBERS ELECTED SEPTEMBER 2020

In accordance with the Charity Scheme, all Committee Members resigned. Jeremy Collins was thanked for his time as Minute Secretary.

8. **NOMINATIONS TO THE HALL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE FROM USER ORGANISATIONS**

The list of Representative Members, as defined in the Charity Scheme of 1981, remained out of date, as several of the organisations had ceased to exist or been replaced by new groups. Ian Scott said he believed that it was unnecessary to advise the Charity Commission of detailed changes to the names of representative Organisations. There was some discussion as to whether all Representative Members were also Trustees. It was understood that this was the case and it was agreed that Representative Members nominated in their absence should be asked to confirm that they understood the responsibilities involved before signing the Agreement to Serve declaration which had been tabled by the retiring Minute Secretary.

Nominations for Representative Members were as follows:

Village People – Amanda McKenna (Representative, not Trustee)
Parochial Church Council – Susan Moring
Parish Council – Mick Ames (Representative, not Trustee)
Village Café – Fizz Lewis (Representative, not Trustee)
Exercise Classes (Yoga/Pilates/Keep Fit) – Sandie Stout
Buckland Newton Amateur Players (BAPS) –
Gardening Club – Katharine Hayens
Youth Club – Kate Parish
Lunch Club – Susan Moring
Artsreach/BAPS – Caron White

Proposed by Ian Scott, seconded by Nicki Barker and agreed unanimously.

Little Goslings – understood to now be meeting at The Gaggles of Geese. Caron White will check with Kelly Evans (or the current organiser) whether they intend to move back to the Hall post-pandemic and if not, whether they wish to remove their equipment from the hut on the patio and back room; the hut is owned by Little Goslings.

CW

Nicki Barker proposed, seconded by Ian Scott, that a new definitive list of Member Organisation be drawn up and submitted to the Charity Commission. This was agreed unanimously. It was suggested that any other changes to the Trust Deed should not be considered at present as these would need to be drawn up, at some cost, by a solicitor.

NB / IS

9. **ELECTED MEMBERS**

The election of Ian Scott, Nicki Barker and Vinny McKenna, as the only candidates standing who were not Representative Members, was proposed by Susan Moring, seconded by Sandie Stout and

agreed unanimously.

10. **ELECTION OF CO-OPTED MEMBERS**

None proposed or elected at this time.

11. **DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE BY NEW CHARITY TRUSTEES BY SIGNING IN MINUTE BOOK**

To be signed by Committee Members as appropriate and pasted in the Minute Book.

12. **APPOINTMENT OF AUDITOR**

The appointment of Jacqui Cuff as auditor was proposed by Ian Scott, seconded by Vinny McKenna and agreed unanimously.

13. **SUMMARY OF ELECTRICAL INSPECTION**

Caron White had overseen the checking, by P N Gray Electrical, of the emergency lighting and PAT Testing. No equipment was to be brought into the Hall and used unless it had a current PAT label. Such equipment was not to be left overnight in the Hall. A 5-year electrical check was to be carried out in 2022, and monthly checks carried out on the emergency lighting. One bulb had failed since P N Gray's check; this type of bulb was no longer available and the emergency lighting unit would need to be replaced.

14. **RISK ASSESSMENT OF HALL PRIOR TO RE-OPENING**

Kate Parish reported on the Fire Risk Assessment which had been circulated prior to the meeting. The main recommendation had been to install four (4) hand-cranked fire bells, in the entrance corridor, main Hall, kitchen and chair store / back room area. The Hire Agreement would also need to be amended and an Assembly Point notice put up on the back of the external notice board. Kate Parish agreed to obtain the fire bells and notices.

Ian Scott stated that the re-opening of the Village Hall could be on a more cautious basis than Government regulations, at the discretion of the Hall Committee. At present no bookings from persons/organisations outside the Parish were being accepted. Discussions would be held with individual bookers to determine what facilities and routines should be followed. No parties would be accepted at present. When regular usage resumes, the need for twice-weekly (or more frequent ad hoc) cleaning would be discussed with the cleaner. Current future bookings included an Artsreach Outdoor School on 12th August, Lunch Club on 13th August and two morning events for the Youth Club.

The aim throughout would be to protect the Hall so that it can be safely used by the village and any changes would be at the

Trustees' discretion. Vinny Mckenna confirmed that there would be no need to advise the insurance company of changes to the Risk Assessment, although in the event of a claim, full details would of course need to be disclosed.

Kate Parish left the meeting at 17:32.

15. CONSIDERATION OF USE OF AVAILABLE SURPLUS FUNDS

It was agreed to follow up the Broadband quote tabled by Kate Parish. This would be for a 2-year trial period and the possibility of grants would be explored.

VM

Fencing repairs. Nicki Barker would contact the contractor used by the Parish Council for fencing along the Recreation Ground.

NB

Restoration of the area to the north of the entrance to the car park. Nicki Barker to contact Roy Godwin for initial suggestions. It was thought desirable to keep this area as relatively 'soft' landscaping.

NB

Damaged tarmac on north side of car park. To be investigated.

SM / SS

The cost of solar panels on the kitchen roof to be investigated.

Guttering on the kitchen wall needs to be replaced by similar with a larger dimension.

NB

16. ITEMS RAISED FROM THE FLOOR

None.

The meeting closed at 18:00.