

COLTON VILLAGE HALL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Annual General Meeting 2021

Minutes of the meeting held at the Village Hall on Wednesday 27th October at 7.30 pm

1. Members present

Richard Monbiot (RM) (chairman); John Macmillan (JM) (Secretary); Alice Hadridge (AH) (Treasurer); Fiona O'Brien (FO'B) (booking officer); Guy Reynolds (co-opted trustee). There were no parishioners present.

2. Apologies

Nigel Parry (PC rep trustee).

3. Minutes of previous AGM

No parishioner having asked for a copy of the minutes which had been made available on the village hall's website, they were taken as read and signed by the chairman as a true record.

4. Matters arising

None

5. Trustees annual report of activities and accounts

In the absence of any parishioners the trustees annual report and accounts which had been made available on the website were received and taken as read.

6. Chairman's report

The report, which is set out here in full, was taken as read.

The full Trustees Report has been placed on line, so I will limit myself to a summary of the events of the year. 2020/21 was a funny old year for the Village Hall. COVID-19 and Government lockdown regulations made it impossible to carry on business as usual. We did not officially close down. We kept the place ready for action by regular cleaning, sanitising and ventilation. We kept the Playground open for the duration. We carried out weekly cleaning and sanitising of all contact surfaces and we provided wipes and sanitiser for all who wanted them. Our thanks go to Mark and Dolphina for their hard work in this matter. The Playground was a lifeline for many families with children who needed to let off steam, so we made every effort meet all the H&S requirements. During the year we lost Mat Crompton who resigned as a trustee when he moved out of the Parish. Kate and Craig Staples were also forced to resign because of the consequences of the serious illness suffered by their son, Anthony. He continues to undergo aggressive treatment. He has greatly improved but it seems that they have several more years of this regime ahead of them. We all wish their entire family well. I thank them all for the effort they made whilst still on the Committee. Then we were three!!, John Macmillan, Alice Hadridge and me – an unsustainably small number, that is, until July when Fiona O'Brien threw her hat into the ring. So with John as Secretary, Alice as Treasurer and Fiona looking after bookings we were able to function smoothly and efficiently. At the start of the

current financial year Nigel Parry also joined us as the Parish Council Rep, and Guy Reynolds came on board. Nigel took on board the intermittent problem with outdoor lighting. Guy manage to get the Village hall connected to Broadband within a month of joining. It is amazing what a difference it makes when you work with people who have specialist experience. Unfortunately Alice has decided to resign as Treasurer and Trustee after this meeting for personal reasons. She will be greatly missed but she will have left the books in apple pie order. Many thanks, Alice, for your service.

I also want to thank Pete Knowles for undertaking many of the maintenance jobs which arise in the management of a site such as ours. It is a non-stop Forth Bridge-type job and Pete offers his services free of charge Barrie Peake has recently taken up the gardening requirement for maintaining the ground around the VH. It is most important that the area looks tidy and cared for when we charge people for using the facility. Thank you Barry for your great contribution. Pete Magee has taken on the job of keeping the footpaths around the Nature Reserve regularly mowed. It is a common sight to see him towing his mower behind the invalid carriage he uses to meet the highway code provisions! To round off the thank yous, I must add the Parish Council for their annual contribution by covering the costs of insuring the Playground, paying certain invoices raised for Playground maintenance and for cutting the grass on the field.

The Colton Village Hall is a stand-alone, self-funding organisation. There are no external sources of finance to keep us afloat, so it is up to the Management Committee to generate sufficient funds for the day to day operations and to build sufficient reserves to meet the costs of maintenance and repair. We ended the year in a very satisfactory financial position. Although revenue from Bookings fell short of last year's by £16,000 (because of COVID). This was more than made up by Business Continuity Grants. The combination of these together with a healthy balance brought forward from our surpluses in previous years has enabled us to hold our strategic £4000 operational contingency fund and a provision of over £6000 for replacement and repair of aging playground equipment. We also have a bank balance of £38,000, most of which is earmarked for resurfacing the Car Park and upgrading the outside lighting. These projects have been in the planning for the past two years and there were no grants available to cover the costs. Hence the need to build a substantial reserve.. The previous temporary repair to the carpark was out of life and we wanted to avoid the potential of Safety problems arising. The work is scheduled to be carried out in January 2022.

Let me now turn to our future prospects. I think we have every reason to be optimistic about the financial viability of the Village Hall in the immediate future. With the relaxation of Covid restrictions, we have started to see an upsurge in external enquiries. Fiona has been highly successful in converting these into live bookings. Bookings of activities by Village Organisations and individual Parishioners has lagged behind . Over recent years outside bookings have accounted for about 65% of revenues (but just 35 % by number) the converse has been true for bookings by Parishioners and VOs.

There has been an understandable reluctance for villagers to return to the pre-COVID pattern of social activity. But gradually we are getting back into the groove with some events in the Village Hall having taken place with more planned.. The traditional Christmas Fair will be reinstated in November but unfortunately the Pensioners Christmas lunch has been cancelled.

All members of the Committee (Trustees) are volunteers with busy lives beyond their village hall duties. All are skilled and experienced people who are round pegs in round holes.. Although we currently have sufficient numbers to function with just five Trustees, we still need two more. We are always at the whim of how many from the community are prepared to serve at any time. For example, in the seven years I have been on the committee, I have served with a total of 32 other committee members! There is a constant churning of trustees and we need to keep on attracting new members if we are to avoid returning to the situation where we have to employ outsiders to carry out tasks which have been traditionally handled by villagers (eg, treasurer two years ago). Is there anyone here who would like to come forward to join us on the Committee?

I would like to announce formally that I have decided to stand down as Chairman of the VHMC. I have filled this role for 6 years which I actually think is quite long enough for anyone to hold this position. It is time for someone else to take over and bring a new perspective to bear. I will be staying on as a Trustee for at least a year. It has been an honour and a privilege to serve Colton in this way. I thank all Trustees, past and present, for supporting me and , at times, for putting up with me!!

7. Election of members

Fiona O'Brien and Guy Reynolds were elected as trustees.

8. Representative members

RM announced that the following were to be representative members of the VHMC having been nominated by village organisations in accordance with the constitution: John Macmillan – Colton Local Nature Reserve; Richard Monbiot – Garden Guild; Nigel Parry (Parish Council).

9. The meeting closed at 7.40 p.m.

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Signed

Dated