

COLTON VILLAGE HALL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES

THURSDAY JUNE 13TH 2024

Members attending: John Macmillan (Chairman) (JM); Richard Monbiot (RM); Fiona O'Brien (Booking Officer) (FOB); Guy Reynolds (Treasurer) (GR).

1. **Apologies for absence.**

Nigel Parry (Parish Council rep); Lynne Richardson (Secretary) (LR).

2. **Declarations of interest.**

None

3. **Minutes of the meeting of 12TH April 2024**

Approved.

4. **Matters arising**

- 4.1 Para 4.1 - Opening of interest-bearing accounts. **GR** advised that there were three options, which he explained, his preferred option being a 95-day notice account which would generate 4% interest. We currently had total assets of around £19,000 made up of the current account, the playground account and the contingency reserve. He recommended that they be treated as one pool of money for banking purposes but continue to be accounted for separately in the books. He further recommended that we invest £15,000 in the account which would generate additional income of £600 in a full year. There was no reason to expect any calls on the capital in the foreseeable future. The proposal was approved unanimously **[Action GR]**.
- 4.2 Para 4.2 – Reimbursement of outstanding playground maintenance costs. **GR** produced a list of items purchased for the playground for the last three years, but **JM** pointed out that it included capital items for which the PC was not responsible. **GR** said he would revise the list **[Action GR]**.
- 4.3 Para 6 – Promoting the village hall. **JM** reported that he had upgraded our membership of HallsHire so it was now important to ask potential hirers how they had heard of us to make sure that it was giving us value for money. **FO'B** said she was receiving very few enquiries for weddings, but she did not feel that it would be realistic to try and hold a wedding fair as we weren't a big enough venue to attract stall holders. She was also very disappointed in the low level of booking enquiries from parishioners. She would continue to promote the hall in every other edition of Parish News and Rugeley Rocks **[Action FO'B]**. **GR** said he would **contact** local funeral directors and churches to promote the hall as a venue for wakes **[Action GR]**.

5, **Treasurers report**

GR produced a summarised profit and loss account for the first two months of the financial year which showed a small operating surplus of £339.39. He reminded the meeting that the year was heavily 'back loaded' in terms of when the large bills fell due for payment.

6. Booking Officer's report

FOB was thanked for her report which had been circulated in advance of the meeting. Since the last meeting, 15 enquiries had resulted in 10 confirmed bookings with three still to respond. One of the enquiries which had not been converted into a booking was because the date was not available. In the 12 months ended today, although the level of bookings was roughly the same, the value was down almost £1500 on the previous period when a wedding had been booked and two caravan club bookings made. She expected both caravan clubs to book their AGMs in the autumn – the dates were in the diary - but the bookings were not yet confirmed. She had no information about whether one of the clubs would rebook for the New Year.

7. Review of room hire charges

FO'B recommended an increase of 25% for non-regular business bookings which she had already begun to implement, although this was unlikely to bring in significant extra revenue. This was agreed. Having recommended a 10% - 15% increase in the wedding packages at the April meeting, she now felt that this would be premature given the very few enquiries she was receiving, although there was nothing to indicate that the price rises implemented in May 2023 were deterring hirers. She would make enquiries regarding charges made elsewhere locally for caravan events and report back to colleagues by email with any recommended increases [**Action FO'B**].

8. Review of room hire T&Cs

JM said that this item was prompted by the disgusting mess left by a recent hirer with rubbish left outside the building, in the bar area and the kitchen rather than placed in the litter bins, yet another broken ladies' loo seat, unwashed plates and numerous marks on the floor. He suggested it was time to reintroduce the special deposit that we had abandoned because hardly anyone had cheque books any more and returning deposits was very time consuming for **GR**. **FO'B** said that in her four years' experience of being involved with the VH this was only the second such occurrence. The security deposit was still mentioned in the booking form but she did not normally mention it to hirers and very few paid it. After a discussion, it was agreed that it was important to have some means of recovering abnormal cleaning and damage costs from hirers if we chose to do so and **JM** was asked to check the wording of the booking form and T&Cs and make any necessary revisions [**Action JM**]. It was agreed that the deposit would be enforced only for adult parties and weddings.

9. Solar panels

RM reported that Roger Wilson, chair of Colton Parish Lands Trust, had mentioned at the recent Parish Forum that the Lands Trust might be prepared to fully fund the cost

of converting the VH to solar panel powered electricity and replacing the existing gas fired hot air heating system with an electric equivalent and had invited the trustees to obtain quotes. If this could be achieved, it would transform the VH's finances and would go a long way to securing its long-term future as energy costs were the single biggest overhead. Because of the need to get National Grid approval for the scheme, it had not yet been possible to get detailed quotes, but £23,000 was the supplier's indicative price. CPLT trustees would meet later in June to consider the question.

10. A.O.B.

GR reported that he would be sending the draft year end accounts and the books to Allan Topliss, the independent examiner, within the next 10 days with a view to holding the AGM in late September or early October

11. Date of next meeting

Thursday July 25th 2024.

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Signed as a true record

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Dated