

# COLTON VILLAGE HALL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES

THURSDAY NOVEMBER 21<sup>st</sup> 2024 at 7.30 p.m.

**Members attending:** John Macmillan (Chairman) (JM); Richard Monbiot (RM); Fiona O'Brien (Booking Officer) (FOB); Lynne Richardson (Secretary) (LR).

1. **Apologies for absence.**

Guy Reynolds (Treasurer) (GR)

2. **Declarations of interest.**

None

3. **Promoting the village hall**

**JM** welcomed Nikki Hawkins (**NH**) to the meeting. **NH** is currently running the Armitage with Handsacre village hall on a voluntary basis but having been born and brought up in Colton was pleased to offer advice on how we might promote the hall. Her main suggestions, which were adopted, were:

- Wider advertising using Village Advertiser Magazine which is free to charities and is delivered to around 7,000 households;
- Modernise and update the website which has very old information on it, perhaps giving the impression we are no longer open;
- Don't put dates on things on the website and don't publicise prices;
- Create a Facebook page with a link from the website. Try and put out two posts per week on Facebook. AWH village hall Facebook page has 1,000 followers;

Other suggestions which require more thought were to simplify the pricing structure; try and recruit non-trustee committee members to support the trustees; and invite local clubs and organisations to an open day to help them promote themselves which in turn could lead to more volunteers for the village hall events. **NH** very kindly offered to draft an advertisement for us to use on village notice boards. It was agreed that modernising the website and creating a Facebook page were the immediate priorities. It was understood that while Duncan Shortland was happy to continue as the main administrator of the website, he would not wish to be involved in modernising the content. **JM** to speak to Duncan to make sure he is happy with a third party doing the revamp. **LR** agreed to look at creating a Facebook page. **RM** would speak to Luke Sargeant to ask whether he would be prepared to revamp the website. **[Action JM, LR and RM]**. **NH** was warmly thanked for her contribution and left the meeting at 8.30

4. **Minutes of the meeting of 26<sup>th</sup> September 2024**

Approved.

5. **Matters arising**

- 5.1 Para 4.3 – **RM** had spoken to Cllr Richard Cox who was looking in to what permissions we needed to improve the roadside signage
- 5.2 Para 4.4 – **FO'B** confirmed that the fact that the hall was now free for New Year's Eve had been advertised but there had been no responses.

- 5.3 Para 7. Fire alarms. **RM** had had considerable difficulty finding a replacement contractor to inspect and test the alarms and extinguishers but had now done so after the contractor he had referred to at the last meeting had let us down. The new contractors advised that we must have a fire risk assessment which they could prepare for us at a cost of £550. While **RM** hoped to be able to negotiate this down, it was agreed that it was essential that one should be done. It was also agreed that in future there should be twice yearly inspections by the contractors [**Action RM**].
- 5.4 Para 8 – **JM** confirmed that the rebuild revaluation had been completed and the sum insured increased accordingly

## 6. Booking Officer's report

**FOB** was again thanked for her report. Since the last meeting there had only been 11 enquiries which she did not feel was unusual for the time of year. Unfortunately, because of pre-booked events, 4 of the potential hirers could not be accommodated. Only three bookings had been made with two enquiries still outstanding. The caravan club had cancelled their AGM booking at short notice and had not rebooked for next year. **FO'B** was concerned that they were unlikely to return either for an AGM or at New Year but was not entirely sure why. They may be looking for an alternative site because of the difficulties experienced last year when the village was badly affected by flooding. Because of this, revenue from bookings was considerably down on the same period last year. She reported that she was still busy with enquiries with most enquiries being repeat bookings or from word of mouth recommendations. Very few bookings were generated by the website.

## 7. Treasurer's report

In **GR's** absence, **JM** went through his P&L report. **JM** noted that while the report identified a loss in the year to date of £946, this was on a 'snapshot' of cash in/cash out. When accruals and deferred receipts were taken into account the picture was more encouraging. Almost all of the deficit (£859) was attributable to essential maintenance work on the playground as required by the annual inspection which would be repaid by the Parish Council in due course. Also, the PC had not yet reimbursed us for the cost of playground insurance (£149.13) and the interest earned to date on the investment account of £45.85 also needed to be added in. Finally, the grant of £1,000 towards the solar panels had not yet been received from the County Council.

## 8. Christmas Fair update

**JM** reported that we had a satisfactory total of 17 tables booked. He went through the list of jobs for the day of the fair and everything was ready to go. He cautioned that because of greatly increased competition on the day – at least two other Christmas Fairs and possibly three in nearby villages – which was likely to continue in the future, we could no longer expect to generate in excess of £1000 income from the Fair. Five or six hundred pounds seemed more realistic. This, together with the apparent loss of the caravan club emphasised the need to greatly improve the promotion of the hall.

**9. Maintenance items**

All the work agreed at the last meeting had been carried out with the exception of the wall mounted boiler in the kitchen. Sam’s Electrical had stripped it down but couldn’t identify a fault. They advised that repairing it might well be throwing good money after bad. A replacement was likely to cost well in excess of £1,000. It was unanimously agreed that this was unaffordable as was a Quooker hot water tap and instead the boiler should be replaced by a catering style tea urn which could be purchased for well under £100. **JM** to action.

**10. Solar panels**

**RM** reported that there had been problems with generating enough hot water, but these had now been resolved and there should be plenty of water without using the iBoost. **JM** to alter the instructions for the iBoost to say it should only be used in the event of the hot water running out during an event [**Action JM**]. **RM** further reported that because we were locked into a contract with Pozitive Energy for roughly another 12 months we were not able to benefit from low night rate energy to boost the solar panel battery and were only being paid a very low amount per unit for energy sold to the Grid. Until we could get out of the Pozitive Energy contract without penalty we would not feel the full benefit of the solar panels.

**11. Becoming a CIO**

**JM** said that he wished to defer discussion on this item until **GR** could be present as he was concerned that the problems that might be experienced in having to set up new bank accounts would outweigh the benefits of becoming a CIO.

**12. A.o.B.**

None.

**13. Date of next meeting**

Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> January 2025

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Signed as a true record

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Dated