

COLTON VILLAGE HALL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting of Thursday 24th August 2017

Members Present:

Marie Havelock (MH)

John Macmillan (JM)

Polly Macmillan (PM)

In attendance Ann Nunn (regular users and village bookings)

1 Apologies

Richard Monbiot (RM); Sonia Jenkinson (SJ); Odette Ghent (OG) (Treasurer)

2 Election of chair. In RM's absence MH was unanimously elected chair for the purposes of this meeting only

3 Conflicts of interest. As item 12 on the agenda, terms of agreement with Colton Local Nature Reserve, was to be deferred to a future meeting, there were no conflicts to declare.

4 Minutes of the previous meeting. Already agreed.

5 Matters arising. To be dealt with in the chairman's report.

6 Treasurer's report. OG had circulated two very short reports which were felt to be too inadequate to enable the trustees to discuss the financial position. Concern was expressed that all income from the Summer Fayre was apparently being split with the Playground Group when that had not been agreed. It seemed – but was not at all clear – that the bank balance figure of £25,196.52 included money being held on behalf of the Playground Group but this could only be assumed from the fact that the income figures for the month of July included money clearly earmarked for the playground. It was of obvious importance for the Playground Group's money to be shown separately from the VH's money both in terms of balances held and income and expenditure. A comment on the income and expenditure account suggested that OG didn't have the paying book but if not who did? It was also a matter of concern that the income shown was for one month (July) only whereas some items of expenditure were for two or even three months. Had all of these payments been made in July? There was real concern over what information OG was being given and by whom. AN said that OG had never contacted her to ask for information about bookings. Although AN still issued monthly invoices for her bookings she had been unable to do so for bookings made by Kerry Ball (KB) in respect of an external hiring for 6 months as she hadn't received a contract from her in that time and wondered whether these were now going to OG or RM direct. JM said that he had today seen an email sent to RM copied to himself in which OG expressed serious reservations about continuing as Treasurer as the amount of time for which she was being paid each month was totally insufficient given the travelling she had to do to get to meetings (she lives in Tamworth). She recommended that we find a new treasurer but was prepared to stick with us for the time being. All present expressed great concern about the situation and agreed that an additional urgent meeting in late September or early October be called to discuss the accounts and the office of treasurer. Fortunately we appeared to have substantial funds in the bank and there was obviously no financial crisis but the current state of affairs couldn't continue. JM was asked to liaise with RM to agree what financial information the trustees needed at each meeting. JM would also liaise with RM about a date for an additional meeting as RM was due to go to India on business in September and JM would also be away in the last week. **[Action JM and RM]**

7 Chairman's report. RM had prepared a written report which JM read to the meeting. The report is attached to these minutes.

8 Booking officers reports. AN produced a report showing the anticipated levels of income from regular hirers and village hirers. If all regular hirers renewed and local bookings continued at the current level a total of about £7200 would be raised in the next 12 months. AN said that she and KB had always produced joint reports in the past but KB had not provided her with any information this time despite being asked to do so. JM said that he had also asked KB for information but she had seemed very reluctant to provide any apart from saying everything was fine. AN said that she had no information about what money KB had received for bookings or what had been paid in. PM said that provided KB was available, she would arrange to meet her on Sunday 10th September for a formal handover of external bookings as previously agreed. KB was away this week and PM would be away the first week in September. It was agreed that it would be helpful if AN accompanied her as she was familiar with the system which KB had been using. PM would then review the situation, especially the diary of bookings, and report back. **[Action PM and AN]**

9 Maintenance issues

9.1 Cleaning standards. The Friendship Club had recently made a formal complaint about the cleanliness of the hall including sticky tape marks on tables. JM and PM had inspected the hall and were not at all happy with what they found. The tables appeared to have had items stuck to them by a user with sticky tape and large amounts were still on the table sides. Several were also sticky on top. They had spent about an hour cleaning them up as best they could. It was agreed that the cleaner (KB) could not be expected to check the tables after each event and so a condition would be inserted in the terms of hire stipulating that tables must be cleaned after use and forbidding the use of sticky tape to attach things to tables or the dado rail which was also still marked but which should have been cleaned by KB. PM commented that there had been quite a lot of confetti on the floor, work surfaces in the kitchen that were reported as not having been cleaned now appeared to have been cleaned, the ramp to the Bellamour Room was dirty with many cigarette ends and there was a growing accumulation of cigarette ends on the car park. The floor of the outside toilets did not appear to have been swept for some time nor the windowsills cleaned. PM said that on their way to inspect she and JM had bumped into the former cleaner Ann Martin who confirmed that she always swept up outside as well as inside the hall. JM said that he could not remember what the cleaning contract with KB said. All present confirmed that their understanding was that KB was just stepping into Ann Martin's shoes (they had worked together for 6 months before Ann had retired so KB must have got to know what Ann did). JM said that he had not had any dealings with KB over the agreement, he had just drafted one on RM's instructions. It was understood that KB was claiming that she was not responsible for doing any cleaning outside the hall. If that was correct the contract needed to be re-visited urgently.

9.2 Dishwasher. Ian Jones was preparing a report on the dishwasher with recommendations about a replacement but in his absence this item would have to be deferred.

10. Friendship Club cupboard. JM proposed that the Friendship Club's cupboard in the kitchen be reinstated with immediate effect. He had spoken to RM about this and he was in agreement. Carried unanimously. The VHMC would pay for the new lock which JM would purchase and fit **[Action JM]**. It was also agreed that the old TV cabinet currently being used as the Club's cupboard in the Bellamour Room be disposed of as soon as it had been emptied and the tables in the room be stored under the window where the cabinet now stood. There were some concerns that 3M were unhappy with the reduction in usable floor space in the Bellamour Room due to the temporary cupboard and the placement of tables against the wall and these changes should improve the situation for them.

11. Governance issues. It was felt that there were too few trustees present to determine the issue of what a quorum should be. Deferred to next meeting.

12. Pricing policy for 2018/19. The intention had been that a paper for discussion be circulated prior to the meeting but one had not been written. The pricing policy for external hires had to be informed by what PM discovered on handover from KB. If there were fewer than expected bookings for 2018 then she would make enquiries of similar local venues to see how we compared on price. PM felt that one issue we had to address fairly urgently was the current rather fragmented pricing policy which was unnecessarily complicated. Hiring the hall should mean just that with no additional charges for the bar etc. It was unanimously agreed that there would be no increase in prices for regular users and local hirers for 2018. PM, AN and JM were asked to meet with RM prior to the next meeting and draft a paper on hire charges for 2018/19 in time for the October meeting. The general feeling was that appeared to be no scope for or need for an increase in prices **[Action: PM, JM, AN and RM]**

13. Terms of agreement with Colton Local Nature Reserve. As both JM and Pm would have had to declare an interest this item could not proceed and would be deferred to the October meeting.

14. AOB

14.1 AN (in her capacity as secretary of WI) asked whether the cardboard boxes which the WI currently used for storage of some of its documents in the VH loft could be replaced with a filing cabinet and a cupboard and all of their archive transferred to it. There would be no question of public access to the archive. PM abstained from this item being a WI committee member. MH and JM both felt that this would be appropriate and the idea which seemed to be emerging that the VH could be a central archive repository for the Parish was a good one in principle subject of course to space being available. Proposal approved subject to the old boxes being removed.

14.2 SJ had asked that rather than send a paper to the committee outlining the History Society's request to be allowed to store its archive in the VH with supervised public access, they be invited to the October meeting to make an oral presentation. This was agreed but AN said that the HS needed to be aware that 3M, who were a valuable source of income for the VH, were not happy about loss of space in the Bellamour Room and they had yet to renew their booking for 2018. The HS's proposal would have to be sensitive to the needs of other users of the Bellamour Room.

15. Date of next meeting.

The next planned meeting was October 26 but it was strongly felt that an additional meeting was required before then to deal with the following items.

- Cleaning contract
- Treasurer and management accounts
- External hire bookings
- Dishwasher
- Quorum

JM to agree a date with trustees once he had established RM's availability **[Action JM]**.

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Signed as a true record

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Date

Chairman's Statement Meeting 24th August

First I apologise for my absence, but needs must.

I know it seems like a long time ago, but we had confirmation of Alan Freeman's resignation as a Trustee and from the Committee. This had been in the wind for a while because of his change of job within the police and other personal commitments. He has offered to help out with minor jobs as and when, but we should not hold our breath. Kerry also confirmed that she wants to resign her bookings role, again pleading work commitments not helped by her moving home towards Burton and not being able to drive. She reaffirmed her commitment to the cleaning role, but there are questions about maintenance of standards which is an agenda item and is a matter of great priority.

We continue to experience a continued leaching of practical involvement and support which is an on-going concern. Happily, and to our great relief, Polly offered her services and has stepped in to take over Kerry's bookings role and she has already agreed how she and Ann Nunn will work together on this. Another busy lady taking on yet more responsibility. Marjorie has agreed to be a backstop if there are issues arising with bookings in the event of Polly's unavailability.

Issues arising from the last meeting:

1. Christmas Fair. A project group has been formed and is being led by Gill MaCay, Mel Crozier and Georgie Hine, with assistance from Kate Staples. This is a formidable team which was the heart of the successful Summer Fair organisation. Margaret Carter has given a full briefing on last year's event and handed over her dossier. Nicola Freeman has agreed to run the kitchen again. A team of helpers is already in place. I regret to say that Scrooge was in the ascendant when the Garden Guild Committee decided against taking a stall or making a contribution to our funds.

2. Dishwasher. We need to resolve the Dishwasher debate. Ian Jones has taken this on as a project to establish whether the existing machine is defunct or not. Hopefully he will be able to report on progress at this meeting because his conclusions will be critical for the decision making.

3. No progress has been made on pricing for 2018/19. This is now becoming a critical item because bookings are already being taken and we need to be in a position to make decisions at the next meeting. I suggest that John, Polly and I should meet to discuss the subject and prepare a paper for circulation during September.

4. History Archive Storage facilities. We are still awaiting a proposal

5. Registration of title. John is leading the search for registration of our title to our parcels of land. Although we have documents and copies of documents to demonstrate our claim to title there are gaps which need to be filled in the record keeping to protect us in the event of any future dispute.

6. Fire (and Rescue). Getting with Kerry to arrange regular testing of alarms has proved impossible. Having discussed it briefly with Polly we agreed that we would train her in this simple task (a test is actually a 5 minute job) so that we can get a routine going. The fire alarms and extinguishers have been tested for their annual re-certification, and all was well. We still should get Staffs Fire and Rescue along to give us advice, but it is not a major priority.

Forthcoming Event

The "From Here to Absurdity" fund raiser takes place in the Village Hall on 9th September. It should be a rollicking evening and we need to drum up support. This is for the car park and playground (40:60 split) but is another social event for the Parish which hopefully will help to spread a warm glow.