

COLTON VILLAGE HALL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting of Thursday 25th January 2018

Members Present:

Chris Dale (CD) Stevie Dale (SD) Marie Havelock (MH)
Sonia Jenkinson (SJ) John Macmillan (JM) (Secretary) Polly Macmillan (PM)

1. Apologies

Richard Monbiot (Chairman) (RM); Ann Nunn (Parish and regular bookings officer) (AN)

1A. Election of Chair

In RM's absence MH was unanimously elected as chair for the meeting. She welcomed SD to her first meeting as a trustee.

2. Conflicts of interest

SJ declared an interest in respect of item 9

3. Tribute to the late Alan Lloyd

MH said that all trustees had been greatly saddened to hear of the death of Alan Lloyd after a long illness on the 18th of January. He had been a long serving trustee of the VH and the last surviving member of its 'ways and means' team. She read a tribute to him which is attached to these minutes after which the trustees observed a minutes silence in his memory.

4. Minutes of the previous meeting

These were signed as a true record having been previously agreed by trustees.

5. Matters arising

11.1 AOB JM said that he had completed the registration of the VH on the Halls Hire website and it seemed to generating enquiries already.

6. Treasurer's report

The treasurer had again failed to provide a report.

7. Election of SD as Treasurer

JM proposed and PM seconded the appointment of SD as treasurer. Carried unanimously. MH thanked SD for agreeing to take on the role as having a locally based treasurer was very important. SD said that she intended to speak with the current treasurer, Odette Ghent, over the next couple of weeks prior to arranging a formal handover. It was agreed that SD should also meet the two booking officers, PM and AN once handover had been completed. PM explained their respective roles. SD said there was a need to create a new accounting system and all agreed that this was an ideal opportunity to start afresh with a system that all trustees understood and everyone could work to. SD and PM both felt strongly that we needed to get back to a system of invoicing hirers as at the moment there was a gap in the paper trail. All trustees agreed. JM stressed the need for management accounts probably bi-monthly to match the meeting cycle and also for the treasurer to have some input, possibly in the form of cash flow forecast, into the booking officers' report.

8. Chairman's report

RM had provided a written report which MH read.

"This report is very brief since we have had a somewhat fallow period since the November meeting and most of the matters I might have covered are already agenda items. I am disappointed not to be present to welcome Stevie. We expect to hear within a fortnight of this meeting whether Biffa have

agreed to fund the new playground. If they do not we will engage a specialist inspector to carry out a full survey of the current equipment to establish what work is necessary to prolong the life of the equipment into 2019. The Parish Council has agreed to meet the cost of the survey out of the balance remaining from the current year's budget allocation. Once Stevie is ready, we need to work up next year's forecasts for revenue and expenditure. We have an unallocated surplus in our account (beyond the £15,000 set aside for the car park and £4000 operating contingency) and we will have to decide how best to use it. We have identified the need for a new main door to the Village Hall and there is a growing requirement for freshening up the paintwork. This all depends on our projection of cash flow which I hope will be good enough that we feel confident that we will not need to subsidise it."

JM reported that RM had asked him to say that we still needed help with routine maintenance work as there were some tasks which Peter Knowles (PK) either could not do or needed assistance with.

9. History Society signage

JM said that when the VHMC had first been approached by the History Society about housing their archive in the Bellamour Room, he had suggested that there should be appropriate signage and that the VHMC might make a donation towards it. However, he had not anticipated that the cost of the signage would be as high as it now appeared to be and on further reflection he felt that we did not in fact have the power to make a cash donation to another organisation, especially one which was not a charity, as it fell outside the terms of our charitable objects. He felt that the VHMC had been as generous as it could be towards the HS by not charging for the storage space and allowing them free access to their archive at any time that did not conflict with other usage of the Bellamour Room. He therefore advised the trustees that we should not make a donation towards the cost of the signage. This was agreed.

10. Booking officers' report

PM reported that the projected income from regular users of the VH was some £330 per month while the current value of outside bookings for 2018/19 was about £5400 which she felt was rather low particularly as it included £650 from the caravan club for 2019. However, it was still very early in the year and further bookings were very likely. M3 had asked for two 4 day slots to hold spring and summer schools which we had unfortunately been unable to accommodate. Ben Ridgway wanted to hire the hall for one hour on two evenings a week starting at 7.00 pm and Saturday mornings to hold self-defence classes for adults and children. It was agreed that we could not offer Saturdays because that would effectively prevent the hall being hired out for weddings and large parties but we could offer Mondays between 8.30 and 9.30 pm and three Wednesdays a month at 7.00 pm. PM reported that complaints had been made about the cleaning at the VH by both M3 and Tai Chi. Kerry had put the problem down to some old cleaning product which she had used which had left a film of dust. The product had now been thrown away. It was agreed that a cleaning book should be introduced immediately for Kerry and her cleaners to sign in and out each time they cleaned and to make a brief note of any problems found and the work they had done. In future it might be necessary for us to devise a cleaning schedule specifying the work to be done on each visit. MH said that at Etching Hill all users of the village hall have to clean up after themselves and sign a book reporting any problems encountered.

11. Playground update

11.1 JM said that the annual 'spring clean' of the playground surface had been carried out by Mark Bull and paid for by a donation from the Parish Lands Trust. He had sent a letter of thanks to the trustees of the PLT thanking them for their continuing and generous support for the VH.

11.2 PM asked for confirmation that there would be no charge for the Playground Group's use of the hall on the 21st July for an all-day fund raising event in accordance with the working agreement between the VH and the group previously agreed. This was confirmed. Kerry Ball was planning another fundraising event at the VH on the 17th February for the group but this would not be free. PM was unsure about the nature of the event and thought that it might be a car boot sale. All

trustees felt that the site was not suitable for car boot sales and PM was asked to make further enquiries before confirming the booking.

13. Registration of title to village hall lands

JM reported that an examination of files handed over by Ron Lawrence after he had resigned as Treasurer had revealed a problem with regard to both parcels of land owned by the charity. The first parcel was the land on which the VH stood plus the playing field. The second was the land used as the wild flower meadow. The former had been vested in the Official Custodian of Charities but the title had not been registered. It seemed that Ron had attempted to register the title about 12 years ago but had found the process too complicated. The latter presented a much more serious problem. The land had been gifted to the VHMC by the Price family in 1996 but the original deed of gift and conveyance appeared to have been lost. Fortunately Ron had kept a photocopy of the deed as executed by the then trustees when he sent it to the solicitors who were acting for us to enable them to complete the transaction. The file strongly suggested that the original had been sent by the solicitors to the Charity Commission for the land to be vested in the Official Custodian but never returned. The land had not been vested either and the explanation appeared to be that the solicitors had failed to include a completed application for vesting in their letter. The Commission wrote to them requesting an application form but not, apparently, returning the original deed. It seemed that matters then just went into limbo and the solicitors had failed both to complete the process of vesting and the registration of the title although it seemed that the then trustees had no reason to suppose that they had not done so. The absence of the original deed of gift was a serious worry and meant that our title to the land was potentially at risk. Registering the title with HM Land Registry would solve the problem. The land also needed to be vested in the official custodian to complete our endowment. With RM's agreement JM had therefore obtained a quote from the original solicitors, Mosely, Chapman and Skemp of Sutton Coldfield, to register the title to both fields and to vest the wild flower meadow. The quote was £1,304 inclusive of VAT and Land Registry and search fees. He strongly recommended that we should proceed even though the work had not been budgeted for to ensure that our interests were protected. This was agreed unanimously. [Action JM]

14. Maintenance issues

14.1 JM reported that he had had to replace the bolt in the mechanism which held the front door open as the original had fallen out and been lost. The replacement bolt was the wrong size and he would ask PK to make the repair permanent. MH thought that we needed to discuss the question of replacing the front door at the next meeting as it was clear that the cost of doing so would be much greater than first thought given the need for the access to be wheel chair friendly which meant that a PVC door within an all-round frame would not be possible. This was agreed.

14.2 A report of flooding in the disabled toilet had been received but an inspection during the meeting found no sign of flooding. There was however a continuous but minor flow of water into the urinals in the gents and also from the external overflow pipe.

14.3 Roof tiles damaged by a falling tree in the recent gale had been replaced by ARN Property Services for a small charge.

14.4 CD said that he would be happy to allow the handyman employed by his company to carry out any jobs which pk could not do. He was thanked for this generous offer. [JM's note: since the meeting I have spoken to Peter and asked him to have a good look round the hall and produce a list of jobs to be done identifying those which he can do, those which he needs assistance to do and those which require professional attention].

15. AOB

15.1 Kitchen floor. PK had been going to get a quote from a contact in the trade for the cost of replacing the damaged area of floor but it was not clear whether he had done so. RM was invited to chase this up [Action RM]

15.2 The dishwasher. This remained a bone of contention as users seldom seemed to complete the cleaning process after use. MH proposed and it was agreed that the only solution seemed to be to include the dishwasher in the cleaner’s regular cleaning duties.

16. Date of next meeting.
Thursday 29th March at 7.30 pm

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Signed as a true record

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Dated

Alan Lloyd

It is with sadness at this Village Hall Committee we remember Alan Lloyd who died last week.

Alan, prior to his illness, was a longstanding Trustee of Colton Village Hall. His gentle black-country humour made him an ideal person in diffusing conflict when meetings could be difficult.

As an integral member of the Village Hall Management Team Alan researched, guided and helped develop the structure of the Village Hall as we see it today. In his role as part of the management team Alan gave of his time in helping with maintenance, helping with the organisation of fund raising events and always investigating, and usually obtaining grants for the improvement of the Village Hall. Allan was a team player, and past changes of committee members through loss and retirement meant the end of an era of a dedicated group of people. His guidance to fellow Trustees was exemplary he was able to explain policy which I personally found clear and simple to understand.

With his wife Brenda, Alan took retirement and settled in Colton. Why Colton I remember asking him? The reply was typical Allan, apparently they looked for a village half way between their families in the Black Country and Derbyshire, and this would keep the peace in both camps, he said with a wry smile. Both of them soon became active in Colton life, joining various groups and societies, very interested in wildlife and conservation, and the Village Hall became important to them both, each serving as active Committee Members until Alan’s illness was diagnosed.

It is testament to Allan that at the Senior Citizen Christmas Meal held in the Village Hall last December, Allan so obviously ill, attended with Brenda, and gave a vote of thanks and a small speech.

Our condolences go to Brenda and family at this sad time.

Alan a gentle humorous man, so sadly missed.

Marie Havelock

PCC Trustee to Colton Village Hall