

COLTON VILLAGE HALL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting of Thursday 9th June 2022

Members Present:

John Macmillan (JM) (Chairman and Secretary); Richard Monbiot (RM); Fiona O'Brien (FO'B) (Booking Officer); Nigel Parry (PC rep); Guy Reynolds (GR) (Treasurer). In attendance for item 4, Peter Knowles (PK) (volunteer handyman); Nick Hawkins (NH) and Geoff Hunt (GH).

1. Apologies

2. Conflicts of interest

None.

3. Minutes of previous meetings and matters arising

The minutes of the meetings of the 31st March 2022 were approved as a true record.

JM reported that both faulty doors had been fixed, the kitchen door by PK and the main entrance door by the manufacturer under warranty. **GR** said that Cherishers were not interested in the old crockery. **JM** to take to Katherine House as a donation. **JM** reported that the fallen tree had been cleared by Mark Bull.

4. The playground

JM welcomed **PK**, **NH** and **GH** to the meeting. He began by thanking **PK** for all the hours of work he had devoted to carrying out remedial work to the playground which was in addition to routine maintenance of the hall itself. He said that a vote of thanks was due with which the other trustees agreed. **JM** said that the purpose of this part of the meeting was to discuss ways of maintaining the playground in future, both the equipment and other safety critical items and general housekeeping matters including the planters. **PK** said that he was unwilling to commit much more time to the playground. He had regularly worked over 25 hours a month on the playground addressing the issues raised in the annual inspector's report and any items highlighted by **GH** in his monthly reports. There was an ongoing problem with the gate not self-closing which he had resolved three times, but further misuse had brought the problem back again. He had moved a planter to a new location after its existing location had been identified as a potential low risk hazard, which had taken 5 hours. There were only two or three items left from the annual report and when he had finished those he wanted to stop. **NH** said that there was much higher usage of the playground than in previous years, including children coming in minibuses from Stafford. In the context of a discussion about the cost of bringing a paid replacement for **PK**, he suggested that the playground attracted hirers to the hall which was disputed by both **JM** and **FO'B**, the former and current booking officers, who said that apart from children's parties, which were a very small proportion of revenue, it had no noticeable impact. **NH** and **GH** both thought

there was very little chance of persuading a small group of parents to take on the role of the former playground group in maintaining the planters and keeping the site tidy on a regular basis, but **GH** thought that he might be able to persuade the school to take responsibility for looking after the planters given its existing involvement in horticulture. After a lengthy discussion the following were agreed.

- 4.1 **PK** to stand down as volunteer handman for the playground as soon as all of the issues identified in the annual inspection report had been completed. He would continue as volunteer handyman for the hall itself.
- 4.2 **PK** to be replaced by a paid handyman, **PK** having declined the role himself, preferably someone local on an hourly rate. **PK** and **NH** would both speak to people they knew who were in this line of work [**Action PK** and **NH**]. **JM** would contact Online Playgrounds which had supplied parts to **PK** and also the successors to Schoolscapes which had installed the playground, to see if they provided maintenance services on contract [**Action JM**]. [**JM note: Online Playgrounds not interested because we are too far away from them and none of the other contractors they would recommend are any closer**]
- 4.3 **GH** to speak to the school about taking over the planters [**Action GH**].
- 4.4 VHMC would pay for all plants required and, if necessary, tools.
- 4.5 **JM** to chase up his so far unanswered enquiry to the inspectors over whether the gate was really necessary given the problems experienced in getting it to self-close and the fact that the site was otherwise completely open [**Action JM**]. In the meantime, the gate would be taken off and placed in storage which would remove another of the minor hazards (that of finger trapping) identified in the last report.
- 4.6 Once the cost of maintaining the playground became clearer as a result of these action points, if necessary, the Parish Council and the Parish Lands Trust would be approached for contributions as the VHMC was really only playing host to the village playground since it had been removed from site elsewhere in the village when it had been solely the responsibility of the PC.

PK, NH and **GH** were thanked for their contributions and left the meeting.

5. Treasurer's report

GR apologised for the fact that, for a variety of reasons he had not yet been able to send the draft accounts to Alan Toplis. He would be sending them with all the supporting papers next week. After two months of the new financial year the position at the bank remained healthy with £29,215 in the current account, £6,348 in the playground reserve and £4,003 in the general reserve. The position was slightly distorted by the payment of £1,000 from the PC as their contribution to the Jubilee celebrations, much of which would have to be returned once all expenses had been paid. So far very few claims had been made. It was agreed that we should not commit any unspent balance of our matching contribution to the celebrations to a permanent Jubilee memorial.

6. Booking officer's report

FO'B had circulated a detailed report to trustees prior to the meeting for which she was thanked. There had been 11 new bookings since the last meeting. The report included a new section showing the value of bookings made in the preceding 12 and 24 month periods with the value of bookings made since the start of June 2022. After a discussion it was agreed that these figures would be more valuable if the period of comparison was the financial year which ended on March 30th. It was not felt necessary to break future bookings down into current financial year and future financial years [**JM note. This is what we agreed, but on reflection I think we got it wrong. If we stick to this the nearer we get to the end of the financial year, the more meaningless the figure becomes because most of the bookings will be for future years. I suggest we change it.**]

7. Heating system

RM reported that Nick Oxby had inspected the boiler and thinks that the problem is the replacement fan he fitted some time ago which was second hand. He will order a new one and deduct the price of the second hand one from the bill. He believes that once a new fan is fitted the system should last for another 10 years. As **RM** had heard nothing from Nick for some time, he would chase him up [**Action RM**].

8. Projector, screen and cable protector

This item was on the agenda at the request of the WI. **FO'B** reported that she was quite often asked if we had a projector but she had never lost a booking because we did not. Concerns were expressed about the security of a projector if we owned one and also the ability of some hirers to use it safely. There was a general feeling that this was not something which the VH should make available to hirers. There is already a drop-down screen at the chair store end of the hall and a wall is frequently used as a screen by the Produce Guild and others and is perfectly adequate. It was agreed that as a H&S measure we should provide cable protectors, **JM** to order [**Action JM**].

9. Carpark lighting

NP reported that he had approached an alternative supplier as he was not happy with the quotes he had had from McCann's. The new supplier was Aptus Utilities of Bolton who had quoted £7,746.34 + VAT which was significantly lower than McCann's most recent quote. They would be able to do the work within the next two months or so. **NP** was asked to get precise dates if possible as it was felt advisable to close the car park while work was actually taking place and there might be a need to inform users [**Action NP**]. **JM** reported that he had applied to the Parish Lands Trust for a grant towards the cost which he understood they would consider at their June meeting. **RM** said that he had applied to HS2 for funding but had so far heard nothing.

10. Chairs

- 10.1 The loan of chairs for use during the service to commemorate the centenary of the village War Memorial was approved. **JM** to liaise with Paul Waring over numbers, transport etc [**Action JM**].
- 10.2 The Friendship Club had asked whether we could purchase 6 chairs with arms. The Parish Lands trust had agreed to cover the cost. **GR** agreed to source the chairs and obtain a quote [**Action GR**].

11. Parish Council key box

The Parish Council’s request to have its own key box located somewhere in the VH to give easy access to, for example, the keys to the burial ground, was approved, the box to be in the kitchen next to the VH’s key box.

12.A.O.B

- 12.1 **JM** informed the meeting that he was not prepared to carry on both as chair of trustees and secretary beyond the next AGM because of the workload and the fact that he was about to take on the role of chair of trustees of another charity. He really wished to relinquish the role of secretary because that was the most time consuming in terms of writing up minutes etc. There was uncertainty whether the secretary had to be a trustee, which, it was felt, would deter people from coming forward. **RM** reminded the meeting that in the past Ann Nunn had acted as secretary after standing down as the WI’s representative trustee. **JM** would check the governing instrument and **FO’B** would place an advertisement for the role of secretary in Parish News [**Action JM** and **FO’B**].
- 12.2 **RM** reported that he had been asked several times whether the VH had any goal posts which could be used on the playing field, the old ones having been taken down prior to the pandemic because of their poor condition and the fact that they caused an obstruction to the caravan club. **RM** And **JM** both thought that replacement goal posts had been purchased but had never been erected but they were unsure where they now were. **JM** agreed to investigate and report back [**Action JM**].
- 12.3 **JM** reported that council had refused to empty the recycling bin because someone had placed some paper in it which should now go in the blue bag. It was clearly impossible for us to ensure that hirers put the right items in right bin or bag and if a failure to do so meant that bins would not be emptied, which we couldn’t risk, then we would have to withdraw from the recycling scheme altogether. **JM** agreed to contact Lichfield DC [**Action JM**].

13. Date of next meeting

The next meeting will be on Thursday 28th July at 7.30.

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Signed as a true record

Dated