

COLTON VILLAGE HALL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting of Thursday 28th March 2019

Members Present:

Craig Staples (CS); John Macmillan (JM) (Secretary); Polly Macmillan (PM); Richard Monbiot (RM) (Chairman)

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Matt Crompton (MC); Anna and Ben Ridgway (AR) (BR) and Kate Staples (KS)

2. Conflicts of interest

None

3. Trustee resignations

JM reported that both PM and SJ had notified him that they would be resigning as trustees at the AGM. It seemed very unlikely that the WI would be able to find a replacement for PM. It was not yet clear whether the History Society would be able to find a successor for SJ

4. Minutes of the last meeting

Having been previously agreed by email the minutes were signed by the chairman.

5. Matters arising

Para 10. Purchasing policy. JM said that he was in the process of obtaining quotes for fire alarm and emergency lighting maintenance contracts. The first quote he had had was considerably in excess of what we currently pay.

Para 11. Playground Group.

1. Colton play stars was currently suspended until such time as CS and KS were able to return to their house which could still be several months away. CS reported that the group had been successful in winning a £2,000 grant from the Tesco Bags of Help scheme for Colton Play Stars.
2. There was still no information from the playground group about their intentions with regard to the goal posts. CS suggested that the current posts were too big for youngsters and replacing them with either $\frac{3}{4}$ or $\frac{2}{3}$ size goals might be the best option. CS was asked to obtain quotes [**Action CS**].
3. PM raised the issue of the badger sett in the spoil bank which was intended to be the site of the playground phase 2. The sett was much more active and seemed much larger than when English Nature had last visited the site and she wondered whether permission to move the sett might now be given. JM asked whether instead of disturbing the badgers it would be possible to move phase 2 nearer to the VH. CS said that there must now be a bit of a question mark over phase 2 as it was dependent on funding from HS2 about which there appeared to be increasing uncertainty. It was agreed that before any more fundraising was done for phase 2 the full committee of trustees needed to see the plans and approve them and be satisfied that the scheme was financially viable. If they were satisfied that it was, then before any more fund raising took place there should be further consultation with English Nature about moving the badgers or siting phase 2 so that the badgers did not have to be disturbed. The item would come back on the agenda when the playground group were ready to make their presentation [**Action Playground Group**].
4. The planned meeting for the 28th February had not taken place as JM had needed to make some enquiries about making changes to the website to assist the booking officer.

6. Treasurer's report

CS reported that he was now able to access both bank accounts on line. There was currently £17,251 in the Lloyds account and £11,853 in the HSBC account, a total of £29,104. The amount which was

Playground Group funds had been provisionally calculated and it was agreed that CS and RM should agree the final figure as soon as possible so that it could be reflected in the year end accounts. JM stressed that as the AGM was likely to be in early July the annual report and the end of year accounts had to be agreed by trustees by the May meeting at the latest. It was agreed that CS should meet the external verifier Allan Toplis as soon as practicable with a view to having draft accounts available for trustees by mid May [Action CS]. JM reported that he had received a donation from the collection made at the late Shirley Carter's funeral of £336.27 and that the Parish Council had reimbursed us for the insurance on the playground. He would ensure that both cheques were paid into the bank tomorrow as that was the last working day of the financial year. He would be writing a formal letter of thanks to John Carter [Action JM]

7. Chairman's report

RM said that we must congratulate everyone involved in the Murder Mystery evening. We raised £1000 which was a great achievement. Particular thanks must go to Bill Douthwaite and KS as the main drivers, and to the troupe of actors. The evening was a great success from both a social and fundraising point of view. We have now reached the end of another financial year, which looks to have been another financial success. Next year also looks promising. However, there are dark clouds. We will be losing PM and SJ, so far with no sign of any replacements. We are losing PM's skills as booking officer which have been fundamental to our financial performance. The VHMC is tasked with managing the Village Hall on behalf of the Parish. The constitution was originally set up to ensure that the members of the community would have a say in how it was run by having representatives of ALL Village Organisations on the Committee. With the resignations of Pm and SJ only JM and myself remain as representatives of Village Organisations. Despite having lived in Colton for just 5 years RM said that he was the single largest repository of experience of operational matters relating to the VH which was very worrying. He greatly welcomed the fact that we have a new generation of trustees who have mainly become involved as a result of the new Playground Project and the future of the Village hall is substantially in their hands. We need to address how we move forward, an issue to be raised at the AGM. Fundamental questions are:

- Where are we going to find new trustees?
- Should we continue with a committee consisting solely of trustees?
- Is our constitution outdated?
- How do we involve the community?
- How do we ensure an effective booking system for the future?
- How do we manage issues of maintenance and fabric of the site?

8. Booking officers reports

PM reported that bookings were still coming in at a steady rate. The Parson Russell Terrier Club have booked the hall for their summer show in July 2021, this is not to be confused with the Jack Russell Terrier Club who have booked the hall and field this April 7th for their show. She has been told by two prospective hirers that the charges are too high. One was a caravan club who was quoted the same price as South Staffs Caravan Club (regular users). The Band hold their practice regularly on a Sunday afternoon every month and have booked April, May and June at £36 /session. Other new bookings since last meeting are a local party and a children's for March 2019, a wedding in September 2019 bringing the total for the year to 10 which is probably the best ever, and a dog show for 2021. Willow Senior Day Care have not held the Salt and Pepper Club since the start of the year as the numbers attending have fallen below a sustainable level. They are still hoping that the numbers will increase sufficiently to allow them to re-open. It was felt that this was not acceptable as we could not hold their Thursday morning slot open indefinitely and there was also the problem of their large and heavy arm chairs which would have to be removed from the Bellamour Room if they did not continue. PM was asked to contact Willow to ask them to make a decision about their future and to remove their chairs if they were not going to continue. PM said that she was prepared to continue to

liaise with Dolphina after she ceased to be booking officer. Dolphina regularly reports on the condition of the hall after events or when she is in need of new supplies. Ann Nunn reports that all regular bookings are ongoing and there are no problems.

9. Replacing the booking officer

JM said that he would replace PM as the booking officer as their seemed to be no other option. He had hoped to be able to make changes to the website to reduce the number of phone calls by having an availability calendar with links to the pricing policy so prospective hirers would be able to see whether the hall was available on the date of their planned event and how much it would cost to hire it. The current calendar could be made publicly accessible but it would show the same information that the booking officer saw including the names of room hirers and the price they had paid. This was clearly not acceptable. JM thought that we could probably manage without it. CS said that we did need to make changes of this nature to the website as so many other venues had the facility. BR had said in the past that the software was available and that he had the expertise to assist the VH in achieving this facility. CS said that he would speak to BR to see if this could be taken forward [**Action CS**]. JM wondered whether we needed to reduce Friday prices as we appear to have lost a least one booking because of price. It was agreed to monitor the situation and to keep a record of any bookings lost through price. JM said that he intended to try and follow up on enquiries which had not resulted in a booking to see whether price had been a factor. It was agreed that in future the value of the booking should also be entered in the online diary and that CS should have read only access to the diary. He would speak to the website administrator to arrange access for himself [**Action CS**]

10. AGM

The AGM would be held on Wednesday July 3rd [**NB. This date later changes to July 17th**]. The trustees would need to formally approve both the end of year accounts and the annual report at the May meeting at the latest to enable them to be posted on the website. JM and RM would compile the annual report between them [**Action RM and JM**]. JM would also ensure that notice was placed in the Parish News June edition and on notice boards [**Action JM**]. The agenda and format of the meeting would be the same as last year. In consultation with CS, RM would prepare a presentation on the accounts [**Action RM**].

11. Playground Group report

KS had informed JM that she had nothing to report. JM confirmed that the monthly inspections for insurance purposes were being carried out and the inspection reports were on file in the VH kitchen. He raised concerns about the number of used nappies being disposed of in the orange Hippo bin. If this practice continued into the summer, it would be very unhygienic and there would be an issue with smell. After a discussion it was felt that additional signage would probably not solve the problem and that the only solution was for the bin to be emptied two or three times a week. It was agreed that it would not be fair to expect JM to do this on top of his additional duties as booking officer and that the load would have to be shared by the Playground Group. The Hippo bin required a plastic key to remove the head. JM had one key but he was certain that when it was delivered there had been at least one and probably two additional keys. He did not know where these now were. It was agreed that the Playground Group would search for the missing keys and assist JM with bin emptying [**Action Playground Group**]

12. Murder Mystery evening

JM reported that total of £999 had been raised. He suggested that if the event was repeated a trustee needed to be designated as the person responsible for the evening as the premises had been left insecure and the chairs and tables had not been put away properly blocking access to the cleaner's store.

13. Maintenance items

13.1 The roof. The repairs carried out to the roof had not fixed the problem of water getting into the baby changing room. Roofbusters had so far failed to find a cause and would come out again next time it rained heavily to try and do so. We might need to get a second opinion. As this appeared to be a wear and tear issue it was not covered by our buildings insurance policy.

13.2 and 13.3 JM and CS had both obtained quotes for a replacement front door. The quote from SB Windows for an aluminium door was the lowest at £2,340 inc VAT. They had failed to provide a written quote for re-glazing the inner doors with toughened glass but had given JM a verbal quote of about £240 + VAT. Their total quote was therefore in the region of £2,630. The quotes which CS had received were for a PVC door which was lower and an aluminium door which was higher. JM said that SB Windows had advised against PVC because the door would be south facing and therefore liable to heat distortion. JM had also obtained a quote from David Wilson, a resident in the village who had recently started in business as a carpenter and joiner. David was doing work for JM and his home and the work was of very high quality. David's quote for a new hardwood door and re-glazing the inner door was £2,822 plus door furniture at cost and finishing of our choice. It was therefore likely to be £400 to £500 more expensive than SB Windows aluminium door. RM and JM both felt strongly that we should accept David Wilson's quote as it was appropriate to support a local craftsman and a wooden door would be much more in keeping with the rest of the VH than aluminium. CS was concerned that we should not spend up to £500 more than we had to and also about the longevity of a hardwood door. It was noted that the SB Windows quote was silent on how long the door would be guaranteed for and what a reasonable life expectancy for an aluminium door would be. JM was asked to enquire [**Action JM**]

13.4 Decorating party. This had yet to take place and at the moment no-one was able to organise one. Anne and Steve Noble had very kindly volunteered to participate. It was agreed that the inside of the hall had to be redecorated this year as it was beginning to look shabby. RM said that he would ask SJ if she could organise a decorating party as she had said that she would be happy to assist the VH after she ceased to be a trustee.

13.5 Goal posts. Dealt with above.

14. AOB

PM reported that someone attending Tai Chi regularly parked a large mobile home where it blocked access to the rear of the VH. PM was asked to contact Tai Chi and ask them to make an announcement to their members not to block the side access to the rear of the hall. [**Action PM**]

15. Date of next meeting

Thursday 30th May 2019.

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Signed as a true record

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Dated

