

COLTON VILLAGE HALL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting of Thursday 26th March 2020 Held in the Bellamour Room

Members Present:

Matt Crompton (MC); Alice Hadridge (AH); John Macmillan (JM) (Secretary); Richard Monbiot (RM) (Chairman); Craig Staples (CS) (Treasurer); Kate Staples (KS). In attendance Fiona O'Brien (FO).

1. Welcome to new trustee

RM welcomed AH to her first meeting. She signed the trustees' declaration and consent form

2. Apologies for absence

None

3. Conflicts of interest

None

4. Minutes of the last meeting

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

5. Matters arising

Mark Bull had been asked to carry out the replacement of the stile etc and had indicated he would do the work when the weather and his schedule permitted.

6. Appointment of new booking officer

RM welcomed FO to the meeting and thanked her for agreeing to take over the booking officer duties currently being undertaken by JM. She was proposed by JM and appointed unanimously. JM suggested a phased handover as it would be easier for both him, FO and the hirers if he dealt with the inevitable cancellations arising out of the Coronavirus outbreak while FO dealt with new enquiries of which there had been none for the last 3 weeks.

7. Treasurer's report

CS reported that there was nearly £25,000 in the current account, £4,000 in the contingency reserve and £6,344 in the playground account. This was about £4,500 higher than at the end of the previous financial year. The difference was attributable to both an increase in income and a drop of about £2.3k in outgoings. Apart from literally a couple of items missing from April 2019, a legacy from the time we had had to rely on external treasurers, the audit paper trail was complete. The accounts were ready to be submitted to the external verifier. JM was asked to terminate the contract for the VH mobile phone which was no longer used [**Action JM**]

8. Chairman's report

RM expressed his thanks to FO for becoming booking officer and to JM for his sterling efforts in combining the role with that of secretary. He referred to rumours that had been circulating about the closure of Etching Hill village hall because of lack of trustees. He had confirmed that although the hall had not yet closed it was in danger of doing so as it was starting its new financial year with only two trustees who are unable to take any decisions because they cannot form a quorum. By comparison he felt that we were in very good shape. However, in the past although there had at times been many trustees, only a

very small number had been active in managing the hall and this had not been healthy. He felt that the future health of the organisation required a reasonable number of trustees all of whom were active so that the load was evenly spread, with new trustees coming in at regular intervals to ensure we do not fossilise and maintained a level of new thinking and vibrancy. This called into question his own position as he had now been chairman for four years. How long should one person be chair?

9. Policy proposal - free special event room hire for village organisations

JM reminded the meeting that trustees had agreed by email to offer St Mary's School PTA free use of the village hall for a special fundraising event which had unfortunately now been cancelled because of coronavirus. There had been no loss of revenue because the event had been booked at short notice on a day when the hall was free. It was felt that this was an appropriate use of the hall as a focal point for village activities and the school had always been supportive of the village hall. It was agreed that similar requests from other village organisations would be considered on a case by case basis. Important factors would be the day of the week the event was to be held on, whether the event was open to everyone, any loss of revenue to the hall (so requests made outside the main wedding season or at just a few weeks' notice were more likely to be granted) and no more than one event per year per organisation.

10. Expenses and allowances for officers

It was agreed that if an officer with specific responsibilities such as booking, treasurer etc incurred a cost in performing that office, that cost could be reclaimed on production of a receipt, provided the cost was reasonable. It was not appropriate to pay a set allowance.

11. Booking officers' reports

11.1 There was a lengthy discussion about the coronavirus epidemic and its effect on bookings. It was agreed that if a hirer cancels due to the virus and whilst government restrictions on peoples' movements are still in force, their deposit would be refunded. JM reported that, so far, he had only been asked for one refund, all other hirers had asked for an alternative date later in the year. However, all village organisations which used the hall for their meetings had cancelled at least two meetings. JM had contacted the hall's insurers who had confirmed that our business interruption insurance only applied to loss of revenue following an event such as a fire which damaged the fabric of the hall. There was therefore bound to be some loss of revenue. Because of onerous conditions in our insurance policy if the hall was left unoccupied for more than 45 days consecutive days, it was decided to remain open. The hall would be available for use and would be regularly cleaned. JM was asked to contact Dolphina to find out what additional supplies she needed and to ask her to perform any additional cleaning duties that seemed appropriate [**Action JM**].

11.2 JM raised the issue of children's parties on Saturdays. This was a very recent phenomenon which our current pricing structure did not cater for as Saturdays were our most expensive day and were split into only two rather than three sessions. No hourly rate was available. It was agreed that if the booking was for a date less than 8 weeks ahead the charge would be half the normal price.

11.3 JM said that we were getting bookings and enquiries for 2022 and asked whether trustees wanted to review 2022 prices now as anyone booking for 2022 would only pay the current price. It was agreed to revisit this topic at the end of the year.

11.4 It was agreed that there should be a sign on the outside of the hall indicating the Bellamour Room. [**Action JM**]

12. **Playground group report**

KS said that the Tesco grant had now been fully claimed and spent. Because of the coronavirus, special events to celebrate the grant and erect the equipment purchased had been cancelled but she and CS and a few other people would erect the items when permissible. They were two storage units for equipment, the smaller one being for balls, games etc, the larger for maintenance equipment. There were also two recycled plastic picnic benches. KS and CS were asked to use their own discretion when siting the items. [**Action KS and CS**]. MC reminded the meeting that money held in reserve by the Parish Council for the playground had to be spent by September 22. He thought that £4,038 was held in respect of the proposed Phase II. AH agreed to take on Phase II as a project and produce some proposals for consideration in due course. AH was thanked for her offer [**Action AH**]

13. **James Bailey - access request**

Since the original decision to allow Mr Bailey access to his property via the village hall driveway, strong objections had been received from Sue Bailey who, it was understood, owned the land over which Mr Bailey would have to walk to reach any new gate. In those circumstances it was clear that the trustees could not allow the proposal and JM was instructed to write to Mr Bailey accordingly [**Action JM**]

14. **Website update**

KS had rewritten her original proposal in the light of comments made by JM and RM and others and would recirculate for further comment [**Action KS**]. JM pointed out that there were a number of contradictory statements on the existing website and some policy decisions would be required such as maximum numbers which the two rooms could accommodate seated and standing.

15. **Maintenance items**

15.1 **Playing field ruts**

Graham Brown had agreed to roll out the ruts caused by the caravan club but the weather had been far too wet to enable him to do so. RM would remind him [**Action RM**].

15.2 **Playing field matting**

John Carter had made a start on rectifying the exposed matting by dropping some soil with grass seed over a relatively small area. It was thought that this was such a large job we might need a specialist contractor. MC suggested Gary Hancock who lived in the village. MC was asked to obtain a quote from him [**Action MC**]. CS said that he would have a look at what was required to see whether it would be possible for it to be done by a small number of volunteers using shovels.

15.3 **Goal posts**

Mark Bull will fix these as soon as he has the time. The best place was thought to be roughly where the last posts had been sited but further away from the playground. They would not be concreted in.

16. **AOB**

There were no items of AOB

17. **Date and place of next meeting**

It was felt that in the current crisis the date of the next meeting should not be fixed.

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Signed as a true record

Dated