

Orwell Village Hall Management Committee

Minutes of a Meeting Held at 11:30 on Tuesday, 11 January 2022



Present:

Ashley Ives (AI) Chairman
 Mark Collins (MC) Treasurer
 Andrew Pulham (CP) Secretary
 Barry Sharman (BS) Maintenance Officer
 Val Rees (VR) Pannier Market
 David Titchmarsh (DT) Hillsiders
 Leslie Daw (LD)
 Roger Daw (RD) Film Club
 Dorothy Turner (DT) Women of Orwell
 Derek Skipper (DS) Hon. Member

1. Chairman's welcome

AI welcomed all members of the OVHMC to the first meeting of 2022.

2. Apologies for absence

Apologies had been received from the Parish Council and from Chris Randall (Orwell FC).

3. Minutes of meeting on 26/10/22

These were agreed as a true and fair record and signed by the Chair.

4. Matters arising not on current agenda

AI updated the committee on the outcome of the Parish Council meeting he and AP had attended in December. Some aspects would be addressed elsewhere on the current agenda; however the Parish Council had been encouraged to furnish at least one representative to join OVHMC meetings. The Parish Council had since identified three Councillors who might attend in turn, but had advised also that daytime meetings would cause them problems. For this reason, it had been agreed that the May AGM would be an evening meeting and that future meetings would alternate between daytime and evening.

AI also advised the Committee that Mr Campbell Weir had cleared the external areas around the hall of weeds and that he had accepted an invitation to continue with clearance and external maintenance of paths etc. on a periodic basis. A simple specification/contract will be drawn up to govern this relationship.

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5. Chairman's report

AI took the Committee through his report, which had been circulated in advance of the meeting.

RD commended MC for his thorough updating and augmentation of the Familiarisation Manual held at the hall.

6. Treasurer's report

MC took the Committee through his report, which had been circulated in advance of the meeting.

MC confirmed that usage was continuing to increase, although it was feared that a number of users had dropped away over the period of the pandemic and might not return. MC confirmed that the hall's finances remain sound, thanks in part to grants/donations from SCDC and, more recently, TOPS.

Reconciliation of historic bookings and associated payments dating back up to two years is now underway and most regular users have been immensely helpful by engaging with this process.

Users were again reminded of the facility on the village hall website at www.orwellvillagehall.com whereby they can advertise their club/society to potential new members. They were also encouraged to make payment for their bookings by bank transfer, whenever possible.

In response to a question, MC confirmed that on a month-to-month basis the hall roughly breaks even on its running costs, although there can be significant variations depending on when major expenditure occurs.

Actions:

- **Clubs/societies to pay for their sessions by bank transfer.**
- **Clubs/societies to consider using the village hall website to advertise their activities (text to be sent to MC).**

7. Maintenance report

BS took the Committee through his report, which had been circulated in advance of the meeting.

The following updates were received:

- The lack of oil will be rectified ASAP, through the organisation of a small, emergency delivery followed by a larger fill.
- The microwave ordered on Amazon still hadn't arrived; therefore, BS will cancel that order and look for an alternative.
- The cooker which had given some users problems has been tested thoroughly and found to be in good working order.

- The repaired and replaced guttering still requires attention in a few areas and this is in hand.
- The kitchen and TOPS Room (committee room) have been measured up with a view to preparing proposals for upgrades, which will be brought to the May AGM for discussion.

Actions:

- **BS to investigate possibility of disconnecting timer on the cooker, in case this is causing the current problems.**
- **AP to place the kitchen and Tops Room upgrades on the agenda for the May AGM.**

There were no questions in respect of BS' report.

8. Fire risk assessment

AI took the Committee through the draft fire risk assessment document, which had been circulated in advance of the meeting.

AI drew Trustees' attention to the 'RAG-rated' tables in the report, which will form the basis of an action plan to be followed over the coming months. AI confirmed that many of the red-rated items had already been completed or are in hand. Other issues rated as amber or green will be scheduled and addressed in order of importance.

The need for the hall to have a proper fire alarm system was discussed and agreed by Trustees.

The Committee noted that the more measures are taken to bring the hall up to code in a number of areas, the greater the requirement to inspect on a regular basis and to make a record of these inspections. This will be a matter for discussion at future meetings.

Actions:

- **BS to update AI, MC and AP when he has received the quote for repairing the metal steps to the rear, side fire escape door.**
- **AP to place quotes for fire alarm system on the agenda for the May AGM.**
- **AI/BS to consider replacing the locks on all toilet doors, given that the last reported incident was not the first time they had caused problems for users.**
- **AP to place progress report on delivery of the 'RAG-rated' items in the report, on the agenda for the May AGM.**

9. Covid-19 update

AI confirmed that officers will continue to monitor and take their lead from official guidance issued by HM Government. At present the situation remains, that individual hirers should self-assess the risks associated with their particular event and should take such precautions as they think appropriate.

The golden rule remains, if you don't feel well, don't attend an event at the hall.

10. Update on projects

The Committee received progress reports on the following projects:

- Installation of full fibre (County Broadband)

AP is in regular contact with County Broadband who had confirmed they will start connecting to individual subscribers in February. In view of this, it is unlikely the hall will receive installation of fibre connectivity until March at the earliest.

- TOPS Room

The donation £1,800 from TOPS had been received and report on refurbishment proposals will be brought to the AGM in May.

- Kitchen

A report on refurbishment proposals will be brought to the AGM in May.

- Defibrillator

The Parish Council has placed the order for the installation of this device on the front of the village hall, as agreed at a meeting between AP and the Parish Clerk.

11. Review of constitution

AP updated the Committee on an email he had received from Birkett's (solicitors) quoting a fee of between £8,000 and £12,000 to manage the process of transitioning from the current trust deed to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO).

AP advised also of a conversation he had enjoyed with an officer from Cambridgeshire ACRE. She had advised that it should be possible to make the requisite changes to the current trust deed, without needing to jettison it completely.

The OVHMC is not currently a member of Cambridgeshire ACRE, but should it join, they would be willing to appraise our current trust deed, assist in identifying the changes required to bring it up to date, help draft the new clauses and assist with following the necessary procedural steps to bring them into force.

The Committee agreed that this was the correct path to follow and agreed that the OVHMC should join Cambridgeshire ACRE, at a cost in 2022 of £57 per annum.

Actions:

- **AP to subscribe to Cambridgeshire ACRE on behalf of the OVHMC and to get the ball rolling with the upgrade to the trust deed.**
- **AP to place a progress report on the agenda for discussion at the May AGM.**

12. Communications received

AP updated the Committee on the response received to his letter to Orwell Parish Council dated 30 October 2021, which, *inter alia*, had encouraged the Council to take a more active role in the governance and running of the hall, by attending OVHMC meetings.

13. Any other business

RD reminded his fellow Trustees that in the past, when he confirmed the valuation of the property for insurance purposes, he had valued it significantly lower than the proposed valuation for replacement purposes, on the basis that were the current building to be destroyed, it would not be re-built on the current site. The difficulties of (re)-building on the current, extremely constricted site would certainly lead to increased costs which would not be incurred should a replacement hall be built elsewhere.

The Committee agreed this was a soundly argued approach, that should be continued.

The Committee agreed that in light of recent events, the potential for three additional enhancements should be investigated, as follows:

- Installation of a remote sensor to monitor heating oil levels and trigger an order to a supplier when levels run low.
- Installation of a remote sensor to control the heating in the hall (e.g. 'Hive').
- Installation of a cut-off facility, to minimise the risk of hirers inadvertently leaving the heating running when they leave the hall.

Action: AI, BS, MC and AP to investigate these proposals.

The Chair closed the meeting at 12:30

Minutes Approved: _____

Signed by Chair: _____

Date: _____