

Orwell Village Hall Management Committee

Minutes of a Meeting Held at 14:00 on Wednesday, 20 April 2022



Present:

Ashley Ives (AI) Chairman
 Mark Collins (MC) Treasurer
 Andrew Pulham (CP) Secretary
 Barry Sharman (BS) Vice-chairman
 Val Rees (VR) Pannier Market
 David Titchmarsh (DT) Hillsiders
 Leslie Daw (LD) Bowls
 Roger Daw (RD) Film Club
 Dorothy Turner (DT) Women of Orwell
 Andrew Stone (AS) Orwell Parish Council

1. Chairman's welcome

AI welcomed all members of the OVHMC to the meeting.

2. Apologies for absence

Apologies had been received from Graham Bunnett, Chris Randall, Derek Skipper and Emma Tabor.

3. Minutes of meeting on 11/01/22

The minutes to be amended to show Leslie Daw as representing the Bowls Club. With this amendment made, the minutes were agreed as a true and fair record and signed by the Chair.

4. Matters arising not on current agenda

RD drew the Committee's attention to the strain gauge on the corner of the stage, which had been placed there to detect any possible movement in the structure. This needs to be inspected and the situation recorded at each OVHMC meeting.

This was agreed and AI notified the Committee that a full building survey would be undertaken every five years.

Action: AI to ensure this check is added to the log of building checks and to ensure the check is reinstated.

Ins _____

5. Notification of urgent business

AI advised the Committee that the agreed fire alarm system would be installed during week commencing 25 April and that in his absence BS and AP would be points of contact for the contractor.

6. Review of constitution

AP updated the Committee on progress. The Committee noted that this meeting to agree the Annual Report and Statement of Accounts was itself a reflection of the reforms underway, as it is not appropriate to debate and agree this document at the AGM, as had been the case in the past.

Other aspects of the reforms underway, such as requiring Trustees to complete a 'Trustee Statement of Eligibility' and revising the list of Representative Trustees in the Trust Deed, were also explained.

These changes are necessary to bring the governance of the hall better into line with statute, regulations, the Trust Deed and current best practice as advised by Cambridgeshire ACRE.

7. Annual report and statement of accounts

MC began by delivering his financial statement. He thanked SCDC and TOPS in particular for the grants they had made during the preceding year. He advised the hall is still suffering from the financial overhang of the pandemic in that a number of regular users have not returned and it is feared some may never do so.

Revenue from bookings in 2021/22 was just over £4k, whereas income of £7k - £8k is needed for the hall to break even. The current reserves of £25k are indeed healthy, but they are mainly the result of grants and there is no doubt more regular and ad-hoc bookings are needed to return the hall to a sound financial footing in the medium to long term.

An additional need to be cautious arises from the fact that a number of agreed projects remain underway and these will further deplete the reserves:

- Fire alarm system
- Kitchen upgrade
- TOPS Room upgrade

Committee members asked the following questions:

Q. Are our hire charges still set at the correct level?

A. We need to look again at charges and our charging structures as well as at utilisation of the hall.

Q. Are we being efficient in our use of energy?

A. Our energy costs are significant. We need to look carefully at how we can mitigate these and we possibly need to look at alternatives to current arrangements when time permits.

Actions:

- **AP to look into advertising the hall in the Orwell Bulletin**
- **AS to send AP details of an infra-red heating system he had learned about whilst attending a presentation in his capacity as a Parish Councillor.**

MC concluded his presentation by advising that the booking calendar for 2023 has now been opened on the Village Hall's website and that bookings are therefore open. MC asked that regular users let him know their requirements ASAP.

Action: Regular users contact MC ASAP, to let them know their booking requirements for 2023.

The other aspects of the Annual Report were agreed, subject to the following amendment:

The section 'Objectives of the Charity' to be amended to indicate that the hall is operated for the benefit of the residents of Orwell *and the surrounding community*.

Action: AP to make the above changes before the report is signed by AI, published and delivered at the AGM.

With the above amendment agreed, the Annual Report and Statement of Accounts as presented was agreed by the Committee.

8. Terms and Conditions of Hire

MC advised the Committee of the changes he was proposing:

- Deletion of the sections relating to Coronavirus
This was agreed.
- Insertion of a clause to address non or very late notice of cancellation.
This was agreed, but with an amendment to be made, to the effect that the Committee, through the Bookings Secretary *reserves the right* to impose the full charge on the terms specified, thus injecting a measure of discretion into the process.

Action: MC to make the agreed changes to the Terms and Conditions of Hire and publish them to the website.

9. Matters notified under agenda item 9

BS took this opportunity to update the Committee on the repairs to the steps leading to the rear fire escape.

He had sought to obtain three quotes, but only two had been secured and one was non-compliant in that the bidder had confirmed he did not currently have the equipment necessary to complete the task.

The Committee agreed that under the circumstances the one compliant quote at approx. £1,025 should be accepted.

Action: BS to place contract with the compliant bidder and to notify officer colleagues of the agreed date for the repairs.

10. Date and time of next meeting

This was confirmed as the AGM at 19:30 on Thursday, 19 May.

It was also agreed that a meeting of the OVHMC would be held towards the end of July, to include the following agenda items:

- Review of hire charges
- Kitchen upgrade project – progress report
- TOPS Room upgrade project – progress report

Minutes Approved: _____

Signed by Chair: _____

Date: _____