

Orwell Village Hall Management Committee

Minutes of a Meeting Held at 15:00 on Tuesday, 13 September 2022



Present:

Mark Collins (MC) Treasurer
 Andrew Pulham (CP) Secretary
 Barry Sharman (BS) Vice-chairman and Maintenance
 Val Rees (VR) Pannier Market
 Leslie Daw (LD) Bowls
 Roger Daw (RD) Film Club
 Graham Bunnett (GB) Orwell Parish Council

The meeting started at 15:00 and remained quorate throughout.

1. Welcome

In the absence of the Chair, BS welcomed Trustees to the meeting.

2. Apologies for absence

Apologies had been received from Derek Skipper, Chris Randall and Dorothy Turner. The Committee noted that Ashley Ives had resigned as Chairman and as a Trustee. The Committee further noted that Andrew Stone had resigned as a Parish Councillor and as a Trustee.

3. Election of officers

No other self-nominations or nominations having been received, MC offered to serve as Chair for the coming year. This was agreed.

No other self-nominations or nominations having been received, BS offered to serve as Vice-chair for the coming year. This was agreed.

No other self-nominations or nominations having been received, AP offered to serve as Secretary for another year. This was agreed.

No other self-nominations or nominations having been received, MC offered to serve as Treasurer for another year. This was agreed.

MC then assumed the chair for the remainder of the meeting.

The committee agreed with MC that his fusion of the role of Treasurer and Chair, whilst necessary under the circumstances, should not be allowed to continue for longer than absolutely necessary. For this reason and in light of the fact that a number of Trustees have recently resigned, the following actions were agreed:

Actions:

- **AP to email all current Trustees to seek any volunteers for the Chair's role.**
- **If the above is unsuccessful, AP to advertise for a Trustee/Chair in the Orwell Email.**
- **If the above is unsuccessful, AP to advertise for a Trustee/Chair in the next issue of the Orwell Bulletin.**

4. Minutes of the OVHMC on 20/04/22

The draft minutes as presented were approved without amendment and signed by the Chair.

5. Actions completed and matters arising not on current agenda

i) Actions Completed

- MC is in the process of engaging with all regular users (item 7).
- BS has placed the contract for the repairs to the fire escape stairs and the works have been completed (item 9).

ii) Actions Outstanding

- BS to follow up on the issue of the strain gauge (item 4).
- AP to follow up on placing an advertisement in the Orwell Bulletin (item 7).
- The possibility of moving to infra-red heating to be discarded (item 7).
- MC to check that the agreed amendments have been made to the website (item 8).

6. Treasurer's report

MC took the Committee through his report which had been circulated ahead of the meeting.

The current level of reserves was noted. Whilst this was still relatively healthy, Trustees agreed that in the light of the reducing balance it would be appropriate to review and reduce the number and cost of future capital projects.

On the linked issue of the website, MC updated the Committee on the enhancements he is currently making.

7. Bookings strategy

MC advised of his preferred approach in respect of cancelled bookings. Whilst flexibility should be shown where possible and was certainly shown during the Covid-19 period, the option should now exist to charge a hirer for a cancelled booking where insufficient or no notice has been given of the cancellation.

The Committee agreed that this facility should be extended to MC in his role as bookings secretary.

8. Hire charges 2023/24

The Committee noted that the hall's current hire charges had been benchmarked against those at a number of nearby halls. Whilst it was not always easy to compare like with like, there was evidence that in many areas Orwell Village Hall's charges are towards the low side.

The Committee noted also the significant external pressures it faces at present, including a rate of inflation of approx. 10% on goods and services and a dramatic increase in the cost of heating oil of some 300%. Following a discussion and in order to accommodate these increases and to protect the hall's reserves, the following was agreed:

- *The current charging structure to be retained.*
- *An increase of 7.5% to be applied to current charges, effective 2 January 2023.*
- *Existing 2023 bookings to be honoured at the rate applicable when they booked.*
- *Charges to be rounded to the nearest whole pound.*

Action: MC to write an explanatory email for the benefit of Trustees, which will be sent to the Secretary for dissemination.

9. Update on projects

The Committee received and discussed an update on current and proposed projects, as follows:

- i) Installation of fibre broadband

This had been installed but was not working at the time of the meeting and when it was working, was running at slower than the guaranteed speed.

Action: AP to refer to County Broadband.

- ii) TOPS Room

- *The Committee agreed to the purchase of new carpet tiles, rather than to the purchase of a hardwood floor.*
- *The Committee agreed that the generous donation from TOPS would be used to finance the new carpet plus new curtains.*
- *The Committee agreed that any additional decisions in relation to the upgrade of the TOPS Room were delegated to the officers.*
- *The Committee agreed that the TOPS Room could not be offered as a storage venue for the village archives, although it agreed to return to this matter at a later date if needed.*

- iii) Kitchen

In line with the decision taken under agenda item 6, it was agreed that refurbishment of the kitchen would be suspended, save for the replacement of the blind above the kitchen sink behind the bar.

Action: BS to either locate and re-mount the former blind or to procure and mount a new blind.

iv) Defibrillator

The Committee noted that the installation of the defibrillator on the front wall of the hall is in train.

v) Fire escape steps

The committee noted that these had been repaired and repainted. In respect of the door itself, the Committee agreed there was no requirement to replace the internal handle which had come away from the door and agreed to seek a quote to prevent the door from sticking.

Action: BS to seek quote from Mr Neaves to adjust the rear fire escape door to prevent it sticking.

vi) Guttering

BS advised that he was waiting for a decent rain event to be able to inspect the guttering around the hall for any remaining faults.

vii) Roof

The Committee noted that repairs had been completed.

Trustees asked the following questions:

Q. Can the cable that hangs across the step at the foot of the stage please be re-secured?

Action: BS to safely re-secure cable.

Q. Can we consider replacing the stage curtains?

It was agreed that the current curtains are slightly shabby and let down the overall appearance of the hall post its refurbishment. It was further agreed that should a costed proposal be obtained for the replacement of the curtains, the officers would be authorised to proceed without needing to revert to the full Committee, should the quote(s) be found to be VFM.

Actions:

- **VR to forward the quote she is seeking to the Secretary.**
- **Officers to meet at appropriate time to agree way forward.**

10. New issues

i) Heating controls

The Committee was notified of several recent occasions where the heating was found to have been left running all night and possibly all weekend. It was agreed that on environmental and cost grounds this was wholly unacceptable.

The Committee agreed to the implementation of technological measures to eliminate the possibility of the heating being left running after a hire.

Action: BS to approach Ashley Ives for his thoughts, as he had previously discussed these informally with members of the Committee.

- ii) Upgrade to AV system

The possibility of upgrading the projector/DVD player/screen was discussed.

The Committee agreed that replacement of the projector at a cost of some £3k/4k might be unwarranted at present, but that an upgrade to the screen and possibly to the DVD player in due course might constitute a VFM improvement.

It was agreed to fund the installation of a new and improved screen and to review the situation in respect of other items of kit after this.

Action:

11. Any other business

In response to a question from the floor, it was confirmed that all hall and stage lighting is currently in good working order.

In response to an additional question, it was agreed that the notice board at the front of the hall should not be used to advertise events, whether commercial in nature or otherwise, that are unconnected with the hall. Officers were authorised to remove notices that do not comply with this ruling.

12. Date and time of next meeting

It was agreed this would be scheduled for early December.

Action: AP to identify and communicate the date in due course.

The Chair closed the meeting at 16:15

Minutes Approved: _____

Signed by Chair: _____

Date: _____