

## HERSTMONCEUX VILLAGE HALL

### MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

#### Minutes of Annual General Meeting held at 7.30 pm on 8<sup>th</sup> February 2016

**1. Present:** Joyce Burt: Sheila Charlton: Rhys Clatworthy: Simon Goacher: Cassie Harris: Karen Hathaway: Karena Mayhew: Mary McBurney,(Chair): Gerald McBurney: Bryan Naish: Ian Stewart,(Hon Treasurer). Chris Thompson.

**Apologies:** Jo Angear.

**2. Minutes of last AGM held 8<sup>th</sup> Feb 2015.** Proposed as true record by Karen H and seconded by Joyce B. Agreed. Signed by Chairperson.

**3. Matters Arising.** None

**4. Chairperson's Report.** Copies were distributed

Herstmonceux Village Hall is now in its 16<sup>th</sup> year of operation on its current site. It is a vital village resource used by more than 80 organisations. We have calculated that this means approximately 1800 people per year – a lot of wear and tear not only on the floors but on all parts of the building! It enjoys an excellent reputation not only for its size and facilities but also the high standard to which it is kept. I must record my thanks to Rhys Clatworthy for his enthusiastic and loyal service not only as the Booking Clerk but for all the extra time and effort he puts in at all hours ensuring that users enjoy safe and attractive facilities.

I also want to record grateful thanks to all the management committee members. I think that sometimes people do not appreciate that the hall is managed and, in great part, maintained to its high standard by a small group of volunteers. Each year the management committee spend many hours shampooing the carpet, steam cleaning more than 200 hundred chairs, deep cleaning the kitchen and even repainting walls. A special thank you to Joyce Burt who is steadily reupholstering the chairs that have begun to show wear and tear. Also a huge thank-you to Ian Stewart for his financial stewardship and to Andrew Philips for auditing the annual accounts.

The year has been challenging and at times frustrating. The Hall Trustees own the building but the entire site was gifted by the Ford family to the Parish Council. The site, including the access road is leased to the Trustees of the Village Hall. In January 2015 we approached the Parish Council requesting that the access road, now shared with the new Integrated Health Centre and the relocated Pharmacy, be removed from the Hall's lease. In June the Parish Council agreed to the access road being removed from the lease but 7 months later it still has to happen. In the meantime, Jo Angear, one of the 3 Trustees resigned because of the additional risk the Trustees carry should anyone have an accident on the access road and decide to sue. Charitable Trustees carry personal liability whereas Parish Councillors are covered by corporate liability.

The members of the Hall Management Committee are recommending to this Annual General Meeting that the charity status should be modernised and change to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation which will give much greater protection to Trustees and members.

A grant-aid application has been made to Wealden District Council for help towards replacing some of the 'blown' double-glazed windows in the large hall and Lounge. We are also seeking assistance towards

resurfacing the floor in the main hall – it has, over the years, been re-varnished but advice is now that it should be resurfaced.

Regrettably the management committee is having to raise hiring fees by a modest amount – we have received notice that the cleaning agency is increasing its charges. We have explored alternative cleaning options and will continue to keep all charges under review. One of the largest expenses is electricity – we rely on immersion heaters especially for hot water during the summer. If a way could be found of financing solar water heaters on the expansive south facing roof we could substantially reduce the electricity bill.

The ‘only pee, poo and paper’ notices in the toilets seem to be having a beneficial effect and whilst we hesitate to tempt fate we seem to be having fewer major expensive repairs to the sewage pumps – because the hall is below road level all sewage has to be pumped up to the sewers in the main road.

During the year the committee was delighted to co-opt Sheila Charlton – Sheila has vast experience of community organisations and was immediately helpful in putting together the grant-aid application to Wealden.

During the year members of the Gardening Club had researched and fund-raised for a memorial plaque commemorating the parishioners who had died during the 2 world wars. This is now sited on the outside wall close to the memorial trough. Hopkins, Estate Agents, sponsor the planting of the trough and the local school children undertake to choose and plant the display.

Do look on the website and see the photos of the hall decorated for wedding receptions – it is a popular venue having excellent kitchen, parking and disabled access. We must remember, however, that there are other venues around and we need to ensure Herstmonceux Village Hall is the venue of choice.

In reading her report to the meeting Mary McB. mentioned her particular concern over the delay in movement, at Parish Council level, over the PC adopting the Hall’s current responsibility for the access road. She gave examples of communication difficulties over the matter and considered that the risk to Trustees seemed not to be appreciated at PC level. Mary also spoke of need for the Hall management committee to revise its constitutional circumstances and seek Charitable Incorporated Organisation status, (CIO). This would update the Hall’s Constitution and make the position of Trustee less vulnerable on the finance front.

Simon G. said that the PC had put aside a financial sum for costs of adopting the access road. He thought the hall committee should write ‘immediately’ to the PC about the delay . Ian S thought that remaining Trustees might sleep better knowing that it would be a legal defence in our being able to show that efforts were being made to deal with the problem.

#### **a) Proposal to change to Charitable Incorporated organisation (CIO)**

A briefing paper on the definition of a CIO, and why Herstmonceux Village Hall should change to a CIO was distributed. The recommendation is that the ‘Association’ model constitution is the appropriate model to be followed.

Karen H proposed that work on attaining CIO status should be continued by the hall committee. Karena M seconded and a vote taken which was passed unanimously.

**5. Hon. Treasurers Report:** Financial figures attached. Ian S reported that in 2015 Expenditure had exceeded Income by £630. A proposal would be put to the committee to increase hall fees by £1 per session.

Sheila C. asked about the surprising amount of 'uncleared effects'. Ian explained reasons for such delays with cheques etc. Gerald McB asked if the court action for unpaid bill was included in these. Ian said that matter had 'died' after court action because the debtor could not be found. Karena M wondered if the hall needed a public phone given cost and availability of mobiles. There was general agreement that signal for mobiles was weak in hall area and land line could be a potential lifesaver so should stay. Query was raised about the near £1700 rent per annum hall pays to the PC and how we could avoid such drain on resources. Ian spoke of tortured process through which contribution had become necessary. He thought hall committee would have to write to PC asking for amendment. Simon G wondered if PC might consider awarding an annual 'general maintenance grant' to lessen impact of rent payment. Simon also asked why hall's monthly electricity bill payments remained same despite sizable increase in overall cost. Ian explained this due to fixed agreement which lasts to June 2016.

## **6 Booking Clerk/Caretakers Report.**

2015 has been a reasonably good year, with an increase in our bookings value of 10.50% increase over 2014. This is mainly due to the increase in our charges at the beginning of 2014.

2016 Our bookings for this year are very slightly up on this same time last year.

Our overall annual number of bookings for the last three year is slightly down by 4.2%, and to break this down, apart from the numbers of Parish users of the halls for regular events, residents of the parish are not using the halls for private events apart for children's parties, which is down by 25.2% over this period, but the numbers of Non-parish users has increase by 20.6%. This increase is due to the number of corporate bookings and the Non-parish private events for anniversaries etc.

The corporate users are mainly ESCC and NHS various off-shoots, and the private events has a great bearing on the number of Non-parish members that attend regular events. The regular users bring in 39% of our total income and approximately 39.5% of that comes from our 5 main regulars. Most of regular users rely a great deal of their members coming from outside the Parish, without whom, they would not survive.

Despite that the hall is still looking good in it's 17<sup>th</sup> year, we must not loose sight of the forthcoming needs to be replaced and the need for decoration to keep our attraction to all users and potential users of these halls.

As mentions last year, because we are getting more corporate users it would be an asset to install or have available a Digital Projector. I know that there are other halls around who have these facilities and make profits from holding film shows as a fund-raiser.

Finally, I would like to thank the committee for the support that they have given me over the year.

Cassie H had been told that Extend were not covered by licence. Ian thought this not so, they were being seen as a 'for profit organisation'. Cassie to let him have papers and he will look into it.

Karen H proposed report adopted. Sheila C seconded. Report approved.

## **7. Nominations to be Hall Management Committee Members.**

The following were nominated and elected as shown:-

**Hon.Treasurer.** Ian Stewart (Trustee)

**Hon.Secretary.** Sheila Charlton

**Committee members.** Karen Hathaway (Pre-School)

Chris Thompson (HATS)

Karena Mayhew (W.I.)

Jo Angear, (meeting was told Jo willing to stand).

Joyce Burt

**Parish Council Liaison:** Bryan Naish (Trustee)

As no one offered to stand for **Chairperson** it would be for the officers and committee members to decide on the Chairperson situation.

**8. Any Other Business.** (a) Ian reminded new committee that the website would be changing. (b) Mary mentioned that a Mr Harris, a member of the former Herstmonceux Bonfire Society had a bell which had been presented to the society by the then Spastics Society in recognition of the Bonfire group's fundraising. This had been displayed in the Woolpack pub until recent changes there. Mr Harris wondered if it could be displayed in the hall in future? It was considered this should be decided upon by the new committee and contact details were passed on to them.

The meeting closed at 8.45 p.m.

GKM