**DUNTISBOURNE ABBOTS VILLAGE HALL**

**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING/BIANNUAL ORDINARY MEETING OF TRUSTEES (1/14)**

**WEDNESDAY 23 APRIL 2014**

**MINUTES AND RECORD OF DECISIONS**

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| **Present:**  Robert Towill (RT) – Chairman  P Smith (PS) – Secretary  Colin Russell (CR) - Treasurer  Rupert Lane (RL) - Trustee  Rosemary Wilcox (RW) – Trustee - WI Rep  Trish Maycock (TM) – Trustee - Flower Show Rep  Eamonn Cuthbert – Resident and Supporter  Judy Lane – Resident and Supporter  Averil Kidd – Resident and Supporter  Russell Carver – Resident and Supporter | |
| **Agenda Item** | **Issue** |
| 1 | **Opening Remarks and Apologies for Absence**. RT opened the meeting by welcoming all present and thanked them for their time and continued support. Apologies for absence were received from: Valerie Bexon, Julian Weston and Jamie Eyken. |
| 2 | **Acceptance of Minutes 16 October 2013**. RT reported that the minutes of the last meeting of Trustees (et al) held on 16 October 2013 had been previously circulated electronically with a copy placed on the Village Hall Notice Board and no comments had been received. Additional hard copies were made available to the meeting for reference as required. There being no further comment made, the minutes were accepted as a true and accurate record of that meeting. |
| 3 | **Matters Arising**. RT stated that the majority of matters arising from the last meeting would be dealt with as main agenda items in their own right during the course of the meeting. Exceptionally:   1. **Use of the Allotments Garage**. RT had written to Mr Cosgrove concerning the future of the current lease/rental agreement relating to the Reading Room and attached Garage and a meeting was awaited.   ***Action:*** *RT et al to meet with Mr Cosgrove to discuss and agree the detail of future lease/rental arrangements.*  b. **Trustees Obligations and Responsibilities**. PS had contacted all Trustees to outline their individual and collective responsibilities as Trustees and solicit their acceptance of these responsibilities. Positive responses had been receipted from all Trustees. The process will be repeated again in this new FY. |
| 4 | **Treasurer’s Report/Financial Position**. CR produced draft figures for the year ended 31st March prior to audit. He did not expect there to be substantial changes. These showed a deficit in the year of £40 leaving £2191 in hand. The most noticeable variation from the previous year was the very substantial addition to the electricity bill. This may be due in part to the timing of the bills but mainly to the fact that the Hall was rented in May 2013 for a funeral and which resulted in a very significant unforeseen bill – specifically the hirer had left all the ceiling radiant heaters on, a fact that was not discovered for over 4 days and resulted in the consumption of a significant quantity of energy at an estimated cost to the Village Hall of in excess of £400. This has led to two improvements, the first being that the Chairman has efficiently changed the utility supplier to a cheaper provider and a process review has resulted in a revised booking process that requires advance payment for all bookings.  In all the Treasurer felt that we were lucky not to have exhausted more of our modest resources – mainly owing to fact that last year very little was spent on repairs (a consequence of the self-help effort) and the in-year rental income had been good.  CR highlighted that of the £2191 figure in hand, £489 relates to the Flower Show. TM stated she did not feel this was necessary. The Flower Show Club was essentially in a state of abeyance and in consequence it was only felt necessary to hold back £150 against the Flower Club (as a start-up budget for when the next Flower Show is organised) – the remainder should go into the main Village Hall funds.  ***Action:*** *CR to transfer £339 from the Flower Club accounting line into the main Village Hall accounting line.* |
| 5a | **Chairman’s Annual Report – The Year in Retrospect**  5.1. **General**. RT reported this has been a productive year with positive progress on a number of fronts – the details of which he went on to outline.  5.2 **Process Review**. Considerable effort had been devoted to reviewing current management practice and comparing this to statutory requirements/obligations as well as best practice – essentially a compliance audit. To ensure future Quality Assurance in respect to the way the Village Hall is managed and administered, processes has been written into DAVH Operating Procedures – these are now available for publication but will first be copied to Trustees and interested parties as a draft for comment.  ***Action:*** *PS to make the draft available on-line for comment (if any) by Trustees and members of the community.*  5.3 **Routine Maintenance**. RT explained that following the last AGM a Maintenance Audit had been conducted resulting in the creation of a Maintenance Register to record all maintenance tasks required. The Maintenance Register currently runs to 34 tasks and of these 17 had already been completed – this including all tasks identified as URGENT – and the remainder will be addressed in accordance with agreed priorities as resources allow.  5.4 **Insurance Review**. RT stated the DAVH insurance policy runs from December to December each year and in advance of renewal in December 2013 the opportunity had been taken to take additional quotes to compare against the renewal quote from the existing supplier. Based on an analysis of both the level of cover provided and relative cost, a decision was made to stay with the existing provider. Whilst re-competing the insurance cover, it was noted the property had not been subject to a formal valuation for a number of years and, in the event of a claim, this could have left the Trustees personally liable if the property was under-valued and thus under-insured. With support from Adrian McDowell of Bruton Knowles, kindly solicited on our behalf by Richard Atkinson, the Trust Property was revalued and in consequence the level of cover increased (with immediate effect) from £213K to £331K.  ***Action:*** *PS to write formally on behalf of the Trustees to both Adrian McDowell and Richard Atkinson to formally thank them for their kind and generous assistance in this matter.*  5.5 **Change of Energy Supplier**. Turning to utility consumption, RT explained that together with insurance, utility charges are a significant expenditure liability and one that is largely non-negotiable if we are to preserve the fabric of the building. Following a competitive tender exercise (involving 4 potential suppliers) RT stated that we have changed energy suppliers from Npower to Southern Electric and in so doing have reduced: the ‘Standard Energy’ charge per KWh from 29.14p (Npower) to 11.02p (SE); the Night Rate from 14.85p to 10.23p; and the daily Standing Charge from 44.415p to 20.18p. This will go a long way to reducing our utility overheads albeit we still need to incentivise users of the Hall to be energy efficient and ensure they are cognisant of the cost of energy they use.  5.6 **Parish Council Support**. RT advised that guidance from ACRE suggests that financial support for Village Halls is a legitimate expenditure item for Parish Councils. Following an approach to the Duntisbourne Abbots Parish Council, a grant of £250 in FY 14/15 has been made and this sum will be used to ensure costs to the users of the Hall, especially the Regular users, is kept to a minimum. Parish Council financial support in the current FY does not however serve to set an absolute precedence but it is understood that this support will be subject to annual Parish Council review/consideration given other competing priorities.  5.7 **Fire and** **H&S**. RT pointed out that new fire precautions (fire alarm, smoke detectors, signage etc) have been introduced and installed and a Fire Safety Risk Assessment has been completed and actioned. Further, a new H&S Policy Statement had also been produced and published as has a generic H&S Risk Assessment for use by users of the Hall.  5.8 **Gloucestershire Association for Voluntary & Community Action**. Previously an Associate Member, RT stated that the Village Hall has now enrolled as a Full Member of the Gloucestershire Association for Voluntary & Community Action. Full Membership is at no cost given the Charity’s modest annual income but, importantly, gives us access to a wide range of free or discounted advice and guidance relating to the correct and proper management of a community building – this information being provided directly by GAVCA but also, through GAVCA, by Action with Communities in Rural England (ACRE). |
| 5b | **Chairman’s Annual Report – The Year Ahead**  5.1 **General**. RT stated that the broad intent for FY 14/15 is to continue work initiated in FY 13/14 - first consolidating and then building upon progress made to date.  5.2 **Revised Booking Process and** **Charging Regime**. RT explained that the current schedule of hire charges was last subject to a full review in 2007. The extant charging regime has consequently been reviewed to take account of inflation since 2007 (cumulatively 17.5%), current economic reality (especially increased utility and insurance costs) and an ongoing maintenance liability. A new charging regime has been agreed by Trustees for FY 14/15 and this new regime will be subsequently reviewed at least annually. RT went on to stress that in determining revised charges the Trustees have been especially keen to ensure an appropriate balance is struck between: meeting the aims and objectives of the original Trust Deed; keeping the facility affordable for all members of the community; ensuring that those who actually use the Hall make a meaningful contribution to the running costs; and ensuring hire charges remain fully cognisant of the true costs of running the Hall but also remain fair, reasonable and appropriate for users. This review process has also included the development of a new Booking Form and revised (fuller) Terms & Conditions of Booking.  ***Action:*** *PS to publish details of the new booking documentation on the DAVH website with hard-copies being made available in the white wooden box located in the DAVH Front Porch.*  5.3 **Maintenance Priorities and Enhancements**. RT propsed that the prioritisation of maintenance tasks in the year ahead should continue to be based on urgency and importance criteria - thereafter the focus should be on external maintenance throughout Summer months and internal over the Winter. He went on to state that leaving aside addressing any “unknown, unknowns” it is the Management Committee’s intent to: investigate further the ongoing damp issue (taking necessary action as considered appropriate and affordable); contract some minor electrical work to provide new electrical sockets in the Main Hall (£280); repoint the roof ‘fillets’ located on both gable-ends of the Main Hall (£200); and continue to selectively redecorate DAVH property externally and internally. Further aspirational maintenance activity during the year included: investigation of options to refurbish/enhance the kitchen (including the fitting of blinds or similar); and the fitting of energy saving timing switches on the heating circuit (£600). After general discussion it was agreed to proceed with repointing the roof fillets and the installation of additional power sockets in the Main Hall but not the fitting of timer switches on the heating circuit.    ***Action:*** *RT and PS to take the lead – engaging contractors and co-opting wider community help and professional support as required and as affordable.*  5.4 **Website**. To improve communication with the community (both full time and non-full time residents) RT confirmed an intent to develop a DAVH Website during 2014. A trial version has already been created to act as a ‘test-bed demonstrator’ – the website can be found at [www.e-voice.org.uk/davh](http://www.e-voice.org.uk/davh) Trustees and members of the community were encouraged to visit the website and make comments and/or suggestions to members of the Management Committee.  ***Action:*** *Trustees and members of the community are asked to visit the DAVH website and make any comments/suggestions to a member of the committee.*  5.5 **Reserve Funding**. RT highlighted that analysis of Annual Income & Expenditure Accounts reflects an annual operating loss in 5 of the last 7 years whilst analysis of Current Assets sees a progressive erosion of reserve funds from £7499 in FY 07/08 (accepting some of this figure will have incorporated a sizable ‘project specific’ element) to £2381 in FY 12/13 (and now £2191 in March 2014). This is a trend that is clearly not sustainable – necessitating a need to reduce overheads wherever possible and increase income to both meet current commitments and re-generate and sustain a suitable reserve fund. Best practice advice suggests it prudent to maintain a reserve fund of 4%-5% of the building capital cost (£331K in 2014 = £15K) or at least 3 times the value of annual overheads suggesting a reserve of approximately £12K. This is an ambitious target and there is a need to balance the re-generation of the reserve pot with the need to continue to invest now in both maintenance and improvement/enhancement projects. RT suggested that it might not be wholly unrealistic (given prudence measures put in place and potential future fund raising opportunities) to regenerate a reserve pot of £5K (as an initial target) whilst continuing to invest in the fabric of the building and the facilities provided – this could perhaps be achievable over the next 3 FYs at the most.  5.6 **Promoting Facility Use**. RT suggested that the Village Hall is reasonably well used throughout the year but the Management Committee remains keen to encourage its wider use. Efforts will be focused on measures necessary to improve the utility of the facility and our marketing effort will be directed towards trying to obtain greater use of the facility throughout the week.  5.7 **Cost Reductions and Generation of Additional Income**. RT highlighted that an overall priority for the Management Committee is to keep the cost to the ‘users’ of the Village Hall to a minimum - and certainly at a level that is affordable. Consequently, significant effort had been, and will continue to be, devoted to reducing overheads and achieving best value for money. Most of the maintenance conducted over the past year has also been conducted on a ‘self-help’ basis and this will continue in the year ahead. RT warned however that such support should not serve to mask the size of the overall ongoing maintenance liability and it should be recognised that many important tasks remain and many are technically beyond the abilities of volunteers and will thus require professional support. Additional income for the next FY (and hopefully beyond) has been derived from the Parish Council and it is hoped that other revenue earning opportunities will come to fruition and help generate further year-on-year income. RT stressed that all Trust property that has the capacity to generate an income, no matter how modest, will be exploited – whilst not a business we will be business like. Consideration is also being given to future grant applications (specifically to help address the ongoing damp problem) as well as establishing a ‘100 Club’ which operates as a private (by invitation only) lottery with the proceeds being used to both build up the level of reserve funding and also to fund future major projects.  ***Action:*** *DAVH Management Committee to, collectively and proactively, identify further cost-cutting measures and support the development of potential new revenue earning income streams.*  5.8 **Hallmark Scheme**. PS stated that the Hallmark Scheme is a Quality Standards Scheme operated by Action with Communities in Rural England (ACRE) which relates to the efficient and effective management of Village Halls and community buildings. Subject to further work in the coming FY, PS suggested that membership/accreditation of the Hallmark Scheme (membership being subject to a successful external audit) was an entirely feasible aspiration. Membership of the Hallmark Scheme provides clear evidence of a properly run Village Hall and, importantly, attracts a significant discount on insurance premiums.  ***Action:*** *PS to obtain the Hallmark audit check list and gauge DAVH progress against the Hallmark ‘gold-standard’ – thus gauging preparedness and likely timeframe required to realise the Hallmark standard.* |
| 6 | **Election/Appointment of Trustees**. After discussion of the requirement for Trustees in FY 14/15 the following was agreed:  Ex-officio Trustees (Rector and Wardens )Val Bexon, Rupert Lane and Julian Weston  Elected Members – Robert Towill, Paul Smith and Eamonn Cuthbert  Rep Member(s) appointed by Parish Council – Russell Carver  Rep Member WI – Rosemary Wilcox  Rep Member PCC – Colin Russell |
| 7 | **Appointment of Officers**. After discussion of the requirement for committee officers the following was agreed:  Chairman – Eamonn Cuthbert  Treasurer – Robert Towill  Secretary - Paul Smith  RT thanked CR for all his work as Treasurer over the past 10 years plus (recognising that for much of this time he had also been Secretary too). PS in turn stated thanks were also due to RT for being Chairman for over the past 6 years.  RT went on to highlight Liz Widdows (LW) had kindly agreed to take on the appointment of Booking Secretary in replacement to Cathy Taylor (CT). RT expressed gratitude to LW for agreeing to take on this appointment and also wished to thank publicly CT for all her help and support over the last few years. |
| 8 | **Forecast of Events and Entertainment**. RT was shortly to attend an Air in G Evening which will present and showcase acts for booking – he would consult with others on return with a view to deciding on any future events programme. Further discussion on entertainment generally favoured a Race Night which, whilst entertaining, also offered to opportunity to boost Village Hall funds. |
| 9 | **Any Other Business**.  a. **Flower Show Rep**. During earlier discussion TM had stated the very limited interest in supporting an future Flower Show and, as the activity was now largely in abeyance, stated an intent to stand down and tendered her resignation. The position was fully appreciated by those present and RT publically thanked TM for all of her efforts and support for the Village Hall. TM stated that there were a number of Flower Show items that required storage and after discussion RT offered to store these in his garage attic.  b. **Achieve Material**. RT explained that he had drawn a number of key legal documents relating to the Village Hall Charity/Trust from a solicitors in Cirencester – this to identify what is being help on our behalf as well as the context and relative importance of what is being held. An overall intent might now be to use these documents to register ownership of Trust property with the Land Registry. PS also stated an intent to electronically record all these documents for future ease of reference.  c. **Licencing**. Further to discussion of compliance issues, PS highlighted several licencing issues for community buildings (including Village Halls) and to inform discussion provided an aide-memoir that he prepared drawing on information from a variety of on-line sources. PS further stated that the requirements had been reflected in the revised booking process, Hire Agreement and Standard Terms and Condition of Hire – these for agreement by users of the Hall. |
| 10 | **Date of Next Meeting**. The date for the next meeting was set for Wednesday 22 October 2014 at 1930 hours. |

**P Smith**

P Smith

Secretary – DAVH Management Committee of Trustees

23 April 2014

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