

Minutes of the meeting of the Watton-at-Stone Community Hall Board of Trustees held in the Community Hall on Wednesday 3rd June 2015

Present: Mr. John Meischke (Chairman) Mr. Ian Knight
 Mr. David Stock Dr. Emma Waltham
 The Clerk (Mrs. Jane Allsop)

1 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence: None.

2 Election of Chairman and update of Trustees to Charity Commission

At the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council meeting, held on 19th May the following elections were made.

- Mr. Meischke – Chairman
- Dr. Emma Waltham – Trustee (in place of Mr. Iain Harris)

The next election date for the Board of Trustees is scheduled for May 2019.

3 Minutes and report of meeting held 29th January 2015

The Trustees approved the minutes for Mr. Meischke to sign.

4 Report on items that have arisen since the last Trustees meeting

Mr. Meischke reported on the following items.

- **Weekly fire-equipment inspections**
 Rosemary Brown is carry-out the weekly fire-inspections at the Community Hall and logging them in a report book. Mr. Meischke said that he will be inspecting the report book prior to each Parish Council meeting.
- **Sewer across the sportsfield and adjacent to the Community Hall**
 At the Parish Council meeting held on 19th May, it was reported that the Clerk had contacted Chris Kitts (East Herts Council) who informed her that they are no longer responsible for sewage and it is now the responsibility of Thames Water. It was agreed to write to Thames Water accordingly. Mr. Smith and the Clerk have been actioned to write accordingly. **Action: M. Smith/J. Allsop**
- **Light out in Pavilion**
 Mr. Meischke said that he had replaced one of the light in the Pavilion.

5 Replacement wall of windows and doors

It was reported at the May Parish Council meeting, that the deposit payment of £4,200 plus VAT has been made to SJM (Stanley J Murphy Limited) towards the cost of the installation of the new wall of windows and doors.

Mr. Meischke said he had spoken to SJM today and they are on schedule to install the wall of windows and doors in August. This will cause minimal disruption to Community Hall hirers.

6 Child-Safeguarding Policy

Mr. Meischke handed round two versions of a draft Child-Safeguarding policy.

He asked the Trustees to look at both documents and email him their comments within a week.

Action: Trustees

The Clerk said that all regular hirers of the Community Hall who are involved with children during their periods of hire have given her the name of their Child-Protection Officer (with the exception of Cassie Rason) and have either produced their own child-protection policy or confirmed that they adopt the current version of the Community Hall's child-protection policy.

The current hire agreement signed by all hirers (regular and casual) states the following under clause 1.

‘Whenever there are children present at an event in the Community Hall or sportsfield, the hirer shall appoint a person responsible for their protection and adhere to our child-protection policy.’

7 Development of the Community Hall

At the May Parish Council meeting Mr. Smith said that he was looking to the Community Hall Trustees to improve rather than maintain the Community Hall facilities and put together ideas for how we can achieve this; in particular with regard to the Main Hall.

Mr. Stock said that in the first instance the Trustees should evaluate the report prepared by Village Halls and Community Buildings Adviser Louise Beaton in November 2014 (an appraisal of the Nigel Poulton Community Hall) and comment accordingly, and establish ways of expanding the scope of use of the building. This was agreed. **Action: Trustees**

It was acknowledged that there are financial issues which need to be resolved, e.g., re the funding of the current work to replace the Pavilion windows and doors on the end of the building, and the need to replace the existing boiler system. Plus of course, money would need to be found to fund any planned improvements and alterations to the Community Hall.

Mr. Stock said that we need to review of periods of hire, type of use, busy periods, slack/empty periods, charges, find out what current users think of the facilities, suggestions for improvements, expand the scope of use etc. He also felt that it was important that we encourage input from current and potential users to enable us to move forward in the right direction. With this in mind it was agreed that the Clerk contacts all regular hirers and the last 20 casual hirers to ask them some or all of the following questions.

Casual Hirers

1. Why did you chose to hire the Community Hall?
2. What was your experience of your hall hire?
3. Would you hire the facilities again?
4. Would you recommend the Community Hall facilities to someone else?
5. Have you any suggestions how we can improve the current facilities?

Regular hirers

1. What improvements would like to see at the hall?
2. Would you recommend the Community Hall facilities to someone else? **Action: J. Allsop**

Dr. Waltham said that the Trustees should also seek the opinion of villagers to establish what they would like to expect from this village facility. She also felt that it would be useful to establish new ways of finding hirers. We could also contact local companies, including event-organisers, and the District and County Councils, to find out if they have a need for facilities that could be offered by a building such as ours (e.g. to see where we currently fall-short of expectations, etc.).

New multi-purpose flooring and a larger connecting door between the Pavilion and Main Hall would be high on the list of improvements to the Community Hall facilities. This would go some way towards facilitating larger functions, such as wedding receptions, to take place. The purchase of items such as an overhead proctor and a sound-system would provide an attraction to potential hirers too.

It was also agreed that we need to find out the charges made for the use of other Halls within our area.

Action: J. Allsop

The Clerk to email the following to the Trustees:

- A list of all regular hiring in the Main Hall.
- Projected long-term capital expenditure document.

Action: J. Allsop

It was agreed that the Trustees would have an ad hoc meeting to discuss the outcome of all the above action points.

8 List of requirements for Hall

The list of requirements for the hall dovetail into the above item 7, Development of the Community Hall.

The need for items such as a Microwave will be better understood once hirer's needs have been sort.

The Trustees agreed that new seating was high on the list of requirements for the Community Hall.

Mr. Meischke said that he had sourced a door mat for the changing room entrance. He anticipates the cost to be under £50.

9 Annual Charitable Trust return

The Annual Return for the year ending 31st March 2104 was electronically filed with the Charity Commission on 15th January 2015.

The Community Hall accounts for the year ending 31st March 2015 were audited by McCash and Hay and approved at the Parish Council meeting held on 19th May 2015.

It was agreed that the Clerk submit the Annual Return for the year ending 31st March 2015. **Action: J. Allsop**

10 Potential use of sportsfield and changing-room facilities by Watford Football Club

.Mr. Knight said that John Fitzjohn (ladies football) had been approached unofficially by Watford Football Club about doing some scouting sessions for local talent in this area. If they were to make an official approach, we would have no objections to the Community Hall changing rooms and the sportsfield being used. An appropriate charge would need to be considered.

11 Provisional meeting dates for 2015/16

The Trustees agreed that they should aim to meet once a quarter, preferably a week before a monthly Parish Council meeting.

The Trustees provisionally agreed to meet on Monday 10th August at 1930 in the Community Hall, to discuss the development of the Community Hall.

12 Any other business

None.

The meeting closed at 1445.