

Minutes of the meeting of the Watton-at-Stone Community Hall Board of Trustees held in the Community Hall on Monday 10th August 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 Minutes of meeting held 3rd June 2015

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

3 Report on items that have arisen since Trustees meeting on 3rd June 2015

During the Parish Council meeting in July, it was reported that Thames Water had confirmed that they are responsible for the sewer that runs across the sportsfield and adjacent to the Community Hall and then exits onto School Lane at its junction with Old School Orchard.

With the aid of a camera, Thames Water inspected the length of sewer between the manhole cover at the back of the Community Hall flowerbed and the manhole cover in School Lane and found that part of the concrete parget (the smooth rounded surface of the drain) was missing. They repaired this on 14th July.

A large piece of concrete has been placed over the manhole cover at the back of the Community Hall flowerbed by Mr. Smith to hopefully prevent any future sewage spills from coming onto the footpath adjacent to the Community Hall.

4 Replacement Windows and doors

Mr. Meischke said SJM had informed him that they cannot install these in August due to material and staff shortages. The installation will now commence on Monday 21st September, with completion on or before Friday 2nd October.

The Trustees agreed to oversee the installation of the new windows and doors.

Mr. Meischke to inform the regular hirers about this work by the beginning of September.

Action: J. Meischke

5 Child-Safeguarding Policy

Mr. Stock said that he had deliberately stood back from the Child-Safeguarding policy subject for a few weeks so as to take a break from it and to clear his mind. He said that from the recent discussions and communications on the subject, it is obvious that all Parish Councillors continue to have mixed views and concerns as to whether or not we need or should have a policy at all. And if we did venture towards one, what form would it take and would it be sufficient or too detailed? The comments received on his last proposal ranged from uncertainty to in-depth comments that he and Mr. Meischke felt would take us back to the stage of repeating the detailed discussions that had already taken place over a period of many months/years.

Therefore to avoid us going around in circles and the continuing delays in making progress on the subject, he proposed that we shelve our work on a Child-Safeguarding policy and instead add something appropriate to our existing 'hire agreement'. To this end he said he had prepared the following text just prior to the meeting and proposed that it be added as a new clause to our Agreement for the Community Hall hirings'.

Child-Safeguarding

It is of primary importance to the Nigel Poulton Community Hall Board of Trustees and to the Watton-at-Stone Parish Council that children are safe, and their welfare and well-being are maintained, during the periods in which they are involved in the use the Nigel Poulton Community Hall. This is so they can have a positive and enjoyable experience in a child-centred environment and be protected from any form of abuse, regardless of their age, gender, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, socio-economic background, religion or beliefs.

With these objectives in mind, we remind everyone who hires Nigel Poulton Community Hall for an event that involves children (e.g., club nights, children's parties) that they have and accept the responsibility of ensuring that children are safeguarded at all times while using the Community Hall and its facilities.

If this proposal is accepted, Mr Stock suggested that a copy of his latest Child-Safeguarding policy be kept on file together with all of the related comments on it. This would give us a 'start point' if at some future date, it was felt that there was a need for us to have a formal Child-Safeguarding policy. Also it may prove to be a useful source of information for anyone who asked us for guidance on the subject.

The Trustees agreed with Mr. Stock's proposal and suggestion, and agreed to recommend its acceptance in full by the Parish Council.

Recommendation: The Parish Council agree that the above clause re Child-safeguarding be added to the Community Hall hire agreement. In addition, the Parish Council put on file the latest proposal of the Child-Safeguarding policy together with all comments made by Parish Councillors.

To speed-up this process, Mr. Stock agreed to e-mail all Parish Councillors as soon as possible detailing the recommendations of the Trustees so that any comments can be taken into account prior to the Parish Council meeting in September. **Action: D. Stock**

The Clerk asked if she should remove the current (old) Child-Protection Statement and Child-Protection Guidelines documents from the Watton-at-Stone website. Mr. Stock said that if the Parish Council approves the Trustees recommendations, she should then remove these documents from the website and upload an updated version of the 'Agreement for the Community Hall hirings'.

Subsequent Note and Action: Mr. Stock has asked the Clerk to create a file containing all items, communications and comments etc. relating to our work on Child-Safeguarding. **Action: J. Allsop**

6 Development of the Community Hall

Mr. Meischke thanked Dr. Waltham for her report (that she e-mailed to the Trustees and the Clerk on 19th July) which read as follows.

"I've had a read through Louise Beaton's report on the Hall and these are my thoughts:

Firstly, we need to establish if the community has any needs that are not currently being met (training facilities? office space? wedding venue, etc).

If needs exist, then we investigate if we can accommodate them (using our hall or another facility in the parish), then look at the cost implications of the above.

(Question: is it an issue to change the usage of the hall to be primarily a sport/recreation venue to more of an all-round venue).

Secondly (though of equal importance and this could run in parallel), we should decide if we need to raise more revenue from the hall, to offset maintenance and/or development costs.

If so, how can we do this?

From reading the report, and after establishing the above, I would say we'd seriously need to consider:

Improvements: Wi-Fi, AV, multipurpose floor in main hall, new linking door, kitchen hatch to main hall, windows in main hall. In addition to funding a new boiler.

Setting a marketing budget and plan.

Closing remarks:

I feel we need to ensure there is a proven need for improvements before progressing.

If we decide we need to increase the revenue to build up a contingency and/or help fund changes, we will probably need to look to outside the parishioners to fund that, unless we use some or all of the new homes bonus. So we'd need feedback on how feasible it is to hire out the venue for weddings and other events, training, conferences, etc. from potential hirers.

It would seem the constraints we are faced with are (1) not competing with other venues/providers unfairly (2) parking limitations (3) alcohol restrictions. Perhaps we can affect (2) and (3), so we should come up with a plan for removing those if we decide that's warranted."

Dr. Waltham suggested that we contact an Events Agency on two counts. Firstly to obtain their views on how to improve the Community Hall facilities to attract additional hirings, and secondly with a view to adding the Community Hall to their books.

The Trustees agreed that the Community Hall is primarily a village-facility, however, the aim is to enable the hall to be self-sufficient and not a burden on the electorate. It was agreed that the Trustees need to focus on increasing hall hiring from Monday to Friday during the day. Currently, only Dots and Tots hire the Pavilion on a Tuesday morning for two hours. Upgrading the Community Hall could accommodate functions such as weddings, conferences and crafts fairs.

The Trustees also need to look at how to increase the parking capacity available to the Community Hall. It was agreed to approach Mr. Abel Smith.

Action: J. Meischke/M. Smith

The Trustees agreed the following list of priorities.

1. Additional car park facilities
2. New chairs
3. Necessity for a new boiler (the timescale for this is unknown as the showers are not being used as much as they used to be)
4. Improvements to the Main Hall flooring to allow multi-use. Enlarging the access from the Pavilion to the Main Hall.

Mr. Stock said that we need to concentrate on maintenance issues with some urgency so as to make the Community Hall and its facilities as presentable/attractive as possible (e.g., especially bearing in mind how an Events Agency would view it upon inspection). This may well need to include the purchase of new chairs.

It was agreed to have an ad-hoc meeting on the afternoon of either the 6th, 7th or 8th of September to inspect the hall and agree any maintenance issues

Action: All Trustees

Dr. Waltham suggested that the Community Hall could also be used as a 'Community Hub' by someone who needs a premises to supply a service for maybe a week or several months; or a 'Pop-up-Café' to benefit parents and children using the sportsfield and play areas. However, both these options would need to be revenue-based.

Dr. Waltham to contact an Events Agency in September.

Action: E. Waltham

The Clerk said that there are approximately three teaspoons in the kitchen. She said that about six months ago she donated about 2 dozen teaspoons. It was agreed that to purchase some value teaspoons

Action: J. Allsop

With regard to bookings, Mr. Meischke said that he had a contact at Wodson Park and could suggest to them that if they have a double-booking, they could contact the Clerk to see if the Community Hall could accommodate them.

Action: J. Meischke

- **Total Contract Cleaners**

Mr. Meischke read out the following e-mail, dated 10th August, from Simon Hargood (Total Contract Cleaners).

'Just to let you know that today when I went into the hall, the front door was unlocked and on the latch, so the door could be pulled open. Not sure how long it would have been like that.

Also, the double fire doors at the pavilion end were closed, but not latched on, so a good pull would have opened them. Both are now locked and closed fully.

The floors in the changing rooms are looking a bit tired. It looks like they are scratched quite badly by studs or spikes or similar. It may be worth giving them a scrub to see if they come up cleaner, but mopping certainly is not getting them as clean as I would like.

I think we originally spoke about doing 3 deep cleans per year, so it may be worth doing one soon?'

The Clerk said she had one hirer on the Saturday but could not remember if the Cricket Club had the facilities booked on Sunday.

The Clerk to forward a copy of this e-mail to Mr. Knight who agreed to speak to the Cricket Club about the unlocked facilities.

Action: J. Allsop/I. Knight

It was agreed to inform Total Contract Cleaners that a deep clean would be required after the new Pavilion windows and doors have been fitted.

Action: J. Meischke/ J. Allsop

7 List of requirements for Hall

The Trustees will put together a list of requirements for the hall when they have their ad-hoc meeting in September.

Action: Trustees

8 Annual Charitable Trust return

The Clerk said that she had submitted the Annual Charitable Trust return for the year ended 31st March 2015.

9 Repair to brick wall

Mr. Meischke said that one of the bricks in the Community Hall boundary wall had been removed. To stop further damage occurring he had immediately reinstated the missing brick.

10 Seats in the Pavilion

Refer to item 6 – Development of the Community Hall.

Mr. Meischke said that, with the exception of 8 that are in reasonably good condition, the blue-fabric chairs from the Pavilion had been disposed of.

The plastic seats stored in the loft have all been brought into use and a selection of these, plus teenage and children's seating of the same style, are now in the Pavilion. The remainder of the seats are in the Main Hall storeroom.

11 Annual safety inspections

- **Fire inspection**

The annual fire inspection was carried out on 11th June 2015.

- **Electrical inspection**

The annual safety lighting and PAT testing was last carried out by D. P. Electrics on 4th September 2014. The Clerk to contact D. P. Electrics to arrange for another inspection before 4th September.

Action: J. Allsop

- **Gas inspection**

James Turner Limited carried out the annual gas and boiler inspection in October 2014.

The Clerk to contact James Turner Limited to arrange the annual gas inspection.

Action: J. Allsop

12 Any other business

- **Watton Youth Drop Inn**

Mr. Meischke said that Lyn Oakman had reported that there had been problems on Watton Youth Drop Inn nights in the car park and sportsfield area with older Youths who are not members of the Watton Youth Drop Inn. Disturbances included fighting and drugs. The police were contacted for immediate support but failed to attend.

- **Cricket Club equipment**

The Cricket Club has had a lot of incidents of vandalism and tampering with their equipment this season. The cricket-square posts have been removed on numerous occasions, as has the new fencing adjacent to the sportsfield hedge. Unfortunately they have not kept a log of the times these incidents of vandalism occurred. The Cricket Club did call the police on several occasions and were told that the liaison officer would phone them back; but they never did.

- **Swings**

Mr. Meischke said that he is in the process of obtaining quotations to replace the large and small swings on the sportsfield play area. The Clerk to chase Kompan.

Action: J. Allsop

The date for the next Community Hall Trustees meeting is Tuesday 8th December 2015.

The meeting closed at 2050.