

MINUTES OF HOTHFIELD VILLAGE HALL COMMITTEE MEETING
MONDAY 4th October 2010

1. Present: Tina Marden (Chairman), Kay Pender (Vice Chairman), Anita Bramfitt, Paula Chapman, Sharon (Booking Clerk), Rose Harris, Shirley Horn (Secretary), Peter Howard (Custodian Trustee), John Nicholls, Graham Parker, Chris Rogers (Treasurer)
In attendance: Bob Rivers, Dave Beckley, Kenny Marden

2. Absent/Apologies: Tony Pender

Peter Howard wished Tony a speedy recovery, which was echoed by the Committee.

Meeting commences with Rose passing on the thanks of Peter Patten for the help received on Saturday at the Harvest Festival, unfortunately Peter could not attend the meeting.

3. Minutes: Minutes for 6th September 2010 amended to record the chilli and ploughmans is to be provided at Race Night not a Quiz Night. Also correction to the person who left the meeting which was Paul Eckersley and not Chris. Also it was Rose and Kay that were going to obtain the price for the curtains and not Peter. On this point Rose and Kay say they have obtained a price and the money paid. Discussion followed about the need to obtain the agreement of the Committee for capital expenditure and whether there could be an amount that a member could spend without reference to the full Committee having obtained agreement of one of the Officers of the Committee. Following further discussions it was decided that £100 can be spent, with discretion being possible for items of food for a pre planned event. Authority given at the meeting to Rose for purchase of the food for the Race Night.

4. Matters Arising

Chris tells the Committee that the insurance certificate now displayed in the Hall.

Tina tells the Committee that Danny Latter has given her a sincere apology for his behaviour at the last meeting he said he should not have behaved in that way, he had been round to some of the Committee to apologise and the Committee thank him for his apology.

Tina thanked everyone for their efforts at the Fete and Chris confirmed that the final amount raised was £997.75 with very little outlay the highest expenditure being the catering and DJ. St. John ambulance apparently normally expect a donation of £70 and it would appear that Pat Coles has paid this amount; the Committee accounts show it paid by Committee but a donation of £70 received in order that the true cost of the Fete is appreciated.

Anita tells the Committee that the man who brought the quad bikes to the Fete did well and suggests an email to him to say how pleased the Committee were and Dave confirms that he has written to Lee Rose of the Fire Brigade and Mr Rose commented that it was a good day and was grateful for the response.

Graham is reluctant to sound negative but raises concern about what he saw as confusion over some of the things on the day although he accepts that there was only 4 months to arrange everything and he gave some examples. Discussion followed about this but it is felt that this would not happen for the next Fete because the Committee will have more time to organise the event and rule these things out.

John Nicholls said that the Hothfield Singers were disappointed with the amount they collected

and following short discussion the Committee agree to make a donation to them for the Vera Lynn charity for Children with Cerebral Palsy, Graham makes a personal donation of £20 and the Committee agree an additional £30 from the Committee and John Nicholls thanks the Committee for the donation handed to him at the meeting.

Application for Grant Money - Bob Rivers

Bob attends the meeting in relation to applications for grants in respect of work to be done for the benefit of the Hall or items the Committee wish to purchase for the Hall. Bob starts by outlining the procedure explaining that it is a joint effort by him in preparing the application and the Committee in producing a list of the items needed and obtaining quotes for the work, a lot of applications are refused simply because the applications are not completed properly.

Firstly a list of suggestions need to be prepared by the Committee and put in a priority order together with approximate costs for the items or for work, and consider voluntary labour material or cash contribution from the Committee. Bob will then write the application in draft for the Committee to agree the terms. Once the application is agreed then quotations will be required with quotes on headed notepaper from the companies. Quotations are usually valid for one month however the timescale of the applications means that the Committee need to ask for the quotation to be valid for six months or it to be a fixed price quote.

The Charities that are prepared to agree grants will be looking to work that ensures the Hall stays open/attracts more members/contributes to the environment, these are the purposes that the Committee should consider when putting together the 'wish list'. It is possible to include the odd item that does not obviously give these positive benefits but they need be included with items that do. It is also advantageous for there to be money given by local groups which gives the funders confidence because local groups are prepared to contribute money. To this end Bob tells the meeting that he has already sounded out Peter Patten for £1,000 from Hothfield Education Fund which together with money from the Hall's own funds will strengthen the application. Also important to go to the Parish Council and the Borough Council, and if Parish Council support the Hall would want it to put money in as well. Peter points out that there will be funds available from the Hall Lottery which currently has around 120 members. There was discussion about exactly when the money paid in would be available to be spent by the Committee, Chris thinking that Paul may wish to operate it on a financial year basis with funds not immediately available to the Committee.

Discussion followed of the types of things needed for the Hall - carpet in the lounge area, lighter weight tables, new oven, perhaps a dishwasher, loft insulation and cavity wall and an awning for smokers. In support of these items it would be helpful if there were letters from persons using the Hall stating that there is a need for a dishwasher or perhaps that the oven is not up to standard which would show the facilities are not adequate/sufficient and the local people who use the Hall. The suggestion of an internet café was discussed and Bob pointed out the cost of such a café involving 3 or 4 terminals, security of these when not in use, a number of persons employed to be present during the sessions and there is a question mark over whether broadband can be installed in the Hall in these circumstances. The grant would need to be substantial and be available for at least three years. It would be preferable to bid separately for the internet/computer project.

The cash balance in the accounts may need to be used because Bob explains that these organisations are more inclined to give to those groups that are without savings. Chris explained that although a healthy balance at the moment much of this amount is spoken for.

Bob pointed out there is a legal commitment that if money is granted to the Hall then there will be a letter which must be signed by an officer of the Hall Committee and this will state that the money will only be spent on items in accordance with the application made to the donator concerned. Once the work is completed the Charity will expect a report saying if the Committee achieved the benefits it set out to and may need a record of extra people using the Hall for example.

It is agreed that there be a sub meeting of members of the committee to speak specifically about the 'wish list' together with Bob and it is agreed this should be on 25th October at the Children's Centre at 7.00 p.m. It is hoped the items/work to be subject of the application can be agreed. Bob warns the meeting about installing a dishwasher that would be open to others hiring the Hall to use and perhaps abuse, and a new oven would need to conform to the current power supply otherwise additional electrician costs will be incurred (as well as extra power consumption).

Bob explains that he is unsure as to how much longer he will carry on working on such applications and would like someone to step forward to take on the work and that these applications will be a good means to train someone. Graham volunteers and will work with Bob and Peter Patten, who has already put himself forward.

5. Chairmans Report

Tina asks if the Bowls Club use two storage areas under the stage and John confirms they only use the 4th one, numbers 1 and 2 are not used and there is no key for the 3rd and the one next to the Bowls one was used by Margaret and Mary. Agreed that these need inspection to establish the contents if any and to gain access to the 3rd area. The dog trainer has asked if they could store some items if possible.

John Nicholls raises with the meeting if it is agreed that the boiler should be serviced this year it is agreed it should be and John Nicholls will organise this and liaise with Tina for keys for access. Peter Howard enquires how old the boiler is in the Hall and it is thought to be 5 years old and that there could be a saving in fuel costs if it were replaced and that could be a part of the grant application.

Query raised about the previous discussion in the September meeting by the Committee about an additional notice to be given to the person hiring the Hall listing clearly the main points of the contract including vacating the Hall, smoking in the Hall, cleaning up after events and the possible loss of deposit if these conditions are not kept. Graham has not had any details to prepare such a notice and Chris indicates he will email the Contract to enable Graham to complete a notice.

Tickets are on sale for the Race Night and it is planned that the food is prepared 50/50 even though it may mean some people are not able to have their choice. In respect of the Jumble Sale there will be hot dogs and burgers £2, with cheese £2.20 and pumpkin soup only helpers have free food, Kelly will be cooking the food. There is to be a Halloween party for children on the 31st October 4-7p.m. Agreed that each child should pay 50p to attend.

Tina puts forward a proposal that Gordon Bull receive a token from the Committee in view of the work he did at the Fete guiding cars through and taking the fencing down which he did without any request. Discussion followed that there were a lot of people who gave their time on the day but it was agreed he receive a £10 voucher because he stepped in to help without prompting.

Date for the Fete next year is announced as 6th August 2011.

Tina told the Committee that she had begun arranging a Fireworks event and spoken to John Coles who had agreed his field could be used for the fireworks. Discussion followed about the previous attempts the Committee had made to hold such an event and the problems with insurance, a qualified person would be required to set them off and that previously overall the cost of insurance and staging an event is too high. A number of members are concerned at running such an event. Chris is waiting a response from the insurance company but unlikely to be favourable. No decision made.

Quiz night: a request that the questions be made easier as a number of people attending found it a little difficult. At the moment the Friends of St Margaret's quiz is booked for the 13th November and consideration given to arranging the Hall quiz in January/February.

Discussion about the possibility of a regular Country & Western dance night being arranged next year, staged every two months with an actual group coming to play. Felt it might be premature to arrange them every two months without knowing the popularity and Peter suggests arranging one and see how it goes.

Public Interval: No representations

6. Treasurer's Report

Financial report circulated. Total funds at the moment around £9,000 but there are a number of items to be paid with the £2,500 now spent on doors, and curtains to be paid along with new vacuum cleaner and tea urn, however overall better year and there is some cash in hand.

Chris then raised with the Committee the Ash tree at the Hall and discussion followed as to whether money should be spent on an assessment of the condition of the tree and whether it is dangerous and should be felled or if is possible to save it with remedial work. Alternatively should the money be spent on felling the tree without any inspection. Chris will double check that there is no tree preservation order on the tree. After discussion it is agreed that the Committee will initiate a report on the condition of the tree – Action CR.

Chris proposes that the Committee buy a notice board to display safely the notices for the Hall which he has costed at between £85 and £125. Also suggests some are bought to place between the windows of the Hall to display pictures, things of interest. It is agreed 4 be purchased.

Buildings insurance for the Hall is paid currently by the Parish Council but last year there was discussion about whether this payment would continue and it was agreed then that the Hall Committee would aim to be financially independent as soon as possible. Finances are such and regular bookings have been obtained that Chris proposes the Committee consider taking on the payment of the insurance this year. Some felt that it was early days and the accounts had only just began to look favourable and it may be better if, for this year, the Parish Council pay the amount. On the matter of the request for grants Bob indicates that the bodies generally do not like to see more reserves than annual expenditure and that it may make sense to pay the insurance. After further discussion it was agreed the Committee should pay the insurance to show that we are trying. If we fall back on harder times next year then perhaps the Parish Council may look sympathetically on such a request.

Following the discussion at the last meeting regarding the need for two members of the committee to sign cheques Peter asked if there had ever been a mandate issued regarding the procedure for signing cheques and what it required. Chris confirms he has never seen such a mandate and reiterates that the Alliance & Leicester do not require more than one named signature on cheques although he understands the security benefits of having two signatures and to this end has begun asking John Nicholls to counter sign cheques.

After further discussion it was agreed that Chris will approach Alliance & Leicester and tell them that the Committee has decided that there should be two named signatories on any cheque presented and that they should amend their mandate to suit our voluntary rule.

7. Booking Clerk

The Dog Training had started and appeared to be successful. The photographer had booked for October.

The ContraDance had booked Saturdays until around October 2011, although these would be evenings only (no afternoon session). Where there is a dance on a Saturday they will not have a dance on the successive Monday evening.

Sharon was producing posters for the Halloween and the Jumble Sale.

8. Fund Raising

Dealt with under other headings

9. Any Other Business

Chris asked Peter Howard if there was anything he could report back from the previous meeting of the Parish Council (in September) as their draft minutes (on the website) stated that "Councillors were concerned that the Hall may not have sufficient insurance". CR wanted to know on what this fear was based, and to which insurance. Peter replied that David Parker (another Parish Councillor) would be contacting Chris and also would be undertaking a Health and Safety Risk Assessment. Curiously the Parish Council had their own Risk Assessment of the Hall independently to the Village Hall Committee's own.

Chris reassured the meeting that David had indeed scrutinised our insurances and our Risk Assessment and Chris could confirm that all was in order. Chris was happy for the Parish Council to support us and offer advice but reminded the meeting that all responsibilities had been delegated to the Village Hall Committee.

Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Committee will be on Monday 1st November 2010 at 7.00pm at the Children's Centre.