

TRUSTEES OF EASTLING VILLAGE HALL

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 26 APRIL 2018 AT 7.30PM IN EASTLING VILLAGE HALL

Present: Mr Paul Ainsworth (Chair)
Mr Simon Brookland-Beck (Treasurer)
Mr Roy Piles
Mrs Helen Higgs
Mr Colin Bell
Mrs Sue Parry (Hon Secretary)

Apology: Mrs Hayley Brookland-Beck; Mrs Pat Younger; Mrs Cathy Willis

1 CHAIR'S INTRODUCTION

The Chair welcomed all to the meeting and all Trustees introduced themselves indicating which organisation they represented.

2 MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF 27 APRIL 2017

The minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 27 April 2017 were agreed and signed by the Chairman.

3 CHAIR'S REPORT

The Chair reported as follows:

The membership of the committee has been stable over the last year, with no Trustee retiring. I would like to thank the Trustees, the Secretary and their partners and friends who devote a significant amount of their time to maintaining the Hall and grounds and who have given me such excellent support in my tenure so far as Chair.

I'd also like to give thanks to all those who have helped to maintain the fabric of the Hall during the past year. Having replaced the boilers and redecorated the Hall during the previous year, we had hoped for a year where maintenance returned to a more normal level. Unfortunately, due to the activities of Mother Nature, we've had to undertake some significant work on deterring/excluding mice and squirrels from the attic.

Whilst the problem has been cleared, we've also had to undertake fairly extensive electrical repairs on the wiring in the attic as a result, we believe, of squirrels chewing through the electrical insulation. This resulted in the Hall being closed for a few days recently, but all wiring has now been repaired and an electrical test certificate issued. We also took the opportunity to thoroughly check all the other electricals throughout the Hall, such as emergency signs/lights, extractor fans, PAT testing, etc.

As you can see, a new stage has been installed in the Hall thanks to the hard work of Colin, who has done all of the planning, construction and tidying-up for nothing – a

not inconsiderable feat! The construction has largely been supported by donations, with most of the remainder covered by a recent fund-raising event.

Colin has been investigating reports of a slippery floor in the Hall, especially during winter and, after speaking with experts, it transpires that the floor itself is actually in very good condition but that the slipperiness is due to moisture condensing below 12 degrees. The obvious solution is to permanently set the Hall thermostat to 12 degrees, something that we'll be trialling next winter, whilst keeping an eye on how this effects costs.

On the subject of general maintenance, the gravel in the car park has been getting a bit low recently despite a number of sessions moving gravel from one area to another. As such, we'll be bringing-in some bulk bags of gravel shortly to top it up.

We will also, now that the problem with squirrels in the attic has been solved, be advertising the Hall more widely over the coming months in order to maximise the use of the stage. The Committee would also like to hear from any potential users, in the Village or outside of it, who would like to be involved in activities like music events, shows, plays, etc. If successful, we will look in the future at the possibility of installing lights and a more robust sound system, especially if this can be additionally funded from grants and/or donations.

Bookings were very much on a par with the previous year, although it has been quite a slow start to 2018, possibly due to the cold/late spring. Financially, we still made a surplus in 2017, although around 80% of this was attributable to grants and donations. The extra expenditure as a result of squirrel damage was incurred after the beginning of the new financial year, so won't be covered by the Treasurer's report.

With regards to increasing income, we will be holding a couple of fund-raising events over the coming year, including the return of the popular Race Night, and have also initiated conversations with a number of other Halls as to the hosting a Christmas pantomime. We are also pursuing the possibility of various grants, through bodies such as the Wheeler Foundation and Action with Communities in Rural Kent (ACRK).

We are also investigating the possibility of running a 200 Club, basically a private society lottery, as a way of raising funds for the Trust providing sufficient interest could be garnered within the local community. Tim has checked with the Gambling Commission, and this is an approved method for charitable organisations to raise funds. We'd be very grateful for any comments during the open forum, positive or negative!

As reported at the last AGM, we lost our audio/sound equipment last year as a result of a break-in. Whilst we've been "making-do" during the year by borrowing from generous friends of the Hall, we recently purchased a new sound system. The hard-of-hearing loop has also been checked and can be run off the new system. Given past experiences, the new equipment will be stored off-site.

Work continues on the Village Hall website with a calendar function added during the year. Viewing figures have held-up well, with average visits of around 400 per month. Tim has also done sterling work on the setting-up of a Facebook page for the Hall and is looking at the possibility of making available advertising to Facebook users within a 10km radius (at a very reasonable rate).

Fees are to continue at the current level for the time being. We have compared these prices with a number of other Halls/venues and believe them to be very competitive. These are:-

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| Villagers | £8.50 per hour |
| Non-Villagers | £10.00 per hour |
| All day parties: | by negotiation but generally £100+ |
| Weddings: | £350 |

4 FINANCIAL REPORT

The Treasurer presented accounts for 2017 indicating that the overall excess of income over expenditure had been £2,692, improving on the 2016 position of a £2,493 deficit. During 2017, the opportunity had been taken of reviewing banking arrangements as a result of which the Kent Reliance Building Society account had been closed and all funds now rested in the Trustees' current account. The outlook for 2018 was uncertain as the beginning of the year had shown hirings at a lower level, possibly due to the severe weather and short Hall closure for electrical works. Additionally, income from the Bowls Club would be lower as the Club had reduced their use of the Hall due to falling membership. The Treasurer stressed that whilst grant income was most welcome, this should not be relied upon and the Trustees must find ways of improving income and raising funds.

5 OPEN FORUM

- **Hall Heating** – Alan Willson expressed concern that over the winter the heating in the Hall had been inadequate which was disappointing as £6,000 had been spent on new boilers in 2016. He noted that one radiator had been removed and that on a number of occasions it had proved impossible to bring the temperature in the Hall to a comfortable level. Trustees regretted this had been the case. Stage construction works had necessitated the removal of one radiator and had taken longer to complete than expected and the very severe weather had had an impact. However, new advice to avoid a slippery floor was to keep the Hall thermostat set no lower than 12 degrees at all times and this would be conducted as a trial next winter. The Chair agreed to personally regularly check the heating situation in the Hall and to keep the matter under review to ensure hirers experienced a pleasant environment.
- **Publication of minutes** – following a question, the Chair stated that AGM minutes were published on the Hall's website and that consideration would also be given to publishing the minutes of all Trustee meetings.
- **Stage** – Jimmy West congratulated Trustees on completion of the stage which he felt was a significant improvement in the Hall and would be good for the community.

6 APPOINTMENT OF TRUSTEES

Current and new Trustees were noted as follows:

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| Parish Council/Gardening Club | Mr Paul Ainsworth |
| Short Mat Bowls Club | Mr Roy Piles |
| Parochial Church Council | Vacant |
| Painters Forstal with Selling WI | Mrs Pat Younger |
| Village representative | Mr Colin Bell |
| Village representative | Mr Tim Philpott |
| Village representative | Mrs Helen Higgs |
| Co-opted Trustee | Mrs Cathie Willis |
| Hon Treasurer | Mr Simon Brookland-Beck |
| Bookings Clerk | Mrs Hayley Brookland-Beck |
| Hon Secretary | Mrs Sue Parry |

The Parochial Church Council had been contacted to determine whether they would wish to appoint a new representative to the Trustees as the post had been vacant for some time.

7 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Tim Philpott urged all Facebook users in the village to “like” the Hall’s new Facebook page as a tool to spread publicity further afield.

8 NEXT TRUSTEES’ MEETING

The next meeting of Trustees was noted as 6.30pm on Tuesday 5 June 2018.