

North Wootton Village Hall Committee
Minutes of the Meeting on Wednesday 27th September 2017 at 19:00

Present:

Lesley Cohen, Andrew Lamb, Antony Lamb, Sarah Simmonds, Wendy Border, Barry Watkins, Doreen Taylor, Colin Smith, Bob Angell, Will Border, Keir Hughes

Apologies:

Dennis Blackmore, Neil Pearce, Jennifer Berridge, Bridget Nurse

1. Introductions

The meeting opened with everyone introducing themselves.

2. Minutes of the last meeting

The Committee agreed that the minutes of the last meeting were accurate.

3. Quotes for work on the Village Hall

The idea of installing gas central heating was discussed after Antony discovered a disused gas inlet at the Village Hall. Lesley reported that one quote said we would have to have a new meter installed, along with plastic piping. Sarah and Lesley met with another builder who had not heard of that law; it was agreed that we need to look at the legal aspects of reinstating a gas connection. Keir suggested talking to utility suppliers.

Bob said that he has had a new gas meter installed at his new premises on pre-existing pipes. He also mentioned that perhaps an electric heating and air-con combination would be more efficient. Bob mentioned that there's been noise overnight from the hall suggesting that heating has been left on overnight and suggested we look into the possibility of a timer that would cut off supplies.

Andrew mentioned that there is a timer in the fuse box cupboard, but we are unsure as to what this controls at the moment.

Lesley suggested that radiators would provide a heat source at ground level, rather than heating the dead roof space.

Keir suggested we look at other options such as those that warm bodies rather than the space. Will mentioned that you have to be positioned facing these kind of heaters to feel a benefit.

Lesley reported that costings are coming in around the same price whether we choose electricity or gas.

Will suggested that gas would provide the advantage of saving money on hot water too.

Sarah reported that the emersion heater had been left on and that there is a leak to the hot water tank in the cupboard.

Keir suggested an air source heat pump. These are more economical and he can suggest companies to approach.

Barry raised the idea of solar panels / photovoltaic cells.

Lesley suggested that everyone has a think and makes a suggestion as to what should be done.

Wendy questioned grants - do we need a short term solution until funds are raised? Lesley said that with the majority of grants, work cannot begin until the grant is offered.

Antony said that he has now shown people booking the hall how to correctly operate the current heaters, and suggested that this gives us time to consider our options.

Colin suggested that we can clean the filters in the current heaters ourselves to make them more effective for the time being.

4. New Roles

Lesley suggested creating some new roles. Firstly, a Maintenance role - someone to keep an eye on small issues.

Bob said that he will look at the 'drip' outside the Hall. He has replaced the manhole cover.

Wendy said that the cleaner has reported that the left side of the disabled toilet is always wet.

Sarah suggested that the air-conditioning pipes are causing a leak.

Bob volunteered to take on the Maintenance role.

Keir has a friend who does some plumbing work who can help.

Colin suggested a lock for the fuse box in the ladies' toilets. Lesley said that we'd need to keep a key to this within the Hall. Antony will inform bookings of this.

Secondly, Lesley suggested an Events and Fundraising role. Wendy took this on.

5. Parking

Lesley reported that we have received written confirmation from Meadow Stores and The Woottons Surgery saying that the Hall can use their car parks out of hours. Antony will inform Hirers of this.

Bob suggested a notice board.

We discussed how removing the conifers will help.

Keir suggested we place leaflets on the windscreens of those parking along Priory Lane, and will check with Dorothy as to whether the Parish Council could be involved as an authority.

6. Finance

Andrew reported that we do not have control of the bank account yet - this will happen once the Parish Council has had the Deeds finalised. When this happens, we will move to online banking and finances can then be correctly reported.

7. Communications

Lesley reported that both the CITB and COWA are willing to work with us, providing voluntary labour. The Young Offenders are also on board. Anglia Electrical Wholesalers have donated goods to the value of £300. Wickes have offered their support - we could possibly use this support to update the toilet areas. Cooper and Elms are donating a fridge and a dishwasher.

Wendy said that she is writing letters to companies within the village. It was suggested that these letters have a tear-off strip for people to return. This would be placed on hold until the format of the letter is finalised and we have control of the bank account. It was suggested that any money donated can be used for minor maintenance.

Keir suggested a 'Pre-Christmas Reception' for business owners who have volunteered their help.

Wendy raised issues surrounding previous committee members and booking tactics. Antony reported the same. He said that one previous member has even called future bookings to inform them there is a new Committee and to check whether their booking still stands. Bob asked if the previous Committee has resigned, because until they do, they're technically still Committee members. It was mentioned that the Parish Council has not yet issued a letter to one committee member, as they did with another. The Parish Council can 'vote off' previous members once the Deeds have been changed.

Wendy said that a friend had noticed that there was no mop, and has installed a new one, though we are in need of more. Colin offered to supply.

Lesley mentioned that KL Magazine are looking to run an editorial feature on the Village Hall and our new Committee. This article would have to be photograph led. The Committee agreed to take part in photo's etc. for this. Andrew suggested inviting KL Magazine to the Coffee Morning while the Mayor was present.

8. Future Events

Lesley mentioned that the Macmillan Coffee Morning was this coming Friday and that Unique Castle Rising Tea Rooms have donated a chocolate cake, Tesco have donated biscuits and prosecco, and the WI will be donating cakes.

Antony said he would organise a Christmas Fair and we discussed dates. Antony had discovered that South Wootton were not running their annual Christmas Fair this year. Colin asked if it had to be a Saturday? We agreed on 2nd December.

Lesley suggested regular quiz nights, possibly starting in January. Will said the problem with that could be echoing in the Hall. Wendy mentioned sound deflectors and how they help. Sarah said that she had builders quoting for sound reducing tiles. Bob asked if we knew whether there is asbestos in the ceiling. Will suggested we could get a certificate to find out either way.

Bob suggested bingo events. Wendy said we could potentially borrow an electronic bingo machine. Lesley said that the WI hold bingo events at the British Legion in King's Lynn. The same people go each week, and the WI bakes cakes to sell there. £300 was made previously. Maybe the Committee could do the same? Colin said that bingo is held at South Wootton school and is very successful.

Lesley suggested we focus on Macmillan, then the Christmas Fair and possible business reception.

Colin suggested a car boot sale, and Sarah suggested a mum to mum sale. Will said that these events need to be regular. Keir suggested we look at the semantics of these sales: table-top sale / jumble sale vs. indoor car boot. Will suggested we could tap into South Wootton in Bloom / Open Garden Scheme.

9. AOB

Antony raised the current Hire Agreement, and sought permission from the Committee to amend it to include a mention of car parking at the surgery and Meadow Stores, an updated section on alcohol and licensing, and the addition of a cancellation policy and monthly invoicing for regular users. The Committee were in agreement. Colin suggested we look at people like Premier Bars who South Wootton charge to supply alcohol at events. Bob suggested that we should include a line on temporary-licensing for mobile bars. Antony will include this in the amendments.

Antony then brought up cleaning. Currently the cleaner spends 6 hours a week cleaning the hall, in-between bookings. For this, she is paid £140/month. This equates to £5.38 an hour which is well below National Living Wage. He asked the Committee for suggestions as to what we do about this. Wendy said that she had spoken with the cleaner and that the cleaner has no job description, and was willing to take on extra duties as and when needed. Antony said that currently, deposits should only be returned to Hirers if the Hall is left in a good state and that the cleaner is to report back after bookings. This is not happening. Colin asked who checks the Hall, and suggested we should have a Caretaker. Sarah questioned the cleaner's efforts - what is done in those 6 hours a week? Wendy said that the cleaner has no direction as to what should be done. Andrew suggested that we create a checklist for the cleaner. Bob asked who checks between bookings on the same day, as it is unfair for the second booking to come in to a dirty Hall. Lesley suggested looking at contract cleaners, and will speak to Rachel about how this is done elsewhere. Bob suggested we could share responsibility for checking the Hall. Andrew said that there will be an online calendar in the coming weeks showing when the Hall is booked. Doreen suggested that we stop paying the cleaner cash in hand and that in future she invoices us as self-employed. Antony said he will ask her to sign for this month's money which had been passed to him from a previous committee member.

Andrew showed the Committee the current charges for hiring the Hall in comparison to other village halls - South Wootton as our competition, Brancaster Staithe as it is in a similar state as North Wootton Village Hall, and Thornham as this is a brand new space with top quality facilities. In all cases, it was more expensive to hire North Wootton Village Hall. Andrew proposed that we change our pricing to compete. The Committee agreed. Will suggested a yearly booking option, and Antony suggested monthly invoicing.

Lesley said that she had received an angry email from Slimming World regarding the removal of the sign attached to the exterior of the Hall. Keir suggested Lesley reply. The email mentioned that £100 was paid to someone to have the sign there. No-one knows where this money went. Keir suggested that we should be charging Weight Watchers and Slimming World the same rate. Antony said he would be approaching existing Hirers with the new Agreement, and that currently they are all paying very different prices as the previous Committee charged whatever they could get in order to secure the booking.

Andrew asked if anyone on the Committee would like to be named with the Charity Commission as a Trustee of North Wootton Village Hall (as a charity, not the Deeds currently with the solicitors). He supplied everyone with information on what it means to be named as a Trustee. If anyone would like to become a Trustee, he asked that Committee members complete the form he had with him.

Lesley mentioned the drafted Constitution which is required in order to apply for most grants. She will email this to Committee members for the Committee to agree upon.

Lesley said that new Fire Safety notices were to be produced, making contact details for the Hall available and naming the assembly point as Meadow Stores as currently the assembly point is behind the hall.

Lesley raised the idea of having an Open Forum at Committee Meetings. Should we publicise the meeting and go ahead with this from next month? Doreen suggested we wait until the Deeds are changed and we are in a position to move forward. Colin said that this is not a good idea, given what is discussed at present. Will suggested we wait. Bob asked about an AGM.

Lesley mentioned Contact Magazine, and that we should submit an article monthly. Will mentioned that the current edition names a previous committee member as the Hall's point of contact. Lesley said she had sent an email regarding this. Doreen will submit the article each month.

Lesley is in contact with Your Local Paper regarding covering the Macmillan Coffee Morning. Colin showed Lesley an article in Your Local Paper regarding Tilney All Saints Village Hall.

Colin suggested we have business cards advertising the Hall as a venue. Andrew agreed to design these and Colin will have them printed.

Lesley mentioned the Macmillan Coffee Morning. North Wootton Academy have agreed to display a banner on their fence. Antony has erected a banner outside the Hall and also one along Sarah and Neil's fence, with their permission. Colin agreed to donate wine to the raffle, and flowers will also be donated by Bridget. Antony mentioned that the Mayor is arriving at 10am and the Mayor's Office has asked for somewhere for the limousine to be parked. Bob said that it could be parked at his house. Sarah said she would make a display of articles relating to North Wootton's history. Lesley showed the Committee a questionnaire to give visitors on the day. Bob said that the first question regarding demolishing the Hall should be removed. Colin agreed to supply a First Aid kit.

Lesley said that a notice board (4x3) and a dog poo bin erection quote had come in at £374.95. Bob asked where this would be. Lesley said we would move the rubbish bin along the fence line.

The meeting closed at 21:30.

Next meeting: Wednesday 25th October, 7pm, North Wootton Village Hall.