

**Westleton Village Hall: Charity No 1164038**

**DRAFT Minutes of Trustees Meeting: Monday, November 4th, 2024, at 7-30 pm in the Foyer**

1. **Introduction & adoption of agenda** (paper1)

JS welcomed everyone to the meeting.

* 1. **Present:** John Shepherd (JS, chair), Fran Bartlett (Fran), Barry Banks (BB), Sue Brett (SB), Andy Gilmour (AG), Carole Homersham (CH), Ivor Murrell (IM Sec) & Annie Groves (CM). Frances Berry (FB) by invitatation. Nikki Felton (NF) joined later by phone .
  2. **Apologies:** Received from Liz Barton (LB)

1. **Minutes of previous meeting** (5th September 2024) (paper 2)

The Minutes were approved as circulated. JS undertook to look into the IT for digital signing. **(Action JS)**

* 1. **Matters arising** (if not otherwise on the agenda)

1. List of donor names to be added to be printed. JS asked CM to please help to finalise this before her leaving date. **(Action CM & JS)**
2. FB had received a key for the new lock, but she had not yet received the purchased short film. **(Action FB)**
3. **Urgent decisions & actions taken, and information items**:
   1. CM resignation to be dealt with under item 7)

ii) BB advised that he cannot now lay the Village Hall wreath at the Village Memorial Service. Fran offered to take his place. **(Action Fran)**

1. **Centre Manager’s Report** :
   1. **Foyer.** Seven exhibitions have been booked to date for 2025. BB’s Art for All exhibition used the Foyer through October, at no charge as funds raised are for the Hall. Andy and Linda Gilmour's paintings will be on exhibition in November and John Mills in December.

Volunteer numbers are still good, with less struggles to fill the rota now that summer is past .

Foyer Income (gross) for September was £537 and October approx. £600 (TBC) so this is satisfactory.

The Tech Table continues to be well booked and give a great service for IT problems.

The new VH Tote bags have arrived, and are for sale at £5 each, with a cost to the VH of £3.10. SB reported that 22 were sold over the book sale weekend. Twenty-eight are left and these are now going into storage until Christmas.

Sum-up machine issues. SB has been trying to contact Sum-up, with little success. SB reported that she met the wife of a Sum-up employee at the book fair and asked her to pass on an urgent message of the need for a contact or response, but she is not hopeful. The Committee agreed that the likelihood would be the need for a new, alternative machine, if improved WiFi does not resolve the issue.

The Foyer will be open throughout Christmas on weekdays as usual (closed 25th and 26th )

* 1. **Bookings:**

All is going well with the Lapwings booking, and they are using the Hall each day. This raised over £1K income in September.

**Activities development:**

1. CM spoke of interest from an instructor from Framlingham about offering Chair Yoga on Wednesday lunchtimes, followed byPilates. JS expressed concern on a possible conflict with one of our existing hall hirers and said that if this was followed up, the Trustees was they would prefer to avoid any conflict in Hall hire and hoped that this could be resolved amicably by negotiation.
2. CM has been asked to bring back Zumba, so an expressions of interest request will go out in November by mailchimp.
3. The organisation of a dog training classon Monday nights is being attempted, with the cooperation of the Parish Council, which has a regular monthly booking (see item (j) below)
4. Interest has been raised from some volunteers/villagers in starting up a Death Café. This was discussed with Trustees a few years ago. There was some discussion about the intentions behind such an event. It was not to deal with bereavement, which is already being addressed in the Village by the Church, but with exchanging information ‘*to increase the awareness of death with a view to helping people make the most of their lives.’* Fran expressed an interest and was asked to investigate the level of possible support with one of the proposers. If this seems likely to achieve support, a newsletter e-mail can then be sent out for a start date next year. If there is insufficient interest, then the idea is to be dropped **(Action Fran)**
5. CM has been talking to an art tutor, Annie Rice, who runs classes in Beccles, and would like to run 3-4 **art** workshops here, on weekends in 2025.
6. Simon Bridge (who ran Shakespeare sessions a few years ago) is keen to give more performances/talks concerning local stories or folklore. These could possibly be on Sunday nights. CM is working with John Ash to develop ideas.
7. The hairdresser is retiring, the last session will be in early December. CM asked for any recommendations?
8. The foot care professional is looking at options for a new medical bed that is height-adjustable, but has so far been unable to find anything suitably movable.
9. Private bookings are increasing e.g. children’s party 23rd Nov. The Suffolk Naturalists Society gave lovely feedback to CM on their use of the Hall and have booked for next year. There are four Tallis Orchestra dates in the diary, but the bookings are yet to be confirmed. Other events coming up soon are the Christmas Craft fair on 30th November and Christmas Miscellany on 13th December. Events will be discussed further, later in agenda.
10. The Parish Council will meet in The Foyer for a trial period, to see if it meets their needs. This will free the main Hall for other uses. BB reported that the Parish Council vote to do this was 7 for and 4 against, and JS expressed the Trustees thanks that they were prepared to try the experiment. BB stated that the Parish Council will want to go back to Main Hall use, if the experiment is not successful.
    1. **Maintenance:**
11. CM has asked the electrician to quote for an archive room thermostat, also for moving the router to outside the A/V cupboard due to weak signals. A quote for a wireless switch for kitchen lights has also been asked for, nothing heard back yet. Using a portable heater in the archive room works for hirers and the archive team, but is not ideal.
12. Issues with audio visual equipment are being looked into (auxiliary audio was not working for an Ipad that morning). JS explained that there was a problem with the new audio socket, which would be fixed.
13. BB and CM are updating the maintenance list in the consultation room.
14. Fire alarm dial-out requires a 3G signal and is therefore no longer working, (see item 6(a) below)
15. CM has applied to East Suffolk Council for building consent for replacement Hall windows.

**General**

1. CM has provided more advice to Yoxford Village Hall on kitchen design and shared our volunteer policy developed by NF. Their people want to meet with CM and JS, to discuss Hall management in more detail.
2. Volunteers Thank You event will be on Monday 6th January. Trustees are all invited to attend and invitations will go out to all volunteers. The cost for the event is the same as last year (£5 volunteer, £10 partner/friend). The menu has been confirmed with James Finch, who will cater. BB and his wife Sam volunteered to help with the event.
3. Acoustic panelling: Linda Gilmour has seen some attractive panelling that could be suitable for the Foyer, JS will talk to her about it. JS reported that an acoustic test by a consultant would cost about £900, so he was trying to avoid that, he will talk with Linda and apologised that his progress on this is slow. **(Action JS)**
4. Christmas decorations will go up in the last week of November. New lights and ideas received from BB. JS, CM and team will decorate inside the hall, Lapwing will do the big main hall Christmas tree. FB agreed to deal with a Foyer Christmas tree. **(Action FB)**
5. **Trustee matters**:
   1. Mark Solomons (MS)had been proposed as a WVH Trustee. This was held over for the next meeting, since he had subsequently applied for the position of CM, which was not consistent with being a VH Trustee. JS had asked him not to attend tonight and this would be reviewed after selection of the new CM. MS has expressed a willingness to become a Trustee if he does not gain the CM role.
6. **Reports from Subcommittees**
7. **Operational and H&S** 
   * 1. Maintenance report

BB reported that although Karma had done excellent work on the exterior lights and fire alarms, he cannot get them interested in the dial-out problem with the fire alarm (which they had installed). JS suggested that we could possibly replace the dial-out module with a device from another company. BB will continue to pursue this. **(Action BB)**

BB reported that getting people on site to assist with the issues we are trying to progress is a continuing problem. There has been no interest in inspecting the drain in the yard. He has not sought a quote for resurfacing the car park as he realised that if we were successful in obtaining grant funds for a hall extension, it could mean digging up the car park, so he would leave on hold that for the present. This suggestion was agreed by the Trustees.

Seeing the Hall emptied for the book fair had shown how scruffy the lower portions of the wall looked, scuffed by stacked chairs. After some discussion it was agreed that a small volunteer task force could paint this area all around the Hall, up to just above where a protective dado could be fitted in due course. It was agreed that this could be a slightly different colour to the existing one. Yeoman are the company who provide the protective dado and they would wish to fit it. The Trustees agreed that, when appropriate, this should ideally be installed all around the Hall. BB said that he had noticed that Yeoman also supply sound proofing and will investigate that further**. (Action BB)**

When 15 parking places are lost on the street (after the proposed double yellow lines are installed), BB thought that ‘rogue’ parking would take place in the VH car park. He suggested a bollard be installed in the entrance. After some debate it was agreed that a simpler option would be an (unlocked) chain across the entrance when the Hall is not in use at night and at weekends, with a sign on it indicating that parking was only for VH users.

1. **Finance**
2. Treasurers report: Income and Expenditure update:

SB reported that she had (as agreed) not produced an accounts update statement for October, having been busy with the Book Sale, but there had been no significant unexpected changes since the September presentation. SB would therefore only draw attention to a few salient points:

£55,000 was transferred from the HSBC interest account to a COIS account, as the better interest rate should earn us an extra £300 per annum.

The incomes from recent events were:

Quiz Night (September) £342 Flea Market £461 Hosepipe Band evening £299

The Book Sale income will be in excess of £1900, with some funds still to come in. (last year it was £2012)

The Art for All Sale work was left displayed on the main Hall wall for the duration of the Book Sale and a further £600 was taken from this for Barbara Buckley’s fund raising.

1. **People & Skills**:
2. What is WVH policy on Hall users who are vulnerable members of the community, either at risk of neglect or with mental health issues?' (FB) (carried forward from last meeting)

FB asked if the Village Hall has a role to play with helping people who have been ill or are having problems? By this she meant in their homes, not in the Hall. There was quite a debate on this, whilst there was empathy with such problems, it was difficult to see how the VH could realistically do much to help. Soup and Pud morning was already bringing older members of the village together and the Foyer was open every morning. It was pointed out that some people might regard an approach to help as an intrusion, and any help needed might require qualified personnel. Fran was asked to look into this matter, perhaps with somebody involved in Soup and Pud? NF offered to do some research on what sources of help are available. (**Action Fran and NF)**

1. **Marketing, Events & Activities**:
2. **Past Events** Vera Morris Talk, Autumn Quiz, Flea Market, Hosepipe Band, Book Fair
3. **Future Events** Christmas Cheer, Volunteers Thank You event, Antarctic Talk, Sea Shanty Evening, VE Day.

JS referred to Fran's circulated report of the Events meeting of September 3rd, which had given a good update.

Fran reported that The Artic talk by David Barnes would be combined with the seasonal supper and would take place on February 15th. James Finch would provide the food, but was unable to serve due to other commitments that evening. We shall therefore need to organise this ourselves. **(Action Events Committee)**

AG reported that The Sea Shanty evening, with fish and chips, was being organised for March. **(Action AG)**

The Christmas Quiz will not take place this year, but Tom Ash has agreed to organise another quiz in 2025.

The main Christmas event will be on December 13th, John Ash is organising with Simon Bridge to tell ‘Ghost stories at Christmas’, with mulled wine and mince pies.

BB advised that Andrew Turner would like to meet with JS , Annie and himself to ensure no clash of dates with next year’s Village Picnic. **(Action JS, BB, CM**)

1. **Governance:**
2. The Risk Register update had been postponed to allow time for work on other issues

Four papers had been circulated by NF to Trustees. Two dealt with Lone Working, one with Bullying and Harassment and the fourth was the Financial Regulation & Budget policy. JS stated that the first three papers were not significant changes to the existing policy, but there were issues to discuss and agreed on the Financial paper. After short debate IM proposed that the Lone Working and Bullying papers be adopted and this was carried nem.con..

JS stated that there were two main items to define in the Financial paper:

1. Should an inventories of goods held in the Foyer be undertaken on a quarterly basis?
2. What should be a declared operating reserve?

Three-months was agreed as a reasonable stock taking requirement for the Foyer. The financial reserve debate spread quite widely. JS and SB have suggested an operational (unrestricted) reserve of 1 year’s turnover to allow for any unexpected major problems, such as major maintenance or loss of income. This could mean holding around £45,000 in restricted reserve. Some Trustees thought a year’s turnover of unrestricted reserve could pose a future problem, particularly if we were bidding for a large amount of grant funding. JS proposed that we should include a statement allowing flexibility and explaining the rationale. He undertook to revise the level of reserves statement with NF and circulate it in clean draft form by e-mail so that this could be recorded back to the Secretary as acceptable, again by e-mail, so that the financial document could also then be adopted. **(Action JS, NF)**

**CM left the meeting at this point.**

1. **Resignation of the Centre Manager *(Grant project discussion delayed in lieu of this urgent item)***
   1. To discuss and agree the job description of this role.
   2. Action plan to find a suitable candidate for the task
   3. Interim coverage

JS said that he had two items to add to this item. The first was a leaving event for Annie as CM, at Noon on Friday November 29th, with a general invitation to all who wished to attend. The issue was discussed, but the plan was subsequently amended by email, as follows: VH funds could be used to provide a suitably decorated nice cake to go with a glass of fizz (e.g. prosecco or elderflower cordial). The Trustees agreed to contribute for the cost of the drinks. JS also proposed that Annie and her partner be invited to be guests of honour to the Volunteers evening on January 6th. This was unanimously agreed.

JS then confirmed the actions taken arising from the emergency Trustees meeting to discuss the CM resignation on October 30th. This included the newsletter e-mail about the vacancy and the job description, the selection of the three interviewers and the local posters drawing attention to the information on The Village Hall website. This had so far produced three applications, and many people already know their names because the candidates are telling people they have applied, so he named the three. There was a request for the poster advertising the vacancy to go out for display in other local village halls, which was approved but could not be allowed to delay the current stated application date of November 11th , nor the stated interview date of November 15th. IM agreed to produce the next morning 3 posters for JS and 3 for SB to distribute. **(Action IM, JS, SB)**

It was agreed that if there was a delay in the start date for a new CM, then the Trustees would have to carry out some tasks, and should shadow the CM after 15 November as necessary, to ensure effective cover.

1. **Date of next meeting**: JS proposed Monday January 13th 2025. IM will circulate the date to check that a quorum can be made on that date **(Action IM)**
2. **The meeting closed at 09.55 pm.**