

ALSTONEFIELD VILLAGE HALL COMMITTEE AGM MINUTES

The Annual General Meeting of the Alstonefield Village Hall Committee was held at the Village Hall on Wednesday 29th July 2020 at 6.30 p.m.

Present: Martin Snodin, Margaret Cohen, Frank Lipp, Mandy Turley, Debs Railton, Jo Griffin, Anne Morgan, Dave and Val Littlehales.

In attendance Cathy Reavy

Apologies: None

Chairman: Martin Snodin took the chair.

Minutes: The minutes of the last A.G.M. held on 12th June 2019 were agreed as a correct record.

Treasurer's Report: Debs Railton presented the examined and signed financial report for the past 12 months 1st April 2019 to March 31st 2020. This is filed with these minutes. She highlighted the following points:-

Using graphic demonstrations, she showed the breakdown of income and expenditure. It had been a good year, and finances were sound. Lettings were up, now 31% of income and concerts gave a steady profit of £447 each on average, the bar and raffle together providing over 50% of this profit. Donations were up to 14% largely due to compensation from Santander Bank for breaches of confidentiality and poor service. There had been high maintenance expenditure on the hall, keeping our excellent facilities in good order, with several new additions provided during the year. Closure of the hall from March until the present time would make a major deficit on our income this year, and would be likely to exceed the £10,000 grant from SMDC to assist village halls. However our finances remain in good shape to withstand these pressures. We now have two Yorkshire Bank Accounts, and Debs will close the Santander Account in the near future. The treasurer's report was adopted unanimously.

Chairman's Report: Chairman's report

Thank you all for coming and I apologise for the delay- about 2 months delay!

I'd just like to start the meeting by putting on record the Committee's respects to our co-member Ian Longdon, who attended meetings and helped out whenever he could, and whenever his health permitted. A card was sent to Rebecca and the family expressing our sympathy and thanks.

To the rest of my report. It's worth reminding of the purpose of the AGM, which is basically threefold:

- To allow the committee to be reminded of our achievements and work over the year.
- To have an update on our financial position up to 31 March, which Debs has done; and
- To elect committee members for the next year, bearing in mind we all 'retire' at the AGM.

Looking back, to 2010 to be precise, and well before I joined the committee, things weren't looking particularly rosy, and an EGM was called to see what could be done, about difficult finances and lack of support. A great deal was achieved in the years that followed and, a decade on, how do things look? Well we started the year with some changes to the Committee and a healthy bank balance, over £40,000, enabling us to look again at re-surfacing the car park, which was raised as an issue as long ago as 2011. We should all keep in mind that the purpose of our charity is to maintain the facility, not acquire funds for its own sake, and any funds over and above what we need for everyday running costs need to be used or earmarked for projects, or otherwise explained in our policies. For example, we may choose to keep some reserves for potential emergencies such as pandemics – not just COVID-19 - the Hall has previously suffered drops in income from things like foot and mouth disease (last time in 2003), so nothing's new!

More prosaically, we started the year having just installed a new dishwasher, which proved its worth, I think, once people got used to the idea! In August, we had the floor re-furbished, delighting our regulars – particularly Indoor Bowls. We replaced the heavy stage, with a modern lightweight version – something we'd talked about doing 7 years ago. The place has been re-decorated, by Richard Allen – and it looks a lot brighter for it. We had two new outside benches installed -one courtesy of the

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Leadenboot event committee, the other a public donation. And we had the outside locks changed, with smart new handles!

On a more general front, we revised our hiring charges, differentiating more for commercial and weekend hirers, but still remaining good value for money and more than competitive with other village halls. Debs and Jo have worked together to improve the way we reconcile bookings with payments, using a shared spreadsheet.

Our healthy bank balance continued to grow, with general hire income being boosted again by fund-raising profits from car boot refreshments, the New Year Market and concerts. We started 2020 on a really bull-ish note by joining in with the nationwide Village Halls Week, and it was great to show-off what we have here.

But as we all know, everything changed in the last couple of months of our financial year to 31 March, as the COVID-19 pandemic began. By early March, the Hall had effectively closed down, and the village had set up its Action & Support Group.

Almost straight away, we established that the Post Office was an essential service and could continue. And by the end of the month, the Hall was being used daily by Cathy Reavy and her small band of helpers to make scrubs and gowns for front line health workers. They continued until the end of May (having made an amazing 437 gowns and 183 sets of scrubs).

Of course, the usual activities of the Hall also ground to a halt. Not just normal user group hiring but also the monthly concerts – one of our largest income sources – and car boots. Unfortunately, the death of Brian Allen during the year had already raised doubts about car boots re-starting in Spring, even without the COVID impact.

So it's been a real roller-coaster of a year, starting with great positivity but ending with huge uncertainty. That uncertainty continues even now, with no real light at the end of the tunnel yet. As Debs will report in our general meeting, our financial situation is strong and we have received the village halls grant from Staffordshire Moorlands, but with almost no income coming in, and some overheads still to pay, we will need to keep an even closer check on our finances for a while. And we need to actively encourage our regular users back – they're what we exist for. We just need to make sure they feel they can do so safely.

Finally, I should like to thank all committee members for being willing to carry out the role and for their contribution during the year. I'd like to record our thanks, too, to Pauline Hambleton, who cleans the Hall and goes the extra mile to ensure its ready for anyone to use. And also to Alan Barnard who has again audited our accounts.

I don't like singling out any one person on the Committee for their work – we all do a great deal - but I must make an exception for Margaret, who has been on the Committee since 2004. She has always been efficient and accurate with her secretarial and admin tasks but – much more than that – is totally committed to the Hall's success and has helped out with every aspect (even helping Anne – another long term stalwart - by working away in the Old School Garden). As the committee gets used to getting on without her, I hope she'll act as our unpaid consultant if ever the need arises. Thank you, Margaret; thank you all.

Representative Members:

The following members agreed to stand:-

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| - Friendship club | Mandy Domville |
| - Parochial Church Council | Val Littlehales |
| - Parish Council | None (they do not wish to be represented) |
| - Alstonefield Cricket Club | None |
| - Mother and Toddlers Group | None |
| - History Group | Martin Snodin |

Elected Members:

The following agreed to serve on the committee as elected members and were elected:-

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- Jo Griffin
- Frank Lipp
- Dave Littlehales
- Debs Railton

Co-opted Members:

The following member was co-opted on to the Committee:

- Anne Morgan

Since no new members have been found thus far, it was agreed that a committee of eight members was sufficient, with a list of helpers to support the committee in running events.

Matters Arising - None.

A.O.B: - Cathy Reavy raised concerns about hirers complying with all the regulations required to prevent the spread of Covid19 infection, e.g. the use of visors and keeping lists of attendees. She plans to resume Threads bookings in October 2020. Cathy was reassured by the Chairman that we would work together to ensure necessary risk assessments are done and appropriate actions taken for everyone to feel as safe as possible.

The meeting closed at 7.30 pm