

Alstonefield Village Hall Committee

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting (AGM)

Held at the Village Hall

on Wednesday 26 April 2023

Minute taker: MS

Item:

1 **Apologies:** None

2 **Members present:**

Dave Littlehales(DL), Joanna Griffin(JG), Debs Railton(DR), Martin Snodin(MS), Kevin Stockton (KS)

3 **Others present** (*names of members of the public attending do not need to be recorded*):

Cathy Reavy, Jon Lane Carrie Osborne, Lois Adams, Joe (from Hope Farm), Kate Jayden, Jo Wood, Charlotte Jordan, Mark Smith, Duncan Scroggs, Liz Power, Margaret Cohen

4 **Minutes of the last AGM** to be signed as a correct record, or corrected:

Agreed as a correct record

5 **Financial report** (Treasurer's report)

DR presented the accounts, which have been inspected and approved (and co-signed) by Rebecca Longdon. Attached below.

Comments on Income

Income has remained steady with lettings at a fairly normal level now and some grants continuing. Refunds and compensation have provided a significant source of income in the last few months! (Gross) concert revenue has again been the greatest source of income.

Comments on Expenditure

Concert expenses were the greatest outlay, but generated overall profit of over £4,000. Given the relatively high capital balances, projects have already begun to make improvements to the kitchen (with over £3,000 already paid in advance) and the Old School Garden (the initial planning costs were grant-aided, and now paid). There are still other grant aided reserves not spent, i.e. the balance of c£1,5000 for heating oil/electricity costs and £1,000 for the generator project.

After her report, DR confirmed she is stepping down from the committee.

6 **Report on the preceding year** (Chair's report)

MS read his report in full, confirming that this would be the basis of the annual report to the Charity Commission:

"Could I Just start by thanking Debs for her hard work as Treasurer and as a committee member, and we should record our thanks, too, to Rebecca Longdon for her independent examination of the accounts again.

This time last year, having none of the café income we had in the previous year, and with COVID grants coming to an end, I reported that we should be realistic in looking ahead and

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that we may well see a fall in our capital balances by the next year end. So it's good to hear from the Treasurer's report that we remain as financially sound at the end of the year as we were at the start. [If it hadn't been for the advance payment for the kitchen improvements, we would have seen an overall increase of c.5% (to over £57,000.)

At the same time, as a charity with specific constitutional objectives, the money we have must be used towards those objectives, and not accumulated for its own sake or for an undefined 'rainy day'. It's all about maintaining this place for people to be able to use, nothing else. And for this reason, we have a Reserves Policy that sets a limit of what we ought to hold. That limit is £46,000. It's only a guide for us, but we are clearly above that threshold.

Hence we have a couple of projects happening now that we feel are a good way to enhance the facilities – improvements to the kitchen and the Old School Garden, which we do, of course, own.

The kitchen improvements and associated carpentry work could cost somewhere close to £10,000, depending on how far we wish to go. Already you can see the way this is going to look and how it should be more attractive to hirers, as well as addressing some important H&S aspects.

The Old School Garden is a potentially really exciting new project, which we want to see involving as many people as possible in the implementation phase. We already have a provisional plan [visual] but we intend holding a village meeting when everyone will be invited to contribute ideas and thoughts. With some fundamental re-design ideas, hard surfaces, seating and new planting, it's not going to be a cheap project, but we think it's a good use of our funds.

It's time to thank a few people. In terms of committee members, there aren't many of us, which makes it even more appropriate I record our thanks for everyone's efforts. But we also rely on help from others, and I'd like to put on record again our thanks to Pauline Hambleton, who despite her busy life, manages to clean whenever we ask - and sometimes when we don't. There are others, too, such as our partners and people who help with jobs such as concerts, and I personally want to thank Kate, Claire, Mandy, Colin and Jon in particular here.

Finally, in news that has been widely trailed, I confirm I won't be continuing as Chair after this meeting. Sadly, I stand accused by one committee member in particular of causing two other trustees to leave the committee and of having an overly authoritative style. I'm not going to comment or get into the rightness or wrongness of those assertions here, but in any event, I inherited the role with some trepidation when Jean Allen died in 2018 – it's not a role I particularly wanted or expected - and after over 4 years, I think it's time to hand over.

After 8 years on the committee in general, I feel proud, justly I hope, of playing a part in us becoming far more financially sound, with some significant improvements such as the floor refurbishment and the car park re-surfacing, an important investment costing some £30,000. With Dave and Val's help, we've benefited hugely from the good level of fund raising income from concerts, which have also provided an obvious community benefit.

There have been challenges - COVID being the obvious one – but we met that challenge better than some, not just financially but also in encouraging user groups to return, with a community café proving hugely popular while it lasted.

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Aside from these obvious projects, and more prosaically, I'm equally glad to have set in motion a much better governance system for the committee to take forward, with a set of policies and procedures in a user-friendly online Handbook that ought to avoid misunderstandings and confusion in future about 'how we do things around here'. Linked to that, we've a much stronger basis for complying legally with Health & Safety rules, with a better risk assessment framework, leading to a recent confirmation of a good standard from the Staffs Moorlands Fire Safety Officer.

One disappointment to me is that I was unable to get traction to the idea of moving us towards a different kind of charitable status, i.e. the Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO), so we remain, I feel, seriously constrained by our 50 year old constitution (as will become evident when we discuss committee membership in a moment). It's not fit for purpose and even a re-draft of its wording can't address all of the issues – it's something I recommend the committee returns to at some stage.

Looking ahead, I'm sure there are plenty of initiatives that our future committee, with a new Chair, will be able to think of, to help secure this place for the future."

7 **Committee membership for the following year:**

The meeting had been advertised expressly as an evening for Parish residents (as beneficiaries of the trust) with 'cheese and wine' available. It was successful in attracting a good number of locals, several of whom offered to join the committee. Elected and co-opted members were provisionally allocated by the Chair as below, subject to confirmation at the next general meeting, when the Chair and any officer positions can be finalised.

i) Nominations for (max 6) Representative Members *(potential user groups to be invited every year)*

| User group | Nomination | Note |
|--------------------------|------------------|------|
| Parent & Toddlers | Lois Adams | |
| Friendship club | - | |
| Bowls | - | |
| History Group | Martin Snodin | |
| Cricket Club | Charlotte Jordan | |
| Parochial Church Council | - | |
| (Parish Council) | - | |
| | | |

ii) Elected members (maximum 4)

| | |
|------------------|----------------|
| Jo Griffin | Kevin Stockton |
| Dave Littlehales | Kate Jayden |

iii) Co-opted members (maximum 4)

| | |
|-----------------|----------------|
| Val Littlehales | Mark Smith |
| Liz Power | Duncan Scroggs |

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Notes on adequacy of committee, if any

The committee is essentially complete, although this is as a result of co-opting members rather than having all 6 Representative members (underlining the need to review the constitution to mitigate any future problems).

8 **Any other business**

- Several users thanked the committee for its work in maintaining the premises for their use.
- DL thanked MS for his work as Chair over the last few years (MS confirmed he is staying on the committee at least until such time as new members are in place and responsibilities passed over.)
- Date of next general meeting confirmed as **Tuesday 23 May**.

The current committee stayed for a short time to discuss minor matters as follows:

- Donations to Ukrainian families from recent concert (currently over £1,000)
 - Heating Oil top-up (JG to arrange)
 - Chairs for Leadenboot (DL to order similar number as last time)
 - Coronation bunting to be put up w/c 1 May, televised broadcast to be used
 - Blue children tables to be ordered
 - Fire extinguishers have been checked, and 2 replaced.
 - Kitchen electrics partially done – should be complete within a fortnight
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See accounts summary below.

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Accounts summary 2022-2023

| Summary of Accounts for year ending 31st March 2023 | 2022-2023 | 2021-2022 | 2020-2021 | 2019-2020 | 2018 -2019 |
|--|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Balance brought forward from previous year | £55,382.50 | £48,538.98 | £52,339.27 | £43,273.21 | £38,562.76 |
| Receipts | | | | | |
| Lettings | £4,546.99 | £4,550.20 | £1,569.00 | £9,118.82 | £5,570.00 |
| Fundraising | £400.00 | £149.92 | £0.00 | £2,825.75 | £2,875.50 |
| Concert Tickets | £17,183.21 | £19,602.15 | £0.00 | £10,850.00 | £11,005.00 |
| Concert Bar | £5,581.48 | £0.00 | £0.00 | £0.00 | £0.00 |
| Car Park | £1,048.79 | £1,543.40 | £1,088.70 | £882.56 | £1,107.17 |
| Donations | £155.00 | £1,092.50 | £1,740.00 | £4,152.25 | £1,120.00 |
| Refunds/Gift Aid | £996.83 | £534.72 | £265.14 | £668.36 | £0.00 |
| Bank Interest | £117.76 | £16.95 | £116.88 | £157.42 | £114.71 |
| Grant | £4,000.00 | £13,198.58 | £31,036.00 | | £114.71 |
| Sales of assets | £150.00 | £651.60 | £0.00 | £700.00 | - |
| Pop-Up Cafe income | £0.00 | £11,752.82 | | | |
| Total Receipts | £34,180.06 | £53,092.84 | £35,815.72 | £29,355.16 | £21,985.93 |
| Payments | | | | | |
| Cleaning & Toiletries | £1,651.70 | £1,566.65 | £674.54 | £570.52 | £846.26 |
| Licences, Insurance & Affiliations | £1,359.75 | £967.09 | £1,214.48 | £1,067.99 | £1,154.99 |
| Water & Sewerage | £212.42 | £325.10 | £0.00 | £127.65 | £200.41 |
| Maintenance | £3,396.47 | £9,949.10 | £33,736.24 | £3,806.36 | £827.49 |
| Postage, Telephone, Stationery | £21.50 | £18.22 | £41.43 | £41.61 | £62.69 |
| Telephone/Internet | £457.74 | £448.83 | £602.84 | £475.09 | £721.84 |
| Heating | £1,024.99 | £1,629.28 | £0.00 | £1,265.64 | £2,137.51 |
| Electricity | £1,513.01 | £959.68 | £638.59 | £555.38 | £632.89 |
| Replacements & Repairs | £4,467.38 | £393.50 | £1,043.90 | £2,482.88 | £232.22 |
| Waste Bins | £677.67 | £324.11 | £0.00 | £314.67 | £304.03 |
| Concert Expenses | £18,633.80 | £17,222.71 | £200.20 | £5,484.37 | £7,698.00 |
| Old School Garden | £195.00 | £435.00 | £313.00 | £195.00 | £1,083.49 |
| Misc. (including new kitchen equipment) | £1,856.34 | £2,490.76 | £1,150.86 | £3,967.71 | £1,373.66 |
| Pop-Up Cafe expenditure | £0.00 | £9,519.29 | | | |
| Total Payments | £35,467.77 | £46,249.32 | £39,616.08 | £20,354.87 | £17,275.48 |
| Balance at year end | £54,094.79 | £55,382.50 | £48,538.91 | £52,273.50 | £43,273.21 |
| Deposit Accounts balance at year end (Virgin current acct) | £3,154.57 | £2,340.04 | £1,945.33 | £29,372.26 | £835.88 |
| Virgin Account (Refurbishment Fund) - CLOSED | £0.00 | £0.00 | £20,641.02 | £20,540.01 | £20,386.82 |
| Current Account balance at year end (Virgin cash management) | £25,940.22 | £53,042.46 | £23,536.61 | £449.11 | £22,081.17 |
| Current Account balance at year end (Santander) - CLOSED | £0.00 | £0.00 | £2,385.70 | £1,877.71 | |
| Cash-in-hand at year end | £0.00 | £0.00 | £30.32 | £100.18 | £10.04 |
| Less Payments not reached bank a/c at year end | £0.00 | £0.00 | | £0.00 | £40.70 |
| Receipts not reached bank a/c at year end | £0.00 | £0.00 | | £0.00 | £0.00 |
| virgin fixed savings accounts | £25,000.00 | | | | |
| Total | £54,094.79 | £55,382.50 | £48,538.98 | £52,339.27 | £43,354.61 |

Footnote:

Less than £2,500 funds are reserved (for grant-aided projects). Of the balance:

- The Fixed Savings account (£25,000) is regarded by the Committee as a refurbishment fund for planned projects, viz internal improvements (inc kitchen) and the Old School Garden.
- The Cash Management account (£25,940) and Deposit Account (£3,154.57) are free reserves, less the £2,500 reserved amount above.

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