

BIDDENHAM VILLAGE HALL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Minutes of Meeting held at 17 Biddenham Turn on Tuesday 18th May 2004

Present:

Ron Hope (Chair)	Liz Watson (Treasurer)
Richard O'Quinn (Secretary)	David Osborne (Assistant Secretary)
David Watson (Technical Officer)	Bridget Cristofoli
Trisha Glanville	Richard Harris
Camilla King	Fiona Kraus
Brian Walter	

In attendance for Item 2 – Sue Norman BRCC

1). Apologies for Absence

Ken Johnston, Barry Lowe

Whilst Richard Harris was welcomed to the Committee, Brian Walters gave his resignation as the nominated member from the Parish Council and confirmed that Terry Allen would replace him.

Bridget Cristofoli confirmed that the Biddenham Wives had disbanded and that she would remain a Member for the time being.

2). Personal Indemnity

Sue Norman kindly attended the meeting to inform the Committee about the issue of personal indemnity but also took the opportunity to give the Committee some background to BRCC and additional information.

Sue Norman is Field Officer – Community Support. BRCC has 35 staff and is responsible for Beds county and does not include Bedford and Luton towns.

Sue Norman advised the committee to keep a look out for funding opportunities from the new Big Lottery Fund.

With regard to groups, the Charities Commission does not like removing groups from Constitutions. With regard to membership of the committee Sue Norman emphasised that Committee Members were not “representatives” of their group but were “Trustees” of the Charity, nominated by their group.

The Committee, as well as managing the Village Hall building and everything that that involves, are also Trustees of the Charity that owns the Village Hall.

Sue advised that the next BRCC event would be on the subject of the new PEL Licensing changes. Date and venue to be advised – expected to be sometime in the next 6 months.

With regard to the individual liability of Trustees Sue Norman reassured the Committee that Members would only be personally liable in cases of gross mismanagement of the Charity with the extra emphasis on the word “gross”. Sue pointed out that all members of the Committee would be jointly liable and that non-attendance at Committee meetings would not make a Member less liable.

Sue advised of the importance of open discussion of the financial dealings of the Charity, as all members of the Committee are responsible for the finances not just the Treasurer. Good practice typically involves regular reporting of the accounts and the bringing of the “books”, chequebooks and statements to meetings.

However Sue did relay the story of a Village Hall Charity where the treasurer, whilst temporarily the only cheque signatory, stole tens of thousands of pounds from his charity. In this case the other trustees were not liable because they were “taken in” by the deceit of the treasurer.

If trustees of a charity did take out indemnity insurance cover, whilst this would help in the case of legal disputes with 3rd parties, it would not be of any use to the trustees in case of mismanagement. Furthermore the Charities Commission would need to give their permission to the taking out of the insurance and the CC would want justification for the need.

The Charities Commission expect trustees to manage a charity to the “best of their abilities” There are 9,000 village hall charities in England & Wales and nobody has ever been found personally liable for the activities of their charity.

The insurance that BVH arranged through specialist Brokers, highly influenced by RCCs, would cover for other eventualities.

In Sue’s opinion, if Members of BVHMC continue to manage the hall as thoroughly as currently then we should not be concerned. However we should continue to be mindful of the need to always be doing a good job.

3). Minutes of Last Meeting (9th March 2004)

These were approved by the committee and were signed by the Chairman.

4). Matters Arising

- 4.1). 5.8 – placing of “keep locked” notices on the cupboard doors has been actioned by DW.
- 4.2). 7.1 - problem with hall heater is being caused by the time clock being switched off. DW to resolve.

DW

5). Treasurer's Report

- 5.1). Balances – Natwest Bank Account: £354 – reduced following payment for the car park resurfacing.
CAF (Charities Aid Foundation) Account: £8,304.

Agreed that ROQ be made the 3rd bank signatory. **LW**

In response to the advice given by Sue Norman, LW to suggest ways of improving the financial reporting at meetings maybe a 6 monthly summary. **LW**

- 5.2). Following the recent increase in hire charges, the Coffee Shop have stated that they cannot afford the new charge and it is likely to result in the shop closing down. Accordingly it was agreed that the charge should be reduced back to the old rate of £8. **TG**

6). Policy and Administration

- 6.1). The Committee agreed the appointment of Barry Lowe (Public Entertainment Licence and Hire Agreement) and Richard Harris (Insurance and Legal) as Assistant Secretaries.

- 6.2/3/4). The Committee regretfully accepted the resignation of David Osborne as Assistant Secretary. David suggested staying on the Committee until at least the AGM.

ROQ requested that DO be a mentor to the Secretaries, to which he agreed.

- 6.5). LW confirmed that new Hire Agreements had been sent out to regular users.

- 6.6). Public Entertainment Licence – this has now been received but, although including the extension on New Years Eve, the time was incorrect. DO to sort out correction **DO**

- 6.7). Charities Commission return – ROQ confirmed that all Members had indicated their having read and agreed with the Return. It would now be sent to the CC. **ROQ**

- 6.8). Archive project – The Archives are now safely stored in the new cupboard on the upper floor of the Hall. **DO**

- 6.9). On-line Booking System – Agreed to proceed with proposal of James Gardner, which would provide the facility for Users to see the booking diary on-line and to download a booking form. Users would still need to fill out the form and deliver to the Bookings Officer. Budget of £560 (£290, plus £70 first annual cost, plus £200 contingency) was agreed. **LW**

- 6.10). Agreed that more can be progressed between meetings through the effective use of email. **ALL**

- 6.11). Parish Council Grants – Thanks was expressed to DO for securing grants for the Car Park and wall re-pointing. Letter of thanks to PC to be sent. **RHo/DO**
- Agreed that we should seek to obtain more funding from the PC, remembering that funding should be agreed before any spending plans are finalised.
- 6.12). Biddenham Bulletin Contributions – recent article in Bulletin, as well as updating villagers on Village Hall matters, called for User feedback to be passed to RHo
- 6.13). Health & Safety – DW reported that there have been 3 incidents since last meeting. All involved cuts received from glass bottles – incidents that require no action.
- Annual inspections of the fire extinguishers and gas equipment have satisfactorily been completed. Electricity inspection due during June.
- Checks relating to the risk analysis are carried out on an ongoing basis. **DW**
- A reported smell of gas was investigated and no problems found. Likely that the smell was coming from the drains.
- A burnt patch on the floor in front of the serving hatch has been discovered and cannot be easily explained. No user has reported an incident and it is suspected that a user has not observed the “no naked flame” rule.
- 7). Improvements, building & maintenance**
- 7.1). Car park resurfacing - completed
- 7.2). Cooker Hood – now installed.
- 7.3). Wall re-pointing – to be carried out May/June. **DW**
- 7.4). Wood panelling – DW to investigate costing of fitting new panelling on top of the old panelling.
- 7.5). Annual Independent Safety Inspection – John Miller has been requested to carry out the inspection.
- 7.6). Flowerbed wall – making the wall more presentable to be looked into. **DW/LW**
- 7.8). Fridge behind bar area – the current fridge, which was donated, does not work properly. Agreed to purchase a bottle fridge to a budget of c£200. **LW/ROQ**
- 7.9). Summer “Spring Clean” – LW proposed the weekends of 7/8 August or 14/15 August. Agreed that workers to be given lunch in the Three Tuns. LW/DW to coordinate volunteers. **LW/DW**
- 7.10). With the increased usage of the Hall (eg 10.1 below, increased computer courses) DW is finding it more difficult to arrange times for work to be carried out in the Hall.

8). Air-conditioning/environmental control

- 8.1). Application for grant from Shanks has been turned down by the first advisory committee and therefore is likely to be turned down by the second decision making committee. Main reason for rejection is the fact that we have applied for 100% of the cost of the project.

Should the second committee reject the application, then our next move could be to seek the guidance of an agency, employed by the Council, who work closely with Shanks.

9). Re-cycling

- 9.1). St James School involvement – FK met with the temporary Head. Although the school would not be able to run a project on re-cycling the Head would be happy to issue letters/leaflets to the children and could make good use of black & white posters for the children to colour-in. FK/CK to progress.

FK/CK

- 9.2). As collection volumes are remaining strong we should consider whether a 7th newspaper bin is required.

DO/DW

10). BVH On-Line

- 10.1). Present courses continue to be successful. In September further courses will be run, on Tuesdays and Thursdays. This initiative is now the responsibility of Age Concern and Micky Litchfield will make arrangements for refreshments.

DO

11). Social

- 11.1). Biddenham Show Supper – LW is having difficulty in raising any response on the matter from Paul Sanderson.

12). Any Other Business

- 12.1). Piano – the Hall Cleaner is interested in the piano and it was agreed that it should be given to her with removal at her cost.
- 12.2). Computers for Charity – further investigation showed that charges are made for the computers.
- 12.3). Letter from John Wagstaff – RHo read out the letter received from John Wagstaff confirming that he is not currently intending to proceed with his plans.
- 12.4). Thanks to Cleaner – RHo confirmed that he had spoken to the Cleaner to express the Committee's appreciation for the work she does.
- 12.5). VAT – DO previously circulated the letter received from Alistair Burt regarding VAT recovery for Village Halls. Any future opportunity to campaign for the cause should be followed up.

- 12.6). Council Tax – Bill has been received with zero charge, part mandatory part discretionary. Discretionary element is unlikely to change in the future but the Committee should remain mindful of the possibility.
- 12.7). Shelf in Cupboard – CK given the go ahead to arrange for an extra shelf to be fitted into the cupboard used by the Toddlers Group **CK**
- 12.8). Floor cleanliness – CK raised the issue of the children in the Toddler Group getting increasingly dirty from the floor. Increased frequency of cleaning to be looked into. **LW/DW**
- 12.9) Letter of thanks – a very nice letter has been received from a satisfied user, Julia Johnson, thanking the Committee for their hard work.

Meetings for 2004

Due to the unavailability of the Chair, the next meeting was changed to 13th July. It was also agreed that the meeting should commence at 7.30, so that the meeting can continue in a social way in the Three Tuns.

13 th July	7.30pm BVH and then Three Tuns
7 th September	Biddenham Village Hall
2 nd November	Biddenham Village Hall (after AGM)

Next Meeting – 12th July 7.30pm BVH and then The Three Tuns

Signed (Chair) Date