

BIDDENHAM VILLAGE HALL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Minutes of Meeting held at 27 Biddenham Turn on Tuesday 3rd March 2009

Present:

Richard Hall (Chairman)	Richard O'Quinn (Secretary)
David Watson (Technical Officer)	Heather Marks (Bookings Officer)
Liz Watson (Treasurer)	Phil Inness (Vice Chairman)
George Metcalf (Gardeners Assoc)	Tracy Matthews (Toddlers)
Philippa Smith (St James' School)	Terry Allen (Parish Council)
Bridget Cristofoli (Women's Group)	Richard Harris (Asst Secretary)
John Greengrass (Dep Tech Officer)	Barry Lowe (Asst Secretary)

1). Membership

1.1). Apologies for Absence - Fiona Kraus

2). Minutes of Last Meeting (6th January 2009)

The Minutes were approved and signed by the Chair.

3). Matters Arising (other than Agenda Items)

There were no matters arising apart from those on the Agenda.

4). Finance

4.1). Accounts & Balances – NatWest Bank Account: £927
CAF (Charities Aid Foundation) Account: £17,571.

LW passed around the financial books and bank papers for the Committee's inspection.

4.2). Energy costs – ROQ reported that some of the websites that allow consumers to conduct energy supply price comparisons were now providing the same service for commercial energy supply. ROQ to review BVH supply arrangements including looking at whether breaking the contract with British Gas could result in large enough savings to offset any penalty charges.

ROQ

4.3). Insurance – RHarr reported on the renewal, reminding the Committee that for 07/08 we changed from Allianz Cornhill to Allied Westminster to make considerable savings. The renewal for this year was at a modest increase of 0.6% at c£1,200. This still represented a substantial saving of 20% compared to the cost prior to 2007. Interestingly whereas there was only one main provider a few years ago there now appeared to be 3 or 4. It was agreed that quotes should be obtained from more suppliers next year.

RHarr

RH reported that as part of the renewal we have been asked to consider what was being stored in the Hall for organisations other than BVH Charity. RHarr to produce an inventory.

RHarr

5). Policy, Administration and Procedures

- 5.1). Booking Admin - HM updated the meeting reporting that all was in order although bookings were down in February including the loss of regular users like the yoga group and the Brownies.

HM reported that a user had contacted her stating that the Cooker was not working, JG attended and found that all was fine just that the cooker had not yet heated up fully. DW to look at changing the notice by the cooker.

DW

Policy on cancellations due to snow – LW reported that 4 bookings were affected by the weather and wondered what action should be taken regarding refunds. The Committee agreed that in the case of acts outside the Hirer's control, like this one, it was only right to make a refund as a gesture of goodwill.

LW

Summer regular bookings – LW advised that all the regular bookings that would be affected by the possible refurbishment of the toilets had been accommodated at the Pavilion.

- 5.2). Website news page – the possibility of creating a news page on the Village Hall website was discussed. There was general agreement that the idea was a good one however with the current arrangement for maintaining the website this would be too costly to set up and maintain.

DW advised that the Village website is going to be redesigned and maybe that site could more easily accommodate Village Hall news.

- 5.3). Health & safety – DW reported that all the monthly safety checks had been carried out and no issues had been identified. Following the recent visit by the Fire Service fire safety checks would now be carried out weekly rather than monthly.

- 5.4). New Health and Safety Policy – DW drew the Committee's attention to the email and attachments that had been circulated. DW stressed that whilst he had prepared the new Policy it is not solely he that is responsible. All Members of the Management Committee are collectively responsible and therefore it is vitally important that every Committee Member understands the Policy and in any matters regarding Village Hall health and safety acts accordingly.

DW also stressed that it is important that all Members go through the risk review and the proposed actions. In particular he asked that everyone, in their own minds, challenges the risks categorised as 3 and 4 and consider whether these ratings are fair and not too low.

It was agreed that every Committee Member would confirm back to DW, by email, their considered agreement with the risk review and actions. The policy will be formally adopted once all Committee Members have indicated their agreement to DW.

ALL

A number of the risks and actions were discussed. With regard to the safe stacking of tables & chairs, it was agreed that an additional trolley would be purchased. The safe storage and use of sharp implements was considered to be no different from the equivalent risks in a domestic environment so no further actions were agreed. The storage of cleaning chemicals was identified as something that would need further consideration.

DW/LW

With regard to the cooker hood and the risk from gas, DW was pleased to

DW

report that he had secured the services of an independent consultant. The consultant confirmed that the previous advice we had received was over cautious and the only issue to address is sufficient ventilation. The installation of simple extraction hood with fan and an air brick would be all that was necessary. DW to arrange the fitting of an air brick as soon as possible and investigate the purchase and fitting of a hood.

DW
DW

6). **Improvements, building & maintenance**

- 6.1). Environmental Plan – PS drew the Committee’s attention to her email and attachments including updated Policy, proposed bulletin/poster and action plan. The majority of actions have been implemented with only a few areas to be addressed, namely: daylight shut-off switch for car park floodlight; dimmable energy saving light bulbs; publicity; and energy efficient plumbing fittings which will be incorporated in the planned toilet refurbishment.

PS/DW

PS advised that the Policy should be reviewed annually with the next review due July 2009. It was agreed that the Policy should be publicised on the website.

PS/RHall

It was agreed that PS’s proposed bulletin/poster should be used in the Hall (including small versions for the kitchen and toilets), issued to regular users and maybe used as a basis for an update for the Biddenham Bulletin. PS suggested that a poster competition be set for St James’s School. This was agreed including the provision of a small prize for the winning entrant.

PS

PS suggested that we should provide, for hire, children’s crockery and cutlery to reduce the usage of disposable items. Agreed that TM should consult members of the Toddlers group to assess likely take-up.

TM

The Committee expressed their thanks to PS for the considerable work she had put into the EP and actions.

ROQ issued an updated chart showing energy consumption.

- 6.2). Bar & toilets refurbishment – DW reported that 5 builders had been asked to tender quotes for the work. 2 declined to quote and of the 3 quotes received the lowest is £25k plus VAT. The quotes have been prepared based on the full specification agreed by the sub-committee.

It was agreed that DW would ask the lowest quoting firm to also provide a revised quote with a reduced specification. The revised spec would exclude the following - wall tiling; new doors in the entrance hall; bar fittings (could be carried out by Committee Members & volunteers); vanity units in the gents; the bench in entrance hall; and decorating (also could be carried out by Committee Members & volunteers). Furthermore the spec could use lower quality floor tiles, not involve hidden pipe works, simpler light fittings, simpler hand dryers, cheaper water heating.

DW

DW advised that VAT would apply to all costs apart from the disabled toilet.

- 6.3). Grant Applications – ROQ circulated a summary of the results from the recent questionnaire to users about Village Hall facilities in particular the toilets.

The questionnaire was distributed widely and filled out by 87 users. Whilst 75% of users rated the hall overall as good or very good only 30% rated the

toilets similarly. 74% of users gave the toilets a lower rating than the hall. On a number of attributes only 24% rated the toilets as up to date, 24% as warm, 16% as environmentally efficient. Only 18% of users felt the toilets were not in need of improvement. ROQ advised that this very valuable feedback will be used in the grant applications.

ROQ also updated the meeting on the work in progress with the grant applications. The meeting agreed that an application will be made to WREN for £10k (of which £1k will be provided by Biddenham Parish Council which has already been secured).

ROQ

It was also agreed that an application will be made to Bedford Borough Council Rural Grant Fund. DW to counsel opinion of Roger Rigby on the chances of success and the appropriate value of the application.

ROQ

DW

ROQ to continue to look for other sources of funds.

ROQ

Discussions took place regarding what course of action should be taken if we failed to gain significant funding. Under these circumstances the Committee agreed a will to go ahead with a refurbishment. This would mean accepting the lower specification and would involve serious fund raising initiatives. Consideration would also be given to the possibility of loan funding.

7). Re-cycling

- 7.1). Performance update – in the absence of FK, LW reported that the number of bins collected were now down significantly. Concerns were raised by both LW and DW that this may well be caused by the introduction of the orange bins and that this could be the level going forward or matters might deteriorate further. Should this be the case the Committee would need to seriously consider alternative uses for the paper store.

8). Any Other Business

- 8.1). Succession planning – Each Member of the Committee revealed their intentions with regard to their likely continuance on the Committee and their interests in increasing or decreasing their responsibilities. Responses were as follows.

RHall – happy to continue as Chair and likely to be travelling less in his job so should be able to make more meetings.

PI – happy to carry on, but conscious that Vice Chair role is limited unless RHall is not present at meetings.

LW – happy to continue as Treasurer.

DW – happy to continue as Technical Officer. Would ideally like to pass on some responsibilities to others, but cannot readily identify what these could be. Volunteers to take tasks off DW to come forward.

ALL

HM – happy to continue as Bookings Officer.

ROQ – happy to continue as Secretary.

RHarr – happy to continue as Assistant Secretary.

BL – would like to stay as Assistant Secretary for 1 more year and would expect to stand down after that.

JG – happy to continue to support DW in the Deputy Technical Officer role.

TA – happy to continue as long as a member of the Parish Council.

PS – will qualify to continue as St James’s rep for another 18 months and after that would like to stay on the Committee responsible for environmental aspects.

TM – happy to continue as Toddlers rep which is likely to continue for 2½ years.

BC - happy to carry on as Women’s Group rep.

GM - happy to carry on as Gardeners’ rep.

8.2). Biddenham Show – the date for this year’s Show is 6th September. It was agreed that this would be a good occasion to officially open the refurbished toilets, should the plan go ahead.

Meeting schedule:

Tue 5 th May	Phil’s – 36 Days Lane
Tue 7 th July	Biddenham Village Hall
Tue 8 th September	Rich Hall’s – 4 Observer Close
Tue 3 rd November	Biddenham Village Hall (after AGM)

Next Meeting – Tues 5th May 2009 at 8pm 36 Days Lane

Signed (Chair) Date