

Wickhambrook Memorial Social Centre

Minutes of the Trustees' meeting on 7th April 2008 in the Pavilion lounge

After refreshments courtesy of the Centre Café the meeting opened at about 7.35pm.

Trustees present

Patrick Colvill, Margaret Colvill, Jim Fieldsend, Jackie Medley, Julia Walker, Deidre Smith, Roz Clarry, Michael Medcalf, Gladys Alexander, Stan Bates, Jim Field, David Turner, Steve Taylor.

Apologies received from Snowy Addison, Esme Jolland, Averil Young-Smith

Member of the public present Linda Newell (on behalf of the Wickhambrook Charity Fund Raisers)

Agenda The main purpose of the meeting was to review the Fete and the re-vamped Hire Agreements. The routine matters were dealt with as expeditiously as possible.

Minutes of the previous meetings

The Minutes of the previous Trustees meeting (4th February 2008) having been previously distributed were taken as read and were approved.

Matters Arising

The car park sign has been purchased and is being displayed. The management committee is to investigate the need for, and appropriate wording and siting of, a 'Rights of Way' sign.

Correspondence

There has been no significant correspondence since the February meeting.

PAT

A portable appliance tester is to be purchased for use by MSC approved persons. To ensure responsible compliance with regulations, insurance and the hall's licence conditions a free testing service is being considered for hirers bringing electrical equipment onto the premises.

Broken window

There is no progress to report on this. The window offers little or no opportunity for forced entry and will be dealt with when the roof area is inspected prior to annual cleaning.

TV sponsorship

A flat screen TV is proposed for the Pavilion lounge. This could be positioned centrally in one wall to be suitable for presentations. It is possible it could be sponsored by a local dealer. The concept was approved by the meeting. The management committee to pursue this idea.

Toilets

Work is scheduled for an April start. A proposal is being considered to add two more cubicles within the existing ladies' toilet serving the Main Hall.

Chairman's Report

The new curtains for the Bar Room and Pavilion lounge are all installed.

The under-carpet insulation in the Pavilion lounge has proven inadequate and has been removed. The remaining stock will be sold and may well realise a profit.

The Farmers Market is continuing, but it is not well supported by the village generally.

Treasurer's Report

The current balances are:	Main Hall	£10,400
	Supporters Ass'n	£12,960
	Woolwich BS	£11,900
	Barclays	£1,186

Total financial assets: £36,487

Booking Manager's Report

The bookings diary is more full for this year than in any previous year.

Bookings for wedding receptions are increasing.

There are already many bookings for 2009.

New Trustee

Linda Newell was appointed as the Representative for the Wickhambrook Charity Fund Raisers (WCFR).

Fete

The fete committee remains in a buoyant mood with good progress on all matters.

Draw prizes and sponsorship have exceeded most expectations.

5,000 draw tickets have been ordered. A strong ticket sales effort is required.

Many volunteers are necessary for the day of the fete if the whole show is to be successful.

Publicity will include radio Suffolk, SGR and every possible avenue.

The publicity flyer produced for potential commercial stallholders is to be distributed with the Minutes.

Hire Agreements

There are two situations to be addressed: Weekend hirers and weekday hirers.

The weekend hirers agreement, having been distributed beforehand was accepted with a) an amendment to the Hire Charges shown in the 'Terms' section whereby only the Hourly, Weekend and Field hire rates are to be shown on the Hire Agreement form and b) an increase of the returnable 'Damages Bond' (sometimes referred to as the 'Insurance Bond') to £500.

The documentation includes:

- (i) The single sheet Booking Form. This is sent in response to any booking enquiry to provide the enquirer with initial information regarding pay bars and the option of making a provisional or firm booking. When it is returned, with a few details from the enquirer, it provides all the early and essential contact details and, to avoid any later doubts, it confirms in writing the date of the requested hiring.
- (ii) The Hire Agreement. This contains the most important restrictions affecting MSC hirings. If the requested hire date is available two copies of the Hire Agreement are sent to the hirer, along with a copy of the Conditions of Hire. One copy of the Hire Agreement is signed by the hirer and returned to the Booking Manager. The second copy is retained by the hirer along with the full Conditions of Hire so that there can be no question later of any unexpected restrictions on the hiring.
- (iii) Following a meeting with the hirer to explain the hall's access, keyholding, safety and fire regulations, and to receive the 10% non-returnable deposit and refundable Insurance Bond, the booking is accepted as firm.

This procedure is more thoroughgoing than has been the case previously, but recent changes in regulations, the smoking ban, the Borough's requirement that steps be taken to avoid complaints about noise, problems with 'ravers' wrecking nearby village halls and a recent comment that the hall's committees might not be acting responsibly, make it essential that future bookings follow a formal and contractual procedure.

It was explained that if the terms and Conditions are not acceptable to the hirer, the booking will be lost. This is better than accepting a booking which could result in the hall losing its Borough Licence (or worse) and being no longer available as a village hall for the Wickhambrook community. This was summed up as 'It's better to lose a hiring than to lose the village hall'.

Acceptance of the new documentation and procedure was Proposed by Stan Bates, Seconded by Jim Field and passed unanimously.

The weekday hire agreement was discussed and a number of matters were raised in support of the need now for a more formal approach and an understanding by all hirers of the importance of the MSC to all the community. Hirers have a clear duty of care when using the premises and, with some problems being repeatedly raised, this needs to be re-stated as a formal 'condition for using' the facilities and accepted by all users, if hirings are to continue as before. The procedure for implementing this Weekday Hire Agreement is not specified at this time.

Dog hairs. The problem of cleaning the floor thoroughly is made worse by the number of double-stacked chairs around the Main hall. Fewer perimeter chairs is to be trialled. A 'tacky mop' is to be purchased.

Mud in the Pavilion lounge. A vacuum cleaner is to be purchased and housed in a new cupboard which is to be built in the Pavilion lounge servery, when the filing cabinet is relocated, probably to the Snooker Room.

Anti-mud matting is to be investigated as a possibility for use as a mud-reducing measure.

Signs. Additional 'No Boots' signs are to be deployed.

Special Cleaning If there are continuing incidents of mud on the Pavilion lounge carpet, special cleaning services will be employed and the bill passed to those (or the club) responsible.

Carpet Protection A carpet protection strip is to be costed and considered for use during hirings for field sports.

Smoking Nothing further has been heard from the Environmental Health Dept or the police. It was accepted that no-one can plead ignorance of the law against smoking on premises used by the public or employees.

Anyone breaching the No Smoking law will be banned from the premises. Any fines arising due to breaches of the law (typically £2,000) will be passed to the individuals or clubs responsible. This condition is to be included in the hire agreements terms and conditions.

With some changes to the title ('Memorial Social Centre', not 'Wickhambrook Memorial hall'), acceptance of the 'weekday' hire agreement was proposed by Jim Field, seconded by David Turner and passed unanimously.

During the above discussion the insurance cover held by or for entertainers was questioned. Jim Field will investigate and report back on this.

Other points raised after the votes on hire agreements were:

1. The merits of a 'smokers bin' outside the premises.
2. Hirer's rubbish should be taken away by the hirers. The MSC cannot offer a rubbish disposal service.
3. A key to the wheelie-bin padlock to be kept in the broom cupboard in the kitchen.

These three points will be left for further thought by the Trustees and made agenda items for the next Trustees meeting.

A.O.B.

Bowls Club The revived Bowls Club is 'desperate' for a Green Keeper. The playing area urgently needs brushing and cutting and this needs to be done throughout the growing season on a twice-weekly basis. The revived Bowls Club committee has Stan Bates – Chairman, Elaine Taylor – Treasurer, Sam Taylor – Secretary

Panto 2009 The Players requested permission to cut a trap door into the stage. After some reassurances, permission was granted. Steve Taylor to oversee the safety standard.

Parish Council Estates Committee The climbing frame in the Toddlers Play Area which was removed for safety reasons will probably be replaced.

Players donation Jim Fieldsend brought the news to the meeting that the Players have offered an as yet unspecified cash donation (but understood to be 'probably a 4-figure sum') to be put towards the toilet upgrade project. This news was greeted with appreciation by everyone. It was discussed informally and was felt to show an improving and very welcome community spirit in the village. The hall doesn't belong to a few 'MSC committee people'. It belongs to the whole village community, past, present and future and this donation reinforces the view that the hall is an integral part of the village community. It was agreed that in order that the Players could be assured that the money was being spent on the actual toilet upgrade project and not simply folded into the general 'MSC coffers', that progress on the project would be reported fully to the Players committee and if possible a specific element of the work should be linked to the donation. This donation, and the welcome improving spirit it engenders, is to be acknowledged in a Scene article.

The Main Hall piano Many years ago, longer ago than even long-term residents can now remember, the piano was occasionally used. But even then the occasions were rare, possibly only once a year. It was last used so long ago that no-one can be certain of when or at what event. Today, and for years past, it has been nothing but an obstacle which, to the visitor's and prospective hirers' eye simply degrades the appearance of the hall. It has been repeatedly dragged to and fro to make space for the panto and is now seen by many to be neither use nor ornament. Whether or not to keep it is a subject few would dare raise. However, in a careful review of the alternatives such as discos, portable keyboards, portable sound systems for CDs etc it was proposed that the piano be disposed of. The proposal for disposal was put by Steve Taylor, seconded by Gladys Alexander and passed unanimously. It will be for the management committee to arrange humane disposal.

Key Register A formal request by Roz Clarry that she be provided with a hall key for the WCFR activities was received and agreed. The management committee are to arrange for a key to be provided and the key register to be amended.

The meeting ended at 10.02pm.

END OF MINUTES

Dates of future meetings (as set by the Trustees at the AGM)

Management

Monday 5th May 2008

Monday 7th July

Monday 4th August 2008

Monday 8th September 2008

Monday 3rd November 2008

Trustees

Monday 2nd June 2008

Monday 6th October 2008

AGM Monday 10th November 2008

Signed

Date