

BENENDEN VILLAGE TRUST

Ordinary Meeting of Benenden Village Trust Wednesday 19th November 2022, Benenden Memorial Hall

MINUTES

Item		Action
PRESENT	<p>Kent Barker, Simon Brown, Athena Cripps, Tom Dawlings, Martin Dickson (Chairman) Julie Lewis, Sally Ann Marks, Richard Stubbings. Caroline Levett (Trust Manager).</p> <p>Martin Dickson thanked Trustees for electing him as Chair, and expressed his regret that Jonathan Strong had resigned.</p>	
1. APOLOGIES	No apologies.	
2. ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR	Sally Ann Marks proposed Tom Dawlings as Vice Chair, this was seconded by Julie Lewis, and unanimously agreed.	
3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS	The minutes of the ordinary meeting held on 19 th July 2022 were unanimously approved as a correct record of the meeting and signed by the Chairman.	
4. MINUTES OF AGM	The minutes of the AGM held on 19 th July 2022 were unanimously agreed as a correct record of the meeting and will be approved at the AGM 2023.	
5. FINANCE	<p><u>a. Meeting Notes</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">The notes of the Finance Group meeting on 26th September had been circulated.It was unanimously agreed that AC would join the Finance Committee. <p><u>b. Cashflow</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">30th September bank account balances : current account £440.79; savings account £5,121.29; Village Hall £7,939.34. Total bank account balances £13,501.42.Current cashflow figures suggest a closing year-end balance totalling approximately £2,000, but these figures do not include any unplanned expenditure.In order to maintain bank account balances at the agreed reserves figure it will be necessary to draw from COIF.It will be important in the current economic climate to exercise caution and consider month by month what is sustainable. <p><u>c. COIF</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">At 23rd September the value of the trust's investments in the COIF Charities Investment Fund stood at £819,876.75, compared to £855,090 at 31st March.Since 31st March £20,000 has been drawn down from the fund to support the trust's regular activities.AC to be added as another signatory to the COIF account. <p><u>d. Banking Arrangements</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">CL has started the process of moving the bank accounts from Barclays Bank to Unity Trust Bank.It was agreed that the bank account signatories would be KB, AC, MD, SAM and TD. Plus CL, and HC for the hall account.	

Chairman..... Date.....

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These minutes are not a verbatim record of the meeting, but a summary of discussion and decisions taken at the meeting.

	<p><u>e. Pre-School Lease and Rent</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As covered in the notes of the Finance Group meeting. Pre-School Trustees have unanimously agreed to the new terms of rental. The main changes to the agreement are that Pre-School has the right to sub-let (for educational purposes); a framework for annual rent reviews has been put in place; a share of the water costs will be paid. BVT Trustees unanimously agreed the new lease agreement. TD congratulated KB and MD in their handling of their negotiations with Pre-School. <p><u>f. Iden Green Tennis Club</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As covered in the notes of the Finance Group meeting. CL to establish who currently maintains the beech hedge. <p><u>g. Insurance Renewal</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> MD raised concerns that the Village Hall may be underinsured and likely that any rebuild costs would be more than the sum insured. The insurance value for this year is £2,118,418. It was agreed that a review should be carried out every 5 years. <p>Post-meeting note :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In July 2018 a consultant carried out a building reinstatement cost assessment and the value of the Village Hall set at £1,811,000. This is the base used by the insurance company since this date. 	CL
6. HR	<p><u>Village Hall Staffing and Review</u></p> <p>HR Group paper circulated.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Karen Saunders resigned in June, and continued on a freelance basis. This was not a satisfactory arrangement for the Trust as it does not comply with employment legislation and the arrangement was terminated on 20th October. Karen is unwilling to continue as a Technical Consultant. The caretaker position has been advertised with very little response. The Hall Manager is unable to increase her hours of work. The Hall Manager will take on some of the Caretaker duties, including communication with hirers and CCTV, meaning she will not be able to fulfil certain areas of her own work. In the short-term Trustees will cover some of the needs of the Hall and HC will be asked to draw up a weekly list of what needs covering, what information hirers have already been given, where other information they may need can be found, and what written checklists are available. Immediate weekend cover : MD to open hall 3pm on Saturday. JL will also attend; AC will carry out a check at midnight; JL to open on Sunday. TD also available Sunday. The HR Group will carry out a review of jobs and will evaluate the existing 3 posts using current job descriptions, customs and practices and speaking to staff; consider contracted hours; consider whether there could be a re-distribution of duties. Benchmarking with other halls in the area to gain ideas and formulate best practice will be undertaken. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AC had previously carried out a benchmarking exercise for the Village Hall. • Consideration will be given to the technical set up of the hall and how this might be streamlined and made more efficient and less complicated. • The robustness of existing systems and anything which may be obsolete will be considered. • Consideration will be given to future proofing the running of the Village Hall. • KB, with existing knowledge and involvement in the operation of BVH and as part of the property portfolio requested an input to the review, and this was agreed. • KB and MD will draft a specification for a technical consultant, should the need arise, to include the entry system, boiler/heating, lighting, sound system, CCTV. Some names were put forward as people who might take this on. It was also suggested that an appeal for volunteers could be made or an approach made to those who installed the various systems. • KB had asked HC to find short-term solutions to heating issues – back-up electric heaters; baffle fixing for open vent. CL to follow up. 	<p>KB/MD</p> <p>CL</p>
7. PROPERTY	<p><u>a. Village Hall</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The new biometric entry system has been installed and trustees are encouraged to be scanned so it recognises them. • The group continues to attempt to obtain three quotes for the re-purposing of the Office to public toilets. • Chris Reading and Associates are in the last stages of completing a sustainability, cost effectiveness and energy assessment of the Hall. RS hopes to report more on this shortly. This could result in some major capital outlay if Trustees wish to meet the suggested 2030 zero carbon target. <p><u>b. St George's</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A revised rent review offer was made to the pre-school, and now accepted, as reported under Finance. • It was decided not to pursue a rent review for the Club. • A review has been carried out for the flat. <p><u>c. New Pre-School Accommodation</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SAM advised that she had been contacted by a representative of Pre-School wishing to discuss a suggestion of siting a new Pre-School building at the top of the Village Hall car park. Pre-School representatives had looked at the primary school site but there did not seem to be any viable options. • MD advised that he too had been approached and that he and KB will be meeting with Pre-School, will listen to any proposals, consider how and if BVT might support, then discuss this further with all Trustees. • It was agreed that Pre-School should be as flexible as possible in their approach to this, and to continue their search for other accommodation alongside this conversation. • Any project must be financially viable for all parties. 	<p>MD/KB</p>

	<p><u>d. Iden Green</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> KB, MD and CL held a zoom discussion with English Rural Housing about the possibility for further social housing development at Standen Street/Woodcock Lane. ER seemed keen on the idea but recognised that 'need' would have to be shown before there was any chance of planning consent. It was noted that the planned Benenden Almshouse development might meet any such need. As part of a future and wider discussion the Trust will need to make a policy decision as to whether it would, in any case, want to pursue trying to raise capital from the sale of the Iden Green land. The Group recommends a modest rent increase for the Iden Green Tennis club. (See Finance Group notes). The Iden Green Pavilion has invited the BVT to nominate a trustee. It was agreed that TD would take this role on. <p><u>e. Playgrounds</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> JL continues to check Iden Green playground. CL to ask Tompsett if they are able to clear acorns and debris from the playground. The gates at Benenden playground are not closing properly again. CL to follow up. 	<p>TD</p> <p>CL CL</p>
8. TRUST FUTURE	<p>Document circulated.</p> <p>MD had spent time talking to all trustees individually and to CL. Trustees were reassured by this and supported MD's approach.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It was agreed that the immediate strategic focus should be on short and medium term goals and maintenance issues rather than blue skies thinking, especially in light of the current deteriorating economic climate. Any changes at St George's are longer term and not too much time should be spent discussing this at present. It was agreed that future meetings would have one major item for discussion, so this could be aired in depth. The Village Hall is the most pressing matter, and would be the main agenda item at the next trustee meeting. This will include the hall staffing, improvement works, budget, revenue increase. An extraordinary HR meeting will be held if necessary. Also important for trustees to consider is the Trust's focus and how it relates to local needs. Quarterly full trustee meetings were agreed to be held every year on the last Monday of January, April, July (trustee meeting + AGM) and October. For 2023 : 30th January, 24th April, 31st July and 30th October. Other meetings between these scheduled meetings could be held via Zoom. MD will aim to send out a monthly email report so that all trustees are kept more up to date on developments. Agreed working group structure : Finance – AC, MD (Chair), SAM, CL; Property – KB (Chair), SB, CP, RS; HR – TD, JL (Chair), SAM; Hall management – one member from each of Finance, HR and Property Groups. Risk Management will be considered annually in April. Policy review is a full trustee body responsibility, but individuals may take on any necessary policy creation. There was discussion about the need for a sustainability 	<p>MD</p>

	<p>policy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> MD will continue individual responsibility for PR and Membership; JL and TD parish and borough liaison; JL and CL playground checks; CL and CP playground health and safety. 	
9. NEW TRUSTEES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MD has met with Chris Parkinson and his skills audit form had been circulated. Chris' experience is in property maintenance. SAM proposed co-opting Chris Parkinson. This was seconded by SB and unanimously agreed. Paul Tolhurst has put his name forward for consideration to become a trustee. MD will speak to Paul. Trustees felt that Paul would be a good addition to the Board. It was agreed that any discussion and decision about his co-option could be carried out via email. 	MD
10. AOB	<p><u>a. Review of Constitution</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SB has offered to carry out a review of the Trust's Constitution, and will aim to do this by Spring. One area which is currently confusing is the co-option and appointment of Trustees, and it was agreed that this should be reviewed and made clearer. Other procedural elements for clarification are meetings and decision making. Some points of the constitution will be relatively easy to change. The Trust's objects are not clear and consent of the Charity Commission would be required to make any changes. SB to discuss with KB and TD who were involved in writing the original constitution. CL to provide any background information if available and required. 	SB SB/KB/TD CL
	Meeting closed at 9.35 pm	