

BENENDEN VILLAGE TRUST
Annual General Meeting
Monday 31st July 2023, 6pm, Benenden Memorial Hall

Present : Athena Cripps, Martin Dickson (Chair), Kent Barker, Julie Lewis, Chris Parkinson, Sally Ann Marks, Paul Tolhurst. Caroline Levett (Trust Manager), John Betts (Village Hall Manager). 5 Members.

Martin Dickson welcomed those present and thanked them for attending, emphasising the important role which members play in decision-making and volunteering.

1. Apologies Received from Trustees : Simon Brown, Tom Dawlings, Richard Stubbings. Member : Janet Beattie. Rowena Walsh, Manningtons Chartered Accountants.
2. Minutes of AGM 19th July 2022 Sally Ann Marks proposed the approval of the Minutes of the AGM held on 19th July 2022 which was seconded by Athena Cripps and unanimously agreed as a correct record. These were signed by the Chairman of the meeting.
3. Trustees' Report

A full Trustees' Report was included within the Reports and Statements to year-end 31st March 2023 which had been circulated to all Members and was available at the meeting.

Martin Dickson picked out highlights of the report and brought members up to date on events since the year-end. He thanked all Trustees for their time and contribution to the work of the Trust.

Financial Review

He noted that on paper the Trust looked comfortably endowed but it had to draw heavily on its financial investments to meet the costs of running and maintaining its buildings and land and increased staffing costs over a number of years.

BVT depended entirely on its own operations for income and received no support through the precept and there was very little grant support available. Trustees needed to act to raise income and restrain expenditure.

Staffing

Following the resignation of the Village Hall's Caretaker and the likely departure of the Hall Manager, the Trust's HR Group conducted a staffing review and concluded the functions of the Hall Manager and Caretaker could be combined in a single role.

John Betts was appointed in April and had made an excellent start. Those who had used the Village Hall or looked at the website had commented very positively on the improvements.

Martin thanked Julie Lewis for leading the staffing review, Karen Saunders and Holly Clayson for their work over the years, Chris Heath for his support as temporary caretaker and Jen Gurr and Caroline Levett for their continued work.

Constitutional Review

Simon Brown had been carrying out a rigorous and wide review to ensure that the Trust's constitution remained fit for purpose and practicable; to clarify the nature and extent of the Trust's charitable purpose; and to clarify and ensure the correct status of property and other assets held by the Trust.

Chairman..... Date..... Page 1

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

There had been detailed exchanges of information with the Charity Commission, and it was hoped that Simon would be able to present a full paper to Trustees before the end of the year.

Property

Trustees continued to tackle significant property issues. The Trust's ageing property portfolio demanded maintenance and capital investment. St George's Hall required roof and window maintenance, repair and replacement, and the Village Hall's heating system was inefficient and would need replacing.

The Future

Trustees will meet in the autumn to review the Trust's strategy and purpose, including a discussion about the Trust's finances and the imbalance between its income and expenditure.

- A member asked whether grants were available from the Parish, Borough and County Councils.

Councils raise their finances through precept and fees and this is used to fund their own facilities and required services. For a trust such as BVT with its own money and resources it would be very difficult to approach a council for funding. There are a limited number of grants available, and these have been applied for in the past.

Past benefactors had enabled the current facilities and in order to allow the work of the Trust to continue for future generations the Trust would welcome any legacy.

4. Approval of Year-End Report and Financial Statements 31st March 2023

The Trust Report and Financial Statements for the year ending 31st March 2023 had been independently examined by Manningtons, Chartered Accountants and were available at the meeting and had been circulated to members and published on the Trust's website.

There were no questions regarding the Report and Accounts, and Kent Barker proposed the adoption of the Statements. This was seconded by John Clarke, and unanimously agreed.

5. Constitutional Changes

A full explanatory note had been circulated to members prior to the meeting and was available at the meeting.

Members were asked to vote on a three-part resolution. The first was to remove a requirement for trustees to stand down after three terms. The second addressed a timing anomaly in the trust's original constitution over the appointment of trustees. The third corrected some minor drafting errors in BVT's original Constitution. The following Members' Resolution was unanimously agreed by all members present.

Members Resolution

Pursuant to clause 28 of the Charity's Constitution dated 9 November 2017, the following amendments to the Constitution are agreed:

1. The deletion of the second sentence from clause 16, which reads "A charity trustee who has served for three consecutive terms may not be reappointed for a fourth consecutive term but may be reappointed after an interval of at least three years".
2. The deletion of the words "the conclusion of" from line 3 of sub-clause 13.6.
3. Removal of the "stray" square brackets in the penultimate line of sub-clause 10.2 and in line 3 of sub-clause 11.6.1 and (for numbering consistency) correction of the reference in sub-clause 9.1.1 to "sub-clause (3)" to "sub-clause 9.3".

Chairman..... Date..... Page 2

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

6. Election of Trustees

Under the Trust's Constitution, a third of Trustees stand down at each AGM, and if nominated can stand for re-election. The longest serving Trustees are Athena Cripps, Martin Dickson and Julie Lewis and offered themselves for re-election. Simon Brown, Chris Parkinson and Paul Tolhurst were presently co-opted Trustees, and they too stood for election.

Kent Barker proposed the re-election and election of all en bloc, and this was unanimously agreed, and confirmed the appointment date of Simon Brown, Chris Parkinson and Paul Tolhurst as 31st July 2023.

Kent Barker thanked Martin Dickson for the amount of work he has undertaken since becoming Chairman, and this was echoed by all Trustees.

7. Any Other Business

Member comments :

- Concerns were raised about the health of some of the trees around Benenden Recreation Ground. Some of the new saplings had died.
 - Caroline Levett to arrange for a survey to be carried out by Advanced Tree Solutions.
- As the football pitch was no longer used could the goalposts be removed?
 - John Betts was currently in discussion with a local football club and it was hoped that the pitch would be used.
 - There were costs in maintaining the Recreation Ground and the Trust would welcome use by teams/groups.
- Was there a risk of unwanted incursion onto Benenden Recreation Ground?
 - The Trust was aware that a number of posts were missing and had sought quotes to have these replaced and repairs made to other posts.
- Broken fence by Benenden Village Hall.
 - The Trust was aware that the car park fence was broken and had commissioned this work to take place.

The Trust tried to use local tradespeople but the length of time waiting for a response and action could be frustrating. Trustees encouraged members to share details of local trades with the Trust Manager.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 6.45pm.

Chairman..... Date..... Page 3

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