

BENENDEN VILLAGE TRUST

Trustees' Meeting of Benenden Village Trust Monday 30th October 2023, 7pm, Iden Green Pavilion

MINUTES

Item		Action
PRESENT	Kent Barker, Simon Brown, Athena Cripps, Tom Dawlings, Martin Dickson (Chairman) Julie Lewis, Chris Parkinson, Richard Stubbings. Caroline Levett (Trust Manager).	
1. APOLOGIES	Apologies were received from Sally Ann Marks, Paul Tolhurst and John Betts, Village Hall Manager.	
2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING	The minutes of the Trustees' meeting held on 31 st July were unanimously approved as a correct record of the meeting and signed by the Chairman.	
3. DRAFT MINUTES OF AGM	The minutes of the AGM held on 31 st July were unanimously agreed as a correct record of the meeting, to be amended to specify that SB, CP and PT were appointed at this meeting. The minutes will be approved at the 2024 AGM.	
4. FINANCE, GOVERNANCE AND COMPLIANCE	<p><u>a. Draft Minutes of the Meeting Held on 3rd October</u> The draft minutes of the meeting had been circulated.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total income Q2 £29,680 including BVH; £21,460 not including BVH. Figures include £15,000 drawn from COIF in July. • Total expenditure Q2 £31,935 including BVH; £19,710 not including BVH. Expenditure included insurance premium £5,586, accountant fee £1,800, St George's roof work £4,560 (£11,946) <p><u>b. Cashflow</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cashflow, accounting system and monthly transactions documents had been circulated. • Cash reserves at 29th October - Bank account balances : BVT Current Account £1,704.21; BVT Savings Account £15,000.36; BVH £6,129.90. All accounts £22,834.47 • As things currently stand the year-end figures show income of £84,000 and expenditure of £103,000 and the day-to-day financial position of the Trust continues to be of concern and running at a deficit with substantial expenditure required on St George's. • BVH forecast income is a conservative one and it is hoped that this may be closer to £40,000. <p><u>c. COIF</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As recommended by the FGC Group all Trustees approved £15,000 draw down from COIF. • As of 19th October, following the sale of £15,000 of units, BVT's investment in the accumulation fund was valued at £775,963.85 • The market is currently flat/down. • It is highly likely that further funds will need to be drawn down before the year-end. <p><u>d. Rent increase proposals</u> Lambert and Foster have conducted the exercise to look at what a reasonable market rent might be for Iden Green Tennis Club and St George's Cottage.</p> <p>IGTC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The last increase was in 2009/10. The current market rate is hard to evaluate and there is no local comparable situation, and L&F suggested an inflationary increase, up to £390 pa, and this was recommended by the FGC Group. • Trustees, by majority, voted to approve an increase to £390 pa. • CL to write to IGTC. • It was noted that there is no reference in the lease to car parking. <p>St George's Cottage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The current tenant has been paying £950 pm since 2016 • L&F suggested that a fair market rent for the Cottage is £1,400pm, and as the Trust has a 	<p align="center">CL</p>

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.

	<p>tenant in good standing it might consider an increase in two stages, and the FGC Group recommended an increase to £1,200 this year and £1,400 next year.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MD looked at the lease again before seeking approval from all trustees and noted that the rent was to increase by RPI and assumed this to be since 2016, taking the figure to be charged to £1,350 rather than £1,400 pm and sought further clarification from L&F. • However L&F consider that the new rent can only be calculated by the percentage change in RPI over 12 months and at 5th October could be increased to no more or less than £1,036pm. • To increase to more than this amount will require either a variation of the current lease or a new lease. MD has asked L&F what their charge would be to assist in either of these actions. • Trustees agreed that the rent should be adjusted to be brought into line for a fair market rent, and noted that the tenant had received a substantial discount for the past 7 years, and that RPI increase applied annually. • MD to contact the tenant. <p>CL to put in place a diary of rent reviews.</p> <p><u>e. VAT</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KB to arrange a meeting with the accountant to discuss further. 	<p>CL</p> <p>KB</p>
<p>5. PROPERTY</p>	<p><u>a. St George's</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roof Works : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Slater and Spiers have completed the work which was originally quoted for. ○ More recently, following heavy rain, the ceiling above the landing was leaking and it was found that previously repaired lead had failed. The work to carry out this repair was £762 which was approved by the Property Group. This work has been completed and the valley gutter replacement will make it 100% watertight. ○ CL has asked Chris Heath to carry out work internally to make good the ceiling again. ○ Some deterioration in other areas of the roof and tiles had also been identified. Trustees agreed to additional work, at a cost of £2,976 to mend tiles on the left of the main front-facing gable and replace the whole length of the right of the gable back to about one metre, which is in a bad and potentially dangerous state. This work is yet to be completed. ○ The total cost of roof works is likely to be in the region of £13,000. ○ Once the roof work is completed it is hoped that many of the damp issues will be resolved. • Pre-School Water Heater : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ It had been suggested previously that the water heater was contributing to the damp. ○ The FGC Group was not happy to sign off on the costs for a new heater without looking at it. ○ The FGC Group concluded that there are no obvious signs of damp around the heater or on other items stored in the same cupboard or that the heater is a cause of damp, and that no further action should be taken for the time being. ○ The damp close by appeared to be coming from the chimney and it is hoped that the roof and chimney repairs will now resolve this. • Pre-School Windows : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 2 quotes had been received for works to two windows as agreed by Trustees. ○ As a Grade II listed building, and within a Conservation Area, listed building consent must be obtained. However it was established unlikely that planning permission would be granted by TWBC for double-glazed windows ○ It was agreed that work on the second window is not urgent as it is on a landing open to the 	

	<p>stairs and front door and is not influencing the indoor climate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ It was agreed that the quotes be amended to a single-glazed window and other secondary glazing measures to be considered once installed. <p>POST MEETING NOTE :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The following morning Pre-School advised that the window on the landing could no longer be opened and coming away from the frame. CP looked at the window and confirmed the more urgent need for it to be addressed. Trustees agreed to this change of action. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Pre-School Flooring <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ CP requested that the flooring replacement should be planned to take place. ○ Trustees agreed that the roof and window replacements are the priority and that no cosmetic enhancements should take place until a decision is made about the future of St George's. <p><u>b. Recreation ground</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Fence/Posts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Repairs have been carried out to the roadside car park fencing and repair/replacement to posts around Benenden recreation ground. ○ JL reported some posts at Iden Green recreation ground which need repair and fence posts at the playground which are rotten. CP to quote to carry out the work. ● Trees <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Primary School had raised concerns about a cherry tree abutting the school's front access path and a fallen branch. ○ A quote for £420 was received from Advanced Tree Solutions to remove the dead cherry tree to ground level and remove the hangers from the neighbouring tree. ○ The Property Group approved this and the work commissioned. ○ The next tree is also covered with ivy and ATS will chop the ivy out at the bottom. ○ ATS also commented that some of the hawthorns on Benenden Recreation Ground are not looking very healthy. These will be monitored over the coming months with a view to reducing them in the spring which may give a new lease of life to the lower growth. 	CP
6. VILLAGE HALL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● BVH Manager met with Trustees on 19th September to share details of some of the successes and changes made to the operation of BVH. ● There has been lots of new interest in the hall, numerous enquiries, vacant slots being filled and many positive comments. ● A hall hirer's handbook has been produced, available as hardcopy and online. ● There are 19 regular hirers with some new classes/activities. ● An additional phone line has been put in place for urgent/out of hours issues. ● There was an urgent need to replace the floor scrubber, which was approved and ordered. ● 4 x external cameras to extend existing security system have been ordered. ● JB and CL working on a list of proposed improvements. ● The Village Hall Working Group meets again on 27th November. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Caravan Club An enquiry had been received from South-East London Caravan Club looking for a venue for holding occasional 'rallies'. A social event with possibly 15 caravans meeting up Friday evening and staying until Sunday afternoon. Mostly pensioners and would use the hall for social activities such as eating, playing music, quiz night, etc. They would want to stay in the car park for 2 nights and also asked about being able to use the field in the summer and accessing a manhole cover (presumably for waste disposal/plumbing). They would expect to pay an overnight fee for each caravan and pay an hourly rate for hiring the hall. They are also talking to Appledore Village Hall. 	JB/CL

	<p>Trustees were assured that no regular hirers would be displaced and agreed that the revenue would be welcome, with potential income for the shop and the pub as well.</p> <p>There are a number of questions and concerns, but subject to them being satisfactorily resolved, Trustees agreed to try this once and then review.</p>	
7. HALL HEATING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chris Reading had been asked, and chased several times, to attend the meeting to discuss his report and give detail about the heating options for the hall. He had been asked to provide comparative data so that trustees could make an informed decision about this major investment. He had been asked to provide an estimate of the fee for carrying out this additional work. No response had been received and it was agreed that an attempt to contact him would be made one more time. <p>POST MEETING UPDATE: Chris Reading responded to MD's further requests by saying he would provide a costed spreadsheet of options before Christmas, but despite repeated requests did not give an estimate for this work.</p>	MD/RS
8. HR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The HR Group has written and agreed an Annual Leave Policy It was agreed that JB's 6-month probationary period has been satisfactorily completed. CL to discuss with JB how he has achieved agreed objectives and to what extent he might have surpassed expectations. A full appraisal will take place in 6 months' time and CL will consider setting goals for this. 	CL
9. 2024 CENTENARY OF ROTHERMERE DONATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trustees were asked to think about ideas on how to mark the centenary of the Rothermere donation and email any ideas. It was suggested that the current Viscount Rothermere should be invited to any celebration. 	ALL
10. CONSTITUTION /STRATEGY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Strategy meeting which took place on 9th October was considered a success, with a very good summary produced by PT and a good base for going forward. It was agreed to defer the next meeting until the new year, to be arranged to suit PT. <p>SB made one amendment to the summary: Briefly the Trust's Objects are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the provision of a Community Centre and ancillary facilities in Benenden, including for meetings, lectures and classes, exercise, training and other forms of recreation and leisure. the use of both the Benenden and Iden Green open spaces as playing fields and recreation grounds. the use of St George's Hall for recreation or other leisure-time occupation. <p>SB clarified the following as there was still some confusion what to look at to determine what can and can't be done :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The permitted objectives vary from property to property. Properties which are not used for the stated objectives can be let commercially or sold. Private clubs, even if recreational, have to pay a commercial rent. Legal advice previously sought was circulated and sets out accurately and clearly. <p>There is still some work to do and further information to be found tracking down files and information setting out how money was set aside, tracking proceeds from sales, ensuring all investment growth is properly reflected, establishing what can be spent and an ongoing undertaking to pay into the accumulation fund.</p>	
	Meeting closed at 8.35pm	