

BENENDEN VILLAGE TRUST

Trustees' Meeting of Benenden Village Trust Monday 27th January 2025, 7pm, Iden Green Pavilion MINUTES

Item		
PRESENT	Kent Barker, Martin Dickson (Chairman), Peta Grant, Julie Lewis, Sally Ann Marks, Chris Parkinson, Paul Tolhurst, Mike Taylor. Caroline Levett (Trust Manager).	
1. APOLOGIES	Apologies were received from Simon Brown and Tom Dawlings.	
2. TRUSTEE RECRUITMENT	- Trustees unanimously agreed to the co-option of Mike Taylor. - The Trust's constitution requires that all co-opted trustees are formally approved as trustees by members at the next AGM - 28th July.	
3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING	The minutes of the Trustees' meeting held on 28th October 2024 were unanimously approved as a correct record of the meeting and signed by the Chairman. Matters arising not covered on the agenda : - TD had offered to raise again with TWBC the installation of another litter bin at Benenden Playground. To be followed up. - JL has started writing an article for the Magazine asking for volunteers to help with general maintenance of the Playgrounds.	TD JL
4. FINANCE, GOVERNANCE AND COMPLIANCE	Draft minutes of the FGC Group meeting held on 21st January had been circulated. The Trust's current finances are still not in an ideal position. a. <u>Financial position</u> - Total income Q3 £20,860 (BVH £9,257; BVT £11,603); Total expenditure Q3 £24,003 (BVH £14,455; BVT £9,548); Total bank account balances at 31st December: £24,453.46. - Current year end bank account balances are forecast as £15,956 with a net cash flow deficit of £5,429. This disguises the fact that income includes the grant from BPC for £5,000 and a total of £49,953 from COIF for 2024/25. Going forward the income from COIF income fund will be restricted to approximately £20,000 pa. - Forecast to year end : BVH income £35,000, expenditure £60,000; St George's Hall income £21,000, expenditure £26,000; Total income £112,000, expenditure £118,000 - Crude analysis for 2025-26 suggests income to be in the region of between £85,000 and £93,000 and basic expenditure in the region of £70,000, but total expenditure is likely to be in the region of £100,000 if recent experience was repeated. ❖ The Trust has carried out some fundraising of its own and this will continue. ❖ The Trust is in the process of increasing rent received from St George's Club and Benenden Bowls Club. ❖ There remains a number of unknowns. Trustees unanimously agreed that that it is imperative that the Trust remains extremely vigilant about costs and spending, and agreed a continuation of essential spending only. b. <u>COIF</u> - Accumulation Units (unrestricted) at 31st December £25,103. - Income Fund Value at 31st December £816,072. c. <u>Leases</u> - Letters were sent to St George's Club, Benenden Pre-School and Benenden Bowls Club on 21st February setting out that BVT has sought legal advice and has an obligation to charge a market rent and invited members to meet with Trust representatives (MD, SB, KB, CL) to discuss.	

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.

	• A meeting with Benenden Pre-School has been arranged for 26th February. • There has been no response yet from St George's Club and Benenden Bowls Club, and it was agreed to contact both after two weeks to follow up. Post meeting note : St George's Club has advised that the matter will be discussed at its committee meeting in February and the Club suggests that there are a number of misconceptions in the letter. • Trustees discussed the position and various responses which might be received. Further legal advice will be sought if necessary at the appropriate time. d. <u>BPC Funding</u> • BPC agreed a grant of £5,000 this financial year towards the cost of the new BVH heating system. • BPC agreed to take on the mowing and hedge-cutting contract for Benenden and IG Recreation Grounds and BVH for 5 years wef April 2025. A saving of approx £6,000 pa for BVT. e. <u>Training Budget</u> • HR training budget had been requested. • Given current and ongoing financial situation no fixed budget could be given to training needs.	
5. PROPERTY	a. <u>St George's Hall</u> • Water meters : CL has spoken to both Castle Water and SouthEast Water. Castle Water will send an engineer to verify the meters so that BVT can establish beyond reasonable doubt the supply from the main meter and the subsidiary one and the billing. CL has established that the main meter on New Pond Road is billed to the Club. If the meters and billing is correct the Trust will have to pay £210 + VAT. Once clarified CL will contact SE Water Developer Services regarding the installation of additional sub-meter(s) so that each tenant has their own meter reading and will be billed directly and individually. • Cottage : The tenant has reported that the carpets are fraying. MD/CL to arrange a visit. There will likely be costs which BVT will have to meet. • Bay window : CL has chased Stephen Neve for drawings, which will be sent to TWBC Conservation Officer. Window replacement scheduled for spring. CP to chase again. • Fire alarm maintenance : 6 monthly maintenance/testing took place on 9th January. b. <u>Playgrounds/Recreation Grounds</u> • PG and CL met to discuss last year's RoSPA reports. • There are no items identified as high risk at either playground. • It was agreed that no action is required at the current time for identified low risk items. • PG and CL to work through medium risk items and make recommendations for any necessary repairs. • JL and PG had raised concerns about the fencing around IG Playground and it is suggested that all posts should be replaced. PG believes that most of the fence panels can be reused. • Bill Lewis has made some temporary repairs at Iden Green by re-attaching panels to stop animals entering the play area and reattaching the fallen gravel boards. • The area by the gate has sunk and gets muddy. PG suggested levelling the soil and adding a metal grill or mesh atop the grass. CP advised that using type 1 roadstone would be a simpler and cheaper option and offered to carry this out at cost. • There are issues at both Benenden and IG with the gates and latches, which are subject to much use/overuse/misuse, and it may be that a different kind of latch is required and possibly new gates. • Trustees unanimously agreed to additional signage at Benenden to include notice that "children must be supervised by a responsible adult" and that "the management cannot be held responsible for any injury incurred whilst using these facilities". CL to arrange signage. • Signage which had stated no climbing on the tractor at Benenden has been removed.	CL MD/ CL CP CP CL

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.

	- Through BPC a request for funding has been made to TWBC from section 106 monies for Benenden Playground maintenance and repairs. However any decision regarding is some way off. - Fencing around Benenden Recreation Ground, and part of Iden Green Recreation Ground, remains a priority. Also included on S106 request, but less likely to receive. - There is a need to look for funding and grants for playgrounds and recreation grounds improvements. ❖ Trustees unanimously agreed to approach the Bonfire Society for a grant of £5,000 primarily to carry out fencing work at IG Playground and other identified repairs. CL to action. <u>c. Iden Green Car Park</u> - KB raised concerns about the use of the car park close to the Tennis Club. There is an ongoing issue of parked vehicles which are not using the Recreation Ground/Pavilion/Tennis Club. It was agreed that KB would draft a polite notice to be put on the windscreens. - There is a large pothole at the entrance to the car park. If this is on the highway it should be reported to KCC. - The stepping stones from the car park to the Tennis Club have become covered and need clearing. <u>d. Trees</u> - PG/MD to meet with Josh Ovenden. Not urgent. - It was previously suggested removing the dead trees from Benenden Recreation Ground roadside. However, these may be better left in situ until any new fencing is installed, so as not to create further gaps. - PG had reported that a fallen tree at Chapel Lane exit from IG Recreation Field and suggested that it needed removing. However this tree has now been removed, but not known by whom. - There is a may tree which needs removing along the front roadside of the Pavilion and a patch of brambles and young ash trees. KB offered to remove the may tree if possible to do so. <u>e. Village Hall</u> - As part of the heating upgrade it had been agreed that a new door would be installed in the foyer and new blinds in the main hall. - New thermal blackout blinds have been fitted. These do not billow out with the heating as the curtains did and positive feedback has been received from hirers. - The original quote submitted some months ago for the door has been chased several times to see if this is still valid (£1,588). No response has been received. This item was not included in Chris Reading's report for energy saving recommendations, but was a "wishlist" item. Given that there has been no response and the work is not essential trustees agreed to delaying this work until the finances are in place to do so. - Consideration will need to be given to car park repair. <u>f. Property Group Meetings</u> - PT has suggested to the group that it meets quarterly, 3 weeks before full Trustee meetings to review work in the preceding 3 months, discuss new issues and agree key themes to report.	CL KB KB
6. VILLAGE HALL	Minutes of the Village Hall Working Group meeting on 17th December were circulated. <u>a. Performance</u> - Details of hall usage were circulated and compared to last year's figures. ❖ For the period April to December hours usage for 2023/24 was 1,467 and for 2024/25 was 1,530. ❖ For the period April to December income generated for 2023/24 was £22,783 and for 2024/25	

	<u>c. Strategy</u> • Trustees had agreed at the Strategy meetings held last year that the Trust’s main focus and attention should be the Village Hall and recreation facilities, which are central to its purpose. • Valuations and subsequent legal advice were sought regarding the Trust’s obligation to charge market rents. • Once discussion have taken place with the relevant tenants and the impact of the proposed increases are known another Strategy Meeting will take place.	
FUTURE MEETING DATES	Quarterly trustee meetings to take place on the last Monday of January, April, July and October. • 2025 : 28th April, 28th July, 27th October	
	Meeting closed at 9pm	