

NENDEN VILLAGE TRUST
Trustees' Meeting of Benenden Village Trust Monday 28th April 2025, 7pm, Iden Green Pavilion
MINUTES

Item		
PRESENT	Kent Barker, Simon Brown, Tom Dawlings, Martin Dickson (Chairman), Peta Grant, Julie Lewis, Sally Ann Marks, Paul Tolhurst, Mike Taylor. Caroline Levett (Trust Manager).	
1. APOLOGIES	Apologies were received from Chris Parkinson.	
2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING	The minutes of the Trustees' meeting held on 28 th January 2025 were unanimously approved as a correct record of the meeting and signed by the Chairman.	
3. FINANCE, GOVERNANCE AND COMPLIANCE	Draft minutes of the FGC Group meeting held on 15th April had been circulated. ❖ Key points : <u>Cashflow/income and expenditure to 31st March</u> - Q4 to 31st March 2025 : - Total income BVT and BVH Q4 £28,971. BVT : Q4 £17,174. BVH: Q4 £11,796 - Total expenditure BVT and BVH Q4 £17,988. BVT : Q4 £5,552. BVH : Q4 £12,436. - Year-end to 31st March 2025 : - Total income £115,541 : BVH £37,980; COIF £45,954; Rental income £23,425; Grants and fundraising £8,088; Bank interest £94 - Total expenditure £105,141 : BVH £61,888; Running Costs £23,780; SGH £13,225; Benenden Recreation Ground £2,417; Iden Green £2,754; Playgrounds £1,078 - Bank account balances at 31st March : BVT Current Account £6,133.57; BVT Savings Account £16,639.09; BVH £9,013.06. All accounts £31,785.72. - Year-end net cash flow surplus of £10,400. Includes £5,000 grant from BPC towards the new BVH heating system; Total of £45,954 from COIF. Future income from COIF will be restricted to approximately £20,000 pa; SGH new window £11,200 was included in 2024/25 budget and will be carried forward. <u>COIF</u> - Income received 2024/25 £10,954; Funds withdrawn £35,000. Total £45,954 - Holdings value at 31st March 2025. Total £783,563. Income Fund - £759,099; Accumulation Fund £24,464. At 25th April total £765,683. Income fund - £741,778; Accumulation Fund - £23,905. - There has been a substantial decline in the value of the holdings in recent months due to the current market volatility. <u>2025/26 Outlook</u> - The need to curb expenditure and look for ways to expand income was reinforced, and only essential spend will continue to be approved. - FGC Group will carry out a detailed review of all expenditure to see where savings could be made. <u>Bonfire Society</u> - The Bonfire Society awarded a grant of £550 towards the upkeep of the playgrounds. - The Society has requested that BVT commits to providing volunteers at the next Bonfire event. ○ Post 15th April meeting – ❖ Item 6. Village Hall : The figures reported were incorrect. Actual income received was £37,980 and actual invoices issued/income generated figure was £38,375. A difference of £395. ❖ Item 8. Banking : MD and CL have spent more time trying to resolve the current mandate	FGC GRP

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.

	issues with Barclays and progress seems to have been made, with all the agreed bank account signatories now listed correctly.	
4. FUNDRAISING AND VOLUNTEERING	• The Film Nights have been successful. ○ The first, Casablanca, held in November, raised £1,016 in profit. ○ The second, The Italian Job, was held in April. Expenditure £1,382.08 (including one-off purchase of new tablecloths for BVH at £120); Income £3,002.14; Profit £1,620.06. ○ Trustees thanked Paul Tolhurst and all those involved and it was agreed that Grant Matthews should be thanked in the Benenden Magazine. ○ PT to consider the next film showing. ○ JL suggested a Saturday afternoon film aimed at children and families. • KB suggested, as another fundraising idea, holding a boot fair on the Recreation Ground. • JL advised that there has been some interest from volunteers willing to help with the upkeep of Iden Green Playground. • It is important to carry on considering fundraising ideas and to seek out volunteers.	MD PT
5. ST GEORGE'S HALL	<u>a. Property Issues</u> As highlighted in the FGC and Property Group minutes. • Window Replacement : TD followed up with TWBC and the Conservation Officer will make a site visit to see if a listed building application is required. Trustees discussed the matter again and agreed to take further advice regarding any imminent risks and to consider again if repairs could be made to the window rather than replacement. • Cottage carpets : The FGC and Property Groups agreed that the stair carpet should be replaced and other carpet stretched back and fixed in place. CL yet to action. • Cottage water pump – This is leaking and in need of repair or replacement. CL has contacted plumbers for quotes. KB queried the necessity of a water pump. CL to investigate. • Beech Tree : A significant reduction of the tree was prohibitively expensive, and not immediately necessary. It had been agreed to carry out a smaller scale deadwood of the tree. • Water Supply : It was confirmed by SouthEast Water that the meter on New Pond Road serves both the Club and the Cottage, and that the meter in Club's toilets serves only the Pre-School. The billing has been incorrect and the Club has been paying the Cottage's water for many years. The billing and metering of all parts needs to be corrected so that all three tenants have their water consumption measured separately. The account is in the name of the Club and initial steps need to be taken by them, and they have made contact with Castle Water. The issue of resolving who owes what to whom remains and once a separate meter has been installed for the cottage this will be able to be taken forward. • A sizable, shed-like structure has appeared in the cottage garden. More information is being sought. <u>b. Leases</u> As agreed by Trustees, letters were sent to St George's Club, Benenden Pre-School and Benenden Bowls Club in January explaining that BVT is obliged to charge market rentals to all its tenants which do not fulfil the charitable purpose of BVT, as confirmed by the Charity Commission. Failing to do so places Trustees in breach of their legal duties. Each was advised as follows: Bracketts reviewed the current market rental value of SGC and BPS and advised the fair market figure is £6,000pa. Neither currently makes any contribution to the cost of insuring the building nor pays any service charge to cover external maintenance of the property or its fire alarm. SGC was granted a five-year lease in 2012 at a rent of £2,000pa and a new lease is overdue.	CL CL

	In 2022 BPS agreed a 12-month lease, renewable annually, with BVT to run from September of that year. Both parties have the right to terminate the lease by giving 12-months prior notice. The rent is adjusted annually by the percentage increase in the RPI over the previous 12 months. BVT intends to give notice by September this year of its wish to terminate the lease at the next possible date, September 2026, and agree a new lease. Benenden Bowls Club's 60-year lease expired in 2017 and the terms of a new lease will require considerable updating and a charge made for the market rent for the land occupied. BBC's situation is comparable to that of Iden Green Tennis Club and it is anticipated that annual rental income may be £300/400. There has been no response from BBC. The letter to the BBC Chair had been passed to John Marshall, and this will be raised with him. Each organisation was invited to meet informally with BVT to talk through the implications of any changes. • Benenden Pre-School ○ MD, SB, KB and CL met with representatives of BPS on 26th February. ○ It was noted that the existing lease gave BPS the right to remain in the property until September 2026 at the current rent plus any increase in RPI and that BVT is unlikely to want to grant a further long lease, and any lease would be short term, possibly just one year. ○ It was explained that the building is in very poor repair and a permanent drain on BVT finances, which is not affordable and explained that in the longer term BVT would either need to refurbish the entire building or sell it and meanwhile did not intend to make any improvements to the property other than absolutely necessary. ○ BVT supports having a pre-school in the village and would give assistance in helping BPS find a new home, though BVT's charitable status precludes it giving any financial assistance. ○ BPS accepted the need to charge a market rent, and had been exploring several possibilities. ○ BPS raised the possibility of building at the back of the recreation ground or a site at the Primary School or the Gibbon School House. These are for BPS to follow up. ○ If BVT provided land on the recreation ground there would be a number of hurdles to overcome. It is for BPS to provide some detailed plans for consideration and have been told (on a number of occasions) to take pre-application advice from TWBC Planning. • St George's Club ○ MD, SB, KB and CL to meet with representatives of SGC on 2nd May. A pre-meeting will take place on 1st May and MT will input into this meeting. A new lease will need to be drawn up and a market rent paid. ○ The initial response from SGC is that it claims not to be a private club, although it may still accept the need to charge a market rent, and mentions repairs and upkeep of the property which it is presumed the Club will want BVT to carry out. ○ The message to SGC will be the same as that to BPS. • Trustees will need to consider the fact that if both BPS and SGC agree to pay a market rent the building will still remain a financial drain. • All trustees will be informed of the outcome of the meeting with SGC.	MD
6. PROPERTY	Minutes of the Property Group meeting held on 7th April had been circulated. • Post-meeting notes : ○ Iden Green Playground Fencing – PT has met with Tembo Kalisch and he confirmed that 5 posts need urgent attention and that another 2 posts will require attention in the near future. PT and TK agreed that repair with angle-iron is a short-term measure and that the old posts and concrete should be removed and replaced. TK to provide a quote.	

	❖ Every physical asset of BVT costs money and are not profitable. ❖ In line with the Trust's purpose and what is important to the parish trustees had agreed the priorities are : BVH, IGP, recreation grounds and playgrounds. ❖ Trustees had agreed that SGH is not a priority, it does not align with BVT objects, it loses money and there is a significant maintenance backlog. • A follow up strategy meeting has not taken place because of the delay in meeting with SGC. • The majority of trustees agreed that a meeting should take place before the AGM with a view to considering options for selling or redeveloping SGH. • Meeting to take place 10th June, 7pm.	
11. VILLAGE FETE	• BVT had been approached by the Village Fete Committee asking if trustees would like to run a stand at the Fete on Saturday 14th June to promote BVT/BVH. • Trustees agreed not to take part.	
12. AOB	• Diary System ○ SB asked if this is in place. ○ CL had previously created a diary system and will review this.	CL
	Date of next meeting and AGM 28 th July.	
	Meeting closed at 9.10pm	