

Kingston Village Hall {Reg Charity No 1197094}

2nd Annual General Meeting Under CIO status

8th February 2024 at 8.0pm

Present:

Trustees: Paul Wright (PW) Chair, Chris Reid (CR) Treasurer, Isabelle Nett (IN), Mark Stalham (MS), Peter Stokes (PS), Suzy Stokes (SS), Sarah Wright (SW) secretary, Femke Cole (FC).

Neil Cambell (NC) has said that business commitments have made it impossible to continue. Brett Barnes and Louise Gaffney would like to remain as Friends of the Village Hall.

Others: Miki Ellar (Friend), Jill Coleman (Friend), Heather Ginn (Friend), Torrie Smith (PCC), Anna Martin, Rachel Hooper.

1. Apologies: Pat Draper

2. Minutes of the last AGM: The minutes of the meeting of were circulated and there were no outstanding actions. (PW) thank all those for completing their actions. The minutes were approved and the hard copy has now been signed.

3. Ratification of existing committee members and election of new members: The existing committee was proposed and elected unopposed, this included (PD) who has indicated that she is willing to continue. Femke Cole (FC) was proposed by (SW) and seconded by (SS), and welcomed by the Treasurer

4. Strategy for recruitment of new committee members and friends: It is an ongoing challenge to find younger members of the village willing to join the committee. (PW) spoke to the participants of the quiz night but the invitation bore no results. (PS) said that from his experience on the Parish Council, it was better to approach an individual directly. Mike Ellar stressed the importance of advertising in the village magazine to go along with the personal approach. The advertising and the personal approach was agreed as the best way forward.

5. Chairman's and Treasurer's and Secretary's reports: A hard copy of the **Chairman's report** has been circulated. (PW) summarised the key points starting by thanking all the committee and friends for their hard work and efforts to keep the hall running efficiently. Thanking (CR) for keeping the accounts in good order, (PS) for countless jobs and for being in charge of the heating and Jill Coleman for volunteering to check that the hall is ready for use. Our big investment over the last year has been the big screen, projector and the film and music licences. We hope that they will be used in the coming year for sport and films. We must now concentrate on getting return from our investment and move to a position where our lettings and fund raising covers our outgoings. A hard copy of **The Treasurer's report and accounts for the year to 31 December 2022** has been circulated. (CR) explained that the accounts for 2022 were representative of the problems highlighted in the chairman's report. The income was approximately £7,500, but £2,500 of that amount was grants. The actual income is between £4,000 and £5,000 of which around £900 was from Karate which has now ceased. The running costs have increased from £4,000 to £6,000 a year as oil and electricity have risen in price. For the year 2023 the deficit will be about £700 which points to the fact that we need to have another fund raising event in the year. We have approximately £25,000 Of which £15,000 is invested in capital-protected interest bearing accounts. (CR) suggested that another £5,000 be invested leaving a cash buffer of £5,000. Rachel Hooper questioned whether we could "hoard" charity money in this way, as reserves should normally cover a two year period, but (PW) and (CR) said we had to set aside large sums for essential refurbishments and replacements in the coming decade. Expensive items include interior and exterior decorating, replacement of the

50 year old main roof and a new boiler or heat pump. (CR) said that grants are now considerably less generous. It was agreed with Rachel we need clear reasons about preparing for future expenditure in our reserves policy. **Action 1** (CR) to amend reserves policy.

NOTE (PW) has since spoken with ACRE who confirmed that our charitable objective is to maintain the fabric and contents of the hall for the benefit of the community. It is permissible for a village hall to retain sufficient funds to meet foreseeable capital expenditure as long as this is itemised in the reserves policy. ACRE also advised us that village halls would have to become increasingly self-sufficient as grants will be fewer and less generous.

Secretary's report A hard copy of the paid lettings has been circulated. The amount taken for the calendar year 2023 was £2352.50. It is very hard to estimate profit as it depends on how much heating is needed due to the weather conditions. The year was an unusually profitable one as we hired to the Ambulance Service for £700. We have two tiers of booking charges. For Villagers the price is £5 per hour before 7pm and £7 in the evening. For out of Village users the hourly charge is £10 before 7pm and £13 after. Events open to all (Coffee Morning, Music Night, Table Tennis and Pub Evenings) are gratis but the village hall benefits from bar takings and any profits from coffee. We had a South Cambs. Community Facilities Audit on 7 February. The audit was undertaken by ACRE and took about an hour. The feedback was very positive indeed and the soft seating area and the floor in the large Hall were especially liked.

6. Strategy for increasing hall lettings: (PW) has distributed flyers in Toft and Hardwick advertising the hall for business meetings, but we have had no response. Halls for Hire (Cambs) and Halls Hire (national) websites have both yielded a few bookings including the Ambulance Service's. To advertise in local Village and Parish Magazines is too expensive. The rates that we charged was discussed at some length and it was felt that we should put up the prices in April by £1 an hour to help cover the increase in electricity. Some felt that there should not have lower rates for the village but Torrie Smith reminded us that when he and (PD) were applying for refurbishment grants they had to supply evidence on how the hall could be used by and enhance the life of people in Kingston. He also recalled that private individuals contributed money to the funds and this is why there should be a lower rate to support Kingston. A business rate was suggested for clubs charging participants, but (CR) reminded us that we have few enough lets as it is and no power in the market. Fund raising and lettings each contribute approximately 50% of our income. If we raise the fees too much we risk the hall being used less than it is already. (PW) pointed out that while Kingston is a generally wealthy village, there are some residents who would struggle to afford even the present level of fees. It was felt that we need to find out the prices that other village halls are charging, (IN) said that it was very hard to compare halls as each one was unique and offered pros and cons. (PW) said that this was too big an issue to resolve tonight and that we would revisit the pricing structure when we had more information.

Action 2 (SW) with the help of those present who used other halls will collect a list of prices for us to consider.

7. Events for 2024 (BBQ, Art exhibition, Christmas fair etc) Torrie Smith has provided the Church Calander to prevent events clashing.

BBQ It was agreed to hold the BBQ at the end of summer on 7th September and (MS) kindly offered to barbeque. **NOTE** (PW) has asked James and Janet Clear and they are agreeable for this date.

Christmas Fair The 2023 Fair was a resounding success thanks to (SS), (PS), (PD), and Miki Ellar. Both Miki Ellar and (SS) feel that we need some new faces to help and that the contributors and customer base needs to be widened. We are returning to the Village Hall for the event, selling from tables, and a subcommittee will be set up to spread the load nearer the time.

Pub Night Pub night with pizzas are very popular but the nights when there is no food on offer are quiet. (CR) suggested Cornish pasties. **Note** (PW) has investigated Ann's Pasties which featured in Rick Stein's Food Heroes. They can be delivered frozen in time for the next Pub Evening. They will

need to be cooked to order, so we need to have the same sort of arrangement as for pizzas with people ordering and paying before the event. Another suggestion was for a take-away curry night, (MS) will kindly arrange this for 6th April. Action 2 (MS).

Live Folk Music will take place on 4th May during Pub Night.

International Evening We thought it was a good idea to see if there would be support for reviving the International Evening. (FC) offered to see if there is interest in the village and if there was, she would help organise it with those who had done it before.

8. Likely fabric maintenance issues in 2024. A hard copy of the general visual inspection of Village Hall on 14 September 2023 was circulated. (PS) said that there were no problems and that he had fixed item 10, the South door. He asked that if anyone spotted problems that they report them to him. (PS) said that he would put up narrow shelves over the radiators under the TV and the tapestry. They would have rounded corners to ensure that they were safe. (PW) on behalf of all present, thanked (PS) for all his hard work on keeping the fabric of the hall up together, coordinating inspections and for taking on the remote control of the heating.

Weed Control (MS) was thanked for his offer to spray the weeds but several members of the meeting were worried about using chemicals. It was decided to weed by hand and Jill Coleman offered to coordinate a team of volunteers to keep the playground and oil tank clear of weeds. Until the next Parish Council meeting we won't know who will be responsible for the car park and the bus shelter area.

9. A.O.B. (PW) asked the committee if everyone was happy with the new format of having the AGM fully open to public contributions and do away with the closed meeting that traditionally followed. There were no objections. (PW) Thanked all who had attended the meeting.

The meeting closed at 10.10 pm