

MINUTES

Attendance: Emily Collard, Tony Bruce, Linda Robinson, Andrew Eckersley, Doug Allen, Sarah Halshaw, Anne-Marie Mulley, Malcolm Morley, Karen Morley, Richard Byas

Apologies: Nicky Wood

1. Minutes and matters arising from meeting on 21 November 2023 (& items on hold from earlier meetings).

- Renewal of smoke detectors. Advice from My Electrics
 - Smoke detectors have been replaced and updated.
- Emergency Lighting. Work completed.
- Dimmer switch replacement. Work completed.
- Additional water tap to be fitted to exterior of hall (right hand side). MM to update.
 - Update at next meeting.
- Improvements to ground floor committee room. MM to update.
 - Better to clear out existing storage cupboard rather than upgrade committee room.
 - Scout leader to clear out their stuff within 2 weeks. We can decide what to do with remaining items.
 - MM to get a few spare cupboard keys cut.
- Discouraging use of extra non-paid for rooms – posters to be erected by AE.
- Village Christmas tree – purchase and Parish contribution
 - Parish council still to pay.
- Christmas Carol Service – report back and expenditure report
 - A lovely and successful evening.
- Overhead projector – confirmation that actions undertaken – Standard Conditions of Hire policy updated by DA. Clause added to booking emails. NW spoken to scout leaders.
- Rendering on front wall of village hall – AE to report back on discussion with original contractors.
 - AE struggling to get hold of original contractors, Paul Thompson. He will persist.
- Topcliffe Bowling Club – donation of bench. DA to report.
 - Bench is in storage during winter months and will be put in place in summer.
- Ground maintenance – arrangements with new contractor.
 - NW to update in due course.
- Condensation in kitchen. MM to update.
 - MM showed committee videos of issues with the existing extractor fan. Proposing a new 12” extractor fan and humidistat into kitchen, estimated £500 for the work. Remain on hold until water leak has been resolved.

3. Hallmaster – Booking Matters

- List of hires and activities – January and February 2024.
- Consideration of the appointment of a Bookings Administrator on an Honorarium – 4-8hrs per month
List of duties circulated to committee members. Committee to debate and decide as Bookings Secretary is unable to continue.
 - No committee members were prepared to take on the role of Hallmaster Administrator, nor aid NW further in the short term until a paid help can hopefully be found.
 - Committee agree to 6-8 hours a month (by trial and agreement) at £15 p/hr as an honorarium amount to administer to the bookings system.
 - DA to advertise in Sunday email and Tattler. Also put something on Facebook.
 - DA to ask question within Village Hall community if other Halls using Hallmaster have an administrator.
- Concern re some clients using hall when it's not booked to them and not using it when it is. Difficulty of keeping track and achieving accurate billing.
 - Need to speak to regular users personally e.g. Scouts/Beavers if problem persists.

4. Treasurers Report

- **Account Balance**

- The balance on the Village Hall Bank Accounts as at close of 16/1/24 totalled £18,152.46 comprised as follows:
 - Santander £17996.28
 - Paypal £156.18
 - Of the above £11,000 is a designated contingency reserve.

- **Risk of Costs Associated with apparent Water Leak**

- The above balance takes account of a DD for £6850.20 taken by Business Stream (Water supplier) on 22/12/23 for water supply until 9/12/23.
- This comprises a “correction” of charges between the previous Actual meter reading taken on 13/3/23 (which was normal) and the next actual meter reading taken on 25/9/23 (abnormal and taken after the Sept bill which was based on estimates and was normal) together with estimated charges (based on the new consumption rates) to 9/12/23.

Upon investigation it has been found:

- The meter reading is correct.
- The meter is reported by Yorkshire water to be functioning correctly based on an inspection by them on 4/1/24.
- Excess amounts of water continue to be metered.
- There appears to be a leak on site based on initial investigations by a contractor using a drain camera undertaken on 17/1/24.
- Further (excavation based) investigation is planned for 23/1/24 with any repair works to follow.
- The stopcock is broken and therefore cannot be turned off.
- Current plan of action is to keep costs to a minimum and lay a new pipe.
- Work is on hold until Yorkshire Water turn the water off. DA has commenced a complaints process with Yorkshire Water and will continue to update the committee.

Financial Risks to the Committee:

- We may be liable for the excess water charges (currently estimated to be running at a rate of £170/week). We have the opportunity to apply to the water supplier for a “leakage adjustment” which they may grant, subject to a written report by a professional that we had a leak and analysis of before and after meter readings. This is possible but not guaranteed. Initially we were advised that a reimbursement under the “leakage adjustment” policy was normal and standard practice and therefore left the water on and hall open. We have subsequently been advised that any reimbursement under the policy is discretionary and not guaranteed. We will therefore challenge any refusal to grant this based on us having been misinformed of the risk to us.
- The additional charges beyond the bill to 9/12/23 to the date of writing are estimated at £1000.
- The cost of finding and repairing the leak. The contractor engaged is charging c £800 +VAT/Day plus materials. A reasonable estimate may be in the region of £2000 - £3000 for sourcing the leak and the repairs. There is also some sign of damp in the building which may need works.
- All of the above costs may qualify as an insurable risk (subject to normal excesses) IF there is a positive reason for the leak such as impact or root damage. Normal wear and tear would not qualify for insurance cover.
- Overall, the potential worst-case scenario is therefore estimated as possibly £8500 for the excess water charges and c £3000 for repairs, totalling £11,500. The best case scenario is our insurance excess, which I have not yet confirmed.

Actions Taken:

- Action being taken to test for, find and repair the leak (MM).
- Insurance company informed and procedures for claim being followed.
- Bank contacted and the £6850 is being recovered through the DD Indemnity scheme, although this does not absolve us of any ultimate liability if the charges are due.
- Water Company contacted and procedures for claiming “leakage allowance” clarified and will be followed once leak confirmed and repaired.

- Variable Direct Debit cancelled and fixed payment plan DD set up for £80/mth (normal amount) in order to prevent a further large charge being taken in March 24 or recovery action being taken against the committee in the short term.
- **Recommendations:**

The Committee is invited to:

- Note the account balances - noted
- Be conscious of the significant financial risk currently being carried by the committee in relation to the water charges and apparent leak, which fully utilises the contingency reserve – noted
- Suspend any discretionary expenditure until such time as the water leak risk is resolved and our financial position is clear - agreed

5 Governance/Insurance/Business/ Maintenance/H&S Checklist

- Regular Checklist – review of actions.
- Revised list of Trustees/Committee Members. 2023/24 list submitted to Charity Commission – TB to action.

6 Items for Information//Decision/Future Consideration

- Wi-Fi – proposal for installation of Wi-Fi in the hall. NW to update
 - Either need a phone line installed or ability to hotspot but need further update to be given at next meeting.
- Purchase of Bluetooth speaker – part of Wi-Fi assessment. Linked to above item.
- MyElectrics - Clarification of regular maintenance vs quotable work.
 - Committee agree to use MyElectrics as preferred supplier for all routine works.
- Yorkshire Water – leak and billing issues
 - £6,850 water bill highlighted a problem. A leak has been identified but during a lot of investigation the leak has not been found. The stopcock is broken and therefore cannot be turned off.
 - Current plan of action is to keep costs to a minimum and lay a new pipe.
 - Work is on hold until Yorkshire Water turn the water off. DA has commenced a complaints process with Yorkshire Water and will continue to update the committee.
- Repair/Replacement of trestle tables
 - Trestle tables stored upstairs, used mainly for the produce show, are near their end of life. On hold for the time being.

7. AOB

- TB intending to stand down as treasurer after the AGM. Will stay on until September to aid with the handover.
- LR, as Safeguarding Officer, to attend upcoming training course (£35).
- Cleaner Lesley has highlighted that windowsills are mouldy and has requested a set of steps in order to clean them. MM to purchase steps and inform Lesley she needs to let someone know when she is using the them in order that we comply with Health and Safety.
- Thanks to TB, DA and MM for all their work with the water leak.
- DA intends to stand down from the committee at the AGM, but will stay on until September to aid with handover.
- AE intends to stand down from the committee at the AGM.
- NW intends to stand down as booking secretary at the AGM.
- Need to make concerted effort to recruit more committee members – advertise in email and Tattler.

8. Date of next meeting – 7.30pm, 19th March 2024.