

## Topcliffe and Asenby Village Hall Committee

7.30pm, Tuesday 10 September 2024

### MINUTES

**Attendance:** Richard Byas, Doug Allan, Helen Fothergill, Malcolm Morley, Karen Morley, Christine Findley, Jim Shaw Ann Marie Mulley, Linda Robinson and Sarah Halshaw.

**Apologies:** Emily Collard, Tony Bruce, Steve Gallon, Debbie Roberts and Geraldine Clifton.

#### 1. Minutes and matters arising from meeting on 9 July 2024 (& items on hold from earlier meetings).

- Installation of Wi-Fi and Bluetooth speaker  
JS reported on Mi-Fi 4G trial and said that it has been successful and that the system should remain in place. It is costing £8 per month. The idea of having a Bluetooth speaker has been dropped. AGREED.
- Re-pointing of external wall above emergency door.  
MM has this on his to do list but needs to fit it into a busy schedule. NOTED.
- External lighting issues  
RB reported that the sensor lights now seem to be working correctly. NOTED.
- Insulation and boxing in of pipework in entrance hall.  
MM confirmed that he has completed this work. NOTED.
- Rendering on front wall of Village Hall.  
RB confirmed this contract had been successfully completed at a cost of £570.
- Replacement chairs offered by Barton Village Hall.  
DA reported on offer and indicated that these chairs were to be collected soon (depends on when Barton's new chairs are delivered). DA presented his proposal for the use/disposal of chairs. AGREED.
- Board Games Club – As GC was not present, there was no update on this idea.

#### 2. Approved project on hold pending clarification of impact of the water leak on the budget

- Condensation in kitchen.  
MM has previously reported that an additional extractor fan and a replacement of existing extractor fan (both larger than existing), and a humidistat controller are required. This item carried forward from the previous meetings and will be reconsidered when the 'ban' on spending is lifted. (see item 3 re Suspension of expenditure).

#### 3. Finances

- Treasurer's report – **Appendix 1, page 5**  
Recommendations. The committee was invited to:
  - Note the account balances
  - Be conscious of the ongoing significant financial risk currently being carried by the committee in relation to the costs of the water leak, which would make a large impact to the account balance and leave us, more or less, with the contingency reserve.
  - Be conscious that it is likely but not yet certain that most of the costs will be recovered either from the water company OR the insurance company and this could prove a lengthy process.
  - Continue to suspend any discretionary expenditure until we have a resolution on the water leak, however, this does not include urgent, small or pre-winter essential costs.
  - Note and be appreciative of the success of the recent fundraising events. ALL AGREED.
- Update on water leak insurance claim and Leakage Allowance refund – **Appendix 2, page 6 & 7**  
The latest update appears to be indicating a largely successful outcome though some final negotiations and calculations are required. The committee was advised that there was no absolute certainty until the negotiations are concluded. The committee was invited to:
  - Allow Tony Bruce to continue to pursue the matter to conclusion, as a Committee Member until 30/9/2024 and as an approved Co-opted Volunteer thereafter; to close down the Leak issues with the Water Companies and with the Insurance Company.
  - Given the experience with the two companies, continue to exercise restraint on discretionary spending until such time as this matter has been finally resolved, a correct final balance in known and

the matter is formally closed. It is expected that this could be resolved in the next few working weeks. TB will provide a further report to the Chair and Treasurer when this is finally resolved.

- Keep the fixed Direct Debit of £80/month in place on an ongoing basis rather than revert to a variable DD to pay the issued quarterly bill. This is because it is clear that, notwithstanding the number of “actual” meter readings provided since the leak was fixed, the companies continue to “estimate” our consumption on a spurious basis which grossly overestimates our use and issues grossly inflated charges for current consumption.
- Undertake and submit quarterly meter readings going forward to ensure that ongoing bills have some accuracy, and to ensure any further leaks are quickly detected.
- On a wider note, this has put a spotlight on the price of water charges. Prior to this incident we paid roughly £80/month for water and price was not on the Committee’s radar. This has highlighted that, in effect, each m3 of water used costs the Committee £3.92. In that context it is worth considering measures to reduce usage and also, once this matter is fully concluded, taking some advice to get the best deal on the market.

ALL RECOMMENDATIONS AGREED. MM will continue to take monthly readings which he passes to TB. He will continue this practice and, after TB has concluded his work, will continue to give the readings to the Treasurer. AGREED.

- Trustees and Committee Members list.  
A current list was circulated for comment/approval. APPROVED
- Asset Register – a check is still outstanding. TB and DA to undertake. RB would like to be involved. AGREED.

#### **4. Hallmaster – Bookings Administration**

- Bookings Administrator’s report – Appendix 3, page 8 & 9
  - Door access codes: all committee members and regular users will have an access code which doesn’t change unless there is an issue that requires it to be. Occasional hirers will have a different code that changes with each hire. HF to check existing door codes with Andrew Eckersley and to seek a lesson on how to change the codes. AGREED.
  - A review of who has administrative access to Hallmaster suggests that most committee members ought to have “view only” permission. But it would be beneficial to have one or two members who can support HF if she is on holiday or otherwise not available. AGREED that the majority will be “view only” and SH will take on support role.
  - Further recovery action will be taken against a hirer who has failed to settle a £174 debt. RB to investigate a way of taking this forward. AGREED.
  - The ‘rogue’ page presenting out of date hire charges is being removed from the village website. NOTED.
  - Discussions are underway with Asenby Parish Council to see how the Hallmaster system can be featured on their website in a similar way to Topcliffe. HF to continue discussions. AGREED.
  - Regular hall users have been advised that the hot water tap in the disabled toilet has been left running recently. They have been asked to include checks on taps as part of their departure checks. NOTED.
  - The Scout Troop has now made more bookings in the period up to Christmas. NOTED.

#### **5. Governance/Insurance/Business/ Maintenance/H&S Checklist**

- Regular Checklist – review of recent checks.  
DA had circulated the latest version of the Checklist document and reminded committee members of the importance of undertaking regular checks to ensure we meet insurance requirements. A form should be completed at each check and these should be kept on file. RB confirmed that he has been undertaking checks and keeping the completed forms. Checks will be undertaken each month. AGREED
- Electrical Testing  
There has been a range of electrical issues in recent months and MM recommended that the Five Year Electrical Test, due in 2025, should be brought forward and undertaken as soon as possible. Several redundant emergency lighting blocks need removing as part of contract. AGREED and MyElectrical Contractors will be asked to undertake the work.
- Future energy  
MM raised the prospect of existing gas heaters needing to be replaced either because they break down or the gas supply is terminated as part of government’s climate change plans.

## 6. Items for Information//Decision/Future Consideration

- Email communications and spam messages

Following a recent incident of spamming of a committee member's Contacts, it is considered important that the committee administration is well-maintained and that some sensible precautions are taken, including communicating where appropriate via 'Blind Copying'. DA indicated that where possible this is now being done, but that it does have some limitations. AGREED.

- Grounds maintenance.

Tree and bush clearance work has recently been undertaken by Michael Darvill. His contribution was agreed via email but now retrospective approval of £100 expenditure is being sought. DA reported that some significant clearance work has already been completed and the removal of Elder trees on left hand side of hall will be completed fairly soon. RB, who's shares a property boundary has agreed to contribute £20 towards the cost of work. RB will ask Jamie Moores – who has a boundary on the opposite side, if he will make a contribution. AGREED

Thanks were given to DA, JS, GC and Martin Hexter who have helped remove green waste to the tip. AGREED.

- Booster on Village Hall roof

HF reported on an approach from Netmore Group to fix a booster aerial on the roof of the Village Hall. **See Appendix 4, page 10.** This would give the Village Hall an annual income of £350 (although the hall would be responsible for electricity usage of approximately £20 per annum. The principle was agreed and RB agreed to meet the company on site to hear their specific proposal re siting (preferably on roof at rear of hall). AGREED

- Library management

RB/DA reported on work undertaken to establish a Children's and Young Persons section in the library. Books had been obtained from the Baldersby St James Book Fair. DA asked if a special 'thank you' could be sent to Peter Manning to thank him for his work maintaining the library. And RB agreed to do that. AGREED. MM expressed the view that access and opening times for the library have been a little chaotic, which must be confusing for potential users. It was suggested that the opening times should match those of the Boccia Club, Warm Hub/Soup & Sweet lunches and the Knit & Natter Club. It was also suggested that an A-Board should be created with clear and colourful advertising for the library. The A-Board will be positioned outside the hall when these sessions are taking place. HF will look at best way forward. AGREED

- Christmas tree – DA reported on an offer from Swaleside residents Gordon & Shirley Walker to supply this year's tree for the front of the Village Hall. The tree is in their private garden and they are happy to donate it. But it would have to be felled and transported away. Offer accepted and DA to seek assistance from Josh Barningham (free or for an agreed fee) to get tree removed and erected at Village Hall by early December. AGREED

- Fundraising events to boost hall funds:

- Alexandra Scott Concert 17 August. £622.27 raised for Village Hall funds. (DA)
- Produce Show – 31 August. £356.23 raised for Village Hall funds. (DA on behalf of Show Secretary Judith Lowe).
- BBQ and Disco – Saturday 14 September – JS, Andy Findlay and Malcolm Ealand organising.
- Christmas Fayre – Saturday 16 November (KM).
- Horse Race Night – Saturday 22 February 2025 (DA)
- The Flying Oysters dance – date in 2025 to be confirmed. (DA)
- Sunday Brunch – date to be set (KM) – likely to be early in the New Year.

Thanks were expressed to all recent and future fundraisers for their support for the Village Hall. AGREED

## 7. Any Other Business

### 7.1 Parish Representation on Village Hall Committee

The Chairman (RB) reported that there had been a misunderstanding regarding the standing of the position of Parish Council representatives attending Village Hall members. The options are that they become full members of the committee with all the usual responsibilities of a Trustee (and voting rights) or act as observers and don't have the extra responsibilities attached to being a Trustee. RB has communicated the true position to the chairman of Topcliffe Parish Council and the Parish Council are due to consider what they will do. NOTED

## 7.2 CFY Network Meeting

DA mentioned that the next CFY Network meeting which will be held online on Thursday 14 November and the main subject will be Fire Safety in Community Buildings and new guidance on safety in community buildings. It's between 10am and 11.30am. He wondered if any committee member(s) would be prepared to attend and report back. RB and CF expressed potential interest. DA to circulate details to all members. AGREED.

## 7.3 Community First Yorkshire

DA reported on CFY approach re holding a day seminar for North Yorkshire Village Hall members on Friday 7 March 2025. Main subjects will be "Access to Halls – disability, dementia etc" and "Trustee recruitment and retention". DA will be a contributor and show attendees round our Village Hall. CFY will pay appropriate rent.

AGREED that:

- the committee fully supports the use of the Village Hall for this event.
- the hire rate will be at the level paid by parishioners (£16 per hour)
- that DA should participate as proposed.
- HF will complete the Hallmaster booking (9am to 3pm)
- other committee members should consider attending.
- coffee and tea will be supplied by the Village Hall for breaks and lunch.
- KM will organise refreshments (and other volunteers will be welcomed)..

## 7.4. Christmas carols around the Christmas Tree

DA reported that he has had discussions with St Columba's officials and agreed dates so that there is no clash between events in the festive season. Our carol service will be at 7pm on Friday 20 December. As last year, mince pies and mulled wine will be offered after the carols to participants. HF will make Hallmaster booking. thanks are given to the Boot Camp for giving up their booking to accommodate the carols event. The committee authorised a spend of up to £100 on this event for catering and printing. AGREED.

## 7.5 Planning Application at the Pinfold, Front Street

DA reported on a letter received at the Village Hall from NYC re an application to install a dormer windows facing north in the roof of the neighbouring property, The Pinfold. AGREED that the committee has no comment to make about this application.

## 7.6 Damp patches in entrance hall

MM reported that the damp patches have been investigated by agents of the insurance company dealing with the recent water leak. Costings for repair have been submitted and the next steps are now awaited. NOTED

## 7.7 Council Licencing

RB reported that his name has now replaced that of the former chairman (Andrew Eckersley) on documentation held by North Yorkshire Council's licencing unit.

## **8. Date of next ordinary meeting.**

Tuesday 12 November 2024 at 7.30pm.

## **APPENDIX 1**

### **Topcliffe & Asenby Village Hall Committee - 10 September 2024**

#### **Treasure's Update & Report**

##### **1. Account Balance**

The balance on the Village Hall's Bank Account currently stands at £30,007.93 which is as follows:

- Santander - £29,724.56
- Paypal - £283.37

Of the above, £15,000 is allocated for the contingency reserve.

##### **2. Fund raising**

- Alex Scott - After expenses, a credit has been deposited into the Village Hall Bank Account for £622.27.
- Produce Show - After expenses, a credit has been deposited into the Village Hall Bank Account for £356.30.

Both great result and these are included in the above balance.

## **APPENDIX 2**

**Report to: TAVHC 10th September 2024**

**From: Tony Bruce – Committee Member**

**Subject: Update on Water Charges and Leakage Allowance following Water Leak**

**NB** This note has been written in some detail for the purposes of corporate history, handover, and to inform the 2024/25 Independent Review.

**1.** Following the Appeal submitted in response to Yorkshire Water and Business Stream rejecting the original Application for Leakage Allowance the decision has been reversed and a Leakage Allowance has been granted by Yorkshire Water.

**2.** I was advised on 21/8/24 that a credit had been approved for 3332m<sup>3</sup> of water supplied and 3165m<sup>3</sup> of waste water removal (based on the standard 95% algorithm). Based on my rough calculation this appeared to be an appropriate volume. Business Stream (our supplier) were then to calculate the financial value and credit our account accordingly.

**3.** A new invoice was issued by Business Stream on 1/9/24. Unfortunately, this showed a new remaining account balance of £1829.54 owed to Business Stream. By my calculations this should have been in the order of £300-£350 owed, reflecting that we have not made any payment for any water for the period from September 2023 to January 2024 inclusive. The £6,850.20 taken for the 10/12/23 invoice was recovered in full through the DD Guarantee Scheme and the £80/mth Fixed DD did not commence until February 2024.

**4.** On further analysis it became clear that:

a. We have been charged £1473.75 for the current period (9/7/24 – 31/8/24); based on overestimated usage by Business Stream. Malcolm has read and I have submitted the new actual reading (4366 on 6/9/24) and this has reduced the account balance to £503.37 owing.

b. The leakage allowance financial value of Credit £11,496.46 has been calculated using the correct water volumes but incorrect prices per m<sup>3</sup> of water. The price the water supply and waste water removal has been refunded at is lower than the price originally charged on the 10/12/2023 and 10/3/2024 invoices.

**5.** I have contacted Business Stream to inform them that they appear to have used the wrong rates to calculate the refund value, and they have acknowledged this. They have agreed that they will investigate this, which is an automated system, and make any further adjustment necessary in the next working week. It is my expectation, based on past experience that they will fail to meet the deadline on this, and I will need to pursue the matter again over the coming weeks to secure the accurate adjustment.**3Recommendations**

**1.** I pursue the matter to conclusion, as a Committee Member until 30/9/2024 and as an approved Co-opted Volunteer thereafter; to close down the Leak issues with the Water Companies and with the Insurance Company.

**2.** Given the experience with the 2 Companies I would continue to exercise some restraint on discretionary spending until such time as this has been finally resolved and we have a correct final balance, and the matter is formally closed. I would expect this to be resolved in the next few working weeks and will provide a further report to the Chair and Treasurer when this is finally resolved.

**3.** Keep the fixed DD of £80/month in place on an ongoing basis rather than revert to a variable DD to pay the issued quarterly bill. This is because it is clear that, notwithstanding the number of “actual” meter readings provided since the leak was fixed, they continue to “estimate” our consumption on a spurious basis which grossly overestimates our use and issues grossly inflated charges for current consumption.

**4.** Undertake and submit quarterly meter readings going forward to ensure that ongoing bills have some accuracy, and to ensure any further leaks are quickly detected.

**5.** On a wider note, this has put a spotlight on the price of water charges. Prior to this incident we paid roughly £80/month for water and it was not on the Committees radar. This has highlighted that, in effect, each m<sup>3</sup> of water used costs the Committee £3.92. In that context it may be worth both considering measures to reduce usage, but also, once this matter is fully concluded, taking some advice to get the best deal on the market.

## APPENDIX 3

# Topcliffe & Asenby Village Hall Committee Meeting Booking Administrator's Report - 10<sup>th</sup> September 2024

## Hallmaster System Access

The Hallmaster system has been set up so that anyone can view what is booked in the hall by following the link from Topcliffe Village website. You don't need any login or account for this.

Anyone who has made a booking in the past will have set up an account and through this will have customer access so that they can request a booking or changes to their existing booking. However there are further levels of access that can be given so that committee members can either simply view, or view and amend bookings or data in the system.

Permissions can be given for:

- Bookings and calendar amend access or view only access
- Reports and set up amend access or view only access
- Invoicing and payments amend access or view only access
- Customer list amend access or view only access

I have the main administrator access, however, some Committee members have also been given permissions in the past, primarily so that they could assist with workload or set up events/tasks that benefit the Village Hall. These are: Doug Allan; Tony Bruce; Emily Collard; Sarah Halshaw; Karen Morley; Malcom Morley; Anne Marie Mulley.

It is definitely good practise to have more than one person having full access to the system so that holidays and illness can be covered, however it may also be beneficial to have all committee members having view only access to the full system so that they can see the levels of booking and revenues being taken.

## Hall Usage

Weekly bookings from: Art class (term time), Boot Camp x 2, Boccia, Knit and Natter, Carpet Bowls and Village Quiz. Squirrels, Cubs and Beavers have booked in only for the first week of term.

Every 2 weeks - Warm Hub

One-Off bookings from the Art Class

Home education classes have paused during the holidays and there is no booking yet for the new term.

Parish Council meetings for both Topcliffe and Asenby held regularly. These are no fee bookings.

Enquiry made about holding language classes.

## Bookings for September and October

Confirmed bookings for the period 1<sup>st</sup> September to 31<sup>st</sup> October are down this year compared to the same period last year, and the main reason for this is that there is only one week of Scout group bookings during the period. This year 3, last year 13 for the same period. The group has been contacted to check whether more bookings will be made. 66 of the 71 bookings are from Regular Users.

	Main Hall	Lower Committee Room	Upper Committee Room
1 <sup>st</sup> Sept to 31 <sup>st</sup> October <b>2023</b>	73	10	1
1 <sup>st</sup> Sept to 31 <sup>st</sup> October <b>2024</b>	61	10	1



### **Outstanding payments in excess of 2 months**

- Baby Bubble sessions discussed at previous meetings. Following the last meeting, Richard sent out a formal letter saying that further action may be taken. A response was received apologising and saying that the payment had now been made, however nothing has been received to date. **£174** outstanding.
- Birthday party booking for 16<sup>th</sup> March, reported on at the last meeting. This party does not appear to have gone ahead and has now been cancelled from the system.

### **Since the last meeting**

- Cycle event booking issue. Web page error has been raised with the Topcliffe Parish Council Clerk and been sent on to the web developer for action.
- Payment has been made to continue use of the Hallmaster system for a further year.
- Regular users advised about WiFi trial
- Regular users advised about hot tap issue
- Asenby Parish website has no mention of the Village Hall and no link to the booking information. This is being discussed by the Parish Council to see if it can be incorporated or linked in some way.

## APPENDIX 4

Topcliffe & Asenby Village Hall Committee

Meeting 10th September 2024

### **Proposal to use Topcliffe & Asenby Village Hall to site a signal booster.**

We have been approached by Netmore Group, (<https://netmoregroup.com/>) which is looking to deploy some small signal boosters in our area, where their normal commercial towers don't quite reach. They would like to place a small connectivity device on the pitch of the Village Hall roof or on the gable end. It is a signal booster only and does not collect any data.

The booster would be used to provide a signal for major utility groups using smart metering. It would take around 45 minutes to be installed, has a 16-20 year lifespan and is not likely to require any access for servicing during this period.

They assure me that the device would not have any negative effects on local households and pointed to Government guidance on the use of 868mghz for smart metering which can be seen following this link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/smart-meters-radio-waves-and-health/smart-meters-radio-waves-and-health>

They are offering £350 per year to cover rental and electricity costs. The unit installed would be a 7w device so they estimate that electricity costs would be around £20 for the year. The rest is considered as rent. The contract length would be a rolling one, year on year so if we approve it and then change our minds, their engineers will remove it. The pictures show what the booster would look like.

