

Topcliffe and Asenby Village Hall Committee

7.30pm, Tuesday 12 November 2024

MINUTES

1. **Attendance:** Emily Collard, Doug Allan, Karen Morley, Linda Robinson, Sarah Halshaw, Richard Byas, Malcolm Morley, Jim Shaw, Chrissy Findlay, Linsey Payne
Apologies: Anne-Marie Mulley, Steve Gallon, Helen Fothergill

2a. Minutes and matters arising from meeting on 10 September 2024 (& items on hold from earlier meetings).

- Re-pointing of external wall above emergency door. MM to report
 - Couple of places externally need repointing and filling. DA to get quote from John Heidstrom.
- Replacement chairs offered by Barton Village Hall. Latest situation re all chairs.
 - Still a delay, but Barton VH will keep us posted.
- Board Games Club – any interest shown in setting up a club?
 - Geraldine to leave the committee and after some research decided it wasn't worth starting a games club.
- Five-Year Electrical Testing – and other work undertaken by My Electrical.
 - Completed and RB to file and post results on noticeboard.
- Signal Booster on Village Hall roof – RB to report on progress.
 - Committee agree to this being installed.
- Library signposting. HF
 - Sign is going out onto pavement regularly
- Parish Representation – Response from Topcliffe PC
 - There maybe an interested party from Parish Council but no name confirmed yet.
- CFY Network Meeting – Fire safety & Guidelines – 14 November. RB/CF/DA to attend
 - DA, RB and CF to attend and report back
- Damp patches in entrance hall – insurance claim – MM
 - Damp-proofing work has been completed. Drying out slowly but not dry enough to paint. It will be painted once ready.

2b. 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 (see item 3 re Suspension of expenditure).
 - Move this item to next years meeting.

3. Finances

- Update on water leak insurance claim and Leakage Allowance refund. See Tony Bruce's report – **Appendix 1**
 - Recommendations:
 - As it is now almost 2 months since this issue was flagged to them on 6/9/24 I propose to contact them again to pursue the outstanding refund amount – confirm.
 - That the Committee endorse this course of action or determine an alternative – endorsed.
- Treasurer's report – **Appendix 2**
 - The committee is invited to:
 - Note the account balance – noted
 - Note and be appreciative of the success of the above fundraising event – noted
 - 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 – aware
 - 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. - aware
 - 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 – continue
 - Continue to be aware that the water leak will have repercussions over next few months, until our claim has been resolved.
 - Recent donations for the Village Hall of £90.
 - Treasurer to report on whether suspension of expenditure can now be lifted.
 - Not yet, committee to wait until water leak claim resolved.
 - Trustees and Committee Members list
 - DA to amend list
 - Asset Register – check update
 - TB to update at next meeting.

4. Hallmaster – Bookings Administration

- Bookings Administrator's report – **Appendix 3**
 - All items noted

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

- Regular Checklist – review of recent checks.
 - All updated

6. Items for Information//Decision/Future Consideration

- Erection and decoration of Christmas tree – DA reports
 - 7th December provisionally booked for Josh Barningham to fell tree at Swale View and put in place at the front of the Hall.
 - Volunteers to help decorate please.
- Carols around the Christmas Tree – 7pm, Friday 20 December DA.
 - Carol sheets have been printed and there will be some musical support from Barber family.
 - Topcliffe Academy Choir to also come along to support.
 - KM providing refreshments.
- Community First Yorkshire – Day Seminar for Village Hall representatives – 7 March 2025
 - Hall hosting and DA will report back at next meeting.
- Village Halls Week – Theme: Celebrating Volunteers - 17 to 23 March 2025.
 - Committee will run an open day to promote the use of the Hall. RB to invite regular users to have a table to show off their services and possibly recruit new members.
- Fundraising events to boost hall funds:
 - BBQ and Disco – Saturday 14 September - £1,076.73 – huge success and well organised.
 - Christmas Fayre – Saturday 16 November (KM) – 12 tables/stalls selling their wares.
 - Sunday Brunch – Sunday 26 January 2025 (KM and others)
 - Horse Race Night – Saturday 22 February 2025
 - The Flying Oysters dance – Saturday 29 March 2025.

7. AOB

- Water Heater – recently stopped working, MM cleaned/de-scaled and now seems to be working again. But may need to consider buying a new one if it breaks again. Committee agree that if replacement urgently needed prior to next meeting we will set aside £750 for it.
- Flooring has been scratched/scuffed which can be seen in certain light. Not urgent and resurfacing to be done April 2025.
- One of the heaters not working. RB to speak to Andrew Eckersley to get key and check.

8. Date of next ordinary meeting. 14th January 2025

Appendix 1

From: Tony Bruce – Volunteer Non-Committee Member for Resolution of Water Leak Charges

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

Following my report to 10/9/24 Committee Meeting (reproduced below for ease of reference), I have continued to monitor the Account to see whether Business Stream have honoured their commitment to address the issue raised, and acknowledged by them, that the rates used to calculate the refund appear to be lower than those used to make the charge; meaning that the refund is too small and outstanding balance too high.

As at the time of writing (4/11/24), no correction invoice has been issued.

The latest invoice issued remains that issued on 6/9/2024 which shows an outstanding balance on the account of £503.37

Whilst this is clearly much better than the £12,012.25 shown on the 12/7/24 invoice I believe it to be incorrect and that sums appear to remain owing to the Committee and should be pursued; particularly given the incompetence and delays shown throughout this saga by the two water companies involved.

Recommendations:

As it is now almost 2 months since this issue was flagged to them on 6/9/24 I propose to contact them again to pursue the outstanding refund amount.

That the Committee endorse this course of action, or determine an alternative.

Report to 10/9/2024 Village Hall Committee

Update

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 3332m³ of water supplied and 3165m³ 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 m³ 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.

Recommendations

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 m3 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.

Tony Bruce
07/09/24

Appendix 2

Treasurer's Update & Report

1. Account Balance

The Village Hall Bank Account currently stands at £30,016.86 which is as follows:

- Santander - £29,768.98
- Paypal - £247.88

Of the above, £15000 is allocated for the contingency reserve.

2. Fundraiser

BBQ & Disco – £1026.73 – Great results for all involved.

3. Maintenance and Health & Safety Checks Updates

- Electric Supply – Currently with Pozitive Energy. Contract renewed with them for a further 3 years. Expires 30/11/2027.
- Gas Supply – Currently with Dyce Energy until it expires in April 2025. At this point in will transfer over to Pozitive Energy who we will then have a 3 yr deal with from 1/4/25 to 31/3/28.
- Buildings/Public Liabilities Insurance – Renewed with Allied Westminster which in all fairness was easier with an ongoing claim, however, a general search with other insurance companies (minus the insurance claim info) proved that the sum we are paying now is pretty much where the renewal should be.

This year has seen an increase of 39% to £1354, brought on by the water claim and the fact that our 5 year desktop valuation is about to expire (Dec) as well as general annual increases which have soared. The renewal Desktop valuation will cost £75 and I have preliminary advised Allied Westminster that we will undertake the survey, bearing in mind the annual costs may increase on the back of the survey but we may also be due a refund. The last time the survey was done was when we had some work completed on the toiled block. I am aware that we have not undertaken any major work since then but feel as trustees, we need to ensure that the insurance we have in place is sufficient going forward.

Please note: The contact list which AW held has been updated. Myself as initial contact and then Richard/Malcolm as chair/vice chair and Chris as vice treasurer.

The committee is invited to:

1. Note the account balances.
2. 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.
3. 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.
4. 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.
5. Note and be appreciative of the success of the above fundraising event.

Linsey Payne / Treasurer 4/11/24

Appendix 3

Booking Administrator's Report 12th November 2024

Hallmaster System Access

Following agreement at the last meeting, the Hallmaster administrator access has been limited to Helen Fothergill and Sarah Halshaw, with read only access for Doug Allan, Emily Collard, Karen Morley, Malcolm Morley and Anne-Marie Mulley.

- **To note that other committee members wishing to be added to have read only access can be set up at any time, or anyone wishing to have fuller access and assist with bookings can be added after training.**

Door Access Codes

Door access codes have been updated and circulated to user group. For occasional users the code will change on a regular basis. The code will be given to the hirer the day prior to the event. For regular users the codes will change less regularly, the new codes will be emailed to the groups following any change.

Wi-Fi

Changes have been made to booking confirmation letters sent out so that they include information about the Wi-Fi, pointing out that the committee does not guarantee Wi-Fi availability or connection speeds. As data usage is limited by our contract, it also advises that anyone anticipating using a large amount of data at their event can purchase extra in bundles of 10GB. This can be done on the booking form.

The terms and conditions available through our webpage have also to been updated.

- **To note**

Hall Usage

Proposed weekly yoga class delayed the start date as not enough uptake and now cancelled but will look at possibly trying again in January.

2 x enquiries about events, not pursued due to hire cost for non-parishioners. One was for weekly language classes, the other for semi regular community meetings.

Enquiry made about holding weekly sessions for an Alzheimer group but they have now decided to set up in Thirsk as more time slots were available.

Enquiry made by Asenby resident whether she could hire the hall without payment as she wanted to run a community workshop to make decorations for the Asenby Christmas tree. This was discussed with RB and we agreed to refuse the request, as by agreeing it could create a precedent for future events and costs incurred during the usage such as heating and lighting would not be covered.

- **To note.**

Bookings for November and December

Confirmed bookings for the period 1st November to 31st December are up slightly this year compared to the same period last year. 75 of the 83 bookings are from Regular Users.

	Main Hall	Lower Committee Room	Upper Committee Room
1 st Nov to 31 st Dec 2023	68	12	1
1 st Nov to 31 st Dec 2024	76	7	0

Outstanding payments in excess of 2 months

- None. The Baby Bubble sessions discussed at previous meetings have now been paid.

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. Still waiting for this to be actioned.
- Link to the village hall is now on the homepage of Asenby Parish website.