

Topcliffe & Asenby Village Hall Annual General Meeting

Minutes of the online meeting held on Wednesday, 1 October 2020 via Zoom

1. Attendance/Apologies

Attendance: Andrew Eckersley; Tony Bruce; Judith Lowe; Doug Allan; Jenny Bumby; Karen Morley; Peter Lowe; Malcolm Morley. Apologies: Emily Collard

2. Reasons for holding the AGM late in the year

The outbreak of coronavirus led to the closure of all village halls in March 2020 and the closure continued beyond the intended May date for the AGM. In recognition of the difficulty of holding public meetings, the Charity Commission gave authority for all AGMs to be postponed until after the pandemic or to be staged online as long as the public were invited to take part. Once a decision was taken to hold an online meeting all residents of Topcliffe and Asenby villages were invited via the village's regular Sunday email and via posters, to join the meeting.

3. Minutes of previous AGM (matters arising) - There were no matters arising.

4. Chairman's Report - See attached report (appendix 1)

5. Treasurer's Report - See attached report (appendix 2)

The Treasurer presented a set of accounts for 2019-20 and with the committee's approval indicated that he would invite John Graham to again conduct an audit.

6. Annual Review of Constitutional & Operational Matters

- Charitable Purpose – there have been no changes.
- Constitution – there have been no changes during the year, though the Treasurer intends to ask the Charity Commission for a view on Trusteeship and committee membership (bearing in mind current day circumstances and fact that the existing arrangements were set up in 1961). Also, the Chairman indicated that the Constitution currently states that there is a Complaints Book held within the hall in which users can register any issues they may have. He suggested that the clause should be changed to simply suggest that anyone with a complaint should raise it with the Chairman or Bookings Secretary.
- Financial Controls – agreed and no changes required.
- Organisational Risks – all considered throughout the year and are satisfactory.
- Charity Commission – there is nothing to report (but see Constitution above).
- Hire Charges for 2020/21 – it was agreed that in the light of the hall's closure for at least 9 months of the 2020 -21 financial year it would be inappropriate to raise any hire charges or fees.

7. Bookings Secretary's Report - See attached report (appendix 3)

8. Hall Users' Reports - No hall users/hirers had submitted a report.

9. Election of Officers for 2020/21

No changes were made to the existing office holders' positions. The following were approved for a further year:

- Andrew Eckersley: Chair
- Tony Bruce: Treasurer
- Judith Lowe: Bookings Secretary
- Emily Collard: Minutes Secretary

10. Confirmation of Trustees/ Committee Members for 2020/21

No changes were made to the existing list of Trustees, so the following were approved for a further year.

Andrew Eckersley; Tony Bruce; Judith Lowe; Emily Collard; Jenny Bumby and Doug Allan

Committee Members - Peter Lowe and Karen Morley (representing St Columba's) were confirmed as committee members.

It was agreed that Malcolm Morley will replace Heather Holt as the Parish Council's representative on the committee.

As David Bowman (Topcliffe Snooker Club) has not attended any meetings in the last year, it was agreed that the Chairman should contact him to discuss his continuing position on the committee.

11. Implications stemming from the closure due to coronavirus

Towards the end of the financial year (March 2020) the hall was closed due to the impact of coronavirus. Because of safety and management concerns, the committee took the decision to continue the closure even after community buildings were given permission to reopen. The cancellation of all activities meant that there was no income during this period. However, a range of building costs including water, gas, electricity, insurance, cleaning and ground maintenance at a cost of around £300 per month had to be paid. Fortunately, the committee was able to apply for a government grant via Hambleton Council, which was successful and contributed £10k to the hall's finances and secured the position. The committee acknowledges its responsibilities in respect of reopening and providing a service for the local community as soon as is practicable in terms of Trustees acceptance of the safety of users/hirers and of government policy governing the safe operation of community buildings.

12. Date of next AGM

Date in May 2021 to be confirmed

APPENDIX 1

Topcliffe & Asenby Village Hall - Chairman's Report for the AGM 2020

This report covers the period May 2019 to April 2020, however, due to the Covid-19 government restrictions placed on public meetings, the report is submitted at the time of the delayed AGM in the month of October 2020.

During the year Topcliffe & Asenby Village Hall continued to serve the communities well and proved to be a popular venue for both regular and occasional hall users. The Village Hall Committee (VHC) organised events that were well attended with very supportive and positive feedback, and regular hall hirers continue to praise the standard of facilities the hall provides for their various activities. The village hall continues to facilitate various regular and occasional events and activities for all age-groups and interests across the community.

The village hall is structurally sound and in good repair for the reporting period with only minor repairs and refurbishments. New fire doors and the construction of an invalid friendly access ramp to the north side of the building was the main improvement during year, but signs for ware are beginning to show on the interior decoration that may need addressing in the next reporting period. The grounds and grass areas of the property continue to be maintained as required by committee volunteers, however, the hedge at the south and west sides of the hall are difficult to maintain and control and it has been agreed they will need professional maintenance in the future.

Finances of the village hall are healthy with a continued growth of the funds that achieved a positive balance of just slightly over the £10,000 target suggested by the Treasurer as an appropriate sum of money to hold as a contingency fund to protect the hall against unforeseen/unexpected expenses. The aim for the future is to hold the account at a figure somewhere a little over the contingency fund and spend the excess on events and charities approved and voted for by the VHC.

The final few months of the reporting period forced the closure of the village hall to all activities due to Covid-19 pandemic restrictions imposed by the government. Expenses did not change, revenue dropped to zero and consequently the hall was operating at a loss: fortunately, the healthy level of the village hall bank account will enable the VHC to fund expenses for a number of months without concern.

Overall a positive reporting period for Topcliffe & Asenby Village Hall which continues to be the centre of community activities for the villages and is well supported by the residents of both villages and beyond.

The VHC members have again surpassed all expectation with their commitment and dedication to keeping the community's centre of activities a healthy and vibrant venue: few will appreciate the personal sacrifice of time, effort and expense that all the committee members make to ensure the village hall is the success it is.

Hopefully, the next reporting period will prove to be less restricted than the latter part of this current period, and events and activities can restart to enable the communities to again enjoy the company of fellow parishioners in their village hall.

Andrew Eckersley
Chairman
Topcliffe & Asenby Village Hall Committee

October 2020

APPENDIX 2

Topcliffe & Asenby Village Hall Committee – Treasurer’s Report AGM 2020

(for the Year 1st April 2019 to 31st March 2020)

The accounting records have been maintained during the year and the accounts for the charity have been completed for the year and are attached for the committee’s approval “subject to Independent Examination”.

I will again contact John Graham who has kindly undertaken the Independent Examination in previous years. The “examined” accounts will be brought back to the committee for final approval in due course, together with the Independent Examiners report. The matters raised in John Graham’s “examination” of the accounts for 2018/19 have been addressed fully for 2019/20.

In my view the accounts present a true and fair view of the finances of the charity. The key points to be aware of are:

1. The Charity has a closing balance at 31 March 2020 of £11,321.19 which is an improvement of £2,346.46 on the balance of £8,974.53 at 31 March 2019.
2. This balance is consistent with the £10,000 “operating reserve” which we had agreed to hold for contingencies.
3. There are no significant amounts owed by or to the charity at the end of the year.
4. During the year, a surplus of £2,346.46 was made.
5. The above is not a straight “operating surplus” made from letting and operating the hall but also from significant surpluses from several successful social events/fundraising events organised by committee members and local people.
6. The hall has been improved this year by the replacement of the side fire doors with UPVC at a cost of £2,100
7. The hall closed in the last few weeks of the year in accordance with the government’s advice and instructions in relation to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Given the exceptional and unprecedented circumstances of the Covid-19 pandemic, the committee should also be aware of the following key points in relation to the charity as a “going concern” beyond these accounts and 31 March 2020:

1. The hall has continued to be closed because of the Covid-19 pandemic and is therefore not generating operating or “events” revenues.
2. The charity has applied for and received a Covid-19 support grant of £10,000 from Hambleton Council, in line with government policy to support community facilities.
3. The charity therefore has significant “reserves”, totalling in the order of £20,000 to enable it to meet a continued period of closure and any other contingencies (repairs etc.).
4. The operating costs of the charity and hall whilst it is closed are relatively modest in relation to the “reserves” held and are estimated to be in the order of £3,000 to £4,000 a year (insurance, utilities and cleaning).
5. It is my view that based on the above the charity continues to be a “going concern”, although caution is needed as the duration of closure is as yet unknown and the recovery of lettings income once reopening occurs is uncertain.
6. Appropriate measures have been taken to secure and protect the Village Hall as a community asset, including a strict monitoring regime of the buildings condition; and meeting the special conditions required by the insurers for the continuance of property cover.

Tony Bruce, Treasurer
Topcliffe and Asenby Village Hall Committee
21 September 2020.

APPENDIX 3

Topcliffe & Asenby Village Hall - Booking Secretary's Report for the 2019-2020 AGM

The year has been extremely successful with a wide range of regular hirers and users, plus plenty of excellent one-off bookings. There was a good variety of activities provided for people of all ages and with a variety of interests. The hall lettings for private functions and entertainment proved quite profitable throughout the period April 2019 to February 2020, but with the onset of coronavirus and subsequent declaration of a pandemic, a range of activities late February and throughout March had to be cancelled.

In March 2020 the committee followed government guidelines and closed the Village Hall for all activities. This was the start of a lockdown that the committee has fully endorsed and even when the government relaxed restrictions on the opening of community facilities, it was decided that the situation was too uncertain and potentially dangerous to recommence activities. The hall is currently scheduled to remain closed at least 1 January 2021.

On two occasions the regular hall hirers were consulted about reopening the hall. In the latest survey the majority of hall hirers agreed that even if the hall was re-opened they were unlikely to restart their activities until the turn of the year, and then only if it is safe to use the facilities. Hirers that use the Village Hall for their business would like it reopened as soon as possible, but they are in the minority.

The only class that we have definitely lost is the art class, which has relocated to Helmsley. This was more to do with a desire on the part of the organisers to relocate to a facility nearer to their home and which could facilitate larger classes.

The rural arts class, which was a great success in the hall throughout 2019-20, is going ahead this year, but in a different format: participants receive packs to be completed at home. These packs are provided free each month.

PAT testing of all electrical equipment in the hall has been carried out during the lockdown. The hall is checked every week following the government guidelines.

The hall floor will be renovated over the autumn months as the closure provides the ideal time for this to be carried out. Peter and Andrew are currently requesting quotations for this work. The annual service of the heaters in the hall will need to be completed later in this year, regardless of the continued closure.

Hopefully, we can reopen in January or soon afterwards and the problem is that if we don't, we may lose some of the classes that use it for their business.

Judith Lowe
Trustee and Bookings Secretary
1 October 2020