

HADLOW DOWN COMMUNITY CENTRE
Minutes of Committee Meeting held on Friday, 28th January at Ailsa, Waghorns Lane,
Hadlow Down 7.30 pm

PRESENT: Bob Lake (BL), Sarah Prall (SP), Fiona Shafer (FS), John Thompson (JohnT), Janet Tourell (JT), Sara Braker (SB), Rachel Lewis (RL) – Parish Council Representative, Michael Lunn (ML) Parish Council Chair

BL welcomed Michael Lunn Chair of Hadlow Down Parish Council to the meeting

1. APOLOGIES: Nigel Harrison

2. MINUTES OF MEETING ON 1.10.21

These were agreed as a true and accurate record and duly signed.

3. MATTERS ARISING: BL reviewed the minutes of the previous meeting.

Re. previous discussion about volunteers. RL said that a volunteer strategy was being discussed at the Parish Council meeting on Tuesday 1st February and that village organisations including the HDCC will be notified.

Re. the Race Night, JT said that she would like it confirmed that the Race Night planned for 2nd April was definite. She had applied for a TENs licence for the October event, but Wealden had refused to refund the fee when the evening was cancelled. BL confirmed the date and advised that she should claim the previous fee from HDCC funds.

Re. Gift Aid – As John Bourne, winner of the last Lottery held in November 2021, had donated £100 of his winnings back to HDCC. He might like to arrange Gift Aid.

ACTION: JT to contact J. Bourne.

4. CORRESPONDENCE: None

5. TREASURER'S REPORT:

John T reported on the financial situation. Currently there is £9735.96 in the account with an additional £134 cash in hand – a total of £1127.80. Of note was the amount of £504.30 received from JT – the proceeds from the Xmas Market held in November 2021 – thank you Janet. Since our last meeting held on 1 Oct, we have received in income £1683.30.

ML asked why the Annual Report and accounts for the year 2019/20 were submitted late to the Charity Commission – John T and BL confirmed that returns to the Charity Commission were now up to date. The HDCC accounts for last year have been finalised and will be presented at the HDCA AGM at the end of February.

Action: John T to send the financial report to JT and to the Parish Council as well.

6. CURRENT VILLAGE HALL:

ML was observing this committee meeting on behalf of the PC and, when invited, will do the same at a future meeting of the Village Hall Committee. RL will be attending the next meeting of the HDVH Committee on Saturday, 29th Jan. in her usual role as the PC observer.

BL reported a conversation with Paul James, one of the VH Committee's trustees, about the need for a new roof on the current building.

To clarify, ML said that the PC had not been approached about refurbishment of the village hall roof – no decisions have been made. He said that until the Parish Council has heard from the VH Committee a decision can't be taken.

SP agreed that all this talk is speculation. BL said that therefore the VH Committee has a problem in as much that this is the second instance of this trustee of the HDVH Committee taking it upon himself to inform local people of such matters when they hadn't been discussed by the Committee itself..

ML promised that the PC will act in an impartial manner and discuss the matter in council. He said that he would be happy to facilitate a meeting between both committees.

SP agreed that the VH needs a viable roof but there must be a balance between VH and HDCC spending.

SB commented that the VH seems to want to spend a lot of money – was it necessary?

For SB's benefit BL reviewed the history and condition of the old village hall and said that it had been agreed and that it wouldn't be closed while a new hall was being built.

JT asked if a proper report for the condition of the roof had been done carried out recently by a qualified roofing specialist – BL though not and most certainly there is no copy of any report on the HDVH website. In his conversation with Paul James, the figure of £50k was mentioned but we will only know the true facts if we have a meeting. SP said that she had offered to set-up a meeting with the chair of the VH committee but this had been declined.

BL is concerned that if VH Committee applied for grant funding from a charitable trust e.g. the Garfield Weston Foundation, this would jeopardise any opportunity of HDCC being awarded a grant. He felt that such a significant amount of funding would provide ammunition for those opposed to the project to question the need for a new hall to be located at the Playing Field. Clearly, if the condition of the VH roof is beyond repair and poses a real H&S issue, then a new roof is required. But one would need to see the facts and irrefutable evidence that indeed, this is the case. The HDCC Committee agreed to support a new roof if shown that it was needed to keep the old hall going.

BL pointed out that on the HDVH website, there are no records of minutes of meetings, accounts and even information of who currently the trustees are.

RL said that the Chair of the Committee had had trouble getting trustees. SP said that she thinks the VH and HDCC Committees should now be joined but BL was firmly of the opinion that such a merger is premature. RL agreed that there should be some sort of collaboration and when asked by ML if HDCC members would support the idea of a joint meeting, it was agreed unanimously by the HDCC Committee members.

BL commented on the fact that in spite having an up-to-date and comprehensive website on which minutes are posted for all to see, two members of the public continue to raise matters regarding the HDCC at the beginning of PC meetings (Public Questions). He is of the view that the PC should be firmer in its response and direct such concerns of the public directly back to him as the Chair of HDCC.

ACTION: ML will organise a joint meeting of committees.

ML reported on the Parish Council's deliberations regarding Section 106 and the planning application for the VH. The PC had asked for an extension based of the previous application to Wealden District Council – this has been delayed. ML explained what is meant by a Section 106 Agreement and stated that this issue had been a bone of contention with Wealden planners for nearly a year. The PC had been notified of legal fees attached to this outline application for a S106 agreement which when challenged had been reduced to £750

rather than being waived. There had been no S106 agreement previously as there had been a planning condition which attached the outline application to the new Village Hall application i.e. that the current hall would remain in use until the new hall is built. It was agreed that the PC could not move forward with this application until this issue was resolved.

SB asked who owns the VH. ML explained that the PC owns the land and that the hall itself is the property of the HDVH Committee and he clarified the conditions of the leases. Outline planning consent was given for the construction of three houses.

ML asked if HDCC would support a PC decision not to proceed with the Section 106, given the cost and the fact that it does affect the position of HDCC as far as the new hall is concerned.

After some discussion it was agreed by everyone that the application should be withdrawn.

7. RACE NIGHT:

BL and SP agreed that there were some anomalies in the poster that had been produced – Julian Michaelson-Yeates has prepared curry not chilli for 80 people.

ACTION: SP to sort out on posters, curry and veg options.

It was also agreed that the price would be £15

JT asked how many tables and people had already been booked and how many had sponsored races – BL said that he has a record of the bookings, race sponsors and those offering to buy horses

FS said that we need a meeting prior to the AGM on February 25th and before the Race Night.

BL asked about at the raffle for the night and said that he thought there should be no more than three prizes.

SB left the meeting at 8.40 pm

8. UPDATE FROM MJB ARCHITECTURE:

BL reported that he had been in contact with Mike Barber who had sent an update on 28.1.22 (a copy of the report will be sent with these minutes). He estimates that as long as conditions are fulfilled the project will be ready to go ahead at the beginning of May '22.

SP confirmed that Rob Prall had agreed to chair the building sub committee replacing Nigel Harrison who is moving to Dorset. She confirmed that Rob has been talking to other surveyors.

BL said that we were getting to the stage where we need the help and formation of two other sub committees – Fund Raising and Business Planning.

ACTION: SP to set up an inaugural meeting

ML commented that MJB's analysis of the construction costs might be questionable – he felt that the cost of materials is stabilising and suggested that it would be helpful for the Parish Council to have a breakdown of how the HDCC was going to manage the project, not least raising the funds.

BL said that the HDCC as a CIO can re-claim the VAT (20%) and whilst agreeing with ML, pointed out that charities had all 'taken a hit' in the past couple of years. He said that SP had contacted a professional fundraiser who would be willing to advise and that she is in the process of arranging a meeting asap.

SP wants to look at ways of involving local businesses to play a part in our fund-raising efforts.

BL referred to the fact that a member of the public had on, at least two occasions, raised the matter of the lack of Business Plan for the HDCC project at the Public Questions part of HDPC meetings. Had he directed his concerns to HDCC directly, he would have been informed that the plan cannot be completed until we have certainty about construction costs and more detailed mechanical and electrical engineering information with regard to the provision of services such as heating, lighting etc.

ML felt that any planning should show capital and revenue costs. SP said that it would be useful to compare similar projects. BL agreed and confirmed that this is what we'd already started to do; he re-emphasised the need to re-establish sub committees.

Finally, RL said that she had been phoned by the Big Lottery 'Reaching Communities' organisation informing her for the next two years, their grants were to be focused on groups trying to recover from the pandemic. This is not good news; they are not keen to fund capital projects. ML said that he could try to lobby our local MP to secure her assistance and support.

ACTION: BL to contact Rob Prall re the setting up of the Building Sub-Group

9. LOTTERY UPDATE:

JT reported that there will be another Lottery draw at the Spring Market on Saturday, 19th March in the Village Hall. She is about to send out renewal emails for the Spring draw.

Numbers are still increasing and over 200 numbers are now taken. There has been a certain amount of interest from members of the TN22 Club since BL had talked to them about the project.

10. GIFT AID:

Nothing to report

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS:

- SP asked JT if she could send her the numbers that had won in the Lottery Christmas draw so that they could go on the web site.
ACTION: JT to contact SP
- BL Said that he thought we should give some thought to a major fund-raising event once the Fund-Raising Sub Committee has been reconvened.
ML said that he thought organising smaller events would be better. BL suggested a Boot Fair.
- FS suggested maybe creating an 'occasion' for the Jubilee??

DATE OF NEXT MEETING: 17th February 7.30 pm at Fiona's in Wilderness Lane

Meeting closed at 9.25 pm