

HADLOW DOWN COMMUNITY CENTRE COMMITTEE

Minutes of meeting on Thursday 20th December 2018 at Ailsa, Waghorns Lane

PRESENT: Bob Lake, Janet Tourell, John Thompson, Fiona Shafer, Nigel Harrison, Rachel Lewis

1. **APOLOGIES:** None
2. **MINUTES OF MEETING ON 15.11.18:** These were agreed as a true and accurate record and signed.
3. **MATTERS ARISING:** BL reviewed the previous minutes:-

Re Item 8 Peter Gillies archive – JThom said that some of the photos had been located but it was thought that on behalf of the Village Trust, these had been entrusted to Eddie for safe-keeping.

Re. Item 5 The Deed of Variation – BL had spoken to a former Sport England employee as well as Jason Lyons, the case officer for the drainage project; the latter had contacted the Sport England Legal team to see if the impasse could be unlocked – both commented that neither could really understand what the problem is. RL said that the Parish Council had decided to ‘wait and see’; she confirmed that the PC had changed its solicitor.

Re. Item 6 Planning application: BL confirmed that the application had now been submitted to Wealden and thanked JThom for organising the payment fee to the Planning Authority (£2792). The Committee will now wait for validation of the application which possibly won’t be for a while because there is a ‘backlog’ of planning applications. When asked how long the whole process will take, BL said that he thought that realistically we should be looking at mid-April for a decision.

Re. Item 8 The HDCC Lottery. RL said that Catharine Hodge had been asking what was happening? BL said that he’d been having trouble with one of the Excel spreadsheets and had asked Lisa Scott to help update. Unfortunately she has pressing work commitments currently and won’t be able to deal with this until after Christmas. Once she has been able to sort out things, BL will let JT have the numbers so that she could meet with Catharine. JT asked if she could have a paying-in book soon. JThom confirmed that she could and also she asked if she could also have a cheque book to pay winners? It was pointed out that currently there are three signatories to cheques – JThom, BL and JT. **ACTION: JT to arrange a meeting with Catharine Hodge once she has up to date numbers from BL**

BL said that in the coming year we must really try to channel our energies towards selling more tickets; whilst the income is relatively modest, it does raise our profile within the local community. **ACTION: RL said that she would look into the use of Gift Aid.**

4. **TREASURER’S REPORT:** JThom presented the accounts and drew attention to the payment of planning fees to WDC; additionally, he is waiting for an invoice via Sarah P for the printing of the public meeting publicity banners and pamphlets. The accounts were duly approved and signed. **ACTION: BL to contact SP with regard to the outstanding invoice.**

JThom reported that on the Charity Commission website, he had uploaded the annual return for 2016. BL advised that as our annual income during 2017 had exceeded the threshold of £25k, we were required to have our accounts examined independently by an appropriately qualified person. Peter Haining had agreed to do this and very kindly, offered his services for free. **ACTION: As chair, BL needs to produce his annual report to accompany the examined accounts and JThom’s annual financial report.**

5. **THE PUBLIC MEETING:** FS thanked BL and Glenys Lake for their efforts prior to the meeting and arranging everything – all agreed that it had gone very well. FS had collated the minutes that she and Glenys had taken – these were approved and signed. There were approximately 50 people attending with some new faces among the audience, which was quite good because there are always some people who don’t ‘engage’ with what goes on in the village. Also we received quite a number of apologies.

There were a lot of interesting questions and it was felt that the people present were very positive and supportive towards the project. BL said that he was particularly pleased to see Geoff Gregory, Chair of Five Ashes Village Hall and Hadlow Down parish resident, who expressed his support. His knowledge will prove useful when the 'real' fund-raising begins as he was instrumental in securing a grant of £450k from the Big Lottery.

One of the issues raised was about the possibility of trying to secure a loan from the 'Public Works Loans Board'; however as BL said that is a decision to be taken by the Parish Council and would need to be approved by a majority of parishioners.

BL emphasised the importance of as many local people as possible lodging their comments with the Planning authority during the three week consultation period and it is only right and proper that objectors also have the opportunity to register their comments. So the challenge will be to notify all of the date when the consultation period opens, particularly those who don't use social media or email. Yet again, we are going to have to use an alternative to the Parish Magazine because of the timescales.

It was suggested by members of the committee that there should be posters and leaflets distributed around the village and possibly Buxted Railway Station to help publicise the need for support. All agreed that BL and FS should organise support and ask for help. **ACTION: BL to draft publicity for the consultation period.**

NH felt that more use should be made of Facebook in the Village because the Fayre Committee obviously found it very useful for publicising events. **ACTION: SP to be consulted.**

The Committee felt that whilst the public meeting numbers in attendance were relatively low, once the planning application was approved, interest from villagers and supporters in the area will increase and the momentum will pick up.

JT said that she would let everyone who used the hall know about the consultation period and encourage them to participate. NH queried whether organisations using the hall would be concerned about hire costs for the new hall, JT felt that they wouldn't.

- 6. Planning application update:** BL confirmed that the application had now been submitted to Wealden and thanked JThom for organising the payment fee to the Planning Authority (£2792). The Committee will now wait for validation of the application which possibly won't be for a while because there is a 'backlog' of planning applications. When asked how long the whole process will take, BL said that he thought that realistically we should be looking at mid-April for a decision.

7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS:

- The Committee discussed funding-raising strategies, post successful planning application. FS suggested taking people around other halls and questioned if we need a 'back-up' plan?
- BL and RL to draw up a list of possible funding sources, e.g. Big Lottery, Charitable trusts etc.
- BL proposed having a 'Big Event', a fund-raising evening at a venue such as the East Sussex National Golf Course. JT said that we needed to think quite a while ahead once the planning application was approved because the ESN gets quickly booked up. FS felt that key fund-raising events were important. NH queried whether it would be possible to make a 'fund-raising' video for possible donors? **ACTON: JT to speak to Piers Bishop about this possibility.**
- NH thought that if approached, maybe Peter Haining might produce a guidance setting out the tax benefits for potential donors/givers.
- RL said that once planning was approved and fund-raising started, the workload for the committee should be widened and the practice of working sub-groups be re-introduced. She suggested applying for grant aid to provide salary costs for the appointment of a funding and marketing co-ordinator – a role similar to that of

Denise Leary leading up to the Hadlow Down Festival. This was enthusiastically approved by the Committee.

- FS suggested marking out the shape of the new building on the proposed site to give people ideas for fund-raising for different areas of the community centre.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING: Friday 15th February at Gill Hope Farm 7.30 pm

Meeting closed at 9.00 pm