

GRASSINGTON DEVONSHIRE INSTITUTE
(A Charitable Incorporated Organisation – Registered Charity no. 1185815)

TRUSTEES

NOTES OF A MEETING HELD VIA ‘ZOOM’ ON MONDAY 4th JANUARY 2021

| | |
|----------------------|---------------------------|
| Participants: | David Wood (in the Chair) |
| | Hanne Barton |
| | Barrie Doyle |
| | Marion Field |
| | Stephen Parry |
| | Jean Slater |
| In attendance | Penny Clover (Treasurer) |

1. Notes of previous meeting

The notes of the meetings held on 7th December 2020 were confirmed as a correct record.

2. Matters arising

i) Games Room Project

A project plan had been devised to convert the Games Room into a ‘Conference Room’ facility. This would involve some internal work to improve the ceiling and install down lights, install blinds at the windows and introduce a multi-media screen. The estimated cost of the scheme was £8,500. A bid had been submitted to YDNPA before the deadline at Christmas and this had been acknowledged and verified. GDI would be responsible for 25% of the cost of the scheme and this could be calculated ‘in kind’ (e.g. to take account of the labour and materials costs). It was hoped to hear more on the progress of the bid by the end of January.

Unconnected to the bid, work had been undertaken to improve the storage facility under the Snooker Room floor. A three-tray storage system had been installed and Christmas decorations had now been placed in the Clock room. A Structural Engineer’s opinion would be obtained to assess whether the Clock room floor was capable of supporting other items for storage.

ii) Caretaker’s Flat project

Measurements had now been taken for the new external door and a quotation received from Spot On for the electrical work. The new flat would have separate electricity and gas supplies to make its future use as independent and flexible as possible. The next step was for the external consultant to make contact with the Building Inspector to ensure every requirement was addressed before the application was formally accepted. It was hoped progress could be made in January but this was now largely out of GDI’s hands.

3. Meeting with Grassington Parish Council

Due to the rapidly-changing position regarding coronavirus, a meeting with GPC, scheduled for 7th January 2021, to discuss a range of issues associated with the repair and operation of Grassington Town Hall, had been cancelled. Trustees expressed a wish for a full, ‘face to face’ meeting with Councillors, to discuss the various issues and accepted that it was likely such a meeting may not be possible until Spring. A number of documents had been forwarded to Councillors, in preparation for the meeting, including copies of recent correspondence, the Annual Accounts for 2019 and the draft Business Plan 2020-23. In return, GPC had forwarded a copy of the recently-approved budget for 2021/22 although no annual plan had been received.

Trustees had received a letter from a member (Mr Davies) which provided a commentary on the existing difficulties concerning the development of any formal lease between GPC and GDI and suggesting a mediated discussion to consider other options. Whilst it was agreed that other options (i.e. in addition to or instead of a formal lease) may

well need to be discussed, Trustees preferred to hold the planned meeting with Councillors and to discuss the letter further, before any move to the proposed mediated discussion would be considered.

Action – Mr Wood to write to GPC to inform them of the Trustees’ views.

4. Forward Calendar

Given the uncertainty around the coronavirus restrictions and the likelihood that the Town Hall would remain closed for at least the month of January, the outlook for the first quarter of 2021 looked bleak, in terms of potential hires, bookings and events. The three planned GDI-organised events for January had been cancelled, although tickets for the events, planned for mid-February and mid-March, remained on sale. It was noted that the Horticultural Society had cancelled its activities up to Spring. Whilst it was noted that some activities could take place, as long as participants involved were in social ‘bubbles’, it was the view of the Trustees that a more responsible approach, in the current climate, was to close the building to the public. Work on schemes could continue, as long as social-distancing remained possible.

An enquiry had been made about a wedding booking for April 2022 which was being followed up with the enquirer. No formal communication had been received, as yet, from Grassington Festival regarding their summer events and discussion would take place in due course, with Grassington Players, to hear their further plans for the major production, planned to take place in May 2021. No further contact had been received from the production company for ‘All Creatures...’

5. Contractual position of the Caretakers

Taking into account the bleak financial outlook, Trustees had decided to continue the Caretakers’ furlough for the month of January (without any work requirement) and to ‘top up’ salaries to 100% of normal earnings. However, after some discussion, it was unanimously agreed that this position was not tenable thereafter, without a big change in bookings. As such, with effect from 1st February 2021, the Caretakers would remain on furlough but would receive a top up only to the extent that they would receive 90% of normal earnings. This position would be reviewed again at the meeting on 1st February 2021.

Action – Mr Wood to write to the Caretakers to inform them of the arrangements from 1st February.

6. Business Plan 2020-23

A Business Plan, covering the period to 2023, had been drafted and circulated to Trustees for comment. As indicated earlier, the document had also been made available to GPC and had been linked to the January 2021 newsletter to members. It was anticipated that any comments or queries which resulted from the members’ consultation would be addressed by the final document which, hopefully, could be approved by Trustees at the February meeting.

Action – All Trustees to consider the draft document and offer comments as necessary.

7. Membership

GDI had 132 members by the end of 2020 and had issued several newsletters since the scheme was officially launched in the summer. Some discussion took place as to the need for a new membership push during 2021 and it was felt that this should be separate from any events flyer to give a membership leaflet some ‘shelf life’. It was agreed that any leaflet drop should not take place should there be a national coronavirus lockdown.

Action – Mr Wood to draft some wording for the new leaflet. Mrs Slater and Mr Parry to pick up the design and distribution responsibilities when appropriate.

8. Plans for the Annual General Meeting and Election of Trustees

All existing Trustees had indicated their willingness to stand for election for at least one further year from April 2021. The January newsletter to members had carried this information and had opened up the opportunity for members to

put themselves forward to join the Trustee group at or before the AGM. Given the likelihood that the discussions with GPC over a lease for the Town Hall building would not be concluded, it was felt that a note should be sent to the Charity Commission to establish whether this would impact upon the GDI's CIO status (agreeing a lease to operate the building was specifically referenced in the Charity Commission's approval of CIO status in October 2019).

The Treasurer reported that the Annual Accounts for 2020 had been drafted and would be finalised for the Auditor's attention by 8th January. This would allow plenty of time for the audited accounts to be received, any queries addressed and Trustee approval given to them ahead of the AGM. It was agreed that the AGM should take place at 7pm on Wednesday 7th April 2021. The meeting would take the format of a presentation with opportunities for members' questions. It was suggested that the Trustee 'leaders' of Team M and Team B be available at the front of the meeting to field any questions for their areas.

Action – Mr Wood to write to the Charity Commission regarding the 'lease' issue.

9. Prize Draw

The winner of the monthly draw was Sheila Ginger (Member number 20-088).

10. Finance Report

The Treasurer had produced and circulated the income and expenditure statement for December, but had also drawn up a draft Annual Accounts statement for 2020 which indicated a deficit of £7,665. A recent gift aid application had been submitted and this had resulted in a £1,939 payment to GDI. Further work was taking place to develop a new, single-entry budgeting and accounting system.

Trustees thanked the Treasurer for her huge contribution over the course of the past year.

11. Any other business

i) Equipment loans

The past year had seen a number of private and organisational requests to borrow items from the Town Hall. Whilst there was no formal charge for doing so, no donation, to support the TH's work, had been forthcoming and some discussion took place as to whether this situation should continue, especially in the current financial climate. It was suggested that loans of equipment should only take place in favour of members although an option should be considered to develop a corporate membership offering. It was agreed that the Caretakers would need to be given explicit instructions as to how to deal with such requests in future.

Action – Trustees to consider how a corporate membership scheme should look.

12. Date and time of next meeting

The next meeting of Trustees will take place, via 'Zoom', at 10am on Monday 1st February 2021. The proposed dates for the remainder of 2021 are as follows:-

Monday 1st March at 10am

Tuesday 6th April at 10am (AGM at 7pm on Wednesday 7th April)

Monday 10th May at 10am

Monday 7th June at 10am

Monday 5th July at 10am

Monday 2nd August at 10am

Monday 6th September at 10am

Monday 4th October at 10am

Monday 1st November at 10am

NB Any decision to hold meetings via 'Zoom' or equivalent will be agreed by Trustees in advance. Assuming the Dickensian Festival takes place in 2021, there will be no meeting of Trustees in December.

DPW
5th January 2021.