

GRASSINGTON DEVONSHIRE INSTITUTE

TRUSTEES

NOTES OF A MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 8TH JULY 2019

Present: Trustees David Wood (in the Chair)
Hanne Barton Mandy Clover
Penny Clover Dave Garland
Marion Field Andrew Jackson
Bob Kendall Stephen Parry
Dave Tierney

Secretary Val Giles
Treasurer Angela Beetham

Apologies Rob Charlton and Jean Slater

1. Notes of previous meeting

The notes of the meeting held on Monday 10th June 2019 were approved as a correct record.

2. Action Sheet

There was nothing new to report from the Action Sheet.

3. Matters arising

i) Grassington Festival review

Mrs Barton gave a report on the fire alarm and evacuation which had taken place on the final night of the Festival (29th June). She commented that the night had been a sell out but despite this and with the help of the many volunteers on duty, the building had been evacuated promptly and in accordance with Town Hall procedures. The cause of the alarm was unknown as the Fire Service had been 'stood down' before their attendance, but it was likely that hair spray or deodorant, in use in the dressing rooms, had triggered the alarm. Two key points had emerged from the event; firstly, the alarm had not been audible in the main hall and those people evacuated through the Moor Lane exit had been 'reluctant' to move up to the top car park. Some discussion ensued regarding the potential to designate a new assembly point in Moor Croft but it was felt that this could be blocked off by emergency vehicles attending an incident in the future. It was noted that Grassington Festival would be addressing their own concerns regarding presence at the sound desk and availability of a microphone, based on their experience that evening.

Action - Mrs Barton, Mr Wood and Mr Garland to meet with the Caretaker to consider the action, if any, required. Mr Garland to discuss the potential to change the alarm sound and/or volume with Keybury during their upcoming inspection.

ii) Terms and Condition of Hire

The most recent set of terms and conditions of hire (dated April 2019) had been circulated in advance. Mr Wood pointed out the clause which stated that 'vaping' was not allowed on the premises. Mrs Barton suggested that clear signs should be placed at the main entrances (as a minimum) to confirm that this was Town Hall policy. This was agreed and the terms and conditions were approved on this basis.

Action - Mr Wood to purchase appropriate signage to publicise the 'No Vaping' policy. The new terms and conditions of hire are to be sent to every new hirer of the hall and to all regular users.

iii) Fire Plan

Mr Garland reported that PAT testing and fire extinguisher checks would be carried out by Fire Academy on 10th July. Mr Wood confirmed that HCS Ltd had undertaken the annual gas installation inspection and servicing of boilers on 1st July but would need to return to replace two parts in one of the boilers. The estimated cost of the return visit and repair would be c£250 plus VAT. This was approved.

Mr Garland stated that no estimate had been received, as yet, from the local joiner, to supply and fit new fire doors in the kitchen.

Action - Mr Wood to contact the joiner to establish if the estimate is being prepared and, if not, to seek alternative quotes.

iv) Updating the Town Hall interior

Mrs Barton reported that some new dimmable down lights had been assessed as suitable for the Octagon, to address the problems reported by traders and others at the 2018 Dickensian Festival. A quotation for the work (c£530) was approved.

Mrs Barton suggested a new scheme to re-decorate the foyer, corridor and toilets (including the toilet floor) should also be put together and quotes obtained. Whilst it was noted later in the meeting that any high level work externally may have an impact on these schemes, Trustees agreed to proceed with quotation.

Action - Mrs Barton to obtain a quotation for a prescribed scheme of re-decoration as discussed.

4. Handover from the Secretary and Treasurer

Mr Wood informed Trustees that an initial meeting between himself, Mrs Barton and the Secretary had taken place and a further meeting, to include the Treasurer, would take place on 11th July. He stressed that any 'service level agreement', taken on by Grassington Hub for any of this work would be entirely separate from the merger discussions. Dr Jackson reported that Grassington Hub may not be able to take on the full requirements of the Treasurer's current role. In acknowledging this new information, Mrs Barton suggested the handover meetings should take place and a set of requirements discussed with the Hub as soon as possible, relating to both the Secretary's and Treasurer's roles. If the 'essential' tasks were not possible to be undertaken by the Hub, Mr Wood commented that a further option, as yet undisclosed, could be considered by Trustees.

Action - Mrs Barton and Mr Wood to compile a list of requirements following handover and to discuss these with representatives of Grassington Hub.

5. Playschool improvements

A letter from Liese Whitaker, Chair of the Dales Playschool, had been circulated in advance. Support had been requested for the installation of a new door to the outside from the main room occupied by the Playschool. It was understood that this could be a factor in helping to improve the Playschool's Ofsted rating in the future. Coun Kendall confirmed that a similar letter had been considered by Grassington Parish Council (GPC) and, as landlords, GPC had supported the work on the basis that no cost was attributed to any organisation other than the Dales Playschool. After some discussion, Trustees agreed to support the work being undertaken.

A second part of the letter related to the repair to or replacement of the wet room floor and purchase of a new carpet. Trustees expressed interest in establishing the cost of both items with a view to considering a financial contribution.

Action - Mrs Barton to obtain a quote to repair and/or replace the wet room flooring. Mr Wood to establish through the Playschool the cost of a new carpet. Both items to be considered at or before the meeting on 12th August.

6. Electricity Supply

Mr Wood reported on discussion he had had with the Energy Advice Line regarding a new contract for the supply of electricity to the Town Hall upon the expiry of the current three year deal in November 2019. Whilst there was a c35% increase in the price charged for kwh during the day, there would be no charge for consumption during the night. After some discussion it was agreed that the Town Hall should sign up to a new 3 year deal, offered by Scottish Power.

Action - Mr Wood to arrange the contractual details in conjunction with the Energy Advice Line.

7. Programme of Octagon Events

Mr Wood reported on a meeting with Mr Tierney and a small group of volunteers which had taken place to put forward a programme of events for the Octagon. 12 live operas and ballets were proposed, to be contracted with More2Screen on a 50/50 box office sales basis, subject to a minimum payment, per event, of £120 plus VAT. This was approved. A series of 4 'recorded live' Shakespeare plays were proposed, along with a short briefing workshop on each run by Mr Norman. These events would be contracted directly with the Globe Theatre on the basis of a 70/30 split of box office sales (in the Town Hall's favour), subject to a minimum payment of £80 plus VAT per event. This was approved.

Whilst the volunteer group had suggested prices for these events, Trustees agreed the following ticket prices:-

Live performances of Opera and Ballet - £14 (inc. Grassington Hub contribution as appropriate)

Recorded Shakespeare plays - £12.50 (inc. Grassington Hub contribution as appropriate)

Action - Mr Wood to arrange the contracts for these events and arrange to publicise them on the diary pages of the Town Hall's website.

8. Contribution to Grassington in Bloom (GiB)

Mr Wood stated he had received an invitation from GiB to contribute £50 towards a flower tub, which would indicate the sponsors of the display. After some discussion and in view of the poor display of the planted boxes at the Town Hall this year, it was agreed to make a contribution to GiB on the basis that they planted up and maintained the Town Hall's box displays.

Action - Mr Wood to speak with GiB representatives to make arrangements for GiB to plant and look after the Town Hall's box displays and to publicise GDI sponsorship.

9. Prize Draw

The winner of the bumper draw for July was Richard Hargreaves.

10. Finance Report

In the light of future changes to the Secretary and Treasurer roles, it was felt necessary for new signatories to be added to the bank account. The Treasurer sought and received unanimous support to allow Mr Wood and Mrs Barton to become signatories (proposer Miss M Clover, seconder Dr Jackson). Significant bills were reported (Oldfields, More2Screen and the window cleaner and these were approved. The Treasurer reported that Craven District Council had returned £350 which reduced the non-domestic rates liability to around £500. Given the likelihood of significant financial outlay in the next few weeks, the Treasurer was authorised to exercise discretion in drawing down monies from savings accounts into the working account.

11. Events schedule

The Secretary reported on a relatively quiet period, post-Grassington Festival. However, the Youth Orchestra would be playing once again on 23rd August and volunteers, to make refreshments, were invited. It was noted that the Town Hall's coffee morning was scheduled for Saturday 20th July (in Church House) and those who are able to help with refreshments, staff cake and tombola stalls will be most welcome. The tombola prizes will be 'bottles' and all donations will be welcome. A short planning discussion/meeting will be arranged to ensure everything is in place for this fund-raising event.

Mr Wood reported on a note he had received from Mr Wilson, which suggested the advance calendar of events was looking very sparse as very few activities were being notified to him.

Action - All available Trustees (with spouses and other volunteers if possible) to contribute to the coffee morning on 20th July. The Secretary to review bookings and to make Mr Wilson aware of any event which can be loaded on to the website's calendar. Mr Wood to notify Mr Wilson of the dates and titles for the new season of operas, ballets and plays.

12. Correspondence received

Mr Wood reported he had received a letter from the office of Rt. Hon. The Lord Pickles, inviting the Devonshire Institute to participate in the 'Parliamentary Review' in 2019. In researching the subject, Mr Wood reported that most, if not all, of the organisations involved appeared to be private or public sector businesses and felt that small charities were not represented. Membership/participation would also attract a fee (undisclosed by the invitation). Trustees agreed that it would be inappropriate to accept the invitation.

Coun Kendall left the meeting at this stage.

13. Proposed merger with Grassington Hub

Mr Wood reported that the due diligence process, conducted on behalf of the Town Hall Trustees by Mr Davies, was progressing and should be completed before the next meeting. He stressed that Mr Davies would analyse the data received and draw any issues to the attention of the Trustees - he would not be involved in the decision-making process. A presentation on the findings of the exercise, would take place at the next meeting on 12th August.

As part of the due diligence process, a 'Governance Report' had been prepared for the Hub and Town Hall by a charity governance expert, Mr Cattell. In the report, Mr Cattell had set out a number of questions which needed to be addressed by both organisations, however he had drawn attention to the GDI's 'unincorporated' status as a charity. The implications of this were set out in the report and discussed in detail. Trustees felt that, irrespective of any progress which may be made towards merger with Grassington Hub, the GDI's status should be converted to a 'Charitable Incorporated Organisation' without delay and Mr Cattell's offer to undertake the necessary work at a maximum cost of £850 plus VAT was approved.

Action - Mr Wood to confirm acceptance of Mr Cattell's offer to undertake the work and to liaise with him during the process.

14. Future of the Town Hall

Mr Wood thanked Mr Parry for arranging a new building condition survey, to include estimates of cost. It was noted the site visit would take place on 11th July. The resulting report would include estimated costs for any work identified along with a likely timescale within which such work would become necessary.

Mr Wood informed Trustees that Grassington Parish Council had made available the legal opinion, relating to the ownership of the Town Hall premises, prepared by Craven District Council. A briefing note, presumably derived from that opinion and from the deeds, had been produced by Coun Rooze and this had also been made available.

Trustees agreed that no formal response would be made to Grassington Parish Council until the building condition survey had been received and considered, and CIO status had been achieved. They also felt that the potential merger with Grassington Hub may need to take a slower track until these two important issues have been addressed.

The Secretary and Treasurer left the meeting at this stage.

15. Remuneration issues

A short briefing paper on the current remuneration of the two Caretakers, Secretary and Treasurer had been circulated. Mr Wood reminded Trustees that the last pay award had been made in April 2018 (excluding Christmas bonuses) and 'consideration' of these rates was now due.

Some discussion took place around the potential to offer pay for performance but it was acknowledged that, in the absence of a performance management scheme, a job description or the ability to manage duties and hours of work, this was currently unworkable. After further debate, a majority decision was reached to increase the rate of pay (and the amounts paid to the Secretary and Treasurer as honoraria) by the 2018 CPI rate of 2.4%, applicable from April 2019. The next scheduled review will take place in summer 2020.

Action - Mr Wood to notify the individuals concerned of the decision reached and to authorise the Treasurer to make the necessary payments, including back money due, as soon as possible.

16. Any other business

There was no other business.

17. Date and time of next meeting

The next meeting of Trustees will take place **on Monday 12th August 2019, at 7pm in the Games Room.**

The meeting closed at 10.00pm.

DPW 10th July 2019.