

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

TRUSTEES

NOTES OF A MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 2nd NOVEMBER 2020

Participants: David Wood (in the Chair)
Hanne Barton Barrie Doyle
Marion Field Jean Slater

In attendance Penny Clover (Treasurer)

Apologies: Stephen Parry (personal commitment)

1. Notes of previous meeting

The notes of the meetings held on 5th October 2020 were confirmed as a correct record.

2. Matters arising

i) Telephone charges

The cost of personal calls made by the caretaker had now been agreed to be deducted from salary. It was noted that the opportunity had been taken to review the telephone and broadband contract with BT and a new, WIFI-based telephone system had been purchased which could save around £30 per month.

3. Progress report – Curtains for Main Hall

The first batch of new curtains had just been received and these would be hung as soon as possible after a query regarding the functionality of the new curtain tracks had been resolved. Trustees felt the social media coverage for the manufacture and delivery of the new curtains had been really helpful given the order had been placed with a Grassington-based company. 50% of the cost of the curtains had been paid up front, with the remainder due following completion of the order.

On a separate issue, much more information had been gathered regarding the potential upgrade to the sound systems and Trustees thanked Mr Thornton for his valuable advice. Whilst £5,000 had been committed to the project, Trustees agreed that the project should be ‘parked’ given the uncertainty over the GDI’s financial position in the light of the coronavirus restrictions.

It was noted that the hall lights had been cleaned and faulty, dimmable bulbs replaced, with a small stock of spares now available. A small technical issue needed to be overcome but it was likely that the hall lighting would be dimmable for future events.

4. Health and Safety – Maintaining a Covid-safe environment

The Town Hall had re-opened, as planned on 22nd October with a ‘live recorded’ screening of the ballet ‘Giselle’. The event had been attended by 60 people, including volunteers and excellent feedback had been received regarding the organisation of the event and the systems put in place to keep people safe. Several, ‘regular’ users had been contacted to discuss their plans for return and those already intending to return in November had been asked to produce an event-specific risk assessment, to complement that produced by GDI. The two Caretakers had been fully involved in determining the details of the new cleaning regime and ‘rules’, governing ‘drop-in’ sessions for Snooker had been put in place. These seemed to be working.

A generic access list had been produced, comprising the Caretakers, Trustees, 'Team M' and key volunteers, all of whom would require regular access to the building. Otherwise, every event organiser would be required to hold a list of people attending each event. GDI-organised events would have the benefit of being able to access personal details of all those attending using the Ticketsource system.

5. Cashless Payments

A new, cashless payments system, requiring wifi access, had been purchased from SumUp. The new equipment would offer an alternative to cash, with all credit and debit cards being accepted. All future customers would be made aware of the new option. Following discussion, the availability of an online SumUp account meant there would be no need for GDI to retain receipts, although each customer using the cashless system would be offered a receipt for their own records. The Caretaker would be made aware of the new process in order that 'drop in' sessions could, at an agreed point in the future, make use of the system. In the meantime, Trustees agreed the facility should be used for ticketed events.

Action – Mr Wood to brief the Caretaker on the use of the new system.

6. Forward calendar, bookings and potential lockdown

Following some difficulties experienced over a number of booked events, a decision had been taken to withdraw the booking process from Grassington Hub pending review. It had become clear that there had been duplicated effort and, in some cases, deviation from agreed process which made the decision to bring the whole process back to the GDI necessary. The Hub's Manager had asked that all references to the Hub's involvement in booking be removed from the GDI's website and that any monies due be paid as soon as possible. In the absence of any service level agreement on the subject, Trustees felt there was no obligation to pay any amount at this stage. A volunteer had now come forward to assist with the GDI's processes and details were received at the meeting of another individual who would be willing to assist. These offers of help were warmly welcomed by Trustees.

Trustees expressed the wish to continue to work positively and constructively with Grassington Hub and to write to seek assurances for the future.

Action – Mr Wood to write to Dr Jackson to confirm the wish to work co-operatively together. Mrs Barton to assume full control of the booking process and system (Skedda) and to work with the new volunteers to determine how they could contribute.

As far as future bookings were concerned, some contact had been made with the Art Group, Grassington Singers and the Fitness Group teachers, one of whom intended to return to the Main Hall this week. Badminton and Snooker had already re-started and it was noted that YDNP had booked facilities for 3.5 days this week for essential training. Some groups had stated it was not their intention to return before the first quarter of 2021. Overall, the diary, in the absence of a programme of GDI-organised events, looked sparse with insufficient income to break even during the early months of the new year.

Taking into account the likelihood that Parliament would approve a second lockdown, Trustees reluctantly agreed that the Town hall should be closed to the public from Thursday 5th November for four weeks pending review. Discussion would take place with YDNP to establish whether the scheduled training event could or should still take place. Two GDI-organised events (Manon Lescaut on 11th November and Macbeth on 1st December) would need to be cancelled and refunds offered.

Action – Mr Wood to ensure the two events are cancelled and appropriate communications take place with customers. The Treasurer to make arrangements for reimbursement of ticket purchases for those people paying cash at Grassington Hub.

After some discussion, it was agreed that the two Caretakers should return to furlough with effect from 5th November for 4 weeks pending review. This would allow the GDI to take advantage of the extended Job

Retention Scheme. Trustees also agreed to top up the salaries of the Caretakers to 100% of normal pay for the 4 weeks period and to review this in the light of further Government guidance.

Action – Mr Wood to write to the Caretakers to confirm the decision to place them on furlough from Thursday 5th November.

7. Caretaker's flat project

Team M had now met on two occasions to review the plans for a Caretaker's flat to be created in the space vacated by the Dales Playschool. Creation of new residential accommodation would allow the whole of the ground floor of the front elevation of the building to be re-designed, in order to accommodate a new sub-let or initiate alternative use. It was noted that Grassington Parish Council had resolved to support the GDI's intentions to create the accommodation and any permissions required for planning and/or building regulation would be sought by GDI. The latest advice from Team M was that an 'accommodation-specific' gas supply and boiler should be installed which would not only provide a suitable service to the resident Caretaker but also allow the unit to be sub-let again, perhaps on a private basis, in the future. With this in mind, a project fund of up to £20,000 was agreed.

Action – Mr Doyle to continue to develop the plans and start the process of seeking the necessary permissions.

8. Town Hall Lease

A meeting with representatives of Grassington Parish Council had been cancelled, at the Council's request, in October and whilst it appeared the Council had identified an 'issue' over land ownership, Trustees stated their wish to continue discussions over the details for a potential lease as soon as possible.

Trustees were of the view that not all Councillors appeared to be aware of all of the GDI's plans and rationale for them and it was agreed that a new business plan be developed as soon as possible. It was agreed that the final version of such plan should be made available to all Councillors, along with individual invitations to meet with a small group of Trustees to address any queries and concerns.

Action – Mr Wood to meet with Mrs Barton and Mr Doyle (arranged for 1.30pm on 2nd November) to continue the drafting of the business plan. Mr Wood to write to Grassington Parish Council to seek re-commencement of the lease discussions and to bring to the Council's attention the availability of aerial photographs showing details of the condition of the Town Hall's roof.

9. Membership

Following distribution of the new brochure and social media and other advertising of the new Membership Scheme, over 100 members had been signed up with more application forms coming in daily. All non-member ticket-purchasers for the five events before Christmas had been asked personally if they would like to apply for membership. Membership numbers had been allocated and communicated to the first 100 and this numbering system would be adopted for any future discount scheme which may be put in place.

10. Prize Draw

The winner of the prize draw for October was Rob Charlton (no. 18).

11. Finance Report

The Treasurer confirmed that all but one of the outstanding bills had now been paid with the other deferred, by agreement of the Trustees until June 2021. However, an event on the first weekend after re-opening had not yet been paid for and this would be chased up under the new arrangements for payment. The main business account balance was now around £11,400 and the Treasurer asked that any significant

expenditure on the Caretaker's Flat project be notified to her in advance, to allow time for funds to be transferred from the GDI's savings account.

Further, private donations to the 'Curtain appeal' had been received, which brought the total to £3,000. Trustees also heard that the Upper Wharfedale Field Society had donated £100 to the fund. All contributions had been gratefully acknowledged and donors thanked for their support.

12. Any other business

Constructive meetings had been held, since the last meeting of Trustees, with Grassington Hub, Grassington Players and the GDI Caretakers. A further meeting with Grassington Players had been scheduled for 19th November 2020.

13. Date and time of next meeting

The next meeting of Trustees will be held at 10am on Monday 7th December 2020 in the Games Room (subject to any restrictions informed by Government)

DPW
3rd November 2020.