

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

TRUSTEES

NOTES OF A MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 5th OCTOBER 2020

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 September 2020 were confirmed as a correct record.

2. Progress report - Main Stage and Hall

The Main Hall stage was now complete, with the new 'reds', generously paid for through a donation by Linton Parish Council, fitted in place. The re-painting of walls and ceiling was complete, with just radiators to be painted this week. The proscenium arch looked particularly impressive with its complementary colour. Trustees expressed thanks to Derrick Lee for undertaking this task in his own time.

The new curtains for the windows and exit doors had been ordered from a local company, although they would not be in place for re-opening due to a material supply problem. Nevertheless, the pre-existing curtains could be reinstated temporarily, if required, to act as acoustic softeners for the events in the Main Hall. These curtains would be sold, as soon as the new ones became available. New curtain rails had also been installed. The rear 'acoustic curtain' would be refitted to ensure access to fire-fighting equipment.

Elsewhere in the building, it was noted that several wooden chairs in the dressing rooms had woodworm and would need to be replaced.

Trustees had previously committed £5,000 to a potential 'multi-organisational' project to improve the sound system in the building. No further information had been received about this project so Trustees had received some guidance from Mr Thornton as to the likely requirements for upgrading the customer (and artist) experience. It was likely that new mobile speakers and a sound desk could be purchased, within budget, and this would cater for the majority of users of the hall over the year. It was acknowledged that larger acts would still likely bring their own PA systems but the expenditure required to install such equipment was not deemed cost-effective at this time. When the time was right, main user groups would be invited to contribute to the development of a final specification.

3. Health and Safety – Preparing the Town Hall for re-opening

A detailed risk assessment had been produced and several amendments and updates had now been included to address local and national guidance. The 'RA' now included assessments for the Snooker and Games rooms and it was agreed that the Snooker Room could be re-opened, with capacity limited to 2 people, once the building had been thoroughly cleaned.

Discussion took place about the various, regular users of the building and the timescale within which they may return to 'normal' activities. Several had been contacted and it was noted that the Arts Group, Zumba, Fitsteps and Pilates classes could potentially return in November. A 24 hours running event (Due North) was still expected to go ahead as planned and this would use the Town Hall's facilities for organisers and

there would be no further use for 72 hours thereafter. Other bookings would be asked to refrain from using the kitchen unless cleaning could be accommodated or a fallow period of 72 hours thereafter could be scheduled. All hirers would be expected to observe and practise the procedures set out in the 'RA' (which would be made available on the website) and to create their own risk assessment for managing their own events within this guidance. The 'RA' now included emergency evacuation procedures. An event-specific RA would be required for the first event on 22nd October.

Action - Mrs Barton to produce the latest version of the Risk Assessment for the website and for the attention of all hirers. Mrs Slater, assisted by Mrs Field, to produce a RA for the 'Giselle' event.

Appropriate notices, regarding Covid-19 safety, would be put in place, including some requiring face coverings when entering, moving about within and exiting the building. Hand sanitiser stations had been ordered but there was no guaranteed date for delivery. Trustees agreed to purchase large, dispensing bottles of 70%+ alcohol, hand sanitiser and to make these available at key points within the building.

Action – Mrs Slater to purchase the required hand sanitiser product and Mr Wood to ensure the order for sanitiser dispensers is cancelled.

After considerable discussion, it was agreed to ask the Caretakers to return from furlough with effect from Monday 12th October 2020 and to start, with voluntary assistance if available, the process of cleaning the building in readiness for re-opening on Thursday 22nd October. Whilst bookings were 'scarce', it was agreed to keep the position regarding the Caretakers' employment under review and to have further discussion on the subject at the December meeting. The option of reducing hours and taking advantage of further Government support would be considered at that time.

Action – Mr Wood to inform the Caretakers of the decision to end furlough and to seek voluntary contribution to the cleaning effort via social media posts.

4. Conditions of Hire

Whilst the new hire rates had been agreed and placed on the website, the conditions surrounding hire were now also in need of review, especially in the area of deposits and balancing payments. Trustees acknowledged the huge administrative workload in taking booking enquiries, actual bookings and maintaining/developing the Skedda online system. It was agreed that the forthcoming news and events brochure would carry a request for help with this area of work.

Action – Mr Wood to provide appropriate wording for inclusion in the brochure. Mrs Barton to draft amendments to the Conditions for Hire document with input from Mr Parry.

5. Town Hall Lease

A second meeting with Grassington Parish Council representatives had been held on 17th September 2020 and a further meeting had been scheduled for 9th October. However, lawyers acting for GPC had raised an 'issue', over land registry registration which would take a time to resolve and hence no further meeting was diaried at present. It was likely that GPC would require a business plan from the GDI to describe how any publicly-raised funds would be spent in the coming years. Such a plan was likely to be a pre-requisite for all external funding applications therefore it was agreed that work would commence on such a document, using the 2018 plan and template guidance (provided by NYCC) as a starting point. It was agreed that the aim should be to seek to present the plan at a public meeting of GPC.

Action – Mr Wood and Mr Doyle to draft a business plan for discussion with Trustees.

6. Events Programme

Information had been received since the last meeting to confirm that the 2020 Wharfedale Beer Festival would be cancelled. However, five new events (four live recordings provided by More2Screen and the annual Christmas Concert by the City of Bradford Brass Band) had been publicised and tickets made available. The Ticketsource system had provided an opportunity to include social distancing for bookings and Trustees felt that small tables could be provided for ticketholders and vacant seats removed to create a 'cabaret-type' ambience for these events, all of which would be held in the Main Hall. It was noted that the four live recorded events would require 10 seats to be purchased to break even and it was encouraging to note that the first event, Giselle on 22nd October, had already passed this figure. The 'front of house' and stewarding arrangements, bar facilities and an opportunity to introduce a cashless payment system would all be explored.

Action – Mrs Slater and Mrs Field to ensure an appropriate seating plan is established for all events, taking into account actual ticket sales. Mr Parry to make appropriate arrangements for a 'table-service' system for bar and other refreshments. The Treasurer to consider cashless-payment systems.

7. Logo/Membership and new brochure

A draft of the news and membership brochure had been circulated in advance. Trustees expressed thanks to Mr Lomax for his considerable input to this project. The brochure would take the format of previous events brochures but would include a membership application and standing order form insert. The potential to commission the printing work (1,000-2,000 copies) from Grassington Hub was discussed and it was agreed that as long as the paper quality and timescale for production could be met, the work would be offered to Grassington Hub. Otherwise, a contingency plan was agreed to commission the work from a pre-existing supplier. It was hoped to start the distribution of the brochure during week commencing 12th October.

Action – Mrs Slater to finalise the wording and layout of the brochure and to discuss requirements with Grassington Hub. Mr Parry to lead the distribution process to include Long Ashes and businesses around the area.

8. Prize Draw

The winner of the prize draw for October was Nic Fielden (no. 27).

9. Finance Report

The Treasurer had provided details of the management accounts in advance and had listed the bills paid and those which remained outstanding. After discussion, Trustees agreed to defer an outstanding payment due from Grassington Festival to June 2021, when the next festival was due to take place. An outstanding payment due from the Toddler Group had been expedited and it was hoped a resolution could be found quickly.

Trustees received details of personal donations made by members of the Upper Wharfedale community to the Town hall's funds, including the curtain appeal, totalling £1,550. This was in addition to the generous donations made by Linton Parish Council and Grassington Players.

Action – Mr Wood to ensure a letter of thanks is forwarded to all 'donors'.

An application to the HMRC, to 'recognise' the GDI as a charity for the purposes of reclaiming 'Gift Aid', had been successful. An application, which could recover around £1,000 would be made in the coming weeks.

Action – Mr Wood to make the necessary application to HMRC.

An 'unusual' charge in the telephone bill for September would be investigated. If possible, the sum involved would be recovered from the user.

Action – Mr Wood to investigate the charge and seek to recover the necessary sum.

10. Correspondence received

A letter had been received from a member which made a number of interesting suggestions regarding alternative ways of viewing the future of the Town Hall. Trustees acknowledged the content but felt that the current course of action should be pursued to a natural conclusion.

11. Any other business

It was noted that Mrs Barton and Mr Wood would be meeting with the Chair and Treasurer of Grassington Players on 19th October to discuss booking flexibility. A full, joint meeting of Trustees would be arranged for November if possible.

A joint meeting with the Trustees of Grassington Hub had been arranged for 20th October. This meeting had been set up to discuss a range of issues around the potential re-location of Grassington Hub to the Town Hall.

12. Date and time of next meeting

The next two meetings of Trustees will be held at 10am on Monday 2nd November 2020 and 10am on Monday 7th December 2020 in the Games Room.

DPW
6th October 2020.