

HARGRAVE VILLAGE HALL CHARITY

TRUSTEE MEETING

6.00pm TUESDAY 30TH APRIL 2024

Present:

Trustees: Jill Upton, Simon de Laat, Roger Sudbury, David Taylor

Jill de Laat

Before the commencement of the agenda items, it was agreed that the minutes should be published on the Hargrave Village website and the Hargrave village Facebook page.

1. Elections

- a. Chairman – RS proposed that SdL be the Chairman (agreed)
- b. Deputy Chairman – SdL proposed RS (agreed)
- c. Treasurer – it was agreed that JU continue in the role of Treasurer
- d. Secretary – It was agreed that JdL act as Secretary to the Trustees and the Management Committee.

It was noted that two of the previous Trustees would be removed from the charity – Vic Turner and Catherine Williams.

2. The form for submission to the Charity Commission confirming the new Trustees was signed by all the above trustees (de Laat, Upton, Taylor, Sudbury)

3. Adoption of Governing Rules for Hargrave VHC

Prior to the adoption of rules, RS summarised his research into the documents pertaining to ownership and governance of the hall since 1926. He recommended that these be reviewed by an expert.

The original 1926 conveyance showed that Mr Gurney of Greene King gifted the village hall land to the trustees. The original plans are, unfortunately, not available.

The Deed of Appointment of 1973 appointed Hargrave Parish Council to be Custodian Trustee. This solves the problem of individuals owning the land as trustees and the CT's sole role is to hold the land, as a corporate body, on behalf of the Charitable Trust. It does not confer ownership and the trustees can terminate the agreement with the CTs at any time. At the same time, there need to be managing trustees retaining responsibility for the day-to-day running of the hall. The Custodian Trustees do not have the power to appoint Management Trustees.

In 1989 a Deed of Release was signed by Greene King and the Custodian Trustee to allow the sale of alcohol in the hall, which had previously been prohibited by GK. This was variation of the covenant.

The beneficial owner should the hall and land be sold is the Charitable Trust.

The hall and land could not at any time be gifted to the parish council; it has to be sold at market value.

RS's summary will be attached to these minutes and it was agreed that legal advice must be sought, preferably *pro bono*, which may be available but, if not, it must be paid for out of funds.

The hall/land is not registered with Land Registry and it was also agreed that this must be done once ownership is resolved.

Roger Sudbury was thanked for his work in researching the history of the hall.

SdL reported that the charity has been in existence since 1926, as documented throughout the minute books and other papers. However, it was also registered in 1991 and his suspicion was that this was when the records became digital.

The whereabouts of the deeds are not known, although they are referred to in past documents. The secretary would approach Greene King to see if they have any record in their archives.

Considering the uncertain position at the moment, it was decided that no action should be taken yet on adopting a set of rules.

4. Items for Discussion

- a) Change of bank account signatories: it was agreed to remove Vic Turner but to retain Jill Upton and Catherine Williams as signatories with the addition of David Taylor. Two out of three signatories would be required.
- b) Appointment of Steve O'Donnell as financial support for Jill Upton – agreed.
- c) Move to digital accounting with effect from 1st February 2024 – agreed.
- d) Opening of an account with the Cambridge Building Society with £5,000 to be increased to all funds, less six months' expenditure – agreed, especially as this would generate a good rate of interest.
- e) Hall maintenance
It was agreed to replace the microwave.
With regard to the hole in the car park, Anglian Water has investigated and the high water table is the problem. Kevin Mayes will repair the hole when the weather dries up. Sleepers would also be replaced.
- f) Appointment of Management Committee
Jill Upton, Catherine Williams and Denise Osborne were appointed to run the day-to-day management and oversight.
- g) Lottery
The lottery is licensed in the name of Hargrave Village Hall. RS will review the licence.
- h) PC as Custodian Trustee – covered earlier in minutes.

- i) Hall hire charges
The charges at the moment are £5 per hour for village residents and £6 per hour for all others. The bowls club pay £4 per hour. DT stressed that the hall is a resource for the village and costs must be reasonable.
- j) Hall and land ownership
Covered earlier in the minutes.
- k) Broadband
This has been in the hall for two years at a cost of £500 pa. It was agreed to continue with this utility as a village resource.
- l) Gifts for retiring trustees
This was agreed and JU will organise. Vic Turner has served at least 35 years as a trustee.
- m) Presentation to Annual Parish Meeting
It was agreed that SdL will give a presentation on the current situation of hall to the next Annual Parish Meeting.
- n) Screen
It was agreed to purchase a screen for the hall at no more than £100.
- o) Bottle and clothing banks
An approach had been made by a clothing bank charity to install one on the hall site and this was agreed to. A bottle bank was considered unsuitable for this location.

5. Any Other Business

With regard to future development of the hall, Denise Osborne has been researching possible funding routes. This will be discussed further.

It was agreed that there should be four trustee meeting per year.

A timescale of three months was agreed to secure legal advice on the status of hall and land ownership. Suffolk Community Action should be able to supply a source of *pro bono* advice.

The meeting closed at 7.40pm.

Signed:

Dated: