

Argles Memorial Hall

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

7.00pm on Tuesday 20th July 2021

Present: Judy Goodland (Retiring Chair), Jenny Waldron (Treasurer), Kath Edwards (Vice Chair, Bookings Secretary & Health & Safety Officer), Helen Todd (Secretary), Peter Windsor (Art Club), Geraldine Wilson & Caroline Holmes (Exchange), Tom Smith (Panto), John Holmes (First Responders), Matthew Dobson (PCC), Martin Casson (Landowner's), Katie Smith (Playgroup), and Angela Dobson (Parish Council and Chair designate).

Welcome – Judy opened the meeting by extending a very warm welcome to everyone.

Apologies were received from: Howard Lawton (Co-opted member), Imogen Field (Yoga), Marilyn Shuttleworth (W.I), Andrea Pickering (School), Lyndsey Dobson (Mini-Movers), Janet Richardson (Indoor Bowls), Hayley Mason (Co-opted member).

The Minutes of the previous AGM were read and signed as a true record.

Chairperson's Report – Unsurprisingly this will be a relatively short report as there have been few of the usual activities in the Hall since the last AGM in September. The major change was the installation of the Broadband connection and the placing near the oil tank of its associated cabinet. At the time of our last meeting Helen Bentley was completing the redecoration of the kitchen. It looks splendid and I am very grateful to her for that and for the many hours she spent working as the hall cleaner. We wish Helen well and are very pleased to welcome Grace Nelson from Brigsteer as our new cleaner. We also started the 100-club last year. Helen Todd got it going and all the numbers are taken. Some lucky people have already won the £25 monthly prize. Helen kindly stepped in as Secretary last year and we owe her a big debt of gratitude for all her work in that role. Some activities are creeping back gradually. The art group, yoga and the WI are hoping to start and, in September, the Exchange will be offering a twice monthly service with a meal on the first Wednesday and teas/ coffees on the third Wednesday afternoons. There are even a couple of non-local bookings for August. Who knows we might even get round to the pantomime again one day!

I am very grateful to the Trustees: to Kath, Jenny and Helen for all their support and for the work they have put in to keep the hall solvent and safe, and to Alan Hunter for being our independent auditor. Thanks to Howard for his practical advice and special thanks to Lynne for her time on the committee as co-opted joint Health and Safety Officer. I am very pleased she is happy to continue helping Kath with this important but onerous and often unappreciated job. I am delighted that Angela Dobson has offered to stand for election as Chairman. I wish her and the committee all the best for the future.

Treasurer's Report - Year Ending April 2021 – please see Excel file attached.

Income

The majority of the total of £615.00 income from lettings was from payments made for lettings in the previous financial year. Only the Art Club hired the hall in October. There was no income from any of the usual events because of the Covid restrictions. The 100 Club was planned before the last two lockdowns and was very well supported. At the same time there were a number of generous donations, from local individuals and organisations. The hall is now registered for Gift Aid, and has reclaimed money on donations made by taxpayers in this and the previous financial year.

Expenses

The committee reduced outgoings during the year as far as possible, because of restrictions on lettings and fundraising events. The heating was switched on at night during the cold weather to protect the building and the oil needed refilling. Roughly half of the cost of electric was for February and March last year. The rest of the cost has mostly been the standing charges. The cleaner was laid off for most of the year and did a great job decorating over the stage, the meeting room and the kitchen, which the Exchange had made a donation for last year.

Grants

The committee applied for and received Covid support grants as they became available. We were encouraged, advised and supported in this by ACT Cumbria whose help was invaluable as the application process was not always particularly easy to follow. Up to the year-end we have received a total of £20,636 in various grants, without which the Year End balance would have looked very different. The initial £10,000 grant received as a lump sum in May, was used to cover the cost of the urgent repairs needed to the roof.

Conclusion and outlook for 2021-22

In the autumn we had no expectation of receiving more Covid grants and I was estimating a probable substantial deficit. Thanks to more Covid grants being made available, the success of the 100 club, generous donations and the committee taking a cautious view of expenditure early in the year, the year ended with a surplus of £8163. Hopefully next year will not bring more lockdowns, and the hall will be able to resume "business as usual" or something much closer to it. The challenge will be to rebuild confidence in participation in activities, and to support existing and potential new users to enjoy the facilities again.

The adoption of the Treasurer's report was proposed by Tom Smith and seconded by Geraldine Wilson. Judy thanked Jenny very much for the comprehensive report, and in keeping our finances in good order through trying times. The rest of the committee seconded these thanks.

Health & Safety Report

In house Fire checks have been done weekly as advised by our insurance company. Compulsory yearly fire equipment service, fire extinguishers, and fire alarm service were done in May. During those planned services some of the fire exit signs were replaced or modified. In the kitchen, it has been rewired so that it is not lit all the time. In the main hall the old non-LED escape route lights have been replaced. In the event of a power cut, the LED lights will come on above the doors in the hall to provide a bright enough light for a certain amount of time, and if necessary for a forced exit from the hall.

Increasingly the issue of the fluorescent lighting in the Main Hall needing replacement will prove a problem, because of the height of the ceiling. It might be better to leave them to fail and replace the wall lights with much brighter more modern efficient LED fittings, which will provide enough light without the ones on the ceiling. If we ever wanted to replace the fluorescent tubes in the main hall it would require a type of indoor cherry picker for safety reasons, and so would be quite expensive, and that problem would never disappear.

The meeting room is to have a plug-in torch, which will come on in the event of a power cut. In the lobby, some of the downlighters need replacing and the wiring to the fire escape sign checked. Also, the lights in the Wilson Store need replacing. An electrician has been in to look at the work, and we are currently waiting for him to report back on what he can purchase and when he will do the work. One of the lights in the ladies toilet is broken, and will also need to be replaced.

Outside kitchen steps - because of the damage to the steps from the kitchen, our insurance company has advised taping these off. We are waiting for the repair work to be done, sooner rather than later as that is one of the fire escape routes for the hall.

The adoption of the Health & Safety report was proposed by Angela Dobson and Seconded by John Holmes. Thanks were given to Kath for all her hard work in keeping the Hall safe for all users.

Lettings Report:

Summary of hall usage since the last AGM.

June, July and August 2020 – the hall was closed

September 2020 Private Book club met once

October 2020 Art group met 3 times and Book club twice

November 2020 Art group met 3 times

December 2020 to March 2021 -Hall closed

April 2021 Playgroup opened up one morning per week. Playgroup felt that with regular PCR tests they were able to open again safely. Of all their bookings only two meetings were cancelled, because of Covid isolation precautions.

May 2021. Local Police and Crime Commissioner Elections, Elections took place and because they use the hall for a whole day from 6a.m. to 10p.m. meant that we did earn some much-needed income for the hall. Parish Council meeting

June 2021 Monthly WI Social afternoons and WI monthly evening meetings started and Yoga started up again.

July 2021 Parish Council and Neighbourhood Steering group meetings

August 2021 Two private bookings and WI have a monthly evening meeting booked

We won't see much happening in the hall during August, but the Exchange will be opening again in September, and they have advertised the new regime of bookings in the August Parish magazine. Art group and Bowling will open up again in October.

Election of Officers:

Chair – Angela Dobson. Proposed by Judy Goodland, Seconded by Kath Edwards, carried unanimously.

Vice Chair – Kath Edwards. Proposed by Judy Goodland, Seconded by Angela Dobson, carried unanimously.
Treasurer – Jenny Waldron. Proposed by Peter Windsor, Seconded by Matthew Dobson, carried unanimously.
Secretary – Helen Todd. Proposed by Jenny Waldron, Seconded by Tom Smith, carried unanimously.

At this point, Judy handed over the chairmanship of the meeting to Angela.

Amendment of the Constitution – The current constitution states that the management committee can only co-opt up to 3 people onto the committee. Now that the village is bigger, we would like to be able to encourage and co-opt more people on to the committee, who will be able to help us in a specific way -ie help with researching the installation of solar panels, fundraising etc. The management committee would like the number of co-opted members increased to 6. This was proposed by Tom Smith, seconded by Peter Windsor and carried unanimously.

Reports from User Groups:

Art Club – managed 4 meetings in October before lockdown struck again. They are hoping to start again in October, as usual, but probably with smaller numbers.

The Exchange – the last Exchange was in March 2020. Plans are afoot for it to start up again on Wednesday 1st September, with a lunch on the 1st Wednesday of the month and tea and coffee on the 3rd Wednesday of the month. Geraldine asked about keys for the Hall; Kath replied that she was in the process of issuing keys to Users again, but following ACT advice, the committee were being cautious.

Pantomime – the panto is written and ready to go. All being well, rehearsals will start on Friday 1st October, and continue until the performances on the last weekend of January.

WI – has started back already, with their usual monthly evening meeting and an afternoon tea and chat.

Playgroup – started back in April, just one day a week with the numbers capped at 15. They haven't used the kitchen area at all, and only 2 people have been putting the toys/equipment back into the Wilson Store. They have now finished for the summer, but hope to return to Tuesdays and Thursdays when they return in September. Katie asked whether playgroup would be able to use the kitchen again when they returned, to which the answer was yes.

Mini-Movers – is still in abeyance, with no plans to re-open at the moment.

Yoga – has started back already.

Indoor Bowls – There is not much to report from the last 12 months. We had been pleased to welcome some new members prior to lockdown, including 2 junior members. We are hoping they will all return when we restart. Previously our numbers had been steadily reducing as people retired or left. Most of our members are pensioners. The juniors play for the first half of the evening, leaving after the tea break. We are looking forward to being able to meet up and bowl again in October.

Landowners – are keen to come back into the Hall, though only use it very occasionally. They offered their support to the committee.

First Responders – unfortunately, the training regime has now changed, and trainings are now held in Windermere.

Any Other Business:

Three people put themselves forward to be co-opted onto the committee, these are Howard Lawton, Hayley Mason and Tom Smith. These were all proposed by Angela Dobson, seconded by John Holmes and carried unanimously.

Jenny suggested that we have an Open Morning in the Hall and invite all User Groups to attend to 'advertise' their group and hopefully get some more members. We would also use this opportunity to show the new members of the community what the Hall has to offer – and to ask the community what else they would like to see the hall used for.

Tom Smith offered a vote of thanks Judy for all her hard work during her time as Chair of the Hall committee, to which everyone at the meeting agreed.

Next Meeting: The next management committee meeting will be on Tuesday 17th August.

The meeting closed at 7.45pm