

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF HAGLEY COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

held on Friday 15th January 2021 via Zoom.

(DRAFT)

1. **Welcome.** The Chairman Roger Seabury opened the meeting at 7.30 pm and thanked those present for attending. Due to the Coronavirus pandemic this year's meeting could not take place at the Community Centre so it was conducted online via Zoom.
2. **Apologies** Nichola Ralph (Hagley Primary School), Mark Collins (MC Paws), Nichola Trigg (HCA)..
3. **Approval of Minutes 2019.** The Minutes of 10 January 2020 (for year 2019) were distributed on email before the meeting. Approval of the minutes was proposed by D. Santus and seconded by R. Porter.
4. **Treasurer's Report** (Alan Hess). The Annual Accounts for 2019/20 were presented to the meeting.

The financial statements show a surplus for the period of £9,248, compared with a surplus of £9,494 in 2019.

Prior to lockdown the centre was well-used and everything was running smoothly but the legal requirement to close due to Coronavirus has had a significant impact. We are confident however that hirers will return as soon as restrictions are lifted, and that the new-look Village News will continue to flourish.

The running costs continue to be well controlled. Maintenance costs are difficult to keep modest due to the age of the building. However, the Committee deems it important to keep the facility in good repair to sustain high levels of usage by the local community and user groups. The Association's financial position is secure despite recent difficulties due to the pandemic and we look forward to a return to normality.

The rebuild fundraising project continues under review. A planning application has been submitted to Bromsgrove District Council for the refurbishment and it is the Committee's intention to accelerate fund raising efforts in the New Year.

An additional grant of £3,870 was received in the year from Co-Op Community Fund, and added to the New-Build Plan restricted fund.

Reserves policy

The Association needs a reasonable level of reserves so that the fabric of the community centre building can be maintained to a high standard and that to ensure that funds are available to cover urgent repairs as they arise. Surplus cash resources are neither substantial nor available for long-term investment and therefore a bank deposit account is deemed an appropriate investment.

5. **Approval of Accounts to 31 March 2020.** Approval was proposed by Sue Corlett and seconded by Ray Porter.
6. **Section Reports**
 - a. **Bookings and Lettings** (Nick Templar). Bookings and invoicing for bookings at The Community Centre have been handled by the website hagleyvillage.org since the beginning of the year. There is no payment gateway on the site yet.

In March at the beginning of the first lock-down both site registration and site bookings were closed to users and will not be reinstated until we move into Tier One or Zero. Bookings have been restricted to regular users following a COVID-19 risk assessment of the centre in August and since then users have been restricted to those that can legally use the centre,

namely, sport to an under eighteen audience and voluntary work connected with aid distribution, as tiers dictated.

Booking invoices totalled £7,317 in 2020 (they were £26,896 in 2019). Cancelled bookings on the website totalled £19434 in 2020, this does not include some block bookings removed directly from the database. Booking rates have been increased by £3 a session to cover additional COVID-19 cleaning at the centre.

In an effort to increase income we have invited regular users to hire the centre at weekends at a weekday rate, if they are able to do so safely and until we are back in Tier Zero, but we haven't yet received any uptake of this offer.

- b. **Affiliation.** (Annette Templar): 36 affiliated groups renewed for 2020-21 which is very encouraging as for most of the year they have been unable to take advantage of two of the main benefits of affiliation as the centre has been closed and production of the printed version of the Village News has been severely disrupted.

Sadly several long-standing groups have disbanded during the year, including Hagley Playgroup run by Sharon Gould, which has been a feature of village life and enjoyed by Hagley children over many years. The list nevertheless reflects the wide variety of activities provided by local groups and the committee is grateful for their continuing support as affiliates.

- c. **Village News** (Alison Akers, editor). . Since the last AGM in Jan 2020 we continued as normal until the April edition which was produced just before Lockdown 1 (at the end of March 2020). Unfortunately it wasn't possible to collect or distribute the April printed edition so we stopped production of the hard copy until Sept 2020. The online edition was shared amongst the local Facebook groups and now has its own public Facebook page with over 750 members.

In Sept we decided to relook at the costs of producing the HVN and had a quote from the existing graphic designer and printer as well as quotes from 2 different companies. It was decided to change to a new team from the Dec 2020 issue which has resulted in a more themed and modernised Village news, all in colour, for a better price! This has been well received amongst the village as well as advertisers who now have the option for colour adverts for no extra charge.

We will continue to produce a hard copy and distribute to over 3000 households in Hagley whilst it is safe to do so.

Advertising (Erica Sprason). A number of established advertisers have decided not to renew due to the effects of Covid, and some felt it is no longer cost-effective following the recent price increase, the first for some years. A number of new advertisers have come on board and have no complaints about costs. I will be promoting the opportunity to advertise in the VN to local businesses.

Distributor's report (David Trewin) There was a gap in distribution from April to September as noted in Alison's report. The distributors were pleased to resume deliveries in September as it was a sign of a return to normality. Production and distribution has continued without interruption throughout the current period of lock down. As ever more volunteers are welcome to help with distribution. It takes 2 days to separate the 3,000 copies into bundles for each delivery, but the new printer is producing copies earlier which makes it easier to get them distributed near the beginning of the month.

Sue Merrill (Chairman, Hagley Art Club) offered to distribute copies to members of her group. David will discuss this with Alison and get back to Sue.

Ray Porter said he had heard that the new style edition was a lot heavier than the previous version. David and Alison acknowledged that they were aware of this as it is better quality paper. They are looking at it, particularly as there are currently fewer pages than usual and they are likely to increase as life returns to normal.

- 7. Chairman's Report.** (Roger Seabury) There is very little to report this year due to the prolonged closure of the centre. Although we have only a small committee the members succeed in getting everything done to keep things running smoothly. We have 3 new members: Nick Templar (bookings); Alan Hess (treasurer); Erica Sprason (Village News advertising manager). The building is maintained by Neville Smart who gives up many hours of his time to ensure that it is kept in a good state of repair. Thanks are due to Neville who has used the closure as an opportunity to arrange for numerous essential repairs to be carried out. Although maintenance is not usually an AGM agenda item I am calling on Neville to give a report of work completed during closure.

(Neville Smart.) I will do my best at short notice, apologies if my report is disjointed. The question of redecoration was raised at the previous AGM. We have partially redecorated the main hall to improve its appearance and have had the stage curtains cleaned and treated with a fire retardant. We have delayed work on other parts of the building which are likely to be affected by the refurbishment.

Blocked drainage soakaways and gulleys have been cleared and repaired.

A Risk Assessment was carried out to identify measures required to ensure the centre was Covid-safe. Hand sanitisers were installed, and posters and directional signage were displayed. An enhanced regime of daily cleaning was implemented (suspended during lockdown) which incurred additional costs.

A coded digital lock has been fitted to the side door from the car park. This is in place so access can be controlled but work on the electronics to facilitate an audit trail is ongoing but is nearing completion.

Leaks have been dealt with and trees cut back to avoid potential damage to the building. The garages owned by Theatre Group at the back of the building require attention. Theatre Group have acknowledged this and we await their response on how they intend to proceed.

Doors to the external store have been replaced and work has been done on doors to the space under the stage.

Ray Porter is an electronics engineer and offered to help with the digital lock. Nick will contact him.

Mita Barnes (WI): Has anything been done about the issue with the window curtains in the hall which was raised by Megan Bury at the previous AGM? Neville: the hems have been repaired but one curtain requires further attention to ensure that it closes properly. I will attend to this as soon as I can.

8. Election of Honorary Officers

- a) President: Vacant.
- b) Chairman: Roger Seabury
- c) Treasurer: Alan Hess
- d) Secretary: Annette Templar

A vote for the re-election of Officers b) and d) was proposed by Ray Porter and seconded by Neville Smart.

A vote for the election of Alan Hess as Treasurer was proposed by Ray Porter and seconded by David Trewin.

- e) Other officers who with the above will form the Executive Committee:
 - i. Minutes Secretary: Annette Templar
 - ii. Bookings Officer: Nick Templar
 - iii. Affiliations Officer: Annette Templar
 - iv. Maintenance : Neville Smart
 - v. Village News editor: Alison Akers

A vote for the re-election of officers i, iii, iv and v was proposed by Erica Sprason and seconded by Dave Santus.

A vote for the election of Nick Templar as Bookings Officer was proposed by Sue Corlett and seconded by Neville Smart.

- f) Additional committee members.
 - i. Advertising Officer: Erica Sprason
 - ii. Village News distributor: David Trewin
 - iii. Sue Corlett

A block vote for the re-election of officers ii and iii was proposed by Ray Porter and seconded by Alan Hess.

A vote for the election of Erica Sprason as advertising Officer was proposed by David Trewin and seconded by Sue Corlett.

- 9. Appointment of Auditors/Independent Accountants.** The committee is intent on reducing costs wherever possible and as it now has access to an independent examiner it proposes to engage them to audit its annual accounts for 2020-2021. There will be no fees involved and legal obligations will be met.

This was approved by Ray Porter and seconded by Neville Smart.

- 10. Appointment of Trustees of the lease of Hagley Community Centre.** Continuation of Jim Austin and Robin Hemming was proposed by Alan Hess and seconded by David Trewin.

11. Any Other Business.

Nichola Trigg. Roger announced that Nichola has resigned from the committee after 22 years' service in a number of roles including bookings officer, Village News editor and treasurer for many years. She has been, and continues to be, a tremendous asset to the Association and will be much missed. Although she has formally resigned and is unable to attend this meeting due to other work commitments, she continues to work in the interests of the Association e.g. by passing on information about grants and funding opportunities. Roger proposed a sincere vote of thanks for all Nichola's hard work, which was seconded by all those present.

Roger invited Steve Colella to talk about **recent developments in policing for Hagley.**

(Steve Colella). It was announced this week that central government money will be given to local policing teams (West Mercia will receive approx.£500k) to combat crime such as burglary, car theft and ASB. It will be used to fund additional beat officers and upgrade and extend the CCTV surveillance infrastructure which now sits on a digital platform and is therefore more effective. A new camera has recently been installed at the Church Street access to the playing fields. Local people are now reporting incidents more consistently which give the police a greater chance of combatting crime, and have used opportunities to raise police awareness of local priorities.

Community Centre Refurbishment (David Trewin). Discussions on this subject have been ongoing for a number of years. A plan was presented and discussed at the previous AGM and was accepted by those present subject to minor alterations. Consultation has continued with interested parties during the past year, with some difficulty due to the Covid situation, and the resulting comments have influenced the final design.

The committee agreed that a suitable stage had been reached for the plans to be progressed and they were recently submitted for approval via the Planning Portal. These will be made available for public consultation in the Village News and on the hagleyvillage.org website. During the planning process comments can be made to the planning authority. Due to the current situation the process is taking much longer than usual and there is some delay between submission and the appearance of the plans on the council website.

The proposal is for a hybrid project retaining and refurbishing the main hall while extending the doorway at the side facing the car park so that it becomes the main entrance and the doors facing the playing field become the secondary entrance. The new design will make the centre more flexible and potentially available concurrently to a number of hirers.

We will require additional funding to build to the plans and are appealing for volunteers to help us raise more money.

Trustees Ray Porter queried if 2 trustees was enough. Annette clarified that Jim Austin and Robin Hemming were trustees of the lease and that she, Roger and Alan were listed as trustees of the Association on the Charities Commission website. In law all committee members are regarded as having trustee responsibilities. Ray asked if 2 trustees for the lease were enough. Steve Evans confirmed that legally 2 trustees is sufficient, but it may be advisable to have more. This will be reviewed at the next HCA committee meeting.

Car parking Steve Evans said he had been asked many times if people were allowed to use the Community Centre car park if the main shoppers' car park is full. Roger said hirers complain if they can't get on the Community Centre car park so strictly speaking it should be reserved for visitors to the centre. This isn't an issue while the centre remains closed but people should avoid parking there when it reopens

12. Close. Roger thanked everyone for attending and the meeting closed at 8.36 pm.