The meeting was chaired by the Committee Chairman Martyn Robinson.

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Claire Stratton, Martin Sandercombe, Margaret Sandercombe, Liz Newton, Mike Newton, Stephanie Ledger and Judy Veness.

14 people were present.

1. Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the 2021 AGM had been posted on the village website and a link circulated to the village email list and in advance. There were no matters arising. The minutes were approved unanimously by the meeting.

1. Appointment of Committee

**New Committee**

The following were appointed unopposed to the committee for the coming year, proposed by June Watkins and seconded by Jenny Morisetti:

* Martyn Robinson (Chairman)
* Colin Tully (Vice-Chairman)
* Tim Ledger (Treasurer)
* Steve Veness (Secretary)
* Sarah Marks (Booking Secretary)
* June Watkins
* Martin Sandercombe (co-opted)
* Elspeth Scott (representative appointed by the PCC)

1. Treasurer's Report

Tony Crocker presented the Treasurer’s report for 2021/22 financial year:

* + During the 2021/22 financial year all of our income arose from Covid grants.
  + We were also fortunate to receive notification of a generous bequest of £5,000 from the estate of the late Gordon Ralph, who was a major supporter of the hall over many years. The money was received in April, so will appear in the 2022/23 accounts.
  + The hall re-opened to bookings during the autumn but due to a ‘re-start’ grant from Dorset Council the committee decided to offer free hire for local users to encourage use of the hall once again.
  + That had been successful, with a large number of bookings but, of course, no income.
  + In conclusion, at the time of the AGM the hall has circa £2,500 in the current account and £13,500 in savings.
  + The outgoing Treasurer made the point that in future years, with sharply rising energy costs we would face an unsustainable financial situation without significant fund-raising or other alternative income.

Acceptance of the financial report was proposed by the Treasurer, seconded by Tim Ledger, and approved by the meeting unanimously.

1. Chairman’s Report

The Chairman provided the following report:

The hall had been successfully re-opened for hire in the autumn following a long period of closure due to Covid, during which time the opportunity had been taken to undertake a large number of repairs and improvements to the hall.

The Chairman noted that there were so many people who helped keep the hall running that it was not possible to thank everyone individually but he did wish to mention the Booking Secretary, Sarah Marks, for her excellent work managing the bookings and hall cleaning rota and dealing with hirer queries.

During the past few years, partly in order to deal with the restrictions in respect of Covid, financial decisions have tended to be taken by a subset of the committee comprising: the Chair, Treasurer, Secretary and Vice-Chair. This has been effective in ensuring decisions have not been held up whilst receiving appropriate support. However, it seemed appropriate to formally agree such an approach for the future. The Chairman therefore proposed that:

*“Items of expenditure of up to £2,000 and including can be approved with the unanimous agreement of the Chairman, Vice-Chair, Treasurer and Secretary. Items above £2,000, or which cannot be unanimously agreed by this group, should be presented to the full Committee for a majority decision.”*

The proposal was seconded by Tony Crocker and unanimously approved by the meeting.

1. Winter Heating

The Chairman raised the issue of the hall heating costs, which are unsustainable given the level of hall bookings and recent increases in electricity rates. A number of options present themselves:

1. We could keep the storage heaters switched-off as we did through Covid, rely on hirers using the overhead heaters, and monitor to see if using the hall increases damp levels compared with the winter when the hall was unused.
2. We could close the hall for three months in the winter, although this would risk losing regular bookers.
3. We could investigate alternative forms of heating, potentially including heating that could be switched on remotely ahead of the hall being used.
4. We could investigate what grants are available, for example for greener forms of heating or for insulation.

It was agreed that a sub-committee would be formed to investigate the issue further and report back with recommendations to the full Committee. Jenny Morisetti, local Sustainability Champion, offered to join the sub-committee, which was gratefully accepted.

There was general agreement that fresh approaches are required and that the existing approach is neither good for the environment nor financially sustainable.

June Watkins offered to see whether any grants might be available from the Parish or Dorset Council to help with fuel costs.

1. Any Other Business
2. **Jubilee commemoration.** June Watkins asked whether the £200 Jubilee grant had been fully spent, and whether the proposed commemorative cherry trees were being progressed. Tim Ledger answered that some of the money had been spent on the village Jubilee party but some still remained for trees to be planted. He proposed investigating whether a tree could be planted either side of the road at the Todber approach to the village. This might then be extended for future national events over time to create a small avenue of commemorative trees. The idea was unanimously supported and will be pursued by the Committee.
3. **Crockery.** Sarah Marks raised the question of crockery levels in the Hall, which have gradually reduced over the years due to breakages. It was agreed we should replenish stocks back to 80 complete sets of crockery. June Watkins can get a discount from Nesbits, where the current crockery came from, and has a copy of their catalogue. Sarah and June will liaise to arrange the necessary replenishments. Tim Ledger confirmed there are currently sufficient glasses.
4. **Future events.** Sarah Panton noted she is planning two village fund-raising events: **Quiz night 15th October 2022** and **Open Gardens 28-29th May 2023**. The meeting thanked her for organizing those events.
5. **Marquee.** There was some discussion about the potential need to purchase a new marquee for use in supporting village hall events, since the one previously lent by June has now gone to the school. Jenny Morisetti kindly offered the free use of a marquee she owns which was gratefully accepted by the meeting.
6. **Old furniture stored at Venetia’s barn.** June Watkins asked what was happening with this old village hall furniture which is now unserviceable. The Chairman noted that an offer for villagers to take any furniture they wanted had met with a limited response. June asked if we wanted her to arrange for the unwanted wooden furniture to be burnt on a bonfire, which the meeting agreed to.
7. **Sound levels in the hall.** Jenny Morisetti asked whether anything could be done about the poor acoustics in the hall. The Chairman said this was a topic that had exercised the Committee for some time but, without engaging expensive acoustics consultants, it was not clear what could be reasonably done. Colin Tully noted that his son’s neighbour may be suitably qualified to advise – he will aim to have an informal conversation to see if the neighbour could suggest any options.

The meeting ended at 19:50pm.