THE MERRY BELLS MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING
ON THE 25TH JULY 2024
HELD IN THE ANNEXE

Present:	Mr T. Blightman	Mr. J. Morrison
	Mr. Ian Germain	Mrs. F. Fox
	Dr. J. Guy	Mrs. L. Tully
	Mr. I. McGregor	

1. **Apologies for Absence**
   Mrs. J. Slade

2. **Agree the Minutes of the Last Meeting**
   The Minutes were agreed as a true record.

3. **Matters Arising from the Minutes**
   A new laptop for the office has been purchased and is up and running. A dedicated mobile phone for The Merry Bells has been set up (the number is 07427 343080) and should now be the main point of contact for hirers and others. While we still have a landline all calls to it will be forwarded to the mobile which can be shared around among the Trustees.

4. **Treasurer's Report**

   The June Report is particularly important because it provides a half-year indication of how we are doing and an indication of the areas to improve and perhaps focus on. So looking at June first before the Year-to-Date (YTD), we see that although the monthly Income is good it is due to a high monthly Rent Income of £3,768, with the lowest monthly Hirings income YTD of £690. However, as discussed at the Meeting the Hirings revenue for July is exceptionally good, with some of the Income being from late invoicing from June. Hirings Income for July is currently standing at over £2,000, although there are also higher than usual Expenses in July, so it may even out. The month's healthy surplus of £3,080 is due to exceptionally low Expenses and £0 spent on Overheads and Exceptionals. June's Expenses were the lowest YTD of only £293. This was due to paying two Cleaning Invoices in May, which included April and May both being paid in the previous month and discussed at the last Meeting.

   This means that the loss recorded in May has evened itself with the June Accounts resulting in a half-year surplus of £7,178 that can be compared with £4,045 in 2023. This can be compared, as follows:
   Income Jan - June 2023, £19,400 against Income Jan - June 2024, £22,890 equals +£3,490
   Expenses Jan - June 2023, £15,355 against Expenses Jan - June 2024, £15,712 equals +£357

Therefore in summary Expenses are virtually the same YTD, with the increase in Income of £3,490 mainly accounting for the increase of Surplus of £3,133.
It is worth noting that the increase in Repairs Expenses of £888 from 2023 to £2,466 in 2024 is cancelled by Exceptional Repairs and Renewals of £1,440 in 2023 to £0 in 2024 YTD, although we have agreed that there will be some Exceptional Repairs and Renewals Expenditure to come in the second half of the year.
However, with a YTD Surplus of £7,178 for the first six months, we are on target for a repeat of the Surplus of £14,000 in 2023.

5. **Maintenance Report**

We are still waiting for the steps and slates to be done.
Sensor lights in all the corridors have been installed and can be adjusted both for level of light before coming on and length of time before switching off, if required.
The electrician has also ordered parts to repair flashing lights in the Main Hall.
TB has contacted Oxford AV to set up a meeting re the sound system.
New, smaller tables, have been purchased and are stored in the annexe.
A few potholes in the car park need attention before winter.
The outside noticeboard is becoming a bit dilapidated and it was agreed to buy a new one.
There was some discussion about the uncertainty of whether planning permission would be required to install a new barrier and it was decided the safest course of action would be to apply for it, to prevent any subsequent comeback from residents.
The Parish Clerk had pointed out that the roots of a tree on the forecourt were beginning to push up the pavement; as the pavement is the County Council's responsibility, we will wait to see if they ask us to do anything about it.

6. **Correspondence**

There were 2 notes from the Halls Advisory arm of Community First Oxfordshire.
The first was to do with Fire Risk Assessments, which under new rules needs to be available for inspection on the premises and also Trustees and "regular users should have a good understanding and working knowledge of the FRA". It was agreed we would display a copy both physically and on the website, having checked we are implementing all the recommendations from our recent assessment (which we will need to review annually)
The second note was to do with the Terrorism Bill (also called Martyn's Law) which was in the recent King's Speech. It was suggested halls write to their MP to register concerns about the requirements of the bill, using the guidance from ACRE. It was agreed to write to our new MP on the matter.

7. **Bookings Update**

As noted above, although monthly income from hirings was low in June, this was a function of timing of invoicing as bookings in June and July were significantly higher than the previous year.

8. **Monthly Calendar – Including Lease Renewals**
   Discussion with OCC about the Library lease has continued and we have clarified our proposal that the 5-yearly rent review will be a maximum of the cumulative rise in CPI over the 5 years.
   Office 4 lease is due for renewal after its first year and it was agreed to renew at the current level.
   BT contract expires soon and needs to be renewed.
   The new energy contracts begin on 1st October.
   The car park has not been closed this year but it was decided to leave it until the barrier has to be installed.
   Insurance cover has been renewed with a different supplier.

9. **Car Park**
   TB presented some of the main findings from the recent car park survey, conducted as a benchmark before the implementation of new parking restrictions elsewhere in the village. It will be repeated after that happens. Occupancy of spaces averaged 59% higher than at the last survey in 2022 but below pre-pandemic levels. As has been found on previous surveys a small number of cars account for a high proportion of use, with some cars left in the same position for days; it also appears at least a dozen cars are regularly left overnight, presumed to belong to nearby residents.
   It is believed the tenants of the flats above the Post Office are some of the culprits and TB will contact the landlord to tell them they are not supposed to leave cars more than 2 hours.
   It was also agreed that St Mary's Church be contacted to remind them of the same conditions now that they are starting to advertise their new facilities.
   TB had responded to a Planning Application from the Post Office pointing out it incorrectly stated that the Car Park was a Public car park and the alleyway was a public footpath.

10. **Any Other Business**
    We still need to obtain another "No Dogs" sign to be visible when the internal doors are left open.

11. **Date of the Next Meeting**
    We will revert to the usual timing of the first Thursday in the month from September onwards and so the next meeting will be on Thursday 5th September at 5.00pm in the Coffee Room.