

**THE MERRY BELLS MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING
ON THE 5TH DECEMBER 2024
HELD IN THE COFFEE ROOM**

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

1. Apologies for Absence

Mrs L Tully

2. Agree the Minutes of the Last Meeting

The Minutes were agreed as a true record

3. Matters Arising from the Minutes

There were no matters arising.

4. Treasurers Report

A disappointing month, with a loss of £696, mainly due to a Hirings income of £803 against a monthly average of £1,150 for Year-to-Date (YTD) and a £1,000 higher than average Expenses due to Utilities of £444 and Repairs of £948 due to repairs to the Library roof. It was noted that the first gas bill on the new tariff had been received and is, as expected, significantly higher.

The result was a Gross Profit of £67, which after Overheads and Exceptional Expenses of £368 meant a loss of £301 and after an allowance for Depreciation of £395 delivered the loss of £696.

This has meant that the Surplus YTD has reduced to £13,327 compared with £14,201 for 2023. Therefore, comparing 2024 with 2023, although Total Income has increased from £41,497 (2023) to £45,102 (2024) the Total Expenditure has increased from £27,296 (2023) to £31,775 (2024).

However, the forecast for December is good, with an expected Hirings Income of c.£2,500, which should deliver a Forecast Surplus of c.£14,000 for 2024.

This led to a discussion about a predicted Bank Balance of £128,000 and how much to keep in 'reserve', with the balance being invested in future improvements and agreeing a list of 'priorities', with a total of c.£50,000 to spend if we maintain two year's worth of expected Total Expenditure of approx. £40,000 p.a.

This would still put us 'well over' the recommended Reserves from the Charity Commission, which meant that a Bank Balance of £60,000 to £80,000 should suffice and be acceptable.

Priority is to be given to essential repairs including possible subsidence in the alley, rotten window frame, replacement fire doors, damp issues and re-decoration.

Future improvements over and above essential repairs and routine maintenance include a battery to store pv generated electricity, a new kitchen, a new screen for the av facilities, insulation in the roof, car park management.

Costings and benefits for each of these to be drawn up as soon as possible.

5. Maintenance Report

TB has been in touch with the Damp Rot Company who are aware of the situation and will come when they are less busy. This also applies to Taylors regarding the subsidence.

TB has also been in touch with Gormans but a meeting is still to be arranged.

All the lights, where necessary, have been replaced and spare bulbs obtained.

One Car Park Management company has proposed an ANPR camera on a post by the Library focussed on the entrance. They would want a Management fee of £150 per week - £7,500 per year, although it might be reduced after 6 months, depending on the level of fines. Another company suggested a camera on the wall of the building, but still awaiting cost proposals

The A.V. System – Amplifier should be fine as its only 2 years old. The problem is that there are too many buttons and controls. Not necessary to go ahead with a new one at present. A new Wide Screen mounted in the bay window would be beneficial. This would enable a Film Club in the Merry Bells. **TB** to obtain quotes for screen, fixing it and moving the projector.

It is necessary to replace the Fire Doors in the Main Hall. 2 quotes had been obtained, the one from Admiral Doors for £2,705 plus VAT was agreed.

From quotes received it was agreed Sherwood Kitchen Company was preferred. It was agreed we should include a taller fridge. **TB** to check if there is an impact on cost. A different supplier will be needed to replace the shutter. Quotes to be obtained before giving the go-ahead on the kitchen.

Further discussions required on the subject of buying a battery to store electricity from the pv panels. **JG ImG TB**

TB reported the printer in the office was starting to play up and may need to be replaced.

6. Correspondence

The cleaners had written to say there would be another price increase from £20.50 per hour to £23.00 per hour

7. Bookings Update

Bookings continue to look good. Age UK have booked a weekly class for older people (they are aware we already have 2 similar classes running)

8. Monthly Calendar

OCC have been chased for progress on the renewal of the Library lease

9. Any Other Business

None

10. Date of Next Meeting

As the first Thursday of January falls on the 2nd of the month, just after the holidays, it was decided to delay to a little later in the month, which would also give time for the first look at the year end accounts.

It was decided to hold it on **Tuesday 14th January** at 5pm in the Coffee Room