

THE MERRY BELLS TRUSTEES MEETING THURSDAY 6th NOVEMBER 2025

5.00 pm in the Coffee Room

Attending: Tim Blightman
Ian Germain
Richard Barrett
Julia Slade
Fay Fox
Adrian Coates
John Morrison
Caroline Sherriff

1. Apologies for Absence: John Guy

The Chairman welcomed Caroline Sherriff as the new representative for the Wheatley Society

2. To agree Minutes of the previous Meeting held on 2nd October 2025:

These were agreed as a true record

3. Matters arising from those Minutes:

Discussion about the introduction of the new Car Park enforcement, which had been badly implemented by UKCPM, resulting in warning letters and fines issued to everyone parking, including those parked within the permitted two hours. This had caused a great deal of upset in the village, resulting in two further emergency Extraordinary Meetings being called, as follows:

4. To agree Minutes of the emergency Extraordinary Meeting held on 20th/24th October 2025:

It was agreed that the two Meetings would be considered as one complete Meeting due to an intervention on Tuesday 21st October by UKCPM accepting full responsibility for their errors, with the assurance that apologies would be issued, all personal data records be deleted and reimbursement of any fines incorrectly issued and paid. Full minutes are available separately.

5. Changes to Trustees:

Caroline Sherriff has joined the Trustees and representatives, as the representative for the Wheatley Society replacing John Morrison, who remains a member moving to represent the Wheatley Gardening Club.

Tim Blightman (TB) tendered his resignation as Chairman and as a Trustee. This was reluctantly accepted at the meeting. It was agreed by all that the resignation would take place at the end of the meeting, allowing TB to continue chairing the meeting.

Julia Slade also tendered her resignation which was also reluctantly accepted. It was agreed that this resignation would take place at the end of the month to allow a handover of responsibilities.

It was announced that John Guy has resigned as a Trustee due to personal reasons.

Toby Newman was proposed as a new Trustee in his absence and was unanimously accepted as a co-opted Trustee. Discussions are ongoing regarding getting a representative of the Scout and Guides as a Trustee.

6. Treasurers Report

October was an encouraging month with a Total Income of £9,135. Although much of this was due to Quarterly rents being received of £7,533, the Hiring's Income of £1,602 was far higher than the previous three months, bringing the average monthly Hiring's Income to £1,101, although the average for the previous two years has been c.£1,250.

The Total Expenses of £2,293 meant a Gross Profit of £6,842 - our highest this year. Our Overheads of £2,324, which included the fitting of new fire-alarm points; checking fire extinguishers and installing CCTV meant our Net Profit is £4,518, which represents our monthly operating profit/surplus is the second highest this year. When we take into account our Depreciation of £1,107 and nothing spent on Exceptional Repairs, our Total Profit/Surplus is £3,411.

Our total Bank Balance is £92,330.05, with £26,729.02 being in our Current CAF Bank Account.

For the Year-to-Date (YTD) our Total Deficit is £13,600, which compared to a Profit/Surplus of £15,885 for 2024 means a swing of minus £29,485. This is represented by an increase of Total Income 2025 of £46,487 YTD from £42,534 YTD 2024, an increase of £3,953 but our Total Expenses have increased from £22,180, 2024 YTD to £29,950 2025 YTD.

This means that after Exceptional Repairs of £22,608 and Depreciation of £7,529 for 2025 YTD, we arrive at our Surplus YTD of minus £13,600.

However, as we have discussed many times; we agreed to invest in the property and new facilities at the end of last year with a budget of £51,515, as we felt that we had a surplus in our Current CAF Bank Account that meant we could afford to set this amount aside and still be, not only solvent but continue to have more than two years' reserves, which is more than the Charity Commission recommend.

7. Exceptional Projects:

The final storage battery is now working and the final instalment can be passed for payment.

The only outstanding work to be completed is the redecoration of the Coffee Room.

8. Maintenance Report inc. Fire Safety

The radiator repaired by Taylors is still leaking and will need a new valve fitting.

Taylor's invoice to be held until work is complete.

Churches Fire Security have fitted new Alarm Call Points but when Tim and IG were doing the testing, the first one tested was broken. Therefore, no others were tested and Churches were notified to check all Points, when carrying out the six-monthly check on Monday 10th November.

The lock needs either to be fixed or a new one fitted on the connecting door to the Parish Office.

New flooring needs to be fitted in Office 1, as it has recently been re-let to a new Tenant and the carpet needs replacing. We also need a new sign for the front door for this Tenant.

9. Car Park

Responsibility for the car park taken over by RB and IG. Good work by RB has secured an apology for the issues and assurances that no action will be taken against anyone who has received incorrect fines. UKCPM have also agreed to extend the free parking allowance to 3 hours. It was decided to avoid publishing this until the signs are in place. So it remains as two-hour parking for the time being but the official position is, 'we are currently negotiating'.

New signs are to be fitted for the Library and Identity Hair staff.

It was agreed that following feedback from some residents we should publish minutes of all Management Committee meetings as well as AGM minutes and Reports and Accounts on the Merry Bells website.

10. Correspondence

No outstanding correspondence other than two letters concerning the car park, which RB is dealing with. One letter was discussed and it was agreed that if the resident wanted to bring a case against the MB with the Charity Commission, then we would not spend time and money challenging this.

11. Bookings Update

The bookings are looking good for the rest of the year and Tim feels, we may recover our average monthly bookings revenue to that of 2024

12. Monthly Calendar

Tim has updated the Monthly Calendar to include all routine Servicing and Safety Checks that are due

13. Succession Planning

This will have to be covered at the next meeting, in terms of 'who does what', once the remaining and new Trustees are in place. In the meantime, the Trustees will manage the various activities, with TB offering to manage bookings until the end of the year; the offer was accepted.

14. Any Other Business

There was a final discussion on outgoing and incoming Trustees. It was unanimously agreed that IG would be Acting Chairman until a new Chairman could be found. IG was clear that he did not want the permanent Chairman role and would not accept it.

Date of Next Meeting - Thursday 4th December 2025 with the start-time to be notified

