

THE MERRY BELLS MANGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING

MINUTES FOR THURSDAY 4th JUNE 2026

6.00 PM IN THE MAIN HALL

AS TRUSTEES OF THE VILLAGE HALL DO WE:

- act within our powers
- act in good faith and only in the interests of the charity
- make sure we are sufficiently informed
- take account of all relevant factors
- ignore any irrelevant factors
- manage conflicts of interest
- make decisions that are within the range of decisions that a reasonable trustee body could make

Present

- Richard Barrett CHAIR (parish council representative) RB
- Ian Germain TREASURER (elected member) IG
- Fay Fox (coffee mornings and the elderly representative) FF
- John Morrison (gardening/produce association representative) JM
- Judy Barrett SECRETARY (guides and scouts representative) JB
- Caroline Sheriff BOOKING SECRETARY (Wheatley society representative) CS
- Stephanie Cox (WI representative) SC
- Michele Gregory (co-opted member) MG

Minutes recorded by: Judy Barrett (JB)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies received from Toby Newman VICE CHAIR (elected member) TN

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

TN, RB & FF are all Parish councillors and as such clients of the Merry Bells

3. SIGNING CONFIRMATION OF ELIGIBILITY FORM

TN to sign

ACTION: RB to arrange TN signature

4. TO AGREE MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING 23rd APRIL 2026

Agreed

5. FORMAL RECORDING OF CONDITIONS FOR MEETING TO BE QUORATE

(<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/charities-and-meetings-cc48/charities-and-meetings>)

Following a thorough examination of the trust deed and government advice, it was proposed that we formally agree and record a minimum number of trustees for meetings to be declared quorate. Government advice is for 1/3rd, but with 9 trustees, 3 was felt to be low, so a minimum attendance of 4 trustees for a meeting to be quorate was unanimously agreed.

ACTION: JB to log this as a trustee decision, referring to these minutes

6. MATTERS OUTSTANDING FROM THOSE MINUTES (see updated actions list overleaf)

7. ROLES / RESPONSIBILITIES ALLOCATION

There was a discussion on roles and responsibilities.

IG will be stepping down as treasurer. in September. JB offered to take on role but would need new secretary as can't do both roles.

IG doing fire alarm testing, recording tests in book in office.

ACTION: MG to take on cleaner management. RB arranging meeting

ACTION: IG to talk to TAYLORS re PAT testing.

ACTION: JB to change hall hire T&C to say must have PAT testing.

ACTION: MG to investigate battery usage. RB to try and find details for MG.

ACTION: JB to check we are insured for batteries.

ACTION: ALL to review list and see what tasks they can do

8. HALL HIRE RATES REVIEW

There was a discussion on rates review. Rates were last increased 3 years ago and with increased heating and cleaning costs, the committee agreed that rates should be increased for commercial rentals and parties. However, it was also agreed to trial a reduction in rates for Wheatley clubs/societies as this would be in line with the charity's objectives.

It was agreed that from September 2027 the main hall/coffee room rates would increase from £15/£7.50 to £17/£9 respectively and that we would trial £10 for clubs/societies and £5 for coffee-room.

ACTION: JB to add to website.

ACTION: JB to log this as a trustee decision, referring to these minutes

9. MAINTENANCE UPDATE

No new maintenance issues have been identified

10. IT UPDATE

ACTION: JB and IG to meet to talk about financial records updating

11. FINANCE UPDATE

The May figures are low, but this is skewed as not all income is in and office rentals have irregular payment patterns. A question was raised as to why office 4 rental is so much less – FF explained that it is because the office is considerably smaller.

ACTION: RB to invoice Parish Council

There was a discussion re heating costs and why they are so high.

ACTION: CS to look at invoices (IG to pass to her)

IG reported that the current accounting software is old, non-supported and time-consuming to use. When we had accounts examined, the examiner recommended that we look at basic accounting software. It was agreed that the new treasurer would look at this.

12. CAR PARK UPDATE

All 5 incorrect PCNs that were issued following the move to 3 hours have been cancelled.

RB waiting to hear re damaged kiosk.

13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- Two outside cameras now working and recording, not outside parish council.
- One client has £600 arrears due to illness. Has said she will pay going forward. RB is monitoring.
- Xmas fair – it was agreed that there will be no charge for use of the hall
- Merry Bells phone. FF will have during July/August, with CS as backup. RB will organise
- Lift proposal. RB has looked at initial costs - £13K was just for the mechanism, not the infrastructure / demolishing stairs etc. Looks like a major cost. Has discussed with

Parish Council, who raised concerns about long-term viability, maintenance and vandalism. Not a priority. Need to investigate alternatives such as replacing stairs with ramps – add to long term plans.

ACTION: JB to log this as a trustee decision, referring to these minute

- Wheatley Society have asked whether the wifi can record a talk. RB advised it cannot
- The matter of cars parked on double yellows outside Merry Bells was discussed and it was agreed that this is a matter for County Councillor
- A discussion re using the toilets was held. If the building is open, people can use the toilet, but it is in the terms and conditions of the hirers (and the insurance) that the building is not left open when no hirers are present. It is correct that hirers lock the building after use.
- FF believes she may have a potential co-opted trustee and is progressing with them
- Identity Hair have asked whether they can install air conditioning. It was agreed that they should progress this with planning / surveyors etc. It was not felt that it was something that the Merry Bells would finance, but as long as they followed necessary process the trustees would be happy for them to proceed.

ACTION: IG to talk to them.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING: THURSDAY 2nd JULY 2026 6pm Coffee Room