As trustees, we must always be mindful that our charitable objective is to ensure the functioning and availability of the village hall for inhabitants' recreational & leisure activities.

THE MERRY BELLS MANGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING 3rd September18:00 – Minutes

Present:

Richard Barrett CHAIR (parish council representative) RB
Fay Fox (coffee mornings and the elderly representative) FF
John Morrison (gardening/produce association representative) JM from 18:30
Judy Barrett SECRETARY (guides and scouts representative) JB
Michele Gregory (co-opted member) MG
Giles Darkes OBSERVER (Wheatley Society) GD

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE & CONFIRMATION THAT MEETING IS QUORATE*
   Apologies received from Caroline Sheriff (CS) - bookings secretary and Wheatley Society representative, Toby Newman (TN) – vice chair, elected member and Ian Germain (IG) – treasurer, elected member.
   At least 4 trustees were presented, so the meeting was declared quorate
2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
   FF & RB are parish councillors
3. ANY URGENT MATTERS ARISING
   None noted
4. TO AGREE MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING 2nd JULY 2026
   Agreed
5. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES REVIEW
   IG to resign as treasurer in October; JB will take over but will resign as secretary. JB needs to be added as a signatory on the bank account.
6. BOOKINGS UPDATE (JB)
   Assuming all bookings are paid for (there is some outstanding debt which JB is chasing), bookings (and income) are slightly up on this time last year. Coffee room income is down, but main hall income is up. A brief discussion was held on how we could improve coffee room bookings, including renaming it.
   ACTION ALL: Think of new name for coffee room/how to market it better
   There have been occasions when Parish Office have let people in, without knowing whether they have booked it (as they can only see the public calendar)
   ACTION: RB to email parish council clerks, asking them to to phone Merry Phone before letting anyone in if they can't verify they have it booked.
7. HEALTH AND SAFETY UPDATE (JB)
   There was a discussion on the H&S implications of people who are not hirers coming in and using the toilet when the hirers have left the door open.
   Action: RB to speak to Andy Cooper.
   Action: RB to arrange getting door closer fitted (check fire regs) along with hook so that hirers can hold door open if necessary.

*at least 4 trustees present

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ACTION: JB to update terms and conditions to shut door and check building is empty before leaving and update booking confirmation message to say this.

ACTION: RB to source sign that says toilets only for hirers.

ACTION: IG to include the fact that the Merry Bells is not a public toilet in newsletter. Can say we have reviewed our insurance and safeguarding.

ACTION: RB to investigate how to change lock codes for toilets and if can be changed and seems practical, to trial keycodes for locks.

8. PREMISES UPDATE
    - Facilities management (TN) – awaiting TN
    - Forecourt update (RB) – ongoing.
      ACTION: RB to arrange someone to put up no smoking/vaping signs.
    - Maintenance issues (All)
      ACTION: FF to see if Wayne can get spare parts to get blinds fixed
      ACTION:RB to email all exercise class teachers to see who owns mats
      ACTION:RB to buy 2 replacement first aid kits
    - Battery usage (CS/RB) – one battery is not working. CS is chasing installers.
    - Office Updates (IG – Office3; RB Office refurbs).
      RB spoke with Wheatley estates – they have 1 potential candidate.
      Laura in room 1 – Tim promised Laura new carpets and paint.
      ACTION: FF to ask Wayne for painting quotes (apple white)
      ACTION: MG to ask Simon for painting quotes (apple white)
      ACTION: MG get quotes for grey flecked carpets.
    - Safeguarding (JB)
      Safeguarding policy was agreed
      ACTION: JB to upload to website and include in booking conditions
    - Parish council door (IG)
      Parish council getting new quote.
    - Cleaning contract (MG)
      We are trialling dropping Wednesdays from the cleaning schedule.
      The cleaners have requested that their code allows permanent evening access - they have needed this 3 times in the last 5 years. This request was discussed and rejected – on the exceptional times when they need to adjust their schedules, they can phone the Merry Bells phone and we can set up a code for them there and then.
      ACTION: MG to email cleaners explaining this and ensuring they have the Merry Bells phone number (one the website)
      A discussion about other cleaning costs took place. The urinals are a constant source of smell and guidelines are that there are at minimum 2 cubicles for men for venues with a capacity up to 100.
      ACTION: RB to get quotes for removal of urinals.

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ACTION: MG to get alternative quotes for sanitary bin servicing.

- Backyard gate (JB)
  At the moment gate (which is a fire exit) opens inwards towards the courtyard, which is a fire hazard. It would be good to also get an external keypad to open this.
  ACTION: RB to get quotes
- Coffee room maintenance.
  Fay has arranged for Wayne to hang pictures next week.
  ACTION: JB to set up code for Wayne for Thurs & Friday morning next week and email to Fay
- Removal of old printer (RB)
  ACTION: RB to arrange removal

9. IT UPDATE
   - Lock fitting (JB)
     The intercom release is not yet operative for the office users. Varsity locks have quoted £700 to complete this (this would take the total cost of the lock upgrade to approx. £1300: £391 for the lock plus £222 fitting plus £700 intercom integration).
     ACTION: MG to contact Lockes and give details to JB
     ACTION: JB to contact remotelock to see if there are alternative latches that might work better
     It was agreed that £700 could be spent on this if neither of the above options are viable,
10. FINANCE UPDATE
    - Electricity costs (CS/IG) – have had a payment from British gas for solar generation buy back. Due a rebate from SSE for electricity. Caroline looking for new supplier.
    - Financial status (IG)
      ACTION: RB to circulate treasurer's report
    - Office 1 rent review (RB)
      Office 1 is due for rent review. Increase by 3.75% rounded up.
      ACTION: RB to email Office 1 with new rent effective from November
11. CAR PARK UPDATE (RB)
    Fay has changed sign back to 3 hours using sharpie.
    1 erroneous ticket for overnight ticket – has been cancelled
    Peter Ramsdale asked about car parking in Merry Bells for village but accepted that it is private property so not a village facility.
    PC are applying for planning for the storage facility.
12. ACTIONS OUTSTANDING NOT ALREADY COVERED (RB)
    Bank signatories – RB to get TN and IG to sign. FF, MG, JB, RB signed. JM signed confirmation
    ACTION: RB to get IG and TN signatures and send form off to CAF
    RB has contacted Tim O/C about tree outside

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MG gave JB details of carpenter: Josh Taylor – carpenter works for Howdens. Tel 07979 129 289

13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS (All)
    - It was agreed that MG, JB, FF and anyone else who is available will meet at 3:30pm on Monday 14th to sort through kitchen cupboards to ensure that there is enough for 100, but no more.

ACTION: JB to book hall

ACTION: MG to confirm availability for Monday 14th September 3:30-5:30pm to sort kitchen

ACTION: FF to confirm availability for Monday 14th September 3:30-5:30pm to sort kitchen

ACTION:RB to buy labeller for cupboards

- A Wheatley-wide competition culminating in an exhibition in Spring 2027 was discussed. Idea is prose/art/poem about Wheatley life / village for children and adults. Winning entries would be copied and framed to display in main hall.

ACTION: JB to put proposal together for next meeting and to take to WPC for grant

DATE OF NEXT MEETING: THURSDAY 1st OCTOBER 6pm COFFEE ROOM

*at least 4 trustees present