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THE MERRY BELLS MANGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING

MINUTES FOR THURSDAY 1st OCTOBER 2026 6.00pm in Coffee Room

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

Caroline Sheriff (Wheatley Society representative) CS

Steph Cox (WI representative) SC

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE & CONFIRMATION THAT MEETING IS QUORATE*
   Apologies were received and accepted from Ian Germain (IG) – elected member and Treasurer and Toby Newman – elected member and vice-Chair.
   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
4. TO AGREE MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING 3rd SEPTEMBER 2026
   CS commented on the finance update stating that British Gas rebate is for the solar panel energy resold. The minutes were clarified and agreed
5. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES REVIEW
   IG resigned as treasurer
   JB was nominated by FF and seconded by CS and unanimously elected as Treasurer
   JB resigned as Secretary. This position remains vacant.
6. BOOKINGS UPDATE (inc. coffee room promotion) CS/JB
   There has been good use of both rooms with 60% of bookings for regular classes and good uptake for the non-profit discount introduced on 1st September. We have a potential regular booker for the coffee room with CS following up.
   We received feedback regarding a shortage of toilet paper; this situation has been resolved.
   It has been noted that there are a lot of cancelled bookings and the following was agreed as a cancellation policy. Cancellation with less than a week's notice will be charged in full. Other cancellations will be charged at 50%. It was agreed that we should change payment to 14 days before the booking date.
   ACTION: JB update website and Hallmaster confirmation emails
   ACTION: CS change invoices

   The new name for the Coffee Room was agreed as The Meeting Room.
   ACTION: RB to order sign
   ACTION JB to update website and Hallmaster

*at least 4 trustees present

It was agreed the charge to use the kitchen should increase to £10.

ACTION: JB to update website and Hallmaster

7. HEATH AND SAFETY UPDATE (JB)

   The use of the bins in the back courtyard was discussed and it was agreed that we should have better signage explaining to hall users what to put in each of the bins and to limit hall uses to 2 bags of black bin waste, with a charge for leaving excess waste of £50.

   ACTION: JB to arrange signage and update website, Hallmaster

   Sanitary bins in the toilets were discussed with MG looking into the use of disposable bins instead of paying for them to be emptied. MG needed to know the current costs for emptying.

   ACTION: JB to get Chiltern Hygiene figures to MG.

   The baby change facility was discussed, and it was agreed that it is preferable to have this facility in a gender-neutral bathroom.

   ACTION: JB to investigate moving baby change mat into disabled toilet

8. PREMISES UPDATE

   - Door into main hall is broken

     ACTION: FF to ask Wayne to fix

   - Forecourt update (RB)

     No progress on seating. No smoking/vaping signs are in office.

     ACTION: FF to ask Wayne to put up signs

   - Battery usage (CS)

     Battery is now working but 1 not all solar panels seem to be online. The battery charges up then powers the hall during day, going back down to 9%. CS still trying to get it set up so that we can charge at night.

   - Office Updates (IG – Office3; MG/FF Office refurbs – carpets and painting)

     We have had an enquiry regarding Office 3; RB is following up. It was agreed that we should put a sign in our window advertising Office 3 for rent

     ACTION: RB to report on Office 3

     ACTION: JB to put sign up

     We have received 2 painting quotes for the offices. RB getting quote from Wheatley painters.

     ACTION: RB to get Wheatley Painter's quote

     MG is working on the carpeting quotes but needs the sizes of the offices.

     ACTION: RB to get office sizes to MG

     RB has informed Office 1 of the rent increase from 1st November. Follow up is needed about signing a new lease to tie in the tenant as part of the agreement to decorate the office

     ACTION: RB to chase up office 1 contract.

   - Cleaning update (MG)

     Cleaning is now being done 4 days a week instead of 5. No comments from hall bookers regarding cleanliness have been received. It is therefore understood that the reduced arrangement seems to be working. We have been asked by one of the hall bookers if they can quote to clean the building. RB will follow up and report back.

     ACTION: RB to contact hall booker for cleaning quote

   - Urinals removal (RB)

     FF asking Wayne for a quote. RB has asked 4 local plumbers.

*at least 4 trustees present

- Backyard gate (RB)
  In progress
- Removal of old printer (RB)
  This is ongoing. The printer has now been moved to office 3 and the Library Manager has agreed that we can take the printer out through Library.
- Tree roots and wall (RB)
  Tim O'Connor says there is little we can do about tree roots – will need to get wall rebuilt.
  ACTION: RB to discuss with Tim whether to pollard.
- Heating update (RB)
  RB has requested quote to
  replace gas heaters with radiators
  fix the TRV in the ladies' toilets
  remove the radiator in the cleaners' cupboard
  remove the radiator in the Annexe
  allow the rest of the radiators to be managed via a thermostat
- Car park maintenance (RB)
  Parish Council has agreed to weed the car park at no cost to The Merry Bells in return for them storing their goods/machinery temporarily in the kitchen yard.

9. IT UPDATE
   - Intercom access (JB)
     All fixed and working
10. FINANCE UPDATE
    - Electricity costs (CS/IG)
      Gas contract is signed through Utility Aid. Electricity contract is more complex.
      RB & CS to work together on this.
    - Financial status (IG)
      It was agreed that the hall hirer who has fallen into arrears with payment should be given the opportunity to overpay each week to bring down the amount owed.
      ACTION: JB to contact hirer
    - Replacement chairs were discussed.
      ACTION: JB should get quotes
11. CAR PARK UPDATE (RB)
    - There has been 1 incorrectly issued ticket from 11 months ago. RB is arranging cancellation
12. ART COMPETITION UPDATE (JB)
    - The paper presented by JB was accepted as an excellent idea. All trustees were given 1 further week to comment.
      ACTION: JB to send to Parish Council Chair once any comments are incorporated
13. ACTIONS OUTSTANDING NOT ALREADY COVERED (RB)
    - Register title deed (RB)
      Ongoing
    - Use of facilities by non-hirers (RB)

*at least 4 trustees present

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RB's email on the use of facilities by non-hirers was discussed and the principle was agreed. RB to adjust wording to be clearer and email the policy to all Trustee for approval at the next meeting.

ACTION: RB to create policy document and circulate

14. ANY OTHER BUSINESS (All)

Garden: CS hoping to plant drought resistant hardy perennials. Would like to involve children more. It was agreed that his was a good idea.

ACTION: CS to follow up

DATE OF NEXT MEETING: THURSDAY 5th NOVEMBER 2026 6pm COFFEE ROOM

*at least 4 trustees present