

**DEVAUDEN HALL CIO  
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING  
HOOD MEMORIAL HALL  
7.30pm July 19 2025**

**DRAFT MINUTES**

The first Annual General Meeting (AGM) of Devauden Hall charitable incorporated organisation (CIO), the charity that manages and runs Hood Memorial Hall, was attended by the five current trustees and 60 members of the local community. Its overall purpose was to enable local people to receive information about the operation of the charity during the financial year February 22, 2024 - February 21, 2025, nominate trustees and engage in open discussion about matters arising from the meeting and other issues of interest to them.

The event was led by Richard May, Chair of Trustees, who spoke to a powerpoint presentation which was also made publicly available on the Devauden Hall website. These minutes therefore form a summary of the key points of the presentation and also the ensuing open discussion.

Copies of the constitution of the CIO were made available to attendees on the night along with financial reports for Devauden Hall and its predecessor charity Hood Memorial Hall, a community survey form and a discussion paper setting out a new, suggested way of working for trustees and working groups.

The AGM was split into two parts, the first being a formal presentation of the financial accounts for 2024 - 2025, a report on significant events after the end of the financial year, an outline of the suggested new model for trustees and working groups and an introduction to the community survey. Following the break, which included free hog roast and non meat options, the second part of the meeting dealt with the nomination of trustees, feedback from attendees on the suggested operating model, open discussion and questions and answers.

Richard began his presentation by reviewing the statutory annual report to the Charity Commission (CC16a form) which demonstrated receipts at the end of the financial year of £99,346. He explained that year by year comparisons were challenging because income from Devauden Festival was spread across more than one financial year. Also, Hood Memorial Hall's financial year differed from that of Devauden Hall in that it ran from April 1 - March 31.

Reviewing the financial position of Devauden Hall since the year end Richard said that the current bank balances and cash in hand stood at £8,000. This was after an investment of £25,000 in the redevelopment of the playground, a loan to Devauden Festival of £30,000, exterior painting of the hall costing £4,090 and £6,150 for a new roof on the Ferard and Sports Rooms.

Richard picked out key achievements in the year including the receipt of a handsome £40,000 profit from Devauden Festival 2024 which enabled the significant grant to the

playground and extensive refurbishments to the hall, a successful application for a 'People and Places' National Lottery grant of £55,000, a further £9,800 'Awards for All' Lottery grant which funded the new perimeter fencing around the playground, the installation of Hive remote control for the heating system and the restoration by volunteers of the dry stone wall in Cae Ni.

Further achievements since the year end included the creation of a separate, limited company for Devauden Festival, exterior masonry painting of the hall, the installation of £84,000 of new playground equipment and a successful village fête which raised £2,000 to be split equally between the hall, Devauden Church and First Shirenewton Scouts who are the biggest hirers of the hall.

Richard then outlined the process for the election of trustees, stating his intention and that of Tessa Legg to retire as trustees at the end of the meeting. He explained that the remaining co-opted trustees would retire and be automatically re-elected under the terms of the CIO constitution. As no nominations had been received by the closing date of two weeks before the AGM, nominations and/or offers to stand from the floor could not be voted on at the AGM. Instead they would be considered for co-option by trustees at their next meeting following the AGM. The new committee would elect a Chair and other officers.

At this point in proceedings, a member of the public challenged the process stating that she was not aware that nominations had to be received two weeks prior to the AGM. She felt it was wrong that trustees rather than members of the public would decide who should become a trustee. She also asked for information on the criteria on which applicants would be judged. Some members of the public observed that the need for trustees had been repeatedly communicated by the Chair in the months leading up to the AGM. Nonetheless, Richard committed after the break to making another public call for trustees, with an unambiguous closing date, and to holding an extraordinary general meeting at which votes could take place.

Richard went on to outline his suggestion for a new way of working in which a small group of trustees made decisions about the management of the charity and the building while regular volunteers, who were not necessarily trustees, fulfilled important roles and attended meetings. These roles might include events co-ordinator, treasurer, bar manager, publicity representative and Top 60 manager. Other volunteers could form action groups to deliver specific events such as the annual bonfire, fête and children's Christmas show.

In his final slide before the break Richard listed possible topics for open discussion and questions such as the skills required to be a trustee, what events should be staged by the hall and whether it could operate a bar or a café.

Following the break, Richard explained the background to the community survey, an independent initiative put forward by Georgina Edwards and Rich Harrison, in which local people were invited to say what they wanted from the hall. Richard said that Georgina and Rich would review any comments made at the meeting and discuss them with trustees.

Richard also said that he had been reminded by a local resident of a commitment made at a public meeting in January to hold a subsequent public meeting to discuss the future plans for Devauden Festival. Richard said he would put the matter to the directors of Devauden Festival Ltd as it would be for them to decide how to respond.

Turning to the appointment of new trustees, Richard announced that he had received a total of four offers during the break from local people who wished to put their names forward. They were Liz Davies, Sandra Barker, Suzanne Chilcott and Jon Penn. In order to support any newly nominated trustees, Richard gave a commitment there and then to stay in post as Chair until Christmas. His announcement received applause and Chris Jackson, an existing trustee, personally thanked him for his decision.

Peter Gardiner then proposed a vote of thanks to Lynn May and the Playground Action Group for their hard work on the playground redevelopment.

When asked what was next on the hall's "shopping list", Richard said one option could be employing a firm of architects to examine ways in which the hall building might be enhanced. Initial plans were already on file and might be something that trustees could look at again along with any grant opportunities. Other suggestions from local residents included a pop up pub and a café. In response to popular demand, the hall toilets had been made available during the day following the opening on July 5 of the redeveloped playground.

Julia Hitchcock, an existing trustee, asked whether adult outdoor exercise equipment could be made available in the grounds of the hall. Tessa replied that she too would welcome it and trustees had indeed looked at it but it would be prohibitively expensive. Julia suggested investigating Lottery funding.

A member of the public asked whether monthly trustee meetings were necessary and could be replaced by quarterly meetings. Richard said that trustees had to attend a specified number of meetings a year or be voted off the committee. *(Note after the meeting - the constitution states that meetings can be scheduled however trustees wish and trustees can be voted off if they are absent without agreement from any meetings in a six month period).* He added that the CIO constitution allowed for online meetings but a hybrid of online and in person meetings had not proved successful. He acknowledged that the constitution could be changed.

Another member of the public, speaking on behalf of a friend not in attendance, said that an individual had put her name forward as a potential trustee at last year's AGM and she did not receive a response. Richard said a response was in fact given to the potential applicant. The member of the public also said that a vote for a smaller Devauden Festival had been passed at the January public meeting. Richard, who spoke at that meeting, confirmed that no such vote had taken place.

In other matters, Richard announced that the organisers behind last year's highly successful free village social event were planning to hold another on October 25.

Richard thanked a member of the public who pointed out that a water pipe on the boundary with Cae Ni was leaking and should be installed underground. He said he would be happy to help. Richard thanked him and committed to adding the job to the Maintenance Manager's list.

Turning to the issue of mowing the hall field and Cae Ni, Richard said a quote for Cae Ni had been received from an independent contractor. However, Monmouthshire County Council had subsequently offered to cut the grass for free as a trial run prior to quoting for the work. On first reading their quote did not appear to be competitive.

Darren Share, First Shirenewton Scout Leader, said he would like to recognise Tim Walker's contribution to the committee over the years. He also commented on the positive attitude at the AGM and urged people to put themselves forward as trustees if they felt they had a contribution to make.

Richard said that the possibility of volunteers running a pop up bar on a Friday night would depend on the hall's licence and the status of the Friday night table tennis club, at which attendance was variable.

A member of the public asked trustees to clarify ways in which local people could communicate with them. Richard said contact details were on the hall's website and people were welcome to attend trustee meetings.

Julia said Richard was doing a "fantastic job" as Chair but that trustees needed to think about finding a replacement for him when he stepped down at Christmas.

In response to a question about setting up a social committee, Richard asked those interested to email him at the hall. He added that there was an 'opt in' email group for those who would like to receive information from the hall and that it would be updated.

The business of the meeting closed at 21.45.