

## **Devauden Hall CIO Committee Meeting**

**Wednesday, July 16 2025**

### **Minutes**

The meeting was held at Hood Memorial Hall starting at 7.00pm

Present: Julia Hitchcock, Chris Jackson, Tessa Legg, Lynn May, Richard May, Lyndon Rowlands.

Apologies: Liz Davies and Geraint Davies sent their apologies.

1. The June minutes were approved.
2. There were no declarations of conflict of interest

### **3. Financial position and banking arrangements**

3.1 Richard reported that he had ordered a cheque book and all trustees were now able to sign cheques having registered with the Co-op bank. Once notified by the bank, trustees would need to complete online registration. In the meantime, Tessa would remain as a signatory in the short term even though she would no longer be a trustee after the AGM on July 19. Richard added that Tim Walker was no longer a signatory.

3.2 Richard said that virtually all the money in the Hood Memorial Hall account had now been spent as a result of the promised payment of £25,000 which was the charity's share of the cost of playground equipment.

3.3 Richard explained that the Welsh Government contract for the festival was with Hood Memorial Hall which was in existence when trustees first applied for a grant. The contract would now need to be transferred along with the final grant payment to Devauden Hall. This should take a couple of weeks. (The necessary paperwork was subsequently signed at the AGM by the trustees of both charities.)

3.4 Chris asked what would happen in relation to any future grant payments from the Welsh Government. Richard replied that a grant application could not be made until the festival accounts were finalised.

3.5 Richard reported that

Bank balances – Hood Memorial Hall £300.75/ Devauden Hall £13,105.81.

Total £13,406.56. Final Welsh Government instalment expected - £19,850.

3.6 Richard said that he would send all trustees a copy of the Delegation of Financial Authority document which Chris as Vice Chair signed at the meeting. This document sets out who is permitted to authorise expenditure. Any trustee can approve expenditure of £100. Two trustees are required for expenditure between £100 and £1,000. A majority of trustees are needed to approve expenditure of more than £1,000.

3.7 Having given notice of his intention to stand down at the AGM Richard said that like Tessa, he would remain a signatory and make online payments in the short term. Before doing so both he and Tessa would need to have written authorisation from the trustees.

#### **Action**

- Richard to send all trustees a copy of the Delegation of Financial Authority document.

#### **4. Report on playground opening and village fête**

##### **4.1 Playground**

Lynn expressed her heartfelt thanks to members of the Playground Action Group for their support and dedication over the past two years which had culminated in the opening of the redeveloped playground at the village fête on July 5. Catherine Fookes MP conducted the opening ceremony by unveiling plaques in Welsh and English. Michael Dupree, National Lottery funding advisor, presented Richard as

Chair with a specimen cheque for £64,800. This comprised a People and Places grant of £55,000 towards equipment costs and an Awards for All grant of £9,800 for the replacement of perimeter fencing.

Also in attendance at the opening were County Cllr Rachel Buckler and Chepstow Mayor Cllr Jim MacTaggart. All of the VIPs expressed delight at the community spirit evident at the fête.

Local media coverage of the event was secured by Lynn, along with pictures taken by Martin Chainey, in the South Wales Argus, the Monmouthshire Beacon and Monmouthshire Free Press. The links to the media coverage were sent by Lynn to Michael Dupree as requested for his records.

Lynn said that during the independent inspection following the completion of the playground installation, the inspector informed her of early signs of rotting wood at the base of the basket swing. This, he said, would need to be replaced in the coming months and certainly before the winter. The basket swing itself did not need to be replaced. Lynn reminded trustees that the new playground equipment was under guarantee should any fault become evident in the coming months. All documentation relating to these guarantees would be placed on the trustees' shared drive.

Lynn also reported that a condition of the Lottery grant was that the impact on the community of the redeveloped playground should be monitored and progress towards meeting the aims set out in the grant application should be recorded. These aims included enabling more children with disabilities to enjoy fun, safe and stimulating play alongside their peers and providing a balanced range of facilities to enable particularly younger children to enjoy the benefits of the playground with

friends and older siblings. Lynn said she would take responsibility for compiling the required monitoring report for the Lottery within the agreed timeframe of six months. She added that she had spoken to Darren Share, the Scout Leader, and he had agreed to her request for scouts to undertake surveys of use of the playground. Members of the Playground Action Group would also undertake user surveys. Finally, Lynn reported that the Enforcement Department at Monmouthshire County Council had confirmed that no action was to be taken following its comprehensive investigation over many weeks into complaints from a single source about the playground. The case was now closed. Lynn said that she and Richard had spent scores of hours responding to the five different county council officials who were involved in the investigation of the complaints all of which, in the event, had proved unfounded.

Rich said feedback was overwhelmingly positive from users of the playground.

Chris proposed a vote of thanks to Lynn and the Playground Action Group for the work involved in the successful completion of the redevelopment campaign.

The proposal was seconded by Richard.

### **Action**

- Hall Manager to contact Monmouthshire County Council (MCC) to carry out a RoSPA inspection of the basket swing supports with a view to establishing a timeline for their replacement.
- Richard to upload documentation regarding guarantees for the new playground equipment to the trustees' shared drive.
- Lynn to complete a monitoring report for the National Lottery within the agreed six month timescale.

## 4.2 Fête

Lynn thanked members of the Fête Action Group for their hard work and support in organising a highly enjoyable event attended by some 200 people. Having not organised a village fête before, she was extremely grateful for the experience and knowledge of those members of the group who had organised previous fêtes particularly Martin Chainey (who joined the group despite having moved away from the village some months ago), Sarah Trim and Peter Gardiner. In addition to being a delightful community event, the revenue raised was £3194.20. The net profit was £2525.64 after the deduction of expenses of £668.56 which included first aid support, printing, licences, musicians' out of pocket expenses, dog waste bins, signage and poo bags. A further £423.30 was deducted following Dave Maddocks' request to retain half of the profits from the BBQ which he and Sue donated. It was agreed by the Fête Action Group that those profits could be donated by Dave to the Neville Hall Cancer Centre. The remaining profits would be equally shared between the Hall, Church and Scouts which meant that each organisation would receive £700.78.

Lynn said that a great deal of time had been spent by herself and Richard in dealing with a neighbour's complaint to MCC about the forthcoming dog show at the fête. The complainant was concerned about the possible dangers to children from the toxocara canis parasite present in dog faeces. Richard liaised with the county council's Environmental Health officer who advised on a range of mitigation measures although he confirmed he had no jurisdiction over private land. These mitigations included providing poo bags and bins, sand for spreading over any loose

faeces that could not be picked up and placed in poo bags and a handwashing station. In addition, extensive signage was employed to remind dog owners that dogs would only be allowed on the village hall field for the duration of the fête and not at any other time of the year.

#### **Action**

- Richard to send £423.30 to Dave Maddocks for payment to Neville Hall Cancer Centre.

### **6. Hall Maintenance**

#### **5.1 Overview – report from Maintenance Manager**

Rich reported that he had seen increased usage of the playground throughout the week since its reopening . Children were accompanied by parents and/or grandparents and staying longer because there was a wider range of equipment to meet their needs.

Rich added that he was monitoring the decision to make the toilets accessible to playground users, which he said was a very positive step demonstrating to the public that the hall was open to the community. He stressed that access to the hall itself was barred by a bike lock from the inside.

Chris asked what had been done to inform people that the toilets were open. Rich replied that he had employed a temporary sign which he would replace with a more permanent, laminated one.

Rich reported that one of the picnic benches/tables had collapsed completely and that he would check the others, taking any broken ones out of commission. The wood would be reused for raised beds.

Lynn said it may be possible to apply for a National Lottery award for more picnic tables/benches.

Chris wondered whether it would be possible to apply for a grant to cover the costs of keeping the toilets open to the general public. These costs included supplies and extra cleaning.

Rich informed trustees that a huge branch from an oak tree had come down just beyond the double gates of the playground, falling slightly into the playing field. He said it was a serious risk to the safety of the general public and so he had cordoned off the area and would assess the situation before taking further action. Outside the meeting Rich was asked to photograph the broken branch in order to be able to provide evidence should it be needed.

Rich reported that the repairs to the roof of the Ferard and Sports rooms (which would cost £6,150.00) had been planned to take place before the fête. However, because completion could not be guaranteed before the event, the start date had been revised to July 28<sup>th</sup>. Trustees agreed that work should begin on that date.

Richard reported that he had received a quote for £680 for remaining work on the exterior of the hall from the contractor who carried out the external painting.

Trustees decided that it would be more cost effective for Rich to undertake the final tasks which involved sanding previously painted doors to a key and applying two coats of zinsser allcoat satin mixed in anthracite grey and sanding handrails to a key and applying two coats of zinsser allcoat satin in anthracite grey.

Rich reported that he had successfully asked workmen who were tarring roads leading into the village to tar the entrance to the carpark – in return for “a cup of coffee and a smile”!

Finally, Rich said at last meeting that he would undertake a comparison between the income received from hall bookings last year (£7,350) and costs for hall cleaning and maintenance and bookings. He said on average he and Tracy were costing £7,900 annually. He added that his ambition was to increase hall bookings in order to cover their costs.

In terms of a contract for the mowing of the hall field and Cae Ni, Richard referred trustees to a separate paper.

## **6. Report from Bookings Manager**

6.1 Rich reported that bookings had been quiet although interest had been shown by a young woman from the village was interested in booking the hall for Welsh speaking toddler sessions, which would be funded by MCC.

Some of the other bookings came from charitable organisations.

In addition, a group of people had expressed a desire to set up a bar on Friday nights. Tessa pointed out that table tennis took place on Friday evenings although Rich said they often cancelled their booking. He suggested that one option was for table tennis to alternate with a Friday night bar. Tessa agreed it would be a good option if table tennis numbers were weak and demand for a bar was strong.

Lyndon asked whether the hall's licence placed a restriction on the number of bars that could be operated each year. Richard said he would check it out.

Rich reported that he and Georgina had made a questionnaire available at the fête in a bid to learn people's views about the sort of events and activities they would like to see at the hall. He added that he and Georgina were planning to put on a paid pottery course at the end of the month with funds going to the hall.

Georgina was also keen to organise a camp out on Cae Ni for local residents who would bring their own food and tents. Rich would carry out a risk assessment.

Georgina would also like to stage wellbeing activities provided by professionals at the hall.

#### **Actions**

- Richard to check out the conditions of the licence.
- Rich to undertake a risk assessment for a camp out.

#### **6. Confirmation of future event dates**

Trustees set the following dates for 2025/26:

- bonfire night – November 5th
- fete – July 11th
- Christmas show – December 11th.

#### **5. AGM**

The meeting discussed the upcoming AGM and the constitutional arrangements governing trustee appointments.

#### **6. AOB**

There was no other business.

#### **7. Dates of future meetings**

There will be no meeting of trustees in August. Subsequent dates will be: September 12th, October 1st, November 12th. (The September date was later revised to September 9)