

DEVAUDEN HALL - TRUSTEES' MEETING
08-10-2025 @ 7pm
MINUTES

THOSE PRESENT : Richard May (chair), Lyndon Rowlands, Chris Jackson, Suzanne Chilcott, Jon Penn, Liz Davies, Julia Hitchcock, Andy Owen, Rich Harrison, Lynn May.

APOLOGIES: Geraint Rees.

1. Approval of minutes of previous meetings

The minutes were approved following an amendment by Sandra Barker to state that the coach trip to Lacock and Devizes was organised by Thursday Teas.

2. There were no declarations of conflict of interest.

3. Finance

3.1. The balance at 03/09/25 at Co-op Bank stood at £3,005.06 and Nat West (the hall's original bank account) at £2,320.82. The Nat West account was now only used for the Top 60 Club. It was agreed that former treasurer Gareth Jones should transfer monies from Nat West to Co-op bank. Lyndon was now able to release bank payments from the bank. Julia's application to do so was pending. Liz, Suzanne and John had completed applications which had been acknowledged by bank, but the bank has asked for further information which Richard will provide..

Richard said outgoings per month were in the order of £1,300 to £1,400 which exceeded receipts. However, he reassured trustees that there was no cause for concern as long as money was transferred from the Nat West account and in addition, the hall received the final Welsh Government grant for Devauden Festival of £19,850 within the next six weeks. He added that the grant was dependent on a festival report which was being finalised by the organisers. *Following the meeting, a briefing with festival organisers and trustees was scheduled for Monday, October 27.*

3.2. Top 60 club account

There were 52 subscribers paying £4 a month (a total of £208 a month) with prize money standing at £114 a month. This month's prize winners, who had been notified were, Natalie Porter, Julie Lazell and Tessa Legg.

3.3. Outside support and independent examiner

Richard said Joy Scott, the hall's independent examiner, had offered to help migrate its accounts to Xero software which offered a 25% discount to charities. The subscription ranged from £7 to £37 a month depending on requirements. Richard anticipated the hall would pay £16 a month excluding VAT. He said had sought the opinions of Halls Together

and other Xero users on the software package but had not had a response. He added that Xero, which did not require knowledge of accountancy, was very easy to use and he commended it to trustees. Liz said she would seek views from those of her contacts who were using the software. Jon said the only reason to use something different would be if a book keeper could be found which would enable the use of Quick Books or similar. Richard said the bank would require authorisation by two signatories for the use of the software. He added that he would bring the six month backlog of accounts up to date before handing them over to someone else. Jon, who also uses Xero, agreed to help him.

3.4. Book keeping

Earlier this year Chris and Richard signed a delegation of financial authority which set out who is authorised to sign cheques and make use of online banking. The meeting approved an amended document to reflect the current composition of the committee.

Liz raised a question about public transparency in relation to hall accounts. She cited as an example receipts from individual stalls at the village fête in July. Richard said a financial summary had been given to trustees at the time and the detail behind it was available to them on the shared drive to which only they had access. Lynn, who led on the organisation of the fête, said she had not realised that level of detailed information was required by stall holders. *Following the meeting, and with the agreement of trustees, Lynn made the information available to all the volunteers on the fête action group.* Following a wide ranging discussion trustees agreed that the current situation in which detailed accounts were available only to them should be maintained. They also agreed that they would decide after each public event what information should be publicised more widely.

3.5 Maintenance

Rich said very few major jobs remained to be done but one of the roofers had pointed out that the ridge needs pointing. No other major maintenance expenses were anticipated. He added that the solar panels were a potential income generator and he had asked Good Energy for a statement. Richard said it was uncertain whether the diverter for the solar panels was working and the issue needed to be resolved as income from the panels had more or less covered the cost of electricity in the past.

4. Roles and responsibilities

Richard said he was happy to continue to support the hall with poster design and publicity, if required, once he stepped down as Chair at Christmas. He would continue his efforts in the meantime to recruit more trustees, and hopefully, a Chair. He put forward a suggestion for trustees' consideration of a revolving Chair underlining the need for one person to take

overall responsibility. Andy suggested the forthcoming village social on October 25th could offer a useful forum for trustee recruitment. Suzanne said it would be helpful to have an overview of roles and responsibilities. Richard outlined the roles broadly as finance, management of events, management of the maintenance manager and cleaner and communications (flyers, website, web design).

Richard said that he would make sure trustees could access the shared drive and receive emails from their hall address as some trustees had experienced problems. Suzanne also offered her help.

5. Devauden Festival - update from drop in session September 27th

The purpose of the session was threefold; to publicise feedback from ticket buyers and a variety of other stakeholders on this year's festival, discuss lessons learned and announce future plans. Ten people attended the session, 2 of whom expressed negative views and the remainder were positive and supportive. One person said she was very sad to see the festival had moved from Devauden but having been to Penallt this year had "loved it". Next year's festival will once again be held at Humble by Nature in Penallt over the Spring bank holiday (May 22nd – 24th). Jeremy Horton, one of the directors of Devauden Festival Ltd, would apply for a music and alcohol licence.

Andy Owen asked for the position on the loan of £25,000 from the hall to the festival.

Richard said festival organisers were not in a position to repay it at the present time as the festival accounts had not yet been finalised. He emphasised that the hall owned Devauden Festival Ltd and there was absolutely no debate that money was owed by the company to the hall. He added that the festival would be run on a different basis next year explaining that in previous years, tickets had been sold through the Ticket Source website which held all monies until the day after an event began.

An email from Dave Maddocks about the festival was shared with trustees and discussed.

The contents were noted and Richard agreed to respond with the trustees' views.

A trustee asked what would happen if someone else decided to run a festival in Devauden.

Richard said that although the name Devauden Festival was not trademarked, the name was protected through use over many years.

6. Playground

Suzanne reported that her husband, Pete, had looked at the legs of the basket swing and felt that he could retrofit something to protect the legs from rot. The committee expressed their thanks to Pete and asked him to proceed.

Lynn reported that a complaint had been made by a playground neighbour to Monmouthshire County Council about the “elevated vocal noise” from children and “mechanical noise” generated by the equipment, specially the zip wire. The complaint was being investigated by the Environmental Health Officer (EHO) who requested that trustees investigate mitigations. Richard had subsequently sought professional advice from the installer of the zipwire whose opinion was that nothing could be done. The EHO put him in touch with another playground equipment installer who said he could successfully mitigate the noise from the zipwire. *Following the meeting received a quote for the mitigation measures of £2,300 for a “silent carrier” and “stopping mechanisms”.*

Trustees discussed the issue in detail and agreed that wherever possible, reasonable measures should be taken to respond to any complaints. Andy said the hall should have a clear complaints policy, a suggestion with which all trustees agreed.

Responding to previous comments by Rich that the number of bookings for children’s parties had increased since the redeveloped playground was opened, Lynn said she would like to contact hirers for the purposes of a user survey which she needed to complete as part of a report to the National Lottery. Rich agreed to approach hirers and give addresses of those who were willing to undertake the survey to Lynn, through the Chair. RH to give addresses to Chair for him to approach hirers. On the subject of the upcoming bonfire on November 5th, Richard asked Rich to take timber from the front of the hall to Cae Ni.

7. Hall maintenance

Rich suggested that once all exterior painting of the hall had been completed, a new picture should be posted on the website. He added that he was receiving very positive feedback about the hall from hirers and asked whether there was a way to capture it.

He added that a new sensor was required for the oil tank. Richard asked him to source a cost and organise a boiler service.

Rich reported that he and Lyndon had repaired the ceiling following roof repairs.

Richard said the grass needed cutting on Cae Ni and the ferns on the borders needed to be trimmed back either by a work party or Matt as part of his topping of the field. **Lyndon to**

follow up with Matt Clarke to action the mowing. Rich to put it on maintenance schedule.

Rich to charge walkie talkies and torches in time for bonfire.

Hall suggestions book - Richard said it was a great idea but it needed a feedback column.

Rich agreed to implement that.

Rich reported that the light switch outside the kitchen was now fixed.

Liz asked whether Rich had a small budget for providing small items. **It was agreed that a formal mechanism be put in place.**

Rich asked whether there was a need to set a charge for the Early Years session sponsored by the Welsh Government/Monmouthshire County Council) or whether it should be a community event sponsored by the hall. Trustees agreed that as it was not a village initiative it should incur a fee.

Rich reported that he had been approached by Doxie Events who wished to hold a Christmas craft event at the hall on November 23rd. The meeting agreed they should be charged the full commercial rate.

8. Hall cleaning

Feedback had been received about cleanliness at the hall. **Rich to follow up with Tracey and trustees to review the specification and determine whether more hours should be allotted to the task.**

9. Recent events

9.1. John Rowlands' wake on September 11th - the bar raised profits of £130 which trustees had previously agreed should be donated to Parkinson's UK, a charity very close to John's heart. In addition, the hall contributed just under £100 towards refreshments in honour of a past Chair who had contributed so much to the village.

9.2. Parkinson's charity ride – September 21st

9.3. Women's Institute - Petals, Puds and Prosecco on September 28th returned a healthy profit to the WI. Bar profits of £105.50 went to the hall.

10. Upcoming events

10.1. Village social Take 2 – October 25th

10.2. Bonfire Night November 5th - set up on Sunday November 2nd from 12pm - marquee, gazebo for entrance/ticket desk, roping off fireworks and bonfire area. Brownies' event for the weekend precludes set up on the Saturday. Clear up from the bonfire on Saturday, 8th at 10am. Commercial traders to provide food. A bubble stage will need to be set up. Gate7 band entertaining. Tickets to go on general sale on Sunday 13th. Fireworks cost £2,000. Will be set off electronically as last year. Scouts have been recruited to help. 15 - 20 volunteers needed as marshals, on the ticket desk and for car parking. Rich reported that he had received an email from the clerk of Devauden Community Council (DCC) for quieter fireworks.

10.3. Senior Citizens' lunch – December 7th, a free event for senior citizens living in the DCC area. Booking through the village shop

10.4. Children's Christmas show – December 12 (new date)

Organised by Suzanne, entertainment to be provided by Circus Berzercus. Tickets to be sent to Suzanne by Night Out scheme. 0 - 5 free, 6 - 18 £3 and adults £6, free for those on benefits. Elves to distribute presents.

10.5. 2026 Fete - July 11th, Peter Gardiner has volunteered to lead

11. National Lottery Wales Egin grants

Richard reported that the National Lottery have encouraged the hall to apply for an environmental grant:

<https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/funding/funding-programmes/sustainable-steps-wales-egin-grants>

The trustees agreed it is a worthwhile scheme - it is necessary to go through a mentoring process and Julia volunteered to lead.

12. Dates of future meetings: November 12th and in 2026, meetings will be scheduled for 2nd Wednesday in the month.

13. AOB

Andy said that the new arrangement regarding the bar staffed on a voluntary basis by himself and Paul Hickman was working well and they were now sourcing local suppliers. They would like to pursue the idea of a pop up bar event at the hall on one Friday a month (Itton Village Hall has a pop up bar twice a month). Richard reported a conversation with Dave Horton who runs the table tennis club and Nico Bee, one of the players, who have agreed to give up one Friday a month.

Lyndon proposed compliments and thanks, endorsed by trustees, to Andy and Paul for doing a terrific job in running the bar.