

# DEVAUDEN HALL - TRUSTEES' MEETING

**11-06-2025**

## **MINUTES**

**Present:** Rich Harrison, Julia Hitchcock, Chris Jackson, Tessa Legg, Richard May, Lynn May, Lyndon Rowlands, Geraint Rees.

**Apologies for absence:** Liz Davies

1. The minutes of the previous meeting were approved.
2. There were no declarations of conflicts of interest.

### **3. Trustee induction / briefing**

Richard said he would write a brief covering organisational matters such as how to run events. In terms of physical issues, he said the middle shed was currently full of creative materials from the festival which made it difficult to identify where things were. Rather than organising a group induction for trustees, Richard suggested they speak to Rich Harrison.

Chris Jackson said it would be better to wait if and until new trustees were appointed.

### **4. Financial position**

Richard outlined that the current bank balances total £59,916 in 2 accounts including money received from the Lottery to pay for fence and an instalment of the grant from Welsh Government for the festival.

Upcoming costs include the exterior painting, playground fencing and the hall's share of playground costs.

As a result, the hall will end up with bank account balances of £13,000. There shouldn't be anything else major to come. So, we are back to building up funds for future developments. Can report at AGM that we have spent funds.

Richard said that he and Tessa were currently the only two trustees with online banking access. If either one was locked out for whatever reason, it would be impossible to access funds. This was clearly not a sustainable situation.

Richard said that any payment using hall funds must be agreed by two people. He added that it was possible for a non trustee to sign payments on behalf of a trustee which was the case currently with Tim and Jeremy but they should be removed as cheques signatories as soon as possible. Chris, Lyndon and Julia needed to be added as signatories which would require them to set up online banking. After the meeting, all trustees signed the necessary forms to change signatories.

Steph Whitehead, who was a former treasurer, had yet to be removed as a cheque signatory for HMH, something that Richard said he would attend to.

## **5. Report from Maintenance Manager**

### **Overview**

- 5.1. Flat roof repair - this had been commissioned and was to be carried out in July after the exterior painting. The roof repairs were anticipated to take a week. The contractor should also be asked to investigate the two flat rooves at the front of the building as one of the painters who quoted for exterior paintwork said they required attention.
- 5.2. Exterior painting - trustees chose Plymouth Grey with a darker grey for the sills.
- 5.3. Exterior repairs - Wes had repaired the concrete at front of hall and needed to remove the shuttering.
- 5.4. Impact of festival on hall - Rich said it was necessary for the first time to run the hall as normal at the same time as the festival was being conducted offsite which meant resources had to be shared. There was a great deal of traffic in and out of the hall and it required careful management of people to ensure the hall remained effective and functioning. A great deal of work was needed after the festival to clean chairs and tables. The blow up bubble stage also required cleaning and folding which was not an easy job. A skip would be arriving in the next couple of days for all the rubbish created by the festival and a decision was required as to what needed to be done with the creative work. The trustees expressed their gratitude to Rich for his work in difficult circumstances.

5.5. Playground - Rich was asked to repair the mound as a priority prior to the official opening on July 5.

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

6.1 A regular stream of birthday parties had been booked throughout the summer but September was currently looking quiet. Weekends were still fairly free but every weekday night was busy. Rich had had an enquiry from a dance instructor but there was no week day available for the classes. Monmouthshire County Council's early literacy programme for preschool children was booked for eight weeks. An open mic jambale to celebrate Rich's 60<sup>th</sup> birthday and retirement was booked for June 22. The date for the village social event had to be changed. A new date was awaited.

6.2 Rich said it would be useful in the longer term to understand the level of hall activity necessary to cover the expenses of hiring and bookings and maintenance manager and a cleaner. He added that Debbie Walker had undertaken a comparison of hire rates at other halls and concluded that Hood Memorial Hall charges were on a par.

## **7. Village fete**

7.1 - The fete would be held on Saturday, July 5 with the set up on the night before. It would have a budget of a £1,000. Richard reported that one of the marquees had become bent by wind and he had ordered a replacement along with a cover for a 10 x 4m marquee which had been eaten by mice. He confirmed he had applied successfully for a temporary event notice. He still needed to submit an event management plan to Monmouthshire County Council. He confirmed that the principal aim of the fete was not to make money but to provide an enjoyable occasion for the community. He added there would be a dog competition with a number of mitigation measures in place to protect the health and safety of the public. Profits from the fete would once again be shared equally between the hall, Scouts and the Church. Rich said he was looking to source musicians to provide incidental music and would possibly provide percussion sessions for children on a drumming kit which he would provide.

## **8. Playground**

8.1. There had been a number of complaints from some neighbours that the Playground Action Group had failed to apply for planning permission, the junior play tower was too high, damage had been caused during the installation of new equipment to the tree roots and there would be excessive noise from the sensory play equipment.

8.2. Richard said that advice had been sought from two architects who said that planning permission for the playground redevelopment was not required as the work was to take place within the existing footprint. He said that the diameter of the two small tree roots removed during the installation was 2cm. He added that a data sheet from the manufacturers of the congo drums demonstrated a sound level of 77 Db at 10m distance. The generally accepted level of busy roads is 70Db. Richard met with a planning officer from Monmouthshire County Council who said the installation should continue pending further instructions. A delegated panel comprising planning committee members and two planning officers was due to visit the playground on June 19 (subsequently postponed and not taken place at the time of writing).

## **9. Devauden Festival**

9.1. Richard reported that the universal reaction to the festival was positive including from Welsh Government representatives. Festival goers loved the new site. Although it was early days indications were it would be a break even year. The new festival company, Devauden Festival Ltd, would decide the future of the festival in the coming years. Richard said that the Welsh Government had indicated that the directors should apply for another grant for next year but it would need to comply with changing criteria which centred on the promotion of wellbeing and sustainability. The challenge now would be to look at the costs and decide where they could be trimmed. There was no element in those costs for the months of work Jeremy had contributed to make the festival such a success. A decision would need to be taken next year about how these costs would be met given that Jeremy would be in paid employment and not able to give up as much time as he had traditionally dedicated to the festival. Julia asked whether the finances turned out as projected. Richard replied that costs were in line with budget but the revenue did not live up to expectations. All contingency funds had been used up. He added that the question mark that had lingered over a new home for the festival meant that tickets only went on sale in January. Lyndon added that festivals were struggling to survive throughout the country. Richard thanked the Scouts for stepping in when a bushcraft course was cancelled at the last moment. Geraint said that managing cash flow would be crucial for the planning of next year's festival. Richard agreed, pointing out that the hall had effectively given the festival company a loan. He added that money

from Ticketsource money did not come through until the day after the event. The festival company was now looking at other ways of selling tickets to enable them to draw down the the money as and when. Trustees were unanimous in their belief that the festival should continue. Geraint was pleased that the hall was now insulated from any problems accruing from the festival. Richard said that the decision about where the festival might be held in the future was not in the trustees' gift. He added that a public meeting to discuss that decision had been promised in the open public meeting that was held at the village hall in January. Geraint said consideration would need to be given to communicating the fact that the move to Humble by Nature had resulted in a break even position for the festival rather than a profit.

## **10. AGM**

10.1 Trustees agreed that a free hog roast should be provided as it had been in previous years. Tessa said she had drafted a letter setting out the importance of people volunteering to be trustees. She referred back to the mood at the open public meeting in January which was about a perceived disconnect between the village hall and community. She felt that this indicated people needed to step up and help to shape the future of the village hall. Julia asked whether it was possible to be a committee member rather than a trustee. Richard said it was, pointing to Rich who was a member of the committee as were Debbie Walker previously and Lynn May now. Julia felt that people did not want to be trustees but would possibly like to be committee members. Richard referred to a previous suggestion by Tim Walker that a level should be created below trustees to organise events.

## **11. There were no items for AOB**

## **12. Date of future meetings**

12.1 All future meeting dates are publicised on the hall website.