

# ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

## THE BADLESMERE LEES AND HALL COMMITTEE

### 7.30 pm, 27 OCTOBER 2015

Those present: Ian Earl (Chair), Jane Austin (Secretary), Rick Blackman (Treasurer), Katie Bennett  
Apologies for absence: Adrian Atkins, Fred Gregory, Jane Gregory, Charlie Kirby, Ben Pullen, Kim Sharrock, Madelene Wilkinson

#### 1 Welcome and Chairman's remarks

IE welcomed the nine members of the public in attendance. (A further nine sent their apologies for not being able to attend.) He was pleased to report the success of a number of working parties throughout the year, for which a total of 25 residents gave up their free time. He thanked them for doing so. DW was given special recognition for supervising bookings and carrying out work on the hall. CK and BP were also recognised for their contribution to keeping the tracks in order. IE thanked the committee for their work.

IE reiterated his desire to improve communications between the committee and local residents. He felt that this has indeed been achieved by posting the minutes of committee meetings on the website [www.badlesmerelees.com](http://www.badlesmerelees.com), displaying them in the bus shelter and in the Red Lion pub, and having them printed in the Parish Magazine. IE also sends out e-mails regarding working parties and so on. He delivered flyers advertising this meeting to 89 properties.

IE has formalised the existence of the committee. It is now a member of *Action with Communities in Rural Kent*, and, in July, the committee was visited its Community Halls Advisor. The committee is by virtue of its trust deed a charity though it is not registered. (It would need to have an income exceeding £5000 pa to be able to register.) The members are management trustees who are required to comply with the trust deed under which they operate. All members have been given copies of the trust deed and the current lease of the Village Hall. Electronic versions have also been sent to ACRK.

IE was keen that any interested party should be able to join the committee, feeling that the more people that are involved, the better for the community. During the year, Dave Austin, Kate Linforth and Rosie Sharrock stepped down, but DA and KL continue to play roles: DA maintains the website and KL is leading a working party to organise next year's Medieval Fayre. AA is also on the Parish Council.

CK, DW and IE have been involved in the continuing refurbishment of the hall, particularly the kitchen, the ladies' lavatories and the guttering. The tracks and trees have been maintained. BP is currently seeking a source for planings for the north track. AA has mowed the Lees regularly. IE extended his thanks to them, as well as to the Lees Court Estate, which dealt with the fallen tree and is going to spray the Japanese knotweed which has appeared on the Lees. IE also expressed his gratitude to the Estate for their help in removing the travellers who camped on the Lees in the summer.

He thanked JG and FG for their work on the 100 Club and the Wine and Wisdom, on which the committee relies for a significant part of its funds. He also thanked JA for organising a new Summer Quiz this year, which replaced the Medieval Fayre. He explained that the accounts now follow the calendar year. Those for 2014 have been posted on the website. He thanked the treasurer, RB, and also Yoshi Euridge, who independently checked the accounts. During the year, the committee paid out £500 more than it has earned, but there was a healthy balance at 31/12/2014 of £10000.

IE said that plans for a village sign are ongoing. This year, Kent Highways approved an application to put a sign on the 'triangle', but it is now agreed that this location would make it vulnerable to large lorries which turn round in that area. It is also felt that the sightlines are not ideal. Consequently, the committee is to approach Lady Sondes to ask if the sign could be put on the Lees. FG has produced a design. The committee is still considering whether a metal or painted sign would be the more appropriate. The committee is now a member of the Village Sign Society. IE was grateful to the Sheldwich, Badlesmere and Leaveland Horticultural Society (now disbanded) for its gift of £500.

IE reported that the committee has been discussing the possibility of having fencing along the Lees, the aim of which would be to improve its appearance (replacing the somewhat random and dilapidated posts) and prevent vehicular access. It would still allow easy access for walkers. The estimated cost of a fence would be in excess of £4000. IE is to approach the Lees Court Estate to ask if they would consider making a financial contribution.

The committee has agreed that the historic Village Hall should not be replaced, though funds for its maintenance are limited. For this reason, the committee needs to establish its charitable status. As a charity, it will be eligible for grants towards work on structural problems, such as the leaking roof. The refurbishment of the lavatories needs to be finished and the walls of the hall need sanding and painting. There should also be structural and electrical surveys.

IE finished his report by saying that, although the committee faces challenges, the Village Hall is in good hands and an asset to the community.

#### 2 Treasurer's report

RB said that there was a loss in 2014 due to the kitchen refurbishments (a grant was received the previous year) and because there was no summer event such as a Medieval Fayre. The balance of the current account at the end of September 2015 stood at £6019.12, with £3841.46 in the reserve account. He stated that about £1500 income per annum is needed to pay for the cutting of the Lees, maintaining the tracks, insurance, etc. He emphasised the need for the 100 Club, the Wine and Wisdom, the Medieval Fayre and the new Summer Quiz. IE confirmed that in the interests of transparency, the 2015 accounts would be posted on the website as soon as they have been checked, and that he could e-mail interested parties to say when this had been done.

#### 3 Open forum

Elizabeth Roberts from the Lees Court Estate said that the Estate might be able to use its contacts to obtain lower prices on insurance payments, planings, electricians, etc.

In answer to a question regarding trustee liability, IE stated that members of the committee would not be liable. Public liability is always insured against and extra insurance is always taken out for special events. He also said that he would like to instigate greater control over financial planning, which would involve surveys, costings and prioritising. Once the accounts are in proper order, the committee will be in a position to apply for grants. KCC produces a monthly list of donors and other sources.

Because the committee is not a registered charity potential donors would need a detailed financial breakdown of the committee's income and expenditure.

Deborah Cook was impressed by the Hall's low outgoings, but wondered what was meant by a reserve account. IE explained that this was a legacy, rather than a policy of the current Committee and financial policies are still to be written. IE stated that in the past there had been two current accounts and two reserve accounts, as well as a building society account for use by those organising fund-raising events. The current accounts were amalgamated about eight years ago, as were the reserve accounts. The building society account was closed earlier this year. IE stated that the accounts may need to be separated again since the

village hall is a community hall and so qualifies for charitable status but the maintaining of the Lees and tracks might not as they are in private ownership.

DC was interested to know the extent of the committee's responsibilities. IE said the committee is pleased to have a good relationship with the Lees Court Estate and discussions about the responsibilities of each are ongoing. ER said that although the Lees is owned by the Estate it is Open Access Land, also that some residents have certain rights to the land, but agreed that there needs to be further clarification. She pointed out the difference in appearance and use between Badlesmere Lees and Sheldwich Lees, though both are maintained by local residents, and stressed how important the following of the correct procedures was when organising events.

Jerry Baker was delighted with the improved communications between the committee and the residents. He said that he is now aware of what is going on, knows he can comment and how to do so.

Kelvin Euridge was impressed at the number of people who have given up their time to help.

Tom Treasure explained that the telephone box, which is now on his land, is likely to become an information booth for walkers.

Keith Cook enquired about hiring the Hall. IE said that those who hire it must be connected to the village. It is usually used for private parties and by a table tennis club. Due to the amount of maintenance still required, it is felt that the Hall is unsuitable for many functions. The cost of hiring the Hall is minimal. There is an additional, metered, charge above the flat rate for heating. In answer to a query from TT, RB said he would calculate how much the hire charge should be if the hall is to break even. DC said that, as the committee is not a registered charity, the rules it must follow are more flexible; a registered charity is required to ensure its outgoings equal or exceed its income from hirings alone i.e. not to include grants.

Following a brief discussion, it was again agreed that car boot sales are inappropriate for Badlesmere Lees. Among the reasons given were the difficulty in establishing such an event with two large car boot sales in Challock and Sheldwich and the disturbance early on a Sunday morning for those living on the Lees. IE said that, at the moment, the committee is not seeking more bookings; members are already giving up a lot of their free time.

The entire committee resigned and was re-elected en masse. It was agreed that meetings would take place once a quarter in 2016, rather than every other month.

There was no other business.

**The meeting was closed at 8.40pm.**