

BADLESMERE LEES AND HALL COMMITTEE MEETING

Tuesday, 13 October 2020

Those present: no one; apologies for absence: everyone; explanation below.

Committee: Ian Earl (Chair), Sue Earl (Secretary), Rick Blackman (Treasurer), Dave Austin, Steve Burt, Gareth Fulton, Fred Gregory, Charlie Kirby, Katie Potter, Ben Pullen, Tom Sisley.

This meeting was not held due to the existing partial lock down, namely the 'rule of 6' and the associated restrictions for community halls – a committee decision. (The restrictions would allow a committee meeting but the members would need to be in 'bubbles' of maximum six, sit 2m apart and wear masks.)

The following is therefore mostly information that would have been imparted at the meeting. Any decisions recorded are the result of email communications between all members of the committee, having chosen not to arrange a video conference as an alternative.

The form (and dates) of future meetings will be determined nearer their time.

1 'Minutes' of April meeting.

1.1 No concerns were raised. (The July meeting was cancelled and no 'minutes' written.)

2 Matters arising.

- 2.1 The Chairman's report (for the AGM that was to be held in May) and the accounts for 2019 were published in October (the chairman offers his apologies for the delay), to be posted on the website.
- 2.2 A Facebook page has been set up for Badlesmere residents, called *Badlesmere Neighbours*, created and moderated by Juliette Pettit.
- 2.3 The soak-away for the drainage system for the hall's guttering has yet to be unearthed. Thanks to SB and BP (and offspring) for their efforts so far.
- 2.4 The 'village bonfire' lasted until August and was used and appreciated by numerous residents.
- 2.5 The North Track was again reworked and 20 tonnes of type 1 added. Thanks to BP for arranging this (with Tom Janes) and to all who helped out over the weekend of 16-17 May. The village hall contribution to the costs was £168.
- 2.6 The existing stock of planings by the South Track will see it through for another year.
- 2.7 Items still to be actioned: the plumbing in of the dishwasher, the problem of dumping of garden waste, the purchase of chairs (this is now more important since all chairs with fabric material in their construction cannot be used while Covid-19 restrictions are in place), the village sign.
- 2.8 The rubble at the front and back of the village hall has largely been removed. There are still a few items (heavy, of metal and/or concrete) to be disposed of. The 'mound' at the far (northwest) end of the hall was levelled (while suitable equipment associated with the North Track repairs was available). This area will need rotavating and sowing with grass seed, any weeds killing, and the area mown regularly once established (BP, IE and TS to action).

3 Accounts and Covid-19.

- 3.1 The bank balances as at 06 October 2020: the current account is £14377.33 and the Business Reserve account £3858.71. IE successfully applied for “The Retail, Hospitality & Leisure Grant” for community halls, part of the government’s response to coronavirus and their nationwide lock down measures. Badlesmere Parish Hall consequently received £10 000 on 15 May.
- 3.2 The cost of the lock down: The loss of income from cancelled hirings for the period to the end of July is estimated at about £1000. Further losses are being incurred due to the partial lock down now in existence since two of our three regular groups are not meeting, and one (EK0GG) has returned after stopping in September. IE is allowing EK0GG to meet twice on consecutive days in place of a single hire so they can meet with reduced numbers in any one gathering. The charge levied for these paired meetings is the same as a single meeting. Since the ‘rule of 6’ does actually allow for larger groups to meet so long as they stay in ‘bubbles’ of six, EK0GG will review how October went before deciding the form future meetings will take. IE will allow whatever EK0GG prefers. The committee has endorsed this approach.
- 3.3 To allow the hall to reopen, certain measures were needed to be instigated. Handwash solutions and dispensers were purchased and the front entrance has been modified for the display of notices (cleaning procedures, a record of any cleaning done, a declaration that the building is ‘Covid Secure’, a request not to enter if showing Covid-19 symptoms, and a QR code for the NHS Test and Trace system) and the positioning of a non-touch handwash dispenser. Notices throughout the hall remind visitors to use the handwashes, to ‘catch it, bin it, kill it’, and to abide by the social distancing rules. Only the white tables can be used and no chairs with fabric in their construction. The curtains are to be left open at all times. The toilets are now unisex, with the urinals sealed off and out of action. This allows everyone access to the washbasin with hot water (originally only available in the gents loo!). The cost of getting the hall Covid Secure was a little over £300. In addition to the monthly clean, key parts of the hall are now to be ‘covid-cleaned’ using a 1000 ppm chlorine solution between each hiring – IE will action this.
- 3.4 Our insurance policy does not cover a loss of income from any forced closure of this nature.
- 3.5 The defibrillator. The pads and batteries were renewed in May, and the cost of doing this was borne by the Parish Council, as was the insurance premium. They also made good the discrepancy in the reimbursing that occurred in 2018/2019. A record of the checking of our defibrillator is maintained on a database kept by the Community Heartbeat Trust, which ensures the local ambulance service is aware that the defibrillator is maintained and working. This charity also helped us considerably when first installing the defibrillator. All this assistance has happened without cost to us. The committee unanimously agreed to donate to the Trust. A sum of £75 was duly sent.
- 3.6 Draws for the 100 Club resumed in August with winners contacted to see if they would prefer receiving their prizes by online transfer rather than a cheque. The winners are:-
March: £15 Katie Potter, £10 Charlie Payne;
April: £15 Jane Hiles, £10 Julie Dee;
May: £15 Sally Willis, £10 Gareth Fulton;

June: £15 C Jones, £10 Julia Gregory;
July: £15 Alan Skinner, £10 Janet Treasure;
August: £15 Alice Moore, £10 A Godfrey-Faucett.

4 Composition of the committee.

- 4.1 In the absence of a formal AGM the committee did not resign. Technically this is contrary to the requirements of the Trust Deed of the Village Hall. In these unusual times it was felt that this was a practical solution (reportedly copied by many village halls across the nation), supported by the belief that had the AGM taken place the committee would have most likely been re-elected anyway.
- 4.2 In August Gareth Fulton accepted our invitation to join the committee. IE proposed his joining, and as it was unanimously supported, I have selected BP as the seconder.

5 Fund-raising and events.

- 5.1 The 75th anniversary of VE Day (8th and 9th May) was not celebrated as a village event.
- 5.2 The 2020 Badlesmere 10k Run scheduled for Sunday 6th September did not take place. SB and RB are keen to have it rescheduled to (the end of) April 2021. It is realised that regulations in force then may cause another postponement but since there are few costs with planning for an April date, the committee has agreed that preparations should go ahead. Lees Court Estate and the farmer whose fields are part of the course have no concerns. The chip-timing company will be contacted by SB, who will then select the date.
- 5.3 The Wine and Wisdom event (28 November) will not be held. The requirements of social distancing, etc, are not conducive to the packed, raucous event it normally is.
- 5.4 With the uncertainty associated with the coronavirus pandemic, and the likelihood of a 10k Run in April, the 2021 Mediaeval Fayre will be put off until 2022.

6 Maintenance of the Hall.

- 6.1 A third under-stage storage trolley has been constructed and the stage front modified accordingly, easing the storage of larger items (generally associated with village fetes) and allowing a better arrangement for the storage of the gazebos in the side room.
- 6.2 It is becoming imperative that the storage of cleaning equipment in the kitchen be rationalised with construction of a cupboard, leaving only rarely-used items in the (locked) main store. A telescopic duster (to reach the numerous cobwebs in the main hall) has been purchased, and adds to the equipment needing a home.
- 6.3 The purchase of new floodlights to replace those taken down and discarded during the painting of the exterior needs to be completed before the clocks change.

7 Maintenance of the Lees and Tracks.

- 7.1 The lees has been mowed four times so far this year. The scheduled September cut was cancelled because in the hot dry weather the grass did not grow. However, it is recovering well from the late first cut of 2018, although rabbits are now becoming an issue at the southern end. A decision on whether to have a fifth cut will be taken soon.
- 7.2 The A251 was completely closed for two weeks, from 27 July until 8 August (though four weeks had been predicted), while improvements were made to the gas main that

runs under the pavement on the west side of the road from the triangle until the Red Lion pub. (Another main runs under the east side of the road.) Because this was going to have a major effect on the pub's business and just after they had re-opened after the national complete lock down, IE sought permission from Lees Court Estate for the northwest corner of the leas to be used as a temporary carpark for customers coming from the Faversham direction. The request was passed on to the Estate's Land Agents, Strutt and Parker. Ultimately the request was not granted with the liability issues cited as the reason.

- 7.3 During the road closure (see 7.3) the leas suffered regular crossing by vehicles from the North Track to the South Track and vice versa. Where the occasional use by residents of either track might have been tolerated, it was mostly traffic from further afield. Luckily the hot, dry weather meant the leas was not seriously damaged by these incursions. However there is evidence (visible tyre marks, October 2020) that it has not altogether ceased, but by whom is not known.
- 7.4 Also during the road closure there were occasions, before a third set of 'spotters' were poisoned on the A251, when lorries arrived at the leas and had to turn round. One, or it may have been more than one, destroyed some of the chestnut paling on the 'triangle' and a stretch of the knee-rail fencing in front of the Leavemere bungalows. Also reported was the metallic sound of a collision (possibly a different occasion) suggesting the steel post was hit, but it seems to have suffered no damage.
- 7.5 On departing after completion of the gas main works (see 7.3) the contractors kindly filled and levelled the two lay-bys beside the A251 with Type 1 material. They were rewarded with a donation of £60. The southernmost one had three significant potholes, whereas the northernmost one had an extremely poor surface of brick/stone rubble which was deeply holed. It was a welcome solution to a longstanding problem, although proper tarmacking is the ultimate goal. However, as before its repair, occasional overnight parking by continent-bound lorries is happening. Both the surface and the grass edges to the layby are suffering. It is suggested that a steel post similar to that on the 'triangle' be erected so allowing cars to park but not lorries (a better solution than the large tractor tyre that was agreed but yet to be actioned) – IE to investigate.
- 7.6 The repair and selling of cars on the South Track, a problem first brought to the attention of the Estate in 2018, continued unabated throughout the lock down. A hardstanding has been created outside Leaside, which may be associated with it. Title plans of the leas, Leaside and neighbouring properties were purchased to confirm this was an encroachment, albeit minor, on the leas. The Estate has been informed and the matter is now with Strutt and Parker.

Next scheduled committee meeting: Tuesday, 12 January 2021.