

BADLESMERE LEES AND HALL COMMITTEE MEETING

7.30 pm, Tuesday, 20 July 2021

Those present: Ian Earl (Chair), Sue Earl (Secretary), Rick Blackman (Treasurer), Dave Austin, Steve Burt, Gareth Fulton, Charlie Kirby, Katie Potter, Ben Pullen.

Apologies for absence: Fred Gregory, Tom Sisley.

This was the first face-to-face meeting since January 2020, for although the pandemic continues most lockdown restrictions have been lifted and the meeting could go ahead. The committee elected unanimously to sit well apart without masks.

1 Minutes of the 'meetings' in January and March.

1.1 The minutes were passed.

2 Matters arising from the two meetings.

- 2.1 A current account and a business reserve account in the name of Badlesmere Parish Hall have been opened with NatWest Bank in Faversham and active since March.
- 2.2 Transfers have taken place between the Badlesmere Lees Preservation Committee account and the new accounts where items this year were processed in the wrong accounts. A single transfer of £14440.00 from the BLPC to the BPH has occurred in line with the decision by the committee, it having considered the sources of income and expenditure since 2005 and IE's recommendations (email IE to committee, 21 April).
- 2.3 The Reserves Policy will need amending to reflect the actual separation of the accounts, and in response to the receipt of Covid grants (see below, paragraphs 3.2, 4.3 and 7.2).

3 Accounts

3.1 Balances in the accounts as at 19 July are as follows:-

BPH current account	£11714.15
BPH reserve account	£19362.72
BLPC current account	£2778.94
BLPC reserve account	£3208.07

It should be noted that no prizes for the 100 Club (BLPC) have been paid out this year, the draws having been held back until they could take place publicly (at the Red Lion).

3.2 Covid Grants. Further successful applications were made during the lockdown, and a Restart Grant of £8000 was also received in May from Swale B C. This means a total of £29050.85 has been received during 2020 and 2021 to offset the effects of the pandemic. The village hall has certainly lost a considerable amount of income from the lack of bookings and at least one regular group is not expecting to return despite the relaxation of restrictions. Making the hall covid secure has also cost money, but overall, being a small hall, we have 'profited' from the response of the government to the pandemic. As a charity, we should not keep in reserve large funds except for designated purposes and a calculated amount to tie us over when sources of income might fail but expenditure continues. Therefore, we now have funds that we need to assign. N.B. All covid grants were support for the village hall and must not be allocated to the BLPC. ACRK also advise against the giving of grants to local charities or enterprises, however worthy, as this would not be allowed by most halls' trust deeds.

- 3.3 Electricity bills. After a mammoth effort to get action out of EDF, they have finally calculated a bill that matches closely what it should read. £915.43 was paid in April. [EDF have for many years been estimating the hall's electricity usage, having last read the meter themselves in March 2013. The last customer reading that was used was in November 2015, despite the regular sending of readings. They ignored these in favour of their own estimations because they did not recognise their own new (Smart) meter installed in April 2016 and so the readings received did not fit the expected pattern. (Because of the metal roof and walls of the hall the meter cannot be read remotely, so is hardly 'smart'.) Their new calculation is almost correct insofar as the total amount of electricity used has been amended to close to the real value. However, the chosen value for the last reading of the old meter is wrong (even though IE sent this reading within the data supplied) and the distribution of the electricity usage over the last 6 years is in error thus making the estimated readings at the times of tariff changes wrong. The bill is only £6 more than what IE calculated, representing an overcharge of £1 per year, so was not queried.]
- 3.4 Electricity tariff. A new tariff has been selected. This ties us in with EDF for three years but will save about £240 per year due to the lowering of the daily charge. The chosen tariff is described as 'zero carbon nuclear electricity'.
- 3.5 Water. Castle Water's billing system is now under scrutiny as an unexpected final demand was received (and paid) only to find their calculations were wrong. The account is now well in credit. Payment by direct debit has also been arranged.
- 3.6 100 Club (BLPC). 82 people have joined the club, down from the 100 last year, probably due to the increased cost of a ticket. However, income is up by £230 (82 x £15 less 100 x £10).
The prize winners (now one prize of £30 each month) for January to August are:-
- | | |
|-----|----------------|
| Jan | Allen Skinner |
| Feb | Fred Gregory |
| Mar | Rachel Sisley |
| Apr | Dennis Hubbard |
| May | Inigo Pullen |
| Jun | Emily Moore |
| Jul | Mary Moore |

4 Governance

- 4.1 The May AGM was cancelled, for a second year. However, the Chairman's Report and a summary of the accounts for 2020 were published on the committee's website. It was agreed that the current committee should continue to sit until the next AGM.
- 4.2 The separation of the BPH and the BLPC, as described in the various communications of the committee and in the accounting, was formally accepted. Put simply, the BPH is only concerned with the village hall and is defined by its trust deed whereas the BLPC looks after the lees (as described in a letter dated December 1979) which have been owned by Lees Court Estate since 1975 but used by residents from long before and is now Open Access land. The two committees will continue to have the same members and meet as one, and will still be known as the Badlesmere Lees and Hall Committee. The minutes of the committee will therefore include matters pertaining to the hall and

to the lees but it should be easy to distinguish to which they technically relate. The separation of the accounts will help in this respect.

4.3 Policies and Reviews.

GDPR – the committee was reminded of the actions required under these regulations.
Safeguarding – the policy document that was circulated to members in January was accepted. SE is the named person responsible for reporting any concerns to the relevant safeguarding agency.

Reserves Policy – is to be updated (see paragraphs 2.3 and 7.2).

Safety (an item which should be discussed at every committee meeting, according to ACRK) – IE carried out a survey of the hall and its environs in January and completed a Health & Safety Executive's checklist for village halls. Matters requiring action will be acted upon with appropriate urgency as part of the hall's improvement and refurbishment plan (see below), the only significant aspect being the poor state of the walk-ways outside the hall from the two northwest-facing emergency exits.

- 4.4 IE announced a desire to reduce the number of roles he seems to have acquired in addition to being the committee's Chairman, particularly that of Hall Manager. It was agreed that the funds in the hall's coffers are sufficient to be able to use professionals rather than rely on the DIY skills of IE (and others). DA suggested IE writes down all that he does so that the recruitment of others for specific roles would be easier.

5 Hiring of the Hall

- 5.1 Since the relaxation of covid restrictions hiring of the hall is beginning to resume. The regular EKOGG (East Kent O Gauge Group) returned in June, the Seven Champions Molly Dancers will return this week, and there has been one private party function. The organisers of the Meditation Group have admitted to a lack of support and will not be returning. A booking for Throwley's Harvest Supper has been received.
- 5.2 The use of a paid cleaner has yet to be re-instigated. In preparation for the re-opening of the hall at the end of lockdown, SE and IE did a thorough clean, except for the ovens which were in a particularly sorry state. SE will tackle these before the first hiring that will use them (currently the Harvest Supper in September).

6 Fund Raising and Events

- 6.1 Badlesmere 10k Run (5 Sep). SB reported that 109 runners (the aim is to have 200) have signed up via the website 'badlesmere10k.co.uk', and requested help in the distribution of flyers. RB offered to take them to park runs. DA suggested promotional videos could be added (by him) to the website and that of badlesmerelees.com. SB and RB will recce the route of the run and take suitable video footage on mobile phones to send to DA. All the necessary information required by Swale B C and other agencies has been complied by SB, and IE will forward these when registering the event later this week. On the day the use of gazebos will enable the registration of runners to take place outside reducing the crowding that happened last time. IE will begin recruiting marshals and other volunteers next week, and SE will organise the tea/coffee and bacon sandwiches on the day.
- 6.2 Wine and Wisdom. A decision as to whether this event will be staged will be taken nearer the time. EKOGG have requested access to the hall all day on the 27 November

for an Open Day, so if the W&W does go ahead it will be either the Saturday before or the Saturday after.

- 6.3 Mediaeval Fayre 2022. IE/SE announced that due to personal commitments next May they could not be the main organisers. It was agreed to go ahead with it still, and Jane Austin will be asked to head it up. IE and SE said they would still be able to offer advice, and help out on the day. It was agreed to spend more funds at the expense of profits in order to re-establish the event and give the village a good time. The date was moved to Saturday, 21 May 2022.
- 6.4 Queen's Platinum Jubilee. An extra day's holiday has been added to the Spring Bank Holiday in 2022 to celebrate the Queen's 75th Jubilee, the dates being now Thursday 2 June to Sunday 5 June. Celebrations will start with a nationwide lighting of beacons – IE has already signed up Badlesmere's participation (on 2nd June) with the Royal Pageantmaster. Other aspects of the occasion will be organised nearer the time, most likely a village party at the village hall, and the planting of trees (which is being encouraged nationally).

7 Maintenance of the Hall

- 7.1 Roof repair. SB and his man repaired the hall roof above the kitchen. Kevin Walters painted the newly exposed parts of the sheets. SE cleaned the walls of the kitchen to remove the mould.
- 7.2 Working Party. This has been set up to best decide how to use the funds we are now lucky to have. To assist with the updating of the Reserves Policy, a list of jobs and purchases needed will be compiled and prioritised. IE, DA, SE, CK, SB volunteered to join. First walk-through is set for Sunday 25 July at 10.30. IE to co-ordinate and delegate as appropriate.
It was agreed that the fridges and freezer should go, the dish washer should be plumbed in, and a cleaning cupboard installed in the kitchen, all as soon as possible.

8 Maintenance of the Lees and Tracks (BLPC)

- 8.1 Four mowings have been organised so far this year and another two expected.
- 8.2 The schedule of future mowings were discussed and considerable debate took place concerning whether the current practice should be amended to allow for shorter grass near the village hall for games and events such as the Mediaeval Fayre and an area of wild flower meadow at the eastern end, while maintaining the rest as now. GF will look into the actions and costs of such actions. It was noted that a 'path' had been mowed between the North and South tracks beyond the copse opposite the village hall, and that brambles and stinging nettles were encroaching onto the lees from the woodland in the south east corner. The increasing number of rabbits was identified as a matter of concern.
- 8.3 Recent storm damage – large branches breaking off an ash tree in the middle of the lees and a sycamore coming down at the edge of the copse next to the village hall – were dealt with promptly by Lees Court Estate.
- 8.4 10 tonnes of planings has been delivered to the South Track (paid for by Chris Moore of the White House in an act of generosity).

- 8.5 10 tonnes of type 1 has been delivered to the copse by the village hall. 10 bags of cement will be purchased to be mixed with the type 1 (which is suitably powdery) as an experiment when the next session of hole-filling is carried out (set for 24 July and subsequent weekends as necessary) (GF, SB, TS, BP to participate).
- 8.6 Metal post in the northernmost layby – no action as yet. The metal post by the ‘Triangle’ has suffered a knock but is still standing and serving its purpose.
- 8.7 The contractors who work for Optivo (the housing organisation responsible for Leavemere Bungalows) are no longer maintaining the verge in front of the bungalows and behind the knee-rail fencing beside the North track, having done so for the last twenty or so years. Communication with Optivo confirmed that the land is part of the lees and this is the reason they will not maintain it. BP has volunteered to look after it. TS has already been strimming the edge when he has visited the Triangle.

9 Electric vehicle charging points

- 9.1 DA raised the matter of KCC offering to install electric vehicle charging points at village halls to overcome the lack of such points in rural areas. The committee decided that although such points were, in principle, advantageous, in practice few people were likely to make use of them so far from a public highway and the practicalities of siting them when the car park is little more than a grassed area on the edge of the lees would preclude their installation.

10 Village Sign. (BLPC)

- 10.1 Item removed to later meeting.

11 A251 Traffic calming

- 11.1 (Strictly a Parish Council matter) SE raised her concern that much of the traffic continues to speed through Badlesmere Lees on the A251. DA responded with information from the Parish Council on their contacts with Highways in which it was found that the A251 will continue as a major route in East Kent, that it is only a few drivers that exceed the limit by a large margin (greater than 46 mph, i.e. 40 mph + 10% + 2), and these are north bound only as south bound traffic is slowed by the bend entering the village. Highways also declared that any local speed monitoring (suitable devices are owned by the Parish Council) could be done outside Corner Cottage, and for only north bound traffic.

12 AOB

No items.

The meeting ended at 9.10 pm.

Next committee meeting: Tuesday, 12 October 2021, at 7.30 pm in the village hall.