

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

THE BADLESMERE LEES AND HALL COMMITTEE

7.30 pm, 22 OCTOBER 2014

Those present: Ian Earl (Chair), Adrian Atkins, Charlie Kirby, Ben Pullen, Madelene Wilkinson (Treasurer), Dave Wilkinson, Jane Austin (Secretary)

Apologies for absence: Fred Gregory, Jane Gregory, Dave Austin.

1, 2. Welcome and Chairman's remarks (including presentation of the accounts) and the resulting Open Discussion

As the new Chair, Ian thanked the many members of the public for attending. Expressing his own views, he said that the committee had not functioned effectively recently in terms of communicating with village residents, but stressed that great efforts had been made by a small number of people, meaning that bills had been paid, events organised, such as the Wine and Wisdom and Medieval Fayre, and great improvements had been made to the hall, notably to the men's lavatories and the kitchen. He said that it was his aim to make the committee more formal and accountable. He added that he saw a key aspect of his job was to improve communication between the committee and the village residents. He viewed this AGM as an opportunity for members of the public to air their views and put forward ideas for fund-raising activities. He said that by turning up for the AGM, residents had already shown their interest. There was general agreement that Badlesmere Lees is a special place with a characterful village hall and that we all need to try to foster a greater community spirit.

It was agreed that a variety of ways of communicating would be useful. Some members of the public were unaware that there is a Badlesmere website (www.badlesmerelees.com). It was suggested that there might be a forum on the website. It was also suggested that the committee should open a Facebook account. Rosie Sharrock said she would look into the possibility of putting up notices about forthcoming committee meetings in The Red Lion, so that residents could suggest points for the agendas. It was decided that the minutes of this AGM and regular committee meetings should be put on the website, and that summaries should appear in the Parish Magazine and on the village notice board.

There was some discussion of the Terms of Reference relating to the Lees and the Village Hall. According to the 2001 Terms of Reference, it is within the remit of the committee to maintain the Hall and the Lees, including the tracks north and south of the Lees and the lay-bys along the A251. There was some discussion about who should be directly responsible for filling the holes in the tracks and the committee was made aware that some residents had paid for planings themselves. Katie Bennett said she knew of cheap source of planings. It was agreed that a working party should be set up to maintain the tracks and that holes would probably need to be filled twice a year. There were concerns about how this could be done effectively; a matter which Ian said should be looked into at a later date. There were complaints that some people drive too fast along the tracks.

3. Accounts and fund-raising.

In order to break even the committee needs to raise about £1500 per annum. This is to cover such items as rent, insurance, electricity, the licence and the cutting of the grass on the Lees. The annual rent for the hall is £10. Madelene gave a summary of the accounts. Between April 2013 and April 2014, income was £2786, including £1391 from the Medieval Fayre, with an expenditure of £1884. The balance in reserve is £3839.23. This year the hall has not been hired out this year due to the ongoing refurbishments.

Kelvin Euridge pointed out that the committee has an obligation to make public the hall accounts and that they need to be audited every year. Gerry Baker added that those in charge of public funds have a level of responsibility to make the accounts open to public scrutiny. Adrian said that the new kitchen was paid for using a grant from the Parish Council. The Wine and Wisdom evenings bring in £400-450.

In response to a suggestion that car boot fairs on the Lees would be a good source of income, Ian answered that they would probably take a long time to become established, given the fact that both Sheldwich and Challock have successful boot fairs, but added that he would be willing to accept the decision of the majority. It was suggested that live music would be a draw, but Madelene pointed out that to pay hundreds of pounds for bands would be counter-productive. It was then suggested that up-and-coming bands would be relatively cheap in comparison to more established ones.

Following a suggestion that the committee should apply for a lottery grant, there was a discussion regarding whether residents wanted a brand new village hall which would attract more people from outside the village or to keep the existing one, (which is about one hundred years old). It was agreed that we should keep the old but newly-refurbished hall and that it should be an amenity for villagers and their close associates. On the question of the purpose of the village hall, the consensus was that it should be a focal point for the village and that some thought must be put into how it might best be used to draw the community together. Further work, such as improvements to the ladies' lavatories and repairs to the guttering, is needed before the hall can be let.

Adrian was thanked for having taken on the responsibility for cutting the grass, and Chris Ward offered his services.

4. Re-establishment of the committee, and election of officers.

Previous members agreed to resume involvement. New members to the committee were proposed and seconded. Rosie Sharrock (/Kim Sharrock), Katie Bennett, Kate Linforth and Rick Blackman were welcomed aboard. Finally a date, 11 November 2014, was set for the first committee meeting in which its officers would be elected. Ian stated that he intended to send a reminder for the meeting and a call for items for the agenda.

5. A.O.B.

Madelene has four sacks of daffodil bulbs, and since these needed to be planted soon it was agreed that a working party would meet at 11.00am on Sunday 26 October to carry this out. Charlie said that the trees on the Lees need regular attention and it was agreed that there would be two working parties a year to take responsibility for this, with a month's notice given for each date. The first of these will be on 23 November 2014. Adrian said that the village is also in need of a general tidy up.

Adrian reminded the committee and residents that he and Dave Austin are Parish Councillors, and that members of the public are always welcome at Parish Council meetings, which take place on the first Tuesday of every month. He said that the Borough Council will be providing a defibrillator for the village and that it will be located in The Red Lion. He added that £1000 a year is available to the village, provided applications are structured and the plans costed. For example, the £2000 grant for the improvements to the men's lavatories was the result of Dave Austin's presentation to the council at Selling two years ago. The meeting closed at 9.30 pm.