

## **BADLESMERE LEES AND HALL COMMITTEE MEETING**

**Tuesday, 12 March 2024**

Present were Chris Moore (Chair), Steve Burt, Ian Earl (took notes), Fred Gregory.

The meeting was barely quorate so for some items discussion took place but decisions were deferred to the next meeting.

### **1 Apologies.**

- 1.1 Dave Austin, Rick Blackman, Sue Earl, Gareth Fulton, Charlie Kirby, Ben Pullen, Tom Sisley.

### **1 Approval of minutes**

- 2.1 The minutes of the January meeting were approved.

### **3 Matters arising** (numbers in parentheses refer to entries in the January minutes)

- 3.1 (3.1) No progress yet on:- the constructing of broom cupboards (IE) and the checking for asbestos (SB). The arranging of an electrician (to complete the minor improvements recommended in the EIC Report will be delayed until other similar work is carried out. For action on posts, see item 2.17 below.
- 3.2 (3.2) Footpaths cabinet: still awaiting KCC PROW to contact us.
- 3.3 (3.3) Two further toilet seats have been replaced.
- 3.4 (3.5) To be added to the list of projects: external sockets so that extension leads are not threaded through window openings to supply power outside, e.g. for a PA system.
- 3.5 (3.6) DA and IE met at the site and discussed options. DA is progressing the purchase and installation of suitable signage.
- 3.6 (3.7) Northern layby post: CB and SB still to coordinate its erection. It was reported that the layby was used recently by an (empty) tour coach and a refrigerated lorry.
- 3.7 (3.8) SE's contact at the North Downs AONB has retired. Also, concern about the effort in establishing and maintaining a wild flower area has halted this project for now.
- 3.8 (3.9) It was reported that the sports equipment has been relocated but is still on the lees. CM to reiterate that its complete removal is required when not in use.
- 3.9 (3.11) A new prepayment meter has been purchased and installed. Fifty £1 and fifty £5 cards were also acquired as part of a 'landlord's package'. Unlike the old (cardboard) cards the new (plastic) ones will need to be returned after use so they can be re-charged at a cost of about 10p each (plus postage).
- 3.10 (4.3) IE has yet to contact NatWest regarding the names associated with BLPC a/cs.
- 3.11 (4.5) The new hall hire rates are on the website and have been used for new bookings. Regular users have been informed of the changes and that they apply from 1 April.
- 3.12 (7.1) Speed calming signage is yet to be progressed.
- 3.13 (8.2) IE to forward contact details so that CM can arrange for the first cut of the lees to happen as soon as possible after the Clean-up session (23 Mar). The mowing is to include the furthest part normally left out of the first cut.

- 3.14 (11.1) Posts have yet to be bought. Following further discussions, IE is to get comparative costings for a simple post system and for a post and rail system to border the south track from opposite The Dell to 1 Godfreys Cottages.
- 3.15 (11.3) A dog waste bin has been purchased and erected near the footpaths map cabinet by the fence in front of the village hall.
- 3.16 (11.4) Defibrillator cabinet: CM has emailed the committee's thanks to Ms J Treasure.

#### **4 Accounts**

- 4.1 Draft versions of the summaries and bank reconciliations of the 2023 accounts have been forwarded to committee members. RB to arrange the independent checking of them.
- 4.2 The current balances in the four accounts (adjusted to include recent payments made and a cheque received that have yet to appear in the bank accounts) are:  
BPH: current = £2 468.03, reserve = £19 331.12;  
BLPC: current = £2 124.56, reserve = £7 314.33.  
Since the last meeting all accounts were adjusted in line with the Reserves Policy. Expenditure due to the extensive renovations is the cause of the sizeable reduction in the BPH reserve account. (For the major projects, payments are made from the current account and then periodically an equal amount is transferred from the reserve account.) The combined amount in the BLPC accounts has increased due to the sales of 100 Club tickets as is normal at this time of year.
- 4.3 The 100 Club. To date only 57 tickets have been sold. This will give an income of only £411 after the distribution of prizes and taking administration costs into consideration. It was suggested that emailing potential members with a link that allows payment online would encourage those busy people who simply forget to send the form/money to LB. IE to investigate ways to have such online payments.
- 4.4 Electricity tariff. The current fixed rate tariff with edf ends on 2 Apr. If another is not chosen the standard variable rate will be charged whereupon the annual bill will rise from £402 to £1271 (edf estimates) because the unit rate doubles and the daily charge increases seven-fold. No offer has been received, though expected within the last month of a contract. RB to contact edf.

#### **5 The Hall**

- 5.1 South Wall renovations update: SB reported on the work completed to date. The sole plate was replaced for most of its length. About a quarter of the corrugated sheets that form the cladding have been replaced. Within the wall 100mm insulation and a Tyvek breathable membrane has been added. New flashing has been put above the windows (the rotting of wood was particularly bad at the side of the windows). When the floor was repaired, temporary aluminium spikes were used to support the joists – these have now been replaced with brackets that hang from the sole plate.
- 5.2 Renovation: the next steps. The renovations described above are to be continued at the stage end of the building. This will require removal of the part of the stage next to the wall. More repairs are expected to be needed here once the timbers are exposed. It is known that that timber in the corner (full height) where the drainpipe descends is in a particularly poor condition. Once the work on the end is completed, new guttering

will be put up (including a 'hedgehog' to prevent the guttering from filling with leaves), the downpipe will be refitted and connected to the drainage (see 5.3 below). A decision on how the stage is reconstructed will need to be made.

- 5.3 Outside work: SB reported that his men have completed the clearing of the back (alongside the fence and the north wall) and the open space next to the copse has been cleared of rubble and vegetation. A contractor has constructed a soakaway and put pipes to the two points where downpipes from the gutters reach the ground.
- 5.4 Next jobs: The contractor has been retained to lay a sub-base and to concrete a complete path along the rear (north) wall (to be modified or extended should a fire escape be located here). The main entrance end, to include an easy-access ramp to the doors, and a 'drive' to the north track will also be concreted. He will also be asked to complete the landscaping of the open space and to lay turf there. This work will begin on 17 Mar.
- 5.5 An approximate estimation of the costs of the above was given as: SB to finish the south wall: £5000; the contractor's costs for the path and landscaping: £6000; turfing: £1000 – all this to come out of the £19000 reserve funds that remain. It was realised that not all the projects (on the current list) could be funded. It was agreed that renovating of the floor and improving the lighting should come before revamping the toilets and storage.
- 5.6 D Day 80 (6 June). Deferred to the next meeting.
- 5.7 Badlesmere 10k 2025. SB requested that its promotion should start earlier than the date of this year's run had it taken place (i.e. before September 2024), and that a proactive sub-committee be formed to assist him, in addition to those who help with the setting up and on the day. The sub-committee will consist of SB, CM, DA and RB (to be confirmed) with other volunteers helping when needed. The expected invoice from Chip Timing for the 2024 Run has still not been received.

## **6 The Lees**

- 6.1 North Track (Jan item 7.3). A weekend of repairs was carried out on the north track recently. Cost allocation for this and previous work will be added to the agenda of the next meeting. A discussion on future repairs – the form they will take and their funding – is imperative.
- 6.2 Trees (Jan item 7.4). The Estate Administrator and their Woodland Consultant have looked at the tree in question and have concluded that although it shows some decay it does not warrant felling. However, one branch will be removed that is near to the footpath and style. The committee and residents are reminded "that, although well meant, no work on trees can be undertaken, unless clearing fallen dead wood and [then] not with the use of a mechanical saw (chainsaws or similar). This is due to insurance as well as health and safety requirements. However we always endeavour to act quickly on any reported trees which are blocking access." The communication received from the Estate did also state that they do "appreciate the time and care that the committee and residents take in looking after the Lees."
- 6.3 The committee was reminded that the Spring Clear Up of the Lees is scheduled for Saturday, 23 March, starting at 9.00 am. All who can, please assist.

## **7 Governance**

- 7.1 Charity status update (Jan 3.10). CM is still pursuing getting the village hall CIO status.
- 7.2 Donation received. In conversation with the Estate's Administrator CM described the efforts the committee were going to with its limited funds to renovate the village hall. As a consequence the village hall has received a donation of £100 towards the work.
- 7.3 CM has applied for a grant from a new small grants scheme opened by Defra as the successor of the Platinum Jubilee Fund.
- 7.4 Advice on how to receive financial support from the Parish Council has been received following an approach by CM. A request for financial help will be submitted.

## **8 Safety and Crime (no items)**

## **9 AOB**

- 9.1 Village Hall Car Park. The recent AGM held by EKOGG resulted in some 20 cars being parked. Although the situation was exacerbated by existence of a bonfire (yet to be lit) at the edge of the carpark and a skip next to the fence (both from the renovation work being carried) and by the heavy rainfall of late, it was felt that relying on the lees as a place to park in winter was not a sensible idea. IE to ask EKOGG if they can hold their AGM in summer. Expanding the hard standing is also a priority, and the use of a plastic grid to extend it even further will be considered.
- 9.2 (From SE) The daffodils around the mound of the village sign are about to bloom, to join the splendid display of the others along the A251.
- 9.3 A reminder that the council bin emptying days are changing next week resulted in a discussion (although somewhat outside the remit of the committee) during which all agreed that central government and local councils are not doing enough to ensure recycling happens, such as insisting that wherever possible materials that can be recycled are used (in industry/retail, etc.), not allowing recyclable and non-recyclable components to be stuck together, having a uniform bin system (colour and contents) across the country, and educating the population as what is and is not recyclable.

**The meeting ended at 9.00 pm.**

**The next committee meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, 14<sup>th</sup> May, in the village hall, after the AGM (which will start at 6.30 pm).**