

BADLESMERE LEES AND HALL COMMITTEE MEETING

Tuesday, 26 November 2024

Committee members present: Chris Moore (Chair), Ian Earl (taking notes), Dave Austin, Gareth Fulton, Fred Gregory, Charlie Kirby.

1 Apologies received from: Rick Blackman, Steve Burt, Sue Earl, Ben Pullen, Tom Sisley.

2 Approval of minutes

2.1 The minutes of the September meeting were approved.

3 Matters arising (numbers in parentheses refer to entries in the September minutes)

3.1 (3.2) Footpaths cabinet: IE has contacted KCC PROW and was told that the Ramblers (walking charity) are preparing and funding the replacement maps, and have been forwarded our request.

3.2 (3.4) Northern layby post(s): GF is still to coordinate its(their) erection.

3.3 (3.5) Speed calming signage on the north track is yet to be progressed.

3.4 (3.6) Posts. No actions or results yet.

3.5 (3.8) A portion of the bonfire has been burnt – with care taken to ensure no hibernating hedgehogs were affected (none were disturbed).

3.6 (3.9) Since the car park is unlikely to have been extended by February, it has been suggested to EKOGG that they hold their AGM later in the year.

4 Accounts

4.1 The current balances in the four accounts as at 26 Nov 2024 were:

BPH: current = £2 239.77, reserve = £7 692.41;

BLPC: current = £1 539.21, reserve = £7 385.52.

4.2 IE has requested payments, where applicable, from the regular hirers to cover bookings until the end of the calendar year.

4.3 To cover the cost of re-charging the e-cards that are required by the hall heaters' meter, 50p will be added to the cost of buying e-cards in addition to their face value. This will be refunded for cards returned unused. Regular hirers have already been informed of this change.

4.4 CAS have sent an insurance quote wherein subsidence cover has been removed, and a request for a 'rebuild cost assessment' or a 'property reinstatement survey'. CM/RB

4.5 100 Club: The winners for July to November are Linda Thompson, Sarah Pullen, Rachel Sisley, Gareth Fulton, and Lorraine Blackman. All members will have an equal chance of being drawn in the December draw (which will take place at the Wine & Wisdom).

5 The Lees – North Track repairs

5.1 Clarification was sought from GF in respect of the invoice he submitted after the committee meeting in May (it pertained to work done immediately before the 10k Run of September 2023), and the two other invoices for materials purchased this year. They will be paid as soon as practically possibly.

- 5.2 It was agreed that the ideas behind the arrangements for looking after the lees and its tracks drawn up in the 1970s no longer apply. Maintenance of the tracks will, from 2025, be the responsibility of the residents on the two tracks. The two tracks will be independent of each other. GF will continue to coordinate the maintenance of the North Track, and CK will take on the South Track. It is envisaged that a request for practical and/or financial help from residents will go out whenever work and/or materials are required. The village hall will be regarded as a North Track household and contribute accordingly. Residents should be informed of planned work and associated costs before it is commenced. CM to write to all residents affected to explain the change, and inform the Lees Court Estate. GF to find out what contribution by the Estate could be expected, from a legal standpoint (one or more properties may have a valid claim) and past practice.
- 5.3 The maintenance of the laybys on the A251 was not discussed, but following on from the decision above, should become the concern of those living on the main road.
- 5.4 CM met with Nichola Rothwell, Project Surveyor from Southern Housing (Maidstone Office), on 2nd October 2024, as they are now Leavemere's social housing providers following a recent merger of societies. Ms Rothwell explained that the track and drive to Leavemere were causing concern for Southern and its residents. CM explained that the track is maintained when funds allow, but as the Landlord of Leavemere, their current and past iterations have never contributed to the committee for its maintenance. Therefore, any work on the tracks had been paid for by fellow residents in the village and our fundraising efforts. Ms Rothwell explained that Southern would like to start contributing to the track maintenance and that they had plans for other capital projects in and around Leavemere to make it easier for residents to access the track and public transport. Some of these included new permanent walking paths (particularly to the bus stop), better drainage by means of a new soakaway and a new driveway. CM explained that the committee would probably support these new additions and help in any way possible.
- Following the meeting, emails were exchanged where CM confirmed the contact details of the land's freeholder of the Lees (the Estate). CM also clarified that the last payment for track maintenance was £550 from the previous landlord in April 2012, with no other payments found going back to 1999; a grant from the South East Consortium's Social Value Fund was used for hall access improvements but could not be allocated to track repairs, as it is funded by Southern Housing's contractors, not Southern Housing directly, and this was a condition of the application that it must be spent on the hall. Ms Rothwell asked to attend the committee's next meeting, CM has made an open invitation to future meetings should Southern wish to present their designs for these future projects and start contributing to the track's maintenance.
- 5.5 Maintenance of the lees, such as the mowing of its grass, Spring Clean-ups, tackling the encroachment of brambles and the like from the copse and around the clumps of trees, and any wilding projects that may be initiated, will continue to be the remit of the Lees Preservation Committee. The 100 Club flyer will need to be amended accordingly and the change may encourage more support from villagers who in the past have not wanted to contribute to the maintenance of the tracks. It should be noted that at the recent and current membership numbers the 100 Club alone does not bring in sufficient income to cover the cost of the mowing.

6 The Hall

6.1 Refurbishment Works. No developments since the last meeting.

6.2 Car Park Extension. No actions taken as yet.

7 Community Events

7.1 10k Run Update. With SB now being unable to attend the subcommittee meeting which had earlier been rescheduled to 4 Dec, it will now happen in January.

7.2 Wine and Wisdom. With a last minute rush of enthusiasm, the committee has pulled together to put on this event on 30 Nov. FG has written the questions and designed the scoreboard, CM has successfully advertised the event (11 tables and more than 80 participants already), and IE has cleared the stage and will score on the night. SE, LB, RB will take on the setting up, organise the distribution and collection of answer sheets, and run the raffle. DA will provide the PA system. Sheldwich Village Hall has kindly offered to supply the extra chairs needed. Committee members are encouraged to source more items for the raffle. The December 100 Club draw will be included.

7.3 VE Day 80. The Pageantmaster has informed CM that celebrations will be taking place on 8 May 2025, and the lighting of beacons will be included. It was agreed to join in. CK will load the beacon, and DA will supply the PA and act as MC. Details of the event will be decided on nearer the time.

8 Governance

8.1 CM and IE have met and an application for CIO status for the Parish Hall is being prepared.

9 Safety and Crime

9.1 Nothing to report.

10 AOB

10.1 Geocaching is an outdoor recreational activity in which participants use GPS to find or position containers, called *geocaches* or *caches*, at given locations, creating a modern day form of orienteering. In locations where the number of caches exceed twelve, grateful geocachers undertake litter picking as a thank you. The Lees was recently visited and two bags of litter were seen to be collected. The committee wishes to thank the geocachers and wish them fun in their pursuits.

10.2 The Halloween Event organised by CM on 19 October was very well attended and thoroughly enjoyed by young and old alike. £502 was raised (for the Lees Preservation Committee). CM wants to thank DA, in particular, for his help in setting up the projection which formed a critical component of the occasion.

The meeting ended at 8.00 pm.

The next committee meeting is scheduled for 6.30 pm, on Tuesday, 14th January, in the village hall.