

# St Margaret's Hall Management Committee Minutes of Meeting

Friday. 16th September 2016. 1900

## **1. Present**

Ann Franklin, Vicky Franklin, Maria Hawkins, Charles James, Jacqueline Pyne, John Macdonald (Chair).

## **2. Apologies**

Chris Bailward (Deputy Chair), Gareth Cherry (Treasurer), Emilie Gordon, Gillian Miles, Tim O'Keeffe, Hannah Williamson.

## **3. Minutes of previous meeting on 7th May 2016.**

Previously circulated, signed.

## **4. Matters arising.**

Memorial for June Wood. Blackmoor Vale Gifts and Trophies in Sturminster Newton have produced a plaque for the memorial and it is presently with a blacksmith who is fashioning a metal stake so that the plaque can be placed in front of the wild cherry tree, which appears to have taken well.

Lighting. JM apologised; he has still made no contact with Rupert Martin of Dextra, but will attempt to do so. Andrew Tarling has said the Mr. Martin can be found occasionally at the Half Moon of an early evening and will effect an introduction. Action. JM.

Crockery. JP has sourced the Athena Hotelware crockery and has found a website that offers a discount on the original prices. The committee has already approved the spend for 72 places of crockery at the last committee meeting. Action. JM.

Floor. JM briefed the committee meeting on his conversations with Dave Upchurch, who laid the original floor when the building was extended in 1999/2000. He asked him about our options. JM specifically requested that he consider:

1. A total relaying of the floor. Firstly, he said, because of the nature of the wood and the way the floor is laid with secret nailing, he would be unlikely to reclaim more than 30% of the wood. The cost of laying the floor with new wood @ £96 per square metre would be in the region of 9 to £10,000. In our present circumstances this would be prohibitive.

2. Laying some sort of expansion strip along one side of the wall. The difficulty with this is, because of the repairs already carried out and the nature of the movement, the positioning of the strip would render it ineffective.

3. A comprehensive repair with a new penny gap introduced for expansion.

Dave went on to say that we must get to grips with the real cause of the moisture levels. It is inevitable that some of the moisture will come from air blowing underneath the floor through the air bricks, but this is not the major cause of the wood expansion. It is notable that there has never been any distortion on the North side of the floor in the hall; the part that is adjacent to the old kitchen. The boards adjacent to the West wall have a width of anything up to 86 millimetres and the

unexpanded boards on the North and East of the floor area have a regular width of 83.5 millimetres. It is also notable that the discolouration of the wood caused by water ingress is only around the porch area. When Dave laid the floor originally, he did so at the same time as the tarmac was being laid outside the Hall. It was noticeable that when the laying of the tarmac had been completed the water content on the bare earth below the floor increased. He described it as a mud bath. We inspected the outside of the building adjacent to the areas of the discoloured wood and it is fairly obvious that by abutting the tarmac next to the wall it has allowed the water to bridge the wall. There doesn't appear to be an obvious damp course. I gather that prior to the tarmac being laid the outside of the hall was laid to cinder chippings, thus allowing rain water to drain away in, what was effectively, a natural soak-away. We came to the conclusion that one way to rectify the problem was to introduce a french trench next to the wall either side of the porch. Interestingly, when JM moved into his house in the village he had a damp wall, illogically South facing. It appeared that one of the previous owners had bridged the damp course by laying soil up against the wall. JM solved the problem by putting in a french trench (basically digging out the soil adjacent to the wall to a depth of 2 feet and filling it with gravel).

Logically, the solution is to dig a french trench either side of the porch as soon as possible and rectify the floor towards the end of the summer. This would have the benefit of being the most cost effective remedy. The committee agreed that this would be the best solution and JM will get estimates for the work. Action. JM.

Sewage. JM contacted Pete White of Wessex Waste Disposal and he confirmed that he had never emptied the sewage tank at the hall. He also was of the opinion that the Hall may be on the mains. JM checked the architects plans for the building when it was extended 1999/2000 and the foul water is marked to run off to a septic tank. This should preclude the necessity for the tank to be emptied regularly. Mr. White suggests that the water flowing from the tank manhole cover is likely to be the product of excess rainwater. VF made the point that since it is a septic tank, no bleach should be used in the hall. JM will contact our cleaners to make sure that they do not use bleach when cleaning the hall. (He has contacted our cleaners, the Benjafields and advised them).

Emergency stairs. JM has undertaken to get quotes for the renewal of the newall post and balusters to be done at the same time as the French trench.

## **5. Chair report.**

*Very little to report for the summer. The damaged floor took longer to subside than previous years. This possibly as a result of dryer air above the floor resulting in a greater difference in the moisture levels, above and below the floor boards. Unfortunately, the vandals have been at their work again, breaking the high intensity light at the end of the building.*

## **6. Treasurer's report.**

*It has been another quiet summer with the usual stream of bookings with the only expense being the cost of the triennial electrical inspection. Unless there are any big expenses/charity events or works undertaken it's business as usual. We will continue to take advantage of the relatively low oil price and fill the oil tank prior to any cold snap.*

## **7. Booking's report.**

*A quiet summer with a smattering of bookings including a wedding reception. All the classes have started up as normal after the summer break.*

## **8. Sports report.**

*It appears that the senior team of the SCUFC and the reserves are no longer playing. The youth teams continue to utilise the sports field.*

## **9. Maintenance.**

Electrical Inspection. In Mark Pearson's report on the triennial electrical inspection he flagged up an increased level of impedance, which he considered bordered on the unsafe. He suggested we contact our electricity supplier. JM contacted SSE and they appeared post-haste. SSE determined that the increased impedance was between the electrical substation transformer and the pole outside the hall. They replaced the three phase 100 amp fuses with 60 amp fuses. This gives us greater protection and Mark is satisfied with the new installation.

Boiler. The boiler is due for yearly maintenance in November. The committee approved Martin Holloway as our servicing agent for the annual service. Action. JM.

## **10. AOB.**

Play group equipment/Toys. VF suggested that since the government reforms into child care it would be very unlikely that any new playgroups would be formed in the local area. In view of the age and the condition of the toys we might consider the disposal of the equipment. The committee agreed. VF undertook to contact the manager of the Balsam Centre to see if and they might be interested in utilising some of the equipment. VF also suggested that any of the toys that were serviceable could be donated to local charities, i.e. The Home Farm Trust. Action. VF.

Place of Safety. GC has confirmed that our insurance covers public liability.

Fund Raiser. John Sansom has approached JM and suggested that we might consider a joint fundraiser in the form of an auction for the Hall and the village defibrillator. Possibly, this to be held in the Spring. The committee agreed in principle.

Trustees. Tim O'Keeffe has resigned from the SCUFC because there are no longer senior sides to coach. Therefore he has decided to resign from the hall committee. A pity, because he brought a much needed common sense approach to dealing with the committee from a football club perspective. He suggested that if we wish to replace him we might select Michelle Hix, who is the secretary to the SCUFC. JP pointed out that as a user of the hall the SCUFC is entitled to have a member sitting on the committee.

Planning application for an Assembly Hall for Horsington School. VF has confirmed that Horsington School have applied for planning for a new assembly hall. This should not affect the Village Hall in the near future.

## **12. Date of next committee meeting.**

18th November 2016. 1900.

The meeting closed at 1950.