

Sunday, 2 February 2025

Minutes of Matfen Village Hall AGM

- **Present:** Rachael Dempsey (RD), Struan Wilson (SW), Richard Szweda (RS), Sarah Belton (SB), Phil Chaffer (PC), Chloe Watson-Webb(CW).
- 1. **Apologies:** Liz Bishop, Rev Rachel, Jean Conteh, Jenny Osborne.
- 2. **Minutes** of last AGM: proposed SW seconded PC.
- 3. **Annual Report:**
 - Rachael gave her thanks to the trustees for their dedication and support for the village hall.
 - The highlights of the year included the installation of the generator and the emergency plans. The generator had been purchased with support from the lottery fund and the parish council and the village hall.
 - Looking ahead regarding the emergency hub the next parish council meeting will be attended by Nigel Fisher, Contingencies officer Northumberland CC and Angela Watt, Northumberland communities together. This meeting will discuss in further detail what community emergency hubs are and how this would run. Prior to the most recent storm (Eowyn in Jan 25) RD had placed an announcement on the village face book page that the village hall would be available if needed. Discussed in the event of power cuts mobile coverage may well be down and a satellite phone is one of the options for the emergency hub 'starlink' which could still be used. The emergency plan will be written and then the facility can be advertised to the local community. There may be some funding through the Northumberland communities together organisation.
 - Another highlight was the Village Fete and RD expressed huge thanks to Reverend Rachel and all the volunteers from the church for organising this.
 - The Halloween Children's Party was also a great event and RD expressed thanks to Chloe for initiating and organising this event. It is hoped this will be an ongoing fixture on the annual calendar and in future years may aim to raise some income from this event.
 - Dot and Phil Hardy ran a Christmas 'Jingle and Mingle' village get together which was really enjoyed.

- Book Club is another new user of the hall meeting every 6 weeks, this is run by Jenny Osborne and there are 13 individuals on the mailing list and 7-10 attend each session. (Including 2 of the trustees.)
- There are regular hirers of the hall; Jill, Jo, Ruth, Harry also the Matfen and Great Whittington WI, the parish council, the church, the cricket club and Run Nation.
- There is a newsletter which Jean Conteh puts out and this is distributed by Rev Rachel via email and also some people receive a paper copy. This is full of a variety of local information and there are a wide range of contributors but more are also wanted.
- Rachael gave special thanks to Phil who had stayed on in the role of treasurer despite having moved out of Matfen and has put together the information for the accounts.
- Rachael closed looking forward to another successful year ahead!
- **Appointment/election of trustees for 2025**
- Our trustees for 2024 were:
 - Rachael Dempsey, Phil Chaffer, Richard Szweda, Struan Wilson, Sarah Belton.
 - PC and RW retired from the Trustee role.
 - RD, SW and SB expressed interest in standing again. Chloe Watson-Webb also volunteered to become a trustee.
 - It was proposed that these 4 trustees should be put forward for 2025.
 - Officer roles and appointment of new signatories will be agreed upon at the first Trustee meeting following the AGM.
 - The requirement for trustees for the charity is more than three and up to 9.
 - Acceptance proposed by Rachael, seconded by Struan.

3. Treasurer's Report

Please see summary of finances and also treasurer's report.

- Discussed that for the past 3 years expenses have exceeded income and that although there is a healthy balance it was important to consider ways of increasing income so that the income covers expenses. The main reason for increased costs was due to bills and notably heating bills - biomass boiler.
- It was discussed that the hire rate has stayed the same for a number of years and that now may be the time to look at a small increase in hire charges.
- It was also noted that certain events, for example the Quiz Nights and the Christmas Market did not occur last year meaning no income was generated from these events.

- Considering hire charge there are about 7 hours a week of regular classes which occur in the Village Hall.
- The current charges for regular hirers is £10 / hour, this could be increased to £12.50 / hour for the first hour then £10 thereafter.
- The charge for standard hire is £15 / first hour and £10 thereafter, this could be increased to £20 / first hour and then £10 /hour thereafter with a £5 charge for use of the kitchen.
- Discussion that in the forthcoming year there were plans to use the hall for a wedding reception and for local elections. There are also people who book returning birthday parties.
- RS asked if there was likely to be any money coming in from the council for acting as an emergency hub? However, this is not currently something which is on offer.
- WiFi - there are plans in place to access free WiFi for the village hall. Chloe raised the idea that this could enable the village hall to be used as a community space by those working from home. There was discussion around the idea we could advertise the use of the village hall for small meetings.
- Looking forward the Church would be happy to organise a Quiz Night.
- Using the hall as a venue for eating food from the takeaway vans which visit the village was tried once but was not very successful with most people choosing to return home with their take aways. The pop - up bar outside the village hall had been a very popular event and this could be something which could be looked at again.
- Actions from treasurer's report: - RD will send round a draft email with the details of the increase in the hiring rates of the VH and then send this to the hirers with a plan to change this in April. The committee felt that if this was going to mean any of the hirers would not be able to afford this we would consider the options, but it was felt the price increase was modest and was to cover the increased expenditure from costs, especially heating. RD to ask at the parish council meeting if there is any money to be received to cover costs the VH incurs as a result of being an emergency hub.
- Accounts were proposed by RS and seconded by RD.

5. Report from the User Groups:

Jean Conteh had written a report from the Matfen and Great Whittington WI which meets in Matfen VH in the winter months and Great Whittington VH over the summer months. Following one of the meetings there are had been difficulties in using the AV equipment which was compounded by the usual people not being on hand to help set it up. It was raised having written instructions available and RD discussed there are 2 sets of written instructions available. The WI had asked if the VH could buy a laptop so this is available to use. This was considered but issues with exposure to computer viruses, maintaining and updating it did not make this a viable option at this time.

6. AOB

We had already discussed an increase in hire charges so the income and expenses of the VH balances.

7. Date for next AGM

Feb 1st 2026.