



DVHA - the Association for Dorset Village Halls

Minutes of the tenth Annual General Meeting

held on 14 May 2016 at Okeford Fitzpaine Village Hall, DT11 0RE

Present

22 Representatives from 12 member halls were present + guests and speakers. Lists of attendees and apologies available on request.

1. Welcome & Introductions

Our Chairman, Mike Burt (MB), welcomed those present to Okeford Fitzpaine Village Hall. He said it was nice to see so many attending. For those that are interested, there is a leaflet on the history of the hall available.

2. Minutes of the previous AGM

Minutes were emailed in advance and copies were available for those at the meeting. Vincent Haslam (VH) proposed and Shirley Rice (SR) seconded that they be agreed. Agreed unanimously and signed.

3. Matters arising

None

4. Chairman's report - Mike Burt

Good morning everyone and thank you for making the effort to attend the AGM. I did not start the year as chairman. Initially the chairman of each meeting was elected at the start of a meeting. As the year progressed the committee felt that this was not the best option and I volunteered to take on the chairmanship until the AGM.

The executive committee has worked hard to move the association forward, and the folding of The National Village Halls Forum gave added impetus to that effort.

Funding cuts to local authorities has led to cuts to many services. Not least as far as village halls are concerned is the loss of Village Hall Advisors.

Despite DVHA only having a small committee of five spread fairly widely across the County, they have continued to meet and do their best to encourage more members and look at the sort of services that DVHA should provide, the Website being one. Our thanks go to Baird and Steve for their efforts in this technical area.

This is where you come in, as members, the committee needs your feedback on the sort of services you require, and how the website works for you.

My thanks goes to Mary Mathers our secretary and John Clode our Treasurer for the work that they do in keeping the administration of the association on track.

5. Secretary's report

Mary Mathers (MM) echoed MBs thanks to the other members of the committee. She also welcomed Tony Horry from Kewstoke VH and Treasurer to the NVHF.

6. Treasurer's report

The accounts for the year 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2016, prepared by the Treasurer John Clode (JC) were circulated. (Copy attached.)

7. Organisation & Subscriptions

It was queried why the membership had declined last year. Baird Oldrey (BO) responded that the membership fee used to be collected by DCA with their affiliation fee. Since that process was changed, we have been trying to rebuild the membership but last year with his illness he has not been so active. The membership workload is now being spread among the Executive.

Marion Eldrett (ME) proposed and Caroline Tory (CT) seconded that the membership fee remain at £10. Agreed unanimously. VH queried if the membership fees would cover increased activities. Steve Hawker responded that it is better to increase membership numbers rather than increase the fees. He said that halls are amazing places for people to meet rather than sitting at home. But, while some halls are thriving and have money in the bank, others are struggling and need help.

8. Proposed changes to the Constitution

MM outlined that the reasons for the changes to the Constitution were to regularise the revised ways of working. The original concept had been that there would be area representatives on the main committee. This had not happened in practice for some time. The other main change was to update the accounting period to April to March to bring it into line with other organisations.

Crayston Lee (CL) proposed and Debbie Weller (DW) seconded that the changes be accepted. Agreed unanimously.

9. Reports

National Village Halls Forum

MM reported that, at its last AGM, it was proposed that the NVHF be wound up. This was modified at the meeting to explore options for collaboration with ACRE. Since then, it has been decided to migrate the Forum into a virtual network and reference group on village hall matters for ACRE. TH said that we have 9,000 village halls but can't find volunteers to help. Government support for ACRE is being reduced and there are no funds for Village Halls Advisors. The NVHF committee will support ACRE but we are not sure how this will work yet.

Annette Newman (AN) said we should knock on the doors of MPs. TH said that Lois Rose had helped us by organising a meeting with Oliver Letwin MP. MB said that the Forum should let VHs know the results – he didn't know that individual halls could join.

DCA

Simon Thompson sent his apologies as he has only recently returned to work part-time after health problems. Jayme Reeves had represented DCA at the ACRE training session and sent a resumé of the topics discussed.

Dorsethalls.net website

SH & BO reported that the website was wiped out by problems with the service provider that affected sites across Europe. SH has managed to recover most of it back to Xmas 2015 and BO is now re-instating changes made since. They have now reached 7 March.

The website is an invaluable resource for halls to promote their facilities and events and, now that we have more members, we are planning to redevelop it to make it more user friendly.

Website entries can be updated by the halls themselves and halls were asked to check if their entry was correct.

CL asked how we contacted all halls. SH said that only 16 email addresses had bounced back and he will try to get in touch with them through other means. AN said that North Dorset produce a list.

VH said this was an admirable idea but takes a lot of work and needs to be promoted. 90% of his hall's bookings come through their own website. MB said that help for VHs on computers and websites was an objective for DVHA. Another was licensing.

10. Election of Officers

The following 5 committee members have indicated that they are willing to stand again namely

Mike Burt, Mary Mathers, John Clode, Baird Oldrey, Steve Hawker

VH proposed that they be elected, seconded by John Dowsett (JD). Agreed unanimously.

JD volunteered to join the committee. Proposed by BO and seconded by MB. Agreed unanimously.

The following indicated they were willing to continue as officers:

Chairman: Mike Burt

Secretary: Mary Mathers

Treasurer: John Clode

VH proposed that they be elected, seconded by ME. Agreed unanimously.

11. Members' current issues

Information Leaflets AN said that the leaflets that Lois Rose circulated were very helpful. Eg PRS/PPL clarification. MM said that the ACRE leaflets are still updated and available from DCA.

Broadband The information on speed is misleading some villages have no provision. Portesham used their MP to apply pressure.

Insurance A couple of village halls have had problems with the definition of hirers' Public Liability cover. MM is discussing with the insurer.

12. Any Other Business

Halls requested receipts/certificates for their membership and suggested that the website address be added to the certificate.

That concluded the business of the AGM.

This was followed by an excellent buffet lunch prepared by Sue Oldrey helped by Diane Burt.

13. Acoustics

(The AGM was running late so this talk was brought forward in the agenda.)

Lloyd Spracklen of Concorde Floors and Ceilings gave a talk on the basics of acoustics and the importance of considering acoustics in the design of village halls. Here is a brief summary of his main pointers.

In the past ceilings were installed to hide problems. Now they can be acoustic, hygienic and decorative. If it's difficult to hear, it can give people – especially those that are hard of hearing – problems socialising. The acoustics are often not considered in the design of a new hall.

The main problem is reverberation and how it can be reduced. There is also the decibel level and how noise can travel inside and outside a building.

A reverb test needs to be reduced to less than 1 second. Different types of tiles have different characteristics. Soft panels soak up noise and echo. A harder tile will give some bounce back which may suit a space used for music. There has to be a compromise in a multi-use environment.

Lloyd showed samples of different materials and said that a free survey could be done for halls experiencing problems.

Mary Mathers
Secretary, Dorset Village Halls Association