

**Minutes of Village Hall meeting:
Held on 28th February 2022 at 7-30pm in the Greater Hall**

Present: Douglas Oliver, John Offord, Alastair Minnis, Cliff Ellershaw, Sandra Thomas, Samantha Brennan, Christine Little, Karen Reilly, Mark Douglas, Christine Holmes, Kenneth Gunn, Bruce Robertson, Charles Strang, Annette Paterson.

Apologies for absence: Audrey Rae, Kate Warner, Kenny Ovens, Rachael Hamilton MSP, John Lamont MP.

Vote of thanks: Douglas Oliver warmly thanked Christine Little for her exemplary work as Booking Clerk during one of the most difficult times in the hall's existence and presented her with a token of our appreciation. Samantha Brennan was thanked for agreeing to take on the position on a trial basis.

1. The minutes of the previous meeting were approved.
2. Matters arising were covered later in the meeting.
3. Treasurer's report. John Offord cogently summarized our financial position, noting that currently we have a balance of £45,375.
4. Alastair summarized the ongoing implementation of our Fire regulations report. An updated fire & evacuation procedures document was circulated; copies will be placed in all three halls and posted on our webpage. Fire alarm tests shall be undertaken (once a week) by Karen. Regular hall users are being asked to carry out at least two fire drills per year. Some emergency lighting covers will be replaced with ones showing the disability (wheelchair) icon. It was agreed that a fire door should be fitted to the stage entrance (from the kitchen). Our red Fire Regulations folder is on prominent display in the kitchen together with first-aid kits and an incident book (in which many kinds of incident, not just those involving a fire, are to be recorded).
5. A summary of building and maintenance work was provided by Dougie and Alastair. The hardwired electrics have been tested; we plan a PAT test. We have renewed and received the necessary licenses allowing us to play background/canned music at certain events and host live music performances. Our general Entertainments License (applied for last August) from the SBC has not yet arrived, but Alastair (who has made several phone calls) has been assured by an official that all is in order. Work outstanding: re-slating of the roof on the newer part of the hall (held up by difficulties in obtaining scaffolding), dealing with the broken light cover in the Lesser Hall, repairs to stonework near the main door, and better stairs to be constructed in eaves storage space.
6. Lockdown easing and current hire policies were addressed. Alastair circulated a draft of an updated hirers' information pack and requested input. Re Covid precautions, it was noted that from March 21st various measures shall cease to be mandatory and become strong recommendations. The legal requirement to wear face coverings in certain indoor settings will be converted to guidance. However, the continued wearing of face coverings in our hall will be strongly recommended, except when users are engaged in permitted activities. From that date we are no longer obliged to collect information for the NHS Test & Protect scheme; this practice shall cease. As ever, the hall's policies in this sphere are being guided by information provided by The Bridge. We shall continue to use our key safe, with only authorized persons being given the code (which is changed frequently).
7. The Village Concert Band was welcomed back to the hall; we look forward to a long and fruitful relationship. An agreement was signed by Douglas Oliver and Kenneth Gunn on 29.1.2022, detailing the space to be used in the hall for band practice and for storage. It shall be reviewed every 4 months. The Upper Hall cannot be a designated and exclusive 'band room', because other groups shall be

using it, and therefore it must be kept clear of all equipment following band events. It is hoped that a 'block booking' of Monday evenings at 7-30pm can be made, but in the meantime any bookings shall be on an ad hoc basis.

On 15.2.2022 *St Boswells Live!* signed an agreement with the committee (the signatories being Douglas Oliver and Graeme Mitchell) gifting to the hall all the sound and lighting equipment therein which previously was under their ownership. The hall's insurance policy has been updated to cover this equipment. As part of the agreement, *St Boswells Live!* is not to be charged for any use which it may make of the equipment in the hall. Andy Drane was thanked for providing the legal advice which enabled the drafting of this technical document. It was noted that Graeme Mitchell had suggested that other users might be charged appropriate amounts for certain uses of the equipment, thereby generating more income for the hall. This is under review.

8. The matter of acquiring an artifact to commemorate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee was discussed. Following various suggestions, a commemorative light (to echo the existing 1902 lights commemorating Edward VII's coronation) found most favour. This will be positioned over the front door. Mark Douglas showed us a cardboard mockup which he kindly had made. The light is to be constructed by Mike Fox of Inspired Fabrication; it shall be accompanied by a wall plaque explaining that it was constructed in celebration of HM's jubilee. Alastair reported that he had applied to the SBC for funding, requesting the maximum amount of £2500.

9. There followed a discussion of the Platinum Jubilee commemoration plus Village Week events from 29th May – 5th June, with important input from Christine Holmes and Annette Peterson. The Village Hall Committee affirmed its wish to be a centre for many of the planned events.

10. AOB. Alastair reported that The Bridge had won a major award from the UK Community Fund (of £160,854), to help communities deliver larger scale projects. This will involve virtual workshops on greening projects in community centres, the development of digital learning centres, and developing incubator unit space (to help new local originations and businesses). Given that village halls are seen as 'information hubs' for the dissemination of information, we have been asked to spread the word. Charles Strang raised the issue of the hall being used as a help centre in the event of community emergencies; Dougie affirmed that it certainly would be made available for any such purpose. Charles asked about obtaining an emergency generator, to ensure a power supply for the building. This will be investigated.

Alastair made an appeal for pictures or memorabilia relating to St Boswells' celebration of the coronation of Queen Elizabeth in 1953 – and indeed, of any village celebrations of HM's jubilees. He wishes to make photographic copies of this material, in light of the upcoming Queen's Platinum Jubilee. Contact: secretary@stboswellsvillagehall.org

11. Next meeting. Given the ongoing uncertainties due to Covid, this is to be determined at a later date.

Alastair Minnis (secretary).

Any queries, comments etc. should be addressed to: secretary@stboswellsvillagehall.org