

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE VISCOUNTESS BARRINGTON'S MEMORIAL
HALL AND RECREATION GROUND TRUST
HELD IN THE MEMORIAL HALL, SHRIVENHAM ON MONDAY 7TH JANUARY 2008**

PRESENT: Councillor R Bartle
Councillor Mrs C Dawson
Councillor Mrs S Day
Councillor K Downton
Councillor C Holman
Councillor S Howell
Councillor Mrs P Mullin
Councillor P Saunders (Chairman)
Councillor S Spencer
Councillor G Tidmarsh
Councillor B Watson

In attendance Mr D Pratt

APOLOGIES: There were none.

858 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the Meeting of 3rd December were approved and signed

859 MATTERS ARISING

All covered as agenda items.

860 ACCOUNTS

The accounts paid in November and for payment were approved with the addition of:

R W Gay	Dec	Leaf clearing	£102.31	1599
Davis Home Centre	Dec	Light bulbs etc	£24.95	1600

861 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were none.

862 WEBPAGE

Cllr Howell reported that he had received a new quotation but had not been able to conclude the income generation agreement. The new quotation does not include the hall booking system but an on-line paging system would support the existing hall booking system. After further investigation he believed it would be possible to include this in the package, particularly in the light of the RBS system which would allow for further scoping. The site would also have an automated payment system for advertisements. On the proposition of Cllr Mrs Day, seconded by Cllr Bartle, it was resolved to accept the updated quotation.

863 STAFF MATTERS

The advertisement for a new cleaner and a key holder had resulted in two enquiries, and a possible third to be confirmed. The interviewing committee would be Cllrs Day, Spencer and Tidmarsh.

863 ANNUAL CHARITY COMMISSION REPORT

Councillors received copies of the Annual Charity Commission Report which was accepted.

864 HIGHWORTH ROAD ENTRANCE

Members had previously been circulated with a letter from the VB Trust for Ex Servicemen and Women offering £8,000 to close the existing vehicle entrance. It was noted that the principle regarding payment of money from the proceeds of the sale was allowable under Charity Commission rules. The Chairman proposed that the Trust employ Messrs Hinton Newport to negotiate with the Ex Servicemen's Trust Advisor regarding an acceptable offer. Employing a professional valuer would enable the Trusts to withdraw from the bargaining positions. He further proposed that we consult with our solicitors regarding the legality of the possible closure of the existing vehicle entrance. The offer to make a grant of easement through the new entrance would effectively remove the Trust's control of the land. Further third parties could close the new track. Should a right of way be closed, it would be possible to take the owner to court. In the Chairman's opinion it would be best if both sides retain the services of solicitors in order to understand the complexities of this possible agreement. Cllr Saunders suggested that prior to the valuers meeting it would be advisable for this Trust to meet and seek a maximum or minimum settlement figure, which would include this Trust's the legal costs. Cllr Mrs Day felt it was best to appoint professionals to carry out these delicate negotiations. It was agreed on the proposition of Cllr Watson, seconded by Cllr Howell, that the Trusts negotiate through professional advisers to find a way forward in this unpleasant dispute.

MEMORIAL HALL MATTERS

865 FLAT RENTAL

The Chairman withdrew for this item as he had business interests which could affect a frank and fair discussion. Cllr Mrs Day believed it was not a good idea to allow a family with young children or pets to rent the flat. Events could be noisy at times. Cllr Mrs Mullin agreed saying that there were too many dangers within the Hall should children be allowed to play unsupervised. Cllr Holman proposed that the rental position be deferred for one month, which was supported by Cllr Howell. Cllr Tidmarsh believed there were two issues, 1) will the Trust rent the flat and 2) which mechanics would be used to manage the Hall. Cllr Mrs Day pointed out that without a managing agent the Trust would effectively carry out landlord's duties regarding work and repairs. Cllr Howell agreed with Cllr Holman that the rental could be discussed at next month's meeting. Cllr Mrs Day warned the Trustees that without a managing agent the Trust Secretary would be seen as the Landlord's agent. Cllr Bartle had experience of letting property and without hesitation would appoint an agent. Cllr Holman reminded the meeting that an agent would find the tenant and manage the flat. Cllr Tidmarsh enquired whether there was an average rate for managing property and was informed an average fee would be approximately 12% of the rental. Cllr Mrs Day put forward the idea that an agent be employed to find a tenant but that the Trust manage the property. She also reminded the Trustees that they required the rental to offset increased costs for managing the Hall. Cllr Howell stated that if the Trust had confidence in the cleaner and key holder, the Trust would save 12% of the total rental by managing the flat. Cllr Holman, who also had some experience in letting property, stated that agents would become the first point of contact, would know how and when to employ tradesmen to carry out various work and that the Trust would be consulted before any major works were carried out. On the proposition of Cllr Tidmarsh, seconded by Cllr Bartle, it was **resolved** that three agents be approached for quotations to find a tenant and manage the property.

866 CAR PARK

Cllr Watson had inspected the recent work on the car park to provide an expansion piece between the plastic grid and the gravel board. In his opinion the work was satisfactory

excepting one small area where the grid had not been trimmed and this would need careful monitoring.

RECREATION GROUND MATTERS

867 FLOODLIGHTING MUGA

This item had been carried over from the previous agenda and members were reminded by Cllr Tidmarsh that the reason to consider this work was to encourage youth to use the area for a greater length of time, thus relieving other lit areas of dangerous ball games. Cllr Saunders asked if the residents of Manor Close would be pleased for additional floodlighting but it was pointed out that both the tennis court and the football pitch were well lit. Cllr Spencer reminded Trustees that the Trust would need to incur expense for an electricity supply and pole lighting. Cllr Saunders was sure it would be possible to have a facility that was operated by a simple timing switch. Cllr Tidmarsh agreed, pointing out that the facility was in darkness the greater part of the year. He suggested the Trust seek advice from OPFA. Cllr Mrs Dawson had been reliably informed that solar powered lights were unproven. Cllr Howell suggested the Trust seek police advice. On the proposition of Cllr Tidmarsh, seconded by Cllr Saunders, it was resolved to seek advice from both OPFA and the Police.

868 RECREATION GROUND BENCHES

The Secretary advised that there were three, possibly four, commemorative benches required for the Recreation Ground. These would be to replace the existing benches along Manor Lane hedge and two additional benches close to the football pitch. Quotations had been received for provision of the benches and estimates were awaited for their installation. Once this information is received, the donors would be contacted for their agreement.

869 CHESTNUT TREE AVENUE

The Chairman asked the Trustees to reconsider the number of trees to be felled this winter. In his opinion it was better to fell six trees and continue with a similar number in following years. Cllr Mrs Day pointed out that the replacement trees would be more expensive and the Chairman believed that the logistics to water replacement trees would be difficult. Cllr Saunders proposed and Cllr Mrs Day seconded and it was **resolved** that a total of six trees be felled to include four at the western end of the avenue, and two at Manor Lane to facilitate the erection of the refurbished gate. Cllr Mrs Mullin enquired why it was necessary to fell so many trees but was satisfied when it was explained that the trees were mature, diseased and a replacement programme would take a number of years.

The meeting finished at 10.05 pm.