

MINUTES OF THE BRIDGNORTH COMMUNITY HALL (BCH)
Annual General Meeting
held on Monday 6th January 2020 10:45 am
in the Annexe to College House, St Leonards Close, Bridgnorth

Registered Charity No 1050804

Present:

Mr E Marshall (Chairman), Mrs C Walden, Mrs C Baines, Mr R Whittle OBE, Mrs K Hurst-Knight

In attendance:

Mr L Jakeman (Clerk to the Trustees): Mrs R Williams, Mrs R Follette

1. Apologies: Mrs S Stevens
2. Report from the Chairman.

It is a pleasure to report that the financial circumstances of the Charity improved during the last financial year, mainly due to two significant items.

The first was the big increase in income from around £25,000 per year to almost £32,000. For many years income seemed to be stuck around £25,000 per annum, but hopefully income figures will continue to rise.

The second item was the welcome decision by Bridgnorth Town Council taken in April 2019 to rescind £9,170 of council charges for 2018/19, which when compared with the previous year was a major cause of expenditure being reduced by over £10,000.

The Town Council took over responsibility for the Charity from the previous Trustees on 1st February 2015, and inherited a very healthy balance sheet, substantial financial reserves and a property and contents in good condition. The previous Trustees had done an excellent job, but had become weary of continuing, and although trying for many years had been unable to recruit further trustees. The Council stepped in to prevent possible adverse changes occurring, including perhaps the loss of the facility to the local community.

Unfortunately Councils do not have the freedom of action to do things which volunteer Trustees can choose to do, and this invariably led to increases in expenditure. Furthermore the Council and councillors chosen to be members of a Management Committee were unsure of their respective roles and responsibilities, and this has taken time to sort out.

A more recent major problem was the Town Council being informed by their various legal advisors that they had a legal responsibility to add VAT @ 20% on all invoices for work undertaken on behalf of the Charity. Services provided by the Council, primarily for labour in one form or another, were a major item of expenditure for this Charity, and in effect would have increased total expenditure by a figure approaching 20%, a not insignificant sum of money.

When the Town Council decided to rescind charges for 2018/19, there was a further resolution, a caveat, requesting that the Bridgnorth Community Hall Management Committee swiftly investigate all options to ensure future viability of Bridgnorth Community Hall that minimises the direct financial impact on the Town Council in future years, and to present these proposals to the Town Council for consideration.

Following that Council resolution, I am pleased to record that actions have been taken. With the agreement of the Charity Commission, the Managing Trustees are working towards agreeing a contract with the Council to make a payment for the provision of Council services which avoids the need for invoices to be raised, and thereby eliminates the matter of VAT.

Another major issue is to sort out legal matters relating to the Constitution of the Charity, and the role of Managing Trustees and Custodian Trustee. Significant steps have been taken on this matter.

3. End of year Accounts.

The end of year accounts as at 31 July 2019 (prepared by Wallace Crooke) were presented and approved for signature. Edward Marshall duly signed the accounts statements.

The relevant information from the approved accounts (attached) will now be uploaded to the Charity Commission website.

4. Election of officials.

(Note: The Town Council as sole trustee appoints individuals to the management committee and so the current membership is required only to appoint the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Management committee from the current membership).

The following appointments were approved:

Chairman – Edward Marshall

Deputy Chairman – Kirstie Hurst-Knight

5. Date of next AGM.

The date of the next AGM was set for Tuesday 1st December 2020.

6. Committee Meeting

It was noted that immediately after the AGM a Management Committee (business) meeting would be held.

The meeting closed 11.10 am.

Lee Jakeman
Clerk to the Trustees
Bridgnorth Community Hall