

**MINUTES OF THE LOW TOWN COMMUNITY HALL TRUSTEES MEETING
held on Friday 6 April 2018 at 2.00 p.m. in the Mayors Parlour, College House**

Present: E Marshall (Chairman), Dr J Buckley, Mrs J Onions, and R Whittle OBE

In attendance: Acting Clerk to the Trustees, B Ince
Minutes' secretary and transcribed by Mrs L Gardner

Absent: Mrs K Hurst-Knight

1. Fire Safety Announcement

The Chairman welcomed the Trustees to the meeting and gave a fire safety announcement.

2. Apologies

RESOLVED: that the apology for absence from Mrs S Stevens be received.

3. Minutes

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting of Trustees held on Wednesday 6 December 2017 be approved as a correct record of the meeting.

Dr J Buckley abstained from voting.

The following matters arising from the above minutes were raised and the following responses given:

- i) It was asked whether U3A had been in touch again regarding the purchase of a defibrillator and Members were reminded that there is a defibrillator in the decommissioned telephone kiosk in Bridge Street.
- ii) An update was requested regarding the agreement to display the Concordia Choir photograph in the meeting room and the photo to commemorate the opening of the hall 25 years ago elsewhere in the hall. Members were told that as far as the Chairman was aware both photographs are now on display.

4. Accounts for Payment

i) Time Sheet

Trustees were circulated with accounts paperwork which showed hours charged for Bridgnorth Town Council staff amounting to £1,091 for the Direct Labour Force hours and £2,084 for admin staff. Information was also provided of materials and services for LTCH which had been purchased and paid by the Town Council amounting to £310.82.

Clarification was sought with regards to these rechargeable items. The Acting Clerk to the Trustees undertook to look into re-wording the accounts to make them clearer and easier to understand.

Trustees were reminded that the LTCH financial year ended at the end of July and not April.

It had been agreed at the last meeting of the LTCH that going forward a formal contract was required between the Town Council and an accountancy firm and although this was yet to be progressed, it was suggested that this should perhaps wait until the new Town Clerk/Clerk to the Trustees was in post.

RESOLVED: that the following recharges be accepted; staff time amounting to £3,175 and other rechargeable items for £310.82.

ii) **Previous resolutions**

At their last meeting held on 6 December 2017, Trustees had stated that they felt that the RBS costs of £1,500 were very high for the amount of work needed for a charity the size of the LTCH and it had been agreed that a formal contract with the Town Council and an accountancy firm was required in order to move forward. It was agreed that this matter should be actioned as previously requested.

Trustees' attention was also drawn to previous resolutions made at the meeting held on 6 December 2017 which stated that the Clerk to the Trustees would draft a suitable contract for consideration by the Trustees to cover the provision of services to the Trust by the Clerk to the Trustees, Administration Services including hall bookings, Accounts and the Direct Labour Force including management time of the Outdoors and Properties Manager.

At that previous meeting, Trustees had also resolved to ask Wallace Crooke and RBS to quote for the work required to prepare the accounts.

As the above requests and resolutions had not yet progressed, it was agreed that they should now be actioned.

The quotation from RBS should also include a complete breakdown of the £1,500 previously charged including clarification of costs for the annual accounts and work carried out during visits to College House.

5. **Proposed Increase in Hire Charges**

The Chairman informed Trustees that based on paperwork listing hire charges in his possession, it appeared that increases in hire charges had already been instigated.

A discussion ensued.

RESOLVED: that retrospective approval be given to the increase of LTCH hire charges by 4% in line with the annual Bridgnorth Town Council fee review.

6. **Discretionary Rate Relief Review**

Circulated with Trustees agendas was information relating to the review of the current non-domestic rates discretionary rate relief policy which could result in the reduction or removal of the discretionary rate relief currently in effect.

RESOLVED: that a written formal representation be sent to the Revenues and Benefits Service Manager at Shropshire Council against this possible loss of non-domestic discretionary rate relief for the LTCH.

7. **Request for Wi-Fi**

In line with demand, enquiries had been made for the provision of Wi-Fi in the LTCH. Quotations had been sought and various costings circulated with Trustees' agendas.

RESOLVED: that subject to the inclusion of a Wi-Fi modem, that the quotation in the sum of £14.49 per month for line rental and Broadband (up to 18mb speeds), plus delivery of £4.99, be accepted.

8. Booking Update

Trustees had been supplied with a list of bookings between 1 January 2017 and 8 April 2018 and were reminded that bookings were up by 10% compared to twelve months ago.

Discussions ensued regarding the use of the hall and the advantage of being able to offer parking plus the availability of a hearing loop.

9. Caretaker Change in Working Hours

The Acting Clerk to the Trustees explained that the caretaker's hours had gradually increased from 16 hours per week to 20 hours per week but the additional bookings had resulted in several hours overtime becoming necessary most weeks (paid at normal rates). Discussions had taken place between the caretaker and the Acting Clerk to the Trustees and it had been mutually agreed to change the caretaker's hours to 25 per week to be reviewed again should bookings increase further.

11. Update on Emergency Work

The Acting Clerk to the Trustees reported that very little emergency work had been necessary since the last report. He did report however that an ongoing problem was that of unauthorised entry into the building whilst open for bookings and it was agreed that key holders should be asked to be extra vigilant whilst locking up the premises to ensure that on one is left in the building. The Trustees were aware that the toilet facilities in the hall were often used as public toilets.

In response to a query regarding whether there are adequate numbers of chairs available for use by hirers in the hall, the Acting Clerk to the Trustees undertook to ascertain how many were currently available and for the situation to be addressed or monitored as appropriate.

12. A request to use Low Town Community Hall as part of Danesford Grange Evacuation Plan

Correspondence had been received from MCG Care Ltd at Danesford Grange Care Home asking if they could use the LTCH as their emergency evacuation point in the event of a full site evacuation. A likely evacuation would consist of approximately 40 residents as well as a team of suitably trained staff.

Whilst Trustees would like to be of assistance, concerns were raised as to how the hall could be opened at short notice should an emergency arise during the night and how to minimise disruption caused to bookings already in progress during the emergency. It was thought that Danesford Grange would in all likelihood be writing to other venues also.

It was requested that the Acting Clerk to the Trustees contact MCG Care Ltd to suggest that any agreement would contain a caveat to say that the hall could only be used if available, that the Castle Hall would be offered as an alternative venue in the event of non-availability, that any emergency use of the building should cause minimum disruption, that clarification should be given as to who would stay with the evacuated residents and that insurance cover and risk assessments would need to be in place.

The meeting closed 3.35 p.m.