

**Draft minutes of the meeting held by Hamsey Parish Council as Sole  
Trustee of Beechwood Hall and Rural Park**

**Registered Charity Number 206200**

**Meeting held virtually on Google Meets on Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> February 2021 at  
7.15pm**

**This meeting was not open to the public**

**Present:** Cllr T d'Arienzo, Cllr K McBrown, Cllr C Henry, Cllr C Perkins, N Kinch – Clerk to Hamsey Parish Council

**Apologies:** Cllr S Fleming & Cllr C Croft

Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

**1.** The minutes from the last meeting of Hamsey Parish Council as Sole Trustee of Beechwood Hall & Rural Park held on Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> July 2020 were agreed and signed as a true record.

**2.** Chair gave an overview on the required roofing repairs to the veranda roof at Beechwood Hall, explaining that the veranda roof had been patch repaired a week before Christmas as seemingly a foot had gone through the roof – assumption of someone retrieving a football on the roof at some point had weakened the ply wood. After speaking with BBM architects, whom helped with the rebuild at Beechwood Hall, it is ascertained that the hall veranda could be in the region of 40 years old as it was not rebuilt when the Hall was. Duncan Baker-Brown from BBM expressed concern over ensuring the joists and beams under the veranda are in a good state otherwise this would significantly raise any costings of repair. Two quotes have been received. A three-option quote from Sussex Roofing & Building Services Ltd, with the most suitable option being priced at £8,050.00 plus the vat and a quote from local specialists Rockfelt Roofing Ltd priced at £7,044.00 including the vat. Beechwood Working Group member Ian Ginn who has great knowledge and a background in building, kindly looked at the quotes and options given and gave feedback. After discussing the quotes, all in agreement to award the contract to Rockfelt Roofing Ltd. Clerk shall liaise with Zurich Municipal, the Parish Council insurance provider to request a quote for Works in Progress Cover before the repairs commence.

Concerns are raised as to whether this has been budgeted for out of the Hall budget for 2021 by Cllr Henry to which Chair stated these are emergency repairs that have not been incorporated into this year's budget, so therefore if the costs increase over the quoted price due to the joists needing replacement then the Parish Council may have to contribute funds. Cllr Perkins asked if anti climb paint would be of benefit in stopping anyone climbing on the veranda roof- this however was felt not needed due to the lack of frequency. Clerk passed on the suggestion of Steve Toomey, Maintenance contractor at the Hall, of removing the last fence post near the veranda entrance as a deterrent- agreed this could be considered as an option in the future should the problem persist.

**3.** The following policies were discussed and suggestions made- all had been circulated prior to the meeting.

Fire Risk Policy – All in agreement to add an additional fire extinguisher to the office upstairs at the Hall and change the Terms and conditions to the allowance of celebration cake candles only within the hall but battery candles are deemed acceptable. This policy flagged up the need for clarification on the Hall's capacity, Cllr McBrown will liaise with Chair and then contact the Fire Services to arrange a business check of the Hall. Policy then agreed.

Main Risk Assessment for the Hall and the Health and Safety Policy were agreed.

Children and Vulnerable Persons Policy- Cllr Henry asks if the hall needs a separate Safe Guarding Policy for the Hall and will make steps to look into drafting a policy for this. Cllr Henry has extensive background in nursing, has been DBS checked and fully trained as a first aider so all in favour of appointing her as the Children and Vulnerable Persons Representative. If needed in the separate Safe Guarding Policy – all in agreement to ask Rose Watts, part of the Beechwood Hall Working Group and primary school teacher at Hamsey School to be Safe Guarding Representative.

**4.** All Weather Access path – Chair gave an update that Rachel Kelly’s bid for CIL money was successful. CIL money can be awarded to Parish Councils on the basis of new developments within the Parish and owing to Hamsey Parish Council’s adopted Neighbourhood Plan, this equates to 25% of CIL money being awarded to be used on community projects to improve facilities for all. Clerk has been in contact with Emma Kemp, Senior Planning Policy Officer at LDC to find out the next steps. Chair explained that since the Hall has not been able to successfully fund raise due to Covid restrictions in the past year and unfortunately all grants for accessibility applied for have been put on hold, the LDC CIL money cannot be matched, but fortunately a new local contractor has agreed to carry out the same work at a discounted rate, which will make up for the shortfall in additional fund contributions. Chair explained that a breakdown of costs can be submitted to the Legal Team at LDC so that a Grant Agreement shall be awarded whereby the CIL money agreed shall be directly passed on to the contractor awarded the works for the cost that the bid was awarded for. Chair suggests the original plans for the path can be changed slightly from originally following the perimeter of the grounds, winding into the wooded area at the back of the grounds, down past the tennis court and back across to the veranda therefore creating a loop, to now carrying on past the tennis courts and rejoining into the car park area where an existing gap is located within the hedging. This change will reduce the footprint of the path and protect the view from the veranda. The path layout will accommodate turning points for wheel chair users and those with pushchairs. Benches and landscaping shall be added so people can sit and enjoy the space. Concerns over the impact on the bookings, once the Hall is reopened are expressed by Cllr McBrown – Chair reiterates that the contractors must be mindful of hirers and visitors to the hall and we shall endeavour to ensure they keep disruption to a minimum. Communication of the works to hirers will be important. The works are hoped to be carried out as soon as possible once given the confirmation by the Legal Team.

**5.** Chair discussed the idea of a Water Bottle Filling Station. This would be purchased using remaining CIL money at a cost of approximately £300 for a basic wall mounted stainless steel unit that will attach to the outside toilet wall and run off the existing water pipes. Fitting costs would be in the region of £300. All in agreement. All in agreement that the water fountain part would need to be covered for the time being due to the risk of Covid but that bottles could still be refilled.

**6.** The establishing of the Beechwood Hall Working Group was discussed by all, whereby the Working Group would hold ad hoc meetings to discuss any planning, fund raising, issues and ideas for Beechwood Hall then these would be proposed to the Sole Trustees to be agreed at their meetings. At present on the Working Group are: Cllr Henry, Cllr McBrown, Ian Ginn, Keavy McBrown, Rachel Clifford and Rose Watts. Hopes are to strengthen liaisons with the church and have Rev Anne Dunlop join the group too. All in agreement.

**7.** Cllr Perkins has kindly offered to take on the role of Treasurer to Beechwood Hall and with her background and experience in finance shall work alongside Rachel Clifford, Financial Services provider. All in agreement.

**8.** The budget for 2021 was discussed with information sent ahead from Rachel Clifford, financial services provider. Rachel states that the Hall’s fixed costs of Hall manager, Book keeper,

Maintenance contractor and Cleaning equate to roughly £11,250 per year. With the added expenses for water, electricity and BT this can total to £1000 so a budget to anticipate any small internal repairs would reasonably total £15,000 for the year. A discussion was had into how the hall generates its income and how to forecast the coming year by way of income. This shall be difficult to achieve given the current Government restrictions with the Hall being closed for bookings at present. Once restrictions are lifted then a plan of generating income can be put into place to improve revenue. The Hall has as such been reliant on any Government funding available since March last year with only a few bookings possible due to the restrictions. Cllr Perkins enquires about the previous Treasurer and obtaining grants for the Hall. Chair reassures Cllr Perkins that grant applications shall be a joint effort. Clerk reiterates that the Hall's expenses at present are being kept to the minimum as the maintenance contractor and cleaning contractor are on limited hours given the hall's closure and the heating is being kept to a low. Chair reminds everyone that the Wind Turbine repairs have been carried out so electricity prices should also be at a much lower rate.

**9.** Cllr McBrown shares information gathered from Keavy McBrown after having researched a new online booking service. Keavy and Cllr McBrown request to trial the Hall Master Online Booking System, this is user friendly, will have online booking viewing availability, will be able to deal with deposits and invoices and is recommended by other Hall Bookings managers. Sat at a cost of £187 plus the vat per year- all in favour. All mindful that saving money in the long run is what is needed for the hall but this shall ensure a smoother bookings system, eradicate the issue of double bookings and allow potential hirers to check availability for events however, they shall still book their events through the bookings manager. Keavy to send over a power point presentation to show everyone.

**10.** Chair asks Cllr McBrown to discuss concerns over the cleaning at the hall from hirers. Cllr McBrown shares concerns that the hirers had not been cleaning after each use and expressed fears of the transmission of Covid and expressly the new variants. Cllr McBrown is reassured by all, that it is the best interests of the hirers that when they hire the hall, they ensure that touch points in particular are wiped down prior to their groups starting and the usual after- cleaning process is required to ensure the hall is left in a clean state before the next hirer and the risk as low as possible. When restrictions allow, the hall is only taking a maximum of two bookings per day to allow extra time for cleaning to take place before and after events. The responsibility is down to the hirers and is reflected in the risk assessment and the terms and conditions of hire – all signed in agreement by the hirer on booking. All are aware of the need to protect others at this uncertain time and all measures will be taken to ensure the risks are mitigated. Cllr Henry shares her knowledge as a nurse, that the emphasis should be on the hirers with the hall signage reminding people to wash their hands regularly, clean down touch points and social distance themselves by two metres. Promoting health and hygiene is of the utmost importance in the battle against the disease. All in agreement to review once the hall reopens to bookings.

Cllr McBrown expressed the issue with people still using the tennis courts although, signs are clearly displayed to state it is currently out of bounds due to Government regulations. Liability is discussed and Chair reassures all that the compliance of the rules cannot be enforced by the Trustees but all measures have been taken to highlight the need for compliance through signs, Facebook posts and website announcements. Litter seems to be an increasing problem left on the grounds at Beechwood Hall along with large numbers of people visiting to play football at one time. Suggestion has been put forward to ask local PCSO, Rose Stainer to visit at a weekend evening when the grounds seem to be most busy with people travelling by car, to encourage the need for social distancing and in the hopes of deterring people from leaving their litter strewn all around. Chair will liaise further with PCSO Rose Stainer to arrange a visit.

Chair explains that Steve Toomey, Maintenance contractor plans to reduce his hours so a Grounds maintenance vacancy has arisen. Cllr McBrown suggests a previous applicant for the Cleaning vacancy from last year may be interested and well suited for the job. All in agreement and Chair will

get a schedule of works from Steve Toomey of the role involved and offer the vacancy out to the previous applicant and any other interested parties.

**11.** AGM has been agreed for June 2021 – Clerk to liaise further with Cllr McBrown on dates to hold the meeting potentially at Beechwood Hall should restrictions allow.

Chair thanked everyone for attending the meeting and ended at 20.45pm.

Minutes by N Kinch – Clerk to Hamsey Parish Council

Chairperson.....