

DEBENHAM VILLAGE HALL & PLAYING FIELD TRUST
Gracechurch Street, Debenham, Stowmarket, Suffolk, IP14 6BL.

43rd Annual General Meeting – 13th May 2008.

The following people attended the AGM:

David Hughes, Richard Blackwell, Mel Aldis, Tony Hutt , Chris Bassett, Mick Morley, Kathie Guthrie and Sarah Hughes.

1. Apologies for absence: George Durie, Martin Durie.

2. Minutes of the previous AGM and matters arising.

Mick Morley requested that an addendum be added to the minutes to reflect the comments made at the meeting about trying to recruit new, younger members to the board.

The minutes, as amended, were signed as a true record of the meeting.

3. Chairman's report.

The chair's report was presented to the meeting. David highlighted the report that had been presented to the annual Parish meeting as a very good picture of the operational activities on offer at the centre.

One of the aims of the board was to get each board member elected to the Parish Council. With a presence on the council it was hoped that a more fruitful relationship would develop. One of the main aims would be to try and get financial support from the parish council, by way of parish precept, for the centre. While it is fantastic village facility there is a large portion of the village that do not realize the benefit that such a facility provides to the community. Part of the difficulty that exists with obtaining finance support from MSDC is that the parish council is not active in their support of the centre.

There are significant events that occur at the centre that benefit the whole village, e.g. annual fireworks display, country and music festival etc.

Although a view at the meeting was expressed that this was somewhat of a cynical move by the board, given the animosity that had previously existed, it is the future of the centre and the wellbeing of the village as a whole that must be at the forefront of our minds here. The directors have, in actual fact been forced down the path that they have taken. The Charity Commission recommendation that the charity becomes a 'Charitable company limited by guarantee' was the starting point for all the changes that have subsequently ensued. The change of charity status resulted in the bank requiring the property to be transferred to the new charity, for the purposes of securing loans etc., and the board had to effect the property transfer from the parish council as custodial trustees to the newly formed charity. This transfer process has proved to be a very long and drawn out affair that has, thankfully, now almost been concluded.

The vacancies on the parish council have to be advertised before co-option or election the vacant positions can occur.

The secretary was to contact Phil Tallent at MSDC to confirm the protocol for the board members to become members of the parish council and clarify any issues that may arise as a result.

Tony Hutt suggested that the ownership of the property could be transferred to an 'official custodian' which is what happens in many cases concerning village halls. Suffolk ACRE can advise on such issues and become the official custodian. Given the substantial loans connected with the centre it was felt that the bank would have some influence on the decisions made in that area. Kathie Guthrie reminded the meeting that the Boundary Committee for England and Wales are considering the future of local government in Suffolk and Norfolk and that their recommendations could have a bearing on the future of the centre. The impact of the outcome of the boundary review is unclear at this point.

4. Treasurer's Report.

Chris Bassett presented the accounts to the meeting and went through them in some detail.

Noted that total income had increased slightly to £276,221 for the year. The figures show a decline in bar income and sporting activity which has resulted in an operating loss of £44,924.

The tight cash flow position continues to be a difficult management exercise that requires continual monitoring.

5. Adoption of Accounts.

Richard Blackwell proposed that the accounts be adopted by the meeting. This was seconded by Kathie Guthrie and passed unanimously.

6. Appointment of Auditors.

Richard Blackwell proposed Izod Bassett be appointed our auditors for next year, and passed by the meeting.

7. Election of Board Members.

David Hughes and Martin Durie both stood down from the board. They were both prepared to stand for re-election. The chair asked for any nominations for board membership. Mick Morley proposed the two members for re-election and Sarah Hughes seconded the proposal. The two members were unanimously voted back to the board. The board members were therefore confirmed as;

David Hughes
Richard Blackwell
Martin Durie
George Durie

8. Date of next AGM.

This was set as **Tuesday 12th May 2009 at 8.00pm.**

9. Any Other Business.

A query was raised about the situation regarding our dispute with Eon over the large outstanding invoice that is being paid off by monthly installments. A test meter has been fitted to the supply so we can monitor our usage of electricity. The results of the test period should be available very shortly. It appears there is

a significant pull on the supply during the early hours of the morning. This needs to be identified and action taken if possible.

Mick Morley suggested that polling the views of the villagers via a community web site may give an insight into the response we would receive to the suggestions of using the parish precept to help fund the centre. This is a possibility that will need to be investigated.

Sarah Hughes extended a vote of thanks to the board for their continued hard work in supporting the centre.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.40pm.