

**Wembdon Village Hall & Playing Fields Trust**

**(Charitable Incorporated Organisation)**

**Minutes of Annual General Meeting**

**held on Monday 16th October 2023 at Wembdon Village Hall**

1. **Those present/apologies for absence.**

* Present: Neil Hughes (Chair and trustee)

Alex Hurford (Trustee)

Mark Phillips (Trustee)

Mike Solomon (Trustee)

Robert Topazio (Treasurer and trustee)

Lyn Tyrrell (Trustee)

Madeleine Upham (Trustee)

Peter Reed (Trust Secretary)

Members of the Public:

Dan Bingham (Chairman of Wembdon Cricket Club)

Mick Bowden (Secretary of Wembdon Cricket Club)

Phil Brunskill (Chairman of Wembdon Football Club)

Jen Dodden (Manager Wembdon Sunshiners)

Laura Lewis (Office Manager Wembdon Sunshiners)

Harrison Young

Mike James

Steve Pigden

Andrew Sellick

Lois Sellick

Dean Fury

Stu Duerden

Kirsty Pester

Matt Rich

Kirsty Turner

Jack Lowe

Luke Payne

Dominique Creedy

Claire Matthews

Will Anning

Mike Barrow

Helen Stone

Dean Hannaford

Aaron Rees

M.Tyrrell

S.Stone

Nicki Bingham

Phil Cerns

Jon Brockwell

Emily Smith

Nick Smith

Joe Syvret

* Apologies: Mike Caswell (Trustee)

1. **Minutes of the last AGM held on the 17th October 2022.**

**– (circulated before the meeting)**

* No corrections to minutes received. Mike Solomon proposed, Alex Hurford seconded and the Trustees agreed the minutes as a true record.

1. **Matters arising from the minutes.**

* None

1. **Annual reports and accounts:**
2. **Chair`s annual report of the work and activities of the Charity Trustees during the preceding year (17.10.22 to 16.10.2023).**

It is with pleasure that I provide this report as Chair of WVH & PFT

This is my second report since becoming Chair.

During the past twelve months we have continued to see change and improvement in the way we operate and run the business of the Trust. I am grateful for the continued support of my fellow Trustees who provide endless hours of support all offered freely for the benefit of the Trust. **THANK YOU**.

Unfortunately, we have seen the resignation of two of our valued Trustees during the reporting period. I would like to **THANK** them for their help during their period of office.

The Village Hall and the recreational facilities for which the Trust have responsibility have grown increasingly busy over the past year as we move out of the Covid pandemic.

During the year we are excited to have been able to appoint to the roles of Premises Manager supported by the caretaking team and a dedicated Booking and Events Manager all of whom provide a fantastic service to all of hirers, tenants and first time and returning guests.

The standard of cleanliness and maintenance of the hall has been lifted to a much higher level as we continue to promote our facilities and hold them as the premier venue in the locality. I’d like to say **THANK YOU** to our team.

The Sedgemoor Room has finally been completed and to an extremely high standard. This provides us additional space which, whilst being used by some of our existing users, also enables us to offer some of the best conference and meeting facilities in the district for use by businesses and Local Authorities. We have worked in collaboration with Youth Unlimited to establish a youth group facility for two evenings a week during school term time giving our young children somewhere to go that is warm, well lit and clean tidy.

As well as our long-established cricket, football, and rounders teams and Sunshiners Preschool, our range of users continues to grow as we see the addition of baby and toddler groups and also many dance groups as well as continuing to provide facilities to our long-term customers, NHS cardiac and pulmonary teams and a number of Slimming World sessions every week. **THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT**.

The Village Hall and our playing fields have been host to a number of charity events including our Annual Wembdon Village Day, which is so ably organized by Wembdon Community Association. We have started to host wakes which is unfortunate for the families that have lost loved ones, but they can gain some comfort in the clean, comfortable, and pleasant facilities we can offer families and friends as they say their last goodbyes.

We as Trustees pride ourselves on continuing to develop the facility into the beating heart of our community as we continue to focus in the coming months on hosting many smaller meetings and workshops for a wider variety of activity groups for parishioners of Wembdon in the refurbished Community Lounge.

We are continuing to develop our Village Hall facilities for the benefit of all our users and have recently, installed a height restriction barrier thus restricting uninvited and unwanted travellers to our site. We are working in collaboration with sporting teams to raise sufficient funding to add two new changing rooms and enhance our kitchenette. Subject to funding in the longer term we are looking to improve car park lighting and the surface of our overspill carpark.

I would like to pass on my sincere thanks to Wembdon Parish Council, with whom we work very closely, and during this reporting period we have seen the adoption of our main entrance from the NDR. We are also proud to host their Council and Planning Meetings within the Village Hall.

In conclusion I am proud to have been Chair of WVH & PFT for the past twelve months and look forward to continuing in my role. I would at this time like to thank all of our clients and customers for their continued support and again all our Trustees who without their continued dedication, advice, support, experience, enthusiasm, efforts and expertise we would not be sitting here today in such pleasant surroundings. My personal thanks also go to Peter Reed for his unstinting work as our Honorary Secretary and Legal Adviser.

**b) Treasurer`s report and accounts of the preceding financial year (01.04.22 to 31.03.23).**

This is the fifth full year of operation for The Green and one which presented the Trust with many and varied challenges but also some exciting opportunities. Since opening, The Green navigated its way out of a global pandemic only to be faced with unprecedented price inflation and a cost-of-living squeeze in the last 12 months. Throughout this time, The Green remained a place committed to being at the heart of the community. There is no better example of this than the broad spectrum of local groups using the facility on a regular basis from parent and baby groups through to cardiac rehabilitation sessions.

One of the most satisfying achievements during the year to March 2023 had to be the completion of the eagerly awaited Sedgemoor Room. Over £130k was raised in grants and donations towards the cost of completing the project but it would not have been delivered without the commitment of a dedicated team of volunteers. The Trust, and all those who will enjoy this marvellous facility for many years to come, are most grateful to all involved.

Another milestone was the adoption by Somerset County Council of the access road off Homburg Way. Yet again, this was only delivered through the persistence of a few individuals and significant support from Wembdon Parish Council. Indeed, WPC remain great supporters of The Green and the Trust is immensely grateful for their continued backing. Other significant supporters during the year included National Lottery Community Fund, Somerset Community Fund, Somerset Community Foundation, Wembdon Community Association as well as numerous other groups and villagers all of whom offered their support, whether funds, materials, or time, freely. The Trust acknowledge the generosity of all.

The next big project the Trust has set for itself is the addition of a further set of changing rooms, completing the original vision which had to be curtailed due to the contractor being replaced during the building stage. Unfortunately, in the intervening period, construction costs have rocketed resulting in the current estimate to fulfil the original design to be in the region of £500,000. To date the Trust and Wembdon Cricket Club have both committed £20,000 each to be added to a £50,000 grant from Sedgemoor District Council. The grant is ringfenced towards the project and would be recalled if it did not go ahead. Several large potential funders including the England and Wales Cricket Board, the Football Foundation, Sport England, Magnox, and the ACRE Platinum Jubilee Fund have also been approached to help close the gap in funding but to date none have been able to commit. An open dialogue will be maintained with these and other potential funders including the Hinkley C Community Impact Mitigation Fund and the Rural Prosperity Fund, seeking financial assistance to secure the shortfall.

More generally, the Trust had approximately £75,000 of unrestricted funds, less the £20,000 committed to the Changing Room project, as at March 2023 which may appear to be a healthy state of affairs. However, having invested in the Trust’s first directly employed staff during the year, seen significant cost inflation and undertaken some important maintenance work across the facility, it was imperative that the projected uplift in revenue receipts could be generated. This has not materialised leaving the Trust having to utilise reserves on a short-term basis restricting its ability to expand activities further into the community to improve the lives of even more villagers.

There is no doubt that the next 12 months will bring equally significant challenges, but the Trustees remain determined to maintain the service levels provided to the community and committed to face those challenges with resolution and enthusiasm.

**c) Managers’ reports**

Report from Sandra Bradley (Bookings and Events Manager)

Since taking on the role of Bookings and Events Manager in April 2023 the following changes have been made to the hire rates:

**Community Hire Rate**

Crowpill Hall or Kidsbury from £22 per hour to £25 per hour.

Main Hall from £44 per hour to £45 per hour.

Sedgemoor Room from £22 per hour to £35 per hour (this is to cover the use of the air conditioning, the integrated Bluetooth audio system, the widescreen interactive TV and the mini kitchen with water heater and microwave).

**Regular Users**

As of 1st July 2023, all regular users were moved from their fixed rates to an hourly rate of £15 which they all pay monthly in arrears. In all cases with 2 exceptions, this has meant our regular users have had a very modest price increase.

**Childrens Parties**

Main Hall from £85 for 3 hours to £100.

Sedgemoor Room from £50 for 3 hours to £75.

**Wedding Receptions**

The fixed rate for the Weekend Wedding Reception Package from £900 to £950.

I have deliberately made myself available for any potential hirer who wants to view the hall, as I believe that this is the best way to sell the space. With the cleaning now at an extremely high standard and the fact that the Team at The Green (myself included, to ensure that no two members of staff are working late shift weekends consecutively) are on hand to set out and pack away the tables and chairs really helps to make things run smoothly and it’s been noticed and appreciated by the hirers.

**Social Media**

On the social media front the website has had a new look and is now easier to navigate with all the important information of what is on offer and pricing presented in a clean and simple layout. Calum has taken charge of the website and he can tell from the data that 85% of potential hirers who look at the website are using a smart phone to do so. Therefore, he has optimized the website for the best view not only on a PC but on a phone too.

I have taken over the Facebook Page for The Green and aim to post at least twice a week, if possible, to make sure that The Green’s profile is up to date and relevant. I also share any posts that our regular groups may do especially if The Green is mentioned just to bring people’s attention to the activities and groups that are here.

**Promotional Flyers and Signs**

Calum has designed all our flyers and the slideshow that can be seen in the foyer, along with a Wedding Reception Folder that I give to couples who are booking their reception at The Green. This has all the details of suppliers that have worked at The Green from DJs to Photo Booths.

He also designed the large signs that can be deployed when the overflow car park is needed, along with a sign for the Cricket/Football participants when there is a private event taking place in the main hall.

**New Regular Users**

I have managed to secure an instructor to take over the Friday morning Pilates class after successful taster sessions in the summer, Debbie Johnson will start her regular classes on Friday 20th October.

I have also filled the Wednesday early evening session with a dog trainer from Bridgwater who started her classes at the beginning of October.

There has been interest shown from Ceroc Somerset in having a weekly dance class at The Green and I am in the throes of talking to them about this.

The requests for meeting spaces using the Sedgemoor Room have increased over the last few months as have the children’s parties and evening celebrations, especially with Christmas around the corner, with 3 local businesses holding their Christmas Celebrations here.

I have also taken 3 charity events for this November a head shave for Cancer Research, January a Fundraising Evening organized by the Bridgwater Chamber of Commerce and in March a Bingo Evening run by Queens Netball Club for a Colon Cancer Charity.

**The bookings from 18th October 2022 until 16th October 2023 are as follows:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Wedding Receptions** | **4** |
| **Wakes** | **3** |
| **Children’s Parties** | **51** |
| **Evening Parties** | **48** |
| **Meetings and/or Training Classes** | **14** |
| **Baby Showers / Christening Celebrations** | **12** |
| **Other Events e.g.: Craft Fair, Charity Events** | **6** |

As you can see from the above Children’s Parties and Evening Celebrations are still the most popular events that we have at The Green.

Report from Ray Bradley (Facilities and Premises Manager

Having started work at The Green just over a year ago as one of two new caretakers I was happy to take on the part time role of Premises and Facilities Manager in May when Dan Grewcock left for adventures new. I am therefore able to comment first hand on events over the last year.

With almost continuous 7 days a week usage both from regular user groups and one off events like birthday parties the building as a whole needs daily cleaning and maintenance.

To start with Chris and myself as caretakers, concentrated on building maintenance and the occasional cleaning but when the part time cleaner left in May that role switched to predominantly cleaning. Although we advertised extensively in the early summer for a replacement for the cleaner and another part time caretaker no suitable candidates came forward. Calum joined us in July as a caretaker/cleaner and brought with him other skills that we have put to good use and he now runs the website and produces all the advertising literature that can be seen around the building.

The team now consists of two part time Managers, Sandra and myself, a part time caretaker, Chris and a full time Caretaker/Cleaner in the form of Calum.

The list of jobs carried out by the team over the last 12 months is extensive but these are the main ones.

1. Daily cleaning schedule including a deep clean every Monday morning. This has been greatly helped with the purchase of the floor cleaning machine and other cleaning aids and tools.
2. Clearing of the various storage areas so that The Kidsbury Store is now used exclusively for chairs and tables and at present items belonging to the Youth Club. The Sedgemoor Store is now the main store for all other items including tools and cleaning products.
3. Redecorating of both main toilets, the foyer and corridors.
4. Building of the new mini kitchen in The Sedgemoor Room.
5. Organising the resealing of the main hall floor.
6. Organising the maintenance of the high level windows.
7. Maintenance of high level fixings and lights in the main hall.
8. Redecorating of the main hall.
9. Regular deep cleaning of the main kitchen.
10. Essential roof repairs following storm damage.

The team now set up and pack away all regular user sessions during the week and at weekends set up, pack away and clean after all events. This does stretch working hours to the limit and the Trustees should be aware that all four members of the team regularly exceed their weekly paid hours to get the job done and provide a first rate service to the hirers. Without this we simply could not cover the 7 days a week nature of the hall activities.

I continue to look at every opportunity to save money with regular shopping trips to the discount shops for cleaning products. The Pelican statements from our online supplier now only show a monthly order for toilet rolls as I cannot find another supplier cheaper.

I have instigated a monthly safety check that takes in the testing of the fire alarm, emergency lighting, fire extinguishers, first aid kits and the defibrillator.

The team all now wear dark blue polo shirts with The Green logo and the word ”Staff” on the back. This has proved to be very useful late on a Saturday evening when ushering guests out of the building and when engaging with the general public. We all take part in regular litter picks and extend our activity into the children’s play area and the park to ensure that we are visible.

1. **Election/Co-opting of Charity Trustees:**

**a) Elected Charity Trustees:** **Charity Trustees for election in accordance with the Constitution clause 9.4 (up to 6 no.);**

The following Charity Trustees were re-elected with no votes against:

Neil Hughes Proposed by Mike Solomon and seconded by Robert Topazio

Alex Hurford Proposed by Neil Hughes and seconded by Peter Reed

Mike Solomon Proposed by Neil Hughes and seconded by Peter Reed

Robert Topazio Proposed by Neil Hughes and seconded by Peter Reed

Marilyn Tyrrell Proposed by Neil Hughes and seconded by Peter Reed

Madeleine Upham Proposed by Neil Hughes and seconded by Peter Reed

1. **Appointed Charity Trustees (Wembdon Parish Council):**

Noted that Mark Phillips is appointed by Wembdon Parish Council to serve as a Charity Trustee in accordance with the Constitution clause 9.3.3

**c) Appointed Charity Trustees (Sedgemoor District Council):**

Noted that Mike Caswell is appointed by Somerset Council to serve as a Charity Trustee in accordance with the Constitution clause 9.3.3

1. **Appointment of the qualified auditors for the coming year to audit the accounts of the CIO in accordance with the Charities Act 2011.**

Michael J Dodden & Co. Chartered Certified Accountants were re-appointed to serve as the Trusts Accountant for the 2023/2024 year to act on behalf of both Wembdon Village Hall and Playing Fields Trust CIO as independent examiners and Wembdon Village Hall Ltd for accountancy support purposes. Proposed by Neil Hughes, seconded by Mike Solomon and carried unanimously.

**7. Any other business**

Wembdon Football Club

Could you please consider the following topics for discussion at the AGM on October 16th?

As your website states, We are proud to be the home of Wembdon Cricket Club, Wembdon Junior Football Club, as well as Wembdon Sunshiners Pre-School

We are also proud to call the Green our home and are always promoting the venue on and off the

pitch. Through funding of 330K from the FA, 100K from the Football Foundation, and approximately 10K to develop the kitchenette. We have grown as a Club at our home and plan to for many years to come

We are trying to get a full understanding of the running of the Green, and can you share with us

* Last year’s AGM minutes
* Current business plan along with a 5 to 10 year financial plan
* Current committee roles and their profiles, i.e., who is responsible for what
* The latest Constitution and Charter
* If we have people interested in joining the Green Committee, how do we get them involved?

We are all too aware of the financial burden and difficulties that exist as part of running this

community area

* Can we have a breakdown on costs generated by user groups?
* We have recently seen the Green go through a redecorating programme and have seen our trophy cabinet taken down. We were not informed of this at all, and it’s unclear what is

happening. We are just hearing that it won’t be going back up, and it took us nearly 5 years

to get this on the wall. Can you advise what the plans are please?

* Do you want the football club promoted at the Green or not? If we can be advised, please.
* We already struggle to see anything football related, and a huge amount of our user group uses the venue regularly. Please can some consideration be given before decisions are made?
* We have our own 5 / 10 year plans and need to know we have the support of the Green to do this. We are looking to arrange a meeting of the WFC Committee / Green Trustees in the

near future, but to outline:

We are currently a three-star affiliated FA Club. We can reach five stars, but we need to achieve a

number of objectives, so for example, four stars would be an all-female adult team, something we are striving towards; five stars would see us having disability teams. We can push even further with this and introduce walking football…all of these options open up further sponsorship opportunities and allow us to access further funding and grants, which would be fed back into the Green

* Kitchen. Can you explain what is happening with this please? We donated a kitchen, tiled and fitted out most of the kitchenette, but feel as though it has now become difficult to use, with

talk of it being taken away altogether and a full-time Cafe being put in instead. The

Kitchenette is the only opportunity for any Wembdon group to make any funds for their teams

Trust response

Para 1 The Chair can decide to answer any relevant questions. Best to include these at the AOB stage rather than disrupt the business of the meeting and also some of the questions may already be answered in the various reports to the meeting.

Para 3 We agree that the football grants and support from the FA were essential in providing the playing fields and the changing rooms, essential for sports.

Para 4 AGM minutes will be available at the meeting and full reports are available on the Charity Commission website.

Business strategy is to encourage greater usage of the whole facility including Sedgemoor Room and Viridor Lounge as well as hall and playing fields.

Trustee officers are Chairman, Neil; and Treasurer, Robert with Peter as a non Trustee Honorary Trust Secretary. Other key Trustees are Alex as Chair of Grounds Committee and Lyn as Chair of Hall Committee.

Constitution is on the website

Constitution details the process, either stand for election at an AGM or approach the Trust and put yourself forward for co-option.

Para 5 We think you mean contribution from each of the user groups, which would necessitate an allocation of overhead and direct costs as well as income by user group. The Trust numbers are confidential but not a secret and we can work with a member of your team to establish the latest contribution figures.

Mike wrote to your senior management 3 weeks ago informing you of the redecoration and requesting a meeting to discuss this:

*Hi Dean,*

*Many thanks for your email and I must say that I am delighted that you are now taking charge of the Mens teams.  Rather than give a simple yes/no response to your questions, you will appreciate that there is a lot going on in and around the bar at the moment and I want to see that both cricket and football are treated equally so maybe it would be better if we sat over a beer one evening and just talked about it.  We have been laying down rules about cooking in the kitchenette and banned deep fat frying, because of the smell that drifts through the whole hall.  Nicki has tried cooking stuff at home and then using a bain marie to keep it hot and that has worked quite well we have also trialled bringing a Munchkins type burger van onto the site and that has worked too.*

*There has also been a massive increase in our electricity and gas costs since the world went mad, so everybody is now having to pay for power used and that makes an outside van seem a lot more attractive.*

*I have copied in Neil as I know he very much wants to see the football successful and a major user of our facilities and between us perhaps we can arrange a beer early next week.*

A response is still awaited.

We would be delighted to help with the promotion of the football club and its activities, just send us the copy and we now have the skills to put professional articles on The Green Facebook page. We can also always link The Green page to the Wembdon Football page.

Para 6 We are only limited by the sizes of the green spaces and the existing built facilities. We are working to provide the additional changing rooms needed for ladies football and are unsure of the additional facilities needed for wheelchair football but our Constitution requires that we offer equal facilities to everybody and we have demonstrated our commitment to disabled people with our investments in the Changing Places facilities, which are part of a coordinated plan to provide play equipment and free access to people of all capabilities across The Green, the playing fields and Parklands.

Para 7 The kitchenette was designed to provide cricket teas and bacon butties for junior football. It has grown into a mini kitchen and new rules for operating the equipment have been driven by the impact of cooking odours on other users and the massive increase in energy costs. A study was carried out earlier in the year that suggested that there was an opportunity to set up a coffee shop based in the kitchenette, which may encourage greater participation from more groups within our “area of benefit”, Wembdon Parish, but The Trust recognises that any plans would need to recognise the requirement to produce cricket teas and bacon butties on the weekends.

Wembdon Cricket Club

‘This facility was conceived and built as a Village Hall and Sports Complex with the financial and volunteer support of both Wembdon Village Groups and Wembdon Sports Clubs in order to provide them with a permanent home in the village.

 As members of the Cricket Club, we wish to express to the Trustees that we increasingly feel unwelcome in the facility and that decisions made by the Trust make us feel we are merely an occasional hirer of the premises rather than a major stakeholder. These decisions offer very little scope to generate the additional revenue which both the Trust and the Club need for a sustainable future.

We would like to hear the Trustees views in response to the above.’

Trust response

The objects of the constitution of the Trust are very clear in that the Trust exists to:

*The objects of the CIO are to establish and run a village hall and playing fields and to promote for the benefit of the inhabitants of the Parish of Wembdon ("area of benefit") without distinction of sex, sexual orientation, age, disability, nationality, race or political, religious or other opinions the provision of facilities for recreation or other leisure time occupation of individuals who have need of such facilities by reason of their youth, age, infirmity or disablement, financial hardship or social and economic circumstances or for the public at large in the interests of social welfare and with the object of improving the conditions of life of the said inhabitants.*

On the basis of the objects of the constitution, the Parish Council has licenced to The Trust the land needed for the main cricket pitch from its own playing fields and the District Authority agreed to realign the public footpath.

The Trust fully supports those objects in every decision that it makes and we absolutely believe that the cricket club, the football club and other sports organisations help us promote those objects, but we are not there solely to be a sports club. We need to serve all of the inhabitants of Wembdon with all of our facilities.

To this end, we have the Viridor lounge facilities that to date have been primarily occupied and used by the cricket club as their clubhouse and the Trustees feel that this does not properly support the objects of the constitution of providing a community lounge for the use of all inhabitants of Wembdon. The plan is now to offer a more community feel to the space, one which is welcoming to all persons and that is also proud of its sports clubs and their achievements. The Trust will be meeting after this AGM to debate and vote a proposal which will support this objective.

We would also make the point that The Trust provides the cricket club with its storage garage, the compound with its integral storage shed for cricket equipment, space around the pitches for storage of covers, sight screens and mobile nets as well as the squares and the permanent nets. The cricket club is very prominent in every corner of the playing fields.

In summary, we do not believe in any way that we are making the cricket club unwelcome but we are increasing our efforts to include far greater inclusion of all members of the “area of benefit”, as is required by our constitution, which may appear as a de-emphasis of the importance of the sports clubs but we constantly strive to balance the needs of each of the sports clubs as well as the sports and other recreational uses of the facilities.

Wembdon Sunshiners

Along with both the Cricket Club and the Football Club we worked tirelessly with the Wembdon Village group to help build the facility that was always intended to be a home for us all. Indeed, we were asked to take part in the project on that very basis.

I think you would agree that over the past few years the relationship between Sunshiners and the Trustees has been at best strained, at times we have definitely felt that the trust do not want us here.  We also feel there has been in some cases an unfair narrative about us. There are now staff in place at the green who have helped with the communication issues,  but we would like to know the Trustee’s thoughts on how the relationship between the Trust and Sunshiners is now. The committee would like to know that communication between the trust and us is going to be open and transparent as this has been a real cause for concern over the past few years, how is this going to look in the future, and we would like to know the Trustees long term plan with us? We want to guarantee Sunshiners longevity as we are an essential part of the Wembdon community, and want to ensure the Trust have the same vision? It was hurtful when we were told another Early Years setting was approached about occupancy at the Green by the Trust.

Trust response

The Trust is disappointed that you feel insecure (unloved?) at the Hall but are pleased to read that with the appointment of staff to run the facility the communications between us are improving. You will be aware that the Trust have long been conscious of communication concerns with other users and set up the Hall Committee and the Grounds Committee in order to provide a monthly forum for such concerns to be raised and addressed. To date we are not aware that Sunshiners have raised any matters for discussion at this forum.

We are also very aware that Sunshiners have repeated on several occasions that their finances were very stretched and that the Trust had had difficult discussions in previous years over agreeing necessary price increases to reflect inflationary increases in costs.

It is a key operating principle for the Trust that none of the organisations or individuals who use Trust facilities are expected to cross-subsidise another user and that each must make a contribution, however small, to the operating overheads of the facility. Unfortunately, due to the design of the overall facility, it has been almost impossible to accurately measure the consumption of the critical services electricity, gas and water by each of the users, these being supplied through shared facilities. However, during the COVID lockdown periods, when the hall was kept open only to provide services to Sunshiners, it became evident that the consumption of power and water well exceeded initial estimates and that price increases were needed.

Following initial discussions with Sunshiners, where price negotiations became very strained, a new Sunshiners Committee Member was introduced and a settlement that was fair to both parties was quickly achieved. Part of this settlement provided access to the main kitchen, by the Trust under strictly agreed conditions, should the Trust have need for this facility for other possible users. The settlement also reached agreement on a formula to calculate any variations in charges for future years. Part of the negotiation included considering alternative models for pre-school provision, including extended hours of operation and differing approaches, such as Montessori. No alternative providers were ever approached or would be considered unless Sunshiners vacated the hall for whatever reason.

The Trust can now assure Sunshiners that with the new pricing structure agreed and the better managed usage of electricity and hot water, we believe that Sunshiners provides a valuable to service to our community and one which the Trust are proud to host. As was agreed at the conclusion of the recent price negotiation, you should look forward to a continuing welcome at the hall.

Bridgwater Hockey Club

Duncan Morrish has written to the Trust to ask about the possibility of the Club using Wembdon Village Hall as a base. The Trust has suggested that the Club puts forward a proposal to it.

Phil Curd

Phil has pointed out that the summary of the objects of the Trust on the Charity Commission website refers to the village hall but not to the playing fields. This is a transcription error by the Charity Commission. The Trust constitution as amended on 21.3.22 specifically refers to the village hall and playing fields. The Trust has asked the Charity Commission to correct the error.

Comments and questions from members of the public

Several members of the public asked questions about what they felt was a lack of communication from the Trust to the three largest user groups, and in particular what was happening to the Grounds Committee and the Hall Management Committee.

Neil Harrison has retired and Alex Hurford has recently taken on the role of chair of the Grounds Committee. Alex said that he had been in touch with both Cricket and Football Clubs and it was agreed that regular meetings of the committee will take place.

Lyn Tyrrell is chair of the Hall Management Committee. Lyn said that she had tried to arrange several meetings of the committee at varying times to suit the needs of the representatives of the user groups but on occasions she had been the only person present. It was agreed that the Hall Management Committee should be a useful forum for communication but its success will depend on the willingness of user group representatives to attend.

There were questions and comments about the refurbishment of the Community Lounge. The trustees were due to meet after the AGM to consider a proposal for a scheme of refurbishment\*

1. **Date of next meeting.**

Monday 21st October 2024 at 7.30 pm at Wembdon Village Hall

\*Post Meeting Note re the Community Lounge

The trustees decided that we would:

* Keep both TVs
* Keep the ‘tub’ chairs – as long as they are cleaned and maintained and not used as footstools or beds.
* Put the honours boards either side of large TV – cricket to one side and matching boards for football (if desired) on the other side
* Put both cricket and football trophy cabinets on the wall where the football cabinet has been.
* Keep the pool table – Fit it with a wooden cover so that it could be used as a serving table – If possible fit it with castors so that it could be pushed against a wall.
* Remove the games machine, juke box and sweet dispensers.
* Move the cricket photographs to the sports corridor.