

**Buxted Community Hall Trust 3rd Annual General Meeting held at  
The Reading Room, Buxted on  
Wednesday 28th January 2015 commencing at 7-30pm**

**Trustees present: Sheila Bartholomew(Chair), Pauline Bonner, Chris Hitchins, Eileen Claydon, George Claydon (Treasurer), Councillor Maggie Dopson, and Nick Tricker. Apologies received from Councillor Barry Marlowe. 20 members of the public were present - including Vivienne Blandford (Chairman of the Parish Council).**

**Item 1. Introduction, apologies and welcome. (Chairman).**

Sheila Bartholomew welcomed all those present who had turned out on another cold and damp evening. She reported apologies from Councillor Barry Marlowe, Michelle Warner, Valerie & John Banks and Sue Hitchins.

**Item 2. Minutes of 2nd AGM on 29th<sup>th</sup> January 2014 and Matters Arising (Chairman)**

Minutes of the previous AGM had been widely published and copies were available in the room. These minutes had no matters arising and could either be read to the meeting or be taken as read. This latter course of action was adopted without exception.

**Item 3. Report on our 3<sup>rd</sup> year of operation (CHAIRMAN)**

The granting of planning permission for the new hall by Wealden District Council in July was the culmination of four years hard fought negotiations by the Parish Council and Buxted Community Hall Trust with Wealden District Council. The planning permission was formally accepted and signed by the Parish Council in December 2014.

When the Trust was formed in 2011 the decision was taken not to fundraise seriously until planning permission had been granted as the 7km restriction on development around the Ashdown Forest made the likelihood of being granted planning permission questionable. The Trust is now in a position to explore every kind of funding opportunity.

Through the generosity of individuals, local clubs and societies we have put on events in the village nearly every month since September. This has been an opportunity to engage the community with the project and fundraise at the same time.. Each ticketed event has been sold out and the talk given by Vivienne Blandford in November is being repeated in February to another sell out audience.

We have a website, [buxtedvillagehall.co.uk](http://buxtedvillagehall.co.uk) and a Facebook page where you can see all the up and coming events and the fundraising results. We post news on BPEC and in the Buxted Messenger but hope that you will all access the website often to see how the project is progressing. Thanks to the generosity of a local firm a logo has been designed for use on our publicity and letterhead. A business plan has been produced which you will find posted on the website under the About heading.

However, the amount we need to raise is large. A Strategic Fundraising Group has been formed who will meet separately to develop a plan of action before putting the proposals before the board of Trustees. We have received advice from ESCC with details of charitable foundations to which we can apply for grants. We are also in contact with 3va and Action in Rural Sussex who have helped in preparing our business plan and with funding advice. That is the position so far and after the presentation of the examined accounts Nick will tell you about our plans going forward.

**Item 4. Presentation of Examined Accounts (Treasurer – George Claydon)**

Copies of our ‘examined’ Income & Expenditure account’s balance sheet for the Trust’s financial year ending 30<sup>th</sup> April 2014, are available around the room. These account were of course closed prior to mid 2014 when it was becoming increasingly apparent that WDC would accede to the planning application for the proposed new hall – thus the difference in our end of year balance is hardly changed from 2012/13, as we had not resumed any fundraising efforts.

I would like to record our trustee’s gratitude to Michelle Warner (FCCA) for her invaluable voluntary work in again conducting an examination of our accounts and for submitting the associated returns to Companies House and HRMC. The annual return for the Charity Commission was correctly filed without adverse comment.

Treasure was asked what the present financial position of the Trust. The Treasurer stated that our true balances today stood at about £9,500, the Parish Council had £33,000 earmarked for us and similarly there was a grant of about £106,000 actually lodged with WDC for us that was the proceeds of a Grampion's site Section 106 building agreement – in all about £150,000. It was possible that a further £100,000 could be made available to us through a loan paid for by the Ionides Trust from their income from the Buxted Medical Centre.

#### **Item 5. PLANS FOR THE FUTURE (Nick Tricker)**

By now you should be aware that the Trust has a website. A copy of these notes will be posted on it in the next few days. There are two main strands of activity over the next year: fundraising and developing the hall's building project.

The main focus clearly needs to be towards fundraising. Sheila has already mentioned our Strategic Fundraising Group. It is our intention to focus on those activities which will make the most significant inroads into the large sum we need to raise. We appreciate the need to deliver popular evenings of entertainment or interest for all sectors of the village. We recognise that these help to publicise our main aim (to replace the Reading Room), but they can also promote a feeling of fun associated with fundraising and obtaining donations, hopefully, from the whole village community. I think that you will agree that our fundraising has started off well. My hope is that we shall continue to organise one event each month. That will keep the Trust at the forefront of everyone's thoughts. It will provide worthwhile and entertaining social events for as many people as are interested. The Trust divides fundraising events into small and large. Next year we shall continue organising minor events, such as concerts or quiz nights, which typically raise about £500 in an evening. Following helpful suggestions from an interested friend of the Trust we are also thinking about a major event for the autumn. I am pleased to inform you that the Trust will be participating in the Village fete in September, when it is the main beneficiary. We anticipate that these two events will swell our funds considerably. Other local groups have offered to organise a fundraising event either wholly or as a shared event between the Trust and another worthy local cause.

We are following up on suggestions for increasing sponsorship. This is likely to be along the lines of acknowledging somewhere in the building families or individuals who have made significant contributions towards the new hall.

The second area of activity concerns the building project. A small group of Trustees has worked hard to produce the Business Plan - see website - which sets out our intentions and makes the case for the new village hall. We are now able to use it to support bids from the Trust for funding from individuals or organisations. The Business Plan is an organic document, which is brought up-to-date as our circumstances or assumptions change. For example the cost of building the hall in the latest version of the Business Plan is a figure that will be revised as time goes on and we make choices as part of the detailed design work for the new hall.

We are currently planning meetings with local builders to ask if they are willing to give us budget prices for the project. I believe that those joint discussions with contractors over the next few months will help us gain a better understanding of the amount we will need to raise. This may also be an opportunity for us to make use of the contractors' practical knowledge in order to spend our hard earned money as wisely as possible. I hope that we shall be able to discuss the project programme with them, including when it might start on site, and whether we should divide the project into individual elements or phases that proceed as funding comes in rather than wait until we have funding for the whole project. This could mean that we do the ground-works before starting to build the hall itself.

I thought that you might be interested to hear some of the questions we have to try to answer over the next year. As you will appreciate some issues are very difficult to resolve.....

1. In order to increase donations we would like to produce good quality advertising material about the new Hall and ensure that all Buxted residents see it. The question is "How can we contact everyone in the village?" Lists of names and addresses for everyone are no longer available.
2. Should we start building before we have raised enough to complete the job?

3. Attendance at all of our events has been excellent so far, but most raise around £500, giving an annual income of £5 to £6k. How can we increase income to enable us to provide the new hall in a reasonable timespan?

Finally I should like to remind you of a couple of events coming up. On Wednesday 18th March we are holding a fundraising dinner in the Buxted Inn. Tickets are available now from Pauline or Eileen for this three-course dinner - with entertainment from a magician. Boy, do we need a magician! The ticket price represents very good value and this should be a popular evening; so don't leave it too late before reserving your places. Please also make a note in your diary for a concert by the Tunbridge Wells Men's Orpheus Choir in St Margaret's Church at 7.30pm on 13<sup>th</sup> June. The choir will be singing a variety of pieces to entertain you. I can guarantee you a delightful evening. As always, all proceeds will go to the new Village Hall.

#### **Item 6. Appointment of Directors. (Company Secretary – George Claydon)**

Our Company Articles require all directors to resign at the AGM but they may, if they are willing to stand, be re-elected for a further year. This is intended to provide potential representatives of new groups in the area the opportunity to put themselves forward as Director/Trustees and have a say in how the Trust operates. Currently we have EIGHT trustees:

Sheila Bartholomew,

Pauline Bonner,

Eileen Claydon,

Myself, George Claydon

Councillor Maggie Dopson,

Chris Hitchins,

Councillor Barry Marlowe, and

Nick Tricker

All are willing to stand for re-election. Are there any other persons who wish to put themselves or others forwards for consideration? No offers or proposals were forthcoming either as directors or co-opted members. Treasurer asked for a proposal concerning re-election of these EIGHT Directors. The re-election of all eight directors en-bloc was proposed by Beryl Barter and seconded by Vivienne Carlton and, in the absence of any other proposals, all were elected unopposed

#### **Item 7. Appointment of Auditor 2014/15. (George Claydon)**

Michelle Warner (FCCA) has indicated her willingness to again undertake this role until any possibility of a conflict of interests arises between this work and her role as a trustee of the Ionides Trust, who will become our landlords once building of the new hall commences. The proposal that she be reappointed was agreed – nem con.

#### **Item 8. Any other Business.**

A number of questions were raised from the floor about the desirability of having a fixed stage in the new hall and storage for clothing, props etc for the Buxted Players group. It was explained that right from the beginning of the planning process it had been obvious that the size of the new hall was going to be constrained by WDC planners, the site and our fundraising abilities. Thus it was imperative that the hall would have to provide the best possible space for the maximum number of groups that might wish to use it and this could not encompass a traditional fixed stage for the main hall. We had planned a secondary hall, adjacent to the large hall, which would act as a stage area using de-mountable stage blocks – such is widely used in many new build village halls. When the project reached the appropriate point in time due consideration would be given to the Players best interests in this regard. If planning restrictions were changed the Trustees may well revisit their decision in this whole stage matter. The players could of course nominate a representative to either join the Board or to be co-opted to be part of the discussions at the appropriate time. Ann Tricker proposed a vote of thanks to the BCHT trustees for all their efforts in taking the project forward to this point. There being no other business, the meeting closed at 9-25pm

**G. Claydon (MBE) Company Secretary**