**Smailholm Village Hall Committee Meeting**

**Tuesday 6 May 2025**

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| **1. Present:** Lindsay Grime (LG), Jane Roberts (JR), Brian MacFarlane (BM), Marjorie Barrow (MB), Denise Hunter (DH) Jane Miller (JM) John Barrow (JB) Yvan Biot (YB) Charlotte Davidson (CD)  There were no apologies.  The Chair welcomed Charlotte to the Committee and she was advised to refer to the Governance folder to help with familiarisation of the Committee’s responsibilities and procedures. MB & LG offered to answer any questions she might have and BM will arrange to issue her with a key for the hall and store cupboard. | **Action by**  MB, LG, BM |
| **2. Confirmation of Office Bearers**  The existing office bearers indicated their willingness to continue.  Chair : Lindsay Grime, proposed by JR, seconded by JB  Secretary : Marjorie Barrow, proposed by JR, seconded by BM  Treasurer : Jane Miller, proposed by JB, seconded by LG |  |
| **3. Minutes of the previous meeting held on 11 February 2025**  Minutes of previous meeting held on 11 February 2025 were agreed. | MB |
| **4. Matters arising**  Website  MB reported that with some external help the building of the website on the new platform had started and it was hoped that the text/pictures etc would be added over June/July. She asked for volunteers to help with editing text, if needed. JB and YB volunteered and LG advised that Will Grime was willing to help also.  Check the dates of invoices from INEOS and send to JM.  Fire door lights  The batteries had not been changed, but currently this is not critical. BM will follow up again.  Outdoor light and PIR  These had been done. Thanks to BM for the light on the tree in the drive. He had another one and JM suggested it might be helpful to have the two on the same branch, one pointing up the drive and one down the drive. This action might change depending on proposed plans for front area of the Hall. See hedging/wildlife plan item below.  Mower service  Done. Thanks to JB.  Storm damage to roof ridge  This has been fixed.  Sink overflow pipe  This has been replaced.  Hedging/wildlife plan  It was agreed to request Will Grime to prepare a plan for the outside area in front of the Hall which he has agreed to do on a voluntary basis. To take this forward Will to be invited to a meeting on 12 May at 7:00pm with DH, CD, JR and JM to consider the specification of such a plan.  One of the community projects in Smailholm Place Plan is to improve the outdoor area of the village hall so there could be value in linking to this project in terms of obtaining funding. A representative from Smailholm Futures to be invited to the meeting. | MB  MB  BM  DH/CD/JR/JM  YB |
| **5. Finance Report**  The Treasurer presented full year accounts 2024/25 (copy attached) which had been fully discussed at the AGM. All those present had been at that meeting, so there was no further discussion.  The Committee agreed that a further 6 month fixed term saving account should be opened with £15,000.00. If it has not matured before the transfer of assets to the new SCIO, it will be held in the Smailholm Village Hall Committee account and transferred later.  The Chair thanked the Treasurer for all her work in preparing managing the accounts. | JM |
| **6. Hall Hire Rates 2025/2026**  It was agreed that the hire charges for the Hall should, in some instances, be increased. There had been no change to the rates since 2019/2020 except for weddings, where the charge increased from £400.00 to £500.00. The rates had been constant because of COVID and to encourage users back to the Hall post pandemic, but we need to take account of recent high inflation.  The Committee reviewed examples of rates from other halls and considered the variation in categories and prices. There followed considerable and detailed discussion about the best approach for Smailholm, bearing in mind that hall hire was a key source of income and balancing that against our role as a charity supporting social and community events. It was agreed to simplify the system, keep unchanged the current hourly rates for classes and meetings, but to increase the daily rates and charges for weddings and children’s parties. A draft of these changes to be prepared and circulated to the Committee for final agreement, before the revised charges come into operation on 1 June 2025.  Once agreed, the new rates to be posted on the website and used for any new booking made for the period 1 June onwards. Events already booked in the diary to be charged 24/25 rates.  It was also noted that from time to time there will be instances when the Committee agrees specific rates for activities or events. An example of this is the agreed current arrangement for community groups organised by local residents (e.g. craft & chat, table tennis etc). The hire fee is at the local rate (i.e. 50%) but if on any occasion a particular group does not have enough attendees to cover the fee then they pay only what has been collected that session; in these circumstances the Committee considers a charge of £2.00 per head acceptable as a contribution to the hire of the village hall. This is designed to encourage, maintain and support local activities, however small the number of attendees. | MB & All  MB/BM/  JM |
| **7. SCIO update**  All those present had attended the AGMs held before this meeting, one for Smailholm Village Hall Committee and one for Smailholm Village Hall, the new SCIO. A full update had been given at those meetings so it was agreed no further discussion was needed. |  |
| **8. Events**  In reviewing events since the last meeting it was agreed that the response to film nights had been best when a newly released film had been shown. In future we should review forthcoming releases and use that as a basis for selection of films, in addition to any recommendations from locals. We should continue to serve wine and collect donations for film and refreshments. The availability of refreshments to be included in the publicity for future film nights.  There had also been a good turnout for the second showing of the Riverwoods film and it was agreed that we should consider including documentaries in future programmes. YB will liaise with Greener Melrose to see if there are any films that we could screen with them.  Forthcoming events and nominated coordinators  *Scotland and wine* : talk to be scheduled for September  *The Stewart Brothers Guitar Duo* : event to be scheduled for autumn on a Friday or Saturday  *25th anniversary celebration of Hall renovations* : at the AGM Will Grime had pointed out that it was 25 years since the hall was renovated and coincidently it was also 100 years since the then Earl of Haddington had given the village the ‘recreation hall’ which was our current hall’s predecessor. It was agreed that these events should be celebrated in August and that a small working group should develop ideas and plans. Suggestions included BBQ, invitations to the Earl of Haddington and key people involved in the renovations, local scavenger hunt and local publicity marking these historic anniversaries. The following people agreed to be on the working group : JM, JR JB & MB. | MB  YB  JB  BM  JM/JR/  JB/MB |
| **9. Update on Smailholm Futures**  The consultation period for Smailholm Place Plan had concluded, there had been a good response. The consultants had analysed the comments received and put the finishing touches to the final draft which has been sent to local councillors and neighbouring Community Councils for comment by 20th May. After that the report will be registered with SBC and implementation of the 11 projects identified can begin. Of the 23 people who had responded to the consultation questionnaire an encouraging 17 had indicated they would like to be involved in the implementation of the projects. The draft is available for review on the Hall website, <https://www.smailholm-village.org.uk/village-ventures/smailholm-futures/>. Funding for implementation needs to be through a formally constituted organisation with a bank account, which may be achieved through MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) with BCA (Borders Community Action) or by setting up a suitable company.  Around 7 heat loss surveys had been undertaken in homes in the area. The scheme will be advertised again in the autumn for further surveys to be carried out. |  |
| **10. Alternative energy systems for Hall**  JB reported that three quotes for solar panels had been received as follows:  Stewarts of Kelso 20 panels : £16,775.00 T  SSS 16 panels : £11,700.00  ESS, Galashiels 18 panels : £14,675.00.  The cheapest per panel was SSS, with Stewarts the most expensive per panel. Whilst all included providing and installing panels, inverter and battery there were other variations within the quotes beyond number of panels, so further investigations are needed to establish the best option.  It was agreed that covering the whole of the roof would look better than partial covering. Planning permission would be needed, following local notice of our intentions.  Funding sources to be reviewed and there may be a need for a decarbonisation case to be made. Again it may be beneficial to link this with the relevant community project identified in Smailholm Place Plan.  A smart meter would be required and further investigations with Octopus needed.  It was agreed that whilst an EV charge point might be desirable, it may be something for later installation depending on costs and funding although the committee had no objection to this being explored. | JB/YB/  LG  JB/YB  JM |
| **11. Maintenance and Quarterly Risk Assessment**  Outside benches and notice board had been varnished. Thanks to JB.  Wasps at front door had been treated. Thanks to BM.  LG offered to fill in the holes in the wall at the front door next time they had some lime mortar.  The blown double glazed window units will need to be fixed this year. There is a possibility that they can be repaired rather than replaced, which would be much cheaper. Further enquiries into this option to be made. Again this appears to be connected to one of the projects in Smailholm Place Plan which may assist with funding.  There may be a need to prune the cherry trees at the end of the drive. Need to check if they have TPO before any work undertaken. CD advised that best to do in summer when there is still some growth in the trees.  The last quarterly risk assessment had identified the need for PAT testing of equipment.  The fire equipment to be checked.  The quarterly risk assessment to be completed. | BM/YB  JB  BM  BM  LG/MB |
| **12 Any other business**  It was noted that at the AGM Will Grime had suggested a building review be undertaken since it was 25 years since the renovation was completed. It was agreed that we would consider approaching him to carry this out once the plan for the outside area was underway.  There was no other business apart from thanks to everyone for their perseverance over nearly four hours of meetings! |  |
| **13 Date and time of next meeting**  Tuesday 19 August 2025 at 7:00pm |  |

