

# **HVHA Annual General Meeting**

**10<sup>th</sup> October 2018**

In attendance: Tom Schofield, Karen Bennett, Sarah King, Sue Gracie, Pat Gordon, local Howgate residents

## **1. Welcome**

Tom Schofield welcomed all to the AGM.

## **2. Apologies**

Shirley Murray, Alistair Proctor, Isobel Alford, Sheena Dawe, Cath Milne, Irene McConnell

## **3. Minutes of previous AGM**

Sue Gracie approved these and Sarah King adopted.

## **4. Matters arising**

- HMRC issue from previous year has now been concluded and the outstanding money paid to HVHA. The committee agreed not to pursue further costs for loss of interest etc. due to the difficulties experienced to date in recovering money from HMRC.

## **5. Chairman's report**

- Hall developments in 2018 – the hall has suffered a number of issues with significant building repair works needing done on quite a regular basis now which is both costly and time-consuming. The main problems and repairs were:
  - o persistent flooding in the kitchen - meshing of gutters and downpipe spouts/rodding of downpipes/repair to pipes have hopefully fixed this issue
  - o wet rot in the men's toilet – stripping and treatment of the rot has taken place but this may be an ongoing problem in the future
  - o the hall back door was deemed no longer fit for purpose on health and safety grounds – this was replaced with a new fire door
- Derek Brown was appointed as the hall handyman, however this was cut short due to health reasons. John Findlay has been assisting with ad hoc repairs since then. Tom and Sue have been managing work required via the snagging book in the kitchen, which was noted is available to all hall user groups to add any work needing done to.

- There have also been ongoing issues with the boiler, typically due to a fall in pressure (although not ideal, easily remedied by a committee member familiar with boosting the pressure), or hall users tampering with the heating timer system. This meant the hall was not at an ambient temperature at times, or on occasion wasting of oil as the system may have been running for longer than intended. Signs have been placed on the heating timer panel to warn users not to tamper with it.
- Broom services clean the hall on a weekly basis and we are satisfied this is of a high standard.
- Karen Bennett checks the AED and heated cabinet on a monthly basis. She will check if any annual service is required.
- Our regular user groups contribute c£2k a year via rental fees which HVHA is very grateful for.
- Social and fundraising events have taken place throughout the year, however it was felt that support for these from the immediate local community is poor.
- Our newsletter has continued to be produced and delivered with the Town Crier on a monthly basis, however Karen Bennett is stepping down this year from this role and that of Secretary. A special thanks to her for her contribution over the years. Our newsletter and Town Crier is also distributed via a network of local residents.
- Donald Cameron maintains the website, which is where minutes of all our meetings are held, as well as newsletters.
- Irene McConnell administers our hall letting.
- Our thanks are extended to all those contributing to these roles in keeping the hall ticking along.

## **6. Treasurer's Report and adoption of accounts**

- Our June 2016 – June 2017 books were audited and submitted to OSCAR – we were notified that they passed in April this year.
- We will aim to have June 2017 – June 2018 audited and submitted by the end of 2018.
- The maintenance issues highlighted in the Chairman's report have impacted our revenue greatly this year. An insurance claim was made for the wet rot in the Men's toilet, which HVHA had to pay £250 towards, and our renewal costs have risen substantially as a result.
- Although HVHA have paid for the cost of the door, it is to be shared 50/50 with the Church (money to be received from Church) and we have managed to save some money in terms of disconnecting our telephone and broadband line with BT (no longer required).
- The closing balance as at June last year was £5,710 and at June this year is £3,900
- The accounts were adopted

## **7. Election of Committee members for 2018/19**

- Chair – Tom Schofield agreed to continue his role as Chair for the forthcoming year. Sue Gracie proposed him and Sarah approved this.
- Treasurer – Sarah King agreed to continue her role as Treasurer. Tom Schofield proposed her and Pat Gordon approved this.
- Secretary – Sue Gracie agreed to put herself forward for this. Karen Bennett proposed this and Tom Schofield approved this.
- Hall bookings – Tom Schofield to confirm that Irene is happy to continue in her role as our Hall booker
- Church representatives – Tom Schofield to confirm that Sheena Dawe, Isobel Alford and Cath Milne are happy to continue their roles as representatives from Howgate Church.
- Committee members – Pat Gordon agreed to continue her role on the committee. Tom Schofield to confirm with the remaining committee members that they are happy to remain as such.

## **8. AOB**

- As Karen Bennett is standing down from her role in the production of the monthly newsletter, Tom Schofield asked those in attendance if they had any thoughts as to who might take this role on. It was suggested that HVHA contact local high schools to see if there was a student who might view this as an opportunity to carry out some voluntary work for their CV or as part of an award scheme, like the Duke of Edinburgh.
- Tom Schofield asked everyone to consider this going forward in case any options come to mind and to spread the word locally. If a replacement cannot be found, then the newsletter will cease to be produced. Ad hoc leaflets would need to be created for events/important communications in the future.
- Colin Rorison suggested HVHA could consider sponsorship from a local business for the newsletter which may generate additional revenue.
- Colin Rorison asked HVHA again consider the matter of replacing the flower tubs across the village. These were introduced by HVHA previously, but have now fallen into disrepair. Tom Schofield explained that whilst the current committee were supportive of the initiative suggested, that it is not a matter for HVHA to take this forward. Both HVHA and HCC have offered a contribution towards this of £100 each, but have no capacity to manage this or provide the funding that would be required. HVHA agreed to produce a November newsletter where this could be brought to the attention of the wider community to see if there would be uptake to help with this, with Colin being the initial contact point. James Garry noted that there are a number of funds available for this type of initiative. Sue Gracie expressed some concern that Midlothian Council may not continue free provision of plants in the village if they believe we have sufficient with the tubs should these be replaced and replanted.
- The Church has announced that it will be closing by the end of the year. This affects HVHA as we currently lease the hall from the Church, although the lease agreement is somewhat unclear. Tom Schofield and Ian Quigley (HCC Secretary) met with the Howgate Church representative, Sheena Dawe who confirmed that they are in discussion with their lawyers

on the matter and that Howgate Church will most probably merge with Penicuik South Church. She confirmed that the assets of Howgate Church, which includes the hall, the car park and the Glebe are owned by Howgate Church Trustees (comprising the current congregation) whose duty is to ensure that the assets are disposed of appropriately in relation to Church Law. Any assets or liabilities from Howgate Church would probably be carried over to Penicuik South once Howgate Church had closed.

- Options available are being explored. Howgate Church expressed a desire to assist with facilitating the best outcome for the community within the legal framework (set by Church of Scotland) that they must abide by. Obviously, they cannot rule out that some or all of the assets may be sold to a developer. In any case, a valuation will be carried out and market value for the sale would be sought. They cannot provide a timescale at the moment for when further developments would happen, but have agreed to keep open dialogue with the community on the matter via HVHA and HCC.
- James Garry outlined his understanding of the Community 'Right to Buy' scheme. He believes it is imperative that Howgate register its interest now if we wish to pursue this. Ian Quigley queried the fundamental requirement for the assets to be classed as delivering 'sustainable development' to qualify for a Community Right to Buy. It was also outlined that a separate Right to Buy user group would need to be established as neither HCC nor HVHA would be able to do this given their individual charitable status.
- Ian Quigley recommended that independent legal advice be sought on the community/HVHA cancellation of lease with the Church and options available.
- It was agreed that a door-to-door questionnaire would be carried out to gauge residents' appetite for maintaining the Church assets for the community. A draft version will be written by Ian Quigley, James Garry and Tom Schofield and circulated amongst HVHA/HCC and those in attendance at the meeting. All agreed that a public consultation would be the next sensible step following this. Tom Schofield and Karen Bennett suggested we include the idea of a community pathway, a proposal being taken forward by Donald Cameron, be included in this process. Ian Quigley to contact Donald regarding this.
- Sheena Dawe has drafted an update message – Ian Quigley to send this to Karen Bennett for inclusion in the November newsletter.

**Tom Schofield closed the meeting by thanking everyone for their attendance and participation.**

**The date of the next meeting will be Monday 21<sup>st</sup> November**