



Petts Wood War Memorial Trust

Registered with the Charity Commission for England and Wales number 303032

PETTS WOOD WAR MEMORIAL TRUST

MINUTES OF THE 78th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD ON 23rd JUNE 2024 IN THE TOWNCOURT ROOM, PETTS WOOD WAR MEMORIAL HALL BR5 1LA

Meeting commenced at 8.00 p.m.

- 1. Welcome by the Chair:** - The Chair, Andrew Stotesbury welcomed Trustees, Guests and Staff to the 78th Annual General Meeting and thanked them for coming. The meeting was informed that a sound recording was being made to ensure a full record of the meeting. The chair explained that the monthly meetings were also recorded. There was no comment to this.
- 2. Notable attendees:** Cllr Simon Fawthrop
- 3. Apologies for absence** were received from: Mike Ricketts (Vice Chair)

The trustees were introduced to the meeting:

Susan Radford (Secretary)

Lina Karim

Ben Colenbrander

Chris Jones

Our Hall Team was introduced to the meeting

Elaine Bryne (Hall Manager)

Julie Cockett (Hall Steward)

- 4. Verification of the correctness of the Minutes of the previous AGM held on 27th April 2023:** Minutes of the 77th AGM have been posted to the Website for several months were handed to attendees. These have already been sent to our accountants and banks to effect their updates. The chair requested comments, no matters arising. The meeting accepted the record.

Verification was proposed by Evan Jones and seconded by Chris Jones carried by show of hands and signed by the Chair.

- 5. Chairman's Report:** - Andrew Stotesbury presented the report of the Chair of Trustees.:

. Thank you for taking the time to join us this evening.

My report on behalf of the charity will include a brief history of the year, some of the highs, and lows, and our expectations for the coming year.

It hard to believe but I have now completed two years as Chair. During this time the Trustees have also not changed. This has brought about stability to the Trust after a quite turbulent period.

Ben Col, Lina, and Susan our Secretary are our most recent Trustees. We still have some posts not filled including Treasurer so may I ask that any questions on our finances could be addressed to me.





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The trust is still very grateful to recent past Offices and Trustees for ensuring the independence of the trust from external pressures. In particular from people and interests speculatively looking at our land and the location. The trustees and I confirm that the property is as secure as possible by safeguarding the trusts assets with the Charity Commission and others. Of course, should the trust initiate any development this would be done with full disclosure.

On this topic: This year we have started to re-invest in the hall with the purchase of more tables, enhanced security and planning to embark on some up-upgrades including: the kitchen at the rear of the main hall, the stage equipment, the gardens etc. With plenty of other ideas, just time and resources needed.

Our hall team: Elaine our Hall Manager is supported by our Hall stewards: Julie and Adam. They now well known to our Hirers and visitors, helping to keep the hall and events running as smoothly as possible.

Another member of the Hall team is our Lead Gardener. Adrian. Who keeps the gardens under control to maintain haven of space for picnics, meeting friends of just some down-time. The recent weather conditions have been a challenge, and discussions are underway to try to make the grounds more manageable. Perhaps by installing SUD, Hardstanding, soil treatments, difference grasses?

The weather at the May-Day garden party was particularly wet! Many thanks to those who attended and STILL made the event a success. I particularly loved the community spirit that shown through the gloomy conditions. A lot of tea was drunk in the hall, and for the first time the Trust had a table to advertise itself. Many thanks to the organisers for letting this happen. I actually think it did get consumption of tea going as a sit-down in the hall was a welcome break from the non-stop rain!

The gardens hosted the 2023 Petts Wood Calling – in the rain, but for Remembrance Day service the weather was better. The RBL memorial was enhanced by the addition of two metal silhouettes installed by John Ros..... and his team. I was honoured to lay a wreath on behalf of the trustees.

The changes made last year to appoint Fairman Keeble of 4a Fairway as our bookkeepers has been successful. The decision even more beneficial as this also helped navigate the trauma of updating our Barclays Account to the new officers. Being local they can support the Trust in our account submittals to the charity commission.

Included in the Treasures statement (we currently still do not have a Treasure) will be a proposal to also change our Independent Charity Commission audit examiner to a local Accountancy practice. This will require a formal proposal and acceptance by the AGM as this is a significant change, but one that I recommend as it is expected to have significant benefits to the Trust.

Lina and the Trust are still working through the due diligence for appointment of a Wealth Manager to oversee our reserves. This is to maximise the value and security with the minimum of Trustees time.

Maintenance has been ongoing.

The subsidence that effected the kitchen area of our main hall, and some of the toilets in the entrance annex, and side doors remains stable. This has given the trust the confidence to re-fit the kitchen.

An unsafe tree was removed owing to a fungal infection at the from the Petts Wood Roadside of the hall. This is required to be re-placed. The trust is in discussion with the council to re-plant this elsewhere in the gardens for several reasons: It has opened up this elevation, the hall is now more visible from the road, more light enters the hall making for a brighter space, the disabled parking space is more visible and not subject to





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dripping sap, and it has opened up a potential space for use. The Trust is in discussion with local businesses and organisations around possible uses.

The main trunk of the tree is being stored by the arborist for possible future use. A replacement sign board, a bench, or other use. Ideas welcomed.

Cost of running the hall has increased. Power and Gas, both have presented unexplained and rise in Water and Energy rates. Our Hall manager is still on the case try to get this resolved. There may be a possible water leak within the grounds, but the metre cannot be located??? Power, it seems the hall has been re-designated as an education establishment. So much for smart meters!

The trust is very grateful to the contractors (Bam-Nuttall) that constructed the new lifts at Petts Wood Station because under their community engagement programme they replaced the stairs to the flat above the Townscourt Room. A first-class job was done, these should last for many years. This flat is an important asset to the trust as it provides regular rental income.

Not so good was the associated works to the sub-station in the gardens when the contractor assumed entry, removed the fence, left unguarded excavations, and did not reinstate. The trust finally tracked down the contractor. Some effort was made to correct this.

Following emergency repairs earlier in the year we are awaiting the council to maintain the boundary fence between the hall and the Car-Park.

Following the Petts Wood and District Residents association's AGM where there was an extensive discussion on local policing there has been more presence. This is welcomed. Along with our own enhanced camera security this has reduced some anti-social behaviour. The gardens are there for the community.

The Hall has been retained by Bromley Council for Voting. It is an ideal venue providing a light safe place for two wards to cast their votes. The recent GLA elections and in a couple of weeks' time the Westminster Parliamentary elections on July 4th. The hall looked for an organiser for a Petts Wood Hustings, but no-one took this on. The Trustees would like to encourage more community use of the hall. Suggestions include: Reinstatement of the mid-week coffee mornings, a drama group (a community pantomime?), form a 'Friends of the Hall' group which could help support functions and the gardens, and, ??

We are also reaching out to local organisations to grow community engagement and use.

Recently joining the regular events of the May-Fayre and Petts Wood Calling has been the Petts Wood Antique Fayre and the Growing Network. Both events are here this coming weekend.

As you have heard the hall is in good hands. And enhancing it's position as the Petts Wood Hub venue. We have exciting new enquiries from Hirers which would help to consolidating and improving our facilities and services for the local community still further.

It is the intention of the Trustees to further safeguard the trust with a review of its constitution. Some clauses do not now reflect the current Management structure, but partially we want to enhance the security of the Trust by clearly defining the criteria for becoming a trustee.

The guidance requires:



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- *A prospective to be sponsored and mentored by a current existing Trustee.
- *A second trustee will need to endorse the application.
- *The applicant shall introduce themselves, provide a CV and reason for applying and clearly declare any interests.
- *After attending a minimum of three consecutive meetings the Sponsoring and Seconding Trustees may bring the application to a vote of the full Trustees.
- *The vote needs to be unanimous to progress the application.
- *The new Trustee is unable to take an officer position until a clear year has been served.
- *A Trustee need to have been a member for at least 3 years before becoming Chair.
- *Contingency: Should a situation require it, an unanimous vote of all Trustee may for a very specific agreed condition amend this enrolment criteria,. (eg: sudden death of the Chair?)

Many Thanks
Andrew Stotesbury
Chair of Trustees.

Comments on the Report:

A member would like the sign at the front of the Hall replaced. The chair replied that is can be but at the moment we have limited funds, but if a donation is forth coming and they wished to sponsor this than it will be actioned, and ideally if someone would like to take this on they are welcome to work with the Trustees get this done.

The Trustee have advertised that we would like to start a Friends of the Hall Group. A group such as this could take on the task of upgrading this sign.

Simon Fawthrop suggested that the criteria should be considered guidance rather than a firm proposal/rule. this was the thought behind the contingency should enable an appointment. However the change to guidance was accepted.

The Chair repeated that any help would be welcome. But this needs to be actual help not just suggestions.

Simon Fawthrop asked if we had adequate insurances and fire cover. Yes a Gap insurance check has been carried out. Our insurance is arranged through Howden Insurance Brokers.

Our fire plan and risk registers are under review.

6. Presentation of the Financial Report for the years ended 31st December 2023:

(Written by Chair as currently the Trust does not have a Treasurer, read out by Susan Radford)

Overview of year ending December 2023

Bank Accounts: Barclays

Bookkeeper Fairman Keable 4a The Fairway, Petts Wood, Orpington

Independent Examiner (IE): Simpkins Edwards, The Summit, Pynes Hill, Exeter

Proposed Independent Examiner: Baxter & Co, Lynwood House, Crofton Road, Orpington,

The financial statements are currently being prepared for submittal to the IE. They have not been sent because the Trust is keen to make this process more efficient. The day-to-day bookkeeping and salary management is carried out by Emily Cook of Fairman Keable. This is an expense that the trustees consider to be necessary to ensure we remain compliant with employment and pension requirements and general accountability and transparency for the trust. It is anticipated that we will retain this, or a similar service should a Treasure join the Trustees.





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Currently communication with our approved IE, Simpkins Edwards, is mainly by email, electronic documents transfer and signatures, with limited telephone support, and no personal contact. This results in an extended period of back-and-forward for authentication and resolving comments.

Following a meeting with Louise Hallsworth, a potential new Independent Examiner, The Chair and Secretary are proposing to the Trustees and the AGM that we change to Baxter who are based in Orpington. Obviously, Baxter is more local so the opportunity of face-to-face meetings can be incorporated into the service. At our meeting we were satisfied of their professional ability to adequately perform this service. We were impressed by their knowledge, and so strongly recommend this change.

A show of hands was in favour of changing to Baxters as our Independent Examiner. None against

As with other years when the accounts are validated, they can be found on the Charity Commission Website.

The charity has reduced income during 2022-2023. £70,675, down from £92,000, but not as low as the previous year of £67,000. We are working hard to get back to pre-covid income of around £100,000 per year.

Because of this the charity has been prudent with its spending but investing in its staff and assets. All the Hall Team received an increase in their pay after a lengthy freeze. Tables have been purchased, and necessary maintenance carried out, frequently by the staff, and by the goodwill of our contractors.

The Management team has been keeping a close watch on our account. Over the years the income has mainly been matched by expenditure, but for some months there has been a call on our reserves. The charity has sufficient reserves to effectively maintain the Trust for the foreseeable future.

The charity needs to increase the halls use and its offering to Hirers. To be ready for this the trust is looking to increase its staff by adding additional Hall Steward. This is intended to give more resilience to the team and increase the diversity of skills within the team

Regards
Andrew Stotesbury

Comments on the report:

Apart from being more local Simon requested if there were other benefits with the change of Independent Examiners. There is a cost saving, and the advantage of a change to ensure that the accounts are subject to rigorous due diligence. Our interview with Baxter did show up a possible weakness in communication with our existing examiners.

There has been an increase in hires, so the income is increasing, the lack of pre-school has changed the dynamics: less wear and tear, maintenance, and consumables. The loss of the Mid-week coffee morning has not been replaced, this is a disappointment, the Trust thanks Carole for her hard work over the years and would love another team to take it over. It's a big commitment, as if it restarts it has to be regular.

The Trust has now launched a new Website. This is opening up opportunities to inform on what is happening, and an effective contact form.

The Trust is supported by the Petts Wood Residents Association and Business Association. We regularly share information and advertise events and news between us on our social media: mainly Facebook.

The trust is looking at getting the Kitchen facility improved at the rear of the main hall. It is possible that Staff could start off a coffee morning especially if we are able to recruit another steward.

7. Re-election of Trustees and Officers. (note: this is being done yearly)



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Andrew Stotesbury (Chair)
Mike Ricketts (Vice Chair)
Susan Radford (Secretary)
Lina Karim (Investments)
Ben Colenbrander
Chris Jones

Proposed by Susan Radford.
Seconded by Elaine Byrne.
All appointments carried unopposed.

Open discussion and any other business.

Christmas Carnival: The hall might get used for face-painting or similar. There are regular users in the main hall but the small hall is available. We are hopeful that a Christmas presentation could be started. Eg; a Pantomime. Please spread the word.

Perhaps a Christmas performance – choirs along side the Christmas Carnival.

Perhaps the hall could become a venue for a radio Any Questions or similar. Nice idea.

The Chair thanked everyone for coming.

Elaine Byrne was thanked for providing the refreshments served after the meeting.

The formal meeting closed at 9.10 pm.

