Goring Village Hall

Minutes of Village Hall Management Committee Meeting
Wednesday 19 November 2025 at 7.30pm

Present: Mike Baker (MB) (Chair), Jack Calder (JC), Neil Lecky Thompson (NLT), Linda Palmer (LP), Roger Wood (RW),
(In minutes Paul Carter (PC), Bill Norman (BN), Colin Silvester (CS))

Item		Action
1. Apologies	Phil Davies (PD), Bill Jackson (BJ), Mark Kibble (MK), Brian McKenzie (BM)	
2. Minutes of last meeting	The minutes were approved and passed for publication on the GVH website.	
3. Matters arising	LP had visited the Great Hall at Cholsey in September but it was a warm day it not possible to judge the effectiveness of their heating system. The PAT testing had been done. Training of U3A and the Arts Group on the PA system had not yet been done since names of the U3A members to be trained were awaited. Minor jobs still to be done included replacing a cracked knob on the dimmer switch and replacing a cracked socket near one of the MH gas heaters. Revised charges for setting up chairs and tables had been agreed, communicated to hirers and published on the Hall website. The Parish Council had confirmed they would not be able to order the new heating system on the Hall's behalf. The gas safety certificate had been renewed but one gas heater had been condemned. RW had mentioned the defective emergency light to PC but it was apparently not yet fixed. MB had circulated proposed dates for Committee meetings in 2026 (shown at section 9 below). The PRS fee for the year had been agreed at £270.	MB RW RW/PC
4. Chairman's	A complaint had been received from Emma Horwill on	

report	behalf of her yoga class and "Sweaty Momas" about unhelpful behaviour by Goring Gap Players during one of their bookings. MB had taken this up with GGP, who apologised and promised it would not happen again. In his communication about the new charges for setting out chairs, MB had said they would not apply to bookings already made and paid for. He had intended this to apply only for bookings a few months ahead, but one hirer had apparently made bookings up to the end of 2028 and asked if the old rate would apply to all those bookings. MB had said no and was negotiating when the new rates would start applying to that hirer. The Committee felt that in general any delay in applying the new charges to particular hirers should be kept to a minimum. Bernard Novell had raised a number of points: 1) He suggested installing an awning at the back of the Garden Room. The Committee were not minded to do this at this stage. They were not aware of any great demand for it from Hall users. 2) He suggested a survey of users about possible improvements. The Committee thought this a reasonable idea though unrealistic expectations should not be raised. LP would take this on. 3) He thought the Hall projector was still not filling the whole screen, but MB had tested it and found it to be working satisfactorily. The Festival Committee had recently asked if they could borrow stage sections from the Hall for outside use during the Festival. Further enquiries would need to be made about the intended use. They should be required to collect and return the sections in good condition, to keep them under cover and not use them on a grass surface. Subject to that, the Committee had no objection but thought the Festival should be charged a fee of, say, £25 or £50 per section for outside use. MB would negotiate terms. A new 3-year energy contract had been signed with Scottish Power, effective from 1 Feb 2026. It was estimated that the annual cost with the current heating system would be around £4500, but around £4200 if the new heating system were installed, a significant reduction from the current £8000 cost. This seemed a good deal compared with the Hall's average energy costs over recent years. In connection with the recent renewal of the NEOS Networks contract, MB said he had learned that 96% of	LP MB

	network providers were currently looking to merge or consolidate. The market might therefore look very different when the contract came up for renewal next August. NEOS Networks was one of the larger providers.	
5. Treasurer's report	NLT had circulated the monthly accounts for October and a draft budget for 2026. For 2025 it looked like hire income would come in a couple of thousand under budget at around £38k. Expenses (including the consultant costs for the heating project) were also likely to be under budget at around £38k. So the position was broadly satisfactory. The Committee felt that regular hires were holding up quite well so the income shortfall compared with last year probably just reflected normal yearly fluctuations in hires for special events such as weddings. The Gap Festival should boost next year's income. NLT would consider options for the Hall's interest-bearing account, since Lloyds were reducing their rates. For 2026 it seemed reasonable to budget for expenses (apart from the heating project) similar to 2025. Any cost increases, for example in wages, should be offset by lower energy costs. If Committee members had particular proposals for expenditure they should let NLT know. RW suggested that improving the acoustics of the Bellême Room should be considered. The current bank balance of around £82k would be significantly reduced by the cost of the proposed new heating system. It had been the Committee's policy for a number of years to hold cash reserves of around £25k in case of need. Because building costs had increased substantially in recent years the Committee thought it prudent to increase this to, say, £35k or £40k. Hire charges had not been increased since 2017, and NLT was asked to model the effect of a 10% increase. LP would research what other venues were charging. Hirers could be warned of any proposed increase in the early months of next year, with formal implementation at the AGM. MB thanked NLT for all his work in preparing such clear figures for the Committee.	RW NLT LP
6. Environmental project report	MK had circulated a summary of the updated written bids submitted by ORAC and Advanced Maintenance, to which he had added further estimated costs for laying concrete slabs (which PC and his brother would do), electrical work	

	(to be done by CS), radiator removal, piping, and fencing plus a 5% contingency. The total for ORAC came to £62.4k if Mitsubishi units were used but £57.4k if Samsung units of equivalent quality and specification were used instead (as ORAC recommended). The total for Advanced Maintenance came to more than £92k. Hans Eriksson had provided a verbal quote of a similar amount to ORAC's. But he would be using non-local contractors and was talking of closing down his business anyway, so it had been decided not to push him for a written quote. Carter remained unwilling to quote. MB proposed proceeding on the basis of the cheaper ORAC quote (if Samsung units retained their cost advantage). BJ had circulated an objection to the Committee and MB had circulated his reply to BJ's objection, which he again summarised. NLT queried what the payback of the project would be. It was accepted that it would have a high initial cost and the savings in energy costs compared with the current system would be only around £300 a year. But the maintenance costs of the current system were high, and it was likely to need replacing before too long. The new system would have the advantage of providing cooling as well as heating and freeing up space. The main motive for the change was in any case to reduce the Hall's carbon footprint and not just to achieve a financial payback. No quote had been obtained for fitting electric radiators, but if the initial costs were, say, half those of fitting heat pumps, the additional energy costs of around £6k a year would offset any initial savings within 5 years or so. As regards grants, PD had talked to Tessa Hall and to SODC, but obtaining a local authority grant was likely to be complex and uncertain. MB had received an email from an organisation called Grants for Growth, who claimed to be confident they could raise the funds to meet the cost. They would need an upfront payment of £5000, which they assured would be refunded if for any reason their fund-raising was unsuccessful. The Committee were reluctant to consider making any upfront payment to this organisation without knowing a lot more about it. In any case the Hall had already received substantial grants in connection with covid which had not been required and which could now be put towards the heating project. The estimated total cost of the ORAC bid would leave us with around £25k in the bank. If our aim was to increase our reserves to £35-40k (as discussed earlier) only a further £10-15k would be	

	required, which it should be possible to raise by local grants and gradual build-up of surplus income. On that basis it was proposed to proceed with the ORAC bid. This was agreed by all those present, and both MK and PD had written to MB to confirm their agreement. It would inevitably take some time to finalise the contract, but it was agreed to proceed as soon as possible. The Committee wished to record their gratitude to those who had worked so hard on the project, particularly MK and MB.	MK/MB
7. Maintenance, repairs & improvements	A lock in the ladies' toilet was broken. The inventory in the Garden Room cupboard needed to be corrected. A socket and heater switch in the Garden Room was broken. RW would ask CS to fix it. There was a fault with the water boiler in the kitchen. RW would investigate and find out the cost of a replacement if necessary. The kitchen needed cleaning.	LP/PC LP RW/CS RW LP/PC
8. Any other business	MB thanked LP and her husband for putting up the Christmas decorations.	
9. Dates of future meetings	21,1.26, 18.3.26, 26.3.26 (AGM), 13.5.26, 15.7.26, 14.9.26 (Monday), 21.11.26	All