

**BENENDEN VILLAGE TRUST**  
**Trustees' Meeting Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> February, 7pm, Iden Green Pavilion**  
**MINUTES**

PRESENT	Kent Barker, Simon Brown, Tom Dawlings, Martin Dickson (Chairman), Peta Grant, Julie Lewis, Sally Ann Marks, Chris Parkinson, Paul Tolhurst, Mike Taylor. Caroline Levett (Trust Manager).	
1. APOLOGIES	No apologies.	
2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING	The minutes of the Trustees' meeting held on 27 <sup>th</sup> October 2025 were unanimously approved as a correct record of the meeting and signed by the Chairman.	
3. FINANCE, GOVERNANCE AND COMPLIANCE	<p>The minutes of the FGC Group meeting held on 22<sup>nd</sup> January were circulated.</p> <p><u>Current Finances</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Income. Total Q1–Q3 : £74,531 - BVT £36,859; BVH £31,562; BVH refund £1,035; fundraising £5,076 (total profit £3,048).</li> <li>• Expenditure. Total Q1–Q3 £56,695. BVT £24,486; BVH £30,103: fundraising costs £2105.</li> <li>• Bank account balances at 31<sup>st</sup> December - All accounts £49,624.85.</li> <li>• Approximate year-end figures : income £97,000; expenditure £75,000; bank account balance £53,000.</li> <li>• Stable income and expenditure as a result of careful management of resources, successful fundraising and fewer items of large expenditure.</li> <li>• BPC has taken on grounds maintenance contract and current tree work saving BVT approximately £11,000 which would have substantially reduced any year-end surplus.</li> <li>• Resources need to continue to be carefully managed.</li> <li>• The most recent film night raised £1,369.52. Thanks given to PT for organising and all those who helped with the event.</li> </ul> <p><u>COIF</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Income Q1- Q3 £16,627. Forecast £22,000 to year end.</li> <li>• Holdings value:14<sup>th</sup> January 2026 total £786,001.87.</li> <li>• The capital sum invested has stayed static. BVT has been receiving a quarterly income from COIF but performance has been disappointing, although over a longer period the fund has performed very well.</li> <li>• The current market remains very uncertain. CCLA has taken a cautious approach and invests in high quality stocks which are solid and stable but are losing rating relative to the rest of the market.</li> <li>• Trustees agreed that a lower risk portfolio ensured the correct duty of care.</li> </ul> <p><u>Leases</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• St George's Club: New 4-year lease in place wef 24<sup>th</sup> December 2025. Annual rent December 2025 £3,500; 2026 £4,000; 2027 £4,500; 2028 £5,000.</li> <li>• Benenden Bowls Club: No response to letters sent early 2025 regarding its lease. Lease Group to progress this.</li> <li>• Iden Green Pavilion: Current lease ends this year. Lease Group to consider.</li> <li>• Pre-School: Current lease ends 31<sup>st</sup> August 2026 and any new lease beyond this date would expire 31<sup>st</sup> August 2027. Rent wef 1<sup>st</sup> September will be £6,000pa. It is understood that BPS is still keen to move and continues to investigate alternative premises.</li> </ul> <p><u>Future of St George's Hall/Strategy</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A strategy meeting was scheduled for June 2025 to determine whether BVT's strategic goal is to sell St George's hall or retain it as part of BVT's income producing assets, but this was deferred.</li> <li>• With the current leases in place and the need to consider other capital expenditure at BVH</li> </ul>	<p>LEASE GRP</p> <p>LEASE GRP</p>

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- Income
  - ❖ Forecast income to year-end in excess of £40,000 compared to 2024-25 income of £37,980.
  - ❖ Total income generated April to January £34,379, increase of £2,373 on same period last year.
  - ❖ 1894 hours hall usage April to January. Increase of 167 hours on same period last year.
  - ❖ Increases to hire charges also account for some of the increase in income.
  
- Hirers
  - ❖ Several regular bookings have been lost to other venues but there have been several new regular hirers and enquiries and bookings have remained constant.
  - ❖ Ami Piper continues to be the highest earner with an estimated annual income of £9,244.
  - ❖ Benenden Art Fair is the highest income generating 'other hirer' (£1,368) and has booked for October 2026.
  
- Capital Projects
  - ❖ BPC had indicated that it would consider a funding application from BVH this financial year.
  - ❖ JB had identified a number of projects:
    - JB is seeking quotes for new lighting in the main hall and throughout the building to replace the existing fluorescent lighting and will be proposed for grant funding depending on costs. JB
    - A new sound system has been discussed but it was felt that sound issues are in part because of the hall's acoustics and a new system may be no better. KB to ask a sound engineer for advice. KB
    - 8 x high level Velux windows in main hall. Window frames have exceeded serviceable life and blinds need replacing. Quote to replace the windows and fit solar powered remote control blinds - £17,500. This is a major capital project which will need to be carried out in the future but finances do not allow for at this time.
  - ❖ Longer term planning needs to be considered for BVH repairs, maintenance, updating and will form part of any BVT strategic discussion.
  
- Other Items
  - ❖ Benenden Hospital to provide free Basic Life Support training for 20 people at the hall. This has been offered to hirers, trustees and parish councillors. The hospital and the hall will follow up with a piece in the magazine.
  - ❖ St George's Church has given 40 x cushioned folding chairs to the hall.
  - ❖ Government published guidance on the use of temporary seating states "*If temporary seating is provided, these should be secured in lengths of not fewer than four seats and not more than 12. Each length should be fixed to the floor*". It is impractical for rows of chairs to be fixed to the floor, but is recommended that chairs are joined together to reduce the hazard that unsecured seating may cause in the event of an evacuation. BVH now has 340 reusable Velcro hook and loop style straps that hirers can use to link chairs together. Should hirers choose to disregard the guidance in relation to the use of temporary seating, they do so at their own risk and any such decision-making should be documented in an appropriate risk assessment with details of any mitigation. BVT accepts no responsibility or liability for injury to persons using the hall where failure to comply with the guidance is considered to be a contributory factor.
  - ❖ JB undertaking Portable Appliance Testing training and will be qualified to carry out testing using the Trust's own equipment. JB
  
- Trustees gave a formal vote of thanks to John.
  
- Village Hall Working Group
  - ❖ Notes of the meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> December were circulated.
  - ❖ The Group was set up to cover hall issues at the time which were not being directly addressed elsewhere. Much of the work of the Group is now redundant or covered by other BVT groups.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ The Group will not be disbanded but will meet if there are specific items to be dealt with not being handled by other groups.</li> </ul>	
6. VILLAGE HALL CAR PARK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It was agreed that a working group be set up to look in detail at issues regarding parking and the car park surface and recommend solutions.</li> <li>• The cost of resurfacing the car park would likely be in excess of £50,000.</li> <li>• Group members will be KB, SB, PG, PT.</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Considerations for the group: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Who should be able to park at the village hall and on what terms.</li> <li>○ How to avoid congestion and risk of injury at times of peak usage.</li> <li>○ How to enforce any necessary restrictions while avoiding confrontations between staff and angry drivers.</li> <li>○ How to pay for long-running maintenance of the car park.</li> <li>○ Practicalities of introducing parking barriers or other ticketing measures. Costs compared with benefits. Policing.</li> <li>○ Experience of other villages which have taken this route.</li> <li>○ What would be the effect on BVT's standing within the community.</li> <li>○ Engagement with residents.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	KB/ SB/ PG/ PT
7. HR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Performance appraisals have been completed for all staff.</li> <li>• The new Employment Rights Act 2025 became law in December 2025. The Act introduces additions and amendments to existing legislation which will take place over a period of 2 years. BVT conditions of employment and employment policies will be updated as necessary.</li> <li>• An Employee Risk Assessment form has been drafted which will be discussed and shared with members of staff. A record of this assessment and associated guidance will be kept in the office.</li> </ul>	
8. ROLE OF CHAIR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MD had indicated in October that he would like to step down as Chair and resign as a trustee wef January.</li> <li>• No-one has come forward to be considered for the role and MD has agreed to stay on as Chair until the AGM in July</li> </ul>	
9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SAM advised that the PCC is looking for someone to help market the church's refurbished space, and that JB's name had been suggested.</li> <li>• TD advised of a suggested indoor padel court on Glebe Field and asked if BVT would want to be involved with this. TD to make further enquiries.</li> </ul>	TD
	Meeting closed at 9pm.	

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