

MINUTES OF THE UMBORNE INSTITUTE TRUSTEES

Meeting at the Hall

Tuesday, 17 November 2009, at 8pm

Attended: Rob Summers (chairman), Geoff Elliott (secretary), Paul Galloway (treasurer), Sue Gush, Neil Shepherd, Peter Rugg, Paul Forster, Eleanor Wood and Liz Gosling

Apologies: Janet Coman and Kimmo Evans

Matters Arising: The sink in the kitchen had been unblocked.

Correspondence: None

Reports from sub-committees:

Finance and General Purposes: PG reported that £60 in cheques had been banked.

Entertainment and Fundraising: EW said that numbers for the children's party were rising towards 60. She thought that parents should give a present worth £3 from next year to save costs for the hall. It would be considered again after Christmas.

Arrangements for the Twelfth Night Party on January 9 were discussed. It was decided that money from the raffle should be retained for the hall's redevelopment. Everyone would be invited to bring finger food. Publicity would be by emails, the website and the parish magazine.

New Hall Development: RS reported that Custom Timber Build had gone in to liquidation before we had committed to them, so there were no losses. Other companies had been approached for quotes. PF said that Harris Timber had quoted £50,250. If we accepted this quote, there would be some differences in the new hall. It would have a shiplap finish. The ceiling could be brought down to the lower ceiling level of the kitchen and toilets to provide storage. The quote had been based on existing plans and complied with building regulations. If we added 2m to the length of the hall, costs would increase by about £6k to £7k.

The hall would be 18m long and 12.5m wide, narrowing to 10.5m. This compared with 12.2m, the width of the present hall, though the new hall would have straight walls providing more accommodation. The building would be 3m high. It could be extended later.

PF said we should keep to our plan because we could not afford more. A discussion followed on possible alterations to the present plan. It was suggested that the toilets area could be reduced with the effect of making the hall space fully rectangular. EW said she was worried that the kitchen might be too small, but was reassured. PR said that the hall

should be long enough to accommodate short-mat bowls. He said that he thought we should go for the longer hall. NS, EW and SG agreed.

GE said that we were tackling things the wrong way around. We had to establish a financial plan so that we knew what we could afford; what our costs would be and what funds we could raise. Without this discipline we couldn't know what decisions to make, nor could we be sure that we wouldn't run out of money.

PF said that a longer hall might cost us £60k. We had £40k now plus a £24k grant. This price covered the building itself, not the foundations, nor any of the finishing trades. We might need to target £20k in loans.

PR asked what the foundations would cost. He was told there wasn't a figure available because we intended to do much of this work ourselves. PR thought it wiser to employ a company's expertise but was told we could not afford to do that.

It was agreed that we should follow two critical paths, as suggested by NS. We should form a financial plan and a firm plan for the building itself. GE was asked to see Ted Townsend as soon as he was reasonably fit after his heart attack to establish whether he was still willing to become project manager.

RS would also ask KE/JC to see what additional funds might be raised. He asked PG to ask the bank whether it might lend us money, and on what terms, and SG to consider how we might raise loans from individuals within the valley.

PF said that he had spoken to Revenue and Customs. He had been told that if we built a new building from ground up we would not be liable for VAT. On that basis we should be able to retain the septic tank, but we should have to discuss that with building inspectors. We should have to tell all suppliers that we were VAT-exempt.

GE said that we should learn a lesson from the demise of Custom Timber Build: we must ensure that we did not pay up front to any other company so that we didn't lose money in any future bankruptcy. PF agreed that we should minimise our risks but said that it probably would not be possible to eliminate them. He suggested that we invited Harris to meet us.

Hall Maintenance: Nothing to report.

Website: Progress was praised on all sides. NS said that he had met with Rick Wood and GE to discuss content and to review the site's construction and design. It had been decided to proceed close to the design already established. More content had been promised. GE said that the email network was now more than 50 strong. In future, it would be used to draw attention to the website.

Hall Bookings: GE reported that no more bookings had been taken.

Any Other Business: SG said that 2010 calendars had been completed with the help of NS. She said that 100 had been printed. So far there had been 67 orders. It was possible extras would be needed. Break-even had been 39. Each trustee was given a list of people to contact for sales and distribution.

GE said that preparations had to be made for an AGM in January. These would have to comply with the standards laid down by the Charity Commission, which had approved our new constitution. They would also have to meet the standards of the Community Council of Devon if we were to gain a Hallmark rating.

It was agreed that the AGM would be held at the Hall on Tuesday, 26 January, at 7.45pm. There would be a pre-meeting for trustees at 7pm.

GE would consult records to decide which trustees should retire and, if they wished, offer themselves for re-election. People in the valley would be invited to stand for election.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, 16 December, at 8pm. RS invited members to Little Yardbury for this Christmas meeting.

The meeting closed at 9.50pm.