

Minutes of Cusop Village Hall Annual General Meeting

Held at Cusop Village Hall on 17 December 2025

The meeting opened at 7.00pm

Present:

Trustees: Alison Matthews, Katja Jones, Phil Gilbert, Kate Hainge

Public: Mark Havard, Gill Walton, Mark Hainge, Laurence Matthews, John Ievers, Sue Ievers, Celia Cundale, Alan Heeks

1. **Apologies:** Paul and June Graves, Jeremy Vivers, Jim Wesley, Emma Philpotts, Jo & Patrick Farrell, Sandra & Stuart Sheldon, Sandy Sandaver, Vyvyan Lloyd, Sandra Havard, Richard Jones, Joan Jones
2. **Minutes of the last AGM:** (18 December 2024). These were agreed as correct and signed by the chair.
3. **Chair's Report:** It was with much sadness that we accepted Jim Wesley's resignation as a trustee of the hall last month due to his increased commitments at home. So it would be impossible to begin this year's report without first expressing our enormous gratitude to Jim for the all years he served as a trustee, chair and bookings secretary. Our best wishes go to him and to Margaret at what is undoubtedly a very difficult time for them. I would also like to thank Kate for taking over the bookings from Jim at very short notice. Thanks as always are due to all the trustees who make up the management committee, for the work they have done on behalf of the hall over the year. Katja, in addition to being our treasurer, is also our caretaker and cleaner. It was brought home to us a year ago just how much she does, when we had to engage a temporary cleaner while she was indisposed. As well as keeping the hall spotlessly clean, she checks it *every day* and so frequently spots problems at an early stage when they are easier to remedy. Phil takes on all the heavy lifting outside whether it's righting Mary's shelter when it gets blown over; cleaning out the car park gullies, taming the brambles or weeding the car park. He also donated mince pies for this AGM. Kate keeps on top of things like reviewing the various certificates, policies and insurance we need as well as dealing with the Charity Commission. She is also our Secretary. And she, along with me and Mark Hainge, did an interim trimming of the hedge alongside the footpath. Among various other things I keep the website up to date, deal with any techy problems, book the plumber and am responsible with dealing with Scottish Power. Thanks as always go to David Jones accountants for examining and endorsing the accounts. Thanks are also due to the Camera Club who took some great photos of the hall for our website, and to Sandy Sandaver who regularly repairs the chairs when the screws come loose and fall out! In terms of maintenance during the year, the hall was repaired & repainted below the white rail; the lights in the hallway were replaced, and various minor plumbing repairs were made. Gwernyfed Walled Garden continued cutting the grass, pruning the fruit trees and trimming the hedges. We also bought new mugs & some glasses for the kitchen and a new table tennis table when the old one, which had done sterling service, finally became unsafe. (But thanks to Sandy Sandaver for managing to keep it going at a less-than optimum level since then). Our annual BBQ proved popular once again, with 35 people attending. Katja will talk about the financial side of this. The year to the end of August 2025 was challenging for us and we made a loss of £2,615 overall. This was largely due to the steep rises we have seen in the price of electricity and maintenance costs (Katja will take you through the accounts in detail a bit later.) As a result we made the decision to increase our hire charges from September 1st 2025. Private rental increased by £3 to £15, and commercial hire went up by £5 to £20. As you will no doubt appreciate, these rates are still low compared to other village halls in the surrounding area and there has been criticism of this from some quarters. Some people feel that we should increase our charges substantially. But whilst we were covering our costs and still maintaining at least a year's worth of outgoings in reserve we felt that it was right to keep our charges down. We are proud of the fact that smaller groups who can't afford the charges for other halls are able to use this one. The likes of Tea & Chat and the Mother's Union would struggle to afford "market prices". We are fortunate to have a hall which is supremely well built and insulated making our costs much lower than similar-sized halls elsewhere. Other measures we've taken to reduce our outgoings in the current year are:
 - that we will no longer pay the £1200 annual stipend for a bookings secretary.
 - Phil will prune the fruit trees.

This, together with a projected increase in income, should result in an overall reduction in expenditure of £1500 in the current year.

In terms of plans for the current financial year ...

- we will be looking hard at ways to increase our income through more effective advertising, renting out space in the sheds and possibly charging for keeping stuff in the hall cupboards.
 - we will also consider ways of increasing the security of the building.
4. **Treasurer's Report:** Thank you to David Jones for examining the accounts again...As you can see, expenditure was £10,459 against income £7844, meaning we made a loss of £2,615 this year. Alison has already touched on the reasons for this, and we are doing our best to reduce costs as much as possible. Together with the increase in hire charges we are hopeful for next year. A few points to note: The solar payments only reflect receipts for 3 quarters, the final quarter's payment of £ 367.98 was received in September. Scottish Power is one of our main costs, the prices for electricity have gone up enormously over the last period. We used to pay £ 138.09 per month, that rose to £ 256.75, Alison did manage to reduce that to £ 217.07, and we are still on that amount at the moment. We are locked into this tariff until February 2027. The costs for the AGM and BBQ are split, £ 32.00 for last years AGM, and the BBQ was 139.09. The costs for the fire alarm services are under review, we are looking into the necessity of having a fire alarm system at all, given the size of the hall. The fire extinguisher is taken into Hereford annually for a safety check. We lost the clothes bin of the Salvation Army, it seems that our bin wasn't cost effective for them.
 5. **Bookings Secretary's Report:** Income from hiring the hall in 2024/25 was £6790, an increase of just over £200 on the previous year, reflecting a slight upturn in bookings. The biggest change was in morning bookings, up from 113 to 178.... but unfortunately afternoon and evening bookings both dipped slightly. Overall the occupancy rate was about 46%, an increase of just over 2% on the 2023/24 figure. It's important to try and hit the sweet point when we set the hire costs. Our Charitable Objectives state that we're here *'to provide a village hall for Cusop and surrounding areas for meetings, lectures and classes or other forms of recreation and leisure occupations in the interests of social welfare and with the object of improving the conditions of life of said inhabitants'*. The 2024/25 period charges were £15 for hires with a commercial element and £12 for personal, charitable or parish council hires. These charges were raised in September 2025 and will be reviewed again in 2026, as will the policy of allowing registered charities holding fundraisers to have the hall for free. Looking to the future, occupancy is currently running at around 48% and we anticipate that income from hires in the 2025/26 financial year will increase by about £500.
 6. **Election of the Management Committee:** The following were elected/re-elected to the management committee. Alison Matthews, Katja Jones, Philip Gilbert, Kate Hainge, Gill Walton and Mark Havard. Proposed John levers, seconded Celia Cundale.
 7. **Renting of shed space:** The possibility of renting one of the sheds, or space within it was discussed and it was suggested that the trustees measure up the space and ask a local estate agent what it might be worth in rent.
 8. **Any Other Business:** Jeremy Vevers had asked if the possibility of having a defibrillator at the hall could be discussed. This had been considered in the past, but dismissed because of concerns about speed of access when the barrier is locked, as well as the costs involved. If the community felt that the hall would be the best location in Cusop then the committee would be prepared to reconsider. However, they would not be in a position to fund the purchase, installation, maintenance or any other running costs and therefore it might be appropriate for the parish council to consider the issue first. Jeremy Vevers also asked if it would be feasible to hold annual first aid courses at the hall, trustees responded that they thought the hall would be an excellent location and anyone that wants to organise this should contact the bookings secretary to arrange dates. Celia Cundale shared the sad news that Janet Bumford died and informed the meeting that she was now co-ordinating the Mothers' Union and Margaret Price was doing Tea and Chat. John levers observed that the lights along the road don't really work and asked if they could be improved? The committee undertook to look into it. Alan Heeks spoke about community resilience and noted that there had been a power cut last year that lasted for 30 hours in parts of Cusop. He suggested that with a pv system and battery the hall could be used as a point of shelter, particularly for older people and people living on their own. Alan agreed to gather information and present his ideas to the committee at a future date. Celia Cundale kindly proposed a vote of thanks to the committee, and to Jim Wesley.