

Farringdon Village Hall

Annual General Meeting 5th June 2025 at All Saints Church, Farringdon.

Draft Minutes

Present (Trustees): Andy Clegg (chairman), John Hustler (treasurer), John Cavendish, Sally Ravenhill, Penny Cushing, John Constable (Secretary).

Members Present: Anne Charrington, Anthony Causton, Kate Causton, Chris Maughan, Mike Law, Helen Constable, Kate Dobson, Cally Horton, David Horton, Mike Ravenhill, Ian Ross, Kathy Ross, Mark Loxton, Ian Dussek, Nigel Edwards, Gillian Lacey, Chris Perry, Keith Johnson, Freda Johnson, Alexander Acland

In attendance: Debby Cook (scrutineer)

(Please note: if you attended and have been overlooked, please contact the Secretary at trustees@farringdonvillagehall.org)

Chair's Report

1. The chairman gave an overview of developments during the first year since the last general meeting and the election of the final four Trustees. Sonia Ranger was thanked for her work as a trustee before her work commitments made it necessary for her to resign.
2. In the first year we have:
 - a. Established the trust and registered for Gift Aid
 - b. Exercised the option to purchase the land South of Marelands
 - c. Received (eventually) the grant of planning permission for the hall subject to conditions, and reduced size of the hall itself and parking capacity.
 - d. Costed out the build: £1.5m for the whole site, of which there would be £800k for the hall itself
 - e. Made the first applications for funding
 - f. Had conversations with a number of developers with regard to the possibility of using some of the site for enabling development, which could contribute to the build cost. A couple remain interested.
3. Sally Ravenhill provided more detail on the three main areas of planning work:
 - a. Planning permission had been granted subject to conditions which have to be cleared prior to development commencing, esp: surface water run off, foul water and – most significantly – approval of a plan and achieving highway access. Access from the highway is a significant condition. A section 278 agreement (access from the highway) can take between 12-18 months,
 - b. The hours of opening are overly restrictive and an application has been made to amend these.
 - c. The status of the land. It is currently designated in the local plan as countryside (outside the settlement boundaries). This is more restrictive and therefore reduces the value of land. The trustees have made representations to amend the local plan, and show the site within the (less restrictive) settlement boundary. They they are relatively hopeful as the land is in the middle of the village surrounded by houses and commercial development.

4. The Chair thanked Denise Maughan for her work with the Village Hall website. Now that Denise will no longer be maintaining the website the trust would appreciate help from any resident who could help and could assist with our automated member communications. We recognise this is a significant weakness.
5. There were questions from members regarding concern that that partnerships with developers would delay the build especially as it may involve altering the proposed siting of the village hall. It is expected that the developers will keep the trust informed of their plans.
6. The Chair recorded our thanks to David Horton and David Craig for originally securing the option on the land.

Annual Financial Accounts

1. The treasurer provided the accounts of the charity for the period from 19th January 2024 to 31st March 2025. The charity has £200k in the bank and the value of the land (£100k).
2. The treasurer advised that the charity can apply for grants to meet the costs of providing the village hall, and that developers have been approached. The cash funds held by the charity are now largely on a 60-day notice account which provides some interest (4.2% gross AER).
3. David Horton proposed that the accounts be approved, seconded by Chris and the meeting was in favour with none against.

Election of trustees

1. The Chair explained that according to the constitution all trustees are required to stand down prior to this first Annual General Meeting. The trustees had all stood down as required and all six had put themselves forward for re-election as trustees.
2. There had been no additional names put forward. Ian Ross proposed that the six current trustees Andy Clegg, John Constable, John Hustler, John Cavendish, Sally Ravenhill and Penny Cushing all of whom had indicated their willingness to continue in the role be elected as trustees. The proposal was seconded by Mark Loxton. A count was not required and the six trustees were duly elected. At the next AGM one third of the trustees will retire.

Proposed amendments to the Constitution

1. Penny Cushing explained the reasoning for the proposed changes which streamlined the format, improved readability and provided some future proofing.
2. The Trustees apologised for not being able to send out the proposed changes any earlier and there was some criticism that although the full constitution is available on the website, some people felt that the full proposed amended constitution should have been provided , not just the proposed clause changes.

3. Penny explained the meaning and application of each clause, and asked for approval of each one, noting that all amendments would require the approval of the Charity Commission.
 - a. Some of the changes were straightforward and formatting/grammatical. (clauses 2, 4, 11, 12, 13,19)
 - b. Only clauses 9 and 10 were considered contentious.
 - c. Clause 9: it was agreed not to have non-voting classes of member. However, permitting the CIO, if necessary in the future, to introduce membership fees was challenged and it was decided that it should not be inserted now but be for an AGM vote if it was required in the future.
 - d. Clause 10. Deleting proxy voting and voting without a general meeting were accepted, and email would be added to postal. However: the need to have a majority of all members entitled to vote was questioned. Also, if there were no non-voting classes of membership, why do we need to specify that members should be “entitled” or “eligible”. A small point, and the Chair explained that this was the time between submitting the membership form and being accepted into the member register

Discussion/ Q&A on Progress of the Project

1. The trustees reported that applications had been made for Community Infrastructure Levy funding to EHDC and SDNP to drop the kerb and build a track and wash-down area from the A32 to enable heavy traffic to enter and leave the site. The cost of the dropped kerb and track had shocked the trustees as it is so high, and would include a sizable % deposit of the value of the works to secure completion of the work to the requisite standard.
2. However, the highway access would constitute commencing the build (required within 3 years of planning permission) and would increase the potential development value of the land.
3. SSEN had also been approached. The secretary advised the meeting that the way funding works nowadays is that funders are not asked to contribute a fixed amount, rather they respond better to being asked to pay for a part of the project e.g. SSEN might be asked to fund air or ground source heat pumps, EV charging points. He said that a formal application would be made to SSEN next week.
4. In answer to a question Penny Cushing explained the reason for creating an Association CIO rather than Foundation.
5. Proposed by David Horton and Ian Dussek, those attending the meeting kindly thanked the trustees for their work since their appointment in January 2024.