WILLIAM BLAKE MEMORIAL HALL - MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD AT 6.30PM ON MONDAY 25TH APRIL 2025 AT THE MEMORIAL HALL

PRESENT

i. **Elected Members:** Francis Blake (Chairman), Anne Brown (Treasurer**),** June Trask, Jo Tudor (Secretary)
ii. **Representative Members**: Sue Budden (Combined Arts Group), Stephen Carp (South Petherton Parish Council), Beryl Male (WI), Angie Long (South Petherton Sports and Social Club)
iii. **By Invitation**: Linda Bleasdale (Hall Manager)
iv. **Members of the public:** Anne Clifford, Robert Coggan (regular user – SP Local History Group), Jan Stanton (regular users – SP Combined Arts Society), Mervyn Taylor (regular user – Table Tennis)

APOLOGIES/ ABSENT

Apologies were received from the following committee members, Angie Long and Kathy Vertannes and from Pete Ellis who had attended recent meetings to provide advice on the refurbishment.

1. **Welcome and Apologies**

1.1 The Chairman welcomed Committee members. He also warmly welcomed the members of the public listed above. Apologies from Angie Long, Kathy Vertannes and Pete Ellis were accepted.

2. **Minutes of the previous AGM**

2.1 The Minutes of the previous AGM held on 22nd April 2024 **were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.**

3. **Actions and Matters Arising from the previous AGM**

3.1 Actions from the previous AGM (listed below) were picked up where necessary under relevant agenda items or at the following Committee meeting:

- Action 1: The Committee led by Francis Blake to draft a brief for a Feasibility Study to evaluate all necessary aspects involved in replacing the Hall's heating system and associated upgrading works. ***Completed and incorporated into application to Somerset Community Foundation.***
- Action 2: The Committee to reconsider lift access to the Hall as part of its Feasibility Study on upgrading the Hall's heating and other facilities. ***Completed as part of Action 1 above. Stephen Carp had met with contractors who had advised that while, it was the still the case, that a lift could not be installed internally, there was scope for fitting one outside.***

4. **Chairman's Report (Francis Blake)**

4.1 The Chairman provided a verbal report which included:

- Note of changes to "the Hall support team". Antonia Gatehouse has stepped down as Bookings Manager and the bookings work was currently being split between Linda Bleasdale and Jo Tudor. Nikki Jones had become a volunteer to the Committee and had taken on the invoicing of regular users. Following training from Stephen Carp, Nikki was also maintaining the website. Laura Hedderwick has resigned as cleaner and had been replaced by Steve Hill, formerly of N&D News and who lived in the Market Square.
- Committee membership has been stable with no in-year changes.
- The Financial Report would be presented under the next Agenda Item. Francis was relieved that, with the move to the Co-operative Bank, all the problems regarding signatories and access previously encountered with NatWest had been resolved.
- Maintenance costs over the year had decreased after the substantial expenditure the previous year. Until the very recent failure of the boiler, there had been few problems with the upkeep of the Hall.
- The booking system and documentation had been streamlined and booking enquiries could now be accepted through the website.

4.2 Looking forward, Francis noted that the refurbishment of the Hall needed to be prioritised. Following consultation with the Committee, he had applied to the Somerset Community Foundation's *Community Building Energy Efficiency Fund* for a grant to produce a detailed integrated and well-costed

plan for this refurbishment. This had drawn on advice from Orme Architecture. If successful, much fundraising activity would be needed to pay for the work itself.

4.3 Francis thanked the contractors, volunteers, Committee members and the Parish Council for all their hard work in running and supporting the Hall.

5. Financial Report and Accounts (Anne Brown)

5.1 Anne Brown, the Treasurer, had prepared the accounts and circulated two documents for consideration:

- Balance Sheet for Year Ending 31st Dec 2024
- Anne had arranged for David Hall of DCLH Associates Ltd to examine the accounts and he had confirmed in writing that all was in order. (Examination of the accounts was not a legal requirement given the size of the charity but regarded as good practice.)

5.2 Anne drew attention to the key points.

a) Total income in 2024 was £17,621.72 compared to £15,767.00 the previous year. The increase was partly due to the fact that the Sports and Social Club had gradually moved to paying full rent again and a refund of buildings insurance following a rebuild survey.

b) Total expenditure in 2024 had dropped by almost half to £18,361.26 from £35,333.13 due to the fact that the backlog of urgent maintenance had been cleared the previous year. Maintenance costs had fallen from over £21k in 2023 to £4.6k in 2024.

c) The Balance Sheet for 2024 showed a deficit of £198.87. While this was a recovery from the deficit of the previous year of £19,130.50, the hall's operating costs were still on a knife edge.

d) Financial reserves had dropped slightly from £29.795.15 in 2023 to £29,596.28 at the end of 2024

5.3 In discussion of the accounts, Francis stated that the reserves would not be sufficient to pay for the Hall's refurbishment and a big fundraising effort would be needed. It was important to hold a contingency fund equivalent to at least six months of operating costs and preferably a year's worth. **Beryl Male proposed that the Accounts be accepted; June Trask seconded this, and all committee members were in favour.**

6. Fire Procedures

6.1 At a previous AGM, it had been agreed that Fire Procedures should be considered annually at the AGM to help comply with requirements for committee members, staff and volunteers to receive fire training. It was noted that Linda met with all new users during which she went through the fire procedures.

6.2 Linda ran through the main points regarding fire procedures including:

- On discovering a fire - activate the alarm, dial 999 and evacuate the building leaving by the nearest fire exit;
- Go to Assembly Point (outside Café Delicious for all users except WI who muster at the Pharmacy).
- Do not stop to collect personal belongings and do not re-enter the building;
- Fire exit routes and location of firefighting equipment are on signs at each call point (alarm);
- Familiarise yourself with fire appliances and their location and memorise the escape routes;
- If possible, contain the fire by closing doors and windows and switch off any electrical appliance which may be involved.

7. Retirement of existing and appointment of new Committee Members

7.1 ***Retirement of existing elected members***. As required under the Scheme of Regulation (Para 8.2), all existing elected members of the Committee retired from office at this point.

7.2 ***Appointment of five new elected members*** – As required under the Scheme of Regulation (Para 5), nominations were invited for five new elected members to serve until the next AGM. Four of the five

had just retired, had confirmed that they were willing to be nominated to stand again (Francis Blake, Anne Brown, June Trask and Jo Tudor). Kathy Vertannes was still to confirm; no new nominations has been received. In discussion, it was agreed that Kathy should be nominated in principle but would be asked to confirm

Sue Budden proposed that the five nominations be accepted; Stephen Carp seconded this, and all were in favour.

Action 1: Jo Tudor to talk to Kathy Vertannes re her membership of the Committee.

7.3 ***Appointment of six new representative members*** – The Scheme of Regulation allowed for the appointment of six representative members which must include the Parish Council from the full range of regular users of the Hall (Paras 6 and 9). These would be appointed at the Committee meeting, immediately following.

8. Any Other Business

8.1 There was no AOB

9. Date of next AGM

9.1 The next AGM was arranged provisionally for **6.30 pm on Monday 27th April 2026.**

The meeting closed at 7.20pm.

Chairman's Signature **Date:**