

Berwickshire Federation of Village Halls

Committee Meeting 23rd January 2025

2 – 3:30pm

Allanton Village Hall

Minutes

Committee members present: Caroline Underhill, Helen Colvine, Audrey Sanderson, John Froggatt, Shane Waddle, Graham Dolan and Jackie Watson

Additional attendees: Madeleine Wilson (Lamberton Holders Hall)

Secretariat: Beth Landon

1. Welcome and apologies

No apologies, full committee present

2. New committee members induction

Beth checked all new committee members had access to the [constitution](#) and grant [guidance](#) and were aware of the [BFVH website](#) and invited any questions, none were received.

3. Accounts update

- Current bank balance: £22,068.62
- Annual grant from SBC: £13,502
- £11,649 has been paid out in grants this financial year to date (breakdown handed out and available on [BFVH website](#))
- £3,000 is ringfenced as an emergency fund
- Bank of Scotland have started charging since BFVH are not a charity. This will cost £4.75/month plus charges for every activity. The preference is stay with BoS anyway, as it is the only one to have 2 factor authentication online.

4. Grant Applications

- Chirnside Community Centre: £1,500 under category C for new chairs** from Office Furniture Direct. This was less than requested in the application as a second quote was sought. They requested the NET amount as they can reclaim VAT. They offered to contribute £342 towards it, but this was not deemed necessary. Caroline and Helen left the room while the committee decided, since they were the applicants.
All agreed to pay in full.
- Lamberton Holders Hall: £500 under Category A towards monthly water and electricity bills.** The hall has very little income as they have no toilet and so can't hire the hall out. They are still actively fundraising as much as possible. Graham questioned why they pay water rates, this is because they are not a charity yet, but Beth is working with them towards this. Caroline and Helen offered to host a fundraising event at Chirnside Community Centre and advice

on running a hall. Audrey and Madeleine left the room while the committee to decided, since they were the applicants.

All agreed to pay in full.

5. Update on 4 Federations

Jackie gave some background on changes in the service provided to BFVH when this was transferred from Bavs to Borders Community Action (BCA) in 2023. Representatives of each of the 4 Federations meet as a 4 Federations committee. The 4 Federations agreed an MOU with BCA which came up for review after a year in 2024. At this point the difference of levels of service across the 4 Federations was raised as an issue by their representatives. BCA also raised the issue of the current levels of service being financially unsustainable for BCA (this is heavily subsidised by BCA).

Beth updated on the 3 options which BCA offered to the 4 Federations:

1. Continue with a similar level of service at true cost
2. BCA to support each federation to operate independently of BCA
3. SBC grant distribution logistics are taken on by BCA with each federation committee forming a funding panel to assess and make decisions on applications.

A second paper fleshing out option 3 was requested by the 4 Federations, as the preferred option. This paper was distributed to BFVH committee ahead of this meeting and the option details were discussed.

Key points from the discussion:

- Centralisation of the grant logistics was broadly welcomed as taking pressure off federation committees.
- There would be no need for a treasurer and reduced dependency on federation committees, some of which are struggling to recruit, would make the grant more viable in the long term.
- It is important that local decision making is retained.
- BFVH committee are aware that the secretariat service would no longer be in place, meaning they would need to arrange their own meetings and take minutes.
- BFVH isn't just about grant making, this option would release time to do more activities such as hosting networking events and training. Although the risk of the function and viability of each organisation was flagged up on paper, this was seen as an opportunity for BFVH to fulfil its intended wider remit.
- However there was some concern raised over the mention in the option paper of the risk of halls disengaging from BFVH and centralisation generally

To raise at the 4 Federations meeting:

- Could federations themselves apply to the SBC VHs fund to deliver activities? Currently they use some of the funding for such activities, e.g. training.
- Clarification is needed that the whole BFVH committee would be the panel for Berwickshire.
- Clarification is needed on what the pre-assessment phase entails., e.g. it would be ok to not pass on ineligible applications for assessment, but BCA needs to let them know these were received and the reasons why they were not eligible.

- Need to clarify what constitutes an emergency (and would therefore enable halls to apply for assessment outwith the 2 funding rounds).
- What happens to the underspend on the 7% admin fee if is not all used?
- What happens to the unspent funds and historic reserves which each federation holds?

4 Federation meeting attendance: John to attend with Jackie in February. Going forward each BFVH committee member will have the opportunity to attend with Jackie, on a circulation basis.

6. Future meeting date

Thursday 13th March 2025 at 2pm at Chirnside Community Centre

7. AOB

Graham reminded everyone about the website and that Jude is working on a Borders-wide website.