

Minutes: Garvald Village Hall Committee (GVHC) Wednesday 29th August 2012

Attendees: Barrie Ash (BA); Katy Mowat (KM); Hazel Clark (HC); Davey Hood (DH); Jean Casey (JC); Vickie Short (VS.)

Apologies: Caroline McGregor (CM.)

Absent: Ian Anderson (IA); Peter Marr (PM); and Ian Marr (IM.)

Ongoing Administration and Management of Weddings in the Hall

Background

- Since the Hall was renovated, it has become an ever more popular as a wedding venue for couples from outwith the village.
- The number of such events held annually has increased gradually, and could be as many as eight in 2013
- Our approach towards administrating and managing bookings has not evolved commensurately
- The Bookings Secretary remains largely responsible for everything from the initial approach of the affianced to locking the door behind the happy couple
- As outlined in BA's recent paper "A Wedding Reception at GVH," this now makes for a significant amount of work and puts an undue burden on the incumbent
- With the prospect of eight weddings in 2013, the situation no longer seems tenable
- As such, it was the object of this discussion to address the issues outlined in said paper and institute reforms

Weddings and Events

- Weddings, as a subset of hires, provide one of the Hall's two key income streams – the other being community events like the Jumble Sale
- The fundraising balance between hires and events was discussed at length, as was the division of committee labour between the two
- KM made the suggestion that more committee time be devoted to hires, on the basis that they raise more funds than events
- JC reminded us that the hall is a community organisation, and that the committee have a duty to provide community events rather than run weddings for third parties
- After much debate, it was resolved that community events remain the committee's priority – and given finite committee time and resources, the number of wedding hires would have to be limited herein

A Limited Number of Weddings

- There have already been three weddings in 2012, and there is one more to come
- In 2013, five are already confirmed and there are three additional prospects
- It was also noted that there have been, and will be, a couple of instances of more than one wedding in a month
- This scenario creates additional stress, with the necessity to engage cleaners, re-stock facilities etc within a tight timescale
- Against this backdrop, there was a wide ranging discussion
- KM suggested that we aim for one wedding per month during peak spring/summer wedding season – so five per year
- HC pointed out that autumn weddings are also popular, so the proposed number was raised to six
- Ultimately, a cap of six was agreed upon – and it was resolved that we try to space them out as much as possible

Inquiries, Booking Paperwork and Visits

- BA's paper outlines just how much time is taken up with the initial administration of weddings i.e. inquiries, booking paperwork and visits
- It is the latter which can get most unwieldy – when hirers want to gain access to the Hall on multiple occasions ahead of their big day
- KM suggested a more blunt approach from the outset – that we tell prospective hirers that there is a cap on visits
- VS and DH softened the suggestion, saying we should set the timeframe for visits and use the fact we are all volunteers as a reason
- Possible times were discussed, and it seemed that between 7pm and 9pm on weekdays was most suitable
- Moreover, VS and DH indicated they were happy to take on more of the responsibility as and where possible

Contact over the Three Days of Hire

- Over the course of a wedding, there are currently three formal contacts with the hirer – initial briefing on day one, opening up on day two and sign-off on day three
- During the hire, there may be numerous informal contacts or emergencies though – necessitating the Bookings Secretary to remain on call
- There followed a discussion of how to reduce the formal contact, and spread the burden of both the formal and informal ones
- HC was keen that a set of keys be made available to the hirer on day one, negating the need for formal contact on day two, although a committee member might have to switch heating on/off as per hirer's requirements
- Fears were expressed about security and lost keys, but on the latter point, KM suggested we instigate a hefty fine as per some hotel keys
- On spreading the burden, VS suggested a rota be drawn up ahead of each wedding allocating duties amongst available committee members
- A preference for buddying was indicated – that two committee members work together in some instances, particularly the sign off on day three when difficult decisions about defraying security posits might have to be made

Conclusions

- Five key conclusions were reached
 1. Hires are an important source of income, but staging community events remains the committee's priority, so the number of weddings must be capped at six per annum from 2014
 2. There still has to be a re-distribution of committee time in favour of hires, and weddings in particular, so that the Booking Secretary receives more support.
 3. Committee members will do more to help in the run up to weddings, specifically facilitating hirer's requests to visit.
 4. Ahead of each wedding, a rota will be drawn up allocating duties to available committee members over the three days of the hire
 5. A door key will be made available to hirers over the course of their occupancy to reduce the need for formal committee contact

Hall Charges

Annual Review of Hire Charges

- During discussions of the ongoing administration and management of weddings in the Hall, it was repeatedly suggested that we charge too little for the facilities and services we offer and that it may well be a factor in the increasingly high levels of demand
- As such, it was resolved that we should instigate a substantial price hike from September 2012 (from £450 to £550) and again in September 2013 (£600)
- Our contracts with hirers include a clause allowing us to raise charges as per this annual review, so it was decided that we should try and invoke it to some degree i.e. by asking for an additional £50 from those who had already paid an initial deposit
- All other hall hire charges were frozen at 2012 levels, given the general slackness of demand
- As a result, the new dance fitness class proposed on Monday nights will be charged £20 as per the standard rate for two hour classes

Date of Next (normal) Meeting: Wednesday 19th September at 7pm