

BENENDEN VILLAGE TRUST
Trustees' Meeting Monday 27th April 2206, 7pm, Iden Green Pavilion
MINUTES

PRESENT	Kent Barker, Simon Brown, Tom Dawlings, Martin Dickson (Chairman), Peta Grant, Julie Lewis, Sally Ann Marks, Paul Tolhurst. Caroline Levett (Trust Manager).	
1. APOLOGIES	Apologies received from Chris Parkinson and Mike Taylor.	
2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING	The minutes of the Trustees' meeting held on 2nd February 2026 were unanimously approved as a correct record of the meeting, with the following amendments to be made, and signed by the Chairman. Item 3. Strategy – to be redacted from published minutes. Item 9. To add that BVT does not support this suggestion.	
3. FINANCE, GOVERNANCE AND COMPLIANCE	The minutes of the FGC Group meeting held on 21st April were circulated. • <u>Year-end to 31st March 2026</u> ○ All bank account balances at 31st March - £56,885. ○ Total income £102,823; Total expenditure £77,724; Surplus £25,099. ○ Ringfenced funds: Grant of £4,320 from BPC for BVH lighting replacement (now complete); grant of £1,000 received Benenden Bonfire Society for playground resurfacing (now complete). ○ BVH income £41,924. An increase of £3,944 on the previous year. Achieved through increased usage and an increase in hire charges. No increase in hire charges 2026/27. ○ Film night fundraising net income of £3,048. ○ Savings achieved through BPC support - £6,106 grounds maintenance and £4,854 tree works. ❖ The Trust gave thanks to BPC and BBS for their contributions and support, which made a huge difference to the Trust's annual figures. ❖ All bank account balances at 24th April - £51,653.97. ❖ The Trust must continue to manage its resources very carefully with all expenditure considered meticulously. • <u>COIF</u> ○ Total income 2025/26 £22,305. ○ Holdings value: ○ 31st March 2025 total £783,563. Income Fund £759,099; Accumulation Fund £24,464. ○ 31st March 2026 total £717,458. Income Fund £694,383; Accumulation Fund £23,075. ○ 20th April 2026 £765,679. Income Fund £741,054; Accumulation Fund £24,625. An increase of almost 7% over a 3 week period. ○ In the past COIF performed very well, and income remains steady, but for a period of time and more recently the fund has not performed so well and is now impacted by the war in the Middle East. ○ FGC Group will continue to monitor the COIF investments and compare the performance against other funds for further discussion at its July meeting. • <u>Investment Policy</u> ○ MD and SB are drafting an Investment Policy Statement. ○ A written policy is an expectation of the Charity Commission, as well as good practice.	FGC GRP MD/ SB
4. LEASES	• MD, SB and MT met with representatives of Benenden Bowls Club and Iden Green Pavilion. • Hallett and Co has been appointed to act as BVT's solicitor, based on engagement, cost,	

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	experience and recommendation. Cost £1,750 + VAT, compared to other quotes of between £2,750 and £8,000 + VAT. • <u>Iden Green Pavilion</u> ○ Current 32-year lease at a peppercorn rent, expires on 30th April 2026. ○ Agreement, in principle and subject to BVT trustee approval, reached with IGP trustees to grant a similar lease for the same term at a peppercorn rent, but subject to a mutual break clause every 8th year. ○ The Negotiating Group had prepared a proposed heads of terms to be shared with IGP, with some minor adjustments and items to be clarified, setting out more clearly which party is responsible for particular matters. ○ Trustees quizzed the Negotiating Group on IGP finances. The Group was asked to provide more information on IGP's finances, and it was suggested that that IGP could be charged a modest ground rent or a percentage of any annual surplus. ○ The Group undertook to obtain further financial information before bringing the matter back to trustees. ○ The Group pointed out that IGP was responsible for all its own building costs and fundraising, and there was no burden on BVT. • <u>Benenden Bowls Club</u> ○ BBC is holding over on a 60-year lease that expire in 2017, at a peppercorn rent. ○ Outstanding items to be considered and discussed with BBC - heads of terms, rental (market rate), length of lease (proposed 30 years, with mutual break every 5th year), grass/hedge cutting waste, parking. ○ BBC had made an enquiry to purchase the land. It was noted that any right of way over BVH car park and the recreation ground could affect and limit any future BVT plans around a strategic piece of land. Any sale would need Charity Commission consent and any proceeds would have to be invested in permanent capital. Trustees unanimously agreed not to sell the land. ○ Consideration was also given as to whether BVT might take ownership of the clubhouse, toilets and stores and whether BVT might charge rent for the buildings. Trustees unanimously agreed against this. ○ A figure of £250 per lane, £1,000 per annum, has been discussed as a market rent, but not yet agreed. ○ BBC has acknowledged the need to remove the compost pile from Benenden Recreation Ground. • <u>Benenden Pre-School</u> ○ BPS had advised that it may not be in position to move in September and had asked if the current lease could be extended on the existing terms until possibly December 2026. ○ Trustees had agreed the lease could be extended but at the new rate already advised to BPS wef September 2026. ○ MD had written to BPS to advise but has not received a response. ○ It was agreed that MD would follow this up sooner rather than later.	MD
5. PROPERTY	The minutes of the Property Group meeting held on 8th April were circulated. • <u>Benenden Village Hall</u> ○ Pothole repairs completed, but not a permanent solution. ○ Lighting works completed. Funded by BPC. New lighting should help to reduce energy costs. ○ Temporary repairs made to leaking velux windows. JB looking into replacement windows throughout the hall and grants available to fund this.	

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	• St George's Hall ○ New stopcocks and meters installed, and a process in place for billing. ○ A quote of £6,858 for the required chimney work had been received and agreed by the Property and Finance Groups with a request for a fuller breakdown of the quote and a request that the internal plastering is carried out at a later stage once any dampness has dried out. ○ BPS has reported issues with toilet cubicles and water heater, and quotes have been sought. • Benenden Playground ○ The agreed resurfacing works have been carried out and the costs met by Bonfire Society grant and the Parish Council. ○ General maintenance of the whole playground is still required and it was agreed to continue to wait until Tembo is available to work. ○ Iden Green, whilst not as heavily used as Benenden, is fortunate that Iden Green residents help to maintain it. • Recreation Ground Security ○ The Property Group had considered this item further and established that the existing dropdown post is still operational and therefore does not need replacing but should be used correctly. ○ New posts will be installed to close down any access across the footpath and rotten posts on the car park boundary will be replaced. ○ Cost - 10 chestnut cleft stakes 4'6" @ £2.80 each. • Trees ○ Three hawthorns and an oak on the northern boundary, which were previously suggested to be moved, are in good health and it was agreed that they remain in their current position. ○ A donated oak sapling has been planted.	
6. VILLAGE HALL	• The Hall Manager's Year-end report was circulated ○ A number of regular hirers were lost during 2025/26 but there were also a number of new hirers with an overall increase in number of hours hired. ○ Total hours hire 2025/26 - 2317.5. An increase of 236 hours compared to 2024/25 -2081.5. ○ The diligence of the Village Hall Manager was noted, with the increase in income and usage. ○ JB is continuing to look into increased gas costs. The heating will be turned off on 30th April. ○ JB will monitor usage of both gas and electricity during May. ○ JB to be asked to speak to the company which installed the new boiler, as it should be more effective and efficient, and therefore cheaper to run. ○ JB to be asked to research a more programmable/sophisticated timer and system for the office boiler. ○ CL to check if there is any insurance requirement that the hall is heated to a certain temperature. • Lighting ○ Upgrades have been completed and a full report by the Hall Manager was circulated. • Car Park ○ The Car Park Group (PG, PT, SB, KB) has held an initial meeting and another meeting is planned. Recommendations will then be presented to trustees.	JB CL
7. HR	Nothing to report.	
9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS	• PT provided an update on St George's Hall future strategy.	

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	• A quantity surveyor’s report at this stage would cost £1,800 + VAT. The majority of trustees were against seeking another formal report and it was agreed that sufficient information had been obtained and was available to illustrate various options to provide the most optimistic and most pessimistic estimates. • KB and PT to continue working on plans, options, feasibility and finances, and a separate meeting of trustees would be scheduled to discuss further.	KB/ PT
	Meeting closed at 8.40pm.	