

THE LETCHWORTH SETTLEMENT

MEETING OF THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE HELD ON 20 MARCH 2018
AT 11.30 AM

MINUTES

Present:

Mrs P. Burn (PB) (Chair)
Mr N. Carrick (NC) (Vice Chair)
Mrs E. Barber (EB)
Mr P. Chapman (PC)
Mr T. James (TJ) (Minutes Secretary)
Mr R. Thorogood (RT)

In attendance:

Mrs S. Weston (SW)
Mrs R. Lawrence-Hyde (RH)

APOLOGIES

- 1 John Bird, Sarah Halfpenny and Akua Obeng-Frimpong apologised for their absence.

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 16 JANUARY 2018

- 2 The minutes were agreed and signed.

MATTERS ARISING

- 3 The names of those awarded Honorary Fellowships will be printed in the brochure for 2018
3.1 – 19.

- 3.2 The Helen Pankhurst lecture was an excellent evening; she is an ideal speaker who would be good to invite on a regular basis if she is willing.

CHAIR'S UPDATE

- 4 PB has been elected as Vice-Chair of the Heritage Foundation, which will in turn be an
4.1 asset to The Settlement.

- 4.2 The railway bridge near the Spirella Building will be closed for six months from September, which will cause issues for approaching The Settlement via Nevells Road from the south-west.

MANAGER'S REPORT

- 5 Sonia Weston had previously circulated her report and mentioned the success of the Helen
5.1 Pankhurst lecture and that the selling arrangement with David's Bookshop had worked well. This is an optimistic model for future talks.

- 5.2 Forthcoming lectures will include John Fishwick on 11 May, on the subject of *Farming and Brexit*. Dr Richard Dance will talk on the *Viking Influence on Language* as a daytime lecture. In principle, daytime lectures will be for specialist topics with general interest events being held in the evenings.

NC will contact Mr Greenhough (potter) regarding a talk in the autumn.

Action: NC

5.3 The programme for 2018 -19 is almost complete, the new cover design has been approved and there are several new tutors.

5.4 SW recommended that an increased hiring rate of £130 should be charged for the touring production on the Suffragette theme; this was endorsed by the Committee. The Settlement could run a bar for its own benefit.

5.5 **David Wood, the new manager at the Bedford Centre, contacted** SW and he his visiting here next week.

5.6 The Hall floor has splinters and is due to be re-sanded this year. NC & RT will investigate. **Action: NC & RT**

FINANCIAL REPORT

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6.1 SW had distributed the financial reports and commented that the net income was up due to increases in attendance and class fees. The rise in expenditure was due to repairs, maintenance and refurbishment.

6.2 **F&GP Committee:** NC reported that the Finance Committee had reviewed the level of the contingency fund. £85,000 was deemed to be an unrealistically high figure and this has been revised to a more realistic £55,000. In July 2017, the net assets were £12,000 above this figure but this is a one-off amount. Prudently, expenditure should reflect current profits and not rely on withdrawing from existing capital. The Management Committee approved the proposal of amending the level of reserves and NC will draft a statement to reflect this change of policy, which will be added to the annual accounts. PC thanked NC for his extensive work in this area.

Action: NC

6.3 NC and RT will investigate the boiler situation and meet with DG Maintenance. It may be that a discrete item is added to contingency funding.

Action: NC & RT

MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

7
7.1 RH presented her report, which had been distributed in advance. She had liaised with the LALG for her monthly meeting. SW recommended that advertising in the LALG magazine should be more accessible for smaller organisations such as The Settlement. The LALG policy of rolling editorship has meant that it difficult to build a relationship for advertising purposes.

7.2 RH will be reviewing next term's courses over the Easter period in order to organise promotion in the media.

7.3 RH recommended that a disaster plan should be developed to formalise the lines of communication in the event of a major incident. PB added that there is also a need for an overall Risk Policy and it would be advantageous to obtain a model policy to inform planning. PC recommended that the Trustees should hold a special meeting to discuss the whole area of risk.

Action: RH

PROPERTY AND DEVELOPMENT

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8.1 The maintenance schedule had been distributed and the planned programme of future work was explained by NC. RT is investigating refurbishment of the tiles on the counter

and bar. The Committee approved the modest expenditure requested for this work.

TJ reported that the data projector for the Hall is likely to be fitted at the end of April.

- 8.2 Michael Andrews will order the projector, screen and fittings directly. The electrical connections have been fitted and the lectern has already arrived. TJ will meet with MA on Wednesday 21 March to assist with the installation of the lectern.

Action: TJ

- 8.3 **With the Centenary on the horizon in 2020 and the Settlement being at pretty much full capacity presently, PB wondered if it was time to** consider expansion of our premises, either at the current site or by moving some activities to larger buildings elsewhere. She **said** that any potential development would need to be fully grant-funded.

NC has investigated the issue and explained that the Spinks/Cruse building will need major refurbishment in the medium term as it has a flat roof and asbestos ceilings, amongst other structural issues. He presented alternative plans, the first of which had already been granted planning permission. The design has a pitched roof and one additional room on the upper storey. A second plan would allow the addition of two classrooms as an extension of the present building. A third alternative would be to construct an entirely new four-classroom prefabricated timber building on a concrete slab base. It could be constructed within eight months.

If an expansion were to happen, PB favoured a new build as the current Spinks and Cruse had many serious problems. She also said that we could not afford to lose the use or the revenue of the two existing classrooms, nor the current tutors and students. The continuing use of the Spinks and Cruse rooms could be accommodated either off-site or by the use of portable classrooms. An estimated cost would be in the region of £600,000

- 9 EB added that significant funds would need to be raised by The Settlement, as it was unlikely that a grant would cover the whole costs. NC suggested that grants might be available from a number of different sources **and work could be packaged for separate funders.** It would be necessary to investigate the whole business model. For example: would the extension raise the necessary income to make the development worthwhile and would the demands on the current staff bring unnecessary burdens and hence bring a need to increase staffing, with commensurate costing implications.

- 10 PC recommended that the Committee should take time to reflect on the matter and set aside a specific time to discuss the matter fully. **This could be done at the same time as we look at the Risk Management Policy.**

CENTENARY COMMEMORATION

The Committee were asked to read the submissions from AO-F and Roy Evans **for discussion at our next meeting.**

Action: All

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

In future, a supervision rota should be developed for evening talks. This should include a designated person to manage the technology on the evening. SW will approach a contact to help regarding the general setting up of the PA technology.

Action: SW

The meeting closed at 1.55 pm

Tony James
Minutes Secretary