

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting - Rowney Green Village Hall Management Committee - Monday 29th June 2026

Present: -

Trustees: Mark Easter - Chair, Andy Free -Treasurer, Nan Fellows, Sue Stevens, Tony Wallis, Gayle Stilwell, Karen Wild, Louise Croxton

Independent Election Auditor: Andy Ballard

Minute taker: Brian Steele

Villagers: Michelle Yeoman, David Smith, Mark Woollatt, Wendy Easter, Ann Gallety, Deborah Sebestjanowiiz, Kathy Chadderton, Sam Chadderton, Nigel Allen, Nick Allen, Sally Bradley, Richard Wooward, John Cypher, P. Jeffs, Dean Croxton, Marie Croxton, Lynsey Hoxha, Klevis Hoxha, Mike Stilwell, Dave Alcock, Kim Free, Laura Pearson, Clare Gittins, Tony Gittins, Jill Wallis, Liz Ballard, Peter Dunbar, Jean Dunbar, Jennie Davies, Anna B (rest unintelligible) Mary Garrett, Jen Burton, Chris Burton, Michael Corfield, Jane Corfield, Viv Hallam, Margaret Rollason, Pat Teall, Callum Savage, Catrina Savage, Will Savage, Annie Cowles, Tony Cowles, Mark Coulson, Jude McManus, Rick Chima, Kim Thomas, Andy Dunkers, Brian Jones, Sue Dutton, Judy Hallam, Shirleyann Millington, Sue Williams, Dave Williams, Mike Fellows, Chris Morgan

Note: plus one person who did not wish to be recorded on the minutes leaving a discrepancy of one unknown attendee (which did not affect any voting outcomes)

1. Apologies: Chris Gollings (Trustee), Sue Walker, Tom & Emma Webb.

2. Minutes of last AGM:

Proposed by Will Savage & seconded by Tony Cowles.

3. Treasurer's report. Presented by Andy Free. **See NOTE 1 Below**

Richard Woodward requested confirmation of the funds received by the Village Hall Trust fund from the 100 club, Andy confirmed that whilst none had been received in the reporting financial year, £1700 had been received for the current year.

4. Chairman's report.

Presented by Mark Easter. **See NOTE 2 below.**

No comments/questions receive

5. Election of trustees.

It was necessary to have an election of Trustees as there were 9 candidates for the 6 elected posts allowed by the constitution.

All attendees of the meeting of 18 years and over were entitled to vote for up to 6 candidates.

The election process was agreed beforehand by the trustees and Andy Ballard. Andy also agreed to be the independent scrutineer and managed the election process.

The 6 nominees who received the most votes were as follows: -

Andy Free, Louise Croxton, Tony Wallis, Sue Stevens, Will Savage, Gayle Stilwell.

The new Trustee committee will meet as soon as possible to elect a Chair.

Sue Stevens, on behalf of all the trustees, thanked the outgoing Chairman and Trustee Mark Easter for his efforts over the previous 9 years. A brief word of thanks to the other outgoing trustees, Nan & Karen, was made by Gayle.

Mark thanked Sue for her warm words and re-iterated the priorities from the Chairpersons report:

- Ensure the governance framework to support the hall, the park and the Trustees is actively in use across the Charity.
- The Trustees should abide by their commitment to a 5-year update meeting with the village to celebrate the achievements and ask the villagers “what next” so village views are heard and taken into account.

6. Appointment of honorary auditor.

See NOTE 3 below

7. AOB.

None

8. Date of next AGM 2027, to be confirmed

NOTE 1 Treasurer's Report 2025

Headlines – big picture overview

When I took over as Treasurer at the start of 2025, the hall was facing a significant challenge due to increasing energy costs.

Fortunately for the charity, our previous treasurer, Nan, had us locked into a fixed price energy supply contract until November 2024 which insulated us from the energy price rises following the invasion of Ukraine.

However, on expiry of that contract we faced a huge spike in our energy bills which were already our biggest single regular cost category. Our electricity costs for the three coldest months in winter 23/24 were £2,688 while the equivalent bills a year later totalled £4,929.

Taken over a whole year, these increased electricity prices would have cost us around £4,500 extra - enough to drive us into an operating loss. This led to the decision of the trustees to increase letting rates for the first time in a decade. The increase of approx. 10% took effect last summer.

Also, in early 2025, the trustees decided to invest around £11,000 in a new heating system. Mark subsequently pursued a grant funding opportunity and was successful with the application he made. This was a huge boost which meant we did not need to draw down from financial reserves for this project.

As a result of the rental increase and the new heating system, we have largely mitigated the cost increases and been able to deliver a small operating surplus for the year, similar to previous years.

Not reflected in the accounts for 2025 are the subsequent successes in obtaining further grant funding towards:

- The play equipment, worth £20,000, submitted by Nan with the support of the park group and
- The solar panels, for which an application was submitted in March 2026, added a further 19,999 toward the project. I'd like to thank all the trustees who helped complete this application in a very short timescale

and thank Gayle, in particular, for identifying and supporting this funding opportunity. These will both appear in the 2026 accounts.

Bank account and cash balances at the end of 2025

Current - £11,267

Deposit - £73,951

Cash - £64

Total funds at end of 2025 - £85,282 up by £3,823 over the year before.

I will go through the income and expenditure accounts as prepared by our independent examiner Sadie Dykes, if you wish to refer to it.

Like for like income is up by over £3,600 on last year, the main differences being increased letting income for both the hall and the park and the hugely successful fete raising money for the park last summer.

Total Charity Income £47,708

Hall income totalled £38,050 under five broad headings

Lettings total - £21,440

Grants £10,786

Fund raising £2,226

Donations £2,998

Bank interest and sundry income £600

Letting income increased by around 7% mostly from the letting rate increase part way through the year. Income from community groups increased very slightly and there were some changes to our regular lettings. Riopedre reduced their classes again and we lost Toddler Football and Read Play Create during the year. However, the Art Group is thriving and we gained Move It or Lose It. The Cello Group was a fleeting visitor for 3 months.

Outside lets were stable – these are mostly from children's parties and occasional villager's birthday parties and family celebrations.

We applied for and received a grant worth £10,786 from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund which almost covered the full costs of the heating upgrade. Our thanks go to District Councillors Bailes for signposting us to this grant funding and supporting the application.

Included in fundraising are park social events and £1,019 taken at Lights Up (after costs taken out the Lights Up profit was £398).

Donations come from various sources, the main one for the hall being the Goat & Trousers. As well as paying a regular rent like other user groups, the G&T usually makes a donation at the end of the year. This year, the donation was reduced as the G&T instead funded new fridges which remain hall assets.

Park

Total Income - £9,658

1. £1,210 from lettings
2. £5,599 from the fete (this is all the takings, not the profit, which was £3,762)
3. £2,849 from donations comprising £1,849 from households and one-off donations and £1,000 from the Parish Council towards maintenance in recognition of the one-off cost of tree felling. You will note that no donation from the 100 club appears in last year's accounts, but that donation has since been received and will appear in the 2026 accounts.

COSTS

Total - £43,885

Hall costs totalled £34,741

I will go through some of the higher costs

1. The upgraded heating system cost £10,887 and is shown under repairs and maintenance. Whilst this is a substantial sum, the real cost would have been far higher but for our volunteer maintenance team. I'd like to personally thank Tony Cowles, Mark Coulson and Tony Wallis who along with myself enjoyed some long days through the summer doing most of the installation work!
2. Other Repairs and maintenance are lower than 2024 at £2,345.

3. Total energy costs increased significantly to £9,258 because of the increased costs in our electricity supply, since the new gas heating did not come on stream until summer 2025. I did, however, manage to increase the proportion of our bill on which we pay reduced rate VAT saving around £300pa.
4. Cleaning & refuse, insurance and Fire plus Health and Safety costs all rose, broadly in line with inflation to £5,838, £1,923 and £1,083 respectively

Park

Total costs £9,144 includes

1. Tree felling cost £2,175. The decision to fell the trees was not taken lightly but it was a condition from our insurers to retain public liability insurance.
2. Capital costs £1,316 the main one being £730 for new quality gazebos for use at the fete and other events.
3. Fees and inspections – £584 for such items as insurance, play equipment safety, fire alarm, burglar alarm inspections etc.
4. Peppercorn rent of £100 to Parish Council
5. Maintenance and mowing - £1,287
6. Fete Costs - £1,865
7. Other Event costs - £596

I would like to thank Sadie Dykes for her support with invoicing and for the independent examination of the hall accounts that must be submitted to the Charity Commission.

Following Sadie's departure from the village, we are looking for a new independent examiner for the coming year if anyone has relevant experience to volunteer or knows a potential candidate – see the agenda item later.

Andy Free – Treasurer, Rowney Green Peace Memorial Hall

Independent examiner's report to the trustees of Rowney Green Peace Memorial Hall

I report on the accounts of Rowney Green Peace Memorial Hall (charity no 523186) for the year ended 31 December 2025, which are set out on the following page.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the Charities Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the Charities Act;
- to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 145(5)(b) of the Charities Act); and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent examiner's report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair view' and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

1. which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements:
 - to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; and
 - to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the Charities Act have not been met; or
2. to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Name: *Sadie Dykes*

Relevant professional qualification or body: Chartered Accountant

Address: The Drift, Rowney Green Lane, Rowney Green B48 7QF

Date: 17/03/2026

Rowney Green Peace Memorial Hall
Income and Expenditure Account
For the Year Ended 31 December 2025

	2025	2024
	£	£
<u>Receipts</u>		
Income from hall lettings - clubs	18,779	17,161
- park	1,210	490
- outside lets	2,661	2,698
Fete	5,599	3,157
Fund raising	2,226	1,377
Donations - park	2,849	3,492
- other	2,998	4,386
Bank interest	588	517
Grants	10,786	-
Sundry	12	12
	-----	-----
Total receipts	47,708	33,290
	=====	=====
<u>Payments</u>		
Park costs	7,278	4,290
Fete costs	1,866	1,441
Events	797	777
New furniture and equipment	-	2,757
Broadband	639	483
Repairs and maintenance	13,232	4,285
Insurance	1,923	1,709
Gas and electricity	9,258	5,846
Water	681	864
Gardening, refuse, caretaker and cleaning	5,838	5,198
Fees and licences	821	870
Christmas tree	-	200
Donations	200	-
Sundry expenses	269	139
Fire and health and safety	1,083	954
	-----	-----
Total payments	43,885	29,813
	=====	=====

	2025	2024
	£	£
<u>Net Receipts/(Payments)</u>		
Net receipts/(payments)	3,823	3,477
Cash funds last year end	81,459	77,982
	-----	-----
Cash funds this year end	85,282	81,459
	=====	=====
<u>Cash Funds</u>		
Cash	64	-
Deposit account	73,951	56,363
Current account	11,267	25,096
	-----	-----
	85,282	81,459
	=====	=====

Signature of 2 trustees on behalf of all the trustees:

Signature:



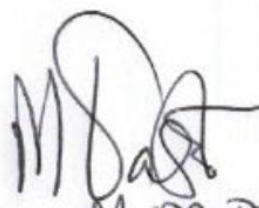
Print name:

ANDY FREE

Date of approval:

23/3/26.

Signature:



Print name:

M EASTOR

Date of approval:

23/3/26

NOTE 2 Rowney Green Peace Memorial Hall Trust Chairmans Report 2026

Mark Easter

The Hall and the Park have had a busy and successful year, together with several changes and improvements. There have been both visible changes such as the play equipment, the new wet heating system and the solar power, and the less visible organisational changes that are vitally important to first and foremost keep all our volunteers safe and to ensure the Charity remains protected. The hall and the park are much loved and valuable resources for all.

As well as the significant structural improvements, the hall continues to thrive by hosting our community groups including Rowney Green Horticultural Society, All & Sundry, the Rowney Green Players, Sassy Lassies, ACE and Lights Up. The Goat and Trousers Community Bar and Coffee Shop remain central to the village along with the annual fish and chip supper and the quiz which they run and hosting the monthly police drop-in surgery. The meeting room is regularly booked out to local organisations such as the RGA and the park and fete groups.

We also have commercial groups such as Pilates, Move it or Lose it, Riopedre Dance Group, children's clubs, the Christadelphian Church group, music lessons and the Adult Art Group which remain highly popular. And let's not forget the private bookings for the fun stuff like weddings and birthday celebrations, New Year's Eve in previous years and the initiative to screen the World Cup England matches – although whether that can be called "fun" depends on how well the team are performing – thanks Mike Stillwell.

These groups and their bookings are managed day to day, week by week, year on year by the fabulous Annie Cowles and Sadie Dykes. Without the round the clock dedication of the "booking team" the hall would simply not be as successful as it is. Thank you both

The park and Green Barn have had another industrious year. There have been so many popular outdoor activity events, such as the Easter egg hunt, the Hallowe'en trick or treating evening, worksheets for nature trails as well as the weekly park group looking after the environs. The sub-committee have also

been responsible for some outstanding innovations such as the initiative to provide free dog poo bags in an attempt to combat the rising number of poo issues they have had to deal with, the instillation of a bug hotel in the orchard and the provision of outdoor children's entertainment facilities like the bowling alley and toddler slide.

The Rowney Green Village Fete continues to be held in the park. The fete has become such a popular village event that no-one can imagine being without and raises significant sums of money towards the upkeep of the park.

We owe a big thanks to all the volunteers who work in all these community activities.

The Trustees had to make a big decision at the start of the year as the hall was costing £2000 a month on electricity alone. So, for the first time in over a decade, we had to put hire prices up for the hall. All our users were very supportive of this move, and this has been an important part of ensuring the long- term viability of the hall. Thank you everyone for your understanding.

The other big adjustment this year has been in the recognition of the changes within the Village Hall Charity itself. I was one of the original Trustees who supported taking on the lease agreement of our park from the APC in 2022, but it's taken a couple of years to truly recognise the impact this has had on the Charity.

By accepting responsibility for the park and the Green Barn, the Charity's obligations changed. We went from one building, a car park and grounds to include being accountable for a tennis court, the Green Barn and a beautiful green space. The number of volunteers also went up in large numbers. There are 60 now declared on the Charity Commission website – a far cry from the 11 or so in the past Trustee team, and the booking and maintenance teams. This includes Duke of Edinburgh students, other youngsters and folk of all ages from the village and we as Charity Trustees are responsible for their safety and wellbeing of all of them. Our ambitions have also grown. We want to upgrade the path from the hall to the Green Barn a project the Trustees approved last October, we wanted specific older children's play equipment, and we wanted to give ourselves energy independence by implementing a plan put together by Andy Free and the maintenance team. The sums involved required bids to

external organisations, all of whom insisted we meet specific criteria to be eligible for funding. These same criteria are also required of **all charities** registered with the Charity Commission such as the Rowney Green Peace Memorial Trust. And crucially, these same criteria are vital to keep our volunteers and the Charity protected. We had an incident in the hall last year where a volunteer was hurt by a falling panel in the hall which certainly focuses the mind on such issues (or as someone said to me today, when you take money from funders such as the lottery there are strings attached, and when you have an army of volunteer using ladders, trailers and power tools you have to keep them safe).

Over the last year we have been making sure all our core responsibilities and obligations are met and supported by appropriate documentation (all of which can be found on the RG website) that enabled us to bid for monies from organisations such as UK Shared Prosperity Fund (administered by Bromsgrove Council), the Lottery fund and the N Power Business Solutions Foundation and the Alvechurch Parish Council.

- Working closely with Tony Wallis we now meet the conditions of our own constitution by developing Terms of Reference for the park sub-committee and the Lights Up organiser (special thanks to Andy Ballard for his help).
- We developed Codes of Conduct for the Trustees and the sub-committees, so everyone knows what they are signing up to. All who aspire to be a trustee or sit on our charity committee(s) know what is expected of them before they join.
- Safeguarding policy written by Louise is an absolute requirement of the Lottery commission for anyone winning funding, but more importantly, how we ensure that ALL our volunteers are valued and kept safe.
- The Charity's Values to assure all volunteers and all who come in to contact with anyone from the Charity that they will be treated appropriately.
- Risk assessments – already completed for the hall, for Lights Up and Tony is working on them for the park.
- The rule we put in place that Trustees need to complete a declaration 7 days before the AGM enables us to meet the Fit and Proper Person Standards of the Charity Commission, and potential Trustees agree to

abide by the Code of Conduct, the Values and work to the safeguarding policy.

Importantly these policies have enabled us to successfully bid for in excess of £52,000 in grant money in 2025 and 2026, as **all of these funders require bidders to have appropriate Governance in place**. We received almost £11,000 from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (administered by Bromsgrove Council) to fund the switch from electric to gas heating in the main hall. This was a project we approved in 2025, and we had expected to have to fund it ourselves. Here I must thank District Councillor Rachael Bailles who signposted us to the opportunity and supported my application. We have subsequently received £19,999 from N Power Business Solutions Foundation - thanks to Gayle for signposting this funding opportunity to us - after we successfully bid to install solar power in the hall. Both projects have ensured the long-term financial stability of the hall especially in these times of high fuel prices. The hall has also been used as a refuge by villagers during recent power cuts, and solar power along with batteries will further enable us to support the village where the hall is cut off from the mains.

It would be remis at this point not to mention the work of our hall maintenance team. Tony Cowles, Mark Coulson and from 2025, Andy Free. Not only have they maintained the hall over many years, but over this last year they have planned and installed the new wet heating system in the main hall and done much preparatory building work for the solar system. This has added up to an incredible number of man hours this financial year alone saving the Charity money. Thank you all.

The third successful bid was £20,000 from the Lottery Fund in 2026 to meet the bulk of the cost of the new play equipment for older children (aided by the money raised by ACE, thank you) that has gone live just these last few weeks. This project, with the bid led by Nan, Graeme Affleck and Sam Sparrow and project-managed by Andy Free, was of key interest to villagers when the Trustees took over the management of the park from the APC and it's great to have phase one completed. A remaining project is renewing the existing path from the hall car park to the Green Barn

We have also updated the hiring agreement for the hall to reduce noise at night for our neighbours and minimise disturbance in the village. You may also

have noticed that we have asked users of the park to not take glass into the park either from the hall or from the Green Barn to protect our children and pets from accidents, and thanks to funding from the APC a major bleed kit has been added to the defibrillator cabinet which is managed by Sue and we are planning to offer training to villagers that want it. The booking form for the village hall has been updated to reflect these conditions, and we have introduced a booking agreement for the Green Barn. All are available on the RG Website – Big shout out to Michael Corfield for all his help here!

So, lots done this year, and lots more to do:

- Now we have established the framework to support the hall and the park the Trustees need to take the next step and ensure these policies are actively in use across the Charity.
- We are coming up to the 5-year anniversary of the Trustees taking on the Park and at our last Trustee meeting the Trustees committed to a 5-year update meeting with the village to celebrate the achievements and ask the villagers “what next” so we absolutely continue to take your views into account.

I would also like to thank Andy for his work as Treasurer and his diligence in administering the Hall’s finances and Sadie for auditing our accounts for many years.

Thank you to Janet Corfield for her work as secretary at the start of this tenure. Earlier this year we were joined by Brian Steele as secretary who has done a great job and hopefully will continue to work with the trustees going forward.

A vote of thanks goes to Chris Gollins who has been a Trustee for 9 years and chair for 7. He is away tonight and, as he is not re-standing, I’m sure we would all want to thank him for his service over the years.

Finally (phew I hear you say!) a personal note; I have been a Trustee for 9 years now and have enjoyed it immensely. I have worked with some wonderful, dedicated people and have had conversations about the hall and the park with

many of you in this room whether at the G&T, the Coffee Morning, the Quiz or “over the fence” in the alpaca paddock and have always enjoyed these discussions. It has been extremely rewarding.

I have spent a lot of this year ensuring our Hall and our Park are fit and healthy for the next few years. Building relationships with District and local councillors and always putting the hall and the park in the centre of these discussions to help secure funding. It may be dry and not sexy but establishes a much needed framework that is essential to take the Charity and the Park into the next decade.

I want to express my personal thanks to all the hall and park volunteers who are dedicated, work hard, give their time freely for the benefit of others and ask for nothing in return. And I want to thank everyone who has come and helped in times of need such as when plants need urgent watering, the hall grounds are in need of clearing and tidying or the hall needs decorating for Christmas. Thank you.

Chair, Rowney Green Peace Memorial Hall Charity Trustees.

NOTE 3 Independent Examiner

I start by quoting some of the introductory guidance on the GOV.UK web site.

“Where a charity’s annual income is over £25,000, the trustees must arrange for an independent person or accountancy firm to carry out either an audit or an independent examination of their charity’s accounts. The purpose of this is to give the charity’s trustees, supporters, beneficiaries and the wider public, some independent assurance that the charity’s money has been properly accounted for and accounting records kept.

The trustees of most charities can choose to have an independent examination instead of an audit. Independent examination is a ‘light touch’ scrutiny involving the examiner checking for specific matters only. Because it is narrowly defined and does not involve forming an opinion as to whether the accounts are ‘true and fair’, it usually costs less than an audit”.

The current trustees believe this remains appropriate for the Peace Memorial Hall trust.

With Sadie Dykes having left the village, we are therefore putting the call out to ask if you or anyone you know would be willing to take on this role? By way of example, with my experience as treasurer for the hall, I have volunteered to be the independent examiner for another small charity based in Worcestershire. I expect this to take a day or two of my time in a year.

To be appointed independent examiner:

- You must be independent of the management of the charity and all of the trustees. This precludes relatives of the trustees or sub-committee members.
- The examiner must have the skills and experience needed to carry out his or her responsibilities. That means they must have sufficient accounting skills to carry out an independent examination. The extent of the skills required depends upon the charity’s gross income and the complexity of its’ accounts. No special conditions apply in our case as our income is less than £250k.

- An examiner must make themselves familiar with and comply with the guidance published on the GOV.UK web site relating to charity independent examination.

For non-professional examiners, the trustees need to be assured of their skills and experience and why this makes them competent to carry out the work. For example, the examiner may work in a role that involves financial management, such as setting and managing budgets and reviewing financial reports, or that requires knowledge of accounting systems, such as maintaining financial records and internal controls.

The examiner will need to produce a short report (example for last year has been shared at this meeting) for use at the AGM next year and as part of our Charity Commission submission.

Our accounts are a relatively simple record summarising all money received and paid out by the charity in the year. For context, this occupied a spreadsheet recording about 320 credits and 220 debits in 2025 with all transactions categorised. This was backed up by a lever arch file of transaction records and evidence.

If you would be willing to consider becoming independent examiner for our financial year 2026 or know someone who would be willing to do so, please make yourself known to me after the meeting as this could save us the expense of engaging a professional accountancy firm for future years.

