



Buckland Old School Trust (BOST)
Minutes of the Annual General Meeting
Thursday 12th June 2025 @ 6.00pm
@ Buckland Village Hall

PRESENT: Richard Peel (Chair), Rev Sally Bottomer Linda Oatley, Heather McKenna and Jane Lewis.

1. Welcome

Richard Peel Chair of BOST welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. Summary of BOST 2024-2025 by Chair

There have been significant changes to the Buckland Old School Trust during the past year relating to its governance, profile and communication. The Trust has embarked on a series of initiatives to raise awareness about the village hall, streamline the function of the Trust and put transparency and communication at the heart of what we do.

At a meeting in August last year, the Rev Sally Bottomer stepped down as Chair of the Trust and I was elected to the post. At the same time, Linda Oatley was nominated as the other Church representative.

The same meeting agreed that Carole Paternoster would assume responsibility for the Old School House, that Linda would deal with the application for Grants and Paula Graves would continue to report on Finance. Nigel Hayward, at the time, was the other Parish Council representative. Phil Hedges, who now lives in Devon, agreed to resign after working with the Trust for many years.

A marketing plan was agreed which included recommendations to introduce a logo and strapline, subsequently agreed as 'A Hall for Us All', introduce a new website, be more active with social media, set up an online booking system and launch a survey to find out past use and ideas for future activities.

We identified target audiences and agreed that a major event to commemorate the 25 years of the existence of the hall, including an exhibition and a day of activity, should be organised to help bring the community of the Buckland Parish together.

The plan also recommended a more active pursuit of grants and sponsorship. In the interests of transparency, it was agreed that we should publish summaries of the minutes of meetings on the website, include FAQs and a list of key events and a history of the hall and background information on each Trustee.

A review of the hourly costs of the hall was sanctioned along with the ambition to double the time the hall is used for regular bookings to 30 hours per week in the first year and quadruple the adhoc bookings during the year to 12. It was also decided to review the Trust's schedule that had remained unchanged for more than 20 years.

The ambitions outlined in the marketing plan have largely been fulfilled. A news release, which was reproduced in the local media and newsletters was issued at the end of the year to announce the appointment of two new trustees and the launch of the website and online booking system.

Thanks go to James and Jane Lewis for turning the concept for the website into an active system now attracting around 500 visitors a month and already showing a 20% increase in searches on Google, with Facebook now registering 70 followers. To date we've had 19 responses to our survey. These will be discussed at our next meeting in June.

Changes have been made to our schedule/governing document including changing an unlimited time to serve as a Trustee to a three year term that can be extended to nine years with the agreement of members of the Trust; the ability to remove Trustees with a vote of no confidence, the addition of a code of conduct and policy documents on equality and diversity, safeguarding and health and safety. A decision was also made to reduce the number of Parish Council representatives from two to one to broaden representation on the Trust.

After benchmarking our rates with other halls and looking at more detail at our income and expenditure we agreed that our rates should remain at £15 per hour for non-villagers, that the rate should be £12 for villagers and that £20 per hour at weekends should be charged for private events. In addition to the above we have obtained a necessary music licence for the hall, reduced the bank accounts from 4 to two, put in a planning application for signage at the front of the hall and agreed to signpost the car park in New Road.

We successfully applied for a Community Grant from, Buckinghamshire Council which will fund the signage adjacent to the entrance to the hall and a new marquee.

The Hall Manager has undertaken work to improve the hall's facilities including replacing a door for the disabled, upgrading the fire doors, ensuring the smoke detection system is functional and introducing a Hive heating system. GigaClear have also renewed their contract to provide community broadband for another year from June 14.

We've also explained our plans and ambitions to the New Road Residents Association and at a meeting with immediate neighbours.

Recently there have been other changes to the Trust membership. Paula Graves, after many years of sterling service, resigned as Treasurer and Nigel Hayward, who resigned as Chairman of the Parish Council, consequently forfeited his role as one of the Parish Council representatives. Carole Paternoster has also stepped down, after many years with the Trust and has been replaced by Heather McKenna from the Parish Council

Our intention in the coming months is to intensify our promotion of the hall and facilities to increase take up; to act on the feedback from the survey; recruit new Trustees and focus on making September 13 - the date of our anniversary celebration - a successful event for the community.

Our bank balances currently stand at £32114.42 in the current account and £52,012.60 in reserves.

Richard Peel thanked all of the trustees for their support and work on the hall over the last 12 months.

Rev Bottomer thanked the Chair, Richard Peel, the trustees and Hall Manager Jane Lewis for all that had been achieved in the last ten months. This was far more than had been achieved during her seven years as Rector.

3. Finance Report

Hall Manager, Jane Lewis reported that the accounts were still being audited. Initial indications show a small loss, however this was understandable given that major redecoration works to the hall had taken place along with all the Health and Safety improvements. Final accounts will be shared at the next trustees meeting.

4. Election of Officers

The Chair stepped aside for this part of the meeting, and Linda Oatley acted as Chair.

Election of Chair - Richard Peel was nominated by Linda Oatley and unanimously voted in.

Treasurer - Position vacant

Other Trustees - Linda Oatley was nominated by Rev Bottomer and unanimously voted in.

Cllr Heather McKenna was welcomed to the trust as representative for Buckland Parish Council. Rev Bottomer will continue as incumbent to the parish.

Trustees agreed the need for more representation and agreed to find more volunteers.

5. Any Other Business

None.

The meeting closed at 6.20pm.