

Minutes of the ORAC meeting held on
Wednesday 14th January 2015 at 7:45pm

Those present: Di, Linda Jay, Dee, Gordon, Martin, Linda St Pierre, Donald, Lindsay, Rob, Scott

Apologies: Nigel, Ann

It was noted that Angela had decided to leave the committee. The committee wished to express their thanks to Angela for her efforts and support during her spell on the committee.

Minutes/Correspondence: Di had received a request from the emergency planning department requesting that Occold Village Hall be available as a rest centre in the event of an emergency evacuation, it was agreed that this was a reasonable request and the hall would be available in these circumstances.

There had been some correspondence regarding including Occold in a national village website it was agreed that the current website administered by Barry, was successful and adequate.

Treasurer's report: Di reported that the ORAC funds were static, there had not been much change. The main account had just under £12,000 in credit. It was noted that whilst this sounded like a healthy balance this was below the level recommended by accountants as required to maintain the ORAC amenities. The balance should be £15,000 -£20,000 and this was the level that should be aimed for. The Christmas dinner had been a success with 87 people seated for the meal. Receipts amounted to £1600, against expenses of £1000, there was also some stock to be considered, profit for the event would be in the region of £700

Matters Arising:

1. **Update on noise compliance** – It was agreed to move this item to the end of the meeting.
2. **Update on rear fire door porch addition** – This would form part of the noise discussions, but it was noted that the drawings had been done. Rob would submit the application and drawings for planning permission to MSDC. Quotes would be invited to build the porch addition. Di reported that there may be funding available from MSDC to assist in this project.
3. **Update on hall floor** – It was agreed that this item would be carried forward until the noise issues were resolved.

Any other items concerning:

Village Hall – It was noted that there were large holes again appearing in the village hall car park. It was agreed to contact Brian Hull to see if these could be repaired.

A wedding reception had been booked for early March, the hirers had been warned about noise compliance and had gone ahead with the booking. Some of the round tables needed repairing for this event. Gordon agreed to carry out these repairs during half term.

A light fitting had been damaged by a private hire. It was thought this had happened during a children's party involving a bouncy castle. It was agreed that bouncy castles were not suitable for use inside the hall and this would be prohibited in the future by terms of the village hall bookings.

Play area/field – Rob requested that a date be set for finishing the footpath clearance this was set for the 14th February at 09:30. Gordon had the replacement catch for the play area and would fit this in due course.

Village green – No items were reported.

Any other new items: There was a brief discussion regarding the fete. It was agreed to have the band again, the tractors and football tournament.

Discussion regarding noise complaints and compliance –

The current situation regarding the noise complaints and compliance issues were discussed at length the following records the main points.

Meeting with complainant – A meeting had taken place involving two committee members, a complainant and complainant's representative. It was reported that this had been a good natured meeting aimed at trying to establish a way forward to bring the noise compliance issues to a satisfactory conclusion. It was reported that the complainant put their case and their feelings that the hall was not fit for purpose and the complainants should not be held responsible for this.

The ORAC meeting attendees commented that they had left the meeting with hopes of a resolution but were disappointed when the draft notes of the meeting issued for comment prompted a different response by email than was initially hoped for.

Sound management system – The complainant had repeated the request for a sound management system to be installed. It was noted that ORAC had been advised against installing such a device by MSDC and acoustic consultants as this was not considered a suitable method to control noise breakout. However the committee agreed to investigate further and consider as an option. It was noted that Athelington Village Hall had such a device, and this was the type of system that may be suitable, further details would be sought.

Porch Addition – There was a discussion as to whether to proceed with the porch addition. It was noted that ORAC had already spent £18,000 in trying to comply with the noise enforcement notice. It was agreed that ORAC had followed the professional advice given in the measures already taken to contain noise. The discussion centred on whether the porch addition would be successful in preventing noise breakout, and if this was the case, it may not be a worthwhile use of funds. It was however agreed by the committee that ORAC should continue to follow the advice given via MSDC and proceed with the porch addition.

The future of the hall as a viable entity – It was agreed that if the village hall could not be made to comply with enforced noise compliance it was hard to see how the village hall could continue to operate as a viable resource for the village. The following was noted – Funds were dependant on hire. If hires were not possible there would be no income to support the hall. As a result of this discussion it was agreed to write to all regular hall users to advise that the committee would provide a minimum 3 months (6 months' notice for long term lease holders) in the event of the hall closure and to amend the booking conditions accordingly.

The future of the committee – The committee discussed the future, it was noted that all committee members and officers of ORAC gave up their time voluntarily in order to support the village community. It was re-iterated that all steps that the ORAC committee had taken followed the advice given by professional persons/organisations in the construction of the village hall and subsequent noise enforcement and compliance. It was agreed that the committee were becoming disillusioned by the current events and these were detracting from the purpose of ORAC to support the village for the enjoyment of village facilities by those who wished to use them. It was discussed that the committee might be held liable for future noise breakout and court action was possible even after all steps had been taken to try to comply, if noise could not be contained within the required levels. It was discussed that in the event of a successful court action against ORAC, fines could bankrupt ORAC. Should this happen the committee would have no option but to resign en bloc and close the hall and playing field giving appropriate

notice to users. It was agreed that the committee would continue to follow the advice given to comply with noise enforcement. The porch addition should go ahead and noise management system be investigated despite this not forming part of the professional advice. It was unlikely that any further steps could be implemented after this other than preventing future use of the hall.

Future events: It was agreed to hold a fund raising event on the 25th April. This would take the form of a 2 course meal and race evening. Tickets would be £10.

There was brief discussion as to whether the committee could hold monthly hall events with a bar after the closure of the pub.

Date of next meeting: Tuesday 10th March 7:45