

## **A draft report by Peter Cox of**

### **An Extra-ordinary General Meeting of the Welney Parish Hall Committee**

**Held at the Parish Hall, Welney, on Monday 17<sup>th</sup> February 2003, at 7.30pm**

**Reason for the EGM:** The meeting was convened by the Committee in accordance with clause 7 (e) of its Constitution in response to a letter dated 12<sup>th</sup> January 2003 signed by ten parishioners who were concerned about the Committee's management and some recent actions of the Committee, in particular those concerning a new Parish Hall and accounting procedures.

The letter requested the Committee to resign, and the Parish Council to assume responsibility and establish a new body with a clearly defined remit.

The signatories were: Nigel Fleming, Tim Bennett, Ian Warrington, Mark Farrow, Ian Shirley, John Loveday, Shirley Johnson, Denis Booth, David Bonner and Greg Maton, all of whom were bone-fide parishioners.

**Committee members present:** Mrs Marlen Moss-Eccardt (Vice-Chair/Acting Chair), Mr Peter Cox (Treasurer), Mrs Silvia Kent, Miss Amy Markham M.B.E., Mrs Margaret Levesley, Miss Elisabeth Deckker, Mr Steve Kerr (PC representative), and Mr Tony Lewis.

**Absent:** Mrs L. Gardiner [*I don't know whether apologies were rec'd*]

**Also Present:** About thirty members of the public including 10 of the signatories (Shirley Johnson and Denis Booth were both unwell); also Mr Richard Green who was a member and Chair of the Committee from 29<sup>th</sup> October 2002 until his resignation on 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2003, and Mrs Carol Green who was a member and Secretary of the Committee from 27<sup>th</sup> November 2002 until she also resigned on 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2003

**Mrs Moss-Eccardt** opened the meeting and said the issue to be dealt with was a motion calling for the Committee's resignation. She invited one of the signatories to come forward and put their case.

**Tim Bennett** then read a lengthy statement from the stage putting forward the case for the resignation of the Committee. The full text is attached and summarised as follows:

He began by saying that it should not have been necessary to present this case as the Committee should have resigned. He praised the hard work of many members over many years, but suggested that in recent years things had begun to go wrong.

He said there were four main complaints

- (1) **The Committee's remit and constitution.** He questioned whether the Committee had the right to undertake work of a Capital nature and suggested that their remit was to maintain the existing building. He pointed out that under clause 8(g) capital expenditure had to be agreed by Parishioners at an AGM or EGM, and that had not been done.
- (2) **Financial irregularities.** Mr Ian Shirley had identified gaps in the accounts after he had been asked to audit them in August 2002 by the then Treasurer (Mr Martin Kyne-Lilley) in particular, a lack of bank statements. The latter had been of concern to several Committee members who had raised the issue to no avail, and had subsequently resigned.
- (3) **The Village Lottery**
- (4) **The proposed New Hall.**

During this statement there were a number of interjections from two of the Committee

**Miss Elisabeth Deckker** asked the signatories to identify themselves and those present stood up.

**Mrs Margaret Levesley** responded for the Committee by reading out a lengthy statement. *[A copy has been requested from MME and is awaited]*

**Mr Tony Lewis**, who joined the Committee on 27<sup>th</sup> November 2002, produced a letter from Mrs T. Roberts together with a petition "supporting the Committee". The petition actually supported the decision "to build a new hall on the existing site" even though the petitioners acknowledged "they did not fully know the plans". It contained 18 names of which several were children. 16 signatories were from, or "c/o" addresses in Chestnut Avenue (five were from one family) and two were from Mr Lewis's own family. One petitioner gave an address outside the Parish. *[MME had previously told me that the petition was from at least 30 people]*

**Mr Richard Green** was then allowed by the deputy Chair to read a statement from the floor. This should not have been allowed as the EGM was specifically for the ten parishioners who called for the EGM to put their case and for the Committee to respond. Mr Green started by claiming the origins of the Hall and Committee were shrouded in mystery *[which is untrue – it is documented in the original Minute Book in the Hall's Archives]*. After a few moments I walked out in protest, so cannot say what else he said.

**I understand a vote** was later taken and as more than two thirds of the floor were against the current Committee continuing in office, the Committee resigned *[or was wound up in accordance with clause 8(e) of the Constitution?]*.

*After the meeting, one member of the public called Mr Bennett "patronising" for praising the Committee's hard work, and Mr Cox "childish" for walking out.*

Peter Cox  
13<sup>th</sup> September 2003.