

## **MISTLEY PARISH COUNCIL - STATEMENT**

**Following recent speculation and media coverage regarding the use of Mistley Village Hall, Mistley Parish Council would like to ensure that residents and users of the Hall are aware of the following, to avoid any continued misunderstandings.**

Mistley Parish Council's primary purpose is to serve the community and taxpayers of its electorate, comprising Mistley residents, who pay a portion of their respective council tax payments for services and facilities offered by the Parish Council. This includes the provision and maintenance of Mistley Village Hall, which is available for hire by individuals and groups.

- The Parish Council owns and insures the Village Hall. The Parish Council is responsible for the payment of insurance premiums, maintenance of the fabric of the buildings comprising the Village Hall and the Village Hall Car Park.
- The Parish Council is the holding custodian of the Village Hall on behalf of its electorate, but has authorised the establishment of a Charity of Managing Trustees known as Mistley Village Hall Management Committee to manage the Village Hall on its behalf. The Management Committee manages the Charity on a day-to-day basis. The Trustees are also responsible for maintaining the financial stability of the Charity.
- The Village Hall needs to ensure that its income is sufficient to cover its overheads. Any surplus income is used to improve facilities available. Any income deficit or shortfall is ultimately funded by council tax-payers.
- A recent review of income and expenditure, and an analysis of the hire charge levied by other similar venues in the area, led the Village Hall Management Committee to review the hire charge to ensure its charges are in line with the current going rate, and feasible to the ongoing running and maintenance of the Village Hall. Following this review, the hourly rental charge for the Village Hall was increased to an amount of up to £20 per hour, inclusive of heating, lighting, water and cleaning costs.
- Currently Mistley residents are subsidising maintenance of the Village Hall, largely due to the low rental amount being paid by one regular hirer, which occupies the Village Hall for a significant number, but varied hours per week. The rate equates to less than £4.50 per hour which includes electricity, water, and cleaning costs.
- Following a formal review and financial risk assessment the Village Hall Management Committee concluded that it could not sustain the current arrangement with the hirer mentioned, and issued a notice to quit the existing contract, in order to replace it with a new, viable agreement. The Management Committee (Trustees) need to act with prudence and cannot allow the Village Hall to continue to make a financial loss.
- While the Village Hall Management Committee recognises that it may be appropriate to offer certain groups special hire rates, it is concerned that discounting pricing to the point that the hire becomes loss-making to the Hall is unfair to Mistley council tax payers, which ultimately are required to fund the shortfall in the Village Hall's income.
- The Village Hall Management Committee recognises the value that the hirer concerned brings to the community and therefore endeavoured to seek a small increase in the current hourly fee charged, while still offering the hirer a significant discount on the standard hourly rate. However, the hirer has resisted any discussion other than to refer to the annual inflation-based increase in the current contract, which has hitherto not been exercised.
- The Village Hall Management Committee's Accounting and Reporting is regulated by the Charity Commission under The Charities Act 2011, the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP 2005) and The Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008. This is best practice of the Management Committee's Finances as demanded by The Charity Commission.
- The Village Hall Management Committee and Mistley Parish Council are extremely saddened by the manner in which recent private discussions were brought into the public domain by the group concerned and are particularly disappointed in the way in which the public was misled over the true facts of the case. Both the Village Hall Management Committee and Mistley Parish Council believe that the public has a right to know the facts, rather than be misled by inaccuracies and speculation.
- The Parish Council and the Village Hall Management Committee remain committed to serving the public at all times and to the provision of a Village Hall for use by the whole community.

26.10.20

**For any queries about this statement please contact the Parish Clerk. Details appended below:**

Susan Clements - Parish Clerk

Mistley Parish Council

Tel. 07982 507584

Email – [mistleyparishclerk@gmail.com](mailto:mistleyparishclerk@gmail.com)

ENDS