



Minutes of North Middleton Village Community Hall

Extraordinary Meeting of Committee

22 January 2026

Present: Sam Paterson (SP)
Norma McDonald (NM)
Janet Donaldson (JD)
Ross Thomson-Chandler (RTC)
Carrie Bennett (CB)
Craig Purves (CP)
Dan McCulloch (DM)
Anne Robertson (AR)
Jen Russell (JR)
Lynne Morris (LM)
Kirsten Park (KP)

Apologies: Tom Silk (TS)
Shirley Cameron (SC)
Stevie Morris (SM)

As a result of the meeting of the office bearers of the committee on 21 January, an extraordinary meeting of committee members was held. SP explained the reason for the officer bearers meeting being held following a complaint raised regarding the village hall and allegations made and the subsequent visit from Environmental Health and the Licensing Office for Midlothian Council.

SP read out the minutes of the meeting to the committee, which are as below verbatim.

A meeting of office bearers was called by the Chair following a meeting JD had with Environmental Health and the Licensing Officer for Midlothian Council.

JD advised that she had only been expecting the Environmental Health (EH) meeting following an email requesting a visit however, the Licensing Officer (LO) was also in attendance. JD was advised that the LO was attending following complaints and allegations received by them regarding village hall. SP thanked JD for dealing with the council meeting which obviously was more involved than anticipated.

JD itemised the points raised in the complaint advised by the LO as follows for discussion:

Lack of hot water – *JD advised EH and LO that the committee were aware of this issue and were taking steps to resolve it. A plumber and electrician were engaged to try and find out where the fault lay and also investigations into specialist heat source pump companies for advice regarding resolving the issue was being sought. EH and LO seemed satisfied with the steps being made to resolve this. EH did advise however that the hall could not use the kitchen for high risk food preparation without the facility for acceptable hand washing. This needs further discussion at the full committee meeting. A list of acceptable food use in the kitchen currently was advised until hand washing facilities were rectified.*

Cleanliness of bar/kitchen - *EH and LO were very satisfied with the cleanliness of the kitchen and bar area.*

The facilities for the storage of beer and the fact it is not in a cellar area - *LO and EH investigated the area where the beer kegs were kept and were satisfied that this area was acceptable.*

Stock rotation/out of date stock - *EH and LO checked the area where the bar stock is stored. EH was satisfied with the cleanliness of the area. The committee however were aware that there had been some out of stock items here and in the bar at times and this needs to be addressed and correct and regular stock controls put in place. An immediate stock check will be undertaken.*

Alcohol left out in the bar area at all times and within easy access - LO stated that any theft of alcohol was obviously the committee's responsibility however the concern is that any underage user of the hall could easily access alcohol and that was a significant licensing issue. JD acknowledged the concern and did advise that there was usually a committee member in the area during usage. The leaving out of alcohol on the optics and bar and in the food fridge must be addressed and removed going forward, at all times.

Bar left unattended and door left open to the bar - LO advised that there was an allegation of bar staff leaving the bar unattended to play pool and also the door to the bar being left open and unattended so that anyone could gain access. It was agreed that this could have happened and needed to be addressed with the bar staff, also the bottom half of the door to the bar can be locked and this should be done to negate any unauthorised access. Further investigation required and resolution made.

Unavailability of Designated Premises Manager - LO advised that, on receipt of the complaint, he had tried to contact the registered DPM (designated premises manager) for the bar on numerous occasions with no success. Voice messages left were never answered. This is obviously a breach of DPM licensing responsibilities. SP to advise the DPM of this and ensure that all the details are correct re contact. It also transpired on further checking, that the personal licence of the DPM shows the wrong address and in fact the required mandatory refresher in 2023 had not been undertaken and therefore wasn't valid. This must be rectified immediately and further prevention required to ensure no similar situation reoccurs.

Additional note - The LO had suggested that there could be more than one personal license holder for the village hall. The DPM is the designated contact but does not physically have to be present in the bar when in use. Further discussion at the next committee meeting regarding personal alcohol licenses.

Also noted at this meeting that the bar prices were not displayed and hadn't been reinstated since the hall decoration.

There was a further discussion around the responsibilities and consequences of committee members and Trustees of the hall and the consequences of any licensing and accounting breaches. RTC and SP expressed concern at their positions as Trustees and further deliberations would have to be made.

The meeting ended with SP contacting the DPM to advise of the current situation and gain further information. A meeting with the other committee members may have to be called outwith the normal committee meetings.

SP advised that there was no other alternative but to close the bar for a minimum of 8 weeks due to the fact that we no longer had a DPM in place as SC was now resigning from the committee and handing in her keys for the hall and bar.

After the above minutes had been relayed to the present members of the committee, RTC indicated his intention to resign from the post of Treasurer and Trustee of the hall with immediate effect and rendered a resignation letter. RTC felt that his professional position could be compromised and he didn't feel comfortable with the level of responsibility of the positions in the committee. RTC did however express that he would still continue to manage the bank account for the short term and ensure a smooth transition of the hall finances as appropriate.

SP also advised that she would be resigning as Chair and Trustee with immediate effect. SP was also uncomfortable with the responsibility of being both Chair and Trustee and now felt it contradicted what she actually wanted to achieve within a committee. SP handed her keys to the remaining committee.

KP, who had previously stepped back temporarily from hall business, although still on the committee, advised that she too would be resigning with immediate effect. KP advised that she would be taking the pool cue equipment from the bar and also the money which was paid to play the pool table immediately and arrange for uplift of the pool table. KP will also hand her keys into the committee.

SP also removed the alcohol from the bar area to the secure cupboard.

The remaining committee, in light of the above resignations, voted JD to the position of Chair and LM to the position of Treasurer with immediate effect. There was now only one Trustee for the hall (CB) however the vacant 2 positions of Trustees would have to remain vacant for the time-being until there was better stability within the committee and hall.

The situation regarding the bar license was a priority. It was agreed that it would be beneficial to have more than one personal alcohol license holder. NM said she would look into training courses. DM advised although he was willing to get a personal alcohol license, he would need to speak to his employers to ensure no conflict of interest. CP is unable to work behind the bar due to his professional position. Further discussion will be done at the next scheduled committee meeting.

It was agreed that a social media post should be put up advising of the immediate closure of the bar only, the hall will remain open. However instead of stipulating an actual timescale of 8 weeks, it was agreed “until further notice” should be worded. LM posted this during the meeting. It was also agreed that there should be no further discussion with anyone outwith the committee regarding the reason for closure.

NM will set up a new WhatsApp Group.

The Senior Burns Lunch scheduled for Friday, 23rd was still going ahead however no whisky /alcohol to be given to the piper or participants.

CB to contact the private party booked for Saturday and advise there was no longer a bar available. Agreed that there could be a discount option applied to the hall hire if required. Also agreed that there was a large stock of fruit shoots in the bar cupboard and this could be given to the booking as a goodwill gesture.

Obviously there were a lot of issues raised due to recent developments. JD asked for everyone to make a list of actions or requirements so that these could be discussed further at the scheduled committee meeting on 2nd February and a more detailed action plan discussed.

The meeting closed at 22.00.

Addendum to minutes added on receipt of email from KP 31.01.26

“Can you please make it clear in the minutes that my husband, Alastair Park, had purchased the pool table and equipment for use in the hall. The money I collected was paid at 50p per game towards the upkeep of the table, all of which was enjoyed on various nights by the regular users at that time. Hence I collected it all, as we would not be returning. That makes it clearer as to why I collected the equipment and money, and also the reason for removing the pool table”.