

# Great Easton Village Hall Committee Meeting: Weds 25th February 2026 - MINUTES

**Present:** Tim Smith, Alice Murdock. Mandy Law (left 11:45), Teresa Chapman, Chris Stirrney, Margaret Stamp, Louisa Feltham (left 10:30), Sue Peet (left 11:45), Bob Wilson (arr. 11:40)

**Apologies:** Lorna Bryant

Minutes of January 2026 Committee Meeting (28.01.26) and minutes of Kitchen Renovation Weekly Update Meeting (19.2.26) were both approved.

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## FINANCE

### 1. Financial Statement

Previously circulated by the Treasurer (see Appendix 1 below, pages 3-4). No major changes; the recent Valentine's Quiz hosted by Alice & Andy Murdock increased our surplus.

### 2. Drawing up budget for 2026-27

- a. **Current position:** £12k projected at end of March available to spend (keeping our £10k contingency and allowing for what we are putting into kitchen):
- b. **Surplus:** £9k – classed as surplus at end of financial year (excluding the kitchen); Mandy predicts it will be £9k again. Financial priorities – total of £26k
- c. **A line-by-line discussion** of our income, operational costs and other costs took place and decisions relating to these are itemised in Appendix II, below (page 5). The main change for the 2026-27 budget is we will reduce our target for fundraising by £1.5k.

### 3. Target Setting Decision for the 2026-27 Budget

If we adjust for £1500 (reduction in fundraising events) we are looking at a surplus of £8k.

Decision: The Committee agreed to set £8k as our target for 2026-27.

Agreed to set reserve at £8k; that covers us for 12 months of our operational costs (in-line with ACRE guidelines). The £2k reduction in reserve transfers to surplus – this will create a surplus of £10k.

### 4. Priority Projects

Limited due to costs and work involved. Mandy outlined two options for fulfilment of main projects:-

**Option A** Slow and Steady - a longer time scale for projects keeping a steady, high balance buffer

**Option B** Quick Start, Slow Build - proceeding with initial projects, allowing balance to drop before “saving” for next project.

All agreed with Option A - that the Fire Safety Assessment should be implemented asap and the Rendering addressed in early Summer rather than Autumn. Mandy to report on a quarterly basis. (Action: ML)

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## HALL REFURBISHMENT

1. Teresa reported that the kitchen work was progressing well - all surfaces made good and skimmed with first fit electrics in place. Continuing to monitor and report to Committee.  
(Action: TC/SP/LB/ML)
2. Chris has obtained two quotes for the Fire Risk Safety Assessment. Agreed to go with Andy Buxton, from Harborough Fire and Safety.  
(Action: CS)
3. As required by HDC, Teresa has had a Human Rights and Modern Slavery Labour Contractor Compliance Declaration drawn up. This was signed by Tim. Contractors will also be asked to sign.  
(Action: TC)
4. With regard to educating the Committee members in the many and varied aspects of Hall Governance, Teresa had obtained a copy of “Action, a Village Hall Managing Risks Toolkit”.  
(Action: ALL)

## HALL BOOKINGS

1. **Our Hall insurance** does not cover us for Bouncy Castles or other “high risk” activities. Any hall hirer wishing to use such items would need to show us evidence of their own personal covering insurance plus that of the item supplier. Unsure how this could work in practical terms.

- a. Need to check process with our insurer **(Action: TS)**
- b. An addition to be made to our Ts & Cs, requiring proof of (to be confirmed by our insurer) public liability insurance for any high-risk activities, including bouncy castles. **(Action: TS)**
- c. To develop a short document identifying what hirers are using the hall for **(Action: CS)**

## 2. Great Easton Little Theatre (GELT)

- a. **Booking changes:** Advance bookings for GELT are sometimes made significantly ahead of time (e.g. booking the Hall for the annual panto) and occasionally need to make adjustments nearer the time. Problems can arise when multiple lines of approach are used (WhatsApp/text/email), which causes confusion between parties. It was agreed that booking enquiries are only to take place via email from GELT. Louisa to advise GELT. **(Action: LF)**
- b. **Heating-only bookings:** Some GELT bookings such as scenery painting are charged at £1.25/hour. GELT to advise Chris/Mandy of bookings for heating only to allow for adjustments. **(Action: LF)**
- c. **Hire Charges:** GELT sometimes needs to make multiple bookings in a short period of time which can prove costly to those taking part in GELT activities. The Committee wants to support GELT as a community asset and a significant hirer of the Hall. However, we also need to be equitable in how we treat all regular hirers. It was agreed that GELT will put forward a written proposal to the Committee as to their requirements. If the suggestion is for a different charging rate for GELT, there needs to be a demonstrable reason why the rate should differ from that of other regular users, many of whom are also providing benefit to our community. **(Action: LF)**

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## MARKETING AND FUNDRAISING

**Valentine’s Quiz** went well, raising approximately £1200 (bar costs difficult to ascertain) 59 tickets sold - lower than last time, possibly due to: illness, people being away, half-term week and an England Rugby match. Need to avoid where possible. Possibly hold on a Friday and not on Valentines Day. Kitchen flow was good - cheese/butter/coleslaw put in bowls on tables so people just collected baked potato & beans from kitchen hatch. Bar & raffle all good. Overall, very successful with everyone having an enjoyable evening.

**Village Plan:** Bob reported on the questionnaire being put together for the revised Village Plan - Village Hall questions were amended appropriately.

**FFS& GEPOS:** Bob reported a busy year ahead for FFS and GEPOS gigs - have a good group of helpers to call on now for FFS and Alice & Andy happy to man the gig bars. Need to advertise for a person to wash-up **(Action: BW)**

**Monthly Draw** agreed to do a promotional boost on Next Door **(Action: AM)** and Facebook **(Action: ML)**

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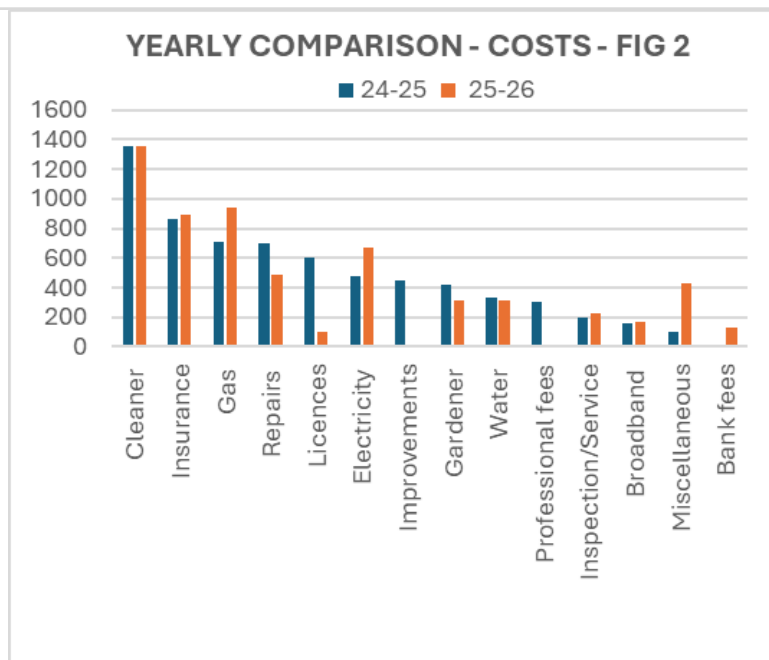
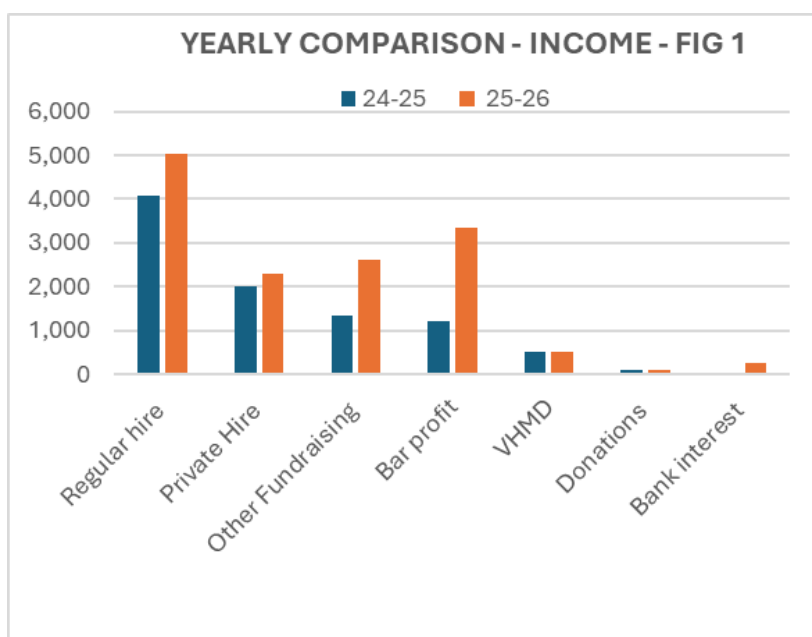
## AOB

- Chris reported finding an item of jewellery on hall floor the day following a History Society Meeting. She has item and will put out enquiries re ownership **(Action: CS)**
- Chris has received an email re an automated booking system “Simply Halls” - decided did not need.

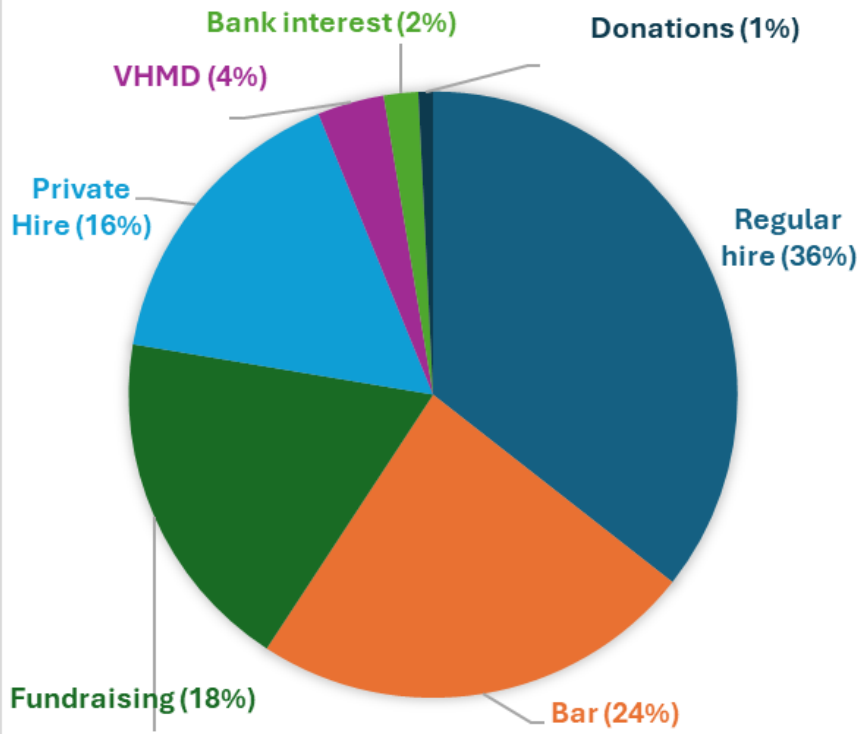
**Meeting closed at 1pm. Next Meeting Weds 25th March.**

## Appendix I: Treasurer's Financial summary to end of January 26.

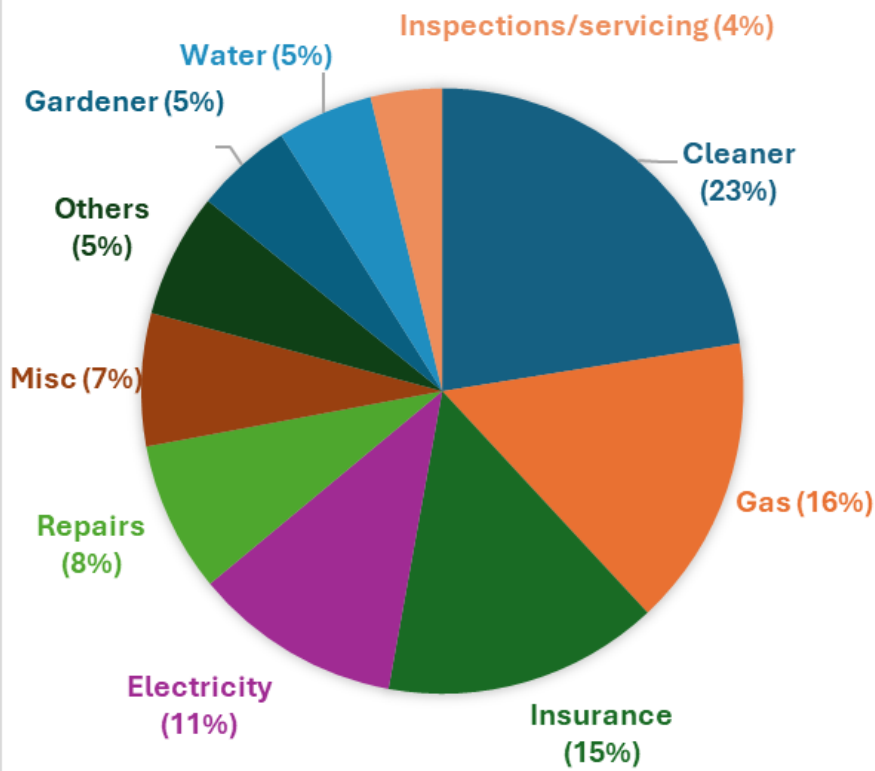
- Generated £21,819 in income and spent £13,480 meaning there is a surplus of **£8,339** so far. This time last year, the surplus was £2,500.
- Regular hire income is 36% of our income, (Fig 3), whilst private hire income is similar to this time last year (Fig 1) and the bar is 24%. Fundraising from the grand raffle is 18% of income.
- Highest running costs are now cleaning and **gas**, as is to be expected at this time of year (Fig 2 and 4).
- On average, our total rental income is still more than our regular costs (Fig 5).
- Hall held approx. £41,000 in the bank account and in cash, with the available funds amounting to approx. £31,000 (Fig 6). By taking away the 10K contingency reserve monies, we are left with **£21,000 to spend**.
- Estimated costs for our proposed programme of works total £29,000 which would leave a net deficit of approx. £8K.



**% OF INCOME - FIG 3**



**% OF TOTAL COSTS**



## Appendix II: 2026-27 Budget Discussion

- a. **Income**
  - i. **Rental Income:** last increase was April 2024 – agreed to leave community groups at £10/hour
  - ii. **Private rental income:** very competitive already at £18/hr; agreed to increase to £20/hour from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2026; objective is to target high income events: possibly via Wedding Fairs etc
  - iii. **Bar profit:** FFS & GEPOS (and fundraising) are our main sources of income; bar is now considered a stable income source. Keep on back-burner as to how we might grow this but not immediately. Themed events are the biggest earners. Continue to consider low-effort themes.
  - iv. **Fundraising:** in 2024-25 we put on 3 fundraising events. It was agreed that this was not sustainable for the next financial year; agreed our objective is to put on 1.5 events for 2026-27 (3 every 2 years)
  - v. **Donations:** – although an area over which we have little direct influence, there was an agreement to aim to grow Give as you Live contributions. A letter-writing campaign to local businesses was also discussed as a possibility
  - vi. **Lottery:** continue to promote on Facebook & Nextdoor; if we go over n=150 we re-consider prizes
  - vii. **Community Grants:** Although not on the list of income items under consideration for the budget, a discussion was held about the possibility of securing a Community Grant (to the value of £10k). Applications are to be submitted to HDC by the end of May 2026. It may be possible for GELT (with external/Committee support) to apply for Community Grant for stage curtains. All to consider whether they wish to input.

**Income summary:** for the 2026-27 budget we will reduce our target for fundraising to £1.5k; otherwise all income figures are anticipated to be similar to 2025-26. This leaves a ‘surplus’ of £7.5k (before costs)

- b. **Operational Costs:**
  - i. **Utilities:** we’re currently on a good commercial tariff with EDF and we’re locked-in for 3 years from 1<sup>st</sup> May 2025. Agreed to set- a worst-case budget of £2.7k assuming 5% increase.
  - ii. **Insurance:** on a three-year contract with Allied Westminster, a specialist insurance broker working with Village Halls and recommended by ACRE. Up for renewal June 2027; Simon Drysdale is an insurance broker who would look at our situation and step us through what we need (or don’t)
  - iii. **Licences** – generally stable but as we’ve increased our income we might have to increase the music licence; bar licences similarly (approx. £180 for the 6)
  - iv. **Inspection/Servicing:** none noted for 2026-27
  - v. **Maintenance & repairs** – should read as £26k; Guttering could be an issue; change light switch that does bar area lights
  - vi. **Cleaner:** (£15/hour) no major change anticipated
  - vii. **Gardener:** (£18/hour); may anticipate only a small increase. However, related matter is the need to clarify their self-employed status. Agreed to change this category to Gardening and to include the costs of 2 x Green Bins (approx. £120) (ML)
  - viii. **Broadband/IT** up for renewal in a couple of months (may go up a little as our discounts are reducing). Digitising would be a whole other project. To be considered at a separate discussion.
- c. **Other costs**
  - i. **Miscellaneous** – need clearer definition (a working definition might be one-off not to be repeated). Agreed to reduce miscellaneous to £300
  - ii. **Marketing:** agreed to leave in in case we do some marketing (e.g. wedding fair)
  - iii. **Professional Fees:** what does this include? Leave it as a cost for now.
  - iv. **Improvements** - £9k shown is our contribution to the kitchen. This is a one-off.