Minutes of Great Easton Village Hall Committee Meeting
Weds 22nd July 2026, 10am

Present: Teresa Chapman, Alice Murdock, Mandy Law, Sue Peet, Bob Wilson, Louisa Feltham

Apologies: Chris Stirmey, Lorna Bryant

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1. **The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed**

Teresa acknowledged the hard work of all committee members in recent months.

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2. Finance

a) Mandy outlined a potential funding gap (see Appendix 1, pp4-6, below): when we drew up our budget in February, we were aiming at a budget surplus of £7k. The first quarter of 2026, however, indicates a downfall of our surplus both against budget and when compared with last year. This is primarily due to a fall in income after losing three regular groups; bar-takings are also down from last year. Private hire is gradually increasing but is not, by its nature, a consistent source of funding. Our available funds still stand at £15,477. Mandy has adjusted projections from the budget to £2500 (from £7k). If the Quarter 1 trends continue, this will have an impact on capital projects such as rendering and decorating. Bob confirmed that the Parish Council is happy for us to break even (self-funding is our objective, providing the Village Hall is kept in a state of good repair). It was agreed that Mandy will monitor for the next few months. It was also agreed that an objective is to grow & maintain regular groups. This will be a main discussion item for a future agenda. **(Action ML/SP)**

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3. Governance, policies & insurance

a) **Health & Safety Policy update:** carried forward **(Action ML)**

b) Fire Risk Assessment: Harborough Fire Safety completed their report on 13.07.26. They are coming in to do a full emergency lighting discharge test on 31 July (am). They will also supply and fit new fire extinguisher in the bar area and complete other fire safety jobs identified in the report. Cost £175 (inclusive of VAT)

c) **Governance:** working with the Parish Council on governance: carried forward **(Action BW)**

d) **Portable Appliance (PAT) Testing:** booked for Mon 21 Sept with Elec Cert **(Action TC)**

e) Insurance

i. Rebuild valuation exercise completed. Valuation for a complete rebuild of the hall now stands at £1.13 million. Our annual premium has increased to £1115. The product our broker is able to offer is VillageGuard and we are currently in a long-term agreement on this (expires 12/06/27). It was agreed that we will consider possible alternatives from January 2027. **(Action SP)**

i. The insurance broker has provided us with a list of high-risk activities that are not covered by our policy, which we will reflect in our hiring conditions. **(Action: SP/CS)**

ii. PC and village hall insurance: the Parish Council holds a separate insurance policy, principally to cover liability for volunteers. The defibrillator is currently covered under Village Hall insurance and it may be appropriate to transfer this to the Parish Council at some stage if this falls under their jurisdiction. To consider at next insurance renewal **(Action: SP)**

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4. Bookings

a) It was agreed that Mandy and Teresa will also have access to the Village Hall enquiries system to cover periods when Chris is away or otherwise unable to deal with enquiries. **(Action: TC)**

b) Hirers' Guide: carried forward. **(Action CS/SP)**

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5. Refurbishment & repairs

a) Stage Curtains update: Track fitting (with Abacus Stage Tech) has now been pushed back to 1st August. Still targeting 2nd September for completion of the whole job. **(Action TC, CS, LF)**

b) **Stage Lighting update:** the problem of lights tripping out has now been remedied. The electrician fitted two new fuse spurs to our main consumer unit in the kitchen. This has upped the capacity and no problems have been reported since. Work completed by the electrician on 4.6.26.

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6. Marketing and Fund Raising

a) **Fundraising:** The committee identified ideas for a tool-kit for future fundraising. It was agreed that we may wish to draw in others to help actualise these (involve wider community). **(Action: ALL)**

b) Final Friday Social

i. July FFS as per usual format: chip-van; Eloise is washing-up; Paul Brittain and Chris Barnes are doing the bar. Set-up at 5:30. Mandy to lock-up. Others to help.

ii. August FFS will be our second anniversary. Music – Mandy to do a playlist (ML); Fish & Chip Van; Mexican themed snacks (TC); pinata (SP)

c) Theatre 17 proposal

i. Chris has had feedback from Wilbarston about Death of a Clown (one-man play about William Kemp – Shakespeare's original Falstaff. It comprises history and live music. 110 min running time inc. 20-minute interval. Wilbarston are running it in October. Chris has heard excellent feedback. Wilbarston are selling tickets at £10, the theatre group take 60% and bring own sound and light and promo materials. Our role would be to sell tickets and run a bar for pre-theatre and interval drinks. Rough estimate based on 50 tickets, would be a profit for the hall of approx £240 (selling at £12) + bar money on top (approx. £150). Our fire limit is 100 seated.

ii. It was agreed that we will try to arrange this for Great Easton. Chris will negotiate dates with Theatre 17 – possibly in the New Year 2027. **(Action CS)**

d) Community Grant application update

Mandy has completed the forms to apply for community Grant funds to replace our existing lighting and sound desks; the deadline for the application is 3rd August. **(Action ML/SP)**

Sue has surveyed current main users from GELT, GEPOS and others. The main findings will be used to draw up a specification. The following are to be approached for quotations to be used as part of the application:

- Rocky Road Music (Danny) – Sue to lead; meeting Monday 27th July **(Action SP)**
- Abacus Stage Tech (Steve)– Teresa to lead **(Action TC)**
- Upstage Theatrical Supplies (Terry) – Louisa to lead **(Action LF)**

Sue will share main survey findings with Louisa and Juris. **(Action SP)**

e) Village Hall logo design: carried forward

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7. AOB

a) Tea & Tales income is currently not covering hiring costs. The committee consider Tea & Tales to provide a valuable social opportunity to potentially vulnerable groups in our community and therefore agreed that it could be run on similar grounds to Crafternoon, whereby usual booking fees will be waived and all profits from the takings will be paid to the Village Hall. **(Action CS/ML)**

b) Mandy has received notification of a planning application for the building of a covered swimming pool in the gardens of Manor Farm House on Church Bank. It was agreed that we have no objection to this.

c) A picture was damaged at the June FFS. Alice is reframing. **(Action AM)**

d) Volunteer Day this Saturday 25th July to be advertised on our Facebook page. **(Action ML)**

Meeting concluded at 12:00
Next meeting Wednesday 26th August 2026, 10:00

Continued over…

Appendix 1: Great Easton Village Hall - Financial Summary for First Quarter of 2026-27

Q1 at a glance

Income (excl. grants)	Expenditure	Available to spend
£2,585	**£3,053**	**£15,477**
Budget: £3,290	*Budget: £2,972*	*After reserves*

The quarter end showed a **deficit** of £468 against a budgeted **surplus** of £318 — a swing of £786 against plan. Whilst there are clear reasons for this, the shortfall in regular hire income is a trend the committee needs to be mindful of going forward.

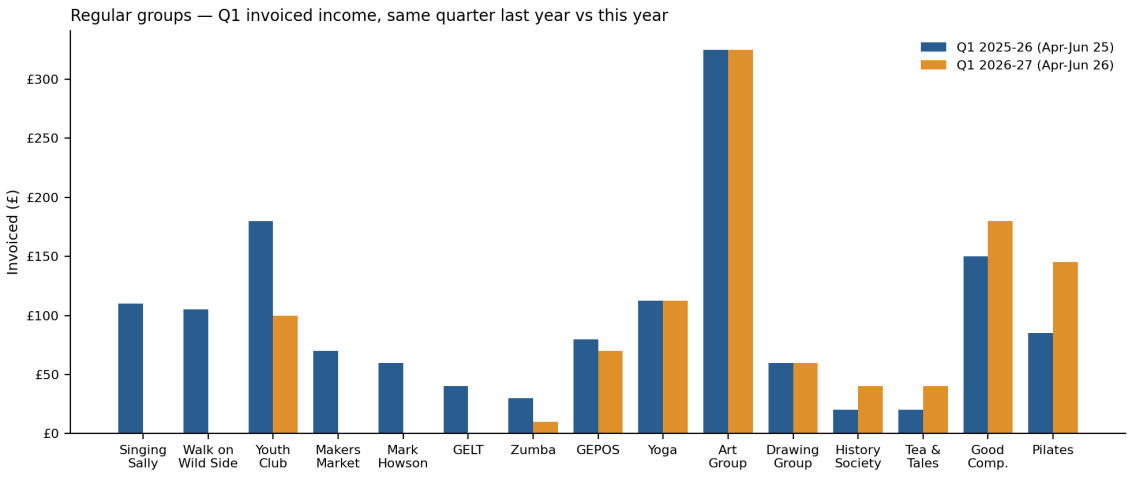
Insurance is a small part of this story, not the main cause — the premium was already budgeted to land in Q1, and only came in £135 higher than planned. Professional Fees and Licences were also anticipated for this quarter, and came in close to budget (£434 against a budgeted £450). The real driver of the shortfall against budget is income — chiefly regular hire, which came in £578 below budget, and bar profit, £216 below budget, partly offset by higher-than-expected bank interest.

Income

We know why regular hire income is lower than last year — three user groups have ceased or significantly reduced their activity, and GEPOS held one fewer event in Q1. These are understandable reasons, and they account for around three-quarters of the year-on-year fall. Between them, the three groups represented around £1,030 a year (roughly £86 a month) in hire income at last year's levels. The bar profit is also down on both last year and the budget, at £660 against a budgeted £876.

Regular hire income is also £578 below budget for the quarter. It is early in the year, and three further GEPOS events are planned before March 27, which will help recover some of this. But there are currently no new regular user groups in the pipeline to replace those we have lost, and this is something the committee should be aware of as we move into Q2.

Private hire is up strongly on last year for the quarter — £487 against £212 for the same period last year, more than double. Bank interest and lottery profit are both broadly on track. The hall also received a £5000 grant and £1,000 donation towards replacement stage curtains.



Expenditure

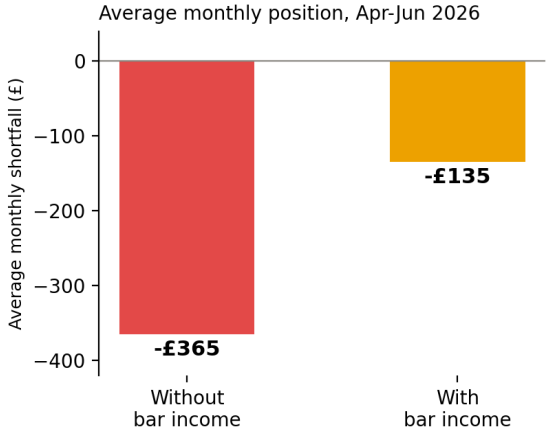
Costs are very close to budget overall — just £81 over for the quarter. Some lines are higher than last year, but these are largely one-off or annual items:

- Insurance premiums have increased.
- A fire safety consultancy review was carried out.
- A replacement vacuum cleaner and other small kitchen items were purchased.
- Annual licences were renewed — no further licence costs are expected this year.

Energy costs, general repairs and marketing spend all came in below budget, which broadly offset these increases, leaving costs close to budget overall.

Monthly average

Without bar income, regular costs **exceed** regular income by an average of £356 per month. When bar income is included, this falls to £135 per month. This underlines how important the bar events are to the hall's day-to-day finances — regular hire and private hire alone do not yet cover our running costs, and even with bar profit included there is still a modest average monthly shortfall, largely driven by June's insurance payment.



Available funds

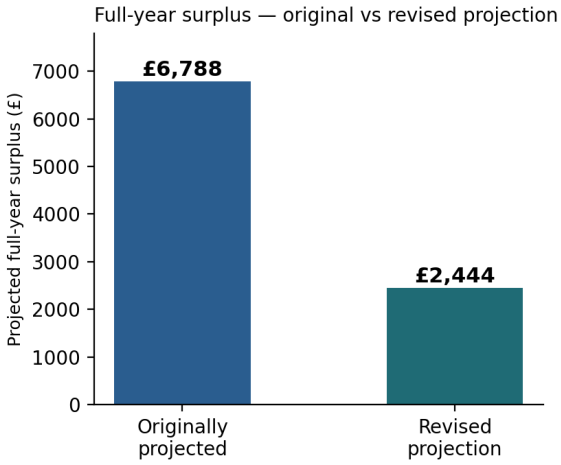
Available funds at the end of June stand at £15,477 — close to the £15,740 originally projected. The £2,000 budgeted for fire safety works was not required this quarter.

Looking ahead

It is too early to draw firm conclusions from one quarter alone, and the GEPOS events planned for the remainder of the year will help improve the position. The June FFS had a poor turnout, which is reflected in this quarter's lower bar profit; the stock bought for that event is still in hand, so it should benefit future events rather than needing to be repurchased. However, regular hire is the foundation of the hall's income and, with no new regular groups currently planned, we need to give some thought to how we might attract new users to the hall, for both regular and private events.

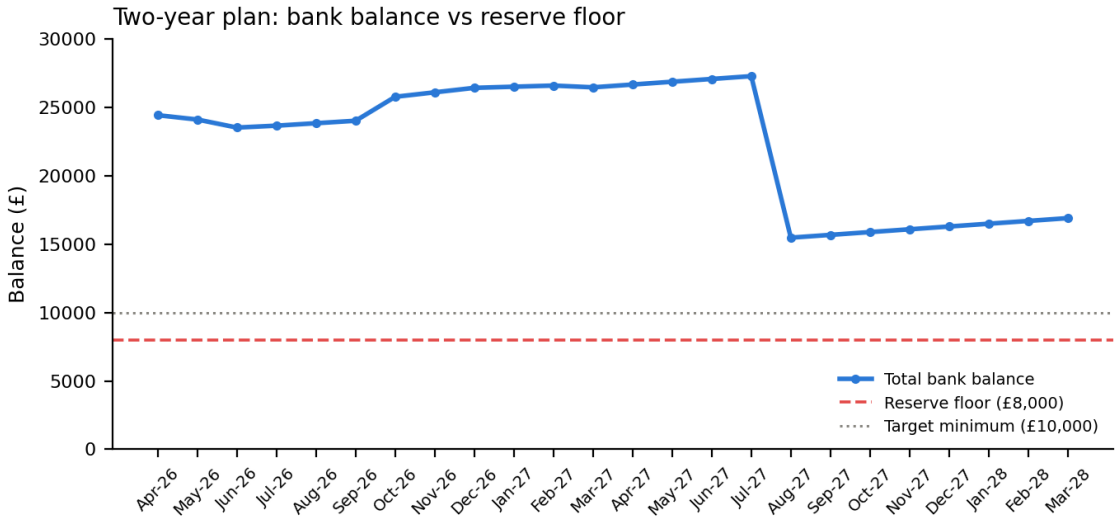
Full-year outlook

Bringing Q1 actuals together with an updated projection for the rest of the year, we now expect a full-year surplus of around **£2,444** — a decrease from the roughly **£7,000** originally projected for the year. The reduction mainly reflects lower regular and private hire income and a quieter bar quarter, We still expect to end the year in surplus, not deficit, and this will be kept under review each quarter.



Two-year plan update

With the revised full-year projection in mind, we have also updated the two-year plan for the exterior rendering and internal decorating works. Fire Safety works have been removed as they were not required. Internal Decorating has been dropped from this plan as non-essential. **Exterior Rendering (£12,000) remains scheduled for August 2027**, next summer as planned, and is comfortably affordable: the account never drops below **£15,463** (still **£7,463** above the £8,000 reserve), and the plan ends Year 2 with **£8,889** above reserve.



Note: this plan assumes the same reduced surplus (~£2,444/year) continues into Year 2, as we do not yet have a separate Year 2 budget. This assumption will be reviewed and updated once a Year 2 budget is prepared.