

Extraordinary Meeting of Raymond Hall Trust

**March 4th 2025 7pm at St John's Hospital
Draft Minutes**

Members of the Trust present: Nicholas Williams (Chair), Caroline Barker Bennett (Minute taker), Ben Coombes, Louise Morris, Susan King, Trish Fellowes

Attendees: Liz Colvin, Derek Hiscock, Rosalie Dipper, Colin Dipper, Doug Wheeler, Anthony Wilson, Geoff Fleming.

Public Participation

The Chair, Nick Williams, opened the meeting. It had been called to decide whether the Trust was going to make an offer for one of the two pieces of parkland north of Park Street. He explained that the "pledge" of £50,000 offered to the Heytesbury Recreation Ground Trust (HRGT) was made subject to legal advice and to their successful bid for some of the parkland by HRGT. HRGT would need to make a formal application for a grant to the Raymond Trust.

Points made by attendees:

1. That it was not made clear at the HRGT meeting in the church on February 27th how the HRGT saw the land being used, apart from the Cricket Club; that a village hall was not part of the plan. The need for funds was the main concern.
2. That the Raymond Trust must be very careful about giving money to another charity if there was a conflict of interest in the two charities' aims; that members of the Trustee needed to be aware that those who voted to give money in such circumstances would be personally liable to refund the RHT if the donation turned out to be illegal.
3. Doubts were expressed about whether Heytesland would accept a bid from the village. The Chair had confirmed with the selling agent that there would be no objection.

Agenda

1. Apologies for Absence: Vanessa Sturmeay, Jo Sneddon.

2. Declarations of Interest: Louise Morris said that her husband was a trustee of the HRGT but she was not.

3. Minutes of the Raymond Trust Meeting on February 18th 2025. Trish Fellowes noted that the votes cast re the "pledge" of funds to the HRGT were missing. These were agreed: as £50,000: For: B. Coombes, L. Morris V. Sturmeay, J. Sneddon
Against: C. Barker Bennett, P. Fellowes N Williams
Motion carried.

£80,000: For: B. Coombes, N. Williams, L. Morris

Against: C. Barker Bennett, P. Fellowes, J. Sneddon, V. Sturmeay. Motion lost.

With these amendments the Minutes of the meeting on February 18th were agreed as a correct record.

4. To consider whether the Trust should make a bid for any of the lots of parkland north and south of Park St.:

The Chair explained that the lot south of Park Sr was not in the Trust's interest. Lot 1a at the western end of Park St was where the Football pitch was. Lot 1b was east of this and included the old cricket pitch and the barn. Lot 1b was of greater interest to the HRGT. The Trust had sufficient funds to purchase Lot 1a (advertised at £125,000).

Discussion followed: Concerns expressed included: how the Trust was to maintain the land once purchased; the trees on the site might be a liability; uncertainty whether planning permission would be given for building a village hall. (Cllr Newbury had suggested at the Feb. 18th meeting that a pre-app. from Wiltshire Council could clarify this). The question of a properly constituted body to run the village hall would need to be addressed. The Raymond Hall Trust was not appropriate. Louise Morris suggested that a business plan would need to be drawn up.

A Community Land Trust was suggested by Trish Fellowes. If this involved building houses it was not appropriate for this site as there would be immediate opposition from villagers. The Chair invited each member to express their view about making a bid. After this a proposal was put to the meeting:

4.1 That the Trust takes steps to make an offer for Plot 1a. Proposed B Coombes, seconded S. King. Passed unanimously.

4.2 The Trust will seek advice to assist with the negotiations to make a purchase. Proposed: N. Williams, seconded P. Fellowes. Passed unanimously.

B.Coombes was to contact a suitably qualified resident to undertake this task.

4.3 P. Fellowes undertook to obtain a pre. app re whether a village hall on the site was likely to get planning consent from Wiltshire Council.

4.4 If the Trust's bid is successful, the question of how the asset will be managed will be discussed at future meetings.

The Chair noted that after about 50 years the Trust had taken a step to fulfill its aims. He closed the meeting at 8.50pm