

BADLESMERE LEES AND HALL COMMITTEE MEETING

Tuesday, 9 September 2025

Committee members present: Chris Moore (Chair), Ian Earl (Treasurer) (taking notes), Dave Austin, Steve Burt, Gareth Fulton, Fred Gregory, Charlie Kirby, Ben Pullen.

1 Apologies received from: Rick Blackman, Sue Earl, Tom Sisley.

2 Approval of minutes

2.1 The minutes of the May meeting were approved.

3 Matters arising (numbers in parentheses refer to entries in the March minutes)

- 3.1 (3.1) Footpaths cabinet: The Ramblers were informed. Awaiting a reply.
- 3.2 (3.2) Tractor tyre: Not removed. BP will now return the tyre to the 'Witches Wood' where it was originally found.
- 3.3 (3.4) The bonfire has yet to be lit. DA asked if he could add material to it from his garden. This was agreed.
- 3.5 (4.3) Replacing RB with CM will be delayed until CIO status has been achieved.
- 3.6 (6.1) Wilding/landscaping of the lees: still with GF.
- 3.7 (10.1) Emergency lighting has been included in the Toilets refurbishment project, and will be extended to the main hall and kitchen when the new regulations are issued and define what needs to be done.
- 3.8 (10.2) Emergency Exit from the stage: this will be removed before the Wine & Wisdom and the wall extended across the opening to ensure a flat surface for the scoreboard.

4 Accounts

- 4.1 The current balances in the four accounts as on 9 September 2025, were:
BPH: current = £1 164.27, reserve = £17 052.50;
BLPC: current = £1 1586.55, reserve = £1 960.25.
Transfers (of about £2000) are due to take place from the BPH reserve account to the current account to match the expenditure on the refurbishment works.
Two major credits have been received from edf Energy and from Castle Water to bring down the high credit balances that existed, and the direct debit mandates have been adjusted and created (respectively) with sensible sizes of the payments.
- 4.2 Draws for the monthly prizes from The 100 Club have taken place. The winners were (January to July):- Townsend (P&L Thompson), Gareth Fulton, James (Fred Gregory), Linda Kirby, Woodhouse (P&L Thompson), Rachel Sisley, Steve Burt.

5 The Lees

- 5.1 Although it may have happened only once, the discarding of food waste near the woodland at the southern end of the lees was discussed. It was agreed to put up a camera if the problem arose again.
- 5.2 Whether to cut the lees a fourth time this year was debated. The grass is long enough near the A251, but the rest has not grown. Looking at his records IE pointed out that in the last ten years the lees was usually cut five times a year until 2020 and thereafter

four times. (An experiment in 2021 – six cuts – resulted in only three cuts in 2022). Only twice was a last cut done after August had ended. It was decided that a fourth cut should only happen this year if the whole lees needed a cut.

6 Hall Refurbishment Works

- 6.1 IE gave an update on the works done so far – the new walls and ceilings have been plaster-boarded and skimmed. The electrical work is almost complete. The plumber has installed the water heater and pipework for the disabled toilet, but will not return until October (on a month's holiday). New flooring has been laid in the disabled toilet, the gents' and the new lobby. A first coat of paint has been applied to all the walls (excluding in the ladies') and ceilings (including in the ladies') – the painter is also now on holiday. The store is almost ready – the water heater has been boxed in, the ceiling painted, and only the walls and skirting need a final coat of paint (which IE will do).
- 6.2 Though the toilets are usable for small gatherings (the ladies' has yet to be touched) enabling hirings to continue, IE will endeavour to complete the disabled and gents' toilets before the Wine & Wisdom, and not dismantle the ladies' until after the event.
- 6.3 The three large, unused insulation sheets (8'x4'x100mm) have been taken away by SB in exchange for ~1780mm high racking for the store (one arrangement 1500mm x 450mm and a second 900mm x 300mm). A third (small) one may also be available.

7 Community Events

- 7.1 CM has converted the posters of the history of Badlesmere and Leaveland displayed at the VE 80 celebrations into booklet form. They could be printed at about £5 each but the committee felt that too few people would be prepared to buy copies to justify its printing. Detailed historical research would have more appeal. IE said he thought Jeanne Harvey (late of Hyperion) had produced a work which could be the basis of such an effort. CM to enquire.
- 7.2 The lecture by Dr James Wright in June was attended by about 30 people and was well received. Despite a costly performance fee and other expenditure the event broke even. It was considered a success in that it was a hiring of the hall that was not just a party or a club meeting.
- 7.3 2026 10k Run. SB reiterated that he would have to stand back from organising the next run but would nevertheless be willing to offer advice whenever asked. The committee still decided to go ahead with a Run, with an organising subcommittee of CM, RB (tbc), DA and IE. The date of the event was set as Sunday, 13 September, 2026. The route will be the same as previous runs. Changing it (to clockwise up Rabbit Valley and back down from Highbens Hill) was considered but keeping to the familiar route was thought to be a more sensible choice for new organisers. Permission from Lees Court Estate and Phil Scutt to use their lands to be sought as soon as possible (CM, IE).
- 7.4 Wine & Wisdom. Saturday 29 November was the date chosen. Although EK0GG would be hiring the hall in the afternoon, it was felt that there would still be enough time to set up before the evening event (as in 2024).

8 Governance and grants

- 8.1 The application for CIO status (as The Badlesmere Lees Preservation Trust) was rejected by the Charity Commission but only on the grounds that the original Trust

Deed and Lease (1974) and the current Lease (2003) appear not to be in agreement as to who owns the village hall (the land is definitely the Estate's). CM to get clarification from the Estate and forward this to the Charity Commission.

- 8.2 Recent attempts at securing a number of grants were unsuccessful, however, Swale BC will soon be accepting further applications.

9 Safety & Crime

- 9.1 Fireworks. After a recent wedding celebration (within the parish but not the area of the lees) in which extremely loud fireworks were set off causing problems within the horse population of the village, and since Nov 5th is not far off, the committee instructed CM to politely ask (by email and social media) villagers to consider the effects on livestock and to inform neighbours if fireworks are going to be used.
- 9.2 Metal detecting. The Estate has declared that no metal detecting is allowed on any of its land, including, and especially, the lees at Badlesmere. That right is being reserved for KAS (Kent Archaeological Society) with whom the Estate has an arrangement.

10 Date of next meeting

- 10.1 Tuesday 13 January 2026 was agreed. 6.30 pm in the Village Hall as usual.

11 AOB

- 11.1 DA reported that the speed limit along the A251 which currently alternates between 50mph and 40mph will, early in 2026, become a uniform 40mph between Faversham and Challock, following considerable campaigning by the SBL parish council.
- 11.2 CK reported that an elderberry tree has died opposite The Dell and is unsightly. CM said the Estate has been informed and is dealing with the matter.
- 11.3 The willow tree near the south eastern boundary of the lees and Hinkley House is also suffering. CK will clear the brambles and other growth that is competing with the tree.

The meeting ended at 8.15 pm.

The next committee meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, 13 January, at 6.30 pm, in the village hall.