

BADLESMERE LEES AND HALL COMMITTEE MEETING

Tuesday, 13 January 2026

Committee members present: Chris Moore (Chair), Sue Earl (Secretary), Ian Earl (Treasurer), Rick Blackman, Steve Burt, Gareth Fulton, Charlie Kirby, Tom Sisley.

1 Apologies received from: Dave Austin, Fred Gregory, Ben Pullen.

2 Approval of minutes

- 2.1 The minutes of the May meeting were approved, subject to one amendment:
11.3 Willow tree – no agreement was reached as to the action to take.

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

- 3.1 (3.1) Footpaths cabinet: A digital copy of the final version has been received except that the QR code that links to the new Explore Kent website has yet to be supplied. Ramblers are awaiting the update before ordering the hardcopy.
- 3.2 (3.2) Tractor tyre: Not yet removed. CM to chase BP.
- 3.3 (3.3) The bonfire has yet to be lit. IE to action.
- 3.4 (3.5) Replacing RB with CM will be delayed until CIO status has been achieved.
- 3.5 (3.6) Wilding/landscaping of the lees: still with GF (and CM).
- 3.6 (5.2) In November, GF and SE both highlighted the need for a further cut this year. IE contacted the contractor but the weather turned and a cut has not been possible. (See 5.1 below.)
- 3.7 (6.2) The refurbishment of the toilets gathered apace in November so that the Gents and Disabled toilets were available for use at the Wine & Wisdom event.
- 3.8 (11.2) The estate has removed with the dead elderberry tree.

4 Accounts

- 4.1 The current balances in the four accounts as on 13 January 2026, were:
BPH: current = £3000.00, reserve = £6078.76;
BLPC: current = £1480.00, reserve = £2265.42.
The only actions since the start of the year have been transfers in line with the Reserves Policy and a payment to Swale BC for a Small Societies Lottery Licence.
- 4.2 Draws for the monthly prizes from The 100 Club were held with the final, December, draw taking place at the Wine & Wisdom. The winners were (August to November):- Debbie Burt, Rick Blackman, Sarah Pullen, Clara Moore. The December winners were:- (3rd prize, £30) Georgina Fulton, (2nd prize, £45) Janice Vant, and (1st prize, £60) The Countess Sondes. The total prize money this year was £465, corresponding to 50% of the income from having 62 members.
- 4.3 IE handed out draft copies of the Bank Accounts Reconciliation sheets, and Summaries of the accounts of the Badlesmere Lees Preservation Committee and of Badlesmere Parish Hall. He then explained the numbers therein, allowing discussion. In essence, the Lees Preservation Committee accounts showed a net profit but only because the Wine & Wisdom made up for the 100 Club no longer providing enough

funds to cover the costs of the mowing and that mowing took place only three times (usually it is four) in 2025. Had a fourth mow taken place the accounts would have broken even.

The village hall figures showed the expected significant depletion in the reserve account corresponding to the amount spent on the projects undertaken in 2025, but otherwise the annual profit and loss was about even (see 4.4 below).

4.4 IE gave out a third sheet which listed the accounts of the village hall without the costs of the projects and the large refunds obtained from edf (electricity) and Castle Water. The salient points are:

a) £1710.72 has been spent on Projects so far, £16656.56 on the toilets, £514.16 on the stage and other areas (in the latter are included (rounded numbers): cladding to cover the stage emergency exit (£270), a new under-stage storage trolley (£100), relocating the stage (£100));

b) Due to a reappraisal of rebuild costs (to £265k) the insurance premium has risen from £384 to £604;

c) The costs of electricity and water actually used in 2026 are: £574.64 for the electricity (1415 kWh), £55.38 for water (12.3 m³);

d) If the rent (due October) and the North track repairs (carried out in November) (invoices not yet received) and the unclaimed cleaning are added to the accounts, then the profit and loss for the village hall becomes: income £2488.82, outgoings £2480.01. This means that we are just breaking even at the current level of hirings.

4.4 What hiring rates would be appropriate when the current work on the toilets is completed (which will include providing hot water in all the toilets – with an associated cost), was then debated. The following were agreed:

a) an hourly rate of £16 per hour (£15 for regular users) – subject to a review of the rates charged by similar local establishments;

b) residents and non-residents to be charged the same;

c) a surcharge for cleaning of £10 for ‘large’ gatherings as per current definition;

d) the rate for the use of the hobs/ovens to remain at £20.

The charge for electricity for the hall heaters will be reviewed before April, and the extra charge to EKOGG for their (almost) exclusive use of the large storeroom is to start in April (amount yet to be agreed; IE informed them of this in October).

4.5 A problem was discovered recently wherein hirers could accidentally (or deliberately) press the ‘Emergency Credit’ button on the hall heaters meter and get £3 extra electricity. This would mean that a subsequent hirer was required to clear any debt before being able to get electricity for their session. A Rate Setting Card (set at ‘zero emergency credit’) has been purchased and applied to the meter. Now the meter switches off when the purchased credit runs out and the ‘Emergency Credit’ button has no effect.

5 The Lees

5.1 The first mowing of the lees in 2026 will be made as soon as it is possible, before the grass has had time to grow any more.

5.2 The Spring Clear-up will take place on Sunday, 8 March, starting at 9.00 am, when BP can participate and supply his 4X4 and trailer. It was suggested that BP uses his vehicle to flatten the brambles around the willow tree (see 2.1 above).

6 Hall Refurbishment Works

- 6.1 Having supplied an overall cost of the work to date (see item 4.3 above) IE gave an estimate of £2000 that would be needed to finish the job. A breakdown of the where the money was spent will be supplied in due course. The disabled toilet and the Gents are currently usable though there are still finishing touches to be done. The Ladies are also usable for apart from the ceiling and lights they are unaltered from their original state. Work will resume when the weather becomes warmer. More work will need to be carried out on the stage since the bannisters erected for the Wine & Wisdom were only temporary as is the location and design of the steps for access the stage. IE was applauded for his efforts particularly his hands-on approach which will have reduced labour costs considerably.
- 6.2 Car Park Extension – awaiting the conclusion of the toilets refurbishment to see what funds remain.

7 Community Events

- 7.1 10k Run. SB voiced concern that the promotion of this year's Run had yet to get underway. He and RB said how runners often decide which events to participate in very early in the year and we were in danger of losing potential participants. CM relayed DA's concern that many other events were taking place locally on 6th Sept. Since the Faversham 10k is expected to be held on 20th Sep, and a revised date of Sunday 27th for the Badlesmere 10k was agreed, subject to agreement from Lees Court Estate and farmer Phil Scutt. CM reported that he and DA are ready to advertise the Run and will soon have a means for runners to book and pay online. SB pointed out that the ability to refund must be built in, and that the chip-timing facility must be arranged as soon as possible.
- 7.2 Fred's Wine & Wisdom event held on 29 November was a roaring success, and raised £734, after costs. This will be put towards maintaining the Lees. It is hoped that FG will arrange another event in 2026.
- 7.3 The Pageantmaster, Bruno Peek, is championing the lighting of a lamp under the auspices of 'The Lamp Light of Peace' at 11am on Remembrance Day (11th Nov). The committee preferred lighting the beacon in the evening. CK to source the fuel.

8 Governance and grants (nothing to report)

9 Safety & Crime

- 9.1 The Neighbourhood Watch coordinator, Peter New, who volunteers at the Ashford Police Station, has reported that during the recent spate of burglaries in the area a silver Range Rover had often been seen at the locations prior to the burglaries.

10 Date of next meeting

- 10.1 Tuesday 24 March 2026 was agreed. 6.30 pm in the Village Hall as usual.

11 AOB (none)

The meeting ended at 8.30 pm.

The next committee meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, 24 March, at 6.30 pm, in the village hall.