**BERRY POMEROY VILLAGE HALL CHARITY**

**CHARITY NO: 300764**

**OFFICIAL NOTICE**

**Date: 5TH March 2025**

**The Management Committee and Trustees of Berry Pomeroy Village Hall wish to make it known that the decision by Berry Pomeroy Primary School and the Management Company, Academies of Character and Excellence, to discontinue use of the Berry Pomeroy Village Hall was entirely their own decision.**

**The Management Committee of the Village Hall had voiced concerns regarding the hygiene of the kitchen, together with the security of the building, which ultimately, is the Village Hall’s responsibility, was not adhered to.**

**Our concern was the health and safety of the Children using the hall and that their plates and cutlery were completely clean, we found mice droppings in cupboards in which the children’s crockery and cutlery was stored – those cupboards were the responsibility of the catering team who served the school meals.**

**The School were aware of the mice and the droppings. However, no investigation was carried out other than bait boxes and mouse traps put down. We brought in Pest Control who found the access point and we have had metal wire put over all the access vents on the outside of the building.**

**We also have a responsibility to ensure the health and safety of our other users.**

**On five occasions, we found the premises unlocked, the responsibility of the School to shut windows and lock all doors was clearly written by the previous Management Committee.**

**We did write on numerous occasions not only to the Admin of the School but to the Operations Director of ACE who had been allocated as our point of contact. At no point did our communications take teaching staff away from the education of the children.**

**The Agreement for the School and ACE to use the Village Hall was due for Renewal and Review in November 2024, having just taken over as the Management Committee due to the sad death of a member, we only became aware that this was required in January 2025. We then put together, with the knowledge of the Operations Director, a proposal, which did include an increase in the hourly rate. The Village Hall’s costs had increased over the previous two years and it was necessary to increase the hourly rate, which was just £5.18 per hour for the previous two years. We started at £8 per hour to include all electric, gas, water, general wear and tear, use of our kitchen equipment, (not cleaning equipment as the Catering team had their own) and the storage of school equipment. At a meeting in February with the School and ACE, we offered negotiation and were prepared to accept £6.50 per hour to commence in September 2025, allowing ACE to include that amount in their budget planning in August 2025. We also stated we would not re-coup any backdated hire charges, i.e. any new rate should have started in December 2024.**

**ACE agreed they would go away and discuss the offer, less than 48 hours later, ACE sent an email to South Hams District Council stating they were no longer using the Village Hall; South Hams District Council has absolutely nothing to do with Berry Pomeroy Village Hall, it is not a Trustee and is not part of the Management Committee. This was the second time, that ACE and the Primary School failed to inform the Charity and Village Hall directly that it was no longer using the Village Hall – we heard third-hand for a second time.**

**There has been no negotiation or offer of resolution talks with either the school or ACE, none of our communications have been responded to.**

**We feel that as parents, you have the absolute right to hear from us the history of events as there appears to be much misinformation and gossip.**

**The School and ACE have been offered the opportunity to discuss ways forward, including the reduction in the hours booked, i.e. 8.30am to 4.30pm Monday to Friday during school term actually resulted in hundreds of unused hours and in turn, wasted their finances – when they could have negotiated different hours. We were also open to using our own cleaning staff to clean the kitchen each day after lunch as it appears the catering staff did not have the time to clear away and clean in the allocated hours the school had given them.**

**Berry Pomeroy Village Hall is a Community owned asset, and is there for the Children of the Parish and for the school children of Berry Pomeroy Primary School, as it has been for decades.**

**For clarity, this is not the first time this has happened, it happened two years ago, when the previous Management Committee was in place, so the statement that this has only happened since the new Management Committee took over in November 2024 is untrue and unfair.**

**We are open to hear your comments and below is our contact details.**

**Email:** **enquiries@berrypomeroyvillagehall.org.uk**

**Phone: 07354 479 357**

**Berry Pomeroy Village Hall Management Committee**

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