

Notes from LAVCH Members Zoom Meeting

5th Dec 22

Members Present:

NAME	ORGANISATION
Anne Huson	Grindleton Pavilion
Simon Kirkham	Catterall Village Hall
Gemma	Hallmaster
Annette Patterson	Salesbury Memorial Hall
Sue Halton	Parbold Village Hall
Tom Cosway	Barley Village Hall
Terry Witter	Whitechapel Village Hall
Peter and Barbara Higham	Whittle-Le-Woods Community Hall
Bernard Kershaw	New Longton VH
Richard Foster	Grimsargh Village Hall
Peter Pemberton	Goosnargh VH
Seamus Heffernan	Mellor Community Association
Peter Bulman	Preston Quaker Meeting House
Margaret Kearns	?
Janet Westwell	Salesbury Memorial Hall
Rachel Gornall	Claughton on Brock Village Hall
Sian Middlebrough	Grimsargh VH & LAVCH Trustee
Eileen Murray	Grimsargh VH & LAVCH Trustee

Sorry if anyone has been missed off, but can be tricky keeping notes as people come in on Zoom.

Apologies: Teresa Taylor, Doreen Brook, Wendy Longton, Ken Dunn

1. Introduction

These are the briefest of notes, with summary points only. Three presenters showed their systems, Gemma from Hallmaster with their system, Simon Kirkham, showing us through the combination of Freeagent and Appointedd, that is used at Catterall Village Hall and Anne Huson, showing their bespoke system, that was designed and “built” specifically for them.

2. Hallmaster

Gemma gave a quick show-through what their system offers

- Online booking system, designed specifically for village halls and community buildings, that also has an additional feature of automated invoicing and payment tracking
- Unlimited Zoom training available
- Phone support available Monday to Friday 9am – 5pm
- Can have multiple administrators
- Any booking made online is, in fact a “request” that is only logged as a provisional booking – with an administrator emailed to give confirmation/authorisation – so no loss of control
- The default is for all bookings to be marked on the calendar as a private booking. The customer can request to have further details made available – contact details, etc.
- All looked relatively “intuitive” on screen
- In the invoicing database, entries are marked up with a Red, Green Amber flag to illustrate status
- The database of events is fully searchable
- Cost is £199 per year, with an additional £22 for Paypal and a further £22 for accounting software integration.
- Post meeting note – believe you get a discount if insured through Allied Westminster – who are a partner with Hallmaster
- Salesbury are minded to go with Hallmaster
- Grimsargh were in a trial when Covid hit and (post meeting note) have now agreed to take it up again
- Online demo on their website, plus free three month trial available.

Website: <https://www.hallmaster.co.uk>

Gemma’s Email: info@hallmaster.co.uk

3. Freeagent/Appointed

Simon showed us through Appointeddd – which integrates with Freeagent – the accounting software his bank requires him to use.

- Appointed costs £200 per year.
- Also quite intuitive layout and not very dissimilar to Hallmaster
- One negative is that with invoices, multiple bookings from one customer don’t merge
- Free 14 day trial available

Website: <https://www.appointeddd.com/>

4. Grindleton Pavillion Tailored Bespoke System

Anne Huson showed us through the system they have, that was designed and is maintained specifically for them, by a local skilled IT specialist

- Does not cater for online booking – as the committee didn't want the lack of control
- Very tailored to meet the client's needs – and was revised a few years' back
- Relatively high up-front cost for design and build, then annual maintenance charges
- Event "features", like if there is a bar can be filtered
- Very useful to see just what can be built, if a hall wants to have something designed specifically for their needs

If anyone particularly liked that system, they might want to consider contacting Grindleton Pavilion to get the contractor's details.

5. Summary and Post Meeting Observations

The systems shown us seemed to be very rich with features and also answered/removed a number of concerns raised – such as loss of control. If a couple of halls are now going to proceed with Hallmaster, we should be able to share experiences in future. Watch this space!

Since the meeting, other discussions have included the following thoughts:

- No reason not to continue to use a "traditional" paper-based booking system too - many traditional hirers are not overly technically oriented. Would just mean an administrator enters the event details in to the system. If an online calendar is already used, this is just swapping one system for another.
- Might be advisable to put a caveat clearly on a hall's webpage with the booking system stating that there may be "offline" bookings being made, so the calendar is only a provisional indication, not an absolute statement of availability.

Gemma, Simon and Anne were thanked sincerely for their excellent presentations.