

The Civil Parish of ALVESTON including Rudgeway & Earthcott**Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting
Held on 20th April 2022 at 7.30pm in the Jubilee Hall**

Present: - Cllr John Graham (Chairman), Cllr Jasmine McGregor, Cllr Valerie Williams, Cllr Carmen Vazquez, Cllr Marion Reeve, Elaine Lee, Brian Lee, Michael Casey, Ivor Bryant, PC Will Price. 12 members of the Parish Community. Graham Smith (Clerk to the Parish Council).

Apologies: - Cllr Paul Caddick, Cllr Anne Curtis, Cllr Lisa Emerson, Cllr Matthew Riddle, (SGC.), Peter Waller (Alveston Community Forum).

1. Welcome by the Parish Chairman

Cllr John Graham welcomed all attendees to the meeting. Due to Covid it was not since April 2019 that a face to face Parish Meeting had taken place.

Agendas are available at the entrance and as can be seen we have many items to cover this evening with reports from; Councillors, Committees of our local community buildings, the Community Forum, our community charity and unfortunately St Helen's School representative is not available. These will be followed by a question-and-answer session to Councillors or Community Bodies and our local beat officer PC Will Price. This will be followed by teas / coffees prepared and served by our Alveston WI – Thank you

The meeting will be presented as per the agenda and the invitation to ask questions or raise issues will be item 6 – Open Forum.

2. Community Reports.**2.1. Jubilee Hall Management Committee**

Report given by Michael Casey.

There have been 4 committee meeting held in the last year. One by Zoom and the other three by face on face meeting. The committee for last year has been :-

Michael Casey Chair
Alice Keehn. Bookings Secretary
Elina Beet. Treasurer
Frances Houghton, Minutes Secretary

Following the recent AGM all officers are continuing in post.

As ever, although not an officer, the committee is indebted to the commitment of Les Forrest in the work he does to keep the facilities of the Jubilee Hall running.

This last year can be seen, in the most part, as a time for managing out of the Covid restrictions required by Government It is pleasing to report that due to the diligence of the organisers of events in the Hall in the last 2 years of Covid there has not been a major health incident reported in the Hall. (MC) expressed his thanks).

Since January 2022 there has been more relaxations by Western England Rural Network (WERN) which now means the Hall is close to being back where it was in February 2020. (Before Covid lockdowns). Organisers of event have just to take some credence of the needs of vulnerable attendees.

The accounts show that we are operating profitably on a day on day basis. This means that general maintenance costs can be covered. Turnover is approximately £12k which is about 12% down on the last year of "non Covid". This shows we are recovering well.

All capital project costs have been accounted for separately. This year the project has been to replace the hall curtains and to provide secondary glazing in an attempt to improve the hall heating. Grants for this work were obtained from Enovert, Ecotricity, South Gloucestershire Council and the Parish Council. Thanks go to all who contributed. It is hoped the secondary glazing will be emplaced this May. At the beginning of the year we were granted the last of SGC Business Support Grants (covid). These have now stopped.

As announced in the February Parish Council meeting there may be some chance of being able to fund replacement of the kitchen by a grant from Enovert. The application for the grant was sent in before the 19th March deadline and adjudication is expected by the end of April 2022

2.2. Youth Centre Management Committee

Report given by Ivor Bryant (Chair of the YC Management Committee).

It's been another challenging year due to the pandemic but things seem to be getting back to normality even if this is the new normal. There have been relaxations in the rules and guidance regarding using the premises, but we continue to provide hand gel, signage and ask the cleaners to work to the same schedule. The cleaners should be working to the risk assessments they provided as none have sent revised assessments. Early days we bought small dispensers of hand gel not knowing how long the problems would last and how much would be used. We soon decided to buy a gallon container and this lasted well, being stolen not long before it ran out. We replaced this with a second gallon.

We have the same committee as the previous year with Lisa Emerson and Val Williams from the parish council. Val is also a user as one of the Badminton group.

The heating to the main hall installed early in 2020 appears to be successful being much more responsive than the system it replaced. The cavity walls were insulated in March last and this was included in last year's report. We are currently having the vinyl floor covering to the main hall replaced. We believe the flooring being replaced is more than 40 years old. The floor had been previously marked out for multi sports, but we are only having the new floor marked out for Badminton at this stage. The previous grants from South Glos Council have afforded this. Unfortunately, due to insurance complications we are unable to let the traversing wall and this can only be used by the scouts who own it.

The centre's day to day maintenance costs remain low and we have suffered no significant vandalism. The doors to the Scouts store have been replaced with metal doors to match the fire escapes and should require little maintenance.

We have received further grants of £2096 via South Glos Council to cover loss of income over the period. Our annual accounts have been passed to the Parish council.

Headline figures are: -

Income...£14805 comprising hire of £12708, Grants of £2096 and interest of less than £1

Expenditure £9905 to include £1800 for the cavity insulation and £2066 for the doors to the scout store.

The new flooring and marking out will be in next year's accounts at £11000

Excess income over expenditure ... £4899

Current bank balance £30,989

Treasurer's report is available for details.

So what's the point of all this? We are providing facilities for the various hirers with regular bookings daytime and evenings every day except Sunday. To book a party we may be able to open on Saturday evening or all-day Sunday. We are maintaining and improving the premises. We are running at a profit day to day although the grants pay for improvements.

2.3. Charity of Emily Amelia Ponting

Report given by Elaine Lee

To During the past year of Covid disruption Trustees of the Charity of Emily Amelia Ponting did not meet but discussed most matters via emails. We had a proper meeting at the end of November '21 to sort out the Christmas gifts given annually to some local people who are elderly, frail or disabled or those who have done good things in our Community. It is our traditional way of showing they are thought of in the village and appreciated.

Our current Trustees are: Rev. David Moss, Sandra Body, Angela Williams, Elaine Lee and Jasmine McGregor (PC Rep), Les Forrest is our Treasurer and Anne Curtis has helped us recently with some extra advice. Rosemary Manley was a Trustee for about 50 years but sad to say she died only 10 days ago after a very long illness. She will be sorely missed by many in the village and Trustees will miss her caring nature and knowledge very much.

A brief description of this Alveston Charity: We are instructed by the deeds to confine any grants to those living in Alveston Parish. We have a wide brief from the main benefactor, Emily Amelia Ponting, who died in 1901 and left a large sum of money. Her instructions directed Trustees to give grants for "the education, improvement, recreation and enjoyment of the inhabitants and parishioners of all ages."

We also had funds left by Edward and Thomas Bush, (died 1908 & 1885). They gave money towards building St Helen's Church and installing the clock as well, of course, for building this Jubilee Hall. In response to the instructions which accompanied their donations we aim to distribute gifts on or about December 16th annually. A third benefactor was Henry King who died in 1792 and asked for the funds he left to be given to help the poor of Alveston on St Thomas Day which falls on Dec. 21st These Charities were combined into one about 70 years ago with the name Alveston Charities - later Alveston Trust and now Charity of E.A.P.

Trustees must include the Vicar and a member of the Parish Council as well as three other villagers. We are a registered Charity and due to local banks closing now use the Broadmead branch of the Co-operative Bank. Trustees are very grateful for the generous bequests given to us by past Alveston folk.

The money they left in their wills has given Trustees over a century of opportunities to approve various grant applications. We use the interest regularly earned on the Charity's investments of our benefactors' bequests and invest in more shares if we accumulate more funds than we will need. We also appreciate extra financial support from Alveston Parish Council as well as church and other local fund raising. Kind villagers sometimes give us cheques or cash as they appreciate our efforts with continuing with this Charity in the 21st Century.

We are fortunate to have Les Forrest as our very efficient Treasurer and we are grateful to Roland Harley for checking the accounts for us for many years.

Treasurer's brief summary for the year ending 31st Dec 2021 as follows:

Income: £1,456.00 from investments and £3,207.00 in donations. Total: £4,663.90

Expenditure: £1,266.28 on gifts and grants

£3,100 was invested and £3.50 of expenses. Total paid out £4,369.78

At the end of December 2021 £4,074.39 was available from funds deposited in Co-op Bank and the value of the investments with CCLA was £58,357.16

Grants and donations since last year's APM:

Aug. '21	Thornbury Orchestra Concert at St Helen's Church donation	£157
Sept. '21/22	Grant to towards the costs of 3 pupils' fees for Field study week	£600
Oct. '21	Helmet readers invited to nominate someone for a treat after a difficult year to show that the community cares about them	No response
Dec. '21	Cash & gift for Christmas to 1 family and 8 individuals	£350
	Pot plants to longstanding Helmet team members who retired	£18

Feb '22 Community Fringe Art Club -extra tables for new members £314
Applications to be discussed by Trustees next week:

(N.B. These are not considered confidential since they are all local Community Groups).

Community Events organisers have asked for a contribution towards costs of hiring some equipment for Jubilee Celebrations on June 3rd - Bubble Football £300 and Lazer Tag £300. Alveston W.I. have applied for a donation towards the purchase of a teak seat and plaque to be placed in the garden of the Jubilee Hall to commemorate the Queen's Jubilee. £350

Future plans for the Charity:

As we did not have many applications for funding last year Rev. David Moss suggested that we think of other ways to use the funds to benefit local residents. One idea was for next year to book the Jubilee Hall and caterers to prepare a meal and social event for lonely or needy villagers who might really enjoy and benefit from this.

Trustees will continue to think of alternative ideas to use some of the funds in ways that would meet with the approval of Emily Amelia Ponting. If any person thinks of suitable schemes please contact to discuss ideas at future meetings of Trustees. If anyone is interested in applying to become a Trustee please make contact.

2.4. Helmet Magazine

Report given by Brian Lee

After generally generating profits up to about 2015, the magazine has made a loss every year since then. The income for the magazine is mainly from advertising, which has been reducing as the number of advertisers has roughly halved over the past 12 years, with a significant drop during the pandemic - but we do have a few new advertisers.

The advertising charges look comparable to other local magazines as competition exists for advertising from other magazines (such as BS35 and Thornbury Voice) and unfortunately social media, rather than Helmet advertising, is used by some people for recommending tradesmen etc.

Helmets' expenditure is mainly the printing costs for 1500 magazines, which had been increasing. We found that reducing paper thickness doesn't save much. Reducing the number of pages is complicated, with the only viable significant cost reduction by going from 48 pages to 32. Even with this, we would be likely to wipe out our reserves in a year or two. We investigated the costs for other printing companies and changed from Motion to Reed printers from our February 2022 edition. They are cheaper and can offer a better cost reduction for fewer pages. So, we were potentially close to break even. But the cost of energy, and now the war in Ukraine, has caused the price of paper to increase significantly. So our financial health remains a concern.

2.5. St Helen's Church of England School Board of Governors

No Representative present or report given (despite requests from parish Clerk)

3. Alveston Community Forum

Report given by Graham Smith in the absence of Peter Waller (chairman of Alveston Community Forum)

Considering the circumstances, the Forum has achieved a lot throughout the last year. This time last year I was reporting on cancelled events. There was no Christmas Fair, several Repair Cafés were cancelled, The Book Exchange was closed for several weeks. Only the litter busting continued unaffected. This year has been much improved. The Christmas Fair was a success with an excellent turn out, raising £216. There were more stalls than ever before, and both the Alveston Singers and the "Get Singing Community Choir" sang carols. The addition of a sound system by Jim Godden made it much easier to hear announcements and the raffle. Jim also made some excellent improvements to the Christmas tree lights which were much more impressive this year. The next Christmas Fair will be on the 10th December 2022. And I know that all of you will be ready to do it all again.

The Book Exchange has been a great help to people in a year when many people were spending more time at home. Our problem has not been a lack of books but rather to manage the oversupply and ensure that nothing was left on the floor to rot in the damp. Carol John has regularly tidied up in the phone box and removed damaged or unsuitable material. Some new rules need to be observed: "Don't leave more books than you take, leave nothing on the floor and don't put adult books on the children's shelves". The only exception to these rules is that currently we could do with more children's and young teenage books.

The Repair Café has re-started with an event on the 19th of Feb and another planned for the 21st May. On the 19th Feb we had over a hundred people coming to the event with 39 items being brought in. On the day we repaired or gave repair advice on 16 and by the end of the month we had repaired 21 with advice on a further 6 items. Another 6 were still in work. I don't know how many cakes were consumed but everyone seemed to be enjoying the event. I would like to give special thanks to our local police constable Will Price and his team for coming to security mark many bicycles and for provide security advice. I am also very grateful for my army of volunteers who exercised their repair skills and also those who performed the admin and provided the refreshments.

The Litter Pickers have continued throughout the pandemic. Many thanks to Shirley Whyte who has relinquished command after setting up and running the Litter Pickers for many years. We plan to continue the work very much as she set it up and ran it. Most of the litter picking is achieved by unsung heroes taking equipment with them when they go on their daily walk of when walking their dog, but in addition we do hold litter picking days. The last one was on 5th Feb and there were 18 volunteers and between 1st Jan and the 7th Feb over 40 bags of rubbish were collected (and those are only the ones I heard about). The main issues are, litter thrown from cars passing through the village (not much we can do about that unless we actually see it happen) and dog owners who fail to put their dog poo bags in the bins provided by the Parish Council or take them home. I am sure most dog owners are responsible people but the remainder do leave a distressing number of bags by the road. This year the large number of face masks has also been noted on all routes.

The Parade and bulb planting

We have continued to maintain the Alveston parade area throughout the year. Tasks such as grass cutting, litter picking, weeding, pruning and paving slab weeding continually need to be completed, so thank you to all who have contributed however small or big. As always a team of St Helen's pupils helped to plant bulbs at the Parade on 19th October and the results are, this month visible for all to see. Many thanks to those who came to help.

Platinum Jubilee Celebration takes place on the 2nd to the 5th June. Hayley Grove and Vicki Moore who are leading the preparations. On Friday 3rd there will be a village show at the Ship with prizes donated by the gardening Club. This will be followed at 11AM by a procession of children dressed as Kings & Queens

4. Parish Council Chairman's Report

John Graham (Chairman) presented the following report:

I would like to thank the committed team of Parish Councillors who work directly on aspects of Council business or represent the Parish Council on the various active community groups which exist throughout the Parish: Jasmine McGregor for her work toward Finance and Open Spaces, Carmen Vazquez, Valerie Williams, Marion Reeve for their work with Community Groups and their dedicated support and contribution at Council meetings and also to those Councillors unable to attend this evening; Anne Curtis in her capacity of Chair of Planning and Council Vice Chair, Paul Caddick for his work with Allotments and Lisa Emerson. Thanks also to our team, Graham our Clerk who has assisted and consistently supported the Council in the work it has undertaken and thank you to Bryan Painter whose dedication to checking the safety of our play areas in all weathers is to be commended and to Kate Driver for ensuring the cemetery is constantly well maintained.

I would also like to thank SGC Ward Councillor Matthew Riddle for working so closely with the Parish Council and attending every meeting without fail although could not be with us this evening due to him having contracted Covid. In addition, I would like to thank the members of the various voluntary organisations that ensure that the Parish continues to be an interesting and pleasant place to live.

Particularly the management committees of our two community buildings and the members of Alveston Community Forum and Litter busters.

There are several new announcements to make which I will leave for the responsible councillors to report. However, amidst our other activities throughout the year we have

1. Been consulted by South Gloucestershire on improvements to the road infrastructure with an emphasis on bus lanes and cycleways
2. Been consulted on the development of a new special needs school at Marlwood
3. Reviewed bus stop provision having installed two new bus shelters on the A38 and working with SGC to continue to make improvements and lobbied for an improved bus service
4. Reviewed dog bins and litter bin provision
5. Lobbied for speed restrictions particularly on A38 adjacent to St Helens Church and improving traffic movements and parking restrictions.

There is also our daily 'housekeeping' functions which ensures the Parish continues to be an outstanding place to reside. The month-by-month activities of the Parish Council are contained within the meeting minutes and available at www.alveston.org.

Finally thank you to the members of the WI who are serving the tea and coffee.

5. Parish Councillor Council Reports

Open Space & Finance Report given by Cllr Jasmine McGregor

The Parish Council is pleased to report that the installation of Outdoor Gym Equipment will be taking place at the old boules area in the Lime Kiln Field next week. Funding for this was raised through a Grant obtained from Enovert.

Trees have been planted in conjunction with South Glos Council at the Down Rd Greenspace adjacent to the Cross Hands Play area. This is the initial phase of what is projected to be a small nature reserve for use by the community. In time a natural boundary along with sympathetically designed seating will be installed, with natural areas for insects and pollinators and wildflowers.

The Parish Council have just undertaken a public consultation assessing the demand for new play equipment within the "Cross Hands" Play Area which generated 170 responses.

Parish Council Finances are healthy, having all reserves earmarked for future projects. The year finished with a slight surplus in finances of just over £3,000 which will be diverted to general reserve. The year 2022/23 the Parish council applied for a precept increase of 5% to cover increasing costs however, with an increase in developments within the Parish, in real terms, to the resident the increase comes out less than 5%.

Planning Report by Clerk Graham Smith in the absence of Cllr Anne Curtis

The Planning Committee met 17 times in the year to consider all the planning applications made in the Parish under our role as formal consultee.

The committee considered 54 Planning Applications and of these applications 28 were approved by South Glos Council Planning, 9 were refused, 1 application was withdrawn and 16 undecided at the time of the meeting. Several meetings were attended by people within the Parish, generally to share their objections with the committee.

Allotments Report given by Clerk Graham Smith in the absence of Cllr Paul Caddick

The Parish Council expressed their sincere thanks to Mrs Hawkins and Mrs Northam for their kind donation of the allotment land to the Parish Council and (Clerk) expressed thanks to Mrs Northam for her assistance with the smooth transfer. Currently the application is lodged with the Land Registry and respective solicitors with the transfer expected to be completed immanently.

There are currently seven residents on the allotment waiting list which proves that the allotments are a popular asset to the community.

6. Open Forum – Questions and Discussion

PC Will Price addressed the residents to express concern for “Rogue Traders” in the area and emphasised that residents must not engage persons unknown to them who have turned up on the door. Should this occur then call the police.

A member of the public raised concerns relating to; speeding within the Parish, HGV’s using restricted roads and parking issues within the area. PC Price confirmed that he is aware of the concerns being raised

7. End of Business

The chairman in closing the meeting thanked the members of Alveston Women’s Institute for providing the refreshments.

The meeting closed at 8.50 pm.