

**The Civil Parish of ALVESTON including Rudgeway & Earthcott****Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting  
Held on 21<sup>st</sup> April 2021 at 7.30pm virtually via “Zoom” software**

**Present:** - Cllr John Graham (Parish Council Chairman), Cllrs; Anne Curtis, Marion Reeve, Paul Caddick, Lisa Emerson, Valerie Williams.

Neil Martin (St Helens' School), Michael Casey (AJHMC), Peter Waller (Alveston Community Forum), Elaine Lee (Charity of Emily Amelia Pontin), Ivor Bryant (YCMC), Cllr Matthew Riddle (SGC), 3 members of the Parish Community. Graham Smith (Clerk to the Parish Council & Zoom Control).

**Apologies:** - Cllrs Jasmine McGregor, Carmen Vazquez, PC Will Price

**1. Welcome by the Parish Council**

Council Clerk, Graham Smith welcomed all attendees to the Annual Parish Meeting via Zoom and stated that the meeting was being recorded purely for the purposes of minute taken and would be deleted thereafter.

This is an opportunity for community groups to review their year for Parish residents and details of how the pandemic has affected the community. John Graham (Parish Council Chair) and Planning and Open spaces will be reviewed as well as community organisations by their appointed person.

The meeting will be presented as per the agenda and the invitation to ask questions or raise issues will be item 7 – Open Forum.

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

Report given by Michael Casey.

2.1.1) There have been 4 committee meeting held in the last year all by Zoom. The committee for last year has been:-

- a) Michael Casey Chair
- b) Alice Keehn took over from Carolyn Melford as Bookings Secretary in September.
- c) Elina Beet took on Treasurer role in September as Deanna Pearce retired.
- d) 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.

2.1.2) Obviously 2020 was a very special year. Hall income from Users was down in the financial year from around £14,000 in 2019/20 to £3,500 in 20/21. From the end of March 2020 many Users decided not to use the Hall until their participants perceived it safe to do so. This is not a Hall issue but more concerning people's perception of the risk to them of Covid 19. Some have already stated that they will not return to the Hall until September 2021.

The accounts show a profit of £6,680 due almost totally to the SGC Business Support Grant of £20,270. Monies have been spent in the year upgrading the facilities as described in a report to the PC in December 2019. New toilets have been built (including disabled facilities) within the curtilage of the old toilet area. In addition, both the internal and external elevations have been redecorated.

The accounts for 20/21 can be seen as a one off as the Business Support Grant will not be available next year and income will be down because regular users are not returning now but waiting a few months. Break-even will be difficult to achieve.

2.1.3) For those organisations who have used the Hall in 2020 there has been a requirement to provide a risk assessment of the operations having taken due credence of the Hall's risk own assessment. These requirements have complied with those issued by Western England Rural Network (WERN). Such instructions are now on revision 9 and extend to 50 pages. So, for organisations that were keen to return this plethora of requirements and the multiple changes in Tiers and lockdowns provided real hurdles. Only a few bothered.

2.1.4) As already stated we have taken the empty nature of the Hall to get on with building and painting works by local companies. This work is complete now and we are planning work to help reduce our carbon footprint into 21/22 and to place the SGC support grant monies back into the local economy.

## 2.2. Youth Centre Management Committee

Report given by Ivor Bryant

For all of us this has been a very different year due to the Coronavirus pandemic. We have been unable to hold regular meetings but have carried on day-to-day management by e mail. Works to make the hall Covid safe when open has been carried out. Thankfully although Shirley Whyte had resigned from the committee, she postponed her leaving until after this had been addressed. We have been working with the Jubilee Hall committee in addressing the issues relating to the Centre and the pandemic.

The committee members have individual responsibilities:

Graham Cribb - treasurer

Anne Davis - secretary

Amy Clayton - booking secretary.

Jim Godden - maintenance

Alan Davies - Parish Council Representative

Ivor Bryant - Chairperson.

Amy joined us soon in September, but we have not had the opportunity to introduce her to the committee. We have sought further volunteers to join the committee and had four responses but as we have been unable to hold meetings have replied but yet to progress this.

The new heating to the main hall was installed early in 2020. We have had good feedback on its limited use but due to the closures the full effectiveness has yet to be appreciated. The cavity walls were insulated in March this year which should reduce our heating costs, condensation and improve comfort.

We have new lighting in the main hall which should reduce maintenance.

The centre's day to day maintenance costs remain low and we have suffered no significant vandalism. Advantage has been taken of the periods of shutdown and Jim Godden has been busy redecorating the main hall and entrance area as well as a new sign at the main entrance, pruning the shrubs and building planters to the entrance.

Most bookings have been suspended to comply with the Covid regulations. The diary of bookings of the centre is on the village website, Alveston.org

We have received grants via South Glos Council to cover loss of income over the period. We have currently declined further grants as those already received have been more than our lost income.

Our annual accounts have been passed to the Parish council.

Headline figures are: -

Income...£20533.25 comprising hire of £1859.45,

Grants of £18669.00 and interest of £4.80.

Expenditure £6665.64 to include £2472 for the lighting. The cavity insulation will be in next year's accounts at £1800.

Excess income over expenditure ... £13867.61

Current bank balance £26,115.32

Unfortunately, although we are a registered charity we do have to pay VAT.

We can continue to look to more improve the facilities but depend on external charity funding for larger improvements.

We will open as allowed by the regulations and as requested by our users.

Due to the receipt of grants, we have not suffered financially to date and have the benefit of further reserves. Refer to the treasurer's report for further details.

Concluding as always, we continue to maintain the facility for the community and endeavour to update and make improvements. We look forward to resuming regular use of the centre.

### **2.3. Alveston Charities**

Report given by Elaine Lee

Due to the closure of the Thornbury branch of the Britannia Building Society a couple of years ago we had to change the Charity's banking arrangements. After a very lengthy process we moved the account to the Cooperative Bank in Broadmead. This was shortly before the Covid-19 crisis hit the UK and accessing the bank has been very inconvenient. However, having gone through months of paper work and visits to the bank in 2019 we decided to incorporate our main benefactress in the account title - hence the rather unwieldy, but historically correct, new wording in the name of our Charity.

As you will understand, we have been unable to hold meetings since March 2020 except with the help of technology. At that meeting I recorded a donation of £100 from a local lady and a donation of £250 from cash raised by Church Concerts in December 2019.

Also at that meeting, Trustees agreed two applications from St Helen's School. One was for funds to cover costs of necessary school trips for pupils whose parents could not pay - and one for money towards equipment for a school gardening club. The two grants cost us £500. We also agreed a grant of £1,000 towards the redecoration of the Jubilee Hall.

We have been very grateful for a few donations including £500 from Alveston Parish Council. Whenever possible we invest donations so that these gifts benefit both present and future needy parishioners. This year, despite the pandemic, we have had a quiet year. I put fresh adverts in Helmet and Church and Graham kindly put one in the Parish Notice Board but, so far, we have received only two applications for grants during the past financial year.

Last September we granted £200 to an Alveston lady. Her husband died suddenly and she was left with little cash to provide for her young family. Rev. David notified us and we quickly arranged a "Grant of Compassion." We became aware of other villagers who gave her supplies of tinned and dried foods plus some extra cash to help her out temporarily.

I believe this exemplifies many kindnesses which occurred recently in our caring community.

The second application was when we granted £500 towards play and sensory equipment for a local family with several special needs children.

Every Christmas we continue the tradition of giving annual cash gifts to some elderly ladies and gentlemen in line with the Bush Brothers bequest. Last Christmas Trustees agreed, via email, to gifts of £50 for a family and £30 for a single person to help with their extra costs at Christmas and to show that the village was thinking of them. This amounted to £250

I have consulted our six Trustees via email throughout the year and they have quickly responded with their views. We are grateful to Treasurer, Les Forrest, for looking after the accounts which have recently been examined by Roland Harley who found nothing amiss.

I recently talked to John Cutland, the Parish Council Representative at our meetings, and we agreed that, on his behalf, I ask if Councillors would now find a replacement so he can stand down from his role. Trustees are grateful for his input and support for nearly 8 years. He has done an admirable job. Thank you.

**2.4. St Helen's Church of England School Board of Governors**

Report given by Neil Martin

The OFSTED report in January 2020 was a high point for the School. The school was granted an outstanding grade across the board. To congratulate Mr Spens & Mr Chapel all teachers and to Rev. Moss as well as volunteers and all involved.

Covid and implications of the lockdown meant that the school had to cope with a rapidly changing environment as the School has been kept going with vulnerable and children of key workers. Teachers put in place home learning through online tutoring.

There is continuing development with the partnership with St Mary's Primary School in Yate. The partnership began in June 2019 on a year's trial basis then decisions regarding permanence would be made in summer 2020. Due to Covid derailing the process the decision timeframe was extended then in the autumn a consultation was followed which generated a positive strength of feeling so the partnership was continued with both boards of governors agreeing to make the partnership a permanent ongoing arrangement. The partnership is intended to enhance the learning of children in both schools and teachers to pull together resources, joint inset days, joint training and development of teacher assistant training project. There have been joint assemblies through the utube channel throughout Covid and lockdown. A new website is available for St Helen's school which has been developed jointly with St Mary's.

All children are now fully back at school. The return has gone well with children settling into the environment and learning well and quickly. It is important to stress that full normality has not yet resumed, Covid bubbles are still in place and staggered breaks and start and finish times to ensure as much social distancing as possible. The prolonged absence and disruption caused by Covid has had impact on Childrens learning and this is recognised by the school and acknowledges and working hard to address. Gaps in learning identified and being addressed by the school and likewise there has been a social and emotional impact with some of the children and staff which is recognised.

The application for the aircraft to be transformed to a new school library has been approved and are working with the suppliers to discuss timeline for deliveries. Over fifty percent of cost has now been received through donations and grants with the remainder being raised via local business. Likely date for installation will be June.

Outdoor play and learning has been adopted by the school which is a new system of learning where children make the best of outdoor spaces, this has been trialled very successfully by other school in the area.

THRIVE package has been introduced which is a new overarching system which is emotional, social and mental health support across the school.

The school will be full again next year and that 50% or more pupils will come from outside the parish.

**3. Alveston Community Forum**

Chairman's Report given by Peter Waller

Every one of the Forum's activities has been affected by the Pandemic and the restrictions imposed on us all by the need to combat it. Amongst the many cancellations and postponements there have however been a few successes, not the least of which has been the quiet offers and acts of kindness which Alveston residents have performed for one another to help everyone through. I have come to the realisation that the social bonds which form the fabric of our society are far stronger and in better health than any of us had suspected. Indeed, the pandemic has undoubtedly brought us closer together (Still two meters apart of course!)

To avoid duplication, I will not report here on things which are covered by others at this meeting. However, I will mention some activities which have been completely suspended due to the pandemic. These include the Repair Café and the Christmas Fair.

The Repair Café will return in some form when it is safe to do so. I am not going to give a prediction of when or how. All my attempts to do so in the last 14 months have proved fruitless. Suffice to say I have put considerable thought into the measures which might be necessary when that day comes.

The Christmas Fair was cancelled but this year it may well be possible to hold some sort of event. If it is possible, I would like to ask that you all put your minds to ideas to make this year's Fair as memorable as possible. A statement of defiance and determination against the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune, a thank you to all those who worked tirelessly in key tasks to defend us, and a memorial to those who lost their lives to the disease.

There were some successes this year. For example, litter busting continued and in fact flourished, The Parade continued to receive care and the new Christmas decorations made their appearance. The Book Exchange reached full capacity and was even open some of the time. Many thanks to all who contributed to these and other activities during the year.

One setback was that the blue plaque celebrating the life of Frank Barnwell was damaged, in spite of all our pleas and protestations. We will be discussing this later in the meeting and may perhaps find a way of taking advantage of this setback to promote the memory of Barnwell's achievements.

Looking forward I see every reason to be optimistic that the coming year will be a good one for the Forum. I am determined that it will be busy, fulfilling and enjoyable.

#### **4. Parish Council Chairman's Report**

Report given by Cllr John Graham

The Parish Council has continued to be very active over the pandemic year having been given permission to be able to hold meetings virtually over "Zoom". As a consequence, normal business has continued with various improvements to play equipment in the parks as well as maintaining the parish as we have become accustomed to.

Personal thanks go to Graham Smith (Parish Clerk), for dedication and support not just to me as chair but all those councillors that sit on the Parish Council. Thank you to all Councillors who are all dedicated to the welfare of the parish and bring their very own range of specialities which makes the Parish Council an asset to the community.

Thank you is extended to Matthew Riddle and Keith Burchell from South Gloucestershire Council for their continued support and advice. To Kate Driver for her role as Cemetery Caretaker and to Bryan Painter who keeps a daily eye on the play equipment and parks within the Parish.

#### **5. Parish Council Committee Reports**

##### **5.1. Planning Committee**

Report given by Cllr Anne Curtis

During the year the Planning Committee have received 48 Applications 28 of these have been approved and 4 having been refused. To date the Planning Committee have not received a decision on 16 of these applications

Of the completed applications the Planning Committee have disagreed with South Gloucestershire on 9 applications These then appear on a circulated schedule which is basically a copy of the minutes of South Gloucestershire's Planning Committee. On it is the decision arrived by the committee and any restrictions that have been put on the application and can contain a restriction mirroring the Parish Planning Committees concerns.

## **5.2. Playing Fields & Open Spaces**

Report given by Cllr Anne Curtis

A new climbing frame has replaced the 20-year-old Frame in the Lime Kiln play Area this year at a cost of £30,000 The 30-year-old goal posts on the football field have also been replaced and the tunnel on the Lime Kiln field has also been repaired and the sides strengthened after they collapsed

The annual inspection of the play equipment at all sites has been undertaken by ROSPA and any repairs or observations have been attended to. It came to the Councils notice some months ago that quite a lot of replacement equipment and remedial work was needed in all of the Councils play areas so a sub committee was formed under the Chairmanship of Cllr Jasmine McGregor to look into what was needed and how to fund it .This committee is proving to be very productive coming up with some innovative ideas.

During the lockdown it has been enlightening to see how well used the open spaces have been and also how well the majority of adults and children have respected the restrictions.

The Cemetery has had no real problems during the year. The Parish Council is receiving regular updates from the Tree Surgeon about Ash Die back on our Ash Trees and the appropriate action has or will be taken although at present there does not seem to have been much of a problem.

The Parish Council would like to take this opportunity to thank our staff Kate Driver and Bryan Painter who look after the cemetery and Open Spaces, Graham our Clerk for coordinating everything to do with the open spaces. A special thank you to community spirited volunteer Mr. Jim Godden who has done a multitude of jobs from painting play equipment and tidying some of the grounds to cleaning a very messy almost unreadable motoring sign outside the Lime Kiln Play Area. Thank you also to Prestige Grounds for their fantastic work on all of our open spaces (apparently our cricket pitch is the best it's ever been!).

## **6. Parish Budget & Finances**

Report given by Clerk – Graham Smith

Currently after the resignation of James Sumner during the year finance reports are provided by the Parish Council Clerk and scrutinised at full council meetings and internal and external Auditors. Work undertaken is to ensure that: -

1. Conformity with Statutory Regulations
2. Prepare budget proposals, propose the annual precept,
3. Oversee the council's finances
4. Manage all staffing matters, asset insurance & risk assessments.
5. Operate the Gift Aid process
6. Review the effective operation of the council, its policies and procedures
7. Deal with any matter not falling to other committees

The electorate may examine accounts through the exercise of Public Rights for a six week period issued after the approval of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return upon pre-arrangement with Parish Clerk.

### **Grant Aid**

Each year Alveston Parish Council is empowered to award grants to organisations or groups operating within the Parish of Alveston. At the Parish Council meeting in November The Parish Council resolved to award the following grants.

- \* Helmet Community Magazine - £400
- \* Alveston Charities - £500
- \* Four Towns & Vale Link Community Transport - £500
- \* Alveston Allotment Association - £500
- \* Alveston Defib Group - £130

At previous meetings the Parish Council awarded -

- \* Alveston Community Forum - £213.80 (Parade Christmas Lights)
- \* Jubilee Hall Management Committee - £7,500 (Toilet Refurbishment)

New applications invited each October.

**7. Open Forum – Questions and Discussion**

Participants Spoke on the following issues / concerns : -

The damaged Blue Plaque previously located at the demolished Alveston House Hotel.  
Concerns over limited parking on Quarry Road.  
Responsibility relating to the maintenance of footpaths within the Parish.

**8. End of Business**

The Clerk to the Parish Council in closing the meeting thanked the participants for attending.

**The meeting closed at 9.00 pm.**