

MINUTES OF ANNUAL PARISH MEETING OF GREAT NESS & LITTLE NESS PARISHES

Held on Tuesday 5th April 2022, 7pm, Little Ness Village Hall

Present: Cllr. Alison Mullis (Chairman), SC Ed Potter, 19 members of the public

Apologies: None.

1. Welcome and Opening Comments

The chairman welcomed all present and explained that this is an opening meeting for parishioners, not a parish council meeting.

2. Present & apologies for absence

Noted as above.

3. Minutes of previous meeting – 13th April 2021.

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes as being a true record and the chairman was authorised to sign them.

4. Matters Arising

None.

5. Parish Council Reports

a) Chair's Report- Cllr. Alison Mullis, Chairman of Great Ness and Little Ness Parish Council

This last year has seen us slowly move back to face-to-face meetings, which has been lovely to see old and new faces within our parish again. In February, Councillor Phil Brooks stood down as Chairman, after fulfilling this role for the last few years. We would like to take this opportunity to thank him for all of his hard work and time being our dedicated Chairman.

Now, having taken on the role of Chair, I am looking forward to working with fellow councillors and the parishioners, to keep our parishes well-kept and build on our great community spirit we are so lucky to have, and welcome ideas for new potential projects we can pursue. We have had quite a few projects that we have been busy working on the last year. The Parish Council formed a CIL Working Group in May 2021 to identify and progress projects within our parishes. Our main focus was for the new plot of land that we have been given by Shrewsbury Homes in Nesscliffe, of which ownership of this is now very near completion. After surveys with the community, we now have plans for an open area with trees and benches and some flower borders, with paths linking this to the playing field. There is a new park being installed this summer on the playing field and a new adult outdoor gym area too both of which are inclusive for multiple user groups. This has taken a lot of time and our CIL Working Group and especially our Parish Clerk have worked tremendously hard ensuring that we meet as many needs as possible.

The traffic calming works have now mostly been completed, just awaiting the crossing signage. We have also had a gateway placed with signage for Great Ness. The new school car park is now open which has really helped to make school drop off and pick up a safer place for the children. The community MUGA on the school grounds will be available to hire at weekends and evenings, with details of this being advertised shortly. Our Clerk also secured an environmental maintenance grant from Shropshire Council and we have had footpaths widened, vegetation cut back on some footpaths, and this year we shall be looking to expand this work to more footpaths throughout the villages where needed, as this has made a huge improvement for walkers and it looks much smarter too. We have had new noticeboards installed around the parishes where they needed replacing. The defibrillator has now been moved and installed in Wilcott, and defib training for members of the community has been booked for the 7th May. I would like to thank our Parish Clerk, who as always, contributes invaluable knowledge and ensures we follow correct procedures, and to all the Parish Councillors for all their time they give to our community, a lot of hard work is given voluntarily and I really appreciate this.

Finally, I would like to thank you, our lovely community, with your support to each other and our various groups within the villages, make our Parishes a wonderful place to live.

b) Finance Report – Rebecca Turner, Clerk & RFO, Great Ness & Little Ness Parish Council

Great Ness and Little Ness parishes have grown significantly in recent years. The growing population means there are more parishioners within the area and this has led to a need to increase the precept slightly from £28,000 to £30,000. We are very mindful that whilst more parishioners means the precept cost is spread over more households, the cost-of-living increases affect everyone and we have kept increases to a minimum.

The parish has also benefitted from funds from development - CIL Neighbourhood Fund to spend on local facilities. In 2021/22, we received nearly £33,000 in Neighbourhood Fund, meaning we have received a total of £117,000 NF to date. We have spent this on projects such as village hall improvements, traffic calming, noticeboards and are planning a major refurbishment of Nesscliffe play area, to include installing outdoor fitness equipment; this project will also be part funded from Shropshire Council's CIL Local fund. We have also been successful in achieving grants from the police towards traffic calming and environmental maintenance grant which have spent on projects like clearing the pavements.

Much of our work over the next few years will be focused on investing the CIL money in the community. We welcome suggestions from the community of possible projects.

A full copy of the parish council's accounts are available on the parish council website.

c) Future projects, including play area and community land

The future projects for the renewal of play equipment at Nesscliffe, outdoor fitness equipment and landscaping of the community land at Stonehouse Close were outlined. Draft plans were handed out.

6. Other Reports

a) Police Report

None.

b) Shropshire Council – Cllr. Ed Potter, Loton Division Councillor

They say 12 months is a long time in politics and a lot has certainly happened in the past year. However, the time seems to fly by and there never seems enough of it.

Some important topics which have arisen or progressed for Shropshire Council are as follows:

- New recycling bins, over 80,000 have been ordered and delivery will begin in late spring of this year.
- Highway investments, over the past 4 or so years money has been remedied from the highways budget to help fund the very growing social care bill, this year and for the next few years money will be reinvested back into highways. There are still issues locally which need addressing but they have involved.
- Children's social care retains its good rating which is fantastic in light of 2 hard years and impact of covid -Covid grants to businesses have been distributed and this has all be completed. Covid recovery is a top priority.
- Shrewsbury town centre regeneration. Is a key priority and the project is moving forward at pace.
- Carbon reduction, net zero is a top priority for the council whilst maintaining services and continuing to encourage economic growth... a fine balance.
- Flooding, solutions and impact on Loton a big concern still EA to make proposals later this year.
- Finances are the number 1 concern for the council 85% of total budget spent of Adults and Children's Social Care this is unsustainable and impacts on other services.

These are just a flavour of some of the issues and I will expand on them and take questions at the annual parish meetings.

c) Church Report

None received.

d) Great Ness Charities - Margaret Dyos and Great Ness relief in need charities

This report covers 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022.

Trustees: Revd Lucinda Burns, Alison Mullis, Sue Peters

Report by Sue Peters, Trustee

Income and expenditure

The two charities are administered as one for everyday purposes, although they are reported separately to the Charity Commission. Annual reports have been submitted as required to the commission (to 31 March 2021).

The total income for the last reporting period for both charities was £94. No outgoings were reported. This is because the reports to the commission are completed on a cash basis. Income and expenditure was reduced because of problems with opening a new account at the bank - which has delayed both the receipt of funds and outgoings. These will be reconciled in due course. The main income is circa £150 a year rental income from a 1 acre piece of land in Meverley. Some of this is payable to a second local charity. Funds at 31 March 2022 were £853.59. During the period the charity borrowed £30 from the parish council to initially stock a food bank in Nesscliffe. This money will be repaid as soon as the bank account issues are resolved.

Activities

The plan over the last year was to resolve the issues caused by running the charities through a passbook account by opening a new “modern” account. That has proved to be very time consuming during the pandemic but is (as of 31 March 2022) near resolution.

During the year a food bank was initially funded, with ongoing contributions of food made by the community. The food bank is still running and is being replenished and managed regularly. Subsequent to the year end the charity was able to provide emergency heating oil to a family in the village.

Future plans

The trustees are considering changing the articles that govern activities as these were drawn up about 50 years ago and severely limit allowed activity. They are also investigating the possibility of selling the small parcel of land - this generates nominal income and a capital input would allow the charities to make more effective interventions. This may take some time and is not yet decided.

e) Village Halls

(i) Great Ness Village

- Hire resumed in September. Bookings are picking up at weekends but no funding events as yet and concern re large gatherings.
- New caretaker/cleaner.
- Lighter, stackable chairs.
- Committed to installing fast broadband.
- Defibrillator being installed after Easter
- Financially, the hall is quite sound and had SC grants to help it through Covid. Want to cut running costs to keep hire down.
- Looking at solar panels and LED lights.
- The hall is leading on jubilee celebrations.

(ii) Little Ness Village Hall – report from Colin Knox, Chairman

Like everyone else, we have done little in the way of activities until this spring. We have pursued grants from both the National Lottery and Shropshire Council’s community funds. We were very hopeful with the lottery application and advanced to the last stage only to be thwarted by the fact that the Charity Commission returns had not been kept up to date due to poor advice given to the previous chairman by the previous vicar. We had addressed this problem but the Charity Commission had not updated their online records in time so we lost out. Shropshire Council told us that, due to Covid, and so many applications from food bank type charities, an application for updating our village hall would not be considered at this time.

On a more positive note, since reopening the hall, our bookings are going quite well and we have had our first fundraiser, a ‘back to life’ quiz. This was a great success socially and raised well over £300. Our next event will be a cheese and wine party for the Queen’s Jubilee and we also propose to plant a tree to mark the event. We hope that the parish council will help with those as we understand that funds are available for this celebration.

Once we have completely sorted the Charity Commission situation, we will be reapplying to the Lottery Fund for a new grant. Prior to that we are proposing to carry out a house-to-house survey of the residents of Little Ness seeking their views on the way forward for the village hall.

We are also hoping for a much easier time in the future.

f) Youth Club

Eleanor Gilbert youth club volunteer gave a report. The club meets on Mondays in term time, 6.30 to 8.30pm. An attendee's first week is free. The club started back in September, after Covid restrictions, beginning with some playing field sessions. The club now meets in the Village Hall and has 10 to 20 attendees per session. The minimum age is now 9 years old.

The club had a great Christmas party, thanks to the community and parents for their support/donations. The club's first trip was to Hollywood Bowl last Monday. Children from Baschurch, West Felton, Tetchill and the village attend. Thanks to youth leader Lee, volunteers, Emma, Roxy, Mia, Eleanor and Christine. Thanks also to Luke and Toby who help to set the youth club sessions up.

g) Great Ness WI

Due to the seemingly endless threat of Covid 19, Great Ness WI's 2021 began with a continuation of online quiz evenings and online games nights; two of our members also gave online talks: one on 'Life in the Emirates' and the other on 'Steaming in the States'! Following on from the success of our trial online talks given by members, we arranged an online talk from Shropshire Rural Communities Charity - they do some fantastic work in the community.

As the weather warmed up and restrictions eased, we ventured outside and visited two beautiful gardens - one local, where we were treated to delicious tea, cake and scones and the other a little further afield where we popped into The Dolphin in Llanymynech for a light meal after strolling around the gardens.

In August, one of our members opened up her garden to us and hosted a BBQ; it was a fantastic afternoon and this event left us finally feeling like we might be heading for some form of normality.

In September, we held a combined craft and produce show; the emphasis on our shows is having fun and taking part and this all members did without exception! There were some lovely entries and the judge was very complimentary of our efforts.

In October, the Bowls Club ran a 'have a go' session for us, which all members thoroughly enjoyed.

In November, Ed Potter gave us a talk on 'The Art of Debating' and then supported and encouraged us all to have a go at debating various subjects; I think we were surprised at how enjoyable it was!

Great Ness WI ended the year with a fantastic Christmas party, held at The Three Pigeons due to a power outage at the village hall end of the village. Jack Dent, a magician, entertained us and he was brilliant. The humour was pitched perfectly and everyone went home with a smile on their face.

h) Great Mess to Little Mess

Whilst there is a long-standing tradition of litter-picking and community support activity in the parish, in 2021, at the instigation of Jim Diggory, this community engagement was formalised by setting up Great Mess to Little Mess Community Projects. The development of Terms of Reference, risk assessments, safe-guarding checks (DBS), enabled the setting up of a bank account with Lloyds Bank and insurance to be purchased with Zurich Insurance plc. In turn, this enabled Great Mess to Little Mess to bid for community funding.

We are grateful for the support of: Great Ness & Little Ness Parish Council for the primer funding to cover the insurance and purchase of litter-picking equipment; Twemlows Community Energy Fund for the £500 grant for litter picking equipment.

Our terms of reference are:

- To have zero litter in the Great Ness and Little Ness Parish, incorporating Nesscliffe, Hopton, Wilcott, Kinton, Felton-Butler, Valeswood villages and the Nesscliffe Country Park
- To have a tidy, pleasant, uplifting Parish environment that promotes well-being and fosters and excellent community spirit.

The objectives of the group are to:

1. To protect and improve the Parish's environment, (e.g. by reducing litter pollution and improving the roadside verges) for the good of people and the natural wildlife.
2. To encourage community engagement with the residents of the Parish and promote a culture of inclusion and integration.
3. To improve the health and well-being of Parish residents by encouraging participation in outdoor community projects.

To this end, we have organised group, community litter-picking events, and supported individuals needing equipment to collect litter whilst out for a walk, either independently, alone or with their children. We have reported to Shropshire Council Streetscene fly-tipping, repeatedly waste engine oil at the entrance to the VOSA and on occasions furniture left in the surrounding lanes.

We have built planters to add a splash of colour on The Crescent. Following donations of turf from Lowther Forestry and A Richardson some 100 rolls of turf have been laid on the Storehouse Close community ground to prevent soil and water run-off. In the spring, hundreds of daffodils appeared along the verges around the parish. In a year when the Queen celebrates her Platinum Jubilee and in collaboration with The Woodland Trust, free trees have been obtained and are being cared for in readiness for planting out when slightly taller.

Thank you to Mr Gilbert, Mr White and Mr & Mrs Brown for providing trees and shrubs. Councillor Ed Potter donated an Oak Tree as part of the Queen's Canopy initiative, this being planted in Wilcot Playing Field in March 2022.

An important element to the Great Mess to Little Mess operation is the provision of social support to those in need in our community. We know some individuals have greatly appreciated the help, friendship and support whilst we have appreciated their efforts in preparing the ground for yet more turf! We are in the throes of planning future community events: litter picking, erecting bird boxes, tree planting and fund-raising at the Village Jubilee party and Christmas Fair. We are looking to go forward with an extra person on our group measuring the impact of our activity and logging the number of bags of litter collected -

currently running at more than ~75 in the last six months. We will be looking for an independent person to review our monetary transactions for our financial year in August 2022.

We would like to thank all those individuals who have contributed to the success of Great Mess and Little Mess, but especially those that turned out on the rainy litter picking sessions, planted bulbs or built planters- a sincere thank you.

Jim Diggory - Chair and lead
Claire Dickinson – Treasurer
Alison Mullis - Community Engagement

i) Nesscliffe Rounders Team

Shelly Hurdley, Team Captain reported that the team has been running for 12 years. It plays in the Minsterley & District League (ladies only). Anyone is welcome to join in.

j) School

At St Andrew's CE Primary School, we have had a challenging but productive year. Ms Marilyn Hunt was asked to support a federation of schools in South Shropshire so I took over as Interim Head here in July. I am incredibly proud of our school and the community. We use our values of respect, care, trust, courage, responsibility and perseverance to guide us through each day. The children are thriving and life feels more like it is returning to normal after a difficult two years.

Curriculum

We are continuing to develop our curriculum and remain focussed on ensuring it promotes the spiritual, moral, social, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at our school and of society. We take inspiration from Matthew 5:16; "Let your light shine" and use this to guide us through our learning, knowing that if we do our best, others will follow. Along with our core values, we use this aim to encourage a healthy attitude to learning, growth and development throughout the day.

We try to enrich our curriculum in exciting and innovative ways. Our whole school forest school days continue to be popular and this term we made great use of the local area and took a groups of children up to the top of Nesscliffe Hill to complete our 'nation Stations' challenge. The children worked in teams to answer some Geography related questions linked to the work covered by each class during the first half of the Spring term. The children had a fantastic day and we were impressed with the knowledge they had retained and how competitive they were!

We have also had a visit from the animal man, a Diwali dance workshop and a visit from the travelling pantomime. Our future plans involve a trip to Chester Zoo with a science and spiritual development focus, a trip to the seaside and a careers fair.

Extra-Curricular Activities

Our aim this term has been to diversify the extra-curricular activities we offer. We have added a dance and drama club to our after-school club offer run by Phoenix Academy who have been excellent. We also offer football, athletics, running and multi-sports. We are also offering music lessons with the return of Music Heroes.

Charity Events

We want to give our children a focus to their fundraising and make sure we are passionate about the causes we choose to support. The children contributed some fantastic ideas and

chose to focus on the conservation of wildlife for the remainder of this year. As a team, we agreed that we would be supporting Chester Zoo's 'Act for Wildlife' campaign. The children will now collaborate to develop fundraising ideas and ways in which we can promote our campaign. We are all concerned about the situation in Ukraine and we had an assembly on the first day back to make sure our children were presented with age-appropriate facts. As you can imagine, the children were desperate to offer help so with less than 24 hours' notice, we collected a van full of provisions to be sent to the refugees fleeing the country. We will continue to do our best to support those in need in any way we can.

Pupil Voice

Our Student Council are now well-established and taking an active role in our community. Most recently the children were tasked with the job of deciding which play equipment would be added to the exciting development of the park and play area.

Parent Voice

We recently conducted a parent survey with very positive feedback. 100% of parents who completed the survey agreed or strongly agreed that their child enjoys going to school and lessons are exciting and reflect a broad and balanced curriculum among many other positive responses. Some parents were kind enough to include comments including the following:

"The staff at school have gone above and beyond to support both children and extended that support to us as a family. They are completely invested and have made a world of difference to the positive progress the children have made both educationally and emotionally"

"The school is a wonderful environment for my children to thrive and I'm grateful that they are able to attend such a well-run and caring place. Especially with everything that's happened due to covid etc the staff have been invaluable in their support of the children and our family as a whole."

"Brilliant school and excellent staff with family life, wellbeing and education at the centre of its ethos."

Friends of St Andrew's

The incredible Friends of St Andrew's continue to support us, most recently with a sale of bags with the children's portraits on them. Unfortunately, plans to hold a Christmas fair were cancelled due to rising COVID numbers. However, plans are in place to hold an Easter Bingo and a Summer Fair.

Strength and Development

As we continue to develop the strength of our community we have linked with the Village Hall committee and offered the use of the school grounds to celebrate the Queen's jubilee. We would also like to begin opening our MUGA for community use. We are hoping to upgrade the MUGA surface to make it safer and more user-friendly before the summer holidays.

It has been an honour and a privilege to lead St Andrew's this year and I am incredibly proud of the children who attend, and the community that we share.

Steph Burgoyne, Interim Head of School

Report from Zia Robins, Chair.

We cover a large area of northern Shropshire, including Great Ness & Little Ness Parishes, keeping routes clear of overgrowth where we can, waymarking etc., and we report problems to, and work with, Shropshire Council's Outdoor Partnership Teams on Public Rights of Way issues and enforcement.

We report to the Nesscliffe Countryside Heritage Park Manager and the Country Park Ranger, updating them on work we have done in the Country Park, waymarking, clearing back overgrowth, and clearing smaller timber off routes, removing rubbish etc. We do regular checks around the Country Park, reporting on works that need to be addressed, vandalism etc. This has been a busy year with all the storm damage to report, and with nearly all the routes having been blocked by fallen trees, which has left considerable debris around the Country Park, and surface damage to some routes.

We have followed up on issues reported by our members and others, and are currently trying to resolve the obstructed Bridleway 25B at the Nesscliffe Hotel; drainage issues on Bridleway 21 from Lower Hopton to Ruyton XI Towns; a broken latch and dropped gate on BW 4 Startlewood, and we await Shropshire Council's replacement of the Bridleway Bridge on BW 54 at Adcote Mill, and the reinstatement of the adjacent Ford BW UN10, hopefully starting this July.

We address the ongoing problems of failing fingerposts, waymark posts, and waymarks, repairing and re-waymarking them where we can, and reporting to Shropshire Council's Team those rotted and needing replacement.

We have reported issues to Shropshire Council Highways such as bad potholes, surface damage, and flooding, including on the Adcote to Baschurch Road, and Valeswood Lane to Hopton, and have cleared overgrowth and reported surface and drainage problems on the Right of Way U1718/15 down to Flanders Ford, Adcote.

We have checked, and have commented on Planning Applications which could impact on Public Rights of Way and other link routes used by horse riders, walkers and cyclists.

We have raised the safety concerns of horse riders and other users, over loose and out of control dogs in the Country Park, and also of dangerous illegal cycling there, with new routes being created down onto, and across bridleways, endangering users, and causing run off etc.

We have liaised with adjacent Parish Path Groups on linking routes, and we have reported issues to this Parish Council.

Covid has meant that we have been unable since 2019 to hold our Annual Meeting in December, in Little Ness Village Hall, but hope to be able to continue them soon.

I) Other reports relating to the Parishes
None.

7. Open forum where members of the public may raise any subject for the exchange of information and general discussion.

No comments.