

Minutes of Berwick St James Village Meeting. Monday, 28th September 2020 online

In attendance: Christian Lange – Chairman
Sarah Humphreys – Deputy Chair
Bill Hiscocks – Treasurer
Kate Wood – Secretary

Total in attendance 25 online + 1 phone in

Apologies received: Cllr Kevin Daley, Henry & Sophie Colthurst, Peter Day, Mark & Mary McDermott, Greville & Gilly Bibby, Julian & Kate Glyn-Owen, Ann Emmerson.

Christian also remembered the late Ian Fisher and Polly Geffryes and extended a farewell to Tracey Nutley who had recently left the village.

Summary of Issues discussed and decisions made

Welcome & Introduction – Chairman.

Christian opened the meeting at 7pm, he explained it was being recorded for the benefit of those unable to attend. As this meeting was the annual AGM it would include voting for the election of the committee and Christian explained there was a new electronic voting system to replace the previous 'hands up' system. Where 2 people were sharing a computer and wished 2 votes to be counted to make this clear in the chat beforehand.

Minutes of last meeting

The minutes of the last meeting which was held on 4th June 2020 were agreed to be a true and accurate reflection – electronic vote =100% yes.

Accounts – 2019/20

Bill presented the accounts in slide form: –

The Precept started this financial year at £877.59 and after all credits and debits were accounted for the present balance stands at £999.06.

The Community Fund started the year at £1,418.13 and after all credits and debits were accounted for the present balance stands at £2,052.39.

Bill extended thanks to Martin Gairdner who, on this occasion, had prepared the accounts.

Voting for the Annual accounts – Proposed by Neil MacDougall, Seconded by Charles Street and general vote = 100%

Bill also showed the Annual Governance Statement slide which demonstrates that the finances are being efficiently managed.

General voting on the annual governance statement = 100%.

Christian extended thanks to both Bill and Martin for their work in managing the accounts for the village

Declaration of potential conflict of interests.

Christian explained that he had become increasingly concerned about climate change and the risks that it poses. He explained that he was a founder member of the [Wiltshire Climate Alliance](#) (WCA) and an active member of the steering group. WCA is an umbrella group of environmental groups who have come together to encourage Wiltshire Council (WC) to succeed in its aim to be carbon neutral by 2030. In short, Christian has become increasingly involved in lobbying councils/authorities to take action on emissions and therefore can no longer be impartial on matters relating to the environment and in particular road building i.e the proposed A303 redevelopment.

In May 2019 when Christian and Sarah were voted in as Chair & Deputy Chair of the village meeting, they agreed they would prefer to be seen as ‘co-chairs’ and it was therefore proposed that Sarah will now deal with any matters relating to the proposed works on the A303.

Christian invited questions relating to this decision but there were none from the meeting.

Election of Members of village committee

The meeting was asked to vote on the election of members of the village committee and the voting was as follows:-

Christian Lange, Chairman – proposed by Neil MacDougall & seconded by Keith Lovett

General vote = 100%

Sarah Humphreys, Deputy Chair (To be seen as Co-Chair) – proposed by Carolyn MacDougall & seconded by Bill Hiscocks

General vote = 100%

Bill Hiscocks, Treasurer – proposed by Janey Campbell-Johnson & seconded by Keith Lovett

General vote = 100%

Kate Wood, Secretary – proposed by Bill Hiscocks & seconded by Neil MacDougall

General vote = 100%.

The village committee was therefore re-elected for another year.

Covid-19 Support Plan

The rates of Covid infections are rising across the country and we may face a winter of further restrictions. It was suggested that, if needed, we renew the plan we had already put in place as it appeared to have worked well. At present there was no need to fully implement the support plan but it was suggested that we review the buddy groups and ensure that everybody will have the support when it is needed. If anyone is in need of help with anything then please inform one of the Committee. People were also asked to consider new initiatives which could help us feel more connected as a community should further restrictions be imposed. If anyone had any ideas going forward to please make them known.

Reading Room

Nicky explained that due to Covid-19 the Reading Room had been out of use this year and no improvements had been able to take place. It had been hoped that the carpet could have been cleaned and also that the present flooring could be replaced by a new hard floor, but they had not yet received the grant for this. Nicky expressed her concern that there had been no income for the Reading Room over the past 6 months and none was foreseen for the next 6 months.

Playground update – potential relocation to The Boot garden

The children's playground, presently situated at the village cricket pitch, is no longer safe and either needs to be repaired or removed. Christian has obtained a quote for the playground to be refurbished on site and this came in at about £2000. It had previously been suggested that the playground be sold on E bay but, as it was discovered that the playground was concreted in place and difficult to remove, it was thought that this was not be a good idea.

A proposal to give the playground to The Boot had been put forward by Chris Brain and he had previously informed Christian that the cricket club no longer wanted it to be situated by the cricket pavilion. People present at the meeting expressed concerns about safety, insurance and potential problems with increased noise and as neither Chris Brain nor Mike Doldon (landlord of The Boot) were present at the meeting, it was not possible to explore the proposal in detail.

It was therefore proposed that this matter be raised again at the next village meeting in January 2021. Christian assured the meeting that no decision on the matter would be made without it first being agreed at a village meeting. In the meantime, the playground will be taped off to discourage people using the playground.

A303 update

Sarah informed the meeting that lane closures were still in place on the A303 and that we were awaiting the decision on A303 tunnel and bye pass. She suggested that if anyone required more information on the progress of the proposed works she would put them in contact with an original member of the A303 working group. Carolyn MacDougall added that, although the group had now been disbanded, they

still closely followed the developments regarding the proposed re-development.

Wiltshire County Council update.

As Kevin Daley had sent apologies for not being able to attend the meeting the planned WCC update will be postponed until the next meeting in January.

Bus Shelter

The village bus shelter is in need of some repairs and it is proposed that these will cost approximately £200. The meeting was asked to vote on this proposal –
General vote = 94% yes.

Cricket Club Update

Berwick St James cricket team did manage to play a few matches this season, in a shorter than usual Tuesday evening league, and won a fiercely fought plate competition. The club has received some very generous support from The Boot and local business, a friendly match was played at the village cricket pitch on 19th Sept between the Berwick St James team and a team from The Boot and this raised a sum of approximately £900.

Village Party/fund raising ideas

Due to Covid-19 plans for a 'village fiesta' this year had to be cancelled. It had been thought that it would be postponed to 2021 but this is also no longer possible.

Ideas for fund raising events are always welcome and an idea was put forward by Mike Riding for a Berwick St James 'Village Wedding Concept' where the village would provide everything for a wedding couple including tent, food, waitressing service, B&B etc

Sarah showed slides whilst Mike went through his proposal as follows: detailing Mike's idea which included: -

- 13th century church for the service/ceremony
- Riverside location
- Availability of Marquees, tables, chairs
- Farm shop and Boot Inn for possible catering arrangements.

Volunteers would be needed to help with accommodation

Revenue consideration –

- Flat fee (amount to be decided) for use of church, reception location and bar/dinner service
- Corkage of £10 a bottle
- Charge of £80 per room per night (max 2 nights)
- Reimbursement of all external charges + 10% admin fee

Profit Allocation-

- The church would receive a minimum of £750
- Those villagers providing accommodation would be able to decide where their £80 should be donated i.e. – church, reading room, community etc.

- Committee would determine the distribution of remaining profit.

The proposal was put to a general vote and the result was -

29% yes

71% no

Therefore, this proposal was not agreed. Christian thanked Mike for working on the proposal and encouraged others to also put forward similarly innovative ideas for fundraising.

Any other business

Neil MacDougall pointed out there was a need to go through matters arising from previous minutes at future meetings. This was agreed.

The next meeting will be held in January 2021 (date TBA)

As there was no other business the meeting closed at 8.30pm.

Christian Lange

Chairman.