

Beverston Parish Council

Minutes of the Annual Assembly of the Parish held on 14th May 2024 in Beverston Village Hall

Present: *Councillors* Oliver Preston (Chairman), Caroline Lowsley-Williams, Dermot McMeekin, Oliver Preston, Jorn Rixen-Osterbro and the Clerk Fiona Gunn

District Councillor Tony Slater, Vanessa Argle, Caroline Beardwell, Anthony Blezard, John Crownshaw, Gill Fry, Joanna Gouriet, Philip and Diana Hamilton, Rona Lowsley-Williams, George Lowsley-Williams, Anna and Stephen Montague-Jones, Darren Pegler, Mark Philpott, Amber Preston, Rex Preston, Vivien Preston, Nigel Sibley, Richard Waldram, Roy Walton

Apologies: Cllr David Morris, Sally Armstrong, Simon and Sarah Carbery, Norma Crownshaw, James Gouriet, Peter Jordan, Pam McMeekin, Sue Morris, Lee Pegler, Levent Tounjer

Welcome by the Chairman, Councillor Oliver Preston: Cllr Preston opened by thanking his fellow councillors for their help and support throughout the year. He thanked the Clerk Fiona Gunn who he said is standing down later in the year after 12 years' service.

Since the last meeting David Lowsley-William's memorial service in Tetbury was attended by 650 and the Last Post was sounded by the Royal Gloucestershire Hussars. He was a former chairman of the Parish Council. The Barn @ Chavenage has reopened and is being run by James Lowsley-Williams and Emma Frampton and a well attended attic sale was held at Chavenage. The film Rivals is due to air later this year.

In Beverston the loss of the Yew tree in the middle of the village was a sad moment. Everyone called it the witch's tree. Some of the wood was collected by wood carvers and he hopes to get a bowl carved for the church.

Thank you to the Village Hall operating committee of Lee Pegler, Gill Fry and Fiona Gunn. Work is progressing on what works need to be done to the Village Hall.

The Babdown issues remain much the same – signs at the entrance and out of hour lights.

Cllr Preston thanked the Parochial Church Council for their work at the Church and said farewell to Canon Poppy Hughes, our vicar and Richard Waldram who has been a Church Warden for many years and who is leaving the village.

Minutes of the previous Annual meeting. The minutes of the meeting held on 16th May 2023 were approved and signed by the Chairman.

Matters arising from the minutes not on the agenda: No matters arising.

Report from District Councillor Tony Slater. Councillor Slater said that since being elected to the District Council he has served on the Council's Scrutiny Committee "which is useful". He said that Cotswold District Council had decided to bring back in house control of many of the council's services. A few years ago all these services had been outsourced to one organisation which had been set up to look after services like planning and council tax for a number of different local authorities. Infact all services had been outsourced except legal services. Councillor Slater said that there was a big cost involved in bringing all these services back under

the direct control of Cotswold District Council.

Crime and Police Report: A representative of the Police was unable to attend the meeting but the Clerk circulated their latest Police report for Beverston parish. This reported that in the year to 31st March 2024 there had been 9 crimes compared to 7 in the year ending 31 March 2023. The report said that the figures overall have gone up and amongst the crimes were 3 drug offences which had been detected through some proactive policing.

The work of the Parish Council in the past year. New noticeboards have been obtained for Beverston and Chavenage; the PC are continuing to liaise with Babdown re lighting. Mainly with the Austin Group and Woodlodge (who now have new lights); the Council are in touch with McCarthy Marland about the speed their new drivers drive through the village. Stephen Montague-Jones raised the issue of the untidy signs at the entrance to Babdown. Councillor Rixen-Osterbro said that this is an issue that the PC has been working on for some time. Councillor Slater had established that the signs are on land owned by the Randall family and that they are in breach of planning. Nicky Randall is going to speak to a planning consultant to work out a way forward. The Babdown Industrial Estate tenants are happy for a change and to pay for it.

Financial Report: The Clerk circulated the Receipts and Payments Account for the year ended 31st March 2024. Total receipts were £6,300 from the precept. Total expenditure was £4,180 which included a one off payment of just over £3,000 for new noticeboards. The end year surplus was £2,119 and there was £27,000 in the bank account.

Report from the church. Church warden Richard Waldram delivered the report. It is thanks to the efforts of volunteers and the wider congregation that services are held four Sundays each month. Hopefully everyone receives notice of the services via Gill and Fiona. Good news, there has been an increase in the number of people in our congregation. Significant support for the church services is provided by our small choir. Community involvement is important for keeping the church running – spring cleaning, churchyard maintenance, flowers etc. Later this year significant repairs will be carried out to the two windows on the south side of the church and one of the Sycamore trees is in poor health and will be felled when permission has been granted.

Canon Poppy Hughes is moving to a new post in north London. Work is in progress towards appointing a new Rector. Richard said that he too has decided to move on to be nearer family and will not be standing for re-election as Churchwarden. Ben Browne and Gill Fry will be standing for the two available posts of Churchwarden. Councillor Preston thanked Richard for all of his good work for the Beverston Church and the Parochial Church Council.

Update on the Village Hall Trust. The Village now owns the Village Hall. A survey has been commissioned of work that needs doing – windows, loos, disabled access etc. The windows will be done by the same person doing the Church windows. Thanks to previous donations there is £30,000 in the Village Hall Trust bank account. This is the year for action in the Village Hall. Councillor Preston thanked Councillor McMeekin for the work he has done on the Trust and the Village Hall.

Report from the Village Hall Operating Committee. Gill Fry reported that during the past year we have held our usual events – coffee mornings, BBQ and quiz night – all were very successful with good attendance.

Ongoing running costs continue to rise and we are very grateful to all those people who are

making small monthly contributions to Village Hall funds via Standing Order. Fortunately, the hire of the hall for elections does bring in a welcome contribution.

We are also very grateful to the small group of volunteers who mow the Village Hall garden. The Operating Committee organised a “fish and chip” supper with them to thank them. Also, a special thank you to Philip and Diana Hamilton who have spent many hours in the garden bringing the borders back to life.

A coat of paint certainly refreshed the building but now we must look to more serious improvements which will need fundraising.

If anyone has an idea of Village events that can be held in the Hall, please do contact us.

Any other business: The state of the allotments was raised. Fiona Gunn said that she has been working on the other owners of the allotments to try and get it cleared of rubbish.

Councillor McMeekin thanked the Chairman for all his hard work.