

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF  
THE PARISH OF CORFE.**

**CORFE VILLAGE HALL TUESDAY 19<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2015 AT 7.PM.**

**PRESENT:** Cllr J Harrison, Cllr B Lenthall, Cllr K Brown, Cllr C Brown, Cllr C George, Cllr D Bradbeer and 11 members of the public.

The Chairman of the Parish Council, Mr J Harrison opened the meeting and welcomed those present.

**APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Cllr J Jackson, TDBC Cllr Williams, Andy Fogwill, Keith Vodden, David Royle, Sue Ford, Sheila Andrews.

**MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Annual Meeting held on 7th May 2014 were confirmed and duly signed.

**REPORT OF CORFE VILLAGE HALL AND QUEENS ACRE (Cllr C Brown on behalf of Mr D Royle)**

The Village Hall annual accounts for 2014-15 reflect what has been a fairly quiet year for the hall. We turned the loss of £887 (a result of replacing the swings) into a profit of £1175. Our Income this year was £7527 down from £7878 and costs were £6353 compared to £6332. The profit is useful of course, but we will need to make more before we are able to fund some of the improvements to the hall we would like to make.

We have had 304 events in the hall this year down from 330 last year. This is only a small reduction, but it now means that we have had six years in a row of falling bookings from 412 in 2009 to 330 now. We are still well supported by our regular customers, the Quilting and Dressmaking Groups, the Mature Movers, Gardening Club, Short Mat Bowling, and the Toddler Group, but many of these groups are reporting smaller classes. We have managed to attract the Blackdown Hills Youth Club this year who use the hall for two evenings a month, but this has been offset by a significant drop in the number of children's parties held this year.

We had our usual village events last year, the Spring and Summer flower shows, and very successful Quiz Night and Bake-Off events. The Christmas Party this year was very successful for those who attended, but very disappointing for the organisers as the event was not well supported. We plan some changes this year and hope to persuade more customers to return in December.

These events, together with the contribution from the 100+ Club provide about a quarter of our income. We have sold 137 100+ Club tickets this year. Tickets are still available if anyone has been overlooked.

We are continuing to invest in maintaining the hall. The most significant improvement saw us sell (not for much) the universally hated small blue tables and replace them with much more friendly white ones. We are planning a

working party day in early July, aiming to paint the hall. Volunteers are welcome.

The continued success of the hall depends largely on our full time staff, Andy and Joan Fogwill and we thank them. As most of you will be aware, they are leaving the village for pastures new, but not leaving us, and we also thank them for that. We are also grateful for the voluntary help we get from the other committee members and friends of the hall.

### **REPORT OF CHARITY FOR ALLOTMENTS (Mrs A Jeffery)**

The income received by the Charity during the last financial year amounted to £2525 compared with £2497 in the previous year, and expenditure amounted to £2331, slightly less than in 2014. Most of the Charity's income is spent on the rental of Deane Helpline for parishioners which the Trustees feel is most important as it gives help and reassurance to those who are less able-bodied. A grant of £250 was again given to the Parish Council towards mowing costs of the Queen Acre, a much used and important part of the village, and Christmas vouchers were given to some pensioners. An outing was arranged in the summer for parishioners to go to Stable Cottage for afternoon tea.

The Trustees are made aware of any problems which might arise for Parishioners and they help wherever possible to alleviate any distress. Anyone who feels they need assistance can seek advice from any of the Trustees: Mrs. Ann Jeffery (Chairman of the Trust), Mrs. Christine Bradbeer, Mrs. Audrey Derrick, Mrs. Pat Evans and Mr. David Royle, or the Clerk Mrs. Ann Finchett.

Thank you to Ann Finchett, who as Clerk is responsible for the minutes, the books and keeping us all in order.

### **REPORT OF CORFE, PITMINSTER AND TRULL ALMSHOUSE TRUST (Mr D Ledger)**

The Trustees have met regularly again this year to manage and maintain the four cottages for the benefit of the Residents. The need to improve the properties to a good state of repair is the on-going challenge for the Trustees given the low level of residents' maintenance contributions and the high cost of upkeep of an old building with no endowments. Early in 2014, after many years as a Trustee, Jenny Fogg resigned which prompted a search for a replacement and in October two new Trustees were appointed. John Harrison filled the position held by Mrs Fogg and Jeremy Crockett, an Architect, joined as a co-opted Trustee. In a very short time, their specialised expertise has proved extremely helpful. The annual review of contributions has been carried out again this year and it was decided to increase these by 15% with effect from 1 April 2015 based on the retail price index of 1.5% and a discretionary increase. The contributions made by the residents are still low compared with local authority housing and residents are being encouraged to apply for benefits to meet the increased contributions. It is regretted that following the re-render of the almshouses in 2013, made possible with grants, the lime render has continued to show random damp patches even during dry weather. This problem is being investigated with the specialist builder who carried out

the work to see if a solution can be found. The Standards Almshouse Management Manual produced by The Almshouse Association of which we are a member, has been reviewed by the Trustees as a useful guidance manual for our charity. In October 2014 inspection visits by three Trustees were carried out to the cottages and a Report was produced showing the most urgent work required including making the chimneys and roof watertight. As suspected, cottages 1 & 3 proved to require the largest amount of work whereas cottages 2 & 4 had more minor repairs to be addressed. In view of limited funds, it was decided to defer any decisions on these repairs until the quinquennial report had been considered. In January 2015 the comprehensive quinquennial report on the condition of the building was completed by Mr Crockett and this will enable a planned programme of work to be carried out over the next five years as and when funds are available. A decision was subsequently taken to proceed with the urgent maintenance work outlined above and a chemical damp proof course in No 1 to alleviate the rising damp at a total cost of £11,500. An electrical inspection of all the cottages has now taken place.

### **REPORT OF THE CORFE SHORT MAT BOWLS CLUB (Parish Clerk on behalf of Mr A Fogwill)**

The Short Mat Bowls Club is pleased to announce that its membership has increased during the past year. The Club is still attending charity events around the county, raising money for local and national organisations that provide much needed support within the community.

A programme of friendly matches has been played against local clubs and has also been arranged for the coming year. However this is decreasing due to the Club's membership and the need to travel during the winter months. Some members have again attended bowling holidays around the South West. We are still covering our costs and the Club will continue until either the membership or the money runs out. The Club still continues to seek new members.

### **REPORT OF CORFE QUILTERS (Parish Clerk on behalf of Mrs S Ford)**

Corfe Quilters continue in much the same way as previous years, busy and productive.

We hope as many local villagers will come and enjoy seeing our work at our exhibition to be held in the hall on Sunday 24th and Monday 25th of May between 10 am and 4 pm. Refreshments will be available and there are some lovely quilts to be raffled. All proceeds in aid of Braemar House, Taunton which is a social day centre catering for people with many conditions including dementia and Alzheimer's.

### **REPORT OF CORFE LIFTS (Mrs P Evans)**

Despite the wet spring Corfe Lifts experienced no weather problems since the last AGM and the service has been able to run smoothly. Health related journeys along with shopping and connections for trains and buses continue to make up the majority of requests. There were a total of 285 journeys for the

year. The 'drugs run' continues to be a valuable service and we are grateful for the morning a month that Ann spends doing the rounds.

The financial help from the Somerset Community Foundation and generous donations from passengers and families of former users has given us a healthy balance. Somerset County Council funding to concessionary fares seems to have survived the latest round of budget cuts. No progress has been achieved with Taunton Hospital Trust over parking concessions for voluntary drivers. The officers and drivers were thanked for all the time they give to keep Corfe Lifts 'on the road' and were reappointed en bloc for the coming year. We were saddened to hear of the sudden death of our treasure June Hope. June died two days after the AGM. Another treasurer has been found.

### **CORFE AND PITMINSTER GARDEN SOCIETY (Mrs C Bradbeer on behalf of Mrs S Andrews)**

Membership continues to grow and is now around 25. An excursion to Buckland Abbey proved very popular.

### **REPORT OF THE CORFE ART GROUP (Mrs A Finchett on behalf of Mrs S Andrews)**

There are four members of this group meeting every Wednesday to be taught by Sheila in her own home.

### **TREE WARDEN REPORT (Mrs G Lewis)**

The two black poplars, *Populus Nigra* planted at the Millennium in the far end of the field west of Queens Acre are still in danger of being overgrown by brambles. We have not been able to encourage a group of enthusiastic community minded villagers to tackle this problem. The trees still need to be freed of brambles.

The Village Hall Committee have authorised the cost of purchasing tree labels for the trees on Queens Acre, this will be completed once in full bloom & after consultation with David Galley TDBC. Labels will be placed at the foot of each tree to prevent any damage to branches.

A new common oak has been planted in the corner of Queens Acre in memory of June Hope and we hope it continues to flourish.

The three lime trees outside Church Cottages have been "pruned" in order to reduce the tree canopy, reduce the mistletoe growth & prevent any more damage to the overhead wires. It is the opinion of David Galley, TDBC that this pruning is less than adequate and we need to confirm that the measures proposed were completed properly.

The Austrian pine at the entrance to Corfe House has now been felled, a necessary felling due to disease but a sad loss to the skyline of Corfe.

There are few public areas in Corfe where new planting can occur therefore residents should be encouraged to consider planting indigenous species on their own properties. Keith Vodden, the Church Warden is considering the possibility of planting an oak in the corner of the church yard.

## **REPORT OF THE BLACKDOWN BENEFICE – ST NICHOLAS CHURCH, CORFE (Mrs A Jeffery on behalf of Mr K Vodden)**

The Annual meeting of the Church was held on 26<sup>th</sup> April when Keith Vodden and Ann Jeffery were again re-elected as Churchwardens and Angela Vodden was re-elected as our very efficient Treasurer. We are at the moment managing to 'hold our own' financially due to our very successful Open Gardens with Flower Festival and Art Exhibition last May and two Parish walks and other generous donations.

Our Rector, the Revd Sue Green retired in June and since then we have been very ably served by the Revd David Ager our Associate Priest. On Monday 27<sup>th</sup> April the Revd James Fallon was licensed as our new Rector at a packed Service at Buckland St Mary led by the Bishop of Bath and Wells, who also visited Corfe in September, presiding at our monthly Parish Communion Service. Corfe welcomed our new Rector with a tea party in the village hall, to which all villagers were invited on Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> May.

The bells are rung for every Service and we thank the merry band of bell ringers. We also thank the volunteers who mow the churchyard, organised by Keith, and we could do with some more helpers. We thank Shirley Grinter our faithful and very efficient organist who never misses a Service and Angela Yarde and her family who keep the church sparkling. Thanks are also due to Christine Bradbeer who organises the flower and open and closing rota. Visitors often remark in the Visitors' Book how nice it is to find the Church open during the day. There are four weddings being held in the Church this year.

We were all saddened by the death of the Revd Christine Canti on 18<sup>th</sup> May at the age of 90, almost 20 years to the day of her ordination by the Bishop of Bath and Wells at the first ordination of women held in the Diocese.

Work has been completed to replace lead between the pitch of the roof and the tower and our next project, permission for which has been granted this week by the Diocesan Advisory Committee is the replacement of the front doors of the Church, the cost of which will be met by a generous anonymous donation. The doors will look exactly the same with the old metalwork incorporated in them.

We are so fortunate in having a small and friendly place of worship in the middle of the village.

## **REPORT OF THE CHAIRMAN OF CORFE PARISH COUNCIL (Cllr Mr J Harrison)**

The Parish Council met 6 times during the year and at last year's AGM in May 2014 John Harrison was elected Chairman and Brian Lenthall Vice Chairman. Thank you to the Councillors for their dedication to the Parish in carrying out their portfolio duties.

However it was very sad we suddenly lost one of our members June Hope and she will be sorely missed by the Parish Council and the village community. In remembrance of her there was a memorial tea and the planting of a tree in Queens Acre.

## PLANNING

During the year we were consulted on a number of planning applications to discuss and report back to Taunton Deane, however none of the items were contentious and were dealt with accordingly.

## SPEED WATCH

We renewed the Speed Watch team after some training by the Police. The speed through the village indicated by the SID is on the high side, which is obviously of concern. So hopefully the team will be out monitoring vehicle speeds and the information passed on to the Police who use it to send a warning letter to the speeding motorists and will then visit them on the 3<sup>rd</sup> occasion of speeding being recorded.

## TDBC

Our thanks must go out to Councillor John Williams leader of TDBC for his continued attendance at our meetings, keeping us informed of developments within the Borough and also assisting the Parish Council in their decision making.

## PRECEPT & ELECTION

The Precept for Corfe for 2014/2015 was £1500 and has been increased to £2000 this year to cover increasing costs and to build a fund for unforeseen eventualities.

The Election of Parish Councillors was not contested but two places became available, one being due to the death of June Hope and the other the retirement of Judith Richards who held the Village Hall portfolio. Our thanks go to her for her continued input and everything she achieved whilst in office. However we did have two parties come forward to replace June & Judith and later at the Parish Council meeting we will welcome Jonathan Jackson and David Bradbeer to the Parish Council.

## FLOODING

Fortunately this year we did not have the snow and rain of previous years but again thank you to Neil Bailey and Chris Pickles and anyone else who helped with the water run-off as and when needed.

The kerb outside Pebbledash Cottage was raised by Highways to protect this property and adjacent houses opposite the field entrance, along with their regular gully clearing. The fields behind Meadow Edge and Meadow House had been deep ploughed helping reduce the run-off and the ditches have been cleared by Brian Lenthall to the edge of the fields. More does need to be done as during the recent heavy rain there was a great deal of ponding behind Meadow Edge and Meadow House making them vulnerable and losing the use of the public footpath.

## TREES

We received a further report from our Tree Warden Gaynor Lewis which was very useful in identifying tree problems and works needed, which was greatly appreciated.

Whilst on the point of trees I was given the run around when investigating the ownership of the lime trees outside Church Cottages, which were in a dangerous state, but eventually I was able to identify that they were in the ownership and the responsibility of Somerset County Council. I was able to persuade them to carry out works which have been completed saving the

village a substantial cost. We understand further work is to be carried out to the trees.

#### SCHOOL PLACES

We had an interesting situation brought to our attention by Ruth & Chris Pickles who were trying to find a school place for their son Oliver, as Corfe had been withdrawn from the catchment area for Thurlbear in 2014.

A lack of consultation meant no one was aware of this and their son Oliver could not get a place in any of the three local Primary schools.

Due to Ruth and Chris' determination to resolve this issue, as well as Councillor Richards making representations, the matter was satisfactorily resolved and Corfe children are again eligible to nominate Thurlbear, which was a good outcome.

#### BROADBAND

Well Superfast Broadband eventually came to the village which I hope has made a difference to everyone, however outlying houses only get 'faster' broadband and not superfast but it is still a vast improvement.

#### VILLAGE AGENT

Our Village agent Trudi Morgan is very active within the area so please contact her for any help you may need.

#### CORFE WEB SITE & SOCIAL MEDIA

A working group comprising our Clerk, Jonathan Jackson, Chris George together with Andrew Moloney and Jacqueline Breslin set about updating the village website ensuring Corfe was fully represented on social media. We now have a Twitter account, Facebook page and more importantly a brand new website.

A successful mail drop now means our email correspondence is more focused on what people have requested.

With important decisions being made by the Council on behalf of the village it is important that the community is engaged with the website.

#### NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH & POLICE LIAISON

We need to thank Neil Bailey for keeping us informed as in previous years of Police reports involving Corfe and the surrounding area.

#### 106 AGREEMENT FUND

Moving on to the 106 Funds available to Corfe from the development of Corfe Farm, as you are aware, there is money available to the village after the 5<sup>th</sup> property is sold, available for up to five years and if not used it will eventually go back to the Developer.

The S106 Fund states that it is to be spent £23205 on a children's play area provision and £13299 on an Active Outdoor recreation area. It was first thought an amount of money would be given to the village to distribute to various village projects which is not the case. Therefore in the Parish Council Minutes 4<sup>th</sup> November suggestions were requested for ideas, but unfortunately there were none falling within the S106 terms.

David Royle and I, in the absence of any other suggestions have been trying to put together within the framework of the 106 Agreement an Outdoor Recreation Area which would double up as a car park for the village, as has been done elsewhere within the Borough.

We have had various meetings regards a multipurpose play area for football, netball, tennis etc. and doubling up for additional parking for the village, Church & village hall, which may also attract larger functions to use the village

hall now that we have lost the use of parking at Corfe Farm. This is not a short term plan but a long term one for the Village of Corfe.

The fund unfortunately cannot be used for acquiring land so we would need to explore funding for any land acquisition however we have ascertained that we could spend a smaller amount on the play area on one or two pieces of equipment and the majority of the funds on the Outdoor Recreation Area.

However there is a long way to go on such a scheme, such as speaking to the Planners, Highways, land funding. so we are not going any further until it has been fully discussed as we were only exploring an option.

Therefore we are going to discuss this along with any other suggestions at tonight's Parish Council meeting bearing in mind we have five years from the sale of the 5<sup>th</sup> unit so plenty of time to consider projects.

PARISH CLERK

Finally a thank you goes out to Louise our Parish Clerk who has carried out her role diligently, keeping her eye on our finances and keeping the Councillors informed of activities and meetings taking place in Somerset.

Thank you to anyone else I have missed who deserved a mention.

**ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

There being no further business the meeting closed at 7.35pm.

Next meeting: Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> May 2016 at 7.00pm.

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Chairman

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Clerk