

**The Civil Parish of ALVESTON including Rudgeway & Earthcott****Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting  
Held on 17<sup>th</sup> April 2023 at 7.30pm in the Jubilee Hall**

**Present:** - Cllr John Graham (Chairman), Cllr Anne Curtis, Cllr Jasmine McGregor, Cllr Valerie Williams, Cllr Carmen Vazquez, Cllr Marion Reeve, Cllr Matthew Riddle, Elaine Lee, Michael Casey, Ivor Bryant, Peter Waller.

23 members of the Parish Community. Graham Smith (Clerk to the Parish Council).

**Apologies:** - Cllr Paul Caddick, Kelvin Chappell, Beat Officers PC Will Price & PC Paula Perry

**1. Welcome by the Parish Chairman**

Cllr John Graham welcomed all attendees to the meeting.

Agendas are available at the entrance and as can be seen we have many items to cover this evening with reports from; Councillors, Committees of our local community buildings, the Community Forum, our community charity and unfortunately St Helen's School representative is not available. These will be followed by a question-and-answer session to Councillors or Community Bodies. This will be followed by teas / coffees prepared and served by our Alveston WI – Thank you

The meeting will be presented as per the agenda and the invitation to ask questions or raise issues will be item 6 – Open Forum.

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

Report given by Michael Casey.

There have been 4 committee meeting held in the last year. One by Zoom and the other three by face on face meeting. The committee for last year has been :-

- a) Michael Casey Chair
- b) Alice Keehn. Bookings Secretary
- c) Elina Beet. Treasurer
- d) Frances Houghton, Minutes Secretary (resigned January 2023)
- e) Elizabeth McCleod Minutes Secretary from March 2023

Following the recent AGM all officers are continuing in post. Frances Houghton was thanked for all the work she had completed over many years for our committee. As ever, although not officers, the committee is indebted to the commitment of Les Forrest and Carol John in the work they do to keep the facilities of the Jubilee Hall running.

In comparison to the Covid years this year has been simpler to manage. In a building 120 years old there are sure to be issues that arise that could not be foreseen. This year we have had two roof leaks which have now been attended to.

The accounts show that we made an operating loss of nearly £900. This mainly due to a need to collect cash from the from the January and February invoices. Turnover is approximately £14.5k which is about £2k up on last year. This now back to pre-covid levels.

We intend to increase our prices by 3% from 1st April 2023. This is to help cover the increase in electricity cost when we renew our contract at the end of August. We have two major contributors to our turnover. School of Dancing and Bristol Care Homes that represent two thirds of our income.

All capital project costs have been accounted for separately. This year we completed the fitting of the secondary glazing just in time for the Jubilee thankfully. Plus the Kitchen was renovated.

We were very pleased that the Hall was utilised extensively during our late Queen's Jubilee last summer. On a warm sunny day it was good to see the Hall being used for informative displays as well as a centre for refreshments. Vicky Moore was integral in organising the Jubilee celebration and so that we can integrate more into future events we have asked Vicky to attend our quarterly committee meetings. This she is doing.

As mentioned in last year's report we were hoping to refurbish the Kitchen. With the help of a 70% grant from Enover and monies from ourselves and the Parish Council this work was successfully implemented in October 2022. Almost everything was replaced:- units, worksurfaces, cooker , fridge , microwave, water heater and flooring.

Although we were not directly involved, we want to thank Marion Reeve, Chris Eatock and Peter Waller for managing the funding and implementation of the refurbishment / rebuilding of the Hall Garden. Work started in late 2022 and completion has been hampered by the weather. But it will just be great when finished.

In the year going forward we have projects that we hope to implement: -

- The double doors in the main Hall are to be replaced with new hard wood doors. Prices have been agreed and implementation will be in the next 3 months
- As part of our ongoing strategy to heat the Hall as effectively as we can we are now planning to install a Building Management System. The issue we are trying to resolve is that the heating is controlled by a clock that is no different to those in a number of domestic houses. For the Hall this control is too simplistic and does not allow the most efficient use of the boilers. We are just wasting gas. We have a quote of £3500 and at present we are urgently looking for grants as we would like to implement in this summer's school holidays

## 2.2. Youth Centre Management Committee

Report given by Ivor Bryant (Chair of the YC Management Committee).

The restrictions due to Covid have been removed and we are now operating as we were previously. Hand gel will continue to be provided at the entrance until it runs out and most of the special signage has been removed.

We have the same committee as the previous year with Val Williams representing the parish council. At our recent AGM we were joined by representatives of the scouts and martial arts groups.

The heating to the main hall installed early in 2020 have proven to be successful being more responsive than the previous system. Since the last parish meeting the vinyl floor covering to the main hall has been replaced and marked out for Badminton.

The centre's day to day maintenance costs remain low .and we in the past we've reported little vandalism however we cannot say the same this year. Over the year we have suffered graffiti and stone damage on the external fire escape and scout store doors. The graffiti has mostly been removed. The doors are secure metal doors, resistant to weather and break ins but spoilt by the vandalism and in addition users of the hall have been disturbed by youths and younger climbing on the roof and banging on the doors. This has occurred on several occasions and ben reported to the Police. The local Police attended one evening and, on that occasion, there was no problem. This disturbance has caused classes to be cancelled. We have been advised that if there are people on the roof, we should call the police on 999 as criminal damage is being done, if the users feel threatened they should call 999, make records of the events and if possible take photographs of the perpetrators. This has been very upsetting and not what we expect in Alveston.

The committee are currently investigating alterations to the toilets to provide disabled facilities within the current toilet area.

The annual accounts have been passed to the Parish council.

Headline figures are: - Income...£12807 all from hire.

No grants received over the year.

Total expenditure £17,545

Exceptional expenditure £11953 (comprising new flooring £8804, floor marking) £1050, electrics £1899.26, fire extinguishers £200

Excess expenditure over income ... £4738

Current bank balance £26,275

Hire charges for the year were unchanged and will remain as they are until next September.

In conclusion:-

- We continue to provide facilities for the various hirers with regular bookings daytime and evenings every day except Sunday.
- We are maintaining and improving the premises with a view to making them accessible to all.
- We are running at a profit day to day.
- We are very concerned that regarding the regular disturbance of the classes and may need to invest in security measures.

### 2.3. Charity of Emily Amelia Ponting

Report given by Elaine Lee

Origins of Charity - This generous lady died in 1901 leaving a large sum of money. She also left instructions directing Trustees to give our grants of money for "the education, improvement, recreation and enjoyment of the inhabitants and parishioners of all ages." Trustees are directed to restrict our gifts and grants only to those who live in Alveston Parish.

Edward Bush, who died in 1908, also left funds for poor villagers and, with brother Thomas, provided funds to build St Helen's church, the tower clock, and this Jubilee Hall. A third benefactor was Henry King who died in 1792 leaving money for the poor of Alveston.

About 50 years ago the three Charities were combined into one named Alveston Charities. This changed to Alveston Trust and then became the Charity of Emily Amelia Ponting. It is a registered Charity now using the Broadmead Co-operative Bank for financial arrangements.

Following instructions laid out in the scheme, Trustees must include our Vicar, a member of the Parish Council and three other villagers. The current Trustees are Rev. David Moss, Parish Council Rep. Jasmine McGregor, Sandra Body, Angela Williams, and currently I am Chair. We are grateful to Les Forrest - our very efficient Treasurer who doesn't have a vote. We also owe huge thanks to Roland Harley who has checked our accounts for many years.

Villagers have benefited from the generous bequests of Emily Ponting, Edward Bush, and the King brothers for several generations. They have provided Trustees with opportunities to approve a range of grant applications. We use the interest earned on the Charity's investments to help many different situations and we invest in more shares if the balance is more than we estimate we will need. We appreciate extra financial support from Alveston Parish Council plus Church and pre-school events and other local fund-raising. We are also grateful to those villagers who sometimes give cheques to help us answer the calls for help.

With the current increase in the cost of living we fully expected to have more applications recently but this, so far, has not happened. I have put several advertisements in recent Helmets to remind readers of Emily Ponting and there is info. on the Village notice board in The Parade, but we have had no applications yet this year. Please spread the word if you hear of anyone who is struggling and suggest that they contact me or David, our Vicar.

Please assure people that we only discuss applications with the Trustees.

In 2022 we agreed grants amounting to £1,723.74. Grants agreed were as follows:

- £250 grant towards several months travel to Hospital
- £200 grant for a student's field study week
- £300 grant towards Jubilee celebrations
- £300 grant to Alveston Scouts
- £313.74 for Art Club tables
- £360 for Christmas gifts to 8 households

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

No Representative present or report given (despite requests from parish Clerk)

#### 3. Alveston Community Forum

Report given by Peter Waller (chairman of Alveston Community Forum)

While the country lurches from one crisis to another, for the Forum the last year has seen a return to Normality. It has been a busy year. Several of our activities have benefitted from the cooperation with the Alveston Events Group run by Hayley Grove and Vicky Moore. I very much hope to see such joint efforts continue. The Events Group represents a younger more tech savvy section of the Alveston population.

Some of our activities include:

The Jubilee Hall Garden - We are very grateful to an anonymous donor from the village, who has gifted the village a sum of £10,000 to refresh the garden behind the Jubilee Hall. In conjunction with the Jubilee Hall Committee a design has been proposed and accepted and a contractor engaged (Morris Landscape Contractors) and the work has started. The WI has very generously agreed to take on the maintenance of the garden once the work is complete. The design includes a paved area, an area of lawn and a wildflower area. An assortment of shrubs will complement the open areas. This work will not consume all the money donated and we will be on the lookout for other projects which can enhance Alveston's amenities, and which will be acceptable to the donor.

Repair Café - We have held three repair events since the last AGM and have two further dates booked for this year. At each event we have had about 40 to 50 items to repair, and usually are successful on about 60%. On a further 10 to 15% we were able to give advice on how to get the item repaired. Judging by the level of chatter and the number of cakes consumed it is safe to say that everyone enjoys the events. It's always very satisfying bringing people's possessions back to life and saving them from the scrap heap. But it's also an opportunity to share ideas and learn new skills. Further Repair Café events are planned for the 20th May and 7th October. Look out for the adverts in Helmet and bring along anything you think we might be able to repair.

I am very grateful to my team of volunteers which include repairers, the refreshment team and the administrative team and of course the Church who provide the tea and coffee as well as the venue.

I delighted also thank the Parish Council for their support and generosity in paying for the insurance policy which covers the Repair Café and other Forum activities. Without this support we would not be able to do the things we do.

The Phone Box Book Exchange - The Alveston Book Exchange continues to be well used, particularly by children whose parents bring them to the phone box to choose books to read at home. People have been very generous with their donations of books for which we are most grateful. Sometimes the books are so numerous that Carol John and I have to remove some to ensure that books do not end up on the floor or overwhelming the children's shelves with adult books.

It is perhaps worth reiterating the rules and to this end I have put up a new notice:

- Leave no more books than you take (until further notice)
- Allow nothing to fall to the floor (where it will get wet and be ruined)

- No adult books on the (red) children's shelves
- Please do not leave reference books.

I would particularly like to thank Carol John for her efforts to keep the phone box tidy and in good order and to thank Jim Godden for his efforts to repair, paint and maintain the phone box itself.

Litter busters - We have had four litter busting days in the last year but that is by no means the whole story because many Litter Busters (and other residents) use their daily walk (with or without dog) to collect rubbish deposited by irresponsible visitors to our village. I try to keep a tally of the number of bags of rubbish collected but people don't always WhatsApp me with details of their haul. However, the number of bags collected since this time last year is easily in excess of 70 bags

We are very fortunate to have about 25 regular litter pickers and a further 20 or so who join us from time to time. This puts a bit of pressure on the organiser because there are only fourteen routes which requires a team of 28 pickers. But so far I have not had to turn anyone away and I am determined not to do so. It is gratifying indeed that we have so much support and I thank one and all for it.

Parade Maintenance (and bulb planting) - Jim Godden and his team of gardeners have once again kept the Parade looking splendid. Jim and Gill Allford have chosen and procured flowers to match the seasons.

On the 17th October a group of St Helens pupils once again joined us at the Parade to plant bulbs. They made a good job of it as evidenced by the splendid spring display which we have all enjoyed. Many thanks to them all and to the teachers Nicola Woodford and Nickie Burns.

Even with a dwindling number of volunteers, Jim and his team have managed to keep the parade looking as best as it can. They have cut grass, weeded, planted, cut back shrubs and cleared the paving slabs of weeds.

One disappointment in the year has been any lack of progress in the maintenance of the shop canopy. It is not only an eye saw and ruins all the good work put in by the volunteers, but we expect it to be dangerous, as at least 3 of the uprights are rotten. Jim did try and get the Parade Company to engage the owners with the Parish Council to assist (the owners) with finance to repair, but so far to no avail. Perhaps no one will be interested until it falls down?

Jim's other project is to try to get the layby resurfaced by South Glos council, but it appears that it is not yet on their priority list.

Christmas Fair - The Christmas Fair of 2022 represented a departure from previous years thanks to Hayley Grove who involved resources from the Alveston Events Group and made it a larger and more inclusive event. There were more stalls, more food of every type and more entertainment, and it lasted four hours not two. The children of St Helens sang carols under the guidance of the Rev David Moss and Ken Pearce reprised his performance of the "twelve days of Christmas" from 2012 to the amusement of all. £837 was raised by the event. Our congratulations to Hayley and all those who helped make the Christmas Fair a such a success.

Christmas Lights - As a result of the generosity of the Parish Council we were able to use a grant of £80 from them to further enhance the Christmas Lights at the Parade with a new light, in the shape of a snowman. Once again children from the Pre-school decorated the Christmas tree and our thanks go to them and to Lucy Long.

Jubilee Celebrations - Perhaps the highlight of the year was the Jubilee weekend, the 2nd to the 5th June. Hayley Grove, Vicky Moore and others from the Alveston Events Group arranged a magnificent three days of celebration and Forum members were very much part of it.

It included:

- Fancy dress parade and a competition of kings and queens for children
- A craft display and competition.
- A Fair in the Lime kiln Field with a Climbing Wall, Bubble football, stalls, displays, food and entertainment.

- In the evening there was a disco at the Cricket Club

It was a very successful day which will be remembered in years to come. It also raised £2838 for local groups and causes. Our congratulations and thanks go to Hayley, Vicky, the Events Group and all those who helped and who took part. The prospects for next year, in Alveston seem very positive. In addition to the Repair Café dates and of course the Christmas Fair ' and the Coronation Picnic.

Coronation Picnic - The Events Group is organising a Picnic on the 6th May to celebrate the coronation of King Charles III This will take place at the Cricket Club where there will be refreshments, a bar and a BBQ. Everyone is welcome. A poster advertising the event can be seen around the village.

If you have further ideas for things which need to be done in the village, and which need the support of the Forum to help make them a reality, come and talk to us. You never know what is possible.

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

John Graham (Chairman) presented the following report:

I would like to thank the committed team of Parish Councillors who work directly on aspects of Council business or represent the Parish Council on the various active community groups which exist throughout the Parish: Anne Curtis in her capacity of Chair of Planning and Council Vice Chair, Jasmine McGregor for her work toward Finance and Open Spaces, Carmen Vazquez, Valerie Williams, Marion Reeve for their work with Community Groups and their dedicated support and contribution at Council meetings and also to Paul Caddick, unable to attend this evening for his work with Allotments. Thanks also to our team, Graham our Clerk who has assisted and consistently supported the Council in the work it has undertaken and thank you to Bryan Painter whose dedication to checking the safety of our play areas in all weathers is to be commended and to Kate Driver for ensuring the cemetery is constantly well maintained.

I would also like to thank SGC Ward Councillor Matthew Riddle for working so closely with the Parish Council and attending every meeting without fail. In addition, I would like to thank the members of the various voluntary organisations that ensure that the Parish continues to be an interesting and pleasant place to live. Particularly the management committees of our two community buildings and the members of Alveston Community Forum and Litter busters.

There are several new announcements to make which I will leave for the responsible councillors to report. However, amidst our other activities throughout the year we have

1. Introduced a new outdoor gym facility
2. Completely refurbished the Down Rd play park including new equipment, fence, goal posts.
3. Resurfaced the Lime Kin play park
4. Acquired allotment land which is now fully under council ownership

There is also our daily 'housekeeping' functions which ensures the Parish continues to be an outstanding place to reside. The month-by-month activities of the Parish Council are contained within the meeting minutes and available at [www.alveston.org](http://www.alveston.org).

Finally thank you to the members of the WI who are serving the tea and coffee.

#### 5. Parish Councillor Council Reports

##### Finance & Open Spaces Report given by Cllr Jasmine McGregor

The Parish Council is pleased to report: -

##### Finance

- Good financial position at year end
- Clean audit report during the year which is testament to our Clerk's great work.
- As well as usual maintenance and running costs during the year, several projects have been completed. Mostly these have been covered by grants from Enover and SGC so thank you to both organisations.
- With a further VAT refund still to come we are in a healthy position going forward into the next year.

### Parks & Open Spaces

- Adult Gym Equipment - Installed at the start of the last financial year and has received positive feedback on Facebook and in person. Group gym sessions have been held, people are building the equipment into their exercise routines and there are first time users, all of which mean the area continues to be a big success.
- Resurfacing of Lime Kiln Play Area - This was much needed after feedback from Parish following accidents and is now not only a safer place to play but looks more inviting.
- Cross Hands Play Area - Feedback obtained from Facebook survey completed by over 150 villagers. A complete revamp of the park including new fencing, new goal posts, safer surfaces and amazing play equipment. Overwhelmingly positive response from parish via Facebook and in person but more importantly by the amount of children in the park each day.
- I feel that we have facilities to be proud of in Alveston and I'd like to thank Enover and SGC for their contributions but also my fellow councillors, in particular our Clerk Graham and our Chairman John as we have achieved a great deal together in the past year.

### Planning Report given by Cllr Anne Curtis

The Planning Committee met 17 times in the year to consider all the planning applications made in the Parish under our role as formal consultee.

During the year the committee considered 57 Planning applications with the total of 57 having been approved by South Gloucestershire Council 7 being rejected. (Note that if the criteria for the said applications is met they will be approved). The total applications that were withdrawn were 4 of these some were resubmitted and subsequently passed.

Of the 57 applications submitted the committee agreed with South Glos on 28 with "no comment" on 4 and disagreed with 12. The ones we disagreed with subsequently appeared on a circulated schedule and decisions had to be made as to whether we would ask the SGC ward councillors to call them in. Remembering that Policy had been followed on all of them, we declined to do this. 9 have yet to be decided. Of the 57 applications received there were: -

- 21 for Extensions
- 6 for New dwellings (2 of these being resubmissions)
- 7 for maintenance of protected trees
- 8 for conversions
- 3 for outbuildings
- 3 for Barns
- 9 for change of use

### Allotments Report given by (Clerk) Graham Smith in the absence of Cllr Paul Caddick

The Parish Council expressed their sympathy to Mrs Northam relating to the death of Mrs Hawkins this year who dedication to the community and her support was exemplary. The Parish council expressed gratitude for their kind donation of allotment land to the Parish Council which is now completed and under control of the Parish Council in perpetuity for allotment use.

There is work to be done around the allotments as fence repairs are required and an arboretum report is to be carried out. There are currently six residents on the allotment waiting list which proves that the allotments are a popular asset to the community.

## **6. Open Forum – Questions and Discussion**

A member of the public raised concerns relating to; speeding within the Parish, and in absence of the local beat officer the Parish Council were unable to answer the issue, not having the remit for traffic control. (Clerk) highlighted that the use of HGV's using restricted roads is ongoing and confirmed that it is a police matter and should be reported as such. Adding to the point a question relating to the use of roadside cameras was raised to which the (Clerk) passed a similar recommendation and suggested that the beat officer is available at many Parish council meetings and suggested that members of the Public attend these to address their concerns to the correct people at the appropriate meeting.

An issue was raised by a member of the public relating to speeding traffic to which was once again a matter for police and traffic control however, it was confirmed that the Parish Council was aware of the issue and had requested, in meetings throughout the year, that a volunteer community speed watch be organised by SGC and endorsed by the local police. This is currently being pursued.

An issue was raised by a member of the public relating to potholes within the local roads and it was confirmed that the responsibility to repair potholes was outside the remit of the Parish Council but the issue is continually raised at Parish Council meetings. Cllr Matthew Riddle confirmed that there is a method of reporting potholes on the SGC website and understands the frustration of residents particularly as he is aware that StreetCare vehicles pass unreported potholes to repair those that are reported.

An issue was raised by a member of the public relating to a specific planning application to which Cllrs confirmed that planning matters are always addressed at a bi-monthly Parish Council planning committee meeting. It was emphasised that the Council Planning Committee is purely advisory and does not have the authority to make planning decisions, (which is purely within the remit of South Gloucestershire Council). Councillors agreed that the early May Planning Committee meeting be brought forward to discuss the matter in a more appropriate setting.

A member of the public thanked all those who were in attendance that volunteer to benefit the community and those not present who do all the good work, unseen by the wider community.

#### **7. End of Business**

The chairman in closing the meeting thanked the members of Alveston Women's Institute for providing the refreshments.

**The meeting closed at 9.10 pm.**