

The Civil Parish of ALVESTON including Rudgeway & Earthcott**Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting
Held on 15th April 2024 at 7.30pm in the Jubilee Hall**

Present: - Cllr Valerie Williams, Cllr Carmen Vazquez, Cllr Marion Reeve, Cllr Paul Caddick, Ward Cllr Matthew Riddle, Les Forrest, Michael Casey, Ivor Bryant, Peter Waller. Hayley Grove, Julie Simpson, Beat Officer PC Will Price
27 members of the Parish Community. Graham Smith (Clerk to the Parish Council).

Apologies: - Cllr John Graham (PC Chair), Cllr Anne Curtis (PC Vice Chair), Ward Cllr Tony Williams Elaine Lee, PC Paula Perry

1. Welcome by the Parish Clerk

Graham Smith (GS) introduced himself as Parish Clerk and passed apologies. Due to absence of both Parish Council Chair and Vice Chair (GS) stated that he would conduct the meeting on behalf of those absent.

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, St Helen's School, and Alveston Community Events. These will be followed by a question / answer session. Then refreshments prepared and served by our Alveston WI-Thank you.

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. The committee for last year has been :-

- a) Michael Casey Chair
- b) Alice Keehn. Bookings Secretary
- c) Elina Beet. Treasurer
- d) Elizabeth McCleod Minutes Secretary
- e) Vicky Moore. Co-opted committee member

Following the recent AGM all officers are continuing in post.

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 previous years there has been little major project work undertaken. However, two items of work should be mentioned.

- New double doors were fitted in the Hall thanks to a generous donation from Emily Ponting charity. The "panic bolt" mechanism was replaced as part of the work which has been appreciated by all Users who had attempted to work the old mechanism previously.
- The HeatingSave Building Management System came on line just in time for the colder weather to start in October. We now have a system that is remotely controlled to be on when Users are in the Hall. The system has been operating continually over this last winter period.

The Building Management System was the last project implemented to improve the heating in the main hall. These projects have been implemented over the last few years and we believe they have been successful as no one has complained of the cold this winter and the School of Dancing said it was getting too hot. Success?

The accounts show that we made an operating profit of approximately £9000. This figure is inflated because we collected income from billings in the 4th quarter 2022/23. These monies were not accrued in 22/23 and were responsible for the loss reported last year.

We aim to make sufficient monies per year (£3-4k) to invest back into the upkeep of the Hall in the way of repairs and maintenance. This we are doing. Turnover has now returned to pre covid levels and before pre-school returned back to St Helens. This year the turnover was £20k. 60% of this turnover is provided by the School of Dancing and Bristol Care Homes We absorbed the increase in electricity cost in 23/24 but will now have to pay double the cost for our gas from May 2024 as our contract runs out then.

In the recent committee meeting it was agreed to increase our hall rates by 3%. These new rates are applied from 1st April 2024 The Garden continues to be a credit to the Hall. For this we thank Alveston Community Forum and the WI. Wi-Fi has been installed and tested. Any User can use it.

2.2. Youth Centre Management Committee

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

When I was invited to submit this report I thought I had little to tell you. The reason for this is that over the past year nothing has changed at the Youth Centre. We have not had the need to repair or replace anything significant other than general maintenance. The costliest unanticipated item was the replacement of the boiler flue at a cost of approximately £1500. Equally unexpected we were given £1000 by Smyths toy store in Yate who invited us to apply for a grant.

Last year we reported that we were investigating the provision of toilets for the less abled. A budget was prepared but the proposed scheme was somewhat of a compromise. This prompted the question of should we look at a more involved proposal and what are the needs of the Youth Centre. Following this, on behalf of the Youth Centre, Adrian Baxter of Alveston Scouts prepared and sent out a brief questionnaire on Facebook. He has received over 30 responses but we are proposing to circulate the questionnaire further, possibly by an insert in Helmet.

Day to day its business as usual. We have regular and occasional one off bookings for parties and charity events. Business as usual includes managing bookings, raising invoices, arranging maintenance and servicing, insurance, paying the bills. We need to manage the facility at a profit with a surplus at the end of the year.

We have yet to finalise our accounts for the past year but in round figures they will be approximately:-
Turnover £14700
Cost £ 7500
Surplus £ 7200.... Current cash in the bank £33000

2.3. Charity of Emily Amelia Ponting

Report given by Les Forrest

2023 was a quiet year for the Charity despite adverts in Helmet Magazine explaining who we are and what we do.

At their June meeting the Trustees were pleased to welcome Anne Curtis as a Parish Council nominee. Already we can see the benefit of her participation. At that meeting we approved two applications one of tuition fees for a talented teenager and the second towards new fire doors for the Jubilee Hall. In recognition the Jubilee Hall Management Committee have displayed an acknowledgement in the form of a framed poster publicising the work of the Charity and giving contact details.

There being no further applications the next meeting was in November to discuss and agree Christmas gifts for villagers nominated as being deserving of help or having been particularly kind and helpful members of our community for many years. The Trustees see these awards as tokens of the Village's awareness of them and how we value their contribution to our community. Christmas is an appropriate time to show appreciation.

The Trustees also spent £2,500 on purchasing more CCA Units to safeguard the Charity's income stream. The value of the investments at 31st December last was £60,465.

The accounts were examined by Roland Harley and filed with the Charity Commission in March. The Trustees would like to record their appreciation of Roland's continued support.

I would like to ask those present to publicise what we do and if anyone knows of a worthy cause please inform the Trustees. The only qualification is that a beneficiary must reside in the Parish. The Trustees are extremely careful to maintain the confidentiality of all applicants.

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

Report given by - Julie Simpson (Executive Head Teacher)

St Helen's is a one form entry village school in Alveston, South Gloucestershire. It is a Church of England school linked with the Diocese of Bristol. In April 2023, St Helen's formally federated with St Mary's CE VA Primary School in Yate, following a successful informal partnership since 2019. There are currently 207 children on roll. 10% Pupil Premium Children, of which 4% FSM. 12% SEND with 4.8% of EHCP children, which is above national average. At the last OFSTED inspection (December 2019) the school was judged to be outstanding. Since the last OFSTED, four new teachers have joined the teaching team and out of the 7 classes from the last OFSTED only two remain in the same class. Since September 2022, we have had three experienced members of staff, go on maternity leave and two of these teachers are due to start a second maternity in March 2024. We have also appointed a new Executive Head Teacher, who took up their post on 1st May 2023. The mantra of 'good every day' is something that we have instilled in children and staff and this is something that we look to continue over time to ensure children have a consistently good education.

The school's philosophy is that reading, writing and maths should be at the heart of a rich, engaging and diverse curriculum. The vision of 'excellence, enjoyment and achievement', together with the school values has contributed to the phrase 'Flying High at St Helen's' - developed by one of our children. This ensures that our determination to excel supports a shared understanding that the way in which we excel, also really matters. Important values such as respect, generosity, forgiveness and friendship create a culture where all can thrive and succeed. We are determined that our children will leave St Helen's ready for the next step of the learning adventure.

A Year in the Life of the School

Over the last year there have been many successes to celebrate. Our work with the Alliance Unity Hub has resulted in positive improvement reviews which have recognised the high level of pupil engagement and achievement.

We are still feeling the effects of the lockdowns where children have gaps in learning that are the focus of our intervention programmes. However, the results of the 2023 assessments are showing a return to the high levels of attainment. This year, we expect to be above the national level of attainment at the end of key stage two.

The children experience an exciting and broad curriculum which encompasses global themes to encourage our children to appreciate how to be successful global citizens.

We were delighted to be able to take the school choir to the O2 Arena in London to sing with hundreds of other children. This was a wonderful event and one that the children will remember long into adulthood.

We were all very excited to formally open the 'Library in the Plane' on World Book Day. We are so grateful to the many people who have worked so hard to make this dream a reality. The children can now enjoy reading their books in a warm and comfortable environment that is unique to our school.



One of our School Development Plan priorities for this year is to promote 'Reading for Pleasure' with our children and staff. We feel that the library will certainly contribute to the aim of every child enjoying their reading experiences.

Pre-School Provision

We are in the process of renewing the lease with the 'Little Stars' Pre-school and await a new lease from the Diocese. We would like to begin fundraising for a new building which could be a community project and encompass the 'wrap-around-care' required to support our children and families. The DFE is expecting all schools to provide a breakfast club and afterschool club to support working parents. We are fortunate to have this provision at St Helen's, but the portacabin on the school premises is coming to the end of its life and we need to begin a project to raise funding to replace the deteriorating temporary structure.

Looking Forward

There is a growing appetite for Multi Academy Trusts (MATs) in South Gloucestershire with new MATs appearing across the authority.

The Executive Head Teacher has been tasked with exploring the possibility of St Helen's School joining a MAT within the next two to three years. It is vital that any potential MAT has the same values and ethos as St Helen's School, particularly our Christian Foundation.

School Funding continues to be a challenge for all schools within the state education sector. The rising costs of utilities, staffing and building maintenance has taken its toll on the diminishing budgets and we wonder how we will continue to provide the high standard of education for our children.

Our most vulnerable children are most affected by the reduction in provision for their needs. This is particularly difficult for a Christian school who is committed to 'inclusion' and the care of every child as precious children of God. The level of need is rising, and the local authority are unable to provide the specialist care for these children. We can only pray for a change in direction from a government who does not seem to view education as a vital tool to address social inequality and future economic success. As Nelson Mandela stated, "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world."

3 Alveston Community Forum

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

The last 12 months has seen continued activity for all the projects on which I normally report, together with progress on one project which has been a sticking point in the past. Some of our activities include:

The Jubilee Hall Garden is now completed, and the WI has completed the planting. We are very grateful to the anonymous donor who made this project possible and to Kellaway Supplies and D Morris Landscape Contractors. Photographs have appeared in *Helmet* and *Thornbury Voice* at each stage. The most recent photo showed a plaque thanking these individuals.

The Repair Café held three repair events since the last AGM and have two further dates booked for this year. In that time 147 items have been brought to us and we have repaired 60% and given advice on a further 10%. But more importantly everyone seems to have enjoyed the events and 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. 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 also thank the Parish Council for their continued support and generosity in once again paying for the insurance policy which covers the Repair Café. Without this support we would not be able to do the things we do.

Further Repair Café events are planned for the 11th May and 21st September. Look out for the adverts in *Helmet* and bring along anything you think we might be able to repair. Radio Bristol gave us a useful plug when they interviewed. (The most recent event (17th Feb) was the 10th).

The Phone Box Book Exchange seems to be as popular as ever. I am especially pleased to see the steady turnover of Children's books. The habit of lifelong reading for pleasure starts at the earliest stages of life. Carol John has done excellent work ensuring that the phone box is kept tidy and that books do not end up on the floor and Jim Godden has taken on the task of any maintenance that is required. Many thanks to both of them. It is perhaps worth reiterating the rules and to this end I have put up a new notice: If you have a book which you enjoyed and think others might enjoy it, but no longer want to keep it on your shelves, you can donate it to the Book Exchange.

Litter busters - In addition to the four litter busting days which were held in the last year many Litter Buster volunteers (and other residents) use their daily walk (with or without dog) to collect rubbish deposited by irresponsible visitors to our village. 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. Thanks also go to Vicky Moore and The Ship for providing coffee and biscuits after each event.

Parade Maintenance (and bulb planting) - It is now a well-established tradition that St Helen's children join us to plant bulbs at the Parade and this year the event fell on the 17th October. They made a good job of it as can be seen by the splash of yellow in today's sunshine. Many thanks to them all and to the teachers Nicola Woolford and Nickie Burns. Jim Godden and his team of gardeners have once again kept the Parade looking splendid. Jim and Gill Alford have chosen and procured flowers to match the seasons. They have cut grass, weeded, planted, cut back shrubs and cleared the paving slabs of weeds.

One project that has caused frustration for many years has in the last twelve months achieved great progress. With the help of a grant from South Glos and the hard work of Jim Godden several of the rotten posts that hold up the canopy at the Parade have been replaced. As well as Project managing the job Jim Godden also painted the posts. Our thanks go to Jim and to Cllr Matthew Riddle for his efforts to get the grant agreed and also to Hayley Grove for encouraging the shop owners to agree to the work.

Jim Godden has lead the Parade Management Group for about 6 years and now wants to move on to other things. We are most grateful for all that Jim has done, not just at the parade. He mows the grass in several places, he mends and paints thing like the phone box when needed. He plants annuals and shrubs. He does the Christmas decorations. People often tell me that he does other things without any expectation of recognition such as cleaning road signs. Thank you Jim, you are a truly special member of the community!

Forum members took part in two Event Group events. The Summer Fair was held on the 2nd September and as a result of the excellent project management skills, imaginative ideas and unstoppable enthusiasm of Hayley Grove and her team this event was a huge success. The Christmas Fair took place on the 2nd December. There were more stalls, more food of every type and more entertainment. £750 were raised . Congratulations to Hayley and her team. We look forward to the Summer and Christmas events of 2024.

Christmas Lights - Once again children from the Pre-school decorated the Christmas tree and our thanks go to them and to Lucy Long. Jim Godden set up the Christmas Lights around the Parade and on the tree. We have an ambition to continue annual improvements to the Christmas decorations.

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 Alveston Community Events Report

Report given by Hayley Grove – Alveston Community Events

Kings Coronation was almost a wash out, but with the help of Alex Gwinell we moved over to the cricket club, the day was a huge success with lots of people dancing into the night.

Alveston Village Fair – 2nd September 2023- The weather was kind, and we the organiser's although stressed enjoyed the day, was great to see so many people from the village out enjoying themselves. RRT provided almost 400 free burgers for the village, the donations were a little light compared to what we thought but all still helps. The bar and the WI Ladies were kept busy all day serving drinks and refreshments. We did manage to make a small profit, which was given back to local groups who helped on the day, WI, Church, Helmet, Scouts, Friends of St Helens, etc

Halloween Trail – October 2023 - With over 200 children attending this year, it just seems to get bigger and bigger each year, this was the wettest one on record but all adults and children enjoyed the trail of 11 properties, the Avon Room in the ship this year was converted into a grave yard, amazing job done by Vicky and Ian.

Christmas Fair – December 2023 - We arrived to ice on the ground and it was freezing, but none the less the village came out, we had more stalls, and entertainment, along with bacon sandwiches at 10:00am followed by burgers and hotdogs at 12:00pm, thanks to Ian and Rick who keep us all feed. Mulled wine, hot chocolate and coffee kept every one warm, along with the fire pit and toasting of apples with the scouts. The Thorn blowers came along to keep us entertained. We made a nice profit and made a donation to the 2nd Alveston scout group.

Bingo – February 2024 - At the ship was a complete sell out, we couldn't have fitted another sole into the room.

5. Parish Council Chairman's Report

Graham Smith (Chairman) presented the following report on behalf of John Graham

Thank you for your very informative reports and thank you all for your hard work. Thank you to the parish councillors, Anne Curtis Chair of planning, Paul Caddick for the allotments, Carmen Vazquez, Valarie Williams, Marion Reeve for their work in the community groups and the contribution to the council meetings, who all give their time voluntary.

A special thank you must go to Brian Painter who retired this year after twenty years plus of service. Brian has been an integral part of the parish ensuring all play areas are clean and safe for children to use. Thank you also to Kate Driver our cemetery caretaker and to Graham Smith our parish clerk. I would also like to say thank you to Cllrs Matthew Riddle and Tony Williams for the help we receive from them both in supporting the parish.

People who do not sit on a committee but have a great impact on our parish, the cemeteries, the green space, allotments, to name a few, we are a lucky community to have you all so thank you for the continued work.

This year we have been busy within the parish, one of our main projects was to find funding for a new facility at the skate park. We have worked hard for this funding the installing of the new pump track. This was a big project that we all should be proud of, to have this facility is amazing, the main funding for this large project has come from Heidelberg materials UK which is part of Tytheington Quarry. Having sat on the Tytherington Quarry liaison group I have personally been instrumental in gaining the funds for this project, I am extremely proud of what we have achieved, the Alveston pump track is something that generations will be able to use, with the nearest pump track many miles away, as a community I realise how lucky we are to have this opportunity. The grand opening of the pump track is on Saturday May 18th, I do hope you will all be able to join us in the celebrations of such an amazing project, details of the grand opening will follow shortly.

Our new nature area on Down Road is still a work in motion, we will be pushing for the completion of this as soon as we can, this area will have seating and be a wonderful relaxation and nature area for the whole of the parish to enjoy.

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.

Before i finish i would just like to add that we are always looking for new candidates to join us as parish councillors, if you would like to join us please see Graham Smith, the clerk or myself for any further information, you would be made more than welcome.

Thank you once again to you all, together we make our parish a great place to live.

6. Parish Councillor Council Reports

Finance and planning reports given by Clerk Graham Smith

Although the year end accounts are still to be finalised The Parish Council is pleased to report: a financial position which has not relied upon the drawing of reserves. It should be mentioned and explained that the parish council increased the precept by £20,000 for 2024/25. This equates to a small addition per household on the overall council tax bill but councillors after due consideration perceived it to be necessary to continue to work effectively. A period occurred several years ago where precept was not increased for many years which as result now has a cumulative detrimental effect upon current finances ongoing if the deficit were not adjusted.

The Planning Committee met 19 times in the year to consider all the planning applications made in the Parish under our role as formal consultee.

66 Applications were considered by the Planning Committee and resolutions submitted to SGC.

Of which SGC made the following decisions—

31 were approved

6 were refused

8 were withdrawn

2 where prior approval was not required

19 are either still awaiting a decision or if the decision had been made it has not been communicated to the committee.

Allotments Report given by Cllr Paul Caddick

The Allotments are currently full with a waiting list of two.

The Parish Council continue to carry out regular inspections and over the summer are looking to complete a full inspection of trees.

The Parish Council continues to work closely with the Alveston Allotment Association to ensure that allotment holders enjoy their allotments to the full.

7. Open Forum – Questions and Discussion

Beat Officer PC Will Price was present to update the meeting on policing matters within the Parish and to take questions.

Mr Coldrick from the Rapid Relief Team introduced the organisation and explained their work and their role in the community. He stated that they have “Bleed Kits” available to donate to communities and enquired if this would be required within the Parish. PC Will Price would liaise with RRT to discuss.

A resident raised concerns relating to a pending Planning Application to extract a further 6 Million Tonnes of limestone from the site by going deeper into existing workings and removing the screening bund (or “Soil Store” as the operators refer to it) at the Woodleaze area of the quarry.

The resident stated that the quarry has an impact on our environment for the following reasons:

The “Sky Glow” from the quarry’s outrageous (dusk to dawn) lighting system dwarfs anything emitted by Thornbury and makes a mockery of all the good work that the council did in reducing the night time emissions from the A38 road lights.

The noise from extraction and train movements is substantial and occurs well outside of any reasonable working hours.

The dust emitted during dry periods is considerable, this includes both during extraction and huge dust clouds when blasting is carried out.

The smell from the associated asphalt plant is obnoxious.

Regular blasting shakes the houses.

Considering that the quarry’s current permissions were granted as a result of a compromise at a Public Inquiry in the 1990’s in which Alveston Parish Council (as well as other local stakeholders) representations were pitted against the then quarry operator Hanson.

Resident asked the Parish Council if it will be opposing the impending Planning Application?

(Clerk) advised that the Parish Council is unable to commit to support until the application has been formally presented and considered at a formal Parish Council planning committee meeting.

8. End of Business

Graham Smith closed the meeting thanked the members of Alveston Women’s Institute for providing the refreshments.

The meeting closed at 8.45 pm.