

CHARSFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

ANNUAL MEETING OF THE PARISH

Minutes of Meeting Held on Tuesday, 17th May 2022

Present: Councillors Pedgrift (Chair), Moor (Vice Chair), Murray, Sharp, McArthur, Haird, Laird and Pam Hembra (Parish Clerk)

Attendees: District Councillor Tony Fryatt

13 Members of the Public

		Action
1.	<p>Update on the Parish Council's achievements and activity over the year and on what is being proposed for 2022/2023.</p> <p>Chairman's Report attached</p>	
2.	<p>To approve the Annual Parish Minutes of 18th May 2021</p> <p>The minutes were approved and signed by the Chair.</p>	
3.	<p>To Receive Reports from Other Organisations.</p> <p>Village Hall AGM Report attached Charsfield Recreation Ground AGM Report attached</p>	
4.	<p>Free Electricity – Local resident John Collins to open talks regarding the Greater South East Net Zero Hub</p> <p>The Nadder Valley in Wiltshire has taken their village off grid. They have erected solar arrays ranging from 18 kW to 50kW on ten buildings, many on the Fonthill Estate near Tisbury. A second share offer in 2018 to put solar panels on five schools in the Nadder Valley was also oversubscribed. The result has been a win-win all round. The building owners and occupiers, through power purchase agreements, receive much cheaper electricity. Nadder Community Energy, which owns and maintains the installations, earns income from the Feed-in Tariff together with a mark-up on electricity sales and payments for exporting spare capacity to the grid. The local community benefits, with all profits going into a fund for planet-friendly initiatives – so far, an environmental school prize, solar panels for the local swimming pool and funding for a highly successful Green Fair – and, ultimately, the planet benefits from the use of clean, green energy.</p> <p>The Rural Community Energy Fund supports rural communities in England to develop renewal energy projects that provide economic and social benefits to their community. It is jointly funded by the Department for Business, Energy</p>	

	<p>and Industrial Strategy and the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and managed by the Greater East Net Zero Hub</p> <p>John Taylor, of Net Zero Hub, is on hand to offer us any advice we need and guide us through the application process for funding. New funding will be coming through soon. Community Energy England is a not-for-profit organisation that represents the community energy centre. A comprehensive list of community energy funding and finance opportunities can be found on their website – www.communityenergyengland.org</p> <p>John Collins will put down a place holder for Charsfield, and we can have free membership of the group for a year. We should possibly include outlying villages to make it more feasible.</p> <p>John Collins is happy to send around his powerpoint presentation.</p> <p>The Parish Council would be responsible for making any initial application for funding. John Taylor would help with any feasibility study.</p> <p>Questions/comments coming out of the discussions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Is there any movement within East Suffolk? - Household bills could be significantly reduced. - How long does it take? - Planting trees is not a long term fix, solar panels better. - Would it be worth a small village doing? - PVT panels – cools the panel doubling life <p>It was also mentioned there was a wind turbine in Monewden which is broken and was asked if there could be any funding to fix it</p> <p>A picture of Charsfield could go on the Community Energy England website.</p>	
<p>5.</p>	<p>Open Forum for the Public to Raise Questions There were no questions from the public.</p>	

REPORTS

Chair's Report

2021/22 has been another year of beavering away behind the scenes, striving to ensure Charsfield has a voice among the many tiered levels of government – from Westminster to East Suffolk District Council, with Suffolk County Council in-between.

We were very pleased to be joined by three new councillors – Sally Haird, Mary Jane McArthur and David Sharp.

We have presented the village views in several initiatives undertaken by East Suffolk District Council including Housing and Planning workshops, a Community Governance

Review, and the Cycling and Walking Strategy. We have also attended several Sizewell C events and heightened awareness of all the different ways this project would impinge on Charsfield.

Charsfield is a member of the Carlford Community Partnership and the Associated Road Safety Forum and has been represented at every meeting this year.

Road safety is always on the agenda and, thanks to our District Councillor Tony Fryatt, we have secured some funding towards safety measures at the junction of The Street and B1078. Charsfield has also been accepted for the trial of Automatic Number Plate Recognition speed signs taking place in Suffolk.

We participated in The Big Clean Up and a small team of volunteers scoured the hedgerows for litter on the first Saturday morning of the campaign in March.

Preparations for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee are well under way thanks to Councillor Haird and her committee and to all the people contributing time and effort to the planned events. John Fox has really established his role as Village Historian this year, in addition to planning the Charsfield History exhibition which will form part of the Jubilee celebrations.

Thanks to Stephen Fletcher and Clare and Andrew Fane for their generosity and work for the Queen's Green Canopy. We look forward to seeing the avenue of soon to be planted Oak trees growing to maturity.

A memorial tree and seat were installed dedicated to the memory of Cyril Kindred who we lost in 2021 and plans are currently underway to provide a memorial seat dedicated to Phyllis and Percy Mapperley in fond remembrance from the village.

Thank you to Councillor Moor who has revised and updated the Emergency Plan so if the unexpected happens we will be ready to cope.

The coming year will be challenging, depending in large part on the decisions made on Sizewell C.

Highways will continue to be one of our main concerns and we will be pursuing the road safety and speeding aspects along every avenue available.

Practically we hope to complete the telephone kiosk restoration and exhibit the first temporary display.

Our new village website is nearly ready for launch so keep an eye out.

You should soon see new plaques appear on our existing footpath signs in conjunction with Discovering Suffolk and we have also applied for Chapel Lane and Davey Lane to be considered for Quiet Lane status.

Thank you to all the councillors for donating their time and dedication to keeping our village a thriving community.

Finally, I would like to thank Pam Hembra, our Parish Clerk for her dedication and hard work. Without her the Council wouldn't function at all.

Jan Pedgrift, Chair, Charsfield Parish Council

Minutes of Charsfield Village Hall Annual General Meeting

Wednesday, 27th October 2021

Present: Chris Haird (via Zoom), David Wolfe, Pam Hembra (PJH), Garry Stratton, Amanda Little, Viviane Ward, Peter Holloway

Members of the Public: Trevor Boyd

1. Apologies for Absence

Liz Holland, Pauline Llewellyn, Martin Lyne, Nikki Hind
Jan Pedgrift

2. Minutes of Last Meeting dated 22nd October 2020

Agreed and signed

3. Chair's Report – full report below

Received and noted

4. Treasurer's Report- below and attached

CH thanked for his clear presentation and timely reports. The AGM accepts the financial statements as at 31st July 2021.

5. Other Reports - below

VW – Bookings Report accept and grateful

GS – Technical Report oversight welcomed

AL – Bar Report

All reports were accepted and the members thanked for work during the year.

Clive Woodall and Margaret Salter and her team were thanks for their participation and help during the year.

6. Election of Committee and Bar Committee

The Committee stood down.

The following were the nominees to the Village Hall Management Committee:

Chris Haird

Peter Holloway

Martin Lyne

Viviane Ward

Liz Holland

Trevor Boyd

Pam Hembra

Pauline Llewellyn

Garry Stratton

Amanda Little

Nikki Hind

Clive Woodall – non voting member

Margaret Salter – non-voting member if willing [Post meeting note:

Margaret does not want to be a non-voting member]

All were approved and agreed

DW suggests, for the moment, we decide at each meeting who is going to chair the next meeting.

Report for Charsfield Village Hall AGM – October 2021 – David Wolfe

Since the 2020 AGM, the Charsfield Village Hall Committee has successfully continued the operations of the Village Hall despite the Covid restrictions.

For much of the period our committee meetings had to go on-line, but we are pleased to be able to meet again properly.

Although there were periods when we had to close the Hall completely because of the restrictions, we have organised Friday night bar openings whenever that was possible and are now back open again for bookings for regular and one-off events. I am proud that we have continued to provide that valuable community benefit to Charsfield despite the challenges which the Covid restrictions brought about.

Given that the opportunities for income generation were greatly reduced in that period but many costs remained the same, it is no surprise that income from the bar and booking did not cover our costs this year. However, the Committee felt it was important that we continued to provide opportunities for people to meet and socialise where possible. That was made financially possible because we received substantial grant income from central and local government arising from the Covid pandemic. We are extremely grateful for those grants. Without them the Hall would not have survived financially and certainly would not have been able to continue to provide its services during the last 12 months.

However, in accepting those grants, we have been clear that the money will not be used to sustain loss making activities long term but will, in the medium to long term, be used to invest in carefully-chosen improvements to the Hall and its facilities which will have long term community benefits in improving the facilities. The Committee will be considering all that in the next few months.

When I agreed to step in as interim Chair of the VH Committee two years ago, everyone's expectation was that it would take only a few months to settle in the new Committee members and arrangements. In the end, that has all proved more complicated than any of us expected, and Covid has slowed us down. But we are now in a good place.

Since the last AGM, the VH Committee has successfully continued with (and now largely completed) the task of updating its governance and operational arrangements, and facilities. That has included new financial management and banking arrangements, a new booking system and approach, improved and simplified IT systems and sounds systems, and new bar management and rota arrangements; a number of repairs and improvements have been undertaken to the fabric of the Hall and the sheds. We also now have in place a 'risk register' which the Committee will review and update periodically which aims to ensure that the Committee as a whole has oversight of the many and varied operational and other matters which need to be in place for the Hall to function safely and sustainably long term.

With the increased membership of the Committee, it has been possible to share out and allocate roles and responsibilities. I am very grateful to Pam for continuing as Secretary to the Committee, to Amanda for taking the lead on overseeing the bar, to Garry for his work on IT and related matters, to Viviane for her work on bookings and publicity, to Peter for his oversight of Hall maintenance issues, to Chris for acting as Treasurer, to Martin in keeping oversight of our various contracts, to Liz for taking on special projects around security and other matters, and for Pauline for her long term support for the VH Committee. We are also all indebted to others who provide additional volunteer support, including Angela with gardening, Clive with beer/bar, and Margaret and her team of volunteer bar staff without whom it would not be possible to keep the bar going every week. Overall, we can be pleased that we now have a great team in place such that people newly joining the Committee or supporting in other ways will not find it onerous.

During the year, Richard Ford stepped back from the Committee after many years of great service to the VH. We were sad to see him go.

Terri, who had provided caretaking/booking support, also stepped down. We were grateful for the service she had provided to the Hall in recent years. We were delighted to recruit Nikki, who has taken on the role with energy and enthusiasm and has been a welcome attendee at our meetings.

In coming to the end of my term as Chair, I wish everyone on the Committee all the very best in taking the VH forward to new strengths.

Charsfield Village Hall Year End Accounts 2020/2021 – Chris Haird

In summary:

Income:	£21,968.00	
Expenditure:	£7,004.09	
Excess income for period:	£14,963.91	
Excess income less Covid Grants:		- £3,744.09
Barclays Bank:	£37,669.83	
Petty Cash	£190.20	
Bar Stock	£845.07	

During the year the CVH Bank Accounts were moved to Barclays Bank with the old accounts at NatWest being closed, two-signatory control was introduced on all expenditure including online transactions, contactless payments replaced all cash transactions and the annual accounts were changed to the 'revenue and expenses' format.

While the accounts show a surplus income for the year this was primarily due to Covid grants covering lockdowns 2 and 3. The underlying operating situation this year, without the grants, was a significant loss (lockdown one grant was received in the previous financial year).

Lockdowns severely impacted the number of Hall Hire bookings and also resulted in significant refunds for bookings that had been pre-paid in the previous financial year. During the Summer of 2021 bookings began to recover. Costs were controlled carefully with limited expenditure being approved for important maintenance and Hall infrastructure projects which would enhance the hirer's experience.

The Friday Night Community Bar which provides a local village drinking establishment since the Pub closed was only able to open 20 times during the year due to the various lockdowns and restrictions. On average the takings were approximately £110 per night. It is worth noting that the Bar profits were lower than previous figures as lockdown closures caused stock to go out-of-date and while the Committee were determined to provide the best possible bar experience which included draft beer, the limited attendance meant that there was often beer wastage.

During this year the operating loss was covered by the Covid grants and will continue to be while we rebuild the usage and income of the Hall. Otherwise, the Covid Grants will be used by the CVH Committee “for the benefit of Charsfield and surrounds Community residents” as follows:

Discounts to be offered to new and existing hirers to encourage increased Hall usage at all times of the day, week and year

- Organise subsidised or free events at the CVH run by the Committee for the Community
- Improve the Hall infrastructure and help to sustain the Hall as a valuable asset for the longer term
- Implement projects which expand Village services

However, the grant money will not be “gifted” to other charities or directly to individuals or causes as this is not within our mandate. We can and will support Community causes through the points above.

Bookings – Vivianne Ward

Bookings are returning to a healthy state. The regular bookings have all returned e.g. WI, cotton club, church and bowling. Pilates is restarting in October too, which is great news. We have also seen new events such as messy play, and an increase of private bookings for social events.

I have put a new folder for hirers that outlines all a hirer needs to know, plus forms to record any accidents.

The transfer of the village hall caretaking from Terri to Nikki has gone well, and Nikki is well up to speed on the role.

Technology Report – Garry Stratton

Stage Lighting

The Village Hall is served by a sophisticated stage lighting system. The lights have not been required or used during the past 12 months, or since the handover of responsibilities, and therefore detailed training will be required prior to their use for a production.

Website

General

The new website has been running successfully since February 2021, with no issues reported during the year. Further changes and upgrades are planned: see below.

Booking System

The main planned upgrade to the website is an improved hall booking system to support a simplified process.

Options have been evaluated against a revised booking process and a preferred technical solution identified. At the time of writing, discussions are underway with the vendor about how our detailed requirements will be met, and the security of our investment in their product.

Once details have been agreed, installing the new system on the website should be quick. Dates to be confirmed following discussion with the vendor.

Integration with Village Website

It has been agreed to integrate the Village Hall and Village websites. A working group with members from the Parish Council and Village Hall Management Committee has been identified to define requirements, and discussions are underway with the technical developer. Requirements are currently being confirmed and prototypes prepared.

Data Management

Many Village Hall documents are stored electronically in secure Google Drive folders. Work is underway to make the structure and use of the drive as simple as possible while maintaining security.

There are no current operational issues, although we should probably make more use of the Google Drive for shared documents. Part of the current work is to make it easier to store and access documents.

Wi-Fi and Data

The Wi-Fi and broadband are routinely monitored and have mostly been working as expected. The broadband connection is occasionally lost, resulting in the loss of access to remote monitoring of heating and lighting (see below). This is resolved by restarting the router, which must be done at the hall.

It is proposed to review the current router and its connections.

Heating & Lighting Automation

Automations are in place to enable remote monitoring and control of heating and lighting. The systems are sophisticated and generally work well. If a fault develops or changes are required, in-depth knowledge of the installation is required, hence the need to ensure backup cover.

Sound System

Following review by the committee, a simple two channel stereo sound amplifier has been installed for the playing of music and use of microphones. Two new speakers have also been installed to replace those on loan.

Low-cost options have been selected, as it is expected that events requiring high quality sound, such as band performances and discos, will provide their own equipment.

A Bluetooth speaker, bought as an interim measure, has proved a success for use during Community Bar evenings.

Other

Post code marking of more valuable items, as a deterrent to theft, has been agreed and is to be scheduled.

Bar report – Amanda Little

The last year in the bar

Obviously due to Covid and the bar being closed we did have quite a bit of stock that went out of date.

Since opening regularly the uptake has been relatively quiet with the odd good week. I've been trying to keep stock low but without running out, we have been asked to get in a couple of products which we have tried to accommodate. Obviously it's a fine line with providing what people want without the big losses of stock. There has been beer wastage but this has been cut with using the mini's.

Thanks to all the volunteers for working on Friday evenings to allow us to provide this facility.

Thanks to Margaret for organising all the volunteers and to Clive for beer organisation.