

## BRAISHFIELD VILLAGE ASSOCIATION

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting  
held at the Village Hall on Tuesday 22 January, 2013

**PRESENT:-** David Robinson [Chairman], Graham Bennett [Vice-Chairman], Sheila Still [Treasurer], Rosie Groves [Secretary], Mike Mullane [News Editor], Sue Mullane [Distribution], Chris Balchin [Web Editor], David Protheroe, Sue Coleman, Tessa Allen, George Elliott, Elizabeth Elliott, Viv Robinson, Ted Still, Jane Bennett, Ian Coleman, Geoff Daniell, Carole Renvoize, Steve Renvoize, Mike Prince, Dorothy Ross, Ron Blizzard, Mike Horton, Betty Horton.

**APOLOGIES:-** Meryl Balchin, Richard Groves, Richard Brazier.

### **CHAIRMAN'S OPENING REMARKS**

The Chairman noted that this was the 37th AGM of the Braishfield Village Association – and that perhaps on the 40th anniversary there should be a party.

### **MINUTES OF AGM 2012**

The minutes of the last AGM, having been circulated at the meeting and available on the website, were confirmed. Proposed by George Elliott, seconded by Carole Renvoize.

### **MATTERS ARISING**

Following on from a survey taken the year before, Chris Balchin had contacted British Gas informing them of the number of households interested in receiving mains gas (about 40). He had been informed that this was not enough.

### **CHAIRMAN**

David Robinson gave the following report:

In 2012 996.1mm (or 39.2 inches) of rain fell on the village –according to Geoff Daniel's section on the village website. Notwithstanding, it has been an eventful year for your committee, and I will attempt to outline briefly the ways in which we have striven to be of service to villagers (and keep dry).

I will begin with the Village News. Six issues have been produced, printed and circulated around all the households in the village. The size and scope of the News has increased steadily over the year as Mike, our editor, has gained more support from people who have something to contribute, to the point that our pre-Christmas issue ran to 48 pages. We have anecdotal evidence that a majority of villagers do actually read it, and for those who say they can't be bothered, we probably have to accept that maybe they don't really value the community in which they are living, and will probably continue in their state of ignorance. Meanwhile it continues to be the major way in which news is disseminated

throughout the village. Fortunately for us, the voluntary donations from readers and the revenue from advertising is just about meeting our production costs, so our sincere thanks to all those who support us in that way. And during the year, we have introduced the on-line version on the village website. The paper version has been distributed by a team of 14 volunteers once again, and we are extremely grateful to them for their efforts – in all weathers!

On the social front, we organised and ran the ‘Murder Mystery’ evening in the village hall in January 2012, which was not only great fun but also raised £1275 in support of the Red and White Appeal for a blood cancer unit in the Southampton General hospital. Mike Mullane and I joined the Jubilee Celebration committee set up and chaired by Mike Prince, the Parish Council chairman, and we were able to communicate fully with people about the plans via the News. It was, by general consent, another very successful knees-up! Miraculously, it was a dry day (rainfall in June: 156.1mm, or 6.1 inches).

The BVA committee organised a collection for our retiring postman, Pip Dennis, for which we had a very good response and it was a great pleasure to be able to present him with a cheque for £1050 on the day of the party. The ‘Don’t Tell Pip’ campaign as it was known was a total success, and Pip was not only extremely gratified but totally gobsmacked by our gesture.

Chris Balchin’s photography was another success on the occasion, along with several other good amateur photographers, and we enlarged and framed the aerial shot of most of the revellers. This now graces the Committee Room in the Village Hall as a lasting reminder of what we do rather well in Braishfield: party!

We had another village outing to the Dorset Steam Fair in August, rather a muddy one. But ‘a good time was had by all’, as they say. The Golfing Society, a brainwave of Richard Brazier’s was floated as an idea in the News and has had an excellent response. I understand it has had several meetings to do what golfers do and clearly has a future. Similarly the Tennis group have had several meetings (or matches) and seem set to continue throughout this year.

Rosie Groves and I keep a watching brief on all planning applications that seem to affect the village. Generally we do not express a view unless it is something that has alarmed a significant number of villagers or is a clear violation of the Village Design Statement. We did however attend the RFSF appeal for permanent use of their site in Bunny Lane and extension of their scope of operations. We had objected earlier in the process even though it is outside our parish boundaries. Rosie and Richard sat through many hours of the sitting, I popped in and out. Their appeal was upheld by the inspector. We also wrote in objection to an application for a change in use of the business premises in Blackthorn Close. So far we have no further news about this.

We have attended most of the Parish Council meetings during the year as observers, to keep ourselves up to date with their activities, and on occasion have been able to make suggestions and raise issues.

We also contributed several comments to the TVBC’s ‘Core Strategy and Designations Development Plan’, which have been included in their website. Whether we will have managed to change anything we do not yet know. Our general experience of these

consultative exercises is neither encouraging nor motivating. I understand that that a revised draft may be available for further consultation in April or May this year.

We were also invited by the Parish Council to put someone forward as a 'Village Agent', but on further examination of the implications declined. We do want to stress, however, that if any villager has a difficulty or issue and is not sure what to do about it or where to go, we as individuals and as a committee will be ready to give them support and our best advice. We see that as an important part of our role in the village, should the need arise. Graham Bennett has had a good response to the idea of setting up a Heating Oil Consortium, and we had our first delivery in December with a bulk purchase at a price at least 2p per litre below the best available. That's a saving of £20 on 1000 litres. We spread the word about registering for 'superfast broadband' and as far as we know, around 50 people have done so. More would be good, especially as we have learned that the project now has been approved for the go-ahead and funding is available.

The Time Capsule project was also our initiative. It was completed with very generous support from all sides in the village and, as you may know, the capsule was buried in December near the village pond. The Hampshire Records Office have it on record with its exact location and a list of its contents (there were over 80 documents and artefacts). It was all great fun to be involved in and a very interesting initiative.

As you will infer from all the above, the committee have all been extremely involved in making all this happen. For those who have not been mentioned already, I want to thank Sheila for, as ever, keeping our finances in excellent order, and especially for her role on the 'Don't Tell Pip' exercise. Sue Mullane took over the News distribution from Anne Edwards in a very smooth handover, as well as acting as editorial assistant to Mike. We said goodbye to Rosalie Gurr, who with her husband Alan, has steered the House Archive along thus far. I am happy to report that they are keen to stay involved with it from far-distant Herefordshire, and we will need to decide with them how it can best be carried forward. We were delighted to welcome Sue Coleman who has joined the committee to take Rosalie's place, and we will be asking you to confirm her appointment later this evening. Regretfully we are also going to lose David Protheroe's presence on the committee. He has served for a number of years, but his ever expanding business empire is putting pressure on his time and we have had to accept his resignation. We have all been extremely grateful for his involvement, energy and enthusiasm. We have co-opted Tessa Allen to the committee in his place, and will ask for your support for this also when the time comes for voting.

In the coming year we intend to keep up our regular News output, produce an updated version of the Residents' Guide, expand the coverage of the House Survey, continue to monitor planning and associated matters, organise one or two social activities, and support others in the community who plan things of general benefit to us all.

This concludes my report, which I hope you will accept, and will continue to support us in the coming year.

Report adopted. Proposed by Elizabeth Elliott, seconded by Dorothy Ross.

## **FINANCIAL REPORT**

The treasurer, Sheila Still, had circulated the finalized accounts for year ending 31<sup>st</sup> December 2012 to all present. She then delivered her report:

I am hoping that you can all see a copy of the Balance Sheet for 2012. My first job is to offer grateful thanks to Gill John for taking the time and trouble to audit the accounts.

Looking firstly at the income, advertising is on an exact par with last year and is covering the printing cost for 6 issues of the news. Sadly donations are approximately 20% down on last year, so a rewording of the donation page will appear in the April issue. Postal subscriptions remained the same and bank interest is negligible. The collection for Pip the retiring postman raised £1038.34 and an additional £11.66 was added to this from the BVA to make it a round figure of £1050 and the cheque was presented to Pip at the Jubilee Party. All profit from the Murder Mystery evening held last January was paid to the Red and White Appeal. On the expenditure side there is an increase in postage and stationery costs as one might expect but Invoices to advertisers are now being sent by email wherever possible to help keep this under control. The BVA News expenses relate to the past two years. The House Archive has incurred costs for printing inks and paper. Armed Forces Day relates to the flags which the BVA agreed to fund and the Jubilee Photo now hanging in the Village Hall was also funded by the Association.

The Association had an excess of expenditure over income of £167.30 but is still in a position to cover future budgeted costs and remains viable.

Then Mr Chairman I would like to put the accounts forward for adoption.

There were no questions from the floor. The adoption of the accounts was proposed by Tessa Allen, seconded by Jane Bennett and unanimously agreed.

## **NEWS AND RESIDENTS GUIDE-**

News Editor Mike Mullane briefly confirmed the Chairman's summary that 6 issues had been published on time over the year. He emphasised that the contributions from Villagers are vital to the health and survival of the magazine, and thanked those present (and those not!) for the strong support this year - to the extent that the magazine now averaged 44 pages, on one occasion 48 pages. Views, opinions and criticism were always welcome and would be taken on board and reflected.

Following an indication from the current printer (Ken Gould, N.Baddesley) that he was planning to reduce his commitments, MM had researched alternatives, including the possibility of colour. Colour however remains beyond BVA's financial scope. Thus discarding various monochrome options (cost/distance) MM recommended adopting a printer in King's Somborne who currently produces their magazine monthly – arguments for adoption are similar cost (£170), proximity to Braishfield and an encouragingly friendly and helpful approach. MM outlined briefly that the printer (Norman Denison) produced the magazine monthly on machinery sourced by Village funds and collated, folded and stapled by local volunteers. Apart from production expenses, all funds go to

the local churches. In the future, BVA might consider voluntary collation etc. (which halves the cost), but not yet! It had been agreed that the April edition will be the first under the new arrangement.

SM outlined the status of the Residents Guide, due out in May/June this year. Pages had been divvied out to willing volunteers to update, and overall no 'mechanical' production problems were anticipated.

In reply to a question from the floor, MM stated that the King's Somborne printer would not be able also to produce the Resident's Guide because it contains colour. DR asked for suggestions for possible sponsors from the floor, having written to Hilliers and awaiting their reply, but none were forthcoming. The meeting agreed that a two year gap in the production of the Resident's Guide was appropriate.

## **WEBSITE**

Webeditor, Chris Balchin, pointed out that colour versions of the News, and updated versions of the Residents' Guide were always available on the website. He then presented the following report:

"The web-site has been running almost five years.

As before I have had the web-site usage analysed by Google Analytics over the last six months. The "hits" on the web-site have been just under 900 which is similar to 2011. The percentage of returning customers is ~40%. The three 'dynamic' pages of Village Diary, Village Hall Booking and Church Room Bookings seem to get good press.

Earlier in 2012 Mike Stevens, previous BVA News Editor, closed his software support activity and we were transferred to a local ISP. Unfortunately when it came to renewing the annual fees their initial request was for £288 which was then halved on review. Still way higher than previous years. A bit of investigation later with the result that I have moved the site to 123-Reg, who claim to be the largest in the UK hosting 1.4 million web-sites.

The House Archive has not been released to the web-site as the BVA Committee re-thinks the project.

I would like to thank Geoff Daniell for supplying the weather data and reports which showed we had 35 inches of rain in 2012 up 50% from previous years.

I leave you with the same question as last year, what do you want from a Village web-site."

## **ELECTION OF COMMITTEE:-**

The chairman listed those members of the committee who were prepared to be reelected: David Robinson, Graham Bennett, Sheila Still, Rosie Groves, Mike Mullane, Sue Mullane, Chris Balchin. They were proposed en bloc by George Elliott, seconded by Mike Prince and unanimously reelected.

Rosalie Gurr and David Protheroe having stood down, two new members, Sue Coleman and Tessa Allen, were proposed by Mike Prince, seconded by Dorothy Ross and unanimously elected onto the committee.

## **ANY OTHER BUSINESS:-**

1. In response to the Chairman's request for suggestions for activities that the BVA

should organise, Meryl Balchin (via Chris) had sent a proposal that a series of speakers be organized (as is done by the Romsey and District Society). This was debated at some length with many contributions from the floor. Main points: good speakers are expensive and hard to find, and there would be too much overlap with other societies (Horticultural, RDS). Meeting not generally in favour. DR said that, nevertheless, the BVA committee would discuss further.

2. Carole Renvoize asked whether there would be any mileage in a film club with bar and drinks to raise money for local projects. CB pointed out that the Village Hall committee had a film evening on its agenda already.
3. Sue Mullane asked for suggestions for new items for the News. Suggestions included a puzzle page with crosswords and Sudoku, and a garden advice page with seasonal tips perhaps supplied by the Horticultural Society.
4. The date of the next AGM was set for Thursday (note) 23 January 2014.