

BRAISHFIELD VILLAGE ASSOCIATION

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting
held at the Village Hall on Thursday 23 January, 2014

PRESENT:- David Robinson [Chairman], Graham Bennett [Vice-Chairman], Sheila Still [Treasurer], Rosie Groves [Secretary], Mike Mullane [News Editor], Sue Mullane [Distribution], Sue Coleman, Viv Robinson, Ted Still, Jane Bennett, Geoff Daniell, Carole Renvoize, Steve Renvoize, Mike Prince, Hazel Prince, Dorothy Ross, Lawrence Randall, Marian Randall, Mike Stubbs, Mary Stubbs, Sue Buxton, Meryl Balchin, Richard Groves, Richard Brazier, David Protheroe, John Bevan, Angela Bevan.

APOLOGIES:- Chris Balchin [Web Editor], George Elliott, Elizabeth Elliott, Tessa Allen.

CHAIRMAN'S OPENING REMARKS

The Chairman welcomed all to the meeting.

MINUTES OF AGM 2013

The minutes of the last AGM, having been circulated at the meeting and available on the website, were confirmed. Proposed by Mike Prince, seconded by Viv Robinson.

MATTERS ARISING

None.

CHAIRMAN

David Robinson gave the following report:

BVA AGM 2014 – Chairman's report.

Our committee has been active throughout the year in a number of ways. As well as meeting regularly every two months we have striven to be of value in the community in several different ways.

Firstly, and most obviously, we have produced and distributed six copies of the Village News, and our thanks for this go to Mike Mullane, our editor, to Sue Mullane who assists and organises the distribution. But also to the team of distributors, to our advertisers, the people who have made donations towards its costs, to those who have written for us, and for the occasional feedback from villagers who have read it. I hope you will agree with me that it has continued to evolve, in terms of size and quality, and this is in no small measure due to the team who produce it. In January we were able to thank our distributors at a small drinks party – the first time ever, apparently – and they have continued to turn out in all weathers to spread the word.

We seem to have had to spend quite a lot of energy this past year on planning matters. With a lot of input from Rosie Groves, we made several recommendations to the TVBC Local Plan Draft, most of which seem to have been taken up. They were issues which impinged on the village and what might happen to it and to surrounding territory.

We wrote in objection to the application to allow Blackthorn House to be converted into a

dwelling, and spoke at the two planning council meetings which were held. Our enthusiasm for the planning process was not enhanced by this experience, and, as you will know, all our objections, despite being upheld by the councillors, have since been swept aside by loopholes in the planning process.

Latterly we have been concerned with the affordable housing issue which has concerned many in the village. Initially we established that there was no clear consensus among the committee members to express any clear view, so we concentrated our efforts on keeping villagers informed about what was going on and what opportunities there were to express their views, whether for or against the proposal. I have to say that the 'consultations' organised by TVBC left a lot to be desired, and that the whole matter has been badly bungled by 'officialdom'. Actually, the fact that we chose to sit on the fence did mean that we could listen to the debate and hear all shades of opinion without heating up ourselves. Then in November we had an extremely thoughtful and thorough discussion in our own meeting and came to a clear consensus on what we as a body needed to argue for. This was a strong rejection of the proposed site which is contrary to the Village Design Statement, and a request to go back to the drawing board. We have not, as some would wish, opposed the provision of affordable housing *per se*. We will await future developments.

Moving from planning, during the year we did a major revision of the Residents' Guide and re-issued it to all households. We sponsored and supported the preparation of a Memorial booklet which will pay tribute to all those who have died in the service of their country, giving details of their contributions. This is inspired by the 100th anniversary of the outbreak of World War I, and is being pulled together by Mike Mullane, and draws on a lot of research done by, among others, John Rhodes, John Edwards and George Elliott. The results will be available for sale within the next few weeks.

On a lighter note, your committee, or most of it, strengthened by spouses, led the singing again at the end of this year's Variety Show, and back in the summer we organised a picnic and entertainment for children on the afternoon of the Flower Show, followed by a barn dance in the evening. Tessa and Mike Allen worked like demons to get the children's events going and a decent few took part. The picnic also happened, but with only a select few taking part. Thank goodness for the Crook Hill gang who turned up in numbers. The barn dance was great fun, and it was good to have our own local caller, Graham Taylor, in charge. But the turn out was very low, and we lost money on the event. In reviewing all three events afterwards, we decided that we had not done nearly enough to publicise them, and that they were probably not to be repeated in future years.

Graham Bennett's Oil Consortium continues to flourish, and all of us involved have felt the benefit this year of the lower prices he has been able to negotiate on our behalf.

Chris Balchin has had a quietish year with the website, but he will report on this shortly, and I just want to register our recognition of his ongoing work to maintain and develop this additional means of communication.

The Housing Survey, which we have been supporting for some time, has suffered from the loss of its champions, Alan and Rosalie Gurr, who have moved to Hereford. We advertised to see if anyone in the village wanted to take it on, but no one has come forward. Earlier, our idea of putting all the available information on the web met some opposition from a few residents, and was therefore abandoned. So the project is shelved, at least for the time being.

Our new committee member, Sue Coleman, has taken on the role of sending greetings cards to any villagers we know of who have been unwell, and this is something we want to repeat and extend in the coming year.

We seem to be in good shape financially, thanks to some excellent stewardship by our treasurer Sheila Still, as you will see and hear when she makes her report.

So much for 2013. In this next year we will carry on as before, we hope. There could well be further big challenges ahead on the planning front, as the pressure on Romsey and its surrounding villages to provide more and more housing continues. We will be alert to this and make sure that you are all kept informed. And we will have a few more social events to keep us all cheerful. A wine tasting is being arranged for late February, and a celebration evening on St. George's Day, with the entertainment provided by BMADS. All this and more you will find in the

next issue of the Village News.

Finally, I would like to end by thanking all the members of the committee for their efforts during the year. They have been very supportive and we all seem to be able to work well as a team. I'm happy to answer any questions and receive any suggestions for 2014.

Report adopted. Proposed by Sue Coleman, seconded by Jane Bennett.

FINANCIAL REPORT

The treasurer, Sheila Still, had circulated the finalized accounts for year ending 31st December 2013 to all present. Her report was as follows:

As usual my first task is to thank Gill John for auditing our accounts – and of course for finding no mistakes!

In comparing this year with last, on the income side advertising revenue is up by approx. 22% which is good news for the Braishfield News Magazine. I'm also pleased to say that donations toward it are also up this time by about 35% and I would like to say a big thank you to all those who have donated. The extra revenue has enabled the editor to choose a more expensive printer to produce a better product thus enhancing the quality of the News. Other income includes £200 sponsorship by Michael Rhodes towards the production of the Residents Guide. The balance was funded by the BVA with the help of donations and advertising previously mentioned. The remaining income was from the two events of Barn Dance and Variety Show. We were able to donate £64 to the Village Hall from the proceeds of the Variety Show but unfortunately the Barn Dance made a loss. This was due to lack of take up by Villagers and the high cost of the hall and band.

The main expenditure each year is the cost of producing the news which had increased by 13% for reasons mentioned above. In addition the cost to the Association of producing the Residents Guide was £226.89 and we hope you find the guide helpful. This year a reception was held to say thank you to the distributors of the News without whom none of you would receive it. A software package for setting up the News prior to printing was part funded by the Association.

Invoices outstanding at the end of 2012 were settled and there was £44 outstanding at the end of this year (which has in fact been settled this month). Overall we made a loss of £67.27 but this still leaves us in a very viable position to cover future budgeted expenditure.

There were no questions from the floor. The adoption of the accounts was proposed by John Bevan, seconded by Sue Buxton and unanimously agreed.

NEWS AND RESIDENTS GUIDE-

News Editor Mike Mullane gave the following report:

Over the year we have evolved both the printing and the layout of the magazine. On the printing side we moved to a private printer, Norman Denison, from King Somborne (he does their local magazine). He produced a couple of our issues.

However we felt, and the Committee agreed, that the final product was occasionally haphazard in quality and reliability so, after some research, we placed the printing in the hands of a local printer – The Studio, in Dukes Mill, Romsey, run by a very professional young chap (Ben Duncan) who so far has proved very good; responsive, quick and reliable. Incidentally, at almost the same time, the Romsey and District Society chose him as their printer, so we are in good company.

In fairness to the King Somborne experiment we have half-borrowed their layout format. They place their adverts on different coloured paper at the beginning and end, with the local news and articles in the middle. We have now moved all commercial adverts to the back of the magazine, with all the news and articles at the front. It is much more efficient and more logical. Nobody has complained!

So, in brief, we managed a reasonably timely production of 6 magazines and are about to go to print on the first for 2014. I get the impression that the magazine seems to go down well, but of course I'll simply get on to my usual hobby-horse and say that the magazine is only as good as the input from the contributors – and everyone has been fantastic as always. We most certainly have not had to 'weave a silk purse from a sow's ear' – quite the reverse, we have always been presented with the silk purse!

Thank you all so much for your support and contribution and, of course, I say 'keep it coming' – along with any suggestions on where you feel we can improve.

WEBSITE

Webeditor, Chris Balchin had sent his apologies and the Chairman read out his report:

The web-site has been running almost six years.

As before I have had the web-site usage analysed. The three 'dynamic' pages of Village Diary, Village Hall Booking and Church Room Bookings get a lot of visitors, approximately three per day. The Residents Guide, BVA News and Five Alive are also well used.

The move to the new web server has been successful – no down times noticed or reported.

I would like to thank Geoff Daniell for supplying the weather data and reports which showed we had 33 inches of rain in 2013 which was similar to 2012 however half of that rain fell in the last quarter of 2013!

Should I have introduced a forum/message board for the Affordable Housing Plans or similar Village interest activities to try and solicit more debate?

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

A question from the floor – how can the website be used to spread up to date news, particularly in cases such as the power cuts in the recent storms that had left many random properties in the village without power, some for several days. The chairman replied that the committee had been reviewing the best ways to coordinate help in these situations, and asked for suggestions. Mike Mullane noted that George Elliott had raised the subject of establishing an emergency plan for the village and would be writing an article on the subject for the next News. Sue Buxton noted that her neighbours were without a BT landline for a month and that mobile reception in that part of the village is not reliable, so they were effectively cut off. Mike Prince said that he had recently spoken to Vodafone who were trying to improve their signal in the area. Several suggestions were made including:

- This is part of the problem that the proposed emergency committee should deal with.
- Perhaps we should talk to neighbouring villages.
- Look again at setting up an email list for contacting people.
- Use the coffee mornings run by Marian Randall to advertise local news.
- Produce a list of resources held in the village eg generators
- Use the Neighbourhood Watch circular as a template.

Mike Prince noted that the Parish Council had written twice to Southern Electric, the electricity suppliers, about the generally unreliable supply to the village and they had replied that the station in Newport Lane was getting old and could not keep up with demand. They had also said that there would be compensation for people who had lost power over Christmas. Mike Mullane offered to publish the details in the next News.

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, Sue Coleman. They were proposed by Richard Groves, seconded by Dorothy Ross and unanimously reelected.

Tessa Allen would be standing down from the committee and with no-one proposed from the floor the committee would seek to co-opt a member during the course of the year.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS:-

1. Richard Brazier had received an unsatisfactory reply to his letter about the unnecessary felling of the oak tree to make way for the new roundabout at Jermyns Lane/Sandy Lane/Braishfield Road crossroads. He suggested that the village should try to plant a replacement tree to make the entrance to the village more attractive.
2. The date of the next AGM was set for Thursday 22 January 2015.