

Great Elm Parish Council

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of Great Elm Parish Council held in the Village Hall on Friday 24 April 2015 at 7.30pm

Present: George Donkin Chairman
Ernie Charlton Council Member
Charlotte McKean Council Member
Peter Molony Council Member
Richard Swann Council Member
Mollie Winter Clerk to the Parish Council

Attendance: Guest Speaker Claire Asquith on the Mells' Community Shop
5 Members of the Village Community

Apologies: Kevin Whitmarsh

1 Minutes of the Previous Annual General Meeting

Agreed as correct by those present at both meetings.

2 Matters Arising

2.1 Speed Limits

Somerset County Council are adamant they do not want to review speed limits from Hapsford Bridge to the edge of the village.

2.2 Boat House Jackdaws

RS reported the boat house has been partially repaired.

3 Chairman's Report

GD reported a somewhat busier year in Great Elm. The planning application at Ely's Field for a bungalow to replace caravans was rejected and not appealed. An application was approved for an extension of the Sustrans Cycle Path from Buckland Bridge to Elliot's Way. A rejection and comments were put forward following Mendip District Council's refusal for planning consent at the Haulage Yard. A public enquiry was held on 17 February which was well represented by villagers with GD and RS attending on behalf of GEPC. The appeal was rejected as the site has no mains drainage and for other reasons.

Mendip District Council's Local Council Plan was approved with Great Elm being classified as a village not designated for development. Work is underway to put the Bedlam Bridleway on the statutory map.

Three Councillors are standing down with four out of the five intended candidates accepted (one rejected due to confusion of the submission date). However there is a valid council to meet the required quorum: Charlotte Mackean, Ric Swann, Kevin Whitmarsh and Edmund ??????? GD thanked the Clerk for her efforts over the years and wished her well.

There has been a precept of £1,400 for several years now. The current balance stands at £4,454 plus the precept so the new Council has sufficient resources.

The Chairman wished to specifically thank Jim Duffus, a stalwart member of the community, for all his hard work in the village. GD also thanks the Village Hall Management Committee and the Parochial Church Council for all their efforts.

Jim Duffus thanked the GD, EC and PM for their combined 60 years' service on the Parish Council.

4 Proposed Financial Support for the Village Day

GD asked this meeting that a sum of up to £150 be made available to the organisers of the annual Village Day. Seconded by CM and unanimously supported by those present.

5 General Plenary Session on Village Matters when electors can raise any matter of concern

5.1 Overhanging Foliage

Gay Jelly raised the problem of overhanging foliage obstructing pedestrian access through the village. This matter has already been reported to Somerset Highways who have confirmed this is in hand.

GD thanked everybody for their support over the years and invited everyone to refreshments.

6 Talk on the Mells' Community Shop by Claire Asquith

Claire Asquith gave an extremely interesting and humorous account of the setting up of a community shop inspired by a Radio 4 programme. At first they were disheartened at the passive response in 2008. This was followed a year later by a survey which raised such comments as: too busy, not interested; wild horses won't drag me there; no fire escape. Advice was sought from The Plunkett Foundation, established in 1919 to pioneer agricultural co-operatives, which supports the network of community-owned shops across the UK, who said they would match the first £20,000 raised with an interest-free loan for the same amount plus a promised grant. 112 people attended a further meeting to discuss buying shares in the shop. A committee of 8 was then set up to find a shop management team, to raise the sum of £20,000, to gut and renovate the premises and to recruit volunteers.

The shop was opened in April 2009 by Kevin McCloud and then received some unexpected publicity when a cow slipped down the slope behind the shop and landed on the roof! Segregated groups soon began to come together to do the weekly shop where locally-sourced products are on sale. The cafe was opened by Mary Berry in April 2011. The shop has won a succession of prizes and has its own web site - all down to the work of some 700-odd people.

The next step will be to continue to be in profit and to continue fund-raising by organising fairs, clay pigeon shooting etc.

A huge thank-you was given to Claire

Signed by G Donkin
Chairman

Date