

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 25 04 23 at 19:00hrs.

Councillors present: Gail Wakeford (Chair), Roy Williams, Jane Mackness, Murray Stewart

In attendance:

Clr Sully,

Representatives: Village Hall, History Society, Carol Paris - Bath & West, Evercreech Larder, Film Club (Evercreech Films), Friendship Club, Evercreech District Information Sheet (EDIS), Explorer Scouts sent a report.

4 residents.

**Item
No**

LEAD

- 001 Apologies for Absence
LP – annual leave.
Absent: Cllrs Reed and Chinnock.
- 002 To adopt minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting of April 2022.
Adopted and signed as a true record.
- 003 Welcome and Report from the Chair
Please see Appendix A
- 004 Finance report from Finance Officer
Please see Appendix B
- 005 County Cllr
Clr Sully
Looking forward to hearing from the groups.
New Somerset Council – one number, one website. Please report issues directly. Access point is at Shape Mendip. Cllr Sully is on the new planning board.
Local Council Network – forum to get together to engage effectively with Somerset Council.
Evercreech Village is known for having a voice, which helps to get things done.
Speed restriction on A371, is being advertised now.
Water on road past Pecking Mill, lots of water collects in the road, Highways Manager going out to look at issue tomorrow.
Lots of different resident issues have been assisted.
- 006 Invitation to groups to speak:
Groups and businesses are invited to update residents regarding the last year and plans for the future.
- Friendship Club** – Thanks given to Parish Council for their donation last year. Transport was an issue for elderly members and the donation was used towards transport costs.
Meet once per month. Have different speakers and activities. First full year since COVID. 1975 the club started. Annual fee £8.00 each and £1 per meeting.
- Bath & West (B&W)** – Carol Parish Chief Exec – started in July 2022 – coming up to her first B&W show.
B&W run the Dairy Show in October.
Other events are not organized by B&W.
Other events pay for the B&W Show and Dairy Show.
Special Ticket offers – will be available from Heathercreech Bakers.
Events leaflets were distributed.
Aware that they (B&W) have not always had the best relationship with Evercreech and hope this will change.
- EDIS** – Changes of staffing and operational. Common format for each item now. Printing costs increased. Not gone into the red. Slightly shorter edition. November will look much thinner with updates and not repeats.

Date:
Signed

Evercreech Larder - Thanks to Village Hall. Being used. Require more food to fill it. Possibly ask regular hall users to contribute. Now being left open, not locked. 24 items were added on Monday morning, by 7.00 pm 2 items were left.

The Food Sharing Project can add from the larder to their items for anyone in need.

This initiative operates anonymously, no referral needed.

History Society (HS) – Last year The Heritage Centre asked communities to create a snapshot picture of their community. The History Society responded. The document will be kept in perpetuity in Taunton. Lots of photos taken of Evercreech in 2022. Whilst it was not a competition, The Heritage Centre picked out the communities to be commended and they thought Evercreech did well.

Evercreech Films – Continue to be popular. Good numbers showing up. Not increasing ticket prices despite other costs rising. Profits made are invested back in the community. Open call out for applications for funding. Reminder that profits from refreshments are donated back to Village Groups.

Village Hall – Please see Appendix C.

Explorer Scouts – Please see Appendix D.

007 The meeting will then be open to discussion and debate on any matters of interest within the Parish.

Electric charging points – Village Hall responded that these have been investigated. Weston Power requires £28,000 to install. Not financially viable.

Shape Mendip Access Point – what can you access there? Council services, walk in service, face to face for advice re where to go for different issues etc.

Planning applications are only online.

Meeting close: Lynn Crisp

Time: 7.40

Appendix A

Chair's report.

The Chair would like to extend her apologies for not being here but hope you all enjoy coming together and sharing what it is you do in the community.

The evening is for you and to say thank you for all your work in the Parish.

It has been a busy year; we began with 2 vacancies on the council and have come full circle it seems. We celebrated 30 years' service from Cllr Roy Williams, a sad farewell to Cllr Sarah Breare and a return to Cllr Murray Stewart.

We have also said a farewell to District Cllr Barry O'Leary and Mendip District Council and now need to work closely with Somerset Unitary Authority.

In the past year we have helped several groups financially and now see progress with the Youth Club and beginnings of a new Skatepark.

As Chair, I am looking forward to another year of being part of a productive group of people and wish you all the best in your forthcoming events.

Appendix B

Financial Report from Finance Officer.

Summary:

Brought forward from 21/22: £38,046.93

Expenditure: £59,896.06

Income: £107,065.72

Carried forward to 22/23: £85,216.59

Expenditure between years:

Date:

Signed

In 2021-22 expenditure was £53,133 compared with this years £59,896.

The main reasons for the increase were staff costs (£4K), storage facilities (~£1K) and the purchase of a Defibrillator (~£1.1K). Aside from these costs, there has been very small difference in expenditure between the years. I do feel that costs will rise significantly in the coming year, however.

Loan repayments are regularly scheduled (for the Sports Field) in August and February, each being £4,403 totalling £8,806. The outstanding balance on the loan is £45,231.22 as of 31st March 2023.

Other Areas of Expenditure:

- We contract out Village Ground Maintenance to Three Counties Landscaping
- We have carried out regular park area inspections to ensure our park equipment is safe for use.
- We employ a Clerk and RFO to maintain our Parish Council records and accounts -
We employ a Street Cleaner to ensure our streets are cleaned and well maintained.
- We have many dog bins around the village and regularly check their upkeep and replace when necessary
- We pay for regular disposals of waste from the village
- We pay monthly for Parish Council storage of documents and payroll services

Main areas of income:

We brought forward £38,046 from 2021/22.

The precept for 2022/23 was £50,375

The cemetery has raised £13,685

Grants received from Glastonbury Festival of £30K and from Mendip District Council of £5K VAT reclaim of £7,545

For 2023/24:

The precept has slightly increased this year to £50,963.

There is a carry forward of £85,216.59 to start the 2023-24 financial year. This means that you should have around £136K going into this financial year.

Earmarked Reserves at 31st March 2023:

Election Fund	£4,400.00
Skate Park	£36,900.00
Defibrillator	£1,420.00
Lych Gate	£1,000.00
QRPF Play Equipment	£4,000.00
Cemetery Misc	£500.00
Community Fund	£9,200.00 (£7K reallocated from 'Road Signs' reserve)
Village Maintenance	£1,000.00

This leaves a general reserve of £26,796.19. This is a reduction of around £3K from last year and you need to be careful with your unbudgeted spending so that this is not reduced any further.

The Budget:

The number of budget lines are going to be reduced (by consolidation), as this has made the cashbook unwieldy and less transparent for everyone, in my opinion. Budgeting will then be easier to manage and understand, focussing efforts on certain areas of the budget as necessary.

The draft budget will be brought to the PC for approval in November, with the final agreed budget presented in December to enable to Precept to be agreed in January 2024. The budget can still be adjusted until this time, if necessary.

General Statement:

I hope that this year the whole PC have felt comfortable with the papers served and the explanations of how the precept is spent by the council. Its not unusual for a Parish Council of your size to not have a Finance Committee and I am confident I can provide the information in a format to assist all Councillors to be informed and engaged with the financial aspects.

Date:
Signed

Appendix C

Village Hall

The Covid virus was bad news for everyone and along with other village halls we were forced to close our doors. However, the silver lining to this was that we received grants from the Government and Mendip District Council that allowed us to cover all the Hall's outgoings that still had to be paid and also left us with some grant money in the bank at the end of it all. This has enabled us to carry out a lot of improvements to the Hall behind the scenes and we were also able to help our local village groups who regularly hire the Hall with a 2 for 1 deal for all of last year to help them get back on their financial feet.

In the rear hall we installed a 75" television and blackout blinds on the window for ease of viewing. We also had new electric points put in, Wi-Fi outlets and a hearing loop installed. In addition, we had a CCTV camera installed overlooking the rear car park to discourage vandalism. A new portable foldable wheelchair ramp was purchased for the rear hall and this is stored in the rear lobby.

In the main hall we replaced all the old 'yellow' ceiling tiles and the white tiles in front of the stage were replaced with black tiles to reduce the reflection from the big screen. The sound system in the cupboard was further improved so there are less connections needed to produce a presentation. New instructions were created, and these are kept in the drawer in the bar under the urn.

We were very pleased to be involved with the Queen's Diamond Jubilee and were able to use some of the grant money to provide free tea/Buck's Fizz and cakes for the village. This was very well attended as it was possibly the first time that people had a chance to socialise in the Hall. In addition to the bunting that we were able to borrow from Drama Group, we bought ourselves some new bunting and specific Diamond Jubilee flags of our Queen that were displayed in the Hall and on the front railings. The bunting will be put out again at the weekend in time for the King's Coronation and the Hall will be open from 10am to 1pm on the 5th May to show the Coronation on the big screen in the main hall. The school will also hold a competition in the hall on the Saturday. The hall will also be open on the Sunday in case of wet weather for anyone planning an outside event and Evercreech Films will stream the Coronation Concert on Sunday evening.

We also took advantage of the lull in bookings to carry out some housekeeping and, together with local groups who store items at the Hall, we undertook an audit of all equipment and threw out everything that was no longer used. We also cleared out under the stage and the inner lobby loft area. As Toddlers no longer hire the Hall, they were asked to remove all their play items and crockery which freed up the big cupboard in the Hall. Flower Club, Evercreech Films and Friendship Club were then able to store their equipment in that cupboard instead of in the rear hall so it is much more accessible for them. As the lockable cupboard in the rear hall was emptied, History Society can now keep their archive cupboard in there.

Rising energy prices caused our Treasurer, Richard Kewish, some concern so he and our Chairman, Nic Jefferies, researched the installation of solar panels to mitigate these sharply increasing costs. After a lot of time and investigation put in by both of them we now have solar panels installed on the south facing roof of the rear hall. These are linked to storage batteries so we can export any electric we don't use to National Grid. (current rate 5p/kWh unit/ supply 44p/kWh unit). In order to successfully accommodate these, we also had to install a new 3 phase distribution circuit and we hope to achieve payback in approximately 4 years. The new solar panels were installed last week with minimum disruption to hall users and this meeting is now running on battery power.

Now we are back on a financial even keel and, very reluctantly, we have had to increase our hall hire charges for the first time since 2017. Richard will be keeping a close eye on this and we hope that we won't have to increase again for a few years.

Finally, our Hot Potato Lunch is back on the third Tuesday of every month and dates for the year have been posted on Facebook and will also be in the EDIS Village Diary. Our grateful thanks to Andrew and Karen Doble for running this for us.

Appendix D

Explorer Scouts Report

Evercreech Explorer Scout Unit 2022-23

As we come into 2023 our Unit is slowing growing back to it's pre-covid membership. We now have young people attending from Bruton, Coleford, Shepton Mallet, Wells, Castle Cary and Kilmerston.

Date:

Signed

Recently we entered our first team into the national Monopoly Challenge in London over the Easter holidays, racing around London to collect the different Monopoly board squares placing a respectable 84th out of 201 teams. Over 1000 people took part and it was a great chance for our Explorers to visit the capital and see the coronation preparations.

This term we look forward to our bi-annual Go Kart race where we build our racers out of pallets and put them through their paces. We are also working on our survival skills badge doing some backwoods cooking, our pioneering building a wooden entrance to a festival camping site and our navigation with a hike around our local area.

We also have a day trip on the train planned to Weymouth after our successful trip to Airhop and Zaza Bazaar in Bristol on the bus in February. Our annual Summer Camp is also getting closer where we will be taking part in lots of exciting activities including:

Leap of Faith
Giant Pioneering
Sumo Suits
Body Zorbs
Team Building
Tomahawk Throwing
Flintstones Karts
Hiking
Paracord Crafts and much much more!

We'll also be taking part in the Big Help Out on the 8th May to celebrate the coronation. Explorers have chosen relatives or people in their communities to help out and support for the day and we can't wait to see what they get up to.

Over the next year we hope to continue to grow our numbers and complete our fundraising to purchase a new mess tent for our camps, so we have somewhere a bit drier to cook and eat our meals. We hope to see you all next at the Evercreech Show!

Date:
Signed