

## **Wreningham Village Hall Annual General Meeting**

**Monday 28<sup>th</sup> February 2022**

### **Present**

Committee: Graham Cormack, Jill Hustler, Val Keel

Apologies Aaron Kelly

Members of the Public: Tressy Glaves Hughie Glaves Michael Hill John Knight Sue Knight David Minns Nicky Morris Karen Nunn Ian Priestley Kim Priestly David Tinsley

Apologies: Linda Craig Janet Richardson

### **Opening Comments**

Val Keel addressed the meeting and informed those in attendance that it was being recorded to facilitate accurate minutes of the meeting.

Val thanked all for attending.

2021 was a difficult year for the committee following the loss of a number of committee members and the ongoing challenges of COVID-19.

The restrictions imposed by COVID-19 meant that Hall use was severely restricted but since May 2021 this has gradually improved with the return of Zumba, Mums and Toddlers, The Last Wednesday Coffee mornings and in person Parish Council meetings as well as a very successful Wine Tasting evening, Heritage Group weekend and Church Quiz. Private Hire events have included the Zumba Ball, 60's, tea and swing dances as well as children's and adult's parties and a wedding reception (with another booked in April). The Ramblers use the Car Park on a regular basis and the Hall has been the muster point for village litter picks.

The Witch and Wren has seen a gradual increase in numbers with the return of family nights and the monthly Thursday Cocktail evening (to be twice monthly from March).

Unfortunately, the Fish and Chip van is no longer coming to Wreningham and a search is on for a suitable replacement to complement the Pizza nights.

The loss of committee members in July has meant that there has been no Chair or Secretary since July 2021. John Knight stepped away from bar "duties" to be able to concentrate on other commitments but was able to support Jill as she took over the running of the Bar and cellar.

The remaining committee members have focused on the maintenance of the Hall and public hires.

This AGM was the delayed AGM from November 2021. A further AGM will be held in November 2022.

Ideally the committee would consist of 9 members who are collectively responsible for the maintenance of the Hall, finances, events, staff, hires and bar, but with the key functions of Chair, Treasurer and Secretary clearly defined and carried out by named persons. An invitation was made to members of the public to consider joining / rejoining the committee or being part of a 'bank' of volunteers willing to help for specific tasks, so that new events, improvements to the fabric of the Hall and better village engagement with the Hall could be achieved.

Priorities already discussed are:

Revamping the Village Hall website with the aims of increasing its attractiveness to potential hirers and information dissemination to village residents.

It was acknowledged that publicity concerning forthcoming events needed to be improved and that the Mardle should not be the only channel used for this.

Maintaining the fabric of the Hall is a key function of the Committee. Key areas are repairs to the roof, improvements to the outside lighting and the patio area as well as ensuring that there is a regular general maintenance and safety plan.

There is a subcommittee who are looking at solar panels to offset increasing energy costs.

Val ended her report by thanking the members of the committee who have or intend to stand down this year (Ian Holloway – chair, Graham Cormack – Treasurer, Tony Wright - Secretary, Paul Parfitt, Sarah Lidington) for all their hard work and commitment over the time that they had served the village Hall.

#### **Treasurer's report – Graham Cormack**

A written summary of the accounts was provided to all in attendance.

Graham reported that Bar takings were down (due to restricted opening re COVID), but that COVID grants had been secured which meant that the accounts showed a surplus for the year. The biggest expenditure was for electricity and maintenance of the Hall. He invited questions.

#### Questions from the floor

Why were the Electricity costs so much higher than the previous year when Hall usage had been restricted?

General Electricity costs had increased and the new suppliers had insisted on a higher direct debit payment upfront than the previous supplier. It was expected that the higher costs would be ongoing and likely to rise further.

Do we need to repay the COVID grant of £28,000?

No, and there were no restrictions as to how this money should be spent. A further separate grant to cover improvements to the patio area of £2,700 is pending.

In general the Hall finances were in a healthy state. (The aim is to maintain a 6 month trading surplus).

The accounts were agreed.

#### **Closing Comments**

Jill Hustler - The success of the private Hire side of the Hall was reiterated and bookings for private parties are very good with up to 4 each weekend.

One wedding reception has been held which was very successful with a further reception booked for April – this sort of event is very profitable in terms of bar takings as well as increasing the profile of the Hall.

The Cocktail nights have been well attended and we are benefitting from the catering and event management skills of Janet Richardson who has moved into the Village.

John Knight- John has returned to the role of Bar manager and thanked Jill for holding the fort this year.

Sales and bar usage were down this year due to COVID restrictions, the Thursday 'Cave Men' nights have 'tailed off' and beer wastage has been an issue. Suppliers have increased their prices and it is likely that bar prices will need to increase. The refurb of the bar / cellar has worked well and he is looking at new beers and new suppliers as well as better matching supply and demand, he is keen to welcome the beer drinkers back!

### **Election of new committee.**

Val explained that at this point in the AGM the existing committee had to stand down. Members wishing to return to the committee needed to state this and new members were encouraged to come forward.

Aaron was not present at the meeting but had previously stated that he wished to step down due to work / family commitments.

Graham Cormack wished to step down.

Jill Hustler, Val Keel and John Knight wished to return to the committee.

Sue Knight, Karen Nunn, Nicky Morris, Janet Richardson and David Tinsley wished to join.

All were welcomed unopposed.

### **Comments from the floor**

A question was raised concerning the staffing of the bar – clarification of concerns was sort and listened to, but it was explained that as per custom, the new committee would be holding a short meeting after the AGM to allocate the various roles so that decisions concerning the bar etc could not be made until roles had been formally allocated.

Publicity for events and how willing villagers could be made aware of specific help needed for village events / maintenance was questioned. It was felt that the use of The Mardle as the primary vehicle for this meant that a number of village residents were unaware of events / needs for help. Various alternatives were suggested and taken on board. An assurance that this matter had already been identified as a significant issue and was to be considered and addressed by the new committee was made.

Clarification re whether the various dances advertised in the Mardle were open to village residents was sort – any event held at the Hall other than private hires are open to village residents.

Suggestions for future events with more use of the Social Club for Village residents were made.

It was explained that the next Village Hall Committee Meeting was on the 7<sup>th</sup> March and that future events were on the agenda. Anyone interested in organising an event was invited to the meeting – the committee would facilitate such events as much as possible but cannot take on all the organising, it would need the help of volunteers.

The meeting closed at 20.20.

