

Aston and Weymouth Village Hall

AGM 23rd July 2024

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Aston & Weymouth Village Hall Trustees Annual General Meeting

9th May 2023

Present: Guy Chatburn (Chair), Rosalind Chatburn (Secretary), Miles Scott (Treasurer), Helen Inskip (Trustee,) Vicky Jackson (Retiring Treasurer and Trustee), Andrew and Kate Spiers, Debbie Slater, Michael Kentish

Apologies: Tony Ward, Di Spires

Minutes: The minutes of the 2022 AGM were approved.

Reports

The following reports were presented:

Chairman's Report (Guy Chatburn)

Treasurer's Report (Miles Scott)

Secretary's Report (Rosalind Chatburn)

Parish Council Representative's Report (Rosalind Chatburn)

All four reports were received and are attached and will be published on the AVH website.

Trustees

Guy thanked the trustees for their service, who expressed their wish to continue for another year in post. Guy especially thanked Vicky Jackson who had served for an extra year as Treasurer, effecting a smooth handover to Miles Scott. He made a special mention also of Helen Inskip for being the longest standing trustee and her great work in the bar and procurement of drinks and Secretary of the 100 Club. Token gifts were given at the end of the meeting to show appreciation for the trustees' hard work over the year.

Matters Arising

Our Treasurer, Miles, suggested that we would need three fund raising events before March 2024 in order to maintain funds. The excess of expenditure over income for 2022/23 was £9409.19, largely due to the additional investments, upgrades and essential repairs to the hall. A conversation followed for reasons why income was less than expected. Being post lockdown, fewer villagers wished to attend events in 2022 and two events had to be cancelled. The cost of living has also affected people's budgets which is why the monthly coffee mornings, the Jubilee celebration and the Coronation Tea Party were all free entry events, to encourage attendance.

Guy explained that the standing trustee documents required six trustees: historically representatives should come from Parish Council, St Leonard's Church Woore, The Methodist Church (linked with the old church on Minn Bank), Aston School, The Youth Club and the WI. Nowadays we rely on villagers from the community.

The land was gifted by a farmer from Longslow, the aims being recreation, the health and well being of villagers and education via a reading room. In the event of AVH failing, the village would hold a referendum to decide which charities would benefit from the sale of the property.

With only four current trustees we need some new trustee volunteers from the community. Guy reported on the set up of the Events Committee, which is a lighter load for folk and may well grow potential trustees for the future.

Any Other Business

Guy asked for questions and suggestions from the floor.

One observation was that given the generosity of the council's Covid grants, the trustees should be spending the money more quickly on hall improvements and maintenance, for example the garden and display board. A lengthy discussion ensued but it was agreed to remind the gardener to resume regular maintenance. It was also decided to recruit a regular cleaner, possibly employ temporary bar staff at events and buy a dishwasher for the kitchen and glass washing facilities for the bar area.

Miles pointed out that a healthy bank account should have two to three years' worth of reserves and spending at the current rate would be unsustainable. He proposed to create a budget for capital and maintenance expenditure which would act as a guide going forward. He also proposed introducing annual stock takes in the bar. It was mentioned that as typical annual costs for the hall are now running in the region of £8000 pa, three year's reserves would equate to £24,000.

It was in general agreed that the vision of the Village Hall is more about a sense of well being and bringing people in the community together. It was felt that this had been achieved this year from midweek coffee mornings for the retired and homeworkers, through the children's Christmas party to several major all-age events, all of which have had a lovely atmosphere where newcomers were warmly welcomed.

To continue with the theme of the village hall as a community hub another suggestion was to purchase cinema equipment and run film shows. Pub evenings were mentioned, but it was felt that it would be too hard to run by the currently small team with the unusual room layout.

Date of Next Meeting

Tuesday 7th May 2024 at 7.30pm

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Chairman's Report

Welcome to the AGM of the Trustees of Aston Village Hall. We invite everyone to hear what we have done this past year. A copy of this report will be placed on our website soon after tonight, along with all the other reports and accounts.

People First I must start by thanking anyone from Aston, or our surrounding villages, who have used the hall over the past year. When you pop in for a quick coffee, buy a bacon bap, form a fish and chip quiz team, or murder 'Sweet Caroline' on the karaoke at Pop Up Pub!, you make worthwhile for the volunteers running the events and contribute to the continued existence of this hall, at the heart of our village.

Trustees Next, I thank the four trustees, all of which I am pleased to say are willing to be re-elected for a further year. Myself as Chair, Miles our Treasurer, Helen our longest serving trustee and Ros, our Secretary.

However, our constitution requires at least six trustees, so we are urgently looking for others to offer to join us. Please consider it. At times in the past there have been over ten trustees, and it varies from year to year. We would welcome fresh input from new arrivals into the village, equally as much as benefitting from valuable experience from those wishing to rejoin again.

Trustees seek re-election annually. The Trustees section of our website has a document from the Charities Commission on what it means to be a trustee, and we have a copy of our 1954 Conveyance and a Summary of our Constitution for information online to download and read.

Events Planning Establishing our separate "Events Committee" has been a great success, with over ten people now at most event planning sessions. I would like to thank everyone involved with running the events over the past year, it is true to say we couldn't do it without you. As for me, whilst I am happy to stand again as Chair of Trustees, and continue to be an active member of the Events Committee, I think it is healthy to rotate the leadership of the Events Committee from time to time, and I'd like to invite someone else to volunteer to head it up now .

The Lessons of History: I have looked back at various 'Chairman's Reports' in previous minutes of AGMs, going back over the decades. I can see some familiar recurring topics: the cost of maintaining the hall, the challenge in attracting villagers to attend events and the difficulty in promoting an isolated venue for regular hall hire activity.

Over its life, AVH has always relied on grant monies to help make major changes and the income from hall hire and social events to cover daily running expenses. We only have a small number of houses in our catchment, so we must attract a higher proportion of regular local users to be viable, than other nearby community halls with bigger catchments need to.

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Using WhatsApp and Facebook has helped, but it is inevitably frustrating to the team when events are not as well supported as they might be. Our challenge is to be as relevant and attractive as possible, when competing with other leisure and home pursuits.

Hall Hires: Income is well down and despite an attractive website and easy online enquiry form, we have not had much success in hall hire income over the past year. We have hired out tables to local residents in return for donations and the hall for two birthday parties. However, we have lost Pilates and Messy Play classes following the pandemic and miss the regular income they brought.

100 Club: I am delighted to welcome Kate Spiers as administrator of the 100 Club. She has taken over from Helen, to whom we give grateful thanks, for looking after it so well especially through the challenges of the pandemic. This club is a simple way for villagers to support the hall, for just £2 a month, paid annually. A pound goes to the hall and a pound goes to a monthly prize fund, currently winners get over £50! The more that join, the better the prize payouts. Please see Kate if you want to join or contact us on the website.

Giving Something Back: The Covid grants gave the village hall's finances a welcome boost, far more than the compensation needed to offset loss of income. So, the trustees have a challenge to use these additional reserves wisely. Over the past year we have continued to respond to community feedback in shaping the pricing of community events and identifying expenditure on suitable improvements.

We were therefore pleased to host a highly successful **Free Coronation Tea Street Party** and a well-attended **Free Summer Barbecue** in the spirit of giving something back to the community, after a few years of pandemic curtailed activities. These events made a predictable loss, but it was seen more as an investment in community spirit. In fact, the Coronation Tea was one of those "where were you?" moments in history and we have the wonderful photo, taken by Michael, on the wall recording the sixty-five villagers celebrating it, for posterity.

The cost of running the free **First Tuesday** coffee mornings is covered by ad hoc donations and continues to attract ten to twenty different people for a chat and coffee every month. The 100 Club draw is now done at the same time, attracting more subscribers as a result.

The free **Defibrillator Training Courses** were also very well attended, with thirty-five villagers now familiar with CPR and in using a defibrillator. This builds on the community investment we made in the new defibrillator and box, which we funded from reserves and keep checking on for accessibility.

The Treasurer's report will show that costs exceeded expenditure again this year, but greatly reduced from the previous year. If all of the social events had been held on a commercial basis, we would be closer to the more usual break-even status. Anticipating that, the Events Committee decided that the remainder of events in the past year should

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return to a more commercial basis, but have still been mindful of the impact on attendance of raising prices . Costs have been rising very fast, ticket prices will have to increase more to keep up and the hall needs to use its social events to cover everyday expenses if hall hires are down.

The **Pop Up Pub** (with Pies and Peas) was a very enjoyable new event, and the karaoke sessions were so successful that a repeat is being planned later this year. The **Fish and Chip Quiz** continues to be a highly successful and oversubscribed annual fixture.

Using the revamped website, Eventbrite and, more recently, SumUp to sell tickets online, has enabled the events committee ensure fairness, eliminate cash handling and introduce a degree of certainty in planning numbers and controlling expenses. Using SumUp to take card payments has maintained bar and raffle purchases as the use of cash has diminished.

Improvements: There was no need to repeat the capital expenses of the previous year, when the electric supply panel needing upgrading, the boiler repairing, and the lighting replaced with low energy LEDS.

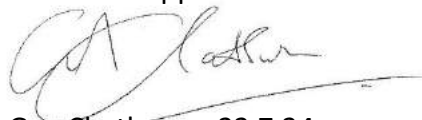
The rising cost of electricity standing charges is a major concern. As usage is infrequent and little different over the years, the problem is not usage, but the standing charges from the obsolete three phase meters. Changing supplier and simplifying the power feed is a long overdue and early priority.

The key improvement last year was the £900 purchase of movable screens. These enable hirers to section-off unused parts of the hall for meetings. They also absorb sound and being pin boards, can be used for art displays or to partition-off stall or make booths.

Going forward the trustees intend to create an “Improvements Fund” in this coming year’s budget. It will allocate and ring fence part of the reserves for suitable projects and receive income from raffles and other donations or grants, where relevant.

One project being considered is to improve accessible access to the toilets, as the current set up, is inadequate. Another initiative is to seek grants, where available. An application is planned for a County Council climate grant, to provide a large compost bin for autumn leaves, for compost reuse locally, rather than pay for two brown bin collections a fortnight.

In summary I once again thank everyone here for their interest and involvement in the village hall, look forward to the trustees providing another year of community service and end on an appeal for more trustees to come forward to share in our endeavour.



Guy Chatburn 22.7.24

Chair of Trustees

Aston and Weymouth Village Hall

Treasurers Report for the Year Ended 31 March 2024

The Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2024 differs from that shown in previous years in that it includes adjustments for:

- Stock of Heating Oil
- Bar Stock
- 100 Club subscriptions paid in advance

All of these are material amounts and therefore the Balance Sheet provides a more accurate representation of the true position at the year end. However as these adjustments were not made in previous years accounts the Income and Expenditure Account may look a little unusual!

After the above adjustments there was an Excess of Expenditure over Income (loss) of £4,365. The underlying result is likely to have been a little worse than this although the absence of stock take figures for the previous year makes it difficult to be precise. This will not be an issue in future years if stocks and income in advance are included in the same way.

Events for the year show a positive margin of about £900, although the underlying position is likely to have been closer to a break-even. This is consistent with our policy of covering our costs in events for which a charge was made for tickets. We also provided a free event to celebrate the Coronation.

Income from hire of the hall dropped significantly from over £1,600 to just £450 for the year. Additionally the grant income in previous years (much of it COVID-related) has now come to an end.

Expenditure on maintenance was much lower than in the previous year when we incurred significant expenditure on plumbing and electrical work as well as the set-up costs for the website. The only significant equipment purchase during the year was just under £900 for the screens.

In total annual overheads came to about £5,000 and I believe this will be a reasonable figure to budget for in future years.

In total the Village Hall reserves come to over £28,000 but it is my feeling as Treasurer that after three years of losses we should now aim to run at a break-even. This will mean adding a mark-up to the cost of future events to recover our overheads, as well as aiming to increase hall hires.

The 100 club continues to be successful and changing the renewal date to April gives us considerable certainty over future revenues.

Miles Scott
Treasurer
23 July 2024

Aston and Weymouth Village Hall

Income and Expenditure Account for the year ended 31 March 2024

	2024 £	2023 £
INCOME		
Hire of the hall	450.00	1,608.50
Events		
Takings and Bar	2,427.72	2,189.65
Raffles	304.00	
Grants received		2,445.00
Donations received	291.30	257.50
Wayleave	43.22	112.13
100 club receipts	546.00	864.00
	<u>4,062.24</u>	<u>7,476.78</u>
EXPENDITURE		
Events		
Cost of events	1,669.99	3,502.62
Other		
Hall Costs		
Electricity	1,817.97	1,676.97
Heating Oil	75.50	0.00
Insurance	1,173.22	1,092.99
Water	215.55	170.29
Council Tax	85.76	222.72
Cleaning	343.69	855.72
Grounds	594.00	384.50
Miscellaneous	123.98	535.50
Repairs and Maintenance		
Electrical	635.70	2,979.79
Plumbing		1,013.40
Other	90.00	374.47
Website	126.00	2,628.00
Defibrillator		798.00
Equipment	896.64	
100 club prizes	580.00	451.00
Donations		200.00
	<u>8,428.00</u>	<u>16,885.97</u>
Excess of expenditure over income	<u>(4,365.76)</u>	<u>(9,409.19)</u>

Aston and Weymouth Village Hall

Assets and Liabilities as at 31 March 2024

	2024 £	2023 £
<u>Brought forward 01/04/2023</u>		
AVH Bank Account	26,938.81	35,577.30
100 Club Bank Account	6,090.47	5,648.47
Petty Cash	852.22	166.10
Accrued Income and prepayments	659.44	1,096.14
Accrued liabilities	(1,800.20)	(338.08)
	<u>32,740.74</u>	<u>42,149.93</u>
 Excess of expenditure over income	 <u>(4,365.76)</u>	 <u>(9,409.19)</u>
	<u>28,374.98</u>	<u>32,740.74</u>
 <u>Carried forward 31 03/2024</u>		
AVH Bank Account	20,351.41	26,938.81
100 Club Bank Account	6,773.47	6,090.47
Petty Cash	701.10	852.22
Stock of Oil	670.00	
Bar Stock	789.00	
Accrued Income and prepayments	90.00	659.44
Accrued liabilities and income in advance	(1,000.00)	(1,800.20)
	<u>28,374.98</u>	<u>32,740.74</u>
 Accrued Income and Prepayments		
Pilates		156.00
Parish Council	90.00	90.00
Wayleave		112.13
Prepaid water rates		215.55
Prepaid Council Tax		85.76
	<u>90.00</u>	<u>659.44</u>
 Accrued Liabilities and Income in Advance		
Donation - MND	(150.00)	(150.00)
Bingo licence		(21.00)
Coffee Morning supplies		(23.55)
Electrical work		(1,484.65)
100 club advance subs	(850.00)	
100 club prizes		(121.00)
	<u>(1,000.00)</u>	<u>(1,800.20)</u>

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Secretary's Report

The role of Secretary of Aston Village Hall is straightforward, mainly involving taking the minutes of our Trustees' meetings and liaising with our hirers and voluntary groups who sometimes use our facilities. I also have regular contact with the family who do the gardening at the hall and occasionally with Karolyn who does our cleaning at AVH when required. I am keeper of the AVH defibrillator and organise training sessions every couple of years, which have been well attended.

Historically there is a link between St Leonard's Church, Woore and AVH. I liaise with the PCC Secretary Mary Mason to help organise services in our chapel. I would like to welcome Rev. Jane Morris in her permanent role at St Leonard's and say how very happy we are to host the annual Tree Lighting and Carol service here in Aston, plus other community services such as Easter or Harvest. Ashley Methodist Church also continues the historic Methodist interest with the Trustees of AVH and as a Steward at Ashley I am their representative on the Trustees. I also represent Maer and Aston Parish Council at Trustees meetings.

I would like to thank the Trustees for their help, patience and goodwill and I am happy to continue as Secretary of the Aston Village Hall Trustees into the future. However, I would appreciate it if someone else would take over as Secretary of the Events Committee, where I shall remain an active member.

Rosalind Chatburn.

Secretary AVH Trustees.

MAER AND ASTON PARISH COUNCIL

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT - MAY 2024

As I reflect on my many years of Chairmanship, I am heartened by the professional and enthusiastic way Councillors continue to give their valuable time, without financial reward, to represent our communities.

Following the retirement of Cllr David Lovatt we have been delighted to welcome Gill Walters to our Council. Gill brings a wealth of local knowledge and respect in the Aston/Minn Bank community.

We have continued to be supported by our local County and Borough Councillors, Paul Northcott and Amy Bryan, who if unable to attend monthly meetings are invited to submit their written reports. My thanks as ever go out to them for their valuable input.

We are also much encouraged by the attendance of our local PCSOs, Gemma Crank and Colin Hodgkinson, keeping us advised of policing matters across our Parish. Recently their attendance at "First Tuesdays," a regular monthly coffee morning in Aston, also provides the opportunity for parishioners to meet and discuss any local police issues face to face.

The changing headings on our monthly meeting agenda reflect not only the emphasis we continue to place on planning matters, but also our renewed recognition of Community and Environmental issues, where as a Parish Council, we can have an impact.

We are constantly reminded that we are only 'consultees' on all planning matters and as such we can only make 'recommendations.' Over recent years, in conjunction with our neighbouring Parish Councils of Whitmore and Chapel and Hill Chorlton, the Neighbourhood Development Plan was devised with the local population defining how they hoped to see their rural area develop. The validity of this Neighbourhood Development Plan has been challenged in planning application appeals during the past 12 months and it's relevance and appropriateness questioned. I believe it is essential that we remain united with our neighbouring Parish Councils to protect the interests of all our parishioners and in this regard sharing information will be encouraged.

Councillor Julia Ziskin has pioneered recycling of some of the more difficult to recycle items we discard such as tetra-pak cartons, crisp packets, empty table blister packs. Julia arranged a range of talks at Maer Village Hall from expert guest speakers to help encourage our residents to consider our environment. Regular collections at First Tuesday in Aston and Garden Guild meetings in Maer, ensure that these collections continue. A number of Councillors attended Keele University looking at renewable energy and sustainable technology. We continue to look forward to working with Keele University with our rural industries and environment.

A significant amount of Councillors' time over past years has been taken up with the 'tracking' of the now cancelled Northern Section of HS2 through our neighbourhood. By their regular attendance at meetings and inputting valuable local information, Cllrs Guy & Ros Chatburn and Andy Mainwaring all made significant contributions. There is little doubt about the immense disruption the work on the local section would have caused in and around our local villages. Whilst little benefit would have been gained for all the inconvenience, great strides were being made towards improvements of the road junctions of the A51 and A53 at Blackbrook. It remains to be seen if and when these improvements take place.

With careful housekeeping we managed to keep our annual precept increase to 1.99%. We have made significant savings over the past couple of years by cutting back on the landscaping at the war memorial whilst also ensuring that the annual Remembrance Day service reflects a beautiful and respectful environment. We have limited contractors work on an 'as and when required' basis. Fortunately, we have not needed to incur costs on snow clearance and we are always looking for savings but at the same time making sure that our village communities can access main transport routes.

Your Council is proud of the role it plays in this community we care about so much. The development of our two village halls over recent years has revitalised the whole of our area. I am particularly impressed with the work Cllrs Ros and Guy Chatburn have done in establishing the monthly 'First Tuesday' event in Aston which is proving very popular. Good communication through the regular newsletter in Maer has been a key factor and is now well established. Also our WhatsApp groups are a good communication between neighbours which was developed by our Clerk Elena Sudlow. The Clerk's role is a very essential one to ensuring the smooth running and maintenance of the higher standards of the Council and we are very fortunate to have Elena at the helm.

We are very fortunate to have such a stable Committee with Councillors willing to take on projects and work for the good of our whole community and I extend my thanks to you all.

Michael Kelly
Chairman Maer & Aston Parish Council
May 2024