

## **SOCIETIES OF CORFE AGM – 16 May 2023**

**Apologies for Absence** – Sue Ford (Corfe Quilters), Sheila Pankhurst.

**Minutes of 10th May 2022** – Viewed and Approved.

## **REPORTS OF THE PARISH ORGANISATIONS**

### **CORFE PARISH COUNCIL REPORT (John Harrison)**

There is not a great deal to report but the Parish Council has convened every two months to consider any matters that have arisen. Thank you to our County Councillors Sarah Wakefield and Ross Henley for their continued attendance at our meetings with Council updates.

In addition, thank you to Parish Councillors for diligently carrying out their portfolio duties and Grace with the Green portfolio who has been trying to find some land adjacent to the Village to set up a Polytunnel and for solar panels with no success as yet but has other ideas to increase the Village's Green credentials.

Over the year we have had several Planning Applications to comment on. We have only asked the planning Department that one be declined which was to erect a stable and storage building on Whitford Hill by the roadside.

Speedwatch in the Village has continued throughout the year thanks to Chris Brown and the team which with the SID's has made a difference to the safety of the residents of the Village.

Unfortunately, the Precept was again increased to keep up with the cost of services which we have certainly seen over the past year.

The Village was invited to a zoom meeting with Airband who have the contract to roll out broadband in rural areas of Somerset and Devon. We requested that no cabinets, poles, and cables be placed in front of the Church which they agreed to and were informative about the project.

The situation with the White Hart Pub has rumbled on since the last AGM and recently the Asset of Community Value (ACV) order was lifted. First of all, we were told by mistake/list not up to date and now because it was sold. A new application will have to be made. We will obviously get to the bottom of the situation, and I currently have an email out with the council and awaiting a response. We understand the new owners are still assessing what they wish to do with the pub.

I will finish on the exciting event to the south side of the village being the installation of another dog poo bin after the success of the one at the Village Hall.

### **CORFE VILLAGE HALL and QUEENS ACRE COMMITTEE (Keith Gosling)**

This year has been one of steady recovery from the Covid restrictions, so included with this report is a 5-year financial history to help understand this period. The aims of the Village Hall Committee

are broadly consistent with those for earlier years, and it is encouraging, that in these difficult times, the Village Hall has managed to return a small profit. There was an excellent turnout to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee and a coffee morning to support McMillan Cancer was also held.

However, the responsibilities for running the Village Hall have relied on ever fewer people and it is very disappointing that, despite urgent appeals, only one new person has stepped forward to help keep the Village Hall running. Emma Bowers will be taking on the Secretary role on a 6-month trial basis, with other responsibilities being redistributed across the rest of the Committee. I will continue to stay on as Treasurer, Andy Butler will take on the Chairman role, Nigel Furniss will cover all Maintenance matters, and Chris Brown will manage bookings, meet and greet, and undertake cleaning of the hall.

Income from normal activities over the year was £7,821, with a vital component being the £1,175 raised through the '100 Club'. Recurring costs were £4,795 and project costs were £1,291 - which left an overall profit of £1,103. The projects included replacing all the paper towel dispensers with hand driers and also drafting plans for an extension (see later).

The profit has added to an already strong financial footing, largely driven by Covid grants given out by the Government, which have amounted to £32,321. Total monies by the end of the financial year were over £38,000. As the interest given by banks is so poor, £30,000 has been moved from Barclays to Skipton, who have recently opened an account to support charities.

Last year, this strong financial position gave rise to considering the replacement of the ageing and damp container with a small, purpose-built extension. This would provide more (and safer) storage facilities in a dry and clean environment, plus the addition of a smaller meeting/social room, for which there has been an increased demand. Building plans have been produced, planning permission applied for and potential grant opportunities explored. The Parish Council has supported this initiative, but as with running the Hall a lack of volunteers to do the required work means that the future of the project is finely balanced.

Given the economic climate there will be challenges ahead with the huge pressure on costs, particularly the recent rise in energy bills (given this it would be worth exploring the possible installation of solar panels going forward under the Parish Council's green initiative). With these increases in costs there will be an increase in hiring costs from next October. However, on a positive note, we have been informed that Somerset West and Taunton have accepted our application to continue with the 100% discretionary rates relief for the Village Hall.

So, in summary, this has been a very challenging year, though much has been achieved with the Village Hall being an excellent and well used resource. The finances are in very good shape and I would finally like to particularly thank Chris Brown and Ruth Pickles for their hard work and commitment over the year, and recognise the work done by Nigel Furniss over recent months. I would also like to thank Andy Butler and Emma Bowers for stepping forward and taking on their new roles and wish them every success for the future.

**CORFE COMMUNITY TRUST** (Ann Jeffery & Keith Gosling)

After over 30 years of service, with the last 20 years as Chairman, Mrs Ann Jeffery has retired from the charity. Mr Ken Brown will now step up as Chairman and Mrs Helen Hinchliffe has been appointed as a Trustee. Ann has done an excellent job for the charity over her many years of service and I am sure that everyone involved with the village would like to thank her for all her hard work and hospitality.

In terms of other business, this year has again seen a small surplus of income over expenditure. The income from the Charities Investment Fund has remained constant at around £3,000. Expenditure was just over £2,000 but this will rise next year as in the second half of the year 3 additional people have been signed up for the Taunton Deane Helpline. Another successful outing was arranged last September for villagers to the Heron Vineyard. Other small amounts have been granted to villagers who were in need of financial assistance. The charity has also generously donated £100 for a village event to mark the coronation of King Charles III.

Given the challenging times that still face a lot of people there may well be an increased need for support for people in the village and all requests for assistance will be reviewed sympathetically by the Trustees. In addition, should the Village Hall extension go ahead then the charity would consider making a donation, plus possibly a loan, towards the building costs.

The charity remains concerned with the state of the pavement running through the village plus the invasive telegraph pole, which means it is potentially dangerous for wheelchair users and those with a pushchair or pram. Therefore, the charity would ask the Parish Council to revisit this to see if anything can be done to make the necessary improvements.

The Trustees are Mr Ken Brown (Chairman), Mrs Christine Bradbeer, Mrs Audrey Derrick, Ms Barbara Coombes, and Mrs Helen Hinchliffe. Any of them can be contacted for advice if any cases of need are known, or the clerk, Mr Keith Gosling.

#### **CORFE, PITMINSTER, & ALMSHOUSE CHARITY (John Harrison)**

The year has been mixed, with all residents well. At Christmas the trustees gave each resident a food parcel containing festive fare which were well received.

There was a fire in one of the houses caused by a faulty fuse box. No one was injured. It was quickly put out, but a damaged carpet had to be replaced and a lounge redecorated. All properties have been checked by an electrician and we suspect that when the Smart meter was installed a lead was not secured correctly.

A contractor was employed to clear the overgrown gardens and will be asked to attend twice a year from now on. The trustees are looking into the building of two 1-bedroom Almshouse bungalows in the grounds and gardens becoming communal.

One of the residents had a fall off-site and was in hospital for over a month with a broken arm. Thankfully, he has recovered and is now at home .

#### **CORFE SHORT MAT BOWLS CLUB**

The Club regularly plays on a Friday morning from 10am – 12 noon. We are restricted to a full membership of 16 as the hall is only wide enough for two bowls mats. We are now back playing

friendly matches with other local clubs and run internal pairs and singles competitions. Now we have a full membership but would welcome anyone interested in joining to come and watch us play and perhaps join our waiting list for future members. Our local representative is Christine Bradbeer.

### **CORFE QUILTERS**

We continue to meet most weeks in the hall and remain an enthusiastic group of likes- minded ladies, although since 'Lockdown' are numbers are reduced. For the first time since the group started, 19 years ago, we no longer have a waiting list.

We are working towards holding an exhibition on May 28th and 29th and thank the Parish council for their support in leaving the Parish Marquee in situ in the playing field for us to use. We hope to attract people from this area as well as fellow quilters from other parts. We will be raising funds for the Exeter Motor Neurone Disease department. Please phone Sue Ford on 07989175387 or email richsueford@hotmail.co.uk for information.

**TREE WARDEN** – No report available to publish at present.

### **THE BLACKDOWN BENEFICE – ST NICHOLAS CHURCH CORFE**

At the Annual Parochial Church Meeting back in March all the Church Council members were unanimously re-elected with the addition of Mervyn Hosking. We continue to have Benefice services in one of our six churches each Sunday and in addition a BCP Communion Service at 9.15 a.m. in one of the Churches. A Family Worship Service has been introduced once a month which is proving successful. In Corfe we have had 4 Baptisms and one marriage during the last 12 months. In June our Curate the Revd Nick Jerrett was ordained in the Taunton Minster; on the 12 September a thanksgiving Service was held in Pitminster to remember HRH Queen Elizabeth II and in November we had a visit from the newly consecrated Bishop of Bath and Wells who had a prominent role in the Coronation Service and a celebratory service was held at Buckland St Mary Church on 7 May. A Christmas Tree Festival was held in Corfe church in December organised by Christine Bradbeer and sum of £650 was made. Carol Service was held during the festival. We have two fund raising events planned – a cream tea at the home of Ann Jeffery on 14 June and a Quiz with ploughman's supper at Corfe Village Hall on 8 July. The Choir of Taunton Minster is coming to sing Choral Evensong in Corfe at 6.30p.m. on 23 July to be followed by a glass of wine in the Churchyard. Thanks are due to Anne Finchett, our Sacristan; Shirley Grinter our faithful organist; Angela Vodden our very efficient Treasurer; Angela Yard who keeps the Church sparkling and Christine Bradbeer who organises flower arrangers and door lockers and Clive Wembridge our Churchyard mower and of course our Clergy the Revd Jim Fallon and Revd Nick Jerret.