

## **SOCIETIES OF CORFE AGM – TUESDAY 8th May 2024**

**Apologies for Absence** – Sue Ford (Corfe Quilters), Ken Brown (Corfe Community Trust)

**Minutes of 16th May 2023** – Viewed and Approved.

### **REPORTS OF THE PARISH ORGANISATIONS:**

**CORFE PARISH COUNCIL REPORT** – Nothing posted (See Parish Council AGM 2024 report of financial year end details).

### **CORFE VILLAGE HALL and QUEENS ACRE COMMITTEE REPORT**

Now Covid seems to be behind us, many more events have taken place at the Village Hall (and Queens Acre) this year. This has largely been down to an excellent engagement campaign run by Emma Bowers who distributed a detailed questionnaire to establish the priorities villagers had for social events and activities, many of which are detailed below. Emma Bowers took on the Secretary role on a six-month trial basis and I am glad to say has agreed to stay in post for the foreseeable future. Keith Gosling will stay on as Treasurer, Nigel Furniss will cover all Maintenance matters, and Chris Brown will manage bookings, meet and greet, plus the cleaning of the hall. A further volunteer has also just come on board (to replace the retiring Sue Ford), to further compliment support from Ruth Pickles and Rob Smith.

Income from normal activities over the year was £10,824, with two vital components being the £1,308 raised from the '100 Club' plus the £1,096 earned through interest. Recurring costs were £5,948 and project costs were £250. The Community Café had income of £2,900 and costs of £1,958. In total, this left an overall profit of £5,568.

Total monies by the end of the financial year were over £44,037. The interest outlined above was because of £30,000 being moved by Keith (Treasurer) from Barclays to Skipton, with it attracting a much higher rate of interest. The £942 profit raised by the Community Café is likely to be invested in improving the equipment and initiatives for the Café in the future.

Here is a financial summary for the year to 31 March 2024:

<https://www.corfevillagesomerset.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/FY2024.pdf>

And a 5-year financial summary:

<https://www.corfevillagesomerset.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/5Y-to-FY2024.pdf>

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 agreed and potential grant opportunities are continuing to be 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 still finely balanced. One quote for the project has been given and more are being sought to assess viability. It is proposed to put more detailed findings to the village in the coming weeks.

If the extension is not considered viable, and given the rise in energy bills, another option being considered is the possible installation of solar panels (going forward under the Parish Council's green initiative). Additional improvements to the current building and facilities will also be considered.

Following on from the questionnaire several new activities now regularly take place at the Village Hall to supplement the well supported, long-standing Short Mat Bowls, Quilters; Sewing Group, Toddler Group, Gardening Society, and MND quizzes.

Pilates: whilst the group has been going for some time there have been an additional men's group, another women's group and a mature mover's group.

Wine Tasting: Jonathan and Louise have run several fantastic wine tasting events which have been very informative and highly enjoyable. Around 50 people have attended each event, and it is hoped there are many more to come.

Community Café: The café opened its doors on a trial basis with six dates in November & December. The team have been delighted that support from the village has been very strong. The café is made possible due to the dedication of a group of volunteers and a wider support team of café helpers and donor bakers. Following the success of the trial the café now regularly opens on a Thursday fortnightly and one Saturday a month. There is a regular team of about 20 volunteers helping to staff the café as well as 30 occasional bakers. A few village members are even helping by registering their kitchens so that more frequent cakes can be provided to the café, a special thanks to Heather Gosling, Lesley Brown and Gaynor Lewis for this extra effort. The café was assessed by Environmental Health Officers in March, and we are delighted they achieved a full 5-star rating, making the café fully official. It really has demonstrated the community spirit here in Corfe that not only are there a large group of volunteers wanting to help, but also across the regular customers who use the café, creating a genuine village hub. To date, with roughly 6 months of being open, the café has served close to 750 hot drinks and close to 800 baked goods! A special thanks to the café core team members for their incredibly hard work – Heather Gosling, Lesley Brown, Catherine Alway, Karen Dewhirst, Melanie Welsher and Emma Bowers for creating such a welcomed hub for the village.

Pop Up Pub: In March, with the ongoing closure of the White Hart, we invited The Dryad Gin team to create a pop-up pub event in the hall. Thanks to Becky Wright & The Dryad Inn team who brought along a gin cocktail bar as well as local beer and cider, with some rather delicious pizzas supplied by Fiamma Wood Fired Pizza. There was a specially crafted cocktail created just for the night. There were over 29 suggestions submitted from across the village and the winner was Lisa Palmer with Corfe Blimey! The Dryad Inn team are all about bringing community together and they helped achieve that for us. Much laughter, fun and connecting with friends old and new. We hope that The Dryad Inn team can come back again as well as Andy from Fiamma Wood Fired Pizza.

Recently there was an Alzheimer's cream tea event run by Heather Gosling with her hard-working team, which managed to raise over £550 for the charity.

There was also a charity Mulled Cider & Mince Pie event that Heather coordinated in December that raised £215 for cancer research.

There was a Christmas Mini-Market event held in December.

In summary, this has been a very encouraging year, much has been achieved with the Village Hall being an excellent and well used resource.

I would finally like to particularly thank Chris and Keith for their many years hard work. I am relatively new to the Committee and prior to coming on board, as a “villager” I had simply no idea of the amount of time and effort that was required to continue the successful operation of the Hall. Emma’s arrival has not only been a breath of fresh air but also the amount of work she has taken on (not just with the café and her amazing volunteers) but in the general management and administration of the charity, it is very much appreciated. Nigel’s work on the possible extension is much valued as is Ruth, Rob and Sue’s support.

**CORFE COMMUNITY TRUST** – After over 30 years of service as a Trustee, Audrey Derrick has retired from the charity and has been replaced by Saranna Cogswell. Audrey has done an excellent job for the charity over all those years, and I am sure that everyone in the village would like to thank her for all her hard work.

In terms of other business, this year has seen a very small surplus of income over expenditure. The income from the Charities Investment Fund has remained constant at around £3,000. Expenditure was just over £2,600, with around 70% of this being the Taunton Deane Helpline, provided for five residents in the village. A successful lunch was arranged last September for villagers in the Village Hall, with outside caterers providing the food. Some financial support was given to the setting up of the successful Community Café. Other small amounts have been granted to villagers who needed financial assistance.

Given the low interest rates offered by the banks the surplus cash over the normal running costs of the charity has now been invested with The Skipton Building Society, who offer much more favourable rates. This is consistent with the Parish Council and the Village Hall.

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.

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

#### **ALMSHOUSE CHARITY SELICKS GREEN REPORT –**

John Harrison reported that a proposal to erect two one-bedroom bungalows within an area of excess and hard to manage garden is going forward with the charity who will be approaching the Parish Council in due course with plans after having pre-build discussions with the planning department.

**CORFE SHORT MAT BOWLS CLUB** – Corfe Short Mat Bowls club continue to meet on Friday mornings 10am – 12pm in the village hall with 14 members under the guidance of Alan and June Fogwill. Many friendly matches have been played with local teams and the club continues but as always, we would welcome new members. All practice sessions include tea and biscuits! Our local representative is Christine Bradbeer.

**CORFE QUILTERS** – Although we have less members, we continue to meet regularly and have completed many projects. We also had a few workshops given by members of the group. We are already planning for an exhibition in 2025 and would welcome more members as we no longer

have a waiting list. Please phone Sue Ford on 07989175387 or email richsueford@hotmail.co.uk for information.

**TREE WARDEN** – No report available to publish at present. Cllr. A Butler has agreed to take on the role for 2024 as Mrs Gaynor Lewis will be stepping down.

**THE BLACKDOWN BENEFICE – ST NICHOLAS CHURCH CORFE** – We continue to hold a Benefice Service on the fourth Sunday of every month when we welcome friends from the other five Churches. We have attempted to provide service recently to welcome families but due to the decrease in the number of children attending services are now Eucharistic. The PCC is considering introducing an occasional service which is not a communion service. A very successful pet service was held at the Matravers's farm in September, and we enjoyed service of Sung Evensong in July with the choir of the Taunton Minster – they are coming again this year on 21<sup>st</sup> July. A carol service led by Revd Nick Jerrett was well attended. Nick will be leaving us this September to become Vicar of St Mary's Church, Chard and he will be inducted to the living at the end of September. We send Nick, Claire and William all good wishes. Revd Jim Fallon had his sabbatical during the year and toured the country visiting Cathedrals and churches. We had fund raising events during the year – a quiz evening with Christopher Poole of Churchinford as Quizmaster and a very successful supper in January organised by Rosemary Gratton. Future fund-raising events include a quiz on 6<sup>th</sup> July and a Gift Day and talk on 1<sup>st</sup> November with Clinton Rodgers who used to be the local BBC correspondent. At our Annual General Meeting on 28<sup>th</sup> April Ann Jeffery resigned as Church Warden after nearly 30 years in the post. Quinquennial Survey has been produced by our new architect, Michael Vaughan, listing in order of importance items of repair and maintenance which need to be addressed. Thanks are due to Shirley Grinter our faithful organist and Clive Wembridge our faithful Churchyard mower and Liam McFarlane who helps him; Angela Yarde who keeps the Church sparkling and most of all thanks to the Revd Jim Fallon and the Revd Nick Jerrett.