

05/23-24

Much Marcle Parish Council Meeting
Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on
Wednesday 12th April 2023
7.30pm in Much Marcle Memorial Hall

Present: Cllr E. Thomas (in the Chair) and Cllrs M Barber-Starkey; T Weston; E. Jefferson; S. Cotton; J. Baldwin; A. Hope; F. Powell

Also Present: Approximately 13 members of the public; Clerk Rachel Freestone; Ward Member Barry Durkin.

1. Acting Chairman's Welcome:

Cllr Elliott Thomas welcomed members of the public and thanked everyone for attending.

2. Apologies for Absence:

Apologies had been received from Mr James Marsden.

3. Minutes of the 2022 Annual Parish Meeting:

Members considered the minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting on 4th May 2022.

It was RESOLVED: to approve the minutes as a true record of the meeting. They were duly signed by the Chairman.

4. Chairman's Report:

Cllr Elliott Thomas delivered his report firstly thanking all the volunteers that keep all the clubs and groups in the Parish thriving. He thanked Ward Member Barry Durkin for all his work and support to the Parish Council. Jim Edwards, the footpath monitor was also thanked. He commented that the Parish Council had seen a number of changes over the last year with both Cllr Mike Barber-Starkey resigning as Chairman and the Clerk also resigning. Cllr Elliott Weston was also no longer a councillor due to family commitments and all three were thanked. The Chair introduced the new clerk who commenced the role in February. He then introduced the Councillors to the room with a brief explanation of their roles within the Parish Council and thanked them for all their work:

- Cllr Ed Jefferson, recently co-opted and both a local farmer and surveyor.
- Cllr Julian Baldwin, involved in grants and planning and the parish council liaison for the defibrillator in Rushall. A member of the MMMH committee.
- Cllr Frank Powell, the longest serving parish councillor. Is involved in highways for the parish council and liases on their behalf with Balfour Beatty.
- Cllr Tim Weston, involved in planning and the Neighbourhood Development Plan.
- Cllr Alison Hope involved in finance and planning.
- Cllr Mike Barber-Starkey involved in finance and planning. Helped with the installation of new heating system in the Memorial Hall and the new website.
- Cllr Simon Cotton, great knowledge of the area and involved in planning and highways.

He also summarised the year:

- Funds have become available at Herefordshire County Council to repair foot bridges. The hope is that with the help of Jim Edwards, the footpath monitor, that the parish council will secure some of this allocation to be able to repair our bridges and re-open the closed footpaths.
- Funds have been allocated from the 23-24 budget to support the new bus service 'The Daffodil Line'. The parish council wish them every success.
- The Jubilee celebrations were a great success. There are funds remaining from the generous donations received to invest in something for the community. Replacement gates for the Barton's Field are a possibility. The parish council welcome ideas from the community. Cllr M Barber-Starkey thanked Cllr Thomas for his work towards the Jubilee events.
- Thanks extended to all those that attended the litter picking events. A great success and being held again on the 15th April in both Much Marcle and Rushall.

5. Report from West Mercia Police:

Cllr Thomas presented the report from PCSO Kirsten Kysow. Please see Appendix 1 for the full report.

6. Report from Much Marcle C of E School:

Not available.

7. Report from the Parochial Church Council of St Bartholomew's:

Mr Richard Brookes provided a report on behalf of the Parochial Church Council. He provided an update on the structural work required on the church. It had been found that water had been running down from the weathervane, erected in the 1800's and attached to a main joist. Subsequently the main structure of the roof had rotted. They had received conflicting advice on how to approach the repair but had recently received approval from the Diocese for the full repair and work will begin in the next month. The scaffolding has been in-situ for 12 months at a huge cost to the church with the advice and scaffolding to have already cost approx. £40,000. The repairs will be approx. £70-75,000. Subsequently, further support is required. The hope is that once the work is completed they will be able to get back to normal and be able to ring the bells again.

He commented that it is almost wedding season and thanked Homme House and Hellens as many who use these venues for their Reception come to the church for their wedding.

He added that the Yew Tree in the churchyard had been chosen as one of the trees for the 'Queens Canopy' as part of the Jubilee celebrations. Visitors come from all over the world to see it.

8. Report from Much Marcle Memorial Hall:

Mr Scott Fleming provided a report. The Hall is in a good position financially and they have reserves for any unforeseen expenditure. The covid years had been difficult but they have retained their regular bookings, they had also been helped by the receipt of two covid grants which had been used to improve the fabric of the building. He added that having Cllr Baldwin on their committee had strengthened the links between the Hall and parish council and thanked him for his help. Cllr Barber-Starkey was also thanked for his help

with the funding and installation of the new heating system, an improvement using less oil and more manageable.

The wifi had been improved in the Hall which had attracted a good booking from the Cheltenham Vintage Rally Club.

Red tape, regulations and policies are causing a lot of work behind the scenes and all the volunteers who help were thanked. They have managed to keep prices down and have not raised Hall hire rates. The Hall is a community asset, not to make a profit and provide a safe, welcoming space.

Mrs Jenny Park added that it is a big, old hall and they are always looking for volunteers to help with repairs. They would like to set up a group called 'Friends of the Hall' to help with repairs and fundraising and this would take the pressure away from the main Village Hall Committee.

The Memorial Hall committee would like to organise something for the Coronation on the Saturday afternoon. The parish council have donated funds to support this event. She added that response to this event was low but further advertising was in the pipeline. Numbers attending would be required prior to the event.

9. Report from the Much Marcle Community Shop:

Mrs Elizabeth Lutzeier presented a report. She thanked the parish council for their continued support. She also thanked all members of the steering group.

The website had gone live in April 2022 and there is also a Facebook page. In May 2022 the shareholder offer went live and they now have 250 shareholders to date with £90,000 in the bank. A donation of £500 had been received from The Mercury and £2500 from the Herefordshire Community Foundation and they were thanked.

They have visited other community shops to learn from their successes and setbacks and continue to promote at the Hellens monthly produce market and the Big Apple. They also attend parish council meetings to provide updates.

The application for funding from the National Lottery had been unsuccessful as the National Lottery felt that Much Marcle does not need a shop. They are now applying to HMRC to become a 'charitable community benefit society' as this would provide more opportunities for grants and funding.

There is a need for more volunteers to help with fundraising and all are welcome.

10. Report from The Rushall Club:

Mr Peter Montague-Fuller presented a report on behalf of The Rushall Club. Please see Appendix 2 for the full report.

11. Report from Much Marcle Gardening Club:

Not available

12. Report from the Guiding Groups:

Mrs Nicola Johnson presented a report from the Guiding Groups. Please see Appendix 3 for the full report.

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13. Report from the Badminton Club:

Mrs Jenny Park presented a report on behalf of the Badminton Club. She commented that the club is the longest surviving club in the village, started in the 1950's. The Hall benefits from high ceilings and is great venue to play badminton. They have 9 members currently who share the one court and run on Tuesday nights at 7.30pm and will be starting on a Friday at 7pm. All are welcome.

14. Comments and Questions from any Elector of Much Marcle Parish.

A councillor added thanks to Ward Member Barry Durkin for his work on the speed restriction signs for Kempley Lane.

The Acting Chairman thanked everyone for coming and closed the meeting at 8.30pm.

Signed Dated.....
Chairman

DRAFT

Appendix 1 – Report from West Mercia Police

We have seen some break ins to sheds/garages and also vehicles. The SNT have in the past offered property marking events in the village we would like to offer this again to residents. We mark tools with ‘**Cremark**’ which is a product that overtly marks the item and then is sprayed with a protective lacquer that cannot be easily scraped or scrubbed off, making it difficult for items to then be sold on - so this is a great way of making your possessions identifiable and traceable!

For example in two other parishes I have arranged to be in a particular location with our events van and given people the opportunity to have a chat about security and mark their power tools at the same time. I also visited individual properties to give security advice and mark any larger items of value. This was very successful in How Caple and Brockhampton/Much Fawley.

For our larger premises, farms and businesses I can organise for our Rural Crime Team to visit to discuss security on a larger scale as well as chat about crime trends/poaching issues etc. The team are based in Ledbury and are focused on rural crime in the county.

Neighbourhood Matters is an alert system whereby users sign up using their email address and will then be updated about policing, crime prevention, ongoing incidents and what we are doing in your community. To sign up to neighbourhood matters you can do this via the website – www.neighbourhoodmatters.co.uk or I am happy to discuss and sign anyone up when I come to the next meeting.

Every 3 months I send an email to the Parish Clerks to discuss any priorities that police need to focus on for that location. Unfortunately we haven’t had any feedback until now..... which I’m really pleased about. I have listed 3 priorities:

1. Increase in police presence
2. focus on burglary prevention due to recent spate
3. speeding

Appendix 2 – Report from The Rushall Club

Thank you Mr Chairman for inviting me to present to the Parish Council on the Rushall Club. My name is Peter Montague-Fuller and I am the Treasurer at the Rushall Club.

Some brief history for those unfamiliar with the Club, it was put into Trust in May 1953 on the death of JJS Powell, of Hall Court, being the Youth Hostel Association, the Rushall Men's Club premises (at the same site) and Clems Cottage where Doreen Pocknell lives as steward to the Club. The Trust owns the buildings and cottage and the Club rents the premises. The Youth Hostel closed in 1980 which occupied the upstairs and some of the downstairs of the building. These rooms are occupied by squirrels and jackdaws. The Club is downstairs and has a skittles alley.

The Club has been run by Doreen (and with Clarence her partner) since 1967 – 56 years. Doreen is 94 year old. It is not a charity and made £10k revenue last year from membership (24 currently) and beer sales - largely beer sales. It is supported by volunteers for whom a special mention goes to Jeremy Hambling who works tirelessly for the Club and Rob & Mary Jolly who assist Doreen and he is President. (As a side note: given Doreen's long career with the Club and with Westons where she worked until she retired, we have started to gather information to submit an application to request an MBE for her. Time is running out given Doreen's age although she is fit and healthy, barring a back problem, at the moment. Any supporting information would be gratefully received from villagers).

The Club benefits from a number of events and activities – Skittles Club is run by Johnny Walters (of Ashperton) and Country & Western evenings every month now run by Viv and Stuart Evans (Doreen's nephew) [Note: the Wheelers ran it for many years but COVID meant they stopped] which brings together people from across the county for live music, a dance and a social. A very important gathering of the older generation. The costs of the Club are bar purchases (strong relationship with LWC and very grateful to Westons for the great value Stowford Press barrel) – c£4k, insurance (£2k), honorarium for Doreen (£3k) and then electricity and oil. The Club is running at a small £1k operating loss on normal business activity and has c £15k cash in the bank currently. The Club received over £13k of grants during COVID which shored up its finances. These funds have been put to good use with the installation of a new heating system (last replaced in 1970), improved lighting and other health and safety measures while retaining the character of the Club. A big thank you to Francis Wynne-Jones, a Club Committee member, for managing this. There is no Wi-Fi.

The Club would like to thank the Parish Council, and Julian Baldwin, for the Defib Unit and some excellent training from our resident firefighter, Kate. This current year we continue with our normal events and welcome all people to the Club for skittles, a full size snooker table, nice cider, meet Doreen, and of course the Country and Western/Dance evenings. We have the odd party and special event. We may put on an exhibition or fund an art prize for the best drawing of the Club. Our future challenges are keeping the Club relevant to local people, visited and used, keep Doreen safe and working (while she still wants to and can) and to maintain the fabric of the building without excessive cost. [We are not necessarily jumping at the chance of Wi-Fi but we may be forced to be a late adopter given that so many transactions are cashless now.] With the Trust set up, we have difficulty seeking grant funding.

Appendix 3 – Report from the Guiding Groups

Girl Guiding units have been run by volunteers in Much Marcle for the last 13 years. We now have Young Leaders who were Brownies in the village once upon a time. Over the last 4 years, Guiding has increased its offer to young girls in the surrounding areas. We now offer fun and exciting opportunities to girls age 7 to 18 with meetings established for Brownies (7-10), Guides (10-14) and Rangers (14-18). Post-covid our units are small and we are keen to grow each unit, however we have a dedicated number girls who enjoy our weekly activities.

We meet at the hall every week and run activities from fire lighting to pancake cooking, games, crafts and seasonal activities to active evenings on the Bartons. We also go swimming in Dymock School pool each year as well as a group going to the New Forest to take part in the annual Guiding Festival 'Wellies and Wristbands'. We have camped in the woods at Hellens and provide flower displays for the church. We are always involved in the Big Apple, with the Brownie Unit holding their annual Tombola stall and Guides providing refreshments from Avenue Cottage.

We are soon to be replacing our shed at the back of the hall and are thankful to the Model Aircraft Show for a recent donation towards this. Other future plans involve another trip to the New Forest with the older girls as well as an exciting outdoors summer term for all our members.

Mary Boustead & Nicola Johnson Much Marcle Guiding. 10.4.23