

THE NARTH & DISTRICT VILLAGE HALL
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
7.30 pm, Tuesday, 9th October 2018

Present: Sue & Graham Agg; Kay Bowen; Marilyn & Jon Dunkelman; Larry Stoter; Pam Manfield; Jane & Steve Gilliard; Peter Flower; Clark & Wendy Atkinson; Pete & Anne Walters; Vivienne & Gordon Casson; Ted Bannister; Bob & Gwen Reid; Alison & Chris Pugh-Jones; Bill & Sue Parnell; Rosemary Thomas; Ruth Williams; Rachel Widdicks

1. Apologies: Sue & Jeff Goodlass; Janni Menday; Kay & Brian Mahony; John Dronsfield; Sue Flower; Sue Stocker; Jane Brackstone; Dianne & Stephen Dix; Clare Catto; Paul Harrington.

2. Minutes of the last meeting: These were agreed to be a true record.

3. Matters Arising: there were none.

4. Review of the Year

Marilyn Dunkelman (Chair) stated that, despite the great variety of weather experienced during the year, the Hall showed a healthy balance. The plan continues to be to keep improving on past achievements, to increase the use of the Hall and to involve as many residents of all ages as possible.

Rosemary Thomas and Nikki Godfrey had left the Committee at the start of the year, but would continue to be involved in various ways. The Committee had gained Clark and Wendy Atkinson, who provided a link with the Glade Tavern Team and had brought significant health and safety experience. Kay Mahony had joined for a short time, but had not been able to remain, though she will also continue to be involved with activities. The Committee was also delighted to welcome Helen King as a new member, co-opted during the year.

During the year the major purchase was the new, lighter chairs. In addition a table-tennis table has been purchased, a new First Aid kit had been bought and the hall now has a TV licence to enable screening of events like rugby matches. Less had been done structurally than the previous year, but major projects are being planned.

Many events had been run by local residents and the Committee was very grateful to all those organisers, especially Luisa Sadler for the Hallowe'en Evening; Gordon Casson for the Christmas event; the Beetle Drive organised by Rachel Widdicks and Mary Pardington and the group who organised the Village Walks.

Many people had been involved in the Fete, which had been greatly enjoyed and very successful, despite the weather - which had prevented Cathy Russell's planned parade. Val Boycott and her team was thanked for organising the teas, the Glade Tavern Team, particularly Rachel Widdicks and Wendy Atkinson, for the bar and Steve Widdicks for the wonderful food. Linda Snowden and Sue Parnell's White Elephant staff raised a lot of money as did the Garden Club's plant/produce stall. The Wild Tots games were greatly enjoyed as was Rebecca King's stall. Thanks were due to Gordon and Ted for organising the raffle and all those involved in serving food and general preparations. A highlight of the day was the display of the village in days gone by, organised by Sue Flower and Rosemary Thomas, to which many people submitted photographs and stories, including Jane Brackstone's contribution to the display about The Glade.

There had been a number of charity events: the February event raised money for Trellech Parents, Teachers and Friends Association; Jane Gilliard's Forest Flute concert raised money for the Air Ambulance and Luisa's Mexican night raised funds for Busy Bodies playgroup. The Arnells had run the very successful Big Breakfasts for a number of years but after this year's event, in which they raised money for HomeStart Monmouth, they have now decided to take a break; they have trained successors so that hopefully the BBs will continue. Janni Menday's entertaining quiz raised funds for a dog rescue centre.

There are good links with all other halls in the Trellech United Community Council (TUCC) area; regular meetings enable us to share useful experiences and help problem solve. The agreement with National Resources Wales (NRW) about use of the Glade had to be renegotiated after their reorganisation. Thanks to the support of our local ranger, Emma, we have a new 5-year agreement for use, very similar to the previous one. Residents were asked to note that if they held events in the Glade, they must inform the Village Hall. Community events would then be covered by the Hall's public liability insurance.

Jane Brackstone was thanked for cleaning the phone box and reintroducing the book swap held there. Contributions of interesting books were welcomed. New residents were reminded to contact Marilyn Dunkelman if they wished to receive the regular emails giving information of upcoming events.

ACTIVITY AND GROUP UPDATES

The Women's Institute had ended, but re-emerged as Wye Valley Women; Line dancing had ended, but a new club for over 50s and a table tennis group had started.

100 Club: Run by the Village Hall Committee, this now has 41 members. Sue Goodlass was thanked for organising this.

Oil Syndicate: Larry Stoter reminded residents that for £8 pa, which goes to the Village Hall, they get approximately a 6% discount on 500 litre orders. In 2017 the 34 members had saved £1,600; in 2018 so far savings were £2,700. Larry was thanked for his work.

Glade Tavern (GT): Clark Atkinson emphasised the great impact this has on the social life of the village and a way to welcome newcomers. It had been a busy year with charity nights run as the GT had been too successful and had to reduce its income to avoid paying tax. £2,332 profit had been made in the previous year. Every month had a different food option, organised by people wishing to raise money for a charity; this had proved very popular. GT T-shirts enabled residents to see clearly who was on duty at the bar. The GT Team had entered the Monmouth Raft Race for the first time. Clark stressed the need for new people to get involved, not just behind the bar but with setting and clearing up.

Wild Tots: Marilyn reported on their behalf that they were in their second year in the area. The ethos was on free play in nature and family members of all ages could attend. The fire pit was a focal point and their induction and training was very strict on health and safety guidelines, which NRW were happy with. Some local families attended, but the group would welcome more.

Film Nights: Marilyn reported that these continued to be successful, particularly since the collaboration with Penallt village hall.

Wye Valley Women (WVW): Jane Gilliard reported that the change from Women's Institute to WVW in January 2018 had enabled them to widen the activities offered. There were currently 44 members who had enjoyed a variety of speakers and social events. The emphasis was on socialising and refreshments with a pub lunch every alternate month and craft meetings. Thanks were given to the Steering Group, especially Sue Goodlass, Dianne Dix and to all members supporting the group. It was noted the WVW will organise

the Christmas Social for the village on 15th December.

Footpath Project: Jon Dunkelman reported, on behalf of Brian Mahony, that the first full survey over all the area had been completed, identifying work needing to be done. The work programme benefited from a close working relationship with Monmouthshire County Council (MCC). Workdays had been held in February, two days in the Summer and a major project had renovated 30 steps from Whitebrook. There will be another working day with MCC in late October. A regular working group of 6-8 volunteers had been set up to manage vegetation near paths. In total 13 volunteers had donated 284 hours of work and MCC had matched much of this. NRW had also done some work, removing felled trees that had been reported to them and replacing steps to the footbridge on Manor Brook. The Village Walks had each attracted about 20 people. The group was beginning to resurvey the paths; start a project looking at the natural and social history of Manor Wood and also try to combine local walks with links to the 65 bus.

Local Links (Age Cymru Gwent): Marilyn reported on their behalf that this had begun in September with 8 regular attendees and the hope that more would join. A range of activities was provided, suitable for over-50s, from gentle exercise to quizzes, conversation and refreshments. A programme of speakers and events is being planned. Residents were asked to contact anyone they know who might be isolated or lonely to suggest they join the club. Transport could possibly be provided by the Bridges Community Car Team.

Whist Drives: Marilyn reported that the group continued to attract approximately 36 people from a wide area, as far as Bristol and Newport. New players who know how to play the game are welcome. A partner is not needed, as the group play semi-partner whist which ensures playing with a variety of people and adds to the social element. A combination of the Hall facilities and their hospitality keep the group a firm favourite on the local village circuit.

Friends of the 65 Bus: Jane Gilliard reported that in June MCC had decided to withdraw the 65 bus service. A high profile campaign supported by County Councillor Debby Blakebrough and Community Councillor Larry Stoter and many villagers lobbied MCC to prevent this. David Davies (local MP) and Nick Ramsay (Assembly member who has been very supportive) were contacted, as well as Beacon journalists, which resulted in a great deal of publicity. A paper petition was circulated, as well as an online petition. This resulted in 1400 signatures and MCC agreed to defer the withdrawal. The group was established to develop use of the service for leisure and tourism, as well as shopping in Monmouth or Chepstow. There will be a meeting with the Transport Officer at MCC in a few weeks. Local Community Councils have also been contacted, as well as Monmouth Town Council and Chepstow Town Council. The group is now a member of Monmouthshire's Strategic Transport Group. *Visit Monmouthshire* offered a page on its website, describing routes with photos, information and ideas for walks. There is now an email address, and Facebook and Twitter accounts with regular bulletins on how to use the bus. There is a need to find someone in each village to look after the bus stops. (The Footpath Group are doing this for The Narth.) Village-specific timetables are being produced by Brian Mahony to Monmouth and Chepstow. The group were very grateful to all those who had supported the campaign in any way, but stressed the future of the bus was not safe; a decision had just been deferred. It is vital to use the bus to ensure it is retained, particularly for those residents who rely on it totally for transport.

Garden Club: Graham Agg reported that it had been a very successful year with a very varied programme. The AGM and Hog Roast had been a great start to the year, followed by a very good Plant Sale in June. The garden visits had been much enjoyed and there would be a trip to Kew next year. The Produce Stall at the Fete had done well and several new members had been gained during the year.

The Narth Singers: Ted Bannister reported that they had held two concerts in 2018,

raising £1800 for Click Sargent and Air Ambulance Wales. The choir was already practising for its Christmas concert but it was stressed that more tenors and basses were needed. No auditions were required, but all new singers would be warmly welcome.

Exercise Groups: Marilyn reported that we were lucky to have so many local groups. Ladies Keep Fit will restart in November; Yoga was going strongly and had a waiting list; Zumba was recommended as great fun, as well as great exercise; Tai Chi again was great fun and relaxation, as well as exercise; Table-tennis now had 2 tables available; newcomers were welcome. Contact details for all were on the Village website.

Community Led Plan: The village was still trying to achieve the aims of the plan. Marilyn suggested that a new consultation might be needed in 2020.

5. The Coming Year

Marilyn reported that we seemed to be doing well, but must continue to balance income against workloads for volunteers available. The major job for the future was to revamp the conservatory. Jeff Goodlass was thanked for all his efforts on work projects; he was leaving the Committee, but would continue to assist with small repairs. Larry Stoter had offered to take over the conservatory project and had spoken to various local builders and gained written quotes for substantial repairs and refurbishment, since the conservatory had a history of leaks. This would also give a little extra space. More details would be available in the next few months; grant support would aid with funding. The Village Hall Committee would continue to canvass residents for the type of things needed to improve the Hall and especially to provide activities for all ages and sectors. Steve Dix was thanked for his work in organising Arts Council Wales nights; it was noted the next was in November. It had been suggested that as well as the Christmas card delivery there could be a Christmas greetings newsletter with donations for entry. This would go out at the same time as the Christmas delivery.

There were no questions.

6. Finance Report

Marilyn had provided a detailed Financial Report for all attendees. She reported the Hall was in a good financial position; income and expenditure were less than last year which had been an exceptional year. £6-7,000 were needed each year to keep the hall running. Tucc provided standard revenue grants to local village halls and £1,000 towards capital costs if needed, to offset MCC's insistence that village halls pay rates. She stressed that fundraising events were vital to ensure we cover running costs and expressed the Committee's gratitude to all those who organised fundraising or social events.

7. Questions from the floor:

Sue Agg asked when the rates for hiring the Hall had last been reviewed. Marilyn replied that they were considered annually, but last amended in 2014. The Committee had decided that there was no need to ask people to pay more at the present time.

8. Election to Committee.

The Committee needed 9-12 members to be elected by village residents; the Committee would then decide who took on which officer roles. It was noted that Larry Stoter is not elected, but is the designated Tucc representative. Four members were leaving: Pete Walters; Jeff Goodlass; Janni Menday and Taryn Rayner. Kay Bowen proposed a vote of thanks for their contributions; seconded by Sue Agg. The remaining 8 members were happy to stand again: Wendy and Clark Atkinson; Stephen Dix; Marilyn Dunkelman; Sue Flower; Helen King; Pam Manfield. Peter Flower proposed that they all be re-elected; seconded by Graham Agg. This was unanimously agreed. Ruth Williams had also agreed

to join the Committee. Bill Parnell proposed her election, seconded by Rosemary Thomas. This was unanimously approved. Sincere thanks were given to Marilyn Dunkelman for all the work she puts in, often behind the scenes, which enables so many activities to work so well.

The Annual General Meeting then ended at 8.55 pm, followed by the 100 Club draw.

100 Club: first prize: Helen King; second prize: Steve Widdicks