

CHALE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on **MONDAY 11 May 2020** at 7.00 pm via Zoom due to the continuing “lockdown” for the Corona Virus pandemic.

Present

Chairman: Cllr. Ron Groves
Councillors: Cllrs: McWilliam, Gosling, Kershaw, Groves and Harding
IW Councillor: IW Cllr Stewart
Clerk: Sue Waters
Public: 3

1. WELCOME

Cllr Ron Groves Chairman of the Parish Council welcomed everyone present

2. MINUTES OF THE 2019 ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

The minutes of the 2019 Annual Parish Meeting held on 13 May 2019 were approved and signed by the Chairman

3. ANNUAL REPORT 2019/20 FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF CHALE PARISH COUNCIL

I always start writing my Annual report at the beginning of the New Year in January as was the case again. Little did I envisage the tragedy that would hit the World with the Global pandemic of the Coronavirus and how it would have life changing effects on us all in some way or another. Nobody knows how long that this will continue and it is pleasing to see the village pulling together in so many ways. Our Helplines continue to assist those who require help and it is only a phone call away 24 hours a day, seven days a week. My thanks go out to my three sets of coordinators and the volunteers who will carry out the required request of the callers.

It would be remiss of me not to mention Rachael who has set up the Pop-Up Kiosk in Town lane for the benefit of all but especially those who are unable to get to the shops and require some food urgently. To Dave Badman, who gave of his time and expertise to make the kiosk bird and weather proof. To those who have donated to the project with donations of money food and plants, to ensure the kiosk can continue. Thank you all for your support.

We have set up a community support network with Niton and Whitwell, namely called CRAB, which stands for COMMUNITY RESPONSE AND BACKUP. We are CRAB Chale and we are working together with the other two villages for our mutual benefits.

My Annual report continues.

I started last year’s report in a similar fashion as to be honest not a great deal has changed, regarding financial constraints being placed upon us all. Not only on our Parish Council; but many others on the Island. The Isle of Wight County Council still have many constraints from the Government and this has a “knock on” effect to parishes such as ours. Therefore, we have again to be prudent regarding our spending and look hard where our money is spent and what local events and charities that we can afford to support. I have deliberately held back on raising our precept for the past four years as I felt that the parish was already having to accept Rate Rises from the IWCC and from the Hampshire Police Authority. Sadly, this year, we have had to raise it; but have kept it to an absolute minimum.

This past year as you will know we ‘lost’ the battle to save Chale Green Stores for the village despite hundreds of emails and also meetings with the owner and other interested parties. My fellow Councillors had backed this project, as well as business minded people who have all freely given both their time and expertise to offer advice and help. For this I am extremely grateful. My thanks also go to Chris and Jo, who as tenants of the Stores, stoically held on until the business became

untenable and they had to close. We did thank them for their work over the past seven years, through difficult times. When they attended our November PC meeting, we gave them a voucher for a meal in the Wight Mouse.

The Public Works Loan Board Loan application still stands, and should things change we can apply to draw it down until the end of May, when the application expires. When not drawn down no interest accrues and no payment from us is required.

Last year I spoke about the Hoy Monument, a legacy from the past, that is our responsibility. I have had meetings with the National Trust and they are not in a position to purchase it from us. I did point out to them that it does stand on their land and that there are no warning signs to the public on the gates leading to their fenced off area as to the possible danger of falling masonry. They agreed and the warning signs will be in place, I have been assured.

Regarding the telephone box, on the Green, close to the Bus Stop. We have been informed by BT that due to the lack of use, it will become redundant and they have offered it to the Village. When this occurs, we will use it to place the Defibrillator in, as we had to move it from the shop and temporarily place it on the wall of the building that advertises Stubbings, my grateful thanks go to Keith Joyce for allowing us to do this on his building.

I have attended meetings at the Isle of Wight Council, with other Town and Parish Councils on the Island regarding future planning and budgets for 2019/20. We have also communication with Niton & Whitwell, Chillerton and Gatcombe Parish Councils, regarding the number six Bus Service. Which, as a group, we continue to subsidise to ensure a Sunday and Bank Holiday service.

I have also attended meetings held by the Isle of Wight Council Leader Dave Stewart, our Ward Councillor, also. These are open to the public meetings, held in Niton and are well attended. Several members of the IWCC attended and subjects discussed and open to questions were the Undercliff Drive; speeding and housing. Also, a presentation from Andy Dorning regarding SWAY's work in the community of South Wight. Broadband and BT were also raised and Dave is taking this problem up with the CEO of BT.

Our donated daffodils, by the IW Horticulture Society, which myself and Sally Kenny planted around our Village Chale signs, have shown themselves again with some areas being replenished with bulb and plants, and our flower boxes continue to thrive at both ends of the village and again my thanks go to those who help maintain them.

Thankfully our two Defibrillators have not been used, but they are still checked daily by volunteers to ensure that if required they are serviceable. We are still continuing the 'battle' with British Telecom over the Broadband issue at the Blackgang end of the village.

Prior to our AGM, I have received, answered and actioned, where applicable, two thousand two hundred and eighty emails during the past year all relating to Parish Council business and I am indebted to Katie, our Clerk, and Sue who took over the post in November 2019, for their forbearance and patience in dealing with often, a time consuming part of Parish Council business; which at times requires instant action dealing with third parties. Since the start of the pandemic the emails have increased by a further six hundred and fifty.

The community Hut, on the Green, at the entrance to Spanners Close, continues to be a challenge. Southern Housing Group donated it to Chale, for Community use and it has been used mainly by SWAY for the youth of the village who continue to meet on a Wednesday evening. My thanks go to Andy Dorning who runs the group, not only on a Wednesday but with outside and off Island activities to the benefit of the young people of the village and the South Wight area, which he explained admirably when he visited a PC meeting.

A steering group, for the Hut, was set up but for many reasons it has not functioned and it is left to us, the PC and SWAY, for future planning and current repairs. Which include repairs of the vandalism by Councillor Pete Gosling and myself. We are fortunate in one way to have it, as with the loss of the Shop we have placed our Christmas Tree close by and our able to run the electric for the lights from it. Room 2 of the Hut requires clearing out as there is a great deal of very old computer equipment in it that was in fact used by the School when it was open a decade ago.

Last year, we, as the PC decided to use our village map, after obtaining permission from the artist, to have Tea Towels made for general sale. Our initial purchase of one hundred were snapped up very quickly by the shop and the Women's Institute, making a small profit for Parish Council funds, the shop and the W.I. We then purchased a further one hundred and sold them slowly over a period of time and purchased a further hundred. Then following another idea, my wife decided that she could make pinafores with some as an experiment and they are proved to be popular with the shop as people are buying them for gifts. I have heard from several purchasers that Chale tea towels and pinafores are in kitchens as far afield as Australia, The USA and Europe.

It has been pleasing to see at our Monthly Parish Council meetings, the number of members of the public who have attend have in fact increased during the past year; I thank them all for their attendance and interest and raising valid points for the benefit of Chale.

Grateful thanks; go to Brian and Cathy Harding, who again so generously purchased the village Christmas Tree and to Keith & Kevin Joyce and crew who erected it for us in time for our Carols on the Green. Andy Price and his musicians who played for us and Reverend Nigel Porter who led the event helped by Leslie Sprake our Church Warden. Andy Dorning and Saffron (SWAY), who generously arranged the gift of 120 mince pies and the Mulled wine. To Pat Joyce who heated and delivered the mince pies and my wife Meg who mixed the wine with fruit and heated it for those who attended on the evening. We were so lucky that the incessant rain we had that day, ceased an hour before the start and we were able to set the musician's Gazebo up to protect them and their equipment. All due to people pulling together and long may this tradition continue.

Yet another Council year draws to a close, we will undoubtedly face even more challenges in the next year, but will face them as they arise and my fellow Councillors and myself will endeavour to do our very best for our village.

Chaler of the Year this year was a unanimous vote by my colleagues, however as we cannot at present have a public meeting, the presentation will take place when we are allowed to proceed normally.

Hopefully, our AGM will take place through the technology of a Zoom meeting, with my fellow Councillors and interested members of the public speaking from our own homes.

Finally, I sincerely thank, Katie our previous Clerk and Sue who has replaced her in post; my fellow Councillors for their support throughout the past year.

4. TO RECEIVE THE 2018/19 PARISH COUNCIL FINANCIAL REPORT

All financial reports relating to 2019/20 were presented at the April Parish Council meeting. Receipts of £13,122.74 were received which included £10,000 precept, and a grant of £15,000 from the IW Council for litter picking. Our expenditure was £11,139.63 which included the Parish Council funding the Sunday bus service again, Grass cutting on Chale Green, and Grants to local organisations including SWAY. Balance brought forward from last year was £19,615.09 which included money put aside for repairs to Hoy Monument and maintenance for the Community Hut. Total balance carried forward at 2019/20 year-end is £21,598.20 including £11,261 of Ring-fenced funds.

5. TO RECEIVE ANNUAL REPORTS FROM:

5.1 CHALE WOMEN'S INSTITUTE REPORT FROM PRESIDENT, MRS LYNDA BURROUGHS

Lynda provided a verbal report as she attended the meeting.

This is my 2nd year as President, as Chale W.I. heads towards it's 91st year. We currently have 22 members, who never cease to amaze me with their talents, good humour, and spirit of friendship. Since May 2019, we have held a number of successful events based around our 90th birthday celebrations, including our Village Summer Fete, which raised £481.64, just under 3 times the amount raised on the previous year. Every penny we raise goes into either our Hall fund, or our Friendship Fund, this helps to ensure that all of our members, (regardless of circumstances), are

able to access various outings or activities. Last year we used part of this fund to visit Havenstreet Railway to celebrate our 90th birthday.

There is no doubt that our Hall is a very important building in Chale. In fact, it is now the only secular public building that provides a base for various clubs, activities, and meetings. We are very keen to continue to build on this. But, as you know, the Hall is very old, and requires constant upkeep, including renovation and replacement of electrical items. This year we have been able to purchase a new water boiler and water filter system for the kitchen, which will make catering for events and meetings much easier.

We try very hard to keep our village Hall up together. However, it has to be said we do not have unlimited funds. This year we approached other local organisations based in Chale for voluntary donations to help with this work. So far, the Parish Council have been the only organisation to help, and have very generously contributed the sum of £300, and we are enormously grateful to them. These last few months our members have faced new challenges. Since lockdown, we have created a contact system and continuous flow of information, and emotional and practical support. We have achieved this by any means available, through telephone calls, emails, texts, WhatsApp and Zoom. To many of our members, including myself, this has been a steep learning curve, but in true W. I. spirit, we are sure we will emerge from this crisis with new skills. Other practical help has been provided by members who have been very busy making scrubs, facemasks, collecting and delivering shopping and prescriptions for people in strict and extended isolation. Once again, our members have risen to, and embraced the challenge, and I am so proud of all of them.

We look forward to our coming year, when we will eventually be together again for W.I. Events, Activities and Meetings, and of course, to enjoy tea & cake!

5.2 CHALE HORTICULTURE SHOW

There was no report received from Chale Horticultural Show

5.3 SUSTAINABLE CHALE LTD. REPORT FROM MR MALCOM GROVES

Malcom both sent a report and attended the meeting to answer any questions. 2019 was a quiet year for the charity although we did continue to provide guidance to householders. The board met to review technological developments and government policy with a view to identifying potential opportunities but due to the lack of availability of grant funding, none have been pursued. The price of solar photovoltaic installations continues to fall and they may well become viable for households without any government support.

Recently, the government launched a consultation on the replacement programme for the Renewable Heat Incentive. This closes in July and is proposing an up-front lump sum grant of £4000 following installation. It is focussed on Air or Ground Source Heat Pumps with Biomass in some exceptional situations where heat pump technology is not suitable.

If the scheme should go ahead on this basis, it seems likely that it would be suitable and attractive to a number of householders in the village and we will explore how best we can help interested property owners. We were successful previously in assisting a number of villagers with a similar in obtaining grants from a similar scheme.

5.4 CHALE RECREATION GROUND REPORT FROM MR MALCOM GROVES

Malcolm both sent a written report and attended the meeting to answer questions.

Whilst it now seems a long time in the past, the 2019 season was very successful for the recreation ground with a variety of events and activities taking place as well as regular use of the ground by parishioners for recreation.

Funds were raised primarily through the usual series of very popular car boot sales supported by a regular band of volunteers without which they would not be possible. The revised traffic management and safety arrangements are proving effective in managing the increased volumes.

The major event on the field was the Chale Show with other events including the car show, the Isle of Wight Challenge walking event and a successful kite festival for young people.

In addition to the support of a team of volunteers, the charity also receives donations from many regular users including the model aeroplane fliers.

Maintaining the field in a condition that enables use as far as possible throughout the year remains a priority with rolling and grass cutting taking place as and when appropriate.

The fencing along the Military Road has been repaired and plans are in place for some new hedging to be planted towards the end of this year and we will be looking for volunteers to assist. It is hoped that if the initial planting is successful that further sections along the same boundary can be planted annually. The hedging is being provided under a scheme run by The Woodland Trust. The current year has been notable for the need to cancel all planned events to date with the consequential loss of income. The field is in regular use for daily exercise by villagers and our costs continue to accrue. Hopefully, we will be able to start running some events later in the year to enable us to at least break even over the course of the year.

5.5 CHALE CHURCHYARD COMMITTEE REPORT FROM MR DEREK SPRAKE

A report was sent ahead of the meeting. The Churchyard Committee has, through the good offices of our hard working and loyal Groundsman, Dave Holmes, maintained the Churchyard, the area to the north usually known as "The Allotments" (as it was for many years let out for use as allotments) and the roadside verge alongside the churchyard. "The Allotments" land is used as an off-road car parking area for Church events during the year. We have also cut back most of the boundary hedges which were overhanging some border graves. Long periods of both cold wet weather and hot dry weather affected the growth of grass, but enabled periods when cutting was not required, which fortuitously saved on costs!

We were grateful for generous grants from Chale Parish Council and Chale Horticultural Society which, with the savings mentioned, enabled the Committee to end the year with a surplus of income over expenditure of some £534. £60 was received from the P.C.C. from burial fees, and the triennial grant of £30 to cover the two War Graves in the Churchyard, from the Commonwealth War Graves Commission who have affixed a plaque on the main gates indicating that War Graves are in the Churchyard (they are doing this at all graveyards in the country where War Graves exist). We also maintain the Chale War Memorial which is in the Churchyard.

Fundraising came from one Quiz evening (raising £240 after costs), and a Coffee Morning at Niton (raising £159 after costs). With the imminent provision of the toilet and kitchenette in the Church we aim to hold future events in the Church, so saving on costs and support further Chale Church. The purchase of new grass cutting equipment two years ago has meant that maintenance costs etc have been reduced, and fuel to run the mowers is generously donated. The Committee made contributions towards the Church Poppy Wreath, organ repairs and the Church Christmas Tree, during the year.

The year ended with £3,047 in hand.

I wish to thank all members of this Committee; our Secretary, Lynette Atkinson, and all supporters at our fundraising events for their hard work during the year.

5.5 SWAY'S REPORT FROM DIRECTOR, MR RICHARD WEBB

There was no report received from SWAY

5.6 CLLR DAVID STEWART, IWC WARD MEMBER FOR CHALE, NITON AND WHITWELL

IW Cllr Stewart sent his written report and was available for questions.

The following report is submitted by me as the Isle of Wight Ward Councillor for Chale and relates to the council year 2019 / 2020.

During the year I have attended most Chale Parish Council meetings and most Isle of Wight Council Meetings.

At the Parish Council level, I have been involved with a range of local matters, including planning applications and specific issues raised by individual residents such as road improvements, removal of a caravan from viewpoint car park and broadband improvements. I have supported the Parish Council in its efforts to save the village store. Sadly, this was not a success and at the present time the shop remains closed.

Other local events in which I have been involved during this period also include engagement in the

annual Chale Show and in the Chale Remembrance Service.

At the Isle of Wight Council level, I have continued to represent the ward and fulfilled my additional role as Leader of the Isle of Wight Council. When attending our local Chale Council meetings I have provided regular briefings on matters affecting the local Parish Council including budget information, progress with Regeneration initiatives, IWC Service Provision to the community and matters affecting Education and Community Wellbeing.

I have also led various Town & Parish Council meetings to which our Chairman and Secretary and other Parish Council members have been invited.

In addition, I have led the IWC 'Cabinet on the Road' meetings, some of which have been held locally, affording Chale Parish Councillors the opportunity to contribute to the development of Island wide matters.

Most recently I have supported our local community in the development of the community response to the Coronavirus Pandemic. I have been pleased to see 'Crab Chale' (led by our Council leader Ron Groves) make its contribution to the community through volunteers and even provide some national leadership around the area of face covers which the Chairman and his wife have been kind enough to model.

I am very pleased to have represented Chale during this year and look forward to continuing to do so in the year ahead.

6. PUBLIC FORUM

The Chairman opened the meeting for Parishioner's comments and questions.

One question was asked about the potential for a Post Office now that Chale Green Stores has closed. The member of the public advised that the Post Office license is still being advertised (for anywhere in the village) and will continue to be so until such times as someone takes it on. If a full-time shop is not an option, a part-time outreach would be considered. He suggested locations such as the church hall, WI Hall or Spanners Hut. Councillors agreed that Spanners Hut would be the preferred location, if the hut was refurbished or rebuilt. Councillor Groves will talk to SWAY as a possibility to incorporate a small Post Office in the future.

The meeting closed at 7.36 pm

Signed:.....Chairman

Dated 8 June 2020