

Sudbrook and West Willoughby Village Hall (SWWVH) Committee Annual General Meeting 18th August 2023 at Ancaster Parish Hall

1. Attendance

Present: John Somerville (JS), Louise Burn (LB), John Cairns (JC), Barbara Campbell (BC), Andy Newton (AN).

Apologies: Karen Barrett (KB), Tamara Coton (TC), Rae Seng (RS), Tom Williams (TW).

2. Chairman's Address.

JS welcomed attendees to the SWWVH Committee Annual General Meeting (AGM) which had been advertised on the Village Noticeboard, the VH site's main gate and the SWWVH Facebook site. None of the current trustees or APC's representative had indicated an intention to resign from their roles and, as there were no other potential candidates at the AGM, an election was not required.

3. Progress Report

JC delivered a Progress Report on the Committee's activities since the last AGM held on 29th September 2022. This report is at Attachment 1.

4. Financial Report.

JC also delivered a report on the Committee's finances. This report is at Attachment 2.

5. Future Plans

JS delivered a report on future plans for the SWWVH site. This report is at Attachment 3.

6. Any Other Business (AOB)

There were no items for AOB.

Attachments:

1. SWWVH COMMITTEE AGM PROGRESS REPORT – 18 AUGUST 2023.
2. SWWVH COMMITTEE AGM FINANCIAL REPORT – 18 AUGUST 2023.
3. SWWVH COMMITTEE AGM FUTURE PLANS – 18 AUGUST 2023.

SWWVH COMMITTEE AGM PROGRESS REPORT – 18th August 2023

What I'd like to do now is to provide you with a summary of what the Committee has been doing since its last AGM on 29th September 2022.

VH Site

Thanks to the diligent efforts of John & Sheila Somerville and Lou Burn, the Beech Hedge saplings along the front border are developing well overall. However, some saplings have had to be replaced and our initial small supply of spares has now been used up. The temporary mesh fences will remain as a protective measure until the saplings have matured. In addition, we hope that everyone enjoyed the first display of Spring flowers that had been planted last year between the hedge and the public footpath.

It has also been gratifying to see residents and ramblers taking advantage of the Memorial Bench for a rest, as well as permitting the three eldest Committee members to have the occasional 'Last of the Summer Wine' moment (but we haven't quite decided who is Compo yet).

We hope that you have found the new Village Hall noticeboard useful as a source of local information. You will have noticed that we have also been posting more 'eye-catching' signs for forthcoming events on the large gate, as well as on Facebook as part of our attempt to join the 21st Century.

Also, the Committee was deeply saddened by the recent death of Councillor Rosemary Kaberry-Brown who had been extremely supportive of its plans to develop the VH site and to encourage its use by all residents. Indeed, many will remember the wonderful Hog Roast party she funded for the village to celebrate her 80th birthday and the end of the Covid lockdown period. Consequently, it has been agreed that a Rosemary bush will be planted at each end of the site's commemorative bench in honour of her memory.

Events

The Christmas Carol Singing Event held on 17th December was enjoyed by all attendees, and the revised format of holding the raffle between the traditional and modern music worked well. However, the overall level of attendance by residents was low and it was thought that the very cold weather plus the finals of 'Strictly Come Dancing' were likely to have been contributory factors (although in our defence, we did avoid the major World Cup fixtures!). Regardless, the event still raised £37 for the Charity's fund.

The Coronation Big Lunch and Big Help Out events held on 7th/8th May 2023 were deemed to be a great success.

The excellent weather for the Big Lunch encouraged a good turnout of about 60 people and it was clear from the very positive feedback that all attendees had enjoyed themselves. The games provided by Tom Williams were particularly popular and John Somerville provided an excellent playlist on his mobile sound system. Moreover, the wide variety of activities raised a total of £465 for the charity's funds. However, it was agreed that there was still plenty of scope for increasing the number of households attending.

The Big Help Out litter-picking event removed a significant amount of rubbish from the approach roads to Sudbrook and the vicinity of 'The Sands' footpath. It was also encouraging to see new faces volunteering their services. Moreover, we believe that litter picking should become a more regular occurrence and that Sundays prior to 'Black Bin Day' are the best option as the orange refuse sacks would be collected by the council on the following day. Indeed, a subsequent litter picking event has since been held and we anticipate doing another reasonably soon. Moreover, the large skip generously provided by Mid-UK Recycling proved to be very popular within the community and it was filled by the end of the day. The company was thanked for its generous support.

To encourage greater use of the VH site, an 'ad hoc' Friday Night social gathering was held on the VH site on 9th June 2023 which was extremely enjoyable. Unfortunately, a further gathering scheduled for Friday 14th July 2023 was cancelled due to heavy rain but we hope to hold a couple more before Autumn sets in (fingers crossed for the end of the unsettled weather!).

Also, Andy Newton coordinated Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust's talk and subsequent tour of the Moor Closes nature reserve that was held this morning, with other committee members helping him with setting up the room in the Parish Hall and providing refreshments. Over 20 people from Sudbrook, West Willoughby and Ancaster participated and LWT's Sarah Craythorne provided a fascinating insight into the wonderful nature reserve on our doorstep. We hope to generate more events of general interest over the coming months.

Lastly, future social events are now being considered. We certainly anticipate holding a Christmas event and are already discussing the theme for a major summer event next year, with mid-June being the most likely timeframe. A suggestion to make it an 'Open Gardens' event is under consideration.

APC website

Residents are reminded that the minutes of all our meetings and various reports are available for viewing on APC's website, as are the Terms and Conditions plus application forms for private use of the Village Hall site and/or marquee. Simply search for the Ancaster Parish Council's website and follow the menu for 'Parish Information' followed by 'All Parish Information' and then 'SWWVH'.

SWWVH COMMITTEE AGM FINANCIAL REPORT – 18th August 2023

Many of you will remember that Neil Gray volunteered to act as our treasurer when the Committee was reformed in 2018. Neil provided an exemplary service throughout his time as a trustee and was instrumental in regaining control of our dormant bank account and, as a chartered accountant, ensured that our financial affairs were on an even keel. Following his move away from the area, Neil resigned from the committee earlier this year. To provide extra flexibility and to meet the requirements of major sources of funding, the role of Treasurer and associated control of the Charity's bank account has now passed to 2 trustees on a 'joint basis': John Somerville and John Cairns.

At the Coronation Big Lunch, a resident who wishes to remain anonymous donated £2000 to the SWWVH charity's fund. This was clearly an extremely generous donation which represented a significant boost to the fund. The Committee intends that it should be ring-fenced for a specific purpose rather than used for routine expenditure. Specifically, we believe that this significant sum should be used to signal the start of a fund-raising campaign for a fixed structure on the VH site.

Finally, the Financial Report for FY22/23 is currently being prepared for entry onto the Charity Commission's website. It is also intended to register the Charity's fund with HMRC so that it could potentially benefit from the Gift Aid Scheme in the future. As of today, the balance of the Charity's bank account is £3912.97.

SWWVH COMMITTEE AGM FUTURE PLANS – 18th August 2023

When it comes to formulating our future plans, I can remind you that we are now in the position where we no longer have to seek the approval of the entire parish to carry out our proposals. Since the Charity is now solely for the benefit of the residents of S&WW, this means that we can act independently in response to the wishes of the local residents without having to accommodate the views of the larger population of Ancaster.

You may remember the questionnaire which was circulated around the villages some time ago requesting your views as to how best to use the site. This resulted in a number of suggestions:

1. Creating a Garden.
2. Providing a Building (i.e. another VH)
3. Maintaining the status quo (i.e. keeping the site as Grass).

Other less popular suggestions were: Play area / Pond / Car park / Tennis court, etc.). Although a garden area came out on top, it was closely followed by the idea of re-instating a Village Hall building – this was very surprising since the wording of the questionnaire included the phrase, “Due to the prohibitive cost, it is unlikely that a village hall can be provided.”

In response to this feedback, the idea of providing a building is now very much back on the agenda. Therefore, in addition to creating a garden on the site, we are now also hoping to provide a modest wooden structure to begin with, possibly on the lines of this building from Dunster House:



If we are able to acquire such a building and it is well used, we would then aim to add to it to provide larger accommodation. We are holding a dedicated meeting next Monday to discuss this single issue: the choice of building, its position and orientation on the site, the possible addition of a toilet, the possible power supply and the possible provision of storage facilities. We will also be continuing our on-going work on planning permission requirements, funding strategy, and gauging the sustainability of these proposals based on the level of community support and engagement in village events. As we continue working our way along this path, we will keep everyone posted about any progress made.