

Sudbrook and West Willoughby Village Hall (SWWVH) Committee Annual General Meeting 30th August 2024

1. Attendance

Present: John Somerville (JS), Louise Burn (LB), John Cairns (JC), Barbara Campbell (BC), Miranda Hickson (MH), Salena Leighton-Humphries (SLH), Andy Newton (AN), Tom Williams (TW).

Apologies: Rae Seng (RS).

2. Chairman's Address.

JS welcomed attendees to the SWWVH Committee Annual General Meeting (AGM) which was combined with a 'Friday Night Social' on the VH site. None of the current trustees 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 18th August 2023. 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. Any Other Business (AOB)

There were no items for AOB.

Attachments:

1. SWWVH COMMITTEE AGM PROGRESS REPORT – 30 AUGUST 2024.
2. SWWVH COMMITTEE AGM FINANCIAL REPORT – 30 AUGUST 2024.

SWWVH COMMITTEE AGM PROGRESS REPORT – 30th August 2024

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 18th August 2023.

VH Site

Thanks to the continuing efforts of John & Sheila Somerville and Lou Burn, the Beech Hedge saplings along the front border have progressed well and we anticipate being able to remove the protective mesh fences in the Autumn. Unfortunately the Rosemary bushes planted in memory of Councillor Rosemary Kaberry-Brown were damaged during the year, most probably by dogs that have been allowed to rummage along the front border. Off-cuts from the original bushes have been taken and will eventually be re-planted in a less vulnerable area. Also, until recently our grass cutting has been conducted by volunteers (notably John Somerville!). Hence, the Committee was extremely grateful to Ancaster Parish Council for including our VH site in its new grass cutting contract for 8 cuts per year.

While the acquisition of a fixed structure for the VH Site is likely to remain a long-term aspiration, we are aware that the associated costs will be high and that substantial funding will be needed. Moreover, a successful application for such a grant would be dependent upon being able to demonstrate a high level of need and active support from within the community. While the interest displayed by residents has been increasing gradually since the Committee reformed in 2018, the community's overall level of engagement will need to be raised much higher for us to justify any application for external funding.

To that end, we believe that raising the residents' awareness that the VH site is an amenity for daily use would not only raise interest levels but would also give the community a sense of 'ownership'. To that end, we were extremely grateful for the generous donation of a pub table by John Leighton and Salena Leighton-Humphries which, together with the Memorial Bench, has been encouraging more residents and passing visitors to use the site for a rest and a chin-wag. Consequently, the Committee is of the opinion that adding more outdoor seating and providing play equipment for young children will encourage more residents to use the site regularly for both social interaction and recreation. It's also possible that the site could be further enhanced with garden features but concerns about associated maintenance would need to be addressed. The potential addition of a pagoda has also been suggested. While the Charity's funds are limited, a major advantage of this project is that it can be conducted incrementally using a mix of self-funding and local grants. Moreover, assistance from within the community will be sought whenever possible.

Communication

To date, the Committee has been almost exclusively reliant upon hand-delivering paper flyers for communicating with all households about its activities and events. Apart from being a very laborious process for the trustees and not kind to Brazilian rain forests, we are aware that everyone gets bombarded with junk mail through the post and are concerned that our flyers could end up in the new purple bins without being read. Consequently, we are currently exploring better use of electronic media including greater use of our WhatsApp page and giving residents the opportunity to interact with the Committee via email in accordance with data privacy and protection requirements.

Events

The Christmas Sing-Along on 15th December 2023 was a very enjoyable event with an excellent turn-out. Residents were thanked for their contributions of raffle prizes and sausage rolls and the event made a profit of £82.20 for the Charity's fund. Afterwards it was suggested that even more raffle tickets could have been sold with the acquisition of a card-tapper (more of that later!).

An 'Open Gardens' afternoon had been provisionally planned for June 2024. However, the plan was subsequently abandoned as there were insufficient garden owners willing to participate. Instead, it was decided to experiment by holding an 'Events Week' during the late May/early June Half-Term holiday consisting of 5 events: A Plant/Table Top Sale, a 'Big Help Out' litter pick, a 'Knit/Craft and Natter', a Children's Picnic & Games, and a 'Big Lunch'.

Sadly the Big Help Out Litter Pick had to be cancelled due to wet ground conditions and a risk of thunderstorms. However, both the 'Knit/Craft & Natter' and 'Children's Picnic' events were successful with good attendance and a high level of enjoyment by all concerned. The hire of a Portaloo was particularly appreciated by these attendees. Despite its cost (£96 for a week), it was agreed that a Portaloo should be booked for future major events.

However, the level of participation in both the Plant/Table Top Sale and Big Lunch was below expectation. While it was not possible to identify specific reasons with any degree of absolute certainty, it was thought that holding the events during a combined Bank Holiday and Half Term period was the most likely factor.

Notwithstanding the above observations, the Events Week still raised a net total of £244 for the charity's fund.

Lastly, future social events are now being considered. We certainly anticipate holding a Christmas event as usual and are already discussing the theme for a major summer event next year. A suggestion to make it a ticketed event is under consideration. We also intend to hold more ad-hoc Friday Night Socials next year providing we get some decent summer weather for a change!

Ancaster Parish Council website

Residents are reminded that the minutes of all our meetings and various reports are available for viewing on Ancaster Parish Council's newly revamped website. Simply search for APC's website and then follow its menu for 'Parish Information' and then 'Sudbrook & West Willoughby Village Hall'. News of our events may also be included within the 'Community Events' section.

Are there any questions before my very brief Financial Report?

Financial Report

As alluded to earlier, the Committee has acquired a 'SumUp Air' mobile card reader (or 'tapper') to reduce potential loss of sales due to people carrying insufficient cash. The transaction fees are 1.69% which is one of the best rates for a 'sole trader' device. It was used for the first time in anger during the summer Events Week and of the £244 raised, £67 was collected using the tapper.

Also, the Charity has now been registered with HMRC which enables us to process any future Gift Aid donations.

In addition, a Lloyds Business Instant Access Account has been opened to run alongside our Treasurer's Business account. It pays 1% interest which is obviously low in comparison to the rates available for private accounts but at least it's earning something!

As of today, the balances are:

Treasurer's Current Account:	£500
Instant Access Account:	£3783.79
Total:	£4283.79

That concludes the Financial Report - are there any questions please?