

Sudbrook and West Willoughby Village Hall (SWVH) Committee Meeting 24th June 2024

1. Attendance

Present: John Somerville (JS), Louise Burn (LB), John Cairns (JC), Barbara Campbell (BC), Tamara Coton (TC), Tom Williams (TW).

Apologies: Miranda Hickson (MH), Salena Leighton-Humphries (SLH), Andy Newton (AN), Rae Seng (RS).

2. Approval/ Amendments of the minutes of the previous Committee meeting

It was agreed that the minutes of the Committee meeting held on 13th May 2024 provided a good overall record. **JC** was to forward the minutes for inclusion on the APC website.

3. Miranda Hickson

Following full agreement of the Committee, **JS** had invited **MH** to join the Committee as a co-opted member. **MH** would be formally welcomed at the next meeting.

4. Evaluation of the 'Events Week' May/June 2024

Committee members were thanked for their unstinting efforts in planning and running a busy week of events during late May/early June 2024. Five events had been planned but the Big Help Out Litter Pick was postponed due to wet ground conditions and a risk of thunderstorms.

Both the 'Knit & 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 community 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 raised a net total of £244 for the charity's fund. Of note, £67 of the net takings was collected using the Committee's new 'card tapper'. **BC** was thanked for recommending the purchase of the device which facilitated additional sales.

5. Further Summer Events While it was acknowledged that summer is the best season for holding fund raising events, there was limited appetite for planning/holding another major event

so soon after the Events Week. Moreover, care would always need to be taken that programming fund raising events did not start to become intrusive upon the Committee members' private lives. Nevertheless, it was agreed that 'ad hoc' events that required minimal planning could still be organized and run by willing volunteers. In addition, it was agreed that the 'Big Lunch' format was becoming repetitive and that fresh ideas would be required for future events. **BC** had already provided several interesting suggestions via email and other potential themes were raised during the meeting, all of which would be considered at a later date. It was also thought that ticketed events could be more financially viable and might attract additional interest from within the community.

6. Funding Strategy

While the acquisition of a fixed structure for the VH Site was likely to remain a long-term aspiration, it was acknowledged that the associated costs would be high and that substantial funding would be needed. However, 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 level of interest displayed by residents had been increasing gradually since the Committee reformed in 2018, the recent dip in their engagement would need to be investigated and rectified in order to justify any application for external funding.

It was thought that raising the residents' awareness that the VH site is an amenity for their daily use would not only raise interest levels but would also give the community a sense of 'ownership'. However, while the Committee had greatly improved the site's front border with gates and hedging, it was still essentially a large patch of grass with only a donated pub table for residents to use. Moreover, it was thought that keeping the main gate closed was not welcoming and might even give a mistaken impression of restricted access.

Consequently, it was agreed that adding facilities such as additional outdoor seating and play equipment for young children, plus keeping the large gate open, would encourage residents to use the site regularly for social interaction and recreation. It was possible that the site could also be enhanced with garden features but concerns about associated maintenance would have to be addressed. A pagoda could also be considered. The overall project would be conducted incrementally using a mix of self-funding and local grants. Assistance from within the community would be sought whenever possible.

BC offered to investigate sculpted outdoor seats that were also suitable for children to play on.

7. Any Other Business (AOB)

There were no items for AOB.

8. Date/Venue of Next Meeting

Arrangements for the next meeting would be coordinated via email.