

Felpham Village Conservation Society

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 29th APRIL 2019 AT THE FELPHAM MEMORIAL VILLAGE HALL, VICARAGE LANE, AT 7.00 PM

Attendees: M Lupton; J Fenton-Jones; M Fenton-Jones; L Pritchard; J Pritchard; P Cosgrove; P Harris; J Summerville; P Jenkins; L Aldis-Hobbs; G Farrell; G Powell; M Powell; J Bowen; D Bowen; E Lord; A MacKenzie Morrison; M MacKenzie Morrison; A Merriman; M Pavard; V Darlington; V Morris; [A N Other]; H Alderton; T Drennan; P Howell; C Jepson; T Davies; R Searle; P Bartlam; J Bartlam; C Andrews; H Sykes; B Piedot; M Camp; A Camp; M Blampied; G Blampied; J Williams; A Netley; C Dunkeyson; S Dunkeyson; C Holliday; A Holliday; J Barnes; D Owen-Ellis; L Owen-Ellis; J Etienne.

Apologies: E Ricards; J and B Barnsley; S and R Long; J Lee; J Farrington; R and M Brooks; S Baker; C and P Hemsley; M and B Pavard; T Lord; S Harris.

1. Chair's Welcome and Introduction

The Chair, Joyce Pritchard welcomed everyone attending the AGM 2019.

Joyce thanked Gina Riley and Jo Wright who had stood down from the Committee during the year. Gina had been the Membership Secretary and a Committee member for a number of years and her contribution had been invaluable. Although Jo had only been a Committee member for a short time, she had nevertheless contributed ideas to the Society.

Joyce said that the Society continued to contribute to the community with its events and projects which would be reported on during the meeting. This year, there had been good weather for the outside events of the Summer Fete in July 2018 and Picnic in the Park in September 2018 as well as for the Great British Beach Clean, also in September, which the Society had participated in, for the first time. Other events had included the Quiz Night, History Talk and Lighting of the Xmas Tree. The Society's funds remained healthy as the Treasurer would explain in his report. Members of the Committee had given a talk to one of the local WI groups and it was hoped similarly to introduce the Society to other groups, schools, etc in the future.

Glenn Powell then addressed the meeting, as Deputy Chair. He announced that Felpham Parish Council had awarded a plaque to the Society in recognition of its continued contribution to Felpham and, specifically, in recognition of its work to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the end of World War I (WWI) in November 2018. Joyce, as Chair, accepted the award on behalf of the Society.

2. Approval of Minutes of last Annual General Meeting

The Chair referred to the Minutes of the 2018 AGM which had been approved by the Committee and posted on the Society's website; copies were also available at the meeting. As there were not any comments, Leeza Aldis-Hobbs proposed they were accepted; Maggie Lupton seconded the motion which was carried by a show of hands.

3. Finance Report for the year ended 31 March 2019 and Approval of Accounts

The Treasurer, John Fenton-Jones presented the accounts for the year ended 31 March 2019. These accounts had been posted on the Society's website and copies were also available at the meeting.

The Treasurer said that the Society's Income derived from membership income and events. He summarised that membership income had been similar to last year at £1,572 plus Life membership donations of £171, totalling £1,743. John said that Pamela Cosgrove, the Membership Secretary would give a short report on membership at the end of this item on the agenda. The very successful Summer Fete 2018 had raised £4,338 and Picnic in the Park £403. Together with the Society's other social events of the Quiz Night and Christmas Tree lighting, a total of £4,837 had been raised which was £1,100 less than 2017. The total income for 2018/19 was £6,580 compared to £7,806 in the previous year.

Regarding Expenditure, it was split into: Group Activities; Projects; Administration; and Other. This year, the Society had incorporated into Group Activities a number of activities that had been included in Projects last year. For example, expenditure by the Hanging Baskets and Allotment group. The costs of plants for 68 hanging baskets (including for Snooks Corner who contributed to their baskets) plus repairs to equipment totalled £1,804. Allotments costs were separated out and comprised the cost of providing plants for the Summer Fete, totalling £774; previously the comparative figures had been included in Projects.

The Society's other significant expenditure had been by the History, Heritage and Archive group at a net cost of £281 which included the purchase of poppies to put up around Felpham, net of a £400 grant from Felpham Parish Council. The expenditure also included the costs of the end of the WWI commemorative tea party and exhibition.

Brief details of the Income and Expenditure was set out in the notes to the Accounts.

The four activity groups in total spent £2,953 which was a similar amount to the previous year but did not include the huge amount of time spent by the Society's volunteers. The Treasurer said that the Society's major costs for the year had been on making itself more self-sufficient by acquiring various items of equipment that were needed, totalling £3,092. For example: better sound equipment of £900 for which the Society had very recently received a grant from Felpham Parish Council; a trailer; a picnic table for the Old Rectory Gardens; and various other items required for the Summer Fete. The Society was grateful to the Felpham Memorial Village Hall which had donated a number of tables. All of these items were regarded by the Committee as being available for use by Felpham community organisations.

Administration costs of £1,775 included the costs of two Social Evenings for members and the community, printing newsletters and other member communications as well as increased insurance to cover the additional equipment, website and radio microphone licence.

In total, Expenditure came to £7,819 causing a net deficit of £1,240 for the year compared to the surplus of £233 the previous year. The deficit decreased the Society's funds from £7,846 to £6,606. As a consequence, the Society's bank balances decreased by £1,299 to £7,527. The Balance Sheet therefore showed that the funds of £6,606 were made up of bank balances and pre-payments of £7,858 less subscriptions and other amounts received prior to 31 March 2018 of £1,252.

The Treasurer commended the accounts to the membership and said he would take any questions. There being no questions, Geoff Farrell proposed that the Accounts were approved; Rachel Searle seconded the motion which was carried by a show of hands.

The Treasurer introduced Pamela Cosgrove, Membership Secretary to say a few more words on membership. Pamela, in turn, introduced Pauline Harris who had been co-opted to the Committee and deputised on memberships. The Society's membership numbers appeared static and input from members on how to grow the numbers would be welcome. A brief discussion took place on encouraging younger members, for example through interest in the environment and using the Felpham Community Hall to reach wider parts of the community.

4. FVCS Groups and Activities

Friends of Old Rectory Gardens: Maggie Lupton reported that the gardening in the Old Rectory Gardens (the Gardens) was carried out by Arun District Council plus volunteers. Maggie met regularly with Arun who had the site plan for the Gardens. Work accomplished during the year included: clearing the area to the left of the main entrance, prior to new planting; purchase of a new litter bin and dog waste bin; installation of two wheelchair accessible picnic tables (one purchased by the Society); clearing and replanting the borders; and preparing a wild flower area. Works planned included: new signs for the Gardens; moving the Blake Heritage Trail board from the main entrance to a safer location; tree cutting and ivy removal; a fountain for the fish pond; and, after four years of persistent asking by the Society, replacement lighting for the path through the Gardens (to be carried out by SSE). Maggie thanked all volunteer gardeners and said that the fruits of their work had been recognised, as Arun District Council were putting forward the Gardens for a Green Flag Award.

Conservation and Development: Geoff Farrell reported that he was temporarily leading the Conservation and Development group until its next meeting at which it would appoint a new leader. The group had met three times during the year. Work covered by the group included: a plan to record the location of all flint walls in Felpham, with photographs, on a map; and a plan to include all footpaths in Felpham as a “linear” shabby area, with the intention of engaging with Felpham Parish Council, Arun District Council and WSCC in order to improve the condition, appearance and usability of the parish footpaths. The group aimed to produce a map of all footpaths, including Public Rights of Way, which would form the basis for a condition report. Thereafter, a schedule of work could be drawn up, to tie in with Felpham Parish Council’s own schedules, and priorities identified.

In respect of other conservation and development matters, Geoff reminded the meeting that the Society’s interest in Blakes Cottage was in seeing the cottage restored. He also referred to recent car parking on grassland by the Butlins roundabout; the group had identified this as another area for action, to prevent continued parking, and would be liaising with Arun District Council.

Taking a question from the floor about the railings recently installed by Arun District Council around the west greensward, GF said that there had been differing views on the merit of these amongst members and that the best course of action was for individuals who objected to them to write to Arun District Council.

History, Heritage and Archive: Joyce Pritchard reported with much sadness that Sue Tressler, the Archivist at Chichester University, Bognor Regis campus, had passed away earlier in the year. Members would have seen from the AGM Minutes 2018, that the History, Heritage & Archive group report last year had been given by Sue Tressler, an invaluable member of the group whose contribution and idea for the Commemoration to the Felpham Fallen would forever be remembered.

Joyce said that the very enthusiastic group had been determined to ensure that events during the year of the Commemoration of 100 years since the end of the WWI would be a success. In October, Alan Readman had been the speaker for the History Talk, and gave an informative and moving talk on the Royal Sussex Regiment, including Lowther’s Lambs and the Day Sussex Died. At the end of October, volunteers from the Society had put up 200 large poppies on lamp-posts throughout Felpham. The Lyons Tea House style afternoon tea in the Memorial Hall had sold out within days and the exhibition of 18 of the servicemen who fell during WWI was very well received. There had been an excellent response from villagers who had joined the group in the walk around Felpham to some of the homes of the servicemen it had researched. The weekend culminated in the *There But Not There* event put on by St Mary’s Church. The group’s research had not been limited to the Commemoration weekend as the exhibition boards were subsequently used by two local schools, Bishop Tufnall and Bersted Green, as an addition to their own commemoration research.

Going forward, the group would be concentrating on the Living History website where it would update: the work carried out on businesses in 2016; changes made to various shops and include the Site 6 area; and photos, posters and reports of the History Talks. The group would also continue research into the remaining servicemen who fell during WWI. Concluding, Joyce said that if members were interested in the history of Felpham or had any old photos, information etc, they should not hesitate to get in touch via the Society website and a member of the group would contact them.

Beach Clean: Jane Summerville reported that there had been 11 beach cleans during the year (every month except July which clashed with the Summer Fete), including one in September 2018 in conjunction with the Great British Beach Clean where a specific 100 m stretch of the Felpham beach had been surveyed for rubbish. 242 volunteers had combed the beach over the year, in all weathers, collecting in excess of 52 consolidated bags of rubbish plus some large items including a pallet, oil drum and old washing basket. Additionally, the group had put on an extraordinary beach clean at the request of Downview School, where 57 children participated under the supervision of their teachers. Jane thanked all volunteers in this important and very topical work and also thanked the Lobster Pot who continued to provide tea or coffee to volunteers.

Hanging Baskets and Allotments: Glenn Powell reported that the Society had started this group in 2018, in order to manage the hanging baskets that were put up annually in the village for the summer months.

There had been a need for a place to grow and bring on the plants and the Parish Council had therefore permitted use of Saint Michael's allotments with the Society's own greenhouse and a storage shed on site.

As plot holders, the group observed the rundown state of the allotments and determined to take an interest in the site generally. The group therefore organised work parties to clear hedgerows and unlet plots, help struggling plot holders, and plant an orchard. They were also able to liaise with the Parish Council in helping manage the site. During the year, one of the old wooden beach huts from the west greensward had been "rescued" and erected at St Michael's, as a focal point and a way of conserving a Felpham icon. There was now much more of a community spirit at the allotments - and a waiting list!

Glenn said that the baskets for summer 2019 were planted and ready to be put up on lamp-posts around the village. On the morning of Thursday 23rd May. Baskets would also be put up again along Sea Road, in conjunction with the Snooks Corner group. Any helpers would be welcome.

For summer 2019, there would be a regular weekly session at the Allotments to look after the Society's own plot, every Tuesday, at 10.00 am. One or more members would be present to help.

Glenn thanked Ron Hands who worked tirelessly to prepare the baskets and also water and feed them throughout the summer. Ron kept the Society's plot in good order, dug it over and planted produce: strawberries, peas, runner beans, potatoes, tomatoes and cucumbers, this year. Glenn advised the meeting of an Open Day and Plant Sale at St Michael's on the morning of Saturday 18th May. All would be welcome.

Events: Leeza Aldis-Hobbs referred to the following forthcoming events:

- **The Quiz Night** on 8 June - tickets would go on sale at the Post Office this week.
- **The Summer Fete** on 13 July – there would be entertainment all afternoon as well as a tea tent, bar-b-q (run by the Rotary Club), games and more; there was always a need for helpers on the day as well as cakes for the cake stall and bottles for the bottle stall. All gratefully received.
- **Picnic in the Park** run with Jazz at the Village would take place on 4 August.
- **History Talk** on 19 October, the subject and speaker to be confirmed.
- **Christmas Tree Lighting** on 6 December.

5. Use of Society Funds

Glenn Powell said that this item on the agenda was a means of looking at how any surplus the Society might have could be used for the benefit of Felpham as a whole. Whilst working within the Society's remit, this could include both the built environment and local community. The Treasurer had advised of surplus funds of approximately £5,000 in addition to the £2,000 reserve. Each year, the funds were added to by way of membership renewals, the Fete and, usually, some grants. Some £2,000 to £3,000 was usually generated per annum, after the cost of the hanging baskets. So, with £5,000 in hand and, potentially, a further £2,000 to £3,000, there was a substantial sum to be used. The Committee looked at expenditure in two ways: firstly, for smaller projects of up to £1,000 per project; and, secondly, for a major project (to be identified) that could be carried out over a period of time.

The smaller projects were normally carried out through the various working groups. For example, the purchase of a new picnic bench for the Old Rectory Gardens - which had been matched by a second bench paid for by Arun District Council; an example of how the Society's money went further by working with other groups including the authorities. Another smaller project had been the work on St Michael's Allotments which also received third party funds, this time from Felpham Parish Council. The Society had been able to lead and fund Felpham's commemorations of the end of WWI because of the strength of its financial position. Suggestions for future projects would be welcome, for taking forward by the working groups: the projects were not only about the money to finance them but also the volunteers to complete them.

Looking at a bigger project had been more difficult, but there seemed to be a consensus for landscaping Grassmere Parade, where the annual Christmas tree lighting took place. An idea had been put forward to open up the area to make it into more of a "heart of the village" space. This would be an ambitious project, requiring partnership working with the landowners and councils to make such a thing happen.

The Society also wished to procure some more equipment as its aim was to be self-sufficient. The equipment would be available to other groups. The Society was grateful to Bognor Rotary who had a community group which coordinated Felpham and Bognor organisations and facilitated help amongst those organisations.

Glenn Powell asked if there were any questions. In answer to a question as to whether a voluntary donation should be made if equipment was borrowed, Glenn replied that a donation rather than hire charge would be applicable.

6. Election or Re-election of Committee Members

The Secretary said that two members had been co-opted to the Committee in the past year both of whom wished to stand for election. They were Pauline Harris, proposed by Pamela Cosgrove and seconded by Joyce Pritchard; and Val Morris, proposed by Glenn Powell and seconded by Jane Summerville. As no other Nominations to stand for election to the Committee had been received, the Secretary proposed that both were elected; Glenn Powell seconded the motion which was carried by a show of hands. Glenn Powell then advised the meeting that he was standing down as a Committee member after five years during which time he had been honoured to serve as Vice-Chair.

7. Appointment of Advisors

The Chair proposed the following Advisors for the forthcoming year: Martyn White as Conservation Advisor; Lisa Kebell as Design Advisor; and Steve Alderton as Tree Warden; all three of whom would be continuing from the previous year; and Glenn Powell, newly, as Allotments Advisor. Anne MacKenzie-Morrison and Rachel Searle seconded the motion which was carried by a show of hands.

8. Appointment of Independent Examiner

The Treasurer proposed that Ivan Towse, who had been the Society's Independent Examiner for the previous year, be appointed for the forthcoming year; Maggie Lupton seconded the motion which was carried by a show of hands.

9. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

10. Close

The Chair expressed her thanks to: the Committee; the Fox Inn; the Felpham Memorial Village Hall; Patrick Jenkins for his help in securing donated tables for the Society; the Society's Advisors; Glenn Powell for his contribution over the years; and to everyone for attending the meeting. The meeting closed at 8.30 pm.

Jane Summerville
Secretary

May 2019