

**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

**13th September 2021**

**at Crawcrook Social Club**

**“Concert Room”**

**7.00 p.m. – 8.30 p.m.**

**M I N U T E S**

**1. Chair’s opening remarks:** Barbara Williams welcomed everyone to the AGM of Our Villages Crawcrook and Greenside.

**2. Apologies for absence:** Janet Capstick, Hugh Kelly, Heather Crawford, Margaret Edwards, Rosa, Helen Haran, Kath McCartney.

**3. Presentation of Annual Report (Chair):** Barbara presented the report verbally, explaining we are a registered charity and that our objects can be found on the Charity Commission’s Website. It has been unfortunate, due to the coronavirus pandemic and the social distancing restrictions imposed; a number of our larger activities have not gone ahead during this time. These events have included the Easter egg hunt, the summer fair and group litter picking. Despite this many other activities have still been taking place. Details as follows:

* Gardening. Sue Welch and Judy Smith have continued with their gardening activities within Crawcrook park, creating beautiful colourful flower beds. They also tend the containers which brighten up Crawcrook Main Street plus the barrier baskets on the railings too. Anne Farrow and other volunteers in Greenside have also been busy planting and looking after the flower beds in the village. Our Villages do have limited funds for bulbs, plants, compost, fertiliser etc, if anyone is interested in adopting a flower bed, please let us know. A point to note, people do need to be willing to look after the beds which includes the watering of them. People were encouraged to get in touch if this is something that is of interest.
* Litter picking. Whilst we have not been able to carry out the group litter picks, trustee Stuart Lowerson has recruited a number of individual members who volunteered to look after an area near them or on their favourite walk. Their efforts are helping to keep both villages clean and tidy. The equipment is provided to our members free of charge.
* Promoting local history. Seating and an interpretation board has been installed on the triangle of land next to the Rising Sun. This gives information about our industrial heritage. This project was jointly funded by Our Villages and Land of Oak and Iron who gave £2,000 towards the cost of the installation. *A member of the meeting raised concerns about the branches not being cut back which is affecting people walking along the path. It was agreed we would contact the Council to see if something can be done (Action Point – Our Villages).*
* Dog fowling. This continues to be an area of concern. Our efforts, unfortunately, can’t easily be measured but the feeling is the problem has worsened. We do try to raise awareness of this problem; we use biodegradable spray to highlight the problem and warn passers-by of the hazard, and warning notices have been placed in Crawcrook Park and on lamp posts around the area.
* Fund-raising. We have not been able to raise as much money this year as we have in previous years. Our main fund-raising event is the summer fair but this was cancelled in 2020 and again this year. We have, however, received funding via:
  + Trustee Julie Gavin who made and sold beautiful face masks.
  + Judy Smith who knitted novelty covers for small chocolate eggs. These were then sold.
  + The Co-op chose us as one of their local causes. If you shop there and have a Co-op card, please log on to your account and nominate us as your chosen cause. That way you can help fund raise just by shopping!
  + Collecting tins in local shops. The money raised from these tins goes towards the Christmas lights, sadly, many of the shops had to close so donations have fallen. Now that the shops are open, please carry on donating your small change. It all counts!
* Other projects and Activities.
  + Redevelopment of Crawcrook Park. This is one of our major projects. We have applied for an asset transfer and, if successful, the bowling green, multi-use games area (MUGA) and pavilion will be transferred to Our Villages to develop as we wish for peppercorn rent. We have been informed that this process is almost complete. This is a long-term project which will be carried out in stages. Money has already been agreed by Gateshead Council for new play equipment and the play surface. At this point a copy of the Masterplan (the artist’s impression of what we want to achieve) was circulated.
  + Community Garden. Partly based on public consultation, we have begun discussing the possibility of a community garden next to Holy Spirit Church. We are hoping to get the local school involved too. We are about to set up a steering group with people who are interested in developing this piece of land. There are a number of opportunities such as edible beds, raised flower beds and it would be an excellent way for children to learn about gardening.
  + Autumn Fair. Whilst we have not been able to have our usual summer fair, we are pleased to say we are having an autumn fair. This will take place on Saturday 2nd October 2021 between 11.00 a.m. and 3.00 p.m. There will be a number of food and craft stalls and also activities for children. If anyone would like to be involved in helping out or know of anyone who would like to be involved, please get in touch.
  + Jumble Sale. This is taking place on Saturday 20th November 2021 in Barmoor Hub. If anyone has any jumble to donate, or could offer storage space we would be delighted to hear from you. We would also be pleased to hear from anyone who would like to help us out, we are always looking for extra volunteers.

This ended the annual report ended and the chair opened the meeting up for questions.

* Julie Gavin enquired about the communal garden in Greenside which was proposed prior to the pandemic. A discussion took place, it was agreed this would be followed up to establish what happened. (Action Point – Our Villages).
* Anne Farrow informed members that a meeting was scheduled to take place at Greenside Cricket Club to discuss the future of the bowling green. Anne agreed to keep us informed. Anne was thanked for all her hard work with the Greenside flower beds.

**4. Adoption of Annual Report:** This was verbally adopted.

**5. Presentation of Accounts (Treasurer):** Caroline James, Treasurer, presented the accounts verbally. Details below:

The financial situation for the period 01/12/2019 – 30/11/2020 (which is the year-end)

Balance £15,161 of which only £256 is unrestricted due to not being able to fund raise.

Aa copy of the accounts is posted onto the Charity Commission’s website giving all the figures.

Closing balance as of today: £14,331 of which

£12,000 is ringfenced to park renovation including

£750 from Co-op, we are due for another donation soon.

£500 has been raised from the booking of stalls for the autumn fair.

£516 donated through the collection tins for Christmas lights (although no money has been raised for Greenside yet, we need ideas on how to raise funds for the village).

An explanation of restricted funds was given. These funds are not flexible, they are for specific requirements, we need to prove we have spent the money on what it was we applied for.

The meeting was informed that the costs of the Christmas lights were expensive at c£1,300, payable to Gateshead council.

**6. Adoption of Accounts:** The accounts were formally adopted.

**7. Appointment of Auditors:** Heritage Accountancy, Prudhoe were formally appointed.

**8. Election of officers:** Firstly, the main officers:

Position of Chair. Barbara Williams, currently holding this position, stood down. Julie Gavin was nominated, proposed by Stuart Lowerson and seconded by Caroline James. This was agreed.

Position of Vice Chair. Helen Haran, currently holding this position, was re-elected, proposed by Caroline James, seconded by Barbara Williams. This was agreed.

Position of Treasurer. Caroline James, currently holding this position, was re-elected, proposed by Judy Smith and seconded by Stuart Lowerson. This was agreed.

Position of Secretary. Mo Forster, currently holding this position, was re-elected, proposed by Barbara Williams and seconded by John Forster. This was agreed.

In addition to the four main officers, the other trustees in post are Stuart Lowerson, Sue Welch and Helen Parker.

The Chair expressed the need for more trustees to join the board. She explained the main role of a trustee was to keep the organisation on track, ensuring activities proposed fulfil the charitable objects. Trustees need to offer suggestions as to how we can grow and develop as a charity and to connect with others. Importantly as we are a CIO there is no financial liability whatsoever on trustees.

Chris Beer agreed to become a trustee and has duly been elected. A warm welcome was given to Chris.

The resignation of trustee Nick Worboys was received today.

**9. Motions to be put to the AGM (**to be received in advance of the meeting**):** None received.

**10. Presentation by Rachel Lawson, ‘Neighbourhood Watch Scheme’:** Rachel gave a very interesting and enlightening presentation of the neighbourhood watch scheme. This was a topic that interested members of the meeting and a helpful discussion took place. Rachel was able to give advice to a concern raised by Mr King in relation to his ongoing complaint about vehicles being parked on Wardle Terrace. Mr King says he has complained to the council and others on numerous occasions but to no avail. It was agreed Our Villages would try and support Mr King’s efforts by contacting our Vice Chair who is also a councillor. (Action Point – Our Villages). Rachel was also able to provide suggestions as to how we may tackle anti-social behaviour in Crawcrook park, this was to make contact with the Inner Youth at Blaydon to see if outreach workers could have a presence. Rachel also informed the meeting that the best way to report any criminal activity is to report it to Crime Stoppers, there everything is encrypted and it is the safest way. Their telephone number is 800 555111.

Rachel was thanked by the Chair on behalf of everyone at the meeting.

**11. Any other business.** Mr King raised an issue in relation to Wardle Terrace, this has been included at agenda item 10, above.

**12. Closing remarks.** The Chair informed the meeting that it is hoped the full member’s meetings can be reinstated, prior to the pandemic they used to be held quarterly and speakers were invited along. At the last meeting representatives from Gateshead council came along and gave a presentation on recycling. If anyone has any subjects, they think would be interested they are asked to get in touch, ideas are always very welcome. The meeting was formally closed and the Chair thanked everyone for coming.