

Creech St Michael Village Hall

Minutes of Committee Meeting Held on Wednesday 23rd October 2024

- 1. Welcome** The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting, especially Residents of Carey Grove who had been invited to attend to clarify the plans for the area of land at the rear of the Hall, previously the Carey Grove Play Park.
- 2. Present** Iris Chown (President) Jan King (Chairman) Liz Sweeting (Treasurer) Margaret Gover (Secretary) Gaynor Underhill; Martin Peak; Lara Bowden; Peter Brown.
- 3. Apologies** Annabelle Peters, Lin Deeley

At this point the Chairman paused the meeting to allow the Residents present to voice their concerns and ask questions regarding the plans for the Cary Grove land at the rear of the Village Hall.

JK outlined the history of the acquisition of the land by the Village Hall Committee. She explained how the play park as it was, had not been used for the purpose it was intended for many years and the play equipment had fallen into disrepair and become dangerous. It has also become an area where some undesirable persons had gathered and were potentially using it for illicit purposes.

For some years the Village Hall had been in consultation with the various Council bodies responsible for the upkeep of the park in an effort to acquire the land as an asset for the Village Hall so that it could be used in conjunction with the hire of the hall and be available for the residents of the Village. The present Council, now in financial difficulties were anxious to shed the responsibility for areas such as these in order to save money. The Village Hall saw this as an ideal opportunity to pursue the acquisition of this land. Peter Brown has been instrumental in negotiating the legal responsibilities with the Council and has been successful in getting the required permissions to allow that Village Hall to take on a 50 year lease of the land. With regard to the Covenant that the land should be used as a Play Park it has been agreed that this can be set aside for the duration of the lease. Because of this covenant the residents were reassured that the land would not ever be available for building.

An outline plan for the land was circulated.

The residents were concerned that if the hedge were taken out in its entirety then their properties would be vulnerable to increased noise and visibility from the Hall. Jan explained that the hedge was much higher now that it was ever intended and the as it was we were in breach of regulations regarding access and egress of the hall from the rear Fire Escape.

The existing access path from Carey Grove to the park has now been blocked and permanent fencing will be erected. Residents whose land adjoins the path are concerned about access to their properties and maintenance of this space. Those affected were advised to contact Somerset Council to discuss their options for the now redundant path. Responsibility of boundary fences which surround the gardens have up to date been repaired and maintained by the council. These residents whose properties were affected are advised to do the same. Help and advice could



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be sought from Local Councillors. The Solicitors acting for the Village Hall will clarify who will be responsible for the boundary.

They were further reassured that the land would be used as a quiet space and planting would reflect this. It would also be used in conjunction with the hire of the Hall, giving an alternative space for activities related to events in the hall could be held. Outdoor games for children's parties, an attractive and restful area for quiet pursuits, a photo shoot for example. The markets could extend outside and events such as cream teas or picnics could be held.

The residents were further assured that their views regarding planting and access to the land will be considered and they will be informed of progress as the plans are finalised.

The residents were thanked for their contribution.

4. **Minutes of previous Meeting** The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as correct and were signed by the Chairman

5. **Matters Arising Red Phone** MG, JK and LS will meet and define what should be included in the information file. Jan has found that the Committee phone has been very busy because Lin has given this number as the back up number on the Bookings Phone answer message. So bookers are ringing that for non urgent enquiries. For example an enquiry has been made by a Special Needs school who need additional space for one on one education next March.

6. **Chairmans report**

Creech Village Hall outstanding issues

- ❖ French drain in car park
- ❖ Solar panels
- ❖ Gutters
- ❖ Salt bin
- ❖ Line management of cleaner and caretaker
- ❖ Updated information on notice boards
- ❖ Checking after a hire that all is in right place and clean following up any additional issue
- ❖ Drains are causing damp issues
- ❖ Electric heaters need servicing (electrical company has been contacted and I'm awaiting date)
- ❖ Fire door maintenance
- ❖ Fire alarm
- ❖ Alarm system
- ❖ Walk round regularly to check any issues
- ❖ Car parking issues with Baptist church
- ❖ BT phone and router problems
- ❖ Carparking right regarding Old School Cottages
- ❖ Outside light on wall by main door needs bulb replacing as too dim

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Since the last committee meeting all my time has been taken up with Caray Grove.

Liz and I have been to the Solicitors, paid £300 and shown proof of our ID.

After the meeting I arranged to meet some scrap metal workers to discuss removal of the play park equipment . I padlocked the gate entry from Caray Grove.

One sent me an estimate of £585 but another agreed to remove and donate an amount to the VH, I shook his hand and agreed for the work to be carried out on Monday 30th September once I had an access hole cut through the hedge which Richard did on Saturday 28th September. On Monday nothing happened and after numerous phone calls and text nothing. The Insurance company wanted copies of the licence of the worker and the contract between us to carry out the work. Insurance! In desperation I contacted a few scrap merchants who all wanted photos of the items to be removed. One came back and said they would take it which was done on the 10th October. The Insurance company was informed and were not happy that relevant paperwork wasn't presented.

On inspection of the site after removal sharp metal was left and so I asked the Caretaker if he could clout them with something heavy which has now been done. Although the gate is locked access is available via the gap in the hedge. I have placed the old fence over the gap to make it difficult for anyone wishing to enter the area.

Stuart (the gardener) rang to say he could do the hedge on 21st October but I have delayed him until after this meeting as we need to make some final decisions on the hedge and garden.

There are some issues with the heating which isn't working with off peak electricity at the moment I'm waiting to hear back from the electrical contractor T&C Ltd.

At a recent party three of the white oblong tables have been damaged. Richard thinks he may be able to fix them. But better still would be if someone could check these things after the party has left?

On a personal note, I have found this last month really stressful just keeping on top of the maintenance is mountainous. This has been like a perfect storm as the majority of committee have all been away on holidays etc. The list of jobs requiring attention as listed is long! and will be replaced by others once these are corrected. That involves hanging about waiting for contractors to arrive and if you manage to organise it so that they call 30 mins before arrival they nearly always forget and call once they are at the Hall or say no one was available to let them in. I have said to Derek that I can't do this anymore.

The Committee were sympathetic to Jan's overwhelming frustrations and all agreed to support her and as much as possible take on extra responsibilities to relieve her of the burdens that have accrued. With regard to the long list at the beginning of her report Peter Brown offered to take on the responsibility of the work needed on Carey Grove. This is time sensitive due to the hedge cutting regulations. The Committee agreed that the sooner we can agree a plan and implement the work the better.

With regard to the Red Phone see item 5 above



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With regard to the damage to the tables it was not possible to identify the culprits. To take into account all the wear and tear which has occurred recently the possibility of increasing the cost of hire to the party bookings was discussed. We must recognise that the electricity costs have increased X2. It was pointed out that £20 per hour was much less than other halls were charging. This will be revisited when we have reviewed the increased Electricity costs.

Martin Peat offered to meet with Jan and address the other items on the list.

This was considered a 'short term' fix and it was suggested that we reconsider the need for a manager who would take on all of these tasks. Once the list was cleared there would be more clarity regarding the duties a manager may be asked to take on. Finance would also be a consideration. This will be on the agenda at a future meeting.

7. Treasurers Report See attached sheet.

Liz reported that income from the Car Park included a donation from the Baptist Church of £100, also the fee from the Blood Transfusion Service, the Fish and Chip van and the Pizza truck.

EDF have still not paid us for the energy from the Solar Panels. They require more information..

Three outstanding invoices have been paid.

Council Invoices remain unpaid except for the three smallest amounts. They will be resubmitted. PB suggested contacting our Local councillors.

An Invoice has been submitted by the Cleaning contractor. It was erroneous and Jan has had a meeting with her and explained that future invoices be submitted on time' She was reminded her that all cleaning products must be locked away. Unfortunately she has lost the key for the storage room and both keys for the lockers, It is her responsibility to replace them.

8. Booking Co-ordinator report

Bookings remain steady for parties with a Halloween party and Halloween chocolate making party booked for the end of October. I am continuing to offer to meet customers at the hall prior to the date of the booking to show them around. Uptake is varied but probably around 50%.

Baby sensory have asked to extend their weekly booking from 3.00 to 4.00 from November.

Unfortunately EMZ pilates and yoga has now finished due to lack of interest.

Parking – the children's party held on Sunday 20th reported that they were unable to park at all as the car park was already full. This was due to a christening at the church. We may need to think about how we can protect some spaces for bookings while supporting the church who book the Cartwright Room on a Sunday. *Margaret will write to the Baptist Church reminding them to review our bookings on Sundays and be mindful of the other Hall users*



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Pizza. We have had a request from Firehouse Pizza based in Curry Rivel to use the car park weekly for a Pizza Van. We currently have an existing Pizza Van mainly throughout the summer on a monthly basis so we do need to think about this going forward.

The committee felt than we should pursue this as it would be another attraction as the Fire House is popular for Pizzas. As long as we avoid Poppy's Pizzas on one Tuesday a month. It was felt that this was not a reason to decline their request.

9. Carey Grove Following the discussion with the Residents earlier in the meeting the committee visited the site to look at the proposed design and discuss possibilities, particularly whether the hardstanding which is currently in situ could be included within the design.

Peter will contact Stuart, the contractor who cuts the hedges, and arrange to meet him at the site. It may be that a section of hedge remain at either end of the garden

10. Garden Tubs New Planters have been purchased and have now been filled with plants which will give a wonderful display during the winter and spring. Many thanks to Liz and her colleagues at the Gardening club.

11. AOB During the last committee meeting there was an issue with interruptions to a meeting that was taking place in the Cartwright Room. It resulted in the hirers locking the fire door entrance to the room. This is in contravention to the fire regulations. Margaret was asked to write to the hirers apologising for the interruptions and reminding them of the fire regs. This has been acknowledged.

Jan feels that a deputy Booking Co-ordinator should be appointed to help Lin. Liz has offered to help and Gaynor has also agreed to be given instructions regarding the booking procedures so that they can help with this.

The salt bin needs to be moved as it is causing damp to the building where it is at the moment.

There was no further business and the meeting closed at 18.00hrs.

The next meeting will be on Tuesday 19th November at 16.00hrs.



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