

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of Cardrona Village Hall Committee

held on 23rd February 2018 in the Village Hall

There was a respectable turnout for the meeting of which 31 were CVA members.

After welcoming all, Peter Sellar ensured that a quorum could take place. Once this was confirmed he asked for approval of the last AGM minutes dated 17 February 2017, approval was noted. He then began his report.

Chair Report: P Sellar

2017 was a good year for the Cardrona Village Association. I will not steal wind from Robin's sails by telling you all the good news regarding the rude health in which we find our bank accounts. Robin will also speak to other details such as subscription uptake. Financials aside I do believe that we are now and still on a properly even keel.

We have a fully operative and dedicated committee that meets approximately every month and that makes sure the bills are paid, the contractors are contracted, the income is generated to pay the bills etc. We run very successful events including the summer fair, the market stalls, the Christmas event, gin tasting and concerts. They are successful not just because, in the main part, they make money for the Association but also because they are genuinely popular and well attended events. Of course, we would like to see more people from the village attending, for example, the summer games, and I know the committee has some more ideas on how to make that happen. But overall, whenever the committee does spend a lot of time organising events, the dividend is a positive.

The committee has also worked hard on some more "big ticket" matters such as the upgrade of the pump n jump track. This has been opened for the public's usage and I have witnessed some pretty amazing skills from cyclists using it. I do believe there might be an official opening ceremony involving an MSP in the future too but that will be communicated as and when.

None of the above however, is possible without the time and effort volunteered by our committee. And that includes its past members, such as Nigel Rutherford. Going forward we will need to repopulate the committee given that both Nigel and I have stood down or are standing down. I would encourage anyone with an interest to put their name forward. The key roles are already taken up, the committee runs smoothly and seamlessly, the time involved is limited. But even then, a member's participation can be limited to whatever he or she wishes to be involved in. The more the merrier is my message.

In terms of 2018, and what we need to discuss this evening in addition to the subscription rate vote, can I suggest the following:

- Who will be chair of the association as of tomorrow? We need to vote on that.
- Security: we have had a few burglaries in the village and we should, be addressing this constructively as a village. We need your ideas.
- Transport: how to help some of our more isolated villagers get into Peebles and back; again, ideas please.

But before we discuss these issues, I hand over to Robin who will talk us through the financials.

Treasurers Report: Robin Waddell

Good evening Ladies and Gentlemen, following a surplus of £1352 for the year ending 31st Dec 2016 the CVA have returned a whopping surplus of £5090 for the year to 31/12/2017. Whilst it is pleasing to top up the Associations coffers, a surplus of this level was not our intention, in fact at this point last year we had budgeted for a surplus of a little over £1000. The accounts have been made available prior to this meeting and I do not intend to go through them line by line but let me explain a little further as I highlight the headline items.

- Net income from events contributed £1676. We had budgeted £600 for this line as it is difficult to know in advance just how many events will be held and how successful they will be. Indeed this budget line looked pretty much on target until we held the very successful Gun Tasting and Choir nights towards the end of the year – thank you to all that organised and attended these events. This income is not, of course, guaranteed going forward and without the help of additional volunteers we may well have to run a reduced number of events we this year.
- Income from hall lets was £1000 ahead of budget, mainly because we had budgeted pessimistically. In fact for 2018 we have already lost some regular booking that will result in a reduction of hall rental income by around £500.
- Heat and power is another area where we made unpredicted saving – mainly through moving to a different energy tariff.
- The final “big ticket” saving were £500 from the green maintenance budget as we did not undertake pruning works to the trees around the Green and £500 from the bike park maintenance budget, not require due to the upgrade works.
- You will no doubt have noticed the major revamp to the bile park – which has been largely paid for by a lottery grant and Crowd Funding. We have however contributed £500 toward completion works in this financial year.
- Lastly, of course your subscriptions at just over £5500 are vital for the continued good heath of the CVA. This income was derived from 140 subscribers, a small increase from last year – but none the less heading in the right direction. We would very much like to see this number increase further and help share the load and hopefully the work your committee are doing to help generate community spirit and inclusiveness will go some way towards that. With regarding to collection of subscriptions, this is a time-consuming task and I would be very grateful if members would set up direct debits to cover this. That said, an as with those that pay by bank transfer, please return your gift aid forms in any case. These allow us to recover a further 25% from HMRC – and its not often you get something from the tax man for nothing!!
- As for expenditure in the current year – we do have the issue of the slow clock, which I am sure we will debate further later.
- And finally, our 3 year contract with Valley Landscaping to maintain the Green has come to an end. We ran for a new 3 year contract on the same specification plus some maintenance of the bike park. Unfortunately Valley were not competitive and the new contract has gone to Green Fingers from Leadburn, at a rate marginally below our current contract. Green Fingers have a strong reputation and have a squad and equipment level suitable to our needs.

Looking forward, and in mind that we currently have £19,000 in the bank your committee has prepared a detailed budget which we believe will return a modest loss.

Based on the above comments regarding Event and Hall income, we have taken a realistic line in budgeting, particularly in these areas where we were proved wrong last year. On the expenditure front we do not foresee any “big ticket” items , except perhaps the clock.

This budget is based on our recommended CVA subscription – which we will come onto as the next agenda item.

Finally, I would like to thanks my fellow committee members for making this happen and you all for contributing via subscriptions and attendance at events. Thanks also go to Neil Hibbert for examining and confirming our accounts.

Robin was then asked what the Virgin deposit account was and explained it was a deposit account used as a reserve. The treasurer fielded a number of other small queries.

Peter Sellar then introduced John Sharp to lead the discussion on Subscription

John began his talk on the subscriptions, acknowledging that the village has properties both with & without a legal obligation to pay their subscription fees. In addition, there are residents who have to pay a factor fee for their immediate areas and those who don't as well as those with no legal obligation to pay either a factor or the CVA. He stated that the approach of the current committee is to appeal to the whole village to contribute to the maintenance of the common parts regardless of the legal obligations. It is not feasible for the committee to start taking neighbours to court because they are not paying their fees. Instead we are proposing that we appeal to the community spirit & also to lower the subscription fee to a more reasonable amount especially given the healthy bank balance. John did acknowledge that there will be residents who will never have their mindset altered and will just undoubtedly not pay into the fees but there are those not in this category who we can appeal to.

John stressed that given the bank balance and healthy reserve that we have a duty and responsibility to our members not take more than we need for a fee. That we cannot justify taking a higher fee when we are hoping to get more subscribers, we did achieve more than last year, and if we do not we can make the slight loss this year and then raise it back in the future with justification for doing so. It is felt by the committee that it is more important to get more subscribers paying into the CVA than growing revenue and that promoting community spirit amongst residents should, we as a committee hope, achieve this.

Jennifer Culley echoed what John had stated that the committee is dedicated to trying to find a solution to engaing with non-subscribers and that we have discussed ways to find solutions to the issue. She did acknowledge that past committee members have attempted a variety methods in the past with varying degrees of success and that their experiences and knowledge are valuable and we hope they will be involved in this topic. We might go down the same paths they have gone and again be unsuccessful but knowing that there are new villagers who might be swayed any attempt surely must be taken.

It was then discussed that new villagers are welcomed into the village by a welcome pack which does detail the responsibility to pay into the CVA. A short discussion was held on

whether those with a legal responsibility have it in title deeds, some do and some don't, whether or not it should be put into home reports when selling property and whether we should be publishing those addresses who do not pay when they have a legal obligation to. It is a possible sanction and can aid as a reminder for those unsure whether they have paid, these can be methods we can look into this year. We are aware as a committee those with a legal requirement to pay and have sent letters to them in addition to those generally sent to the wider community.

Concerns were raised about reducing subscriptions over the years continuing thus a deficit could occur and that in the past the fee has not appeared to make much difference and that by lowering certain people might take the approach that if they are lowering they don't need my fee. The committee has acknowledged the past situations where lowering the subscriptions but then increasing dramatically to balance out has resulted in fewer payees. We hope as a committee to not have to go down this road and we will be highlighting why we are lowering the fee very clearly that thanks to good fundraising we have a healthy bank balance but more subscriptions will either keep the fee low or best yet lower it still but that we do need all residents to subscribe.

John Sharp stressed that there is a strong duty to not over-charge or hold money in accounts unnecessarily as there is a healthy float and that things were looking positive.

One resident did make the point that it could be prudent to keep the fee as it currently is to ensure a healthy float given the age of the building and any future work such as updating the kitchen or creating storage. The committee did make the valid point that if there was a need for a large amount of money to be spent on things like storage that we as a community could do a fund raising event for this and also that there were specific grants we could apply for. This is something the committee will be discussing this year as we are aware that storage is badly needed especially for items like table tennis / youth club possibilities.

It was then put to a vote once the discussion was finished and the 23 voted in agreement to reduce the subscription to £30 per member with 8 against wanting to remain at £40.

The committee advised new subscription forms and the latest leaflet would be distributed as soon as possible.

Re-election of CVA Committee

The Chairman advised that he would be stepping down from the role but that the current committee were prepared to stand again in their current roles, a vote of agreement for this was noted. He asked given his departure and that of Nigel Rutherford as Member at Large if anybody else wished to join the committee of which Keith Kitching has agreed to join the committee but nobody stepped forward to take on the role of Chair. This will be discussed at the next general meeting. A note of thanks to the committee was addressed by a member of the attendees.

AOB

The following were discussed as additional items

Security

We held a meeting in December to discuss this topic due to recent burglaries of which minutes were circulated out. As a committee we have decided that we will take be taking responsibility of proactively lobbying the council to install cctv cameras. Instead to move this initiative forward we have three proposals

1. **Cold calling:** Invite PC Chris Burnside to a special meeting for him to explain to us regarding cold-calling so that we become a no cold calling village which would involve the installation of signs at the entrances of the village (as in Clovenfords). The CVA would facilitate that meeting but it would also need feet on the ground because we would only become such a village if the majority of its inhabitants agree. We tried this one and failed because of lack of village uptake. One resident did point out this was sent at the same time as a request for subscriptions so it might have been missed and thought we should try this again.
2. **Dos and don'ts top tips:** Have volunteers from the village put together a list of dos and don'ts top tips in terms of keeping their property and themselves safe. For example, lights on at night and at the front of your house during the night. The CVA can assist by circulating that list but it needs volunteers to get together and produce a list.
3. **CCTV:** Installing cctv cameras whether at the entrances of the village or on the hall requires (i) money (between 1k and 2k) and (ii) compliance with data protection laws and the responsibility/liability which goes with that. Depending on where they are located, it could also require permission from the Council. The CVA suggests again that a group of villagers get together to decide what they consider to be the best way forward, and to present it for a vote at an EGM of the CVA. One resident was quite keen to look into this and security as a topic and will liaise with the CVA on this matter.

Isolated Villagers

Brian McCrow has been discussing the possibility of putting together a point of contact for those elderly residents who are unable to walk to the bus stop but would still like to go out and the idea behind being able to phone people to see if they are able to take them somewhere. One resident did state that he would like to believe if there are neighbours in that situation others would be aware and offer services to them. The committee stated that these ideas are great for others to pull together as opposed to the committee themselves but that we can advertise/market as needed any information.

Maintenance Issues

One resident has advised that roots from the pine trees along the Renwick's owned land on the cycle path are extending into and damaging her land. So far she has been unsuccessful in liaising with them on this to assist in arranging treatment. She is worried that they could be

affecting drainage too. A committee member offered up contact details to help and asked her to keep us informed of how things progress.

Another resident noted that the back road has terrible visibility and road surfaces which is getting worse and the bus stop has a drainage problem. He has sent the council emails on these matters with little success. John Sharp asked him to forward the emails to the committee to resend on behalf of the village as a whole to see if that helps. It was noted that due to the upcoming works on the new development at Nashy's the bus stop is likely going to be left until after all that has been carried out.

Storage

One lady did ask about whether we could use the money in reserve for purchasing table tennis equipment but storage is a key issue with this as we have none. We will look into this topic this year to see whether we can appeal for grants to help with this topic. We would like it if we could have help on this topic by any volunteers.

As no further business was raised the Chair thanked all for attending and closed the meeting.