

## **Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of Cardrona Village Hall Committee**

**held on 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2019 in the Village Hall**

There were 22 attendees of which all were CVA members.

After introducing himself as the temporary Chairman and welcoming all, John Sharp asked for approval of the last AGM minutes dated February 2018, approval was noted. He then began his report.

### **Chair Report: J Sharp**

Thank you all for coming. I'm John Sharp & for the purposes of this AGM I'm acting as chairperson. I have with me the treasurer, Robin Waddell and Mark Nethercot & Keith Kitching

We're going to present a quick summary of the CVA activity over the last year, including the finances & then deal with matters arising, electing the committee & plans for the coming year. But first we have a number of apologies – which I have a list of here & I would like to invite anyone to second the minutes from the last AGM.

### **Apologies**

Ian & Anne Nimmo

Rod & Brenda Mitchell

2018 saw the departure of 2 committee members who moved away from the village – Peter Sellar, the chair & Jenny Culley, the secretary. Both were very active and a core part of the committee, so they are missed & we would again like to thank them for the massive contribution they made to the CVA over the 3-ish years that they were involved.

Despite a number of attempts to get volunteers for these positions, we are still lacking new committee members and for this reason 2018 has been a year of maintaining the core functions of the CVA committee. Apart from the Christmas Lights switch-on, there were no CVA-initiated events & this is a reflection of the depleted nature of the committee. That said, the CVA did run & more or less broke even, despite a lack of fund raising & 'community spirit' type events.

The Pump Track upgrade was completed back in April last year, so that was a big improvement in the village & down to a lot of work by people in the village. The appointment of Green Fingers for the maintenance has been widely approved – they've been doing a great job, helped by a very dry summer!

So our main thrust at the moment is to try to encourage more people to get involved – there's so much that we can do to improve facilities & surroundings, but just not enough people to organise it. The current committee all have full time occupations, families & lots of other responsibilities and we are now half the size than we were when we volunteered back in 2015. We need more than ideas – we need people to put ideas into action and for that we need to get people involved, either in a limited way via a working group or organising an event, or more involved generally by joining the committee.

There have been loads of ideas & suggestions for hall improvements, environmental improvements, clubs, events like the Summer Fair & other areas such as groups looking at security around the village, mobility facilities, organising factors & campaigning for or against changes in the area. We just need people to come forward and commit time, however much that is.

In the meantime, the current committee will continue to operate the CVA in 'maintenance mode', but we would encourage everyone to consider volunteering some time towards making Cardrona an even better place to live.

Thank you – I'll pass you on to Robin who will go through the 2018 finances.

## **Treasurers Report: Robin Waddell**

Good evening Ladies and Gentlemen, following a whopping surplus of £5090 for the year to 31/12/2017, the year to 31/12/18 has returned a deficit of £598. This is broadly in line with the last year's budget that predicted a deficit of £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.

- You will recall that there was some discussion at this meeting last year regarding the level of cash we were carrying forward and that the decision was taken to reduce subscriptions by £10 to £30 p.a. This has resulted in a drop in subscription income of approximately £800.
- The number of subscribers is fairly stable, having dropped from 140 to 138.
- But for 2 exceptional events we would have actually made a profit in 2018.
- Cheque totalling £467, lodged with the bank in mid-December, went missing in transit and were not credited to our account until mid-January.
- We normally claim gift aid a year in arrears. Due to a mix-up we claimed the 2018 year amount of £620 rather than the 2017 year amount of c£900.
- Had it not been for these 2 events the CVA would have returned a small surplus.
- Our dwindling committee and lack of time has given no opportunity to run any events over the last year. In 2017 events made a net surplus of £1600
- Income from hall lets has dropped – due to several factors including the facts there have been noticeably fewer evening party bookings and we have had no elections (we had 3 polling bookings in 2017 at £200 at time – So we need a second Brexit referendum, the outcome of which will result in a general election, which in turn will trigger yet another Independence referendum!
- Otherwise income and expenditure has been pretty stable.

Looking forward, and in bearing mind that we currently have £18,400 in the bank your committee has prepared a budget which we believe will return a modest loss of approx. £500.

- We have made no allowance for event income – although we would love to see that change – but desperately need support to allow us to do that.
- Subscription level has yet to be debated and we would very much like to see this number increase however for now we have budgeted on an “as you are” situation.
- With regard 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, 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 it's not often you get something from the tax man for nothing!!

On the expenditure front we do not foresee any “big ticket” items, with everything remaining much the same. One thing that I think we will need to consider in the next year or so is the outside paintwork of the hall, which is beginning to show bare wood in places.

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

Thank you and I would be happy to answer any queries from the floor.

**The committee now turn to the attendees for their thoughts/questions on this.**

Questions/suggestions regarding the reduction in subscription numbers was raised.

The number of subscriptions dropped by 2 over the previous year. It was stated that this may be due to the natural turnover of houses in the village, with new residents being unlikely to be aware of the CVA and/or less engaged with the village and therefore unwilling to pay. Suggestion was made it would be good to knock on new neighbours doors and utilise the welcome pack.

Also pointed out that the lack of events over the last year will have impacted the community spirit and removed an opportunity to remind people to pay subscriptions.

The point was made that we pushed to lower the subscription last year to increase the number of subscribers. The reply from the committee was that whilst this was something we would have welcomed, we do not consider the reduction of £10 to be significant regarding the will to pay but rather the reductions was due to the level of funds we currently have available and there was no justification to continue to increase this.

It was asked how many houses pay subscriptions versus the total that could pay. This was confirmed as 138 in the last year out of 300+ houses. The floor continued to ask about the break down of the village with respect to who has factors fees, who has care for the common parts written into their title deeds and all combinations of this, the figure of 184 was confirmed as the houses with title deeds for the common parts and the number of different arrangements throughout the village with respect to factors. It was iterated that this was something that had been looked at in detail over the lifetime of the CVA and there was no simple solution. In the case of houses that are legally supposed to pay for the upkeep but refuse to do so our only recourse is to pursue it legally and this is not something that the committee would be willing to engage in.

It was questioned if we knew who pays and who doesn't. The committee gave a summary of the street by street breakdown of payees

- Main Farm Steading: 9
- Renwick Lane: 5
- Leeburn View: 9
- Plumberknowe Gardens: 4
- Fawnburn Crescent: 9
- WallaceHill Way: 2
- St. Leonards way: 7
- Cardrona Way: 16
- Govans Way: 3 (1 from Eildon homes)
- The Green: 17
- Green Lane: 13
- Pikes Knowe Ct: 4
- St Brydes Way: 29
- Nutwood Ct: 4
- Castleknowe Way: 5
- 'Up the Hill': 1

It was noted that the largest drop in numbers paying was seen on St. Brydes Way, Nutwood Ct and CastleKnowe.

It was asked if, in the case where a house is let, do we ask the landlord to pay or the renter. The committee answered that we are unaware of the status of individual houses and simply deliver newsletters with the subscription forms. The committee is also unaware of which houses are being sold and therefore are not able to target welcome packs to the new owners. This was something for which Street Reps were previously useful, but this is a task for which it is difficult to get volunteers. If members make the committee aware of house sales we would try to ensure a welcome pack is made available.

I was stated that if a house sells which will have the common parts in the titles deeds we could make a point of informing them of their obligation. This is not something the committee has the capacity or ability to do.

A point was made that we could change our position and try to push the fact that the maintenance of the common parts is beneficial to the whole village and has a positive effect on the value of the properties and contributes to making it a nice place to live. A response was made that various approaches have been tried in the past with minimal impact.

It was stated that for the last 19 years the village has continued to be well maintained and as such it can be difficult to make people who don't pay see any reason to pay. It is unfair to those that do pay as they bear the brunt of the maintenance but unfortunately this is not easily solved.

It was asked if the new houses being built at Nashys will have the common parts in their title deeds and it was confirmed that due to the nature of the current title deeds it isn't actually possible for the new builds to be added (as it would require changing all current titles deeds).

The example of Renwick Lane coming together to sack their factor was raised. This is a model that could be used in other areas of the village to significantly reduce factor costs. Renwick lane now uses the same contractor as the CVA. This would potentially increase the willingness to pay into the CVA as factor costs are reduced.

It was asked if Eildon could be asked to pay a reduced subscription rate (say 30%). It was stated that we have always allowed this but do not feel pushing it for specific areas would be fair as it introduces disparity between the villagers.

It was suggested that people could, on behalf of the CVA, knock on their neighbours doors if they don't pay and ask why not. This would provide an opportunity to iterate the benefits to the village as a whole and would also serve as a useful reminder to some people. Whilst this was something that was at one point part of being a street rep, it is not something the committee would relish doing and we would be unlikely to get any volunteers to do this.

It was suggested we could provide membership rosettes which villagers could put in the window to show they had paid their subscriptions.

The topic on number of subscriptions and possible methods to increase payees was closed and the discussion moved towards what the CVA should be doing moving forwards.

The committee pointed out that we are limited at the moment by the size of the committee and the lack of volunteers to help. It was countered that if we prioritised and published things for which we needed volunteers we would maybe get more traction.

The floor was reminded that at the last AGM we had made a request for working parties to help with a number of topics (village security and storage at the hall) being specific topics) but after some initial interest nothing had come of this. Requests are also regularly made in the newsletters for help.

With the aid of volunteers there are various funds which could be used to help with costs, It was suggested that if the CVA was more specific about tasks that were being considered we may get volunteers. The point was made that the committee as it is does not have the time to be able to do this level of leading and we required people to come forwards to lead working parties to drive such things.

At this point someone on the floor asked if we had a proposal for next years subscription.

### **The Committee made a recommendation for the Subscription Rate for 2019**

The committee recommends that we maintain the current annual subscription level of £30. As we have heard, the bank balance is still extremely healthy & despite no significant fund raising, the finances remained steady. It was felt that increasing the subscription rate and therefore increasing our bank balance was not something that could be justified.

The Committee asked if there were any counter proposals from the floor.

A suggestion was made to increase the subscription to £31 with the extra £1 being considered an entry into a 'raffle' to get the subs refunded for the year (for 3 houses). This would be at no cost to the CVA but may increase the number of houses that pay in. This proposal did not receive a seconder at the time.

Another proposal was made to increase the subscription rate back to £40, the fact that the year had resulted in an overall loss being given as the key justification. It was reiterated that it was only technically a loss due to misplaced cheques and the wrong year being claimed for gift Aid. This proposal was seconded.

**No further proposals were made so the committee ensured the floor were aware of voting rights (one vote per paid subscription) and ask for votes for the two proposals:**

Keep the subscription at £30: 21 votes (15 on the floor, 4 committee members & 2 proxy votes)

It was queried how we are able to know how the proxies wanted us to vote on this question as it was not listed in the agenda. It is the opinion of the committee that the proxies had given the committee their votes to use as we saw fit and to agenda had detailed the proposal to keep the subscription rates at the current level.

**We then voted on the counter proposal:**

Raise the subscription back to £40: 3 votes

The proposal to keep the subscription rate at £30 was therefore carried.

**Committee re-election**

The Chairman stated that the committee were willing to continue in our current 'maintenance' roles, reiterating the call for new members as we currently do not have enough members to fill the required 5 roles, and asked if there were any objections to this. None were noted. A note of thanks to the committee was addressed by a member of the attendees.

**AOB**

The amount of litter, specifically dog mess, bottles and the concrete blocks on the railway path. It was suggested a litter pick could be arranged and in fact some of the local school children are looking into forming a litter picking club.

It was asked if the security meeting held last year had gone anywhere. Whilst interest in forming a working parties was made at the time nothing came of this. A member from the floor asked if we had reviewed his security proposals. None of the committee was aware of this so we asked if it could be resent.

The use of the overflow car park for Nashy's was questioned. It was confirmed that this was a temporary arrangement for the duration of the works and the point was made that this was not exclusive and the car park could also be used for the bus stop.

**The Chair thanked all for attending and closed the meeting.**

**At the meeting we received two volunteers to join the committee:**

- Kevin Thomson
- Pat Spence