

CULWORTH ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY APRIL 27TH 2021 VIA ZOOM

1. Stuart Rolt Chair of Culworth Parish Council welcomed 29 members including 7 councillors and the Clerk Mrs J.M. Rowling
2. Apologies 4 received
3. Minutes of 2019 Annual Parish Assembly had been circulated in 2019. No Assembly in 2020.
4. Chair of Parish Council Stuart Rolt thanked all parish councillors for their contributions over the past 6 years, the Emergency Team of Andrew Wilby, Peter Coville the Clerk and himself, District Councillor Mary Anne Sergison-Brooke who is retiring after over 30 years of loyal service to us all helping residents and Parish Council in her quiet way. Cllr Rosie Herring who is retiring but seeking election in the Middleton Cheney ward for West Northamptonshire. County Councillor Ian Morris who is retiring. Mrs Joanne Wilby for setting up the new website and Cllr Koster for taking on the newsletter from Mrs Howse and now passing it onto Mrs Kate Smith. Email address of newsletter culworth.newsletter@gmail.com
5. Financial Report was available. Dick Winter the volunteer internal auditor, who is retiring was thanked for his work for over 20years. The content of the report will receive questions and adoption at May AGM before PKF Littlejohn the external auditors examine the accounts.
6. Culworth Charity Account. Martin Rowling Chair of trustees stated that at Christmas 17 households within the parish received a cash benefit from the Charity. After the deduction of agent's fees, the net rental income was £2121. The main income is derived from an arable field at Wappenham, a small paddock at Silverstone let for grazing and an annual wayleave payment for an electricity pole and an underground broadband communication cable. Mrs J Howse is the current other trustee.
7. Open Meeting
 - a. Resident asked for the correct website address. The Chair of PC explained that the long current hugo fox address would be amended to a gov.uk one as soon as approval was granted. The old website would then be closed.
 - b. Concern expressed traffic from HS2 and large farm vehicles were making local driving a hazard. Banbury Lane footpath parking and

outside Forge Coffee made it difficult for pedestrians to walk on the pavement. The Chair stated that the police were aware of parking on the pavement but due to the narrow road, without that traffic would be a standstill or there would be damage to vehicles. Vehicle activated signs are soon to be erected within the village paid for by HS2 after a three year battle. Residents had suggested double kerbs would stop parking. Those residents could also be asked by Parish Council to park elsewhere. Concern was expressed at the lack of visibility when leaving Banbury Lane. For further discussion at May 18th meeting.

8.Village Hall Report –

Julie Tinn Chair of Trustees: The Coronavirus, Covid-19 has had a profound effect on the Village Hall year. There have been no classes, coffee and chat, monthly cafes, Snappers photography groups, meetings or gatherings in the Hall from mid-March 2020. We hope to open up again on 17th May. We briefly opened the Hall on November 2nd last year having carried out all the necessary risk assessments, cleaning and sanitising only to close it again on November 5th when we went into lockdown again. Village Hall meetings have been held via Zoom. Our last film night was on 7th March 2020, showing the film Judy, when the 54 attendees did not know how much we were going to be affected. We hope to resume the film nights this summer, fingers crossed. Financially, we have had no income from hirings and have still had to find funds to keep the Hall in good working order – new fire doors will be installed before we open up again. Fortunately, we were eligible for the small business grant offered by the Government.

Charlie Timmins joined the Committee in May 2020 as a Trustee. June Oxley resigned as Secretary in November but stayed on as Bookings Clerk and Sarah Powell took up the role of Secretary. All other Trustees and officers remained – the AGM was postponed until further notice.

Since the last Parish Assembly work has continued on the new community building project although finding the necessary funding has been difficult due to funders closing their doors to new projects for the time being. We are hoping as things get better that funding opportunities will open up again.

The Village Hall Committee had fixed a date last year for a Public Meeting to gain village consent to sell the current Village Hall site conditional on the new

community building being finished and operational. However, this was cancelled due to the outbreak of the Coronavirus and the restrictions imposed on gatherings. We have recently made a new provisional date of 3rd July for this meeting.

The Committee agreed not to increase the hiring rates for the Hall this year. The Hall remains a popular, well- appointed venue and an asset to the community.

9. St Mary's Church 2020.

2020 began with a very leaky roof. The lead had been stolen in September 2018 and although we got planning permission quite quickly from South Northants District council for the roof to be replaced with terne coated stainless steel, we also needed permission from the Diocese – and they took their time! Therefore in January 2020, through no fault of our own, we still had a tarpaulin covering which, after 18 months, was not as efficient as it had been initially. A very wet winter meant that the rain poured in every time it rained, and despite valiant efforts the pews and walls of the south aisle and the general deterioration of the paint and woodwork in the whole church was most depressing. The pews were eventually removed when it got too bad.

We carried on with our normal services until 15th March. Gerald Cadogan took the last Evensong on that day before we were forced to close the church entirely for the first lockdown due to Coronavirus.

The roof was repaired during this time. We were fortunate that the roof men carried on working during the lock down. Two of them came from near Bedford, a journey of over an hour every morning. They started the preparatory work on 6th March. Fortunately, for much of the time after this, there was little rain, because the roof was completely open to the elements. At Easter, although the church was closed and boarded up with scaffolding all round, Amanda put up an Easter message and display, the weather was lovely and the primroses looked magnificent.

The roof is bright, hopefully will mellow with age and also will deter any future thefts. We were fortunate to have had the support financially of many people in and out of the village to whom we are extremely grateful. The Parish Council were able to give us grant and thanks to Phillida's diligence we were able to get grants from other sources. We have as yet not been able to hold a service of thanksgiving but hopefully we will be able to in the not- too- distant future.

The church remained completely closed due to Covid restrictions until 8th June. We were then able to reopen it for private prayer and also open up the library. As you can imagine after such a long time and so much major building work, there was a huge clean up operation to be done. Jose rallied her troops, and John and Christine sorted out the books.

Huge thanks go to everyone involved.

Services started again on 5th July and from 8th August face coverings were required. We then maintained our normal services until the next lockdown – 1st November, Gerald took Evensong. The same day saw the final service taken by our Rector, Brian Fairbank, which was a benefice communion at Chipping Warden.

Brian Fairbank had been rector of Culworth for 8 years. Initially the benefice consisted of 6 parishes but last year Sulgrave and Thorpe Mandeville moved to the Chenderit benefice, leaving the Culworth benefice with four parishes, Culworth, Chipping Warden, Moreton Pinkney and Edgcote.

We held one wedding in 2020, no funerals and no christenings.

We were expecting a long interregnum but fortunately we didn't have to wait long before we had a new rector. We were very lucky to get a new incumbent so soon after Brian left, as the process will usually take many months of waiting. Reverend Mike Chesher is our new rector. Culworth is now 'House of Duty' benefice which means the incumbent receives no stipend and will work Sundays and 2 other days. His appointment was announced on 10th January and Mike was inducted via Zoom on 7th March and I know many people in the parish were able to join in the service. We hope he will spend a very happy time here.

Back to 2020. The church remained open for private prayer and the library. We were able to reopen the church for December services, and although we held our usual services over Christmas, numbers were down dramatically. For example Christmas Day usually see a full church with about 150 in the congregation; this year we only had 35. We were fortunate to have the Ven David Painter, retired Archdeacon from Oakham, to take our Christmas Day Holy Communion. However the church looked magnificent with the Christmas decorations organised as usual thanks to Diana and her team.

However in 2021 we closed again. Gerald took Evensong on 3rd January and the services stopped until Evensong on 7th March – Gerald taking the service

with Mike, our new rector there. We continued to keep the church open for the library and private prayer.

Hopefully all services will continue as normal from now on.

During this time Jose organised a short service every week from our Rural Dean, Rev. Carolyn Oley to be delivered or sent by email to anyone who needed it.

Much of our other activities came to a halt during much of the year. We were able to have our Lent Quiz and one of the Lent lunches before the first lockdown. The money from the Lent Lunch went to Banbury Citizens Advice which launched an appeal to help people isolated by Coronavirus get essential food and supplies. No village cafes or coffee and chats have taken place since March 2020, no fete to raise money for church funds. Plant sales and the Culworth 5 miler, along with the Christmas candles raised money for church funds. The collection from the Carol Service went to The Children's Society.

We have continued to be supported by a regular team who have helped to keep the church clean, and our annual Spring Clean this year took place in time for the Easter services. The churchyard has likewise been maintained by an energetic group of mowers and strimmers. And the efforts of the annual churchyard tidy up in August can be appreciated by the wonderful Spring flowers. Thanks to everyone.

Marion Bullock very kindly mended 4 of the kneelers in front of the altar rail and more recently some pew runners.

After many years as secretary of the PCC Phillida Walker has felt she must now change her allegiance to Woodford Halse, having moved there a few years ago. She has done an amazing amount of work for our church over many, many years, especially in the last few years trying to find grants for the roof. Huge thanks to Phillida.

As usual the mainstay of our church as always is Martin. He is always there. He opens and shuts the church every day, keeps a check on all the maintenance requirements.

10 Culworth Junior Cricket Club

2020 was a weird year for all of us. The cricket club obviously could not do anything during the full lock down. Then as the restrictions were relaxed gradually, we were allowed to do 1-2-1 coaching sessions in the nets, then we

were allowed up to 5 children together in a session, so we split the Tuesday evening into two groups- 6-7pm is 5-9 year-olds and then 7-8pm was over 9s.

During the first lockdown of 2020, which coincided with the start of the cricket season I sent out a weekly email. This had training videos, showing the parents drills that they can do in the back garden with their children. The idea was not to let the children and the parents forget cricket.

We normally stop after the schools close in July, as getting teams together in August is always difficult because of family holidays. 2020 was no different, but what we did do, which was new for our club, was we arranged some matches in September. Over one weekend we had a under 11 match against Towcester, which was well supported. Then we had a Dads, lads and lasses game against the Eydon Occasionals, who are their Sunday afternoon men's team. This was a great success. We had five dads (mums were invited to play) and six children aged between 11-15. We narrowly lost, but everyone enjoyed it, and we have another game against them scheduled for this July, and we may try to get another two matches planned against other sides.

We hope 2021 will be better. We had a spring clean on Saturday 3rd April and training sessions have started. Even though we are competing against football, rugby and hockey who are extending their seasons, it has been nice to see that we have had at least 12 new members join, of which half are girls. We have also had a resident of Culworth join us as a coach.

Even if you do not have a child of the right age (6-16 yrs), the club is always looking for people to help as either coaches, or to help with ground maintenance, or to act as admin support, or become a scorer. It is a hugely satisfying job when you see the smiles on the children's faces, and the good thing is that it is all done generally in the sun. If you want some green exercise, why not offer to mow the ground? Or you could mow the wicket, which gives you a nice walk in the sun.

If you are an adult living in or around Culworth and interested in playing cricket please get in touch with the club, as if we have enough interest, we could start a Culworth Occasionals team, and play a couple of games a season and have some training sessions.

We are fairly confident this year that we can run an under 9s kwik cricket team, an under 11s, under 13s and an under 15s team. Their matches are on a Friday

night, Sunday morning, Monday and Wednesday evenings. So if you would like to come and watch, you are more than welcome.

To find our more information about the club, please call Jim on 07860 638557, or email me on jpowell@jspmanagement.co.uk.

11. ABILITY Community Bus Service. Margaret Watts

The service to Banbury commenced in July 2019 running initially on a Thursday morning.

As there was sufficient demand the service then increased by running a Monday afternoon service.

Ability also offered trips mainly to local garden centres and these were greatly enjoyed enabling the ladies to mix socially.

In March 2020 due to the coronavirus pandemic and the first lockdown the bus ceased running but resumed after lockdown measures lifted offering a Thursday service to Banbury for essential shopping from the summer of 2020.

In December 2020 again trips were made to local garden centres adhering to Government Guidelines which are strictly operated at all times.

The service continues at present once a week to Banbury and service for an additional day will be reviewed in good course.

12. Culworth Snappers Camera Club. John Emmett

Culworth Snappers is now in its 7th year.

We normally meet on the 3rd Thursday of the month in Culworth village hall. During the pandemic the monthly club nights have continued via zoom.

Each month there is a topic which as been selected by members, these are then discussed on the club nights. As well as discussing images, members will discuss any new ideas or queries they might have. At our club nights we also include regular technical sessions where members share knowledge and experience on a wide range of topics such as image composition, know your camera and astrophotography.

As the lockdown eases we hope to get back to our outdoor photoshoots which are popular with the members. Previous shoots have been at Chesterton Mill, Stowe, The canal at Cropredy, and we have some interesting locations planned for the future.

Earlier this month we had a guest speaker Tony Worobiec, a professional photographer who gave an excellent presentation on “Lowlight and Night Photography”.

You can now follow us on Facebook under “Culworth Snappers”_where you can find images taken by members. Topics this year include Lockdown; Kitchen Utensils; Gates; Woodland; Life's back to normal; Wheels; Minimalism; Windows.

Future Club Nights this year (Thursdays)

20th May; 24th June; 22nd July; 26th August; 23rd September; 21st October; 25th November. The membership consists of people with various degrees of expertise from beginners to keen amateurs. They use a wide range equipment from mobile Phones to the latest mirrorless cameras.

This is a very friendly local club, why not come and join us. Membership is only £20/annum, to cover things like the hiring of the hall and guest speakers etc.

13. Culworth Hill Field Trust Chairman John Duggan

The Chair Stuart Rolt announced that Mr Duggan had had a serious cycling accident in the afternoon and was now in John Radcliffe. He asked that the good wishes of the meeting for his speedy recovery be sent to him and to his family. Norman Green presented the report instead.

CHFT PROGRESS BRIEFING NOTE 24th April, 2021 • As highlighted in a Country File programme, community facilities are increasingly important in providing essential services in rural communities. This is particularly so in the light of the impact of Covid-19 and the likely impact of Climate Change. People are likely to travel less, be more likely to work from home and be more reliant on local community facilities for their recreational and social welfare.

- Culworth Hill Field Trust was set up specifically to deliver and manage the new Community and Recreational Facility to replace the existing village hall and cricket pavilion. Both are in a bad state of repair, continuing to deteriorate and are not fit for purpose. Post Covid-19 it is increasingly important that we find a way to build this new facility.

- Mrs. Trott’s generous donation of the land was for sole purpose of building the new facility. The Parish Council (PC) now own the land for this project on the clear understanding that it will be transferred to CHFT in due course. The PC also has a long lease on the rest of the cricket field (Hill Field) for 50 years, of which 43 years are still remaining, the freehold of which is held in trust by Mrs. Trott’s family.

- We received planning permission for the new Community and Recreational Facility late 2019. It will expire in December 2022, unless a substantial start on site has been made. Now the principle of development on the North East side of the cricket field (Hill Field), has been established, getting a new planning permission, when required, is expected to be reasonably straightforward.
- Our prime objective remains, albeit over a longer time scale, to deliver a new community and recreational facility, at the lowest possible capital and operating cost. possibly with smaller changing rooms, that can be used by the cricket club. We will carry out a value engineering exercise with a view to reducing the scale and size of the new facility, possibly with smaller changing rooms. Our intention is to do this without materially changing the appearance of the current design of the building. In due course, we will request a pre planning application consultation with the planners to get their feedback.
- The cost estimate for this project, now two years old, is £974k. To date we have raised £42k from the villagers, the Parish Council and SNC, to pay for the cost of getting planning permission and £250K of match funding commitments. This is comprised of £75K from HS2, for the specific purpose of constructing the new facility, and an estimated £175K, subject to the village approving the sale for residential development. This leaves an estimated funding gap of £724k, before the value engineering exercise has been carried out. We continue to explore potential sources of funding.
- The Coronavirus pandemic and its economic impact has led many potential funders to temporarily close their doors to new grant applications. We will continue our fundraising efforts; we have made an initial application to Sport England and we are awaiting their response. The funding outlook is expected to improve over time, but realistically we do not expect any substantial grants for capital projects to be available in the next two to three years.
- In conversations with villagers, some of whom have already generously made a donation, a number of constructive fundraising proposals have been put forward. In particular, the offer to donate land for a crowd funding project to plant trees, and an offer to organise a major social event. Along with other local fundraising initiatives, they have the potential to raise a total of £100k once we have reduced the funding gap.
- The Village Hall Trust was poised to call a Public Meeting to gain village consent to sell the existing village hall site before the first lockdown. It intends to call the public meeting as soon as possible in the circumstances. This is necessary, to demonstrate to other potential sources of funds, that the village

are doing everything within their power to help raise the funds necessary to get this new Community and Recreational Facility built.

- We are likely to be living with the impact of Covid-19 and Climate Change for the foreseeable future. Despite the challenges, all the CHFT trustees remain committed to getting this done; the village still needs these new facilities. To date the burden of the work to get this far, has fallen on a small number of people. We need the support from a younger generation of villagers, with the drive, vision, and necessary skills to get this done. We need your active support, participation and commitment to deliver a new Community and Recreational Facility for Culworth.

Questions included that if the changing rooms were modified for a smaller building would that comply with Sport England requirements. If built in stages would this be even more costly. It was noted that both buildings Village Hall and Cricket pavilion are not fit for purpose. Would the new planning application be met by funds from the Cricket Club and Village Hall who had received coronavirus support grants? Mr Green continued to state that all potential sources of funding were being explored.

14. Culworth 2021 Cllr Andrew Wilby.

The Parish Council supported the launch /rebirth of village activities as lockdown eased or ceased. A steering group had been formed from Volunteers.

a) June 26th 2021 on the Cricket Field from 10am onwards games and fun for the children followed by a free BBQ and silly games for all ages. Village Walk, Cricket. Event may go on into the evening.

b) Culworth in Bloom Best kept garden and allotment to be judged between 19 and 20 June by Debbie Rolt and Mary Gribbin.

c) Request for more people to join the steering group. Plans to carry out survey to assess village skills and needs. History Group and much more.

15. Culworth Community Park Karen Mullins Blyth reported on survey monkey and hard copy results. 136 responses with 61 personal comments. Further details will be presented to Parish Council on 18th May 2021. Questions included ownership of the Recreation Field which is the Trustees of the late Commander Crutchley. Funding may be sought from HS2.

16. Updates on HS2 Cllr Stuart Rolt attends the regular forums with HS2 and local Council members including the MP.

a) Proposed layout Magpie to Marston Crossroads/ Greatworth Junction. A revised layout was proposed to maximise safety. The road from Magpie past end of Bulls Lane to Thorpe Mandeville would be closed with the Greatworth Green tunnel being built and the new road going over the tunnel. Road closure likely until 2024 but no start date known yet. It is thought that the Banbury lane from the village might not be closed. Many residents expressed huge concern that the safety aspect of Marston crossroads currently poor. Traffic in the Banbury Lane would be a hazard. Road surface poor due to potholes and road erosion maybe caused by large vehicles. School buses have used this route for years. Could village join with neighbouring villages for a combined approach to HS2 for a resolution.

b) Traffic through the village is principally for staff or equipment to travel from one site to another. Any causes of concern require the time place and number plates of vehicles involved. These are forwarded to HS2 for prompt resolution. Clerk to put contacts for HS2 in newsletter and website. Cllr Rolt will ascertain which rights of way are being affected although he wasn't aware of any closures. Fences have appeared in fields for what purpose.

c) Magpie compound is a base for 80 workers. It will also be the concreting plant. Light intrusion is being addressed once the site is fully operational and it is in Banbury Lane.

d) Sound Barrier at Lower Thorpe was part of the agreement for Culworth. This is now on latest plans. Cllr Rolt was thanked for his work with HS2.

It is noted that once lockdown is eased, there will be opportunities for discussions and workshops showing the archaeology, developments of the sites and environmental supports.

17. Local Government Future. Cllr Wilby reminded residents that following the financial issues of NCC the Government inspectors had recommended that Northants be divided into two unitary authorities North and West Northants. West Northants consists of SNC, DDC, Northampton Borough and services of NCC. Resulting in 93 councillors. Culworth is in Silverstone Ward which will be represented by three councillors. West Northants is one of the wealthier authorities with reserves of £93 million. Currently, all planning policies will be retained and served by a local committee. Shadow Authority in place for one year. It is important to vote on May 6th for this, Police and Crime commissioner, and Parish Council.

No further business meeting closed at 8.40pm.