

MINUTES of WEEK ST MARY ANNUAL PARISH OPEN MEETING
held on Thursday 1st April 2021 at 7.30pm via Zoom

The Chair, Mr J Ward, opened the meeting at 7.30pm and welcomed 9 Parish Councillors, 7 parishioners and Mrs N Chopak, Cornwall Council Ward member. Beth Sachs – Clerk.

1. Apologies:

Lesley Booker

2. Minutes of Annual Parish Meeting 2019

A precis of the Minutes was given and they were then accepted as read and agreed.

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and gave his report.

3. Chair's report

The work of the Parish Council ranges from issues with fundamental, long term implications for the parish to small, day to day things that nonetheless contribute to the Parish's wellbeing. This being the 11 th time I have presented the Chairman's report, I do not propose to summarise the full extent of the Parish Council activities in this report. The activities of the Parish Council are reported comprehensively in the Parish Magazine, available on the Parish Notice Board and on the village website. Rather I will pick out some key highlights.

In response to the lockdown, the Parish Council set up a central telephone number to help people struggling to get provisions, prescriptions or needing help. I would like to say thank you to the volunteers who took the calls and the volunteers who responded. Particularly Stephen Peters, Tricia Cozens, Peter & Hilary Daniel, David and Denise Purchase, Michael and Shelley Collman, Phil Dorren and Sophie Doyle.

We also organized the availability of emergency food supplies. Whilst there were not many requests for assistance, it was a hugely appreciated service for the people who used it. There was no cost to the Parish Council as it was supported by donations from Poor Man's Piece and Meet and Greet. None of the provisions were wasted. For example, goods approaching sell-by dates were donated and delivered to Bude Foodbank by Denise and David Purchase, who managed the operation.

The Parish Council often gets thought of as important in the consideration of planning applications. We take that role seriously and offer our views responsibly but in practice we have no decision-making role. I always feel that our direct responsibilities are the most important aspect of what we do. For example, the management and upkeep of the Public Toilets. The toilets are kept in a good condition and this is due mainly however to the work of Jamie Sachs who cleans and maintains it for the Council. Jamie also looks after another community resource we are responsible for, the village greens.

Whilst we are not ultimately responsible the footpaths, Cornwall Highways are the responsible body, we do undertake the maintenance contract and we are extremely grateful to Phil Dorren who voluntarily reports on and manages the parish footpath network on behalf of the Parish Council.

We value highly the continuing and close support of our County Councillor Nicky Chopak. Nicky attends virtually every Week St Mary Parish Council Meeting despite an incredibly busy schedule. She is a swift and effective communicator of our concerns to Cornwall Council, very effective at sorting stuff out and doesn't duck when thorny problems need addressing. She also keeps us advised of what's happening in Cornwall Council and its issues, mainly of late about managing an ever shrinking budget.

I would like to say thank you to the Parish Councillors who have worked diligently over the year for the community, many of whom taking on special responsibilities. There are two long serving councillors standing down at the election in May. Micheline Smith and Bill Pearce have been actively engaged, including during some challenging times. Micheline has chaired the Council and led the council during the difficult responses to the wind farm planning application, when the Parish Council's response was ultimately discussed in a session at the High Court. Bill, in addition to general Council duties, has been a strong advocate for community transport and policing.

Thank you also to Beth Sachs, our Parish Clerk, who supports the council very efficiently. And keeps us on the straight and narrow procedurally.

I would like to record thanks to all the people who contribute to the running of groups and activities in the community in these challenging times. I believe we are effective as a Parish Council and deliver valuable services to the community. Our objective continues to be to maintain our services to a high standard, to develop new facilities and invest in the future. Our current main project is the play equipment. Once again, thank you to all the people who work to make Week St Mary a better place to live and work.
Jeremy Ward, Chair.

4. Reports from Village Clubs and Organisations including:

Community Shop – Stephen Smith

The past year has seen the Community Shop adapt to the changed needs of the community during the pandemic, including ordering with a home delivery service at times. Sales increased by 10% in the year ending 28 th February 2021 to over £217,000.

Much credit must go Jackie and Val for running the shop and Post Office so well during this period and to all the volunteers who have helped. Collectively, volunteers have put in well over 3,000 person hours during the past year. We now have 5 members of the team qualified to run the Post Office and have therefore been able to increase the time this service is available to parishioners. Using grant funding, new freezers, a fridge and other equipment has been purchased and the storeroom and kitchen facilities upgraded. Further refurbishment is planned, notably the counter and screening but we are having difficulty sourcing this work.

We aim to continue to try and extend the range of the products and services we offer to enhance the shopping experience of the 100 or so customers which use the shop and/or Post Office each day. As a Management Committee, our goal is that a shop and Post Office remains in Week St Mary to serve the community. Events over the last 12 months have highlighted the importance of this. With the lease on the current premises having been recently extended to 2027 we have secured this for the medium term.

Village Website – David Martin

Owners, David Martin & Linda Cobbledick continue to maintain this village website, now in its 16 th year, for the benefit of all no matter where they reside. Over the years we have often heard of people viewing the website and then moving into the area! We continue to thank the Parish Council for their annual financial contributions towards the hosting and running costs of this website.

Since the launch of the website on 5th December 2005, we have seen millions of hits from around the world! This past year has not seen as much activity on the web site, no doubt due to the Coronavirus situation, but over the next few months we expect a dramatic increase in use as the lockdown restrictions diminish.

We continue to support the Parish Council who have had their Agenda and Minutes listed on our website since 2011 and all major items of importance from the Council are listed on their own pages:
www.weekstmaryvillage.co.uk/parishcouncil

Our graphical monthly calendar has been in use on our 'home' page for several years and is a prominent way of seeing what's coming up over the next few months, especially with many of our regular village activities likely to resume over the coming months.

PLEASE do tell us of any future events being planned, whether large or small, so that we can publicise it for you. It only takes an email! This also stops events from being 'double-booked' in the village. Remember, the past 12 issues of the Parish Magazine can be read online, as it frequently is by those living away from the village. Behind the scenes, the web site is frequently 'tweaked' in order to continue to give the best information to all who are interested in our village. It never fails to amaze us how many people say "I saw it on the village website" and this from visitors coming here from all over the world along with several enquiries each year asking questions on the village or of past family occupancy – we always try to help.

If you think we have missed anything on our website, just give Linda a call and we will see what we can come up with. Thank you & Stay Safe: David and Linda

Chapel – Jeremy Ward

We have been open though-out the period since the first lockdown whenever Government and Methodist Church regulations permitted.

Since lockdown started we have produced printed weekly worship sheets, delivered to our members and other

households in the community. We have now delivered our 55 th edition. We intend to continue these when we are physically open.

We maintained contact with our members and congregation, many of whom have been shielding. We were helped in this by our Church Community and Pastoral Worker, Sophie Doyle. Sophie also helped the community of Week St Mary by being the contact point for our hardship fund for people struggling in the crisis.

Since November, we have produced worship videos, featuring an entertaining mix of drama, singing, prayers and messaging. Distributed by social media, the videos reach around 170 views, with at least 120 very regular viewers. We propose continuing the videos now we are back meeting on Sundays again.

We will be making some changes to our worship styles and times. Full details will be listed on our website. Thank you

Bright Sparks – Jeremy Ward

This is The Club is run within the chapel under the direction of Hilary Daniel B A (Open), Dip Mus, ALCM, PGCE and her team of six regular helpers.

The Club has very clear aims:

enabling young people to enjoy

- ▮ Learning general acting and speaking skills
- ▮ Developing singing and musical skills
- ▮ Planning and rehearsing for performances
- ▮ Performing for audiences

We aim to develop long-term skills that are valuable in a range of contexts e.g. oral language skills at GCSE, job interviews, making great presentations at school or work. Building confidence is at the core of what we seek to do. The Club has not met physically since lockdown. The last meetings were two performances of the Wizard of Oz in February to packed audiences at the Chapel.

We have kept in touch with our members. At Christmas, six Bright Sparks young people sang duets at the Stratton Young Farmers Carols Service and the village Candlelit Carol Service. Other Bright Sparks members performed instrumentals.

Since November 2020, the Chapel has been producing fortnightly worship videos. Bright Sparks members have been acting and singing as part of the videos. We hope to restart Bright Sparks face to face meeting, within the regulations, on 23 April. We will split into two bubbles: primary age and secondary age, as we have an enthusiastic group of secondary members.

We intend to produce an outdoor Variety Show this summer and we are looking forward to getting back together. In addition to the regular Club Leaders, there are a multitude of volunteers who help with costumes, make-up, props, scenery, front of house, refreshments, and much more. We are very grateful for this community support.

Week St Mary Church – Lesley Booker

The Parish Church has been closed for services for the majority of 2020 due to COVID restrictions. Initially, we were unable to open at all and then after some months for private prayer only. We took the decision to open twice a week for these purposes so that there was adequate time between openings for possible contamination to be neutralised. Later in the year, the Benefice started to hold socially distanced in-church services which used only one or two churches per week to ensure that the priest had to travel between sites and communities as little as possible.

From the start of the pandemic, the benefice has been holding regular weekly Zoom services on Sundays and Wednesday mornings and at least one service has been streamed on Zoom from one of the Benefice churches when live services have been held. In the latest lockdown, although churches have been allowed to open, it was decided to remain closed for services for safety's sake and we have continued with Zoom.

As a result of the restrictions, our usual social, community and fund-raising events have been cancelled. These would have included Open Gardens, a Gift Day, a Countrymen Concert, Safari Supper, the Revel, Coffee Mornings, Meet and Eat, CAMEO etc, etc. We managed to hold a successful online Open Gardens event in the early summer and at Christmas had a Photographic competition and exhibition, an Experience Christmas Trail in church and many families took part in an Advent Windows event around the village.

The church has remained closed for all but private prayer once a week throughout 2021 and expects to be resuming some form of live service pattern with Zoom support from Easter. We also hope to hold a Countrymen Concert in October and currently plan to hold the September Revel outside as usual.

Throughout this time, our church roof project remains urgent but little progress has been possible in fund raising. We are however, very grateful to all those who have held sales of various kinds, the proceeds of which have been donated to this fund and to Jonathon Parkin who continues to ensure that the roof remains watertight despite its continued deterioration.

Adventure Church – Lesley Booker

It has not been possible to hold Adventure Church Meetings since March 2020, but the young people have been supported with prayer, activities and social opportunities through the Facebook Group. This has been far from satisfactory, but we have felt unable to restart activities due to the vulnerabilities of most volunteer helpers and of several of the families and children themselves. The need for Home Schooling via Zoom has also led to an unwillingness to use this medium for other purposes, so we hope that a new Adventure Church will emerge in the not-too-distant future when outdoor activities upon which the group was based, may begin again safely.

Bellringers – Lesley Booker

Social Distancing rules have prevented the ringing of any more than three bells for most of the year and the physical strains of mask wearing have meant that the ringers have only rung two or three times during the year. We look forward to a time when these restrictions are no longer necessary and the bells can ring out across the village once more, calling the people to worship, celebrations, and commemorations.

Football Club – Antony Sachs

Unfortunately, both the combination of natural cycles and Covid-19 have brought about the most difficult period for the football club since our reformation 21 years ago. Clubs and organisations often go through peaks and troughs, especially in smaller catchment areas where the reliance on the same committed volunteers is more crucial. To this point it has been a story of constant progression and growth, but now the picture has changed.

18 months ago we were running 6 youth teams and one senior team, our youth setup was the envy of the county with over 80 children signed on. The suspension of the season a year ago halted all momentum, commitment waned, and with only a brief restart in the Autumn it has been difficult to re-generate. Senior players decided to call it a day or move elsewhere and we had to take the difficult decision to withdraw the senior team. This was incredibly disappointing to have to do so given the hard work and effort put in by all over the recent years and leaves the next generation currently without the chance to play for their village. We do still have 3 youth teams operating at U8's and two at u11 level and they have re-commenced training this week. While the door is not closed on the senior team our immediate focus is supporting the youth teams in getting back to having fun as that is what they need post lockdown.

A big positive point for us is that Trevor Hamlyn has agreed to help us with the upkeep of the fields and has done a sterling job at keeping them cut and strimmed. The grass coverage has not looked so good for many years and we extend our thanks to him.

We do continue to desperately struggle with drainage on both the top and bottom pitches. The bottom is largely unplayable or even walkable from Oct to Mar and despite the better weather, is still even unplayable today. Similarly, the top pitch has a severe localised drainage issue at the tennis court end. To try to improve the situation we would like to commit some more club funds to putting in further drainage pipes in the very near future. We acknowledge that our communication with the Parish Council has not been good enough over the course of the pitch shoring work, and from now on propose that any future work is discussed with the PC beforehand and accompanied by a suitable sketch or plan.

While this report may seem downbeat, it is not intended in that way, but more statement of realism. Let's not forget that the club was formed out of the youth club as something for youngsters to do to keep them fit and healthy and off their Xboxes. We do operate on a skeleton committee but we remain positive and determined to continue while there is interest and we can try to make that happen. Lastly to conclude, we won't forget that we have had two boys signed for Plymouth Argyle under contract. For those two boys that is giving them a real shot at realising their dreams of maybe one day making it as a pro, and for a village like WSM to be able to facilitate and start that journey is a fantastic achievement.

Jacobstow School – Mikaela Rofe (Headmistress)

They have sadly had to close a bubble at the school due to a COVID positive case.

Key worker children and vulnerable children have been in school throughout the lockdowns.

The school have been conducting assemblies on Zoom, although have had an open air assembly before the Easter holidays.

New outdoor and play equipment has been purchased with savings made in the last year.

Womens Institute – Barbara Brown

This report covers the period from April 2020 until March 2021. Sue Dickenson was re-elected as president at the February 2020 AGM and the subcommittee also continued in their posts following this meeting. The new year's monthly programme was organised to start in March and then lock down happened and all social activities had to stop. Not all our members use the computer so throughout the year we did our best to keep in touch by telephone and letters as well as email. We also sent out a regular printed newsletter and one of our members sent out daily emails to all members containing entertaining, funny or awe inspiring attachments garnered from around the world.

Two goodie bags full of treats and things to do were also sent to all members: one in the first lockdown and the second at Christmas. Like many others we had to learn how to use Zoom. We gradually increased our use of Zoom for weekly and monthly meetings but this had a mixed reception. Some members just do not like using Zoom, but others have used it to their advantage. We held regular weekly zoom meeting for any member to attend if they wanted to keep in touch and monthly meetings for our full membership. Initially the weekly meetings had a discussion topic but they later became a general chat forum. The group fluctuated in size but those members who attended found it useful and supportive during lockdown. The committee met regularly on a monthly basis throughout the year, initially this was very informal but we began more formal minuted meetings from October 2020. As well as dealing with National and Cornwall WI business matters we planned how we could best serve members by improving zoom content at our monthly meetings and this has been very successful and greatly increased the numbers joining in. We looked for interesting topics and we found that we could use a wider variety of experienced and entertaining speakers because we could use people living in other parts of the country. We were also able to afford more expensive speakers because we did not have to pay travel costs and we could share costs with other WIs plus we have opened some of these meetings to guests from the village for a small contribution.

So far we have had topics such as: "Mothers' Ruin The Story of Gin"; "Sex, Scandal and Salacious Gossip in the Royal Court" and Poetry from "The Taxi Driver Poet". In addition members were able to attend three Zoom quizzes, two were organised by Hayley Collman, one on the 18 December and one on the 26 March and Micheline Smith also organised a quiz in July. These were great fun and encouraged other members to join in and try out Zoom.

Some members have also taken up the on-line training opportunities arranged by the National Federation of Women's Institutes. Each month members can choose from a wide range of online sessions at a very reasonable cost of £5 per session. Members have joined in sessions on many subjects including cooking, Sewing, free motion embroidery, other crafts, history and travel. Sadly, we have not been able to take part in, or organise social events this year and there may still be some months before we can do so. We began and ended the year with 29 members and we hope that we will soon return to some normality as it is very important that the WI continues to flourish and play a part in our community and nationally.

Magazine – Dick Sowerby

The magazine continues to thrive thanks to all our contributors and advertisers. For obvious reasons the magazine has been a bit light on news over the past year, but hopefully as we come out of lockdown there will be more activities to report. We would like to remind everybody that the last date for inclusion is the 22nd of each month and we cannot guarantee that items received after the deadline will be included.

We now produce more than 300 copies of the magazine each month and I would like to thank the production and distribution team who, not only keep me on the straight and narrow, but also endeavour to ensure that the magazine is delivered to every house in the parish by the beginning of each month.

In order to survive and continue to serve the Community we must be financially viable. The bulk of our income continues to come from advertising. We now like to think that from an income perspective our balance of advertising and editorial within the magazine is about right without becoming largely an advertising medium.

We endeavour to just about break even every year thanks largely to the continued support of the Parish Council, who kindly make a contribution to the cost of the paper.

Skittles – Stuart May

No games have been played for 12 months due to COVID but the teams are keen to get back playing as soon as they can.

Parish Hall – Trisha Cozens

It has been a very sad year for us all and to have the hall standing idle for all that time has been very frustrating. We had our AGM last March and increased the committee to 7 and all to no avail.

We had the car park used for Wood fired Pizzas on a monthly basis, which we are hoping to continue with as it has been very popular and several visits from Tapas on Tour which was popular to start with but has dwindled. We had a legacy for the hall which has been spent on new curtains for the stage.

A new kitchen has been fitted by Alan Colwill and his team, an extremely generous gift, which will be of benefit to all users of the hall. Premium Carpets are putting new flooring in at a discount rate.

Fortunately we have had some Covid Grants which is enabling us to refurbish the flat roof, some of which is in a very poor state.

Thank you goes to a resident of Ashbury Grove who has closed the gap in the hedge, hopefully the end of that saga.

Thank you also to the Parish Council for the quarterly contributions.

We have started to get dates in the diary for this year and hope that these events will go ahead in accordance with government guidelines.

5. Report from County Councillor Nicky Chopak

- Encouraged everyone to get their COVID vaccine when offered.
- Cornwall Council have been quick to deliver COVID grants to residents and businesses.
- Concerned about large gatherings at local beaches.
- Currently chair of the Bude Area Network which has been a great tool for getting parishes to work together, particularly with Stratton MIU overnight opening.

6. Discussion on Play park project

Sarah Wickett gave an update on the play park project. Sarah is co-ordinating a community response to the proposed scheme and reported the following;

- The children were grateful for the opportunity to have an input into the new playpark.
- The views of 35 children were collected and the themes were similar.
- The proposed scheme was felt to only cater for small children.
- 80% of the children would like a continuous path around the field to allow for all weather cycling and scootering.
- The most requested items were a picnic bench, a cradle swing, a climbing tower with monkey bars, and a sunken in trampoline.
- Older children would like outdoor gym equipment.

7. Questions & Observations from the Public

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 20:55.

Signed.....Chairman

Date.....

DRAFT