

# LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

## MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING FOR ST CUTHBERT (OUT) PARISH

The Annual Parish Meeting for St Cuthbert (Out) Parish Council was held at Coxley Memorial Hall, Coxley BA5 1QZ on 09<sup>th</sup> April 2024 at 6.30pm.

**In attendance:** Councillor J Zorab (Chairperson), 11 Councillors, 3 clerks, 7 members of the public and 6 speakers.

**Apologies:** Cllrs Hayden, Blatchford & Joseph sent their apologies.

### 1. **Welcome and report from the Chairman**

Councillor Zorab welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked the speakers in advance for their attendance. There were no actions to be updated from the previous meeting. Cllr Zorab summed up the predicament that Somerset Council faced.

### 2. **To confirm and sign as correct record the minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held remotely on 12<sup>th</sup> April 2022.**

Councillor Zorab signed and dated the Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> April 2023 following the meeting's agreement that they were a correct record.

### 3. **The Work of YMCA locally: Siobhan White & Jessica Lewin, YMCA Mendip.**

Jessica and Siobhan spoke about the work of YMCA Brunel Group and their work with young people. They explained the demand for their supported housing and youth work and how young people were recommended through local councils and homeless charities. They also spoke about the popularity of youth clubs in Street and Glastonbury and that Wells Youth Club would soon be up and running again; the response from young people aged 10-19 has been very positive and the YMCA also run a Young Carers group. Activities are varied at the youth clubs, it exists as a safe place but also teaches essential life skills through a tailored but curriculum-based scheme, covering themes such as anxiety, eating disorders and vaping. Up to 80% of attendees have different levels of safeguarding requirements, 90% of activities are offered free of charge. The YMCA also run a volunteering programme for young people and they are always interested in opportunities for these volunteers. Some case studies were shown, demonstrating the varied needs, the strong links to community, positive relations with feeder primary schools and the emphasis on making positive choices.

Their presentation demonstrated how critical and appreciated the services are and that community links and support were essential for their survival.

**4. The Dorset & Somerset Air Ambulance: Ollie Zorab, Clinical Lead & Specialist Paramedic.**

Oliver introduced the audience to the visible and behind-the-scenes work of the Air Ambulance. He highlighted the number of cases they had responded to by helicopter and land-based rescue, and the relationship between the air ambulance, the NHS and various personnel involved in call-outs, including doctors, paramedics and patient liaison officers. Ollie explained that the service runs 19 hours a day, 7 days a week all year, organised into 2 shifts. He also shared insights into the technical operations of the Augusta Westland ambulance helicopters operating from Henstridge Airfield and the capacity to reach casualties within 20 minutes. The helicopter is advanced and has substantial space allowing medics to walk around patients, which was unusual. The air ambulance was subject to CAA approval to conduct flights depending on weather and night flying and the technical preparations for pre-flight mobilising were extensive. Ollie also told the audience about the process from a call being received, to the Bristol or Exeter-based dispatcher, the triage system and the decision regarding the deployment of either the air ambulance, outreach cars and local ambulances. Ollie concluded by highlighting the essential fundraising required to fund the £3,500 for each mission and how volunteers to help with fundraising were as essential as lottery funding, legacy donations, corporate sponsorship and organisations' support.

Ollie's presentation demonstrated the complexities, cost, technicalities and efficiency of operating an Air Ambulance service that residents are rightly very proud of.

**5. The Wells Foodbank Storehouse Project: Margaret Mitchell.**

Margaret explained that she had been volunteering at the food bank for 4 years and that the Wells Storehouse, previously the Vineyard Church, was embarking on a new journey and was in its early days. Margaret is now responsible for some 25 volunteers and she explained the routine and time involved in preparing the Wells Storehouse food parcels and deliveries. For each day the food bank is open, a further day is spent preparing, sorting and organising. Margaret also highlighted how important emergency help was and that it was the true purpose of food banks but acknowledged that in 2024, some 100 people are supported each week with parcels that provide 3 meals a day for 3 days and includes pet food and basic household essentials. The support the Wells Storehouse Food & Furniture receive locally is invaluable, such as the 'pay it forward' scheme run by Wookey Hub, the cheese man who can source cheese much more cheaply and some supermarket collection points. However, Margaret was keen to emphasise that financial donations were the most efficient support as it allowed the team to buy exactly what's needed. Margaret also explained that there were links with debt councillors, underpinning that the need for food bank support was often accompanied by financial hardship.

Margaret's presentation clearly highlighted the need and demand for food banks, basic kitchen equipment, furniture in 2024 and that community support remains critical to ensure the provision can continue in its new guise.

## **6. The Volunteer Network- challenges and opportunities: Scott Macmillan**

With 20 years experience, Scott spoke about the changing role of The Volunteer Network and how the focus had morphed from young people to now anyone needing support and supported up to 120 people each month. Whilst the network runs enjoyment activities by many, often attendees require some meaningful support that, once comfortable, they feel they can ask for. Allotments provide meaningful focus for various groups as well as produce, which were used to develop cooking skills which, Scott noticed, many attendees had not experienced. The allotments in Glastonbury are RHS Disabled Award winners and clearly much loved but their future is precarious, unless an alternative site is found. Scott was clear to emphasise that The Volunteer Network was picking up people's needs where other services are dropping away and it was vital that they offered welcoming spaces, opportunities for 1:1 support, training and connections and interaction for isolated groups and individuals. The work of The Volunteer Network clearly has an upsurge in demand, wide geographical and demographic scope yet it remains constrained by staff availability and time and Scott was keen to promote volunteering opportunities. He noted too that where previously there may have been thresholds where more official intervention for the most in need would happen, these services are just not available anymore. Scott's presentation also highlighted how powerful an impact a largely volunteer organisation was having locally, its varied programmes and, due to its lack of any official funding, the importance of donations and volunteers.

## **7. Environmental Working Group: Tony Hathway**

Tony explained how the Environment Working Group of the Parish Council was driven very much by community interest and aims to respond to, and work with, community groups to improve the environment, biodiversity and awareness. He offered a flavour of the diverse projects the group were working on: the longer-term Strawberry Line wildlife pond (Dulcote) where sitting, resting and enjoying the environment had been suggested by residents and was in early planning stages; Greener Grants for villages provided funds for environmental initiatives across the parish and have already contributed to several completed projects; a Dark Skies initiative was also underway and a survey had highlighted the argument of light pollution vs resident safety. The group is made up of residents, councillors and council staff and meets online: it welcomes committed environmentalists!

## **8. Public questions and comments**

A resident raised the question of Council support for the Coxley Holt path, explained it to the audience and received some good feedback about accessibility and fundraising. It was agreed the Clerk would progress this through Council meetings.

The meeting closed at 8.20pm and the audience was able to chat and mingle whilst refreshments were available.