

Astons' Recreation Committee

Minutes of AGM held at 19.30 on Monday 1st June 2020

1. Apologies

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2. Present

Joanna Hart (JH), Jolyon Tidmarsh (JT), Nigel Hawkey (NH), Bob Picken (BP), Kirsty Richardson (KR), Frances Barlow (FB) and Joanna Walshe (JW).

3. Minutes of last AGM.

The minutes were approved by all present.

4. Presentation of Chair's report

The pavillion is now 10+ years old and maintenance of the building has become an ongoing issue to ensure that we keep it well maintained. This year has seen building work to fix the rotten and wobbly wooden ballustrades and uneven paving, fixes to the boiler and hot water system plus electrical work to replace broken electrical lighting.

In a similar vein, the swings have finally taken out of service after being condemned by RoSPA. Many thanks to the contributions from Lucy Didrikson and Kirsty Richardson for planning and arranging their replacement which is scheduled for later in the summer.

Stolen football goal netting was a low-light during summer 2019.

The cricket club were donated a set of cricket nets by a villager and the old frame and concrete strip have been revitalised by the cricket club.

Covid-19 has resulted in the cancellation of all fun at the rec., especially the planned Astonbury and it places an air of uncertainty over the bonfire night and safari supper which are our main fundraising events.

Welcome to Kirsty – your enthusiasm is much appreciated. A special thanks to Matt Williams replacing the fencing by the main gate.

Fran Barlow continues to be an enthusiastic bookings secretary who's contribution is valued. Jeremy remains a very helpful helper even though he is not on the committee for which we are very grateful. Jo Walshe has been doing a great job taking on the role of treasurer.

November's Bonfire Night was a great success, as ever. Many congratulations to the organising team ably led by Albie. Many thanks also to Richard Cox for again making a very professional display making excellent use of the electronic firing system. Albie has now stepped down as Bonfire Organiser after several years of service and we are looking for a successor. It was good to see new faces on the bonfire committee including Nick Isaac building the bonfire, Charlotte Wigg for health and safety.

The Safari Supper evening was again successful not just as a fundraiser, but also facilitating introductions and strengthening existing friendships within the village. The event is a staple in the village social calendar and is an excellent way for those new to the village to meet people.

Congratulations to Susan, Berenice and Laura who organised the event with typical calmness and efficiency. Half the profits went to the Didcot foodbank.

This year we agreed again with the Parish Council to run the rec work day on the same day as the village clear-up. This would have worked really well but it was cancelled in the week before due to covid-19.

My thanks to everyone on the Committee for all of their hard work over the last 12 months.

5. Presentation and Adoption of Accounts

JW presented the Accounts for the year as summarised below. These were discussed by the group. It is clear that our cash balance will be significantly lower by the end of the year, which is a good thing. However it will focus our minds on our operating expenses.

Steve Morant is the Internal Auditor for the PC and ARC and will be reviewing the accounts ahead of the formal PC return.

The total income in the year to 31 March 2020 was £4,924 (£6,125 in year to March 2019), made up of £803 (£720) from donations and hire; £3,184 (£5,405) from fundraising: Bonfire night and Safari Supper; and £937 from the PC in respect of the received Community Infrastructure Levy that will be put towards the new swings. Fundraising income from Fireworks was lower than previously £2,652 (£3,706), due to extremely bad weather which could not have been anticipated. The Safari Supper contributed £532 (£586) after a donation to the Didcot Food Bank. The Parish Council paid £289 to ARC to cover the Health and Safety costs accrued during the year. Note the PC also covers the insurance costs.

Expenditure was £10,811 (£5,090 in March 2019), including utilities of £1,909 (£1,477): Electricity and gas were mostly comparable with last year with the regular submission of meter readings; water increased to £779 (from £437) which has been followed up with Castle Water and costs for the coming year will be approximately 75% lower; £472 was paid to Grundon for regular emptying of the bins. Cleaning costs were higher (£658 compared to £470 in the previous year) as carpet and general deep cleaning at the beginning of the season were needed. Maintenance costs were considerably higher at £3,882 (£1,248) which included £2,290 for repairs to the paving along the sides and steps of the Pavilion, and replacement of some sections of the side balustrades with sympathetic metal railings for safety and longevity. £590 was paid to Group GA for the replacement of the toilet cistern in the Ladies' Toilet, and the replacement of strip lights and an emergency light. £500 was paid for the hire of a grab truck for help with clearing at the Recreation Ground. There were also other smaller general maintenance costs. Essential repairs and service to the tractor cost £1,500. New fixed assets of £2,428 (£998) were purchased including a replacement finishing mower and additional mulching kit (£2,160), a baby changing table which will be installed in the disabled toilet, and a replacement for the vacuum cleaner which was no longer working.

Cash balance at the end of the year was £24,240 (£32,551), a decrease of £5,887 including the outstanding VAT reclaim for 2019-20. A contract has been entered into for the replacement of the swings in the playground, which had to be dismantled as they were unsafe, and some additional climbing equipment. This will take place as soon as restrictions due to the Coronavirus pandemic are lifted. Additional expenditure will also be needed to address issues with the boilers which are currently under investigation. During the 10-year electrical check a few issues were noted that are also being remedied. As a result of these costs in 2020-21, ARC expects a significantly lower cash balance at the end of the next financial year.

6. Election of Management Committee/Office Bearers

The Committee for the next year was approved consisting of

Jolyon Tidmarsh – Chair and Secretary

Jo Walshe – Treasurer

Bob Picken – Vice Chair

Fran Barlow – Bookings Secretary

Kirsty Richardson

The two parish councillors are Joanna Hart and Nigel Hawkey

In addition to the committee we have supporters for various events:

Susan Pallett

Laura Haigh

Berenice Cox

Amberley Diamond

7. Terms of Reference

The terms of reference were reviewed and agreed by those present. There have been no changes to them.