

COMMUNITY COUNCIL OF STAFFORDSHIRE
MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

HELD ON 6 OCTOBER 2016

AT STOWE BY CHARTLEY VILLAGE HALL

1. Welcome

1.1 Mr Steve Hopkins, Chairman of the Community Council of Staffordshire (CCS) welcomed approximately 30 members and guests to the 63rd Annual General Meeting. In particular, the Chairman welcomed Her Majesty's Deputy Lieutenant, Mrs Angela Tams.

1.2 The Chairman explained that this was an opportunity for members to question CCS about things which may not be clear and to be certain that they were satisfied with the direction that the organisation was taking.

2. Apologies

2.1 Approximately 30 apologies had been received prior to the meeting.

3. Appointment of Tellers

3.1 There was no need to appoint tellers at this time, but if matters arose during the meeting which required a vote then arrangements were in hand to appoint tellers.

4. Minutes of the meeting held on 8 October 2015

4.1 The minutes of the meeting, which had previously been circulated, were agreed by the members and signed as a true record by the Chairman.

Matters Arising

4.2 There were no matters arising.

5. To consider and receive the Annual Report of the Directors and the Statement of Accounts of the Company for the period 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2016

a) The Chief Executive, Mr Chris Welch, began by thanking everyone for their attendance and expressed his thanks to the following sponsors to whom the organisation was extremely grateful:

Sponsors of the Best Kept Village (BKV) Competition - Rubery Owen Holdings Ltd - Sponsors for over 62 years, The Leavesley Group on behalf of the National Memorial Arboretum, Lafarge Cement, South Staffordshire Housing Association, South Staffordshire Council and Staffordshire County Council.

Sponsors of the BKV Children's Competitions - KGL (Estates) Ltd and Jan Altham.

Funders - Defra has been an important provider of support to the nationwide network of community councils (38 organisations across England) through Action with Communities in Rural England (ACRE) for many years. Staffordshire County Council was also very valuable and important partner.

The Chief Executive went on to say that 12-18 months ago, due to the uncertainty of Defra and County Council funding, the Board had been contemplating closing the organisation, but now that Defra support had been confirmed for the next 3-4 years at a tapering level, the situation had changed. This meant that CCS has had to reshape the organisation. The staff team has been reduced from 13 to 8 people and the organisation has reverted back to its core activities, these being:

The Village Halls Advisory Service which will continue though sadly, after 22 years of delivering the Staffordshire County Council Capital Grant Scheme for Village Halls and Community Centres, the scheme became a victim of the austerity programme and funding was withdrawn earlier this year.

Best Kept Village Competition – A competition that has been running for over 60 years, with 60-70 volunteer judges being recruited each year to help with the competition.

The Community Bulk Oil Buying Scheme. A scheme set up to alleviate the cost of domestic fuel prices. Reported savings are estimated to be between 15-20p per litre.

Voluntary Car Scheme based in Codsall, South Staffordshire.

Village Agents Programme - helping individual people on an individual basis.

The above are the core activities, but other projects have included consultation work, health and community food projects and Village SOS.

Looking forward, CCS continues to look for opportunities and new projects. New projects this year include:

Connect and Support – This is a small project, in partnership with Staffordshire Fire & Rescue Service, advising individuals on fire safety and health choices in South Staffordshire. Work will be done this year to expand the project to other areas of the county.

Smart Meters - a project aimed at promoting the benefits of smart meters to oil scheme customers.

CCS continues to seek and investigate collaborative working opportunities and now that the Staffordshire County Council VCSE contract has been awarded to a consortium comprising of Staffordshire Council for Voluntary Youth Services (SCVYS), Support Staffordshire and South Staffordshire Community and Voluntary Action, the Chief Executive will maintain regular contact with the consortium.

The Chief Executive was asked why the organisation was not run by volunteers, as in the case of village halls, this would alleviate the pension liability. The Chief Executive replied that although the work of CCS did benefit immensely from the contributions made by volunteers CCS was a charity run by paid staff. Furthermore, as part of their

remuneration packages staff could elect to join the contributory pension scheme run by Staffordshire County Council.

- b) The Chairman of the Finance Committee, Mr Paul Newman referred member to pages 22 and 23 of the Annual Report 2015/2016 and went on to say that it was a great pleasure to be able to report good news and not to have to add or explain any financial caveats beyond those implied by the summary of the conditions in which CCS operates that had been outlined by the Chairman and Chief Executive.

The bottom line of financial data shown on page 23, which is the final page of the Annual Report for the financial year that ended in March 2016, shows that the total funds available to the Charity at the beginning of the financial year were £564,585, which compared very favourably with the sum of £208,299 that the organisation started with in the previous year.

The difference was explained by the sum of £360,000 in brackets in the 2015 column, which the Charity had previously set aside so that any potential pension contribution shortfalls could be met. Following the pooling agreement with Staffordshire County Council, it had been confirmed that CCS no longer had a pension liability. This meant that the previously reserved £360,000 was now able to be transferred to the general reserves.

Looking beyond significant improvement in the organisation's situation, the figures confirm that the Board and excellent team, led by the Chief Executive, had adjusted operations and, as a consequence, reduced expenditure to take account of changes beyond the organisation's control. The Chairman of the Finance Committee then referred members to the Total Expenditure (seventh line down on page 22), where the difference between the two financial years shown was £58,603. Although a small deficit was made during the year, it was considerably less than anticipated, especially allowing for the one-off sum that the Board agreed to make to the pension fund enabling three members of permanent staff to work reduced hours prior to their retirement. Behind the scenes, a considerable effort had been made to make the new system work and the Chairman of the Finance Committee thanked all the paid team for their ideas and the smooth execution of the changes involved.

CCS was now in a new financial year, and the organisation's income from public sources had not fallen as much as had been feared. Nonetheless, the Chairman of the Finance Committee assured members that the short term was being managed as prudently as possible to enable the charity to cope with future uncertainties. The Chairman concluded by thanking all members for their support during these interesting times.

6. To re-appoint Deans of Bank Passage, Stafford as Independent Examiners and Authorise the Directors to fix their remuneration

- 6.1** Mr John Blount proposed Deans of Bank Passage, Stafford be appointed as independent examiners for the ensuing year. This was seconded by Mr Malcolm Price.

7. Election of Board Members

7.1 The Company Secretary updated members on the Board changes for 2016/2017.

Under the organisation's Memorandum and Articles of Association there was provision for up to 12 trustees. Each year three trustees who have completed their three year term of office were required to retire from the board. This year it was the turn of Mrs Eileen Awty, Mrs Catherine Clitheroe and Mrs Ada Wells.

The rules allow for them to be re-elected and all three trustees had been nominated and had agreed to stand for re-election. The members were in agreement that they should be re-elected for a further three years.

Board Members for 2016/2017:	Mrs E Awty	Mrs V Laflin
	Mr J Blount	Mr P Newman
	Mrs C Clitheroe	Mr J Perry, MBE
	Mrs D Crook	Mr M Price
	Mr S Hopkins	Mrs A Wells

The rules allow for a Board of between 9 and 12 trustees which meant that there were currently 2 vacancies. Nominations would be welcomed and anyone interested should contact the Chief Executive.

8. Items raised by members

8.1 There were no items raised.

9. Date of next Annual General Meeting

9.1 To be decided at the next Board meeting.

Close of formal business

Hallmark Quality Standard

Following the close of the formal business Cathy Russell, Village Halls Adviser, gave a brief background introduction to the Hallmark Quality Standard, explaining that there are three parts to the Hallmark Awards:

Hallmark 1 focuses on the management and administration of the charity

Hallmark 2 focuses on health, safety, security and licences.

Hallmark 3 focuses on community and social awareness, communications, forward planning and development.

The aims of the awards are to encourage committees to share best practice and access appropriate training also to encourage improvement in established customs and procedures and recognise and reward good practice.

Hallmark certificates were presented by Her Majesty's Deputy Lieutenant, Mrs Angela Tams to Mr William Huckfield, Tittensor Village Hall - Hallmark 1 and Mr Gary Hyde, Whittington Village Hall - Hallmark 3.

Mr Gary Hyde, Whittington Village Hall

Mr Hyde had been Chairman of Whittington Village Hall for about 2 years, but had previously been on the village hall committee for about 10 years. Whittington was a 1960’s village hall, well-kept and well-run with a committee doing an excellent job. They had decided to undertake the Hallmark Quality Standard because of new legislation and wanting to be more professional as well as needing to make a profit. Over the years they had spent £100,000 to keep the hall going. Cathy Russell, the Village Halls Adviser, had helped them a great deal to achieve Hallmark Quality Standards 1, 2 and 3. The hall committee had gone out to the whole community and involved them in all aspects of the village hall which had now become the hub of the village. Mr Hyde said that he would be happy to assist any village hall wishing to undertake the Hallmark standard and he would also welcome the opportunity to twin with another village hall to share best practice and experience, if any hall committee was interested he would be pleased to hear from them.

Her Majesty’s Deputy Lieutenant, Mrs Angela Tams

The Deputy Lieutenant said it was a privilege to attend the AGM and gave apologies from the Lord-Lieutenant, Mr Ian Dudson, CBE, CStJ. The Deputy Lieutenant said that she had an affinity with rural Staffordshire having lived in Hilderstone, Fradswell and Burston. She praised the CCS Mission Statement, which states “Our aim is to protect and improve the quality of life for all those living and working in the communities of Staffordshire, especially in the rural areas”, but emphasised that more focus on young people was needed and not just on transport and services for the elderly. It was important that young people had somewhere to go to develop relationships and mix with all generations.

The Deputy Lieutenant expressed her best wishes for the future and hoped that the organisation would keep going for many years to come.

Thanks from the Chairman

The Chairman thanked the Deputy Lieutenant for her timely reminder about young people and that responses were required to the needs of those across the whole age range and not just those of senior years. The Chairman then thanked the staff, his fellow trustees, saying that they make his job much easier, and he expressed his appreciation to all the people with whom CCS works. Finally, the Chairman thanked members of Stowe by Chartley Village Hall for their hospitality and the comfortable facilities they had provided.

The meeting closed at 8.30pm

Signed.....

Dated.....