

Parish Council of Coleford

Miss V Watts

Clerk to the Council

Tel: 07971 516916 / 01749 880428

Email: clerkcolefordsomerset@gmail.com

Website: www.colefordsomerset.info

Gallant Hill Farm

Foxcote

Radstock

BA3 5YB

Annual Parish Meeting held Wednesday 22nd March 2023

1. Present

Cllr Chris Pearce (Acting as Chairman presiding)

There were 18 members of the public present and the Parish Clerk, Vickie Watts taking the minutes.

2. Apologies Absence (acceptance of any reasons offered)

Philip Ham (SCC/MDC/PC & Resident), Alan Townsend (MDC/PC & Resident), Barry Clarke (SCC), Heather Allen (Theatre Group), Julia Neesam (Holy Trinity Church), Mark Wilcox (YMCA – Coleford Youth Club), Amy West and Mark Barrett

3. Minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting 25th May2022

The minutes were produced and had been circulated and on the website for review. They were agreed as an accurate copy and should therefore be signed by the Chairman.

4. Matters arising

There were no matters arising.

5. Chairman's report

Philip Ham sent the following report:

The Parish Council meets every second Wednesday of the month and if needs be on the fourth, here at the hub. We are made up of 12 councillors and the clerk. The public are always welcome to attend meeting

The last 12 months has been difficult due to the Ukrainian war, recovery from covid, energy prices and the cost-of-living crisis, in turn resulting in high inflation and higher interest rates. The Parish Council finances are fixed by the Parish Council's precept element of each household council tax. Coleford element rose by 4.4% which is well below inflation rates (so a cut in real terms) We set a balanced budget that will need strong management.

We have reserves but these were lowered due to the fight against Gladman's development, due to the failures of Mendip district council and the problematic local plan that has cost the tax payer thousands of pounds.

What do we do?

Roads – all our problems from potholes, signage, white lining, speed limits, road closures, blocked drains, lighting, even state of the surface. Alan Townsend works extremely hard to get things done for us.

Environment – This covers everything around us, litter bins, dog poo bins, benches, footpaths, litter, weeds and grit bins. Keith Evans gets a lot done every year and is helped by the community payback team and the litter picking team run by Alison Still and Teresa Hopkins.

Allotments – we have allotments, but not enough so Chris Pearce has taken on the task of finding more and with a climate change grant from Somerset County council, we hope soon to make up to 60 more allotments. The grant was worth £16,000.

Playgrounds – We do our best to keep our play equipment safe and operational - they are inspected weekly. Play equipment is very expensive to buy and repair as it has to be done to national standards of by a qualified installer.

Maintenance - This relates to the playing fields and our open spaces owned by the council e.g., the cemetery, church street gardens, etc. Jamie has done an excellent job keeping it neat and tidy. Ash die back and tree maintenance has become an expensive burden financially to the council, especially as it was not budgeted for.

Planning – The Parish Council are consultee to all planning applications with a remit to recommend approval, refusal or leave it to the planning officer. Applications are all taken seriously and debated fully. We also did a community valued asset application on the royal British Legion.

Climate change – we are in the process of setting up a group and a Councillor that the Moulding to do with the climate and ecological concerns within the parish. This will include a policy document and an action plan going forward.

Community plan – the this is being done by Libby Meyrick and her team of volunteers and a couple of Parish Councillors. The results are due soon and we await these findings.

Grants – Each year we give small grants to local groups. Applications are welcomed in the autumn with a decision be made by the grants committee in November. This year the total awarded was £2500.

Tuesday afternoon club	£200	Huckyduck carnival club	£200
Bishop Henderson	£200	Young at heart	£100
Coleford at the hub	£500	Coleford conservation volunteers	£75
Theatre group	£450	Coleford scouts	£200
Coleford Rocks	£500	Knit and natter	£75

We also give a grant to the Youth club and Citizen’s advice as they both work in the village providing much needed help. Coleford is one of the most deprived villages in the area.

Buses – Annie Paterson and myself had both been attending meetings to try to get funding for a Saturday bus service. It’s hard work but we’re still fighting.

All councillors have worked hard on the three main projects being progressed at this time.

Hardcourt refurbishment - The old fencing and lighting have now been removed. We have received grant funding from Mendip district council community fund and Halecombe quarry fund to proceed with the upgrade.

Levelling the football pitch – This has a cost to the Parish Council of £2500 but will be fully paid for by R M Penny Ltd if planning is successful. Talks have been progressing well and hopefully this will happen in future.

Allotments – Funded by Somerset County council climate change grants. Legal documents are ready to sign. Watch this space over the next few weeks.

The last year has been difficult but the Parish Council has been involved with helping the Food bank and Ukrainian appeals, celebrated the Queen’s jubilee, and marking the passing of our Queen and the start of King Charles III reign. The Parish Council have planted 2 oak trees to commemorate the last 2 events.

In the last few weeks two Miners have appeared in the village to record the mining heritage of Coleford.

Before I finish, I must thank 2 people:

1. Alan Townsend who has been my co - Mendip district council councillor for eight years but is always available to help with Parish matters. He will be staying on as a Parish Councillor and
2. Vickie Watts – how would he manage without you? Vickie always goes the extra mile, gets involved, proactive and excellent with records and financial accounts. Vickie, even in your difficult days last year you kept going, remained strong and helped Neils charity with your cycle ride to Bordeaux. We cannot thank you enough.

The future will mean change but we will deal with it. Thank you and sorry I cannot be with you.

6. Mendip District Council Report

District Cllr Townsend and Ham reported

This is our Mendip DC closing report some 49 years after its formation – we’ve not been there that long but Philip started 2007 and Alan in 2015. We have both been very active members being variously involved in:

Asset management, including Assets of Community value application for Eagle and RBL	
Audit Committee	Licensing Board
Cabinet/Cabinet Assistant	Mendip Lottery
Car Park Strategy	Migrant forums
Changing Places for less able bodied	Planning Board
Commercial property income generation	Quarry Liaison Committees
5 Councils outsourcing contract	Renewable Energy
Equalities Board	Scrutiny Board
Enforcement	SHAPE Mendip Campus revamp
Frome Independent Market	Shape our Future
Fusion Leisure	Social Housing, including Mackintosh View, Coleford
Glastonbury Festival	Staff and Councillor Development
Idverde maintenance contract	Syrian Refugees
Keyring Letting Agency	

Recent Highlights:

Started by the previous Conservative administration:

- Recycle More programme giving major increase in recycling rates
- Climate and Ecological Emergency declared
- Saxonvale site procurement and redevelopment partner established

Recent disappointments:

Failure to produce a valid Local Plan with a 5-year housing land supply – leading to unwanted developments, especially locally at Stoke (Coalpit Lane), Leigh (AMV), White Post (Beauchamp Drive) and Anchor Rd in Coleford. Losing a Judicial Review on the validity of Local Plan site allocations has cost us tax payers £65k plus. A new Local Plan is 5 years away leaving us open to speculative development.

Saxonvale – a way ahead is still not resolved with 2 competing proposals granted planning permission. A Judicial Review has been raised against Mendip for allegedly not respecting the Local Plan.

Multi User Paths – nothing for us as attention has focused on the Strawberry line

Obituary – sadly we have to report the passing of 4 Mendip Councillor colleagues in the last year, the most recent being John Greenhalgh on 15th March

Way ahead:

It will be important to establish lines of communication with the new Unitary Authority, either directly or through our Local Community Network.

7. Somerset County Council report

Somerset Councillors Philip Ham and Barry Clarke provided the following report:

The election result in May 2022 saw a change of administration with the Liberal Democrats taking control. With Parliamentary Bills having gone through prior to the election, the change to a Unitary Council would take place by the 1st of April, 2023. Firstly, the new administration had to get to grips with this and proceed at pace. A new chief executive was appointed - Duncan Sharkey, who started in October. However, over this period due to the invasion of Ukraine, worldwide economy, interest rises, cost-of-living and energy crisis, budgets have been difficult. However, last month a balanced budget was achieved for 2023/24. Only time will tell if there is achieved.

Somerset County council will be disbanded on 31 March and the New Somerset council will be born on the 1st of April, 2023. The word County is lost.

What will this mean to Coleford parish? The famous red dragon of Somerset goes green. Your council tax bill will come from Somerset Council. Your only councillors will be myself and Barry Clarke. We will be in Shepton Mallet rural area local community networks. A lot will be the same, but you will have one contact telephone number 0300 123 2224.

The structure of the new council is being put together. Tiers 1 and 2 are complete. Tiers 3 in process of and hopefully will be completed by the 1st of April.

The budget for the new council is around £500m but over 73% of this is spent on adult social services and children's services. Somerset has a large elderly population but a low student number.

Most services will continue as they are now but for contact you will need to use the new telephone number or email addresses

8. Coleford Youth Club

Mark Wilcox was unable to attend but sent the following report:

The youth club is thriving, averaging between 25-30 young people regularly attending. The group actively engages in the activities and has great relationships with each other and the youth workers. It's been going from strength to strength for a while. The young people have taking part in a range of fun meaningful activities from art, team games, cooking to issue based work on relationships, making good life choices and staying safe. Thank you to the hub and the Parish Council for all your support.

9. PCSO Report

No report was received.

10. Coleford Athletic Football Club

No report was received.

11. Coleford Gospel Hall

Howard Coles attended and gave the following report:

Regular Weekly Activities - As Christians, Sunday is special for us. For those in fellowship we meet at 10.00 a.m. in the morning for a time of worship at our Breaking of Bread (or Communion) service

At 4.00 p.m. we hold a Family Gospel Service with a few favourite hymns followed gospel message then light refreshments. These are attended by people of all ages from the village.

On the 1st Tuesday of each month at 10.00 a.m – Coffee Morning – All welcome

On the last Sunday of the month, we have a Tea and Talk Meeting – again at 4.00 p.m. where we have a longer time of favourite hymn singing followed by a short Gospel talk and then afterwards a full tea.

At the main Christian festivals – Christmas and Easter we have Special Family Services where we endeavour to involve the Children with Bible Quizzes and Chorus singing. At these public services we often use visual helps including Microsoft PowerPoint via a large screen monitor.

On Tuesdays we get together for Bible Study and Prayer at 7.45 p.m.

On Thursdays we hold a Carers and Toddlers activity at 10.00 through to approx. 11.45 a.m.

In the afternoon at 2.30 p.m. there is a Ladies Meeting.

During the winter months on the 4th Saturday of the month we hold Bible Teaching Meetings at 7.00 p.m. with speakers from all over the UK. Details of these are advertised on our web site What's on Page these are Zoomed.

Other Activities - During School Holidays we hold other activities as announced

During February Half Term each year we hold a Holiday Bible Club for children of school age – each weekday from 10.00 a.m. to noon. A visiting children's worker comes to conduct these meetings and the children do supervised craft to take home themed on the Bible stories. Following the week's meetings there is a prize giving on the Sunday at 4.00 p.m. this year over 70 attended.

We have several Family Activity Days usually from 3.00 to 6.00 p.m. with various children's craft sessions planned for other school holidays – we have several planned for 2023 these to be announced and publicised in the area. Periodically as announced we hold what we call an Ignite Group for teenagers and other young adults sometimes at different venues than the Gospel Hall.

On Christmas Eve we have a time of Favourite Carol Singing at 4.00 p.m. For those who may require transport to any of these please we do our best to arrange. We periodically distribute literature in the area for the purpose of making known these activities. It is our set policy to provide all of these activities free of charge. We have a Web site at which gives details of our history, regular activities and contact details –we also have a Facebook presence – details can be supplied to anyone interested. We are a registered charity (details provided for those interested) We are not connected with any other organisation but are an

independent bible believing evangelical church. All those who take active part in assisting with our children's or vulnerable adults have been certified under the DBS regulations.

Our Overall Purpose - To make known the Christian Gospel and in particular the invitation of the Lord to each person - whatever their circumstances – that they might by simple trust and faith come to know Him as their personal Lord and Saviour – and therefore receive the gift of eternal life. The Lord Himself said ...

Mat 11:28-30 Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke *is* easy, and my burden is light.

12. The Community Review & The Big Help Out

Mary Pearce reported that in the Autumn of 2022 the Parish Council decided to complete a Community Review to establish what the priorities were for Coleford residents. A working party was formed, made up of parishioners and Councillor who with the help of the Community Council of Somerset (CCS) put together a questionnaire. The survey was well publicised and had to be completed online. An open session was held at the Hub to allow those with limited IT knowledge or without the technology to come and complete the survey online with support.

CCS then provided the results to the working party who have extensively considered the information to create a detailed report which includes graphs and statistics from which an action plan will be created. It is hoped that the action plan will be completed very soon and that actions can be linked to groups or organisations that may be able to help address them.

One of the things that was apparent from the results, was that many parishioners were unaware of the wide-ranging groups or services that are available within the parish some run by volunteers. The group want to find a way of promoting this and agreed that an event would be held to both showcase what the village has to offer but also open doors to allow residents to get involved as a volunteer. This would link in with 'The Big Help Out'

King Charles has suggested that we use Coronation Bank Holiday Monday 8th May as 'The Big Help Out'. The Big Help Out will highlight the positive impact volunteering has on communities across the nation. This will encourage people to try volunteering for themselves and join the work being undertaken to support their local areas. The aim of The Big Help Out is to use volunteering to bring communities together and create a lasting volunteering legacy from the Coronation Weekend. The recent Village Survey suggested that we have lots of clubs and activities in the village, and also lots of people who think that nothing goes on here. The Royal British Legion Hall has been booked for everyone to publicize YOUR activity. Book a table so that you can come along and promote your club or activity. You could get more volunteers or members.

Some clubs have already been contacted but the more the merrier. Spread the word. Save The Date, Monday May 8th. and start think about how you can promote your club or activity.

13. Coleford Rocks 'CROCKS'

Michelle Hinks provided the following report:

Coleford rocks is the new Coleford community group raising funds to put on social events in the village. When we originally heard the CRG were disbanding we were saddened to think there would no longer be the family events we have all loved in the past so after a few drinks at the Kings Head Coleford Rocks (C.R.O.C.K.S) was born.

Our first task was putting on a Halloween event in quite a short amount of time. Martin and Karen Smith pulled out all the stops with the set dressing and along with Victoria Mitchell's party games, Retro spin disco and even a demo from the Laney's Zumba girls, we hosted our first event which was very well received by all that attended.

We followed that with Santa's Grotto at The Kings Head where Father Christmas and Mrs Claus, elves and the master toy-maker delivered gifts to the children through the enchanted forest, Sharon and Dave supported us fully with an outside bar serving mulled wine/cider and warm mince pies. The sax pistols provided seasonal music with Rudolph the reindeer joining in. The weather was even on our side with the first settling of snow which made our snow machine redundant.

So, what's next you may ask. Well, we are already in the stages of planning the Easter event set for Saturday 8th of April turning the Hub into a wonderland with our own spin on a mad-hatters tea party with cream teas for adults to sit and relax while we take the children though wonderland to take part in activities to win treats, Easter Crafts will also be available.

You can find us on Coleford Rocks Facebook page or email Colefordrocks@hotmail.com for more details as they develop. But mostly we would like to thank those that have already supported us and we look forward to hosting many events in the future. You never know with enough funds we could even bring back the village day which would be our main goal.

We are also interested in bringing back the village Christmas tree alongside the council.

14. Coleford Flower and Craft show

Mary Pearce reported that the 123rd Annual Show will be on Sunday 13th August at The Royal British Legion. The free Show Schedule is available now at Co-op, Pharmacy and The King's Head. We are a small committee and meet when needed, maybe about once a month. We need many more volunteers on the day to help set up everything, then to break down at the end.

15. Coleford Conservation Volunteers

Andy Conn attended the meeting and reported that the group have been working at the Coleford playing field since 2015 but it was agreed last year that if they made things more formal with constitution and bank account it would enable the group to access grant funding. A Facebook page has been set up which shows some of the activities undertaken. In about 2000 the bank was initially cleared and planted to create the butterfly bank. Over the years the bank eventually became overgrown and in 2015 the group started to clear it. There is now a management plan in place with the Parish Council contractor completing a winter cut each year. Somerset Wildlife Trust have provided advice and support.

A small grant was obtained from CRG when they disbanded and from the Parish Council. Three events have recently been held, the annual winter clean-up following the contractor's cut, a planting event using grant funds in early March and helping with the planting of fruit trees for the Parish Council to create the orchard funded by the Somerset County Council Climate emergency fund. A watering program has been put together to give the trees the best chance of succeeding. CCV is also working the PC to install tree guards. During the summer there will be the annual session to clear the paths and remove non-native plants. Further grant applications have been submitted for more wildflower planting and tree maintenance. Some success has been achieved and more applications will follow. CCV would like to take on further local projects, for example information and advice to people interested in wilding their gardens. The group thanked the PC for its support.

16. Litter Picking champions

Teresa Hopkins attended and reported that there are a team of 10-12 people who are regularly litter picking around the village. Volunteers are encouraged to pick at times that are convenient to them and wouldn't be more than an hour at a time. There is currently a young person who is litter picking for the volunteering element of their Duke of Edinburgh award scheme, which is being overseen by Alison Still. Teresa thanked the Parish Council for supplying the litter pickers to make this possible.

17. Love to Move

Carrie Hemmings gave the following report:

Love to Move is a fun seated movement to music program, providing physical & cognitive benefits designed to keep you moving. Open to anyone, our weekly sessions are also age & dementia friendly, providing a welcoming & relaxed social space for people living with dementia, memory loss & their Carers.

This weekly group provides physical & cognitive benefits designed to keep people moving and functioning better. This a specially designed seated exercise program achieves this by carefully integrating movement, cognitive stimulation and social interaction activities, all carried out to music.

Components of Love to Move are based on bilaterally asymmetrical movement patterns as well as coordination exercises. These are understood to greatly benefit older people and those living with dementia, Parkinson's and other forms of cognitive impairment, by enabling the left side and right side of the brain to process information independently, thus improving cognitive function, coordination and the ability to carry out activities of daily living more independently.

In addition to encouraging people to join in with the above session to keep fit, I offer a post session social with refreshments. This greatly transforms the Love to Move experience as a relaxed, welcoming and friendly community for participants and develops a social support network for their carers.

Love to Move also offers volunteering opportunities for people who enjoy helping out. These opportunities range from helping set up and pack away the room, demonstrating the Love to Move Exercises, promotion and making and serving the refreshments.

We invite people to come along & join in for companionship, meeting new people, relaxing & for Carers to enjoy spending time with the person they care for.

18. @ The Hub

Henry Banks introduced himself as one of the 4 Trustees for the Hub which was initially set up to help support the Youth Club after Somerset County Council (SCC) dropped their funding. Clientele was built up to raise the income. The hall has been decorated, the kitchen improved to catering standards, toilets and central heating upgraded. The lease with SCC has finally been signed which will enable the Hub committee to apply for grant funding. Grants have already been received which has covered the cost of new double glazing and the car park, which will soon be tarmacked. The committee have also received funds from SCC to assist with the repair of the damaged wall next to the road

Dagmar's catering had been successful but had to stop due to other commitments. It is hoped that she will be returning soon. Last year saw 2 new tapestries completed, 1 for the Gospel Hall and the other showing the events hosted by the Coleford Revival Group.

The hall is used by the Mells Postmaster to provide a weekly post office for the Parish at no charge and the Youth Club meet each Thursday during term times. Although there are regular parties, wakes and meetings, daytime use needs to be regenerated. Spread the word to all that the hall is available for hire.

19. Coleford and Holcombe Community Magazine

Adam Townsend did not attend but asked for the following report to be read out: if it could be read out:

Team Townsend took on the magazine with some trepidation as our only experience in this line was Alan's over 50 years ago. We have been so grateful for everyone's support, the handover from Revd Clarissa and the Stevens, the hard work of distribution with the Perkins, Robert Bull and David Hirst, and of course the huge volume of contributions from all directions. We now have some 80 pages, close to 75% more than before.

On the Finances, the last year of On the Map actually lost £940. We have now become victims of our own success; with the increased size we of course incur extra printing costs which we did not budget for. We were grateful for the input of funds from the On the Map closing balances. Also, for the undertakings of support from the Parish Councils. We will keep a close eye on our budget and report back.

20. Coleford Methodists

Mary Pearce reported that the Methodists in Coleford are a small group, unlike days gone past when John Wesley visited often. All of our meetings are held in Douglas Yates Court. We meet twice a month on Sundays when we share lunch at 12.30 for 1.00 pm. and then share fellowship at 2.00pm. We usually number about eight.

We also meet twice a month on Tuesdays 2.00 for 2.30. pm, when we invite Christian speakers to talk about anything that they like. We've been transported to the war in Afghanistan, countries in the far east, rambled around The Mendips, and have shared personal testimony. We usually number about twelve.

Both of our meetings are ably supported by Ron Brewer on the piano and he is much appreciated. Also, both of our meetings can be affected by covid and extremes of weather. Why bother, you may well ask for such a small group? Our members are mostly elderly, who may not drive. Buses do not run on Sundays; we offer a good alternative to staying at home alone. Warm, comfortable and easily accessible.

21. Knit & Natter

Geraldine James attended and gave the following report:

Firstly, on behalf of myself and our group, we thank the Council for the grant of £75.00. This money was put to good use as there were lots of online sales, and one local supplier was sadly closing down, and we got great deals there as well.

At the moment we have 8 regular members, one home knitter whom we provide the wool, and she knits scarfs for us to give to Julian House. There are a few other members who for various reasons can't always come every week, but they pop in just for a chat and to catch up with us.

We are a happy group. First and foremost, we come together socially, and we cover many issues both locally and beyond, whilst knitting away and putting the world to rights. There is no pressure to knit for Charities, we work on our own projects as well, and each member has a say in deciding which Charities that we would like to donate to. We also welcome anyone who would like to learn to knit or crochet.

Last year and this year so far, we gave donations of lap blankets to Rowden House, small cat/dog blankets to Blue Cross Animal Charity, and 2 deliveries of hats, scarves, neck warmers, and gloves to Julian House, hats and little jackets to The Gospel Hall, who in turn donate to much needed aid in Africa. Some members helped fill the shoe boxes with little gifts which go to Operation Christmas Child. We also gave a donation of £50.00 to The Red Cross for the war in Ukraine out of our own sub money of £1.00 a week.

We all look forward to, and feel the benefit of our weekly get togethers and feel that our little contributions are all going to help bring a little comfort to those who need it.

22. Holy Trinity Church

Julia Neesam provided the following report:

For the last year we have held coffee mornings every other week with a short break at Christmas and August. These coffee mornings raise much needed funds for the church and average about 250.00 every coffee morning. We also held a jumble sale in the church hall which did very well and plan to have another one in April.

Various bits of maintenance have been carried out on the church roof and edges. In April the guttering will be repaired and repainted. In May the church hall is having a new roof this will mean that for 4 weeks the car park outside the hall will not be usable.

The services at Christmas were well attended and enjoyed by all.

We have now joined with Kilmersdon and Babington, this seems to be working well although we are relying on our lay reader to cover some of the services. If there is a fifth Sunday in the month then the churches come together and have a joint service in one of the 4 churches.

Over the period of Lent, we have had soup and sandwiches every week with the money going to our chosen charity which this year is Mercy in Action and so far, have raised nearly 1000.00 pounds. The 'World Day of Prayer' was once more a success and it's good to know that lots of countries around the world are following with the wave of prayer.

We will continue on with our fundraising and a further programme of maintenance.

23. Coleford Theatre Group

On behalf of Coleford Theatre Group I thank you very much for inviting us to send a report for your AGM.

Our Group consists of Members from Coleford, Midsomer Norton, Wells and surrounding Villages from the age of 10 to our older members in their late 70's.

We as a Group have struggled with Covid and not being able to meet, but luckily in 2022 we all decided we had to bring something back to the village, so heads were put together and a script was chosen we did a Pantomime in November at the Royal British Legion, and it was a real joy to see all those people together enjoying themselves, and it was lovely for the Group to be able to do this.

So, 2023 has started with a New Director and lots of New Members. A script has been chosen and read throughs have been going on for a few weeks so auditions will be held in due course, and then rehearsals will be in full swing. This Pantomime will be performed in November

One of our younger Members has just written a Murder Mystery Script so on Monday night we had our first read throughs. This event will be held on Friday 19th May at the Royal British Legion which will also include a 2 course Meal so tickets will be limited. For this event. We would like to thank the council very much for their kind donation last year to the group.

24. Kilmersdon Gardeners

Judith Stanford provided the following report:

This past year was an opportunity to catch up with our losses in members and income during the COVID period.

We have had some new members join us who have enjoyed our variety of speakers on subjects such as the answer lies in the soil, Fuchsias, family friendly wildlife gardens, how to set up an organic flower farm, the climate change garden and more, our pièce de resistance was a talk by Chris Sperring on British Owls.

Our plant sale went well and we were pleased the income was more than the previous year. The plant sale is a must to help towards rising costs of speakers as well as their travelling costs increasing since the Pandemic and all things political.

Our AGM was held in February, the committee welcomed a returning member as well as a new Programme Secretary who has put together a fantastic programme for 2023/4. We are still in need of a secretary to lighten the load of the Chairperson. It was agreed not to increase the subs from February 2024. The committee was voted on for the next year and the programme of speakers with their subject accepted by members of the club.

After the official business the members thoroughly enjoyed the finger buffet two of our members produced as well as wine and fruit juice. Members decided it was so relaxed and friendly we should make it an annual event or two!

Do come and try us out, visitors are asked for a fee of three pounds which includes refreshments, our annual membership is ten pounds. We are sure you will enjoy our meetings; we are a friendly group with a diverse programme of speakers. Our doors are open at 7.15pm to allow for refreshments to be served before the speaker is introduced at 7.30pm.

Details of our forthcoming meetings can be found on our website www.kilmersdongardeners.org; or on our Facebook page Kilmersdon Gardeners

25. Date of the next Annual meeting of the Parish

Wednesday 27th March 2024

Meeting closed at 20.44hrs

These minutes were approved as an accurate record of the meeting held on 22nd March 2023 and were duly signed by the Chair:

Dated 27th March 2024