



Minutes of the ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY

Held on Tuesday 30th April 2024 @ 7:30pm at Cromhall Village Hall

Chair: Mark Daniel, Chairman of Cromhall Parish Council

Clerk: Emma Pattullo

Present: 11 residents and one non-resident (external speaker)

1. Welcome and introductions

ClIr Mark Daniel welcomed residents to the Annual Assembly.

2. Approval of minutes of the 2023 Annual Assembly

The minutes of the 2023 Annual Assembly were approved as an accurate record and signed by the Chairman.

3. Report from the Parish Council

ClIr Daniel gave a report on the council's activities over the past year and plans for the coming year.

Actions in the past year included:

- Grass cutting of green spaces at The Green, Bibstone Hill, Townwell play area, Hawkers Knapp and contribution to grass cutting of the school playing field;
- Installation of more protective boulders on Bibstone Green at the Royal Oak;
- Moved the entrance gate at Hawkers Knapp, so the steps are no longer needed;
- Installed a new defibrillator at the Heathend Garage, in addition to the existing device at the De Smit building;
- Replaced two benches in Townwell play area and planted hedging along the rear fence;
- Awarded grants totaling £3030 to a number of community organisations;
- Held an extra meeting to discuss the planning application to build 47 houses on Church Lane;
- Monitored planning applications, submitting feedback/and or objections to South Glos. Council;
- Commented on the draft South Glos. Local Plan;
- Liaison with South Glos. Council on many issues including potholes, the state of local roads, Junction 14 improvements, footpath and stile maintenance

- Litter picking
- Recruitment of a new Parish Clerk and co-option of two new parish councillors to fill vacancies.

In the coming year, the council plans to continue efforts to improve road safety including support for the Speedwatch group, organise defibrillator training for residents, continue liaison with other organisations such as South Glos. Council, Wickwar Quarry and Leyhill Prison, and look into the possible development of a greenway (off road path) to link Cromhall and Charfield.

Residents asked various questions:

Q. Can the parish council do anything to improve the Townwell Green open space, as it is very overgrown and becoming unusable?

A. The area is currently managed by the developer, prior to being handed over to South Glos. Council once an appropriate standard has been established. Cllr Daniel will continue to push the maintenance contractor for improvements and has sent photos of the current state of the area.

Q. Where can residents find more information about grants awarded by the council?

A. All payments including grants are included in the minutes of Parish Council meetings which can be accessed on the council website www.cromhallpc.org.uk.

Q. Can you give any more details of the Cromhall-Charfield Greenway proposal?

A. This is at a very early stage and no details have yet been established, but it is hoped that an off-road route could be established for pedestrians and cyclists to move between Cromhall and Charfield, linking with the onward route to Kingswood/Wotton-under-edge.

4. Reports from local organisations and community groups

Village Shop

Linda Richards gave an update on the shop, which has operated in Cromhall in some form for the last 30 years. Usage of the shop is declining and the volunteers and committee are ageing; more input from new people would be needed to keep it going. The recent public meeting brought forward some new volunteers but no-one to help with the overall management of the shop. The current committee have tried various things to improve usage and find out what residents want from the shop but these have not been enough to reverse the decline. If the situation does not improve, the shop and Post Office will close at the end of this year.

Linda explained that, although the lease requires that the building be used as a shop, there is no specific restrictions as to what sort of shop it must be. There may be leeway for a change of use, for example to a coffee shop, if that is what villagers want. A new committee and refreshed group of volunteers will be needed to keep the shop going in any form. She appealed to the Parish Council to try and find out what would be supported by residents.

Village Hall

Joanna Carr and Susie Gilbert reported on behalf of the Village Hall committee. The committee has worked hard to increase usage of the hall since the Covid lockdowns and the hall is now well used with a mixture of regular groups, one-off bookings and social events organised by the committee themselves. The finances are stable, but increased hire revenue has been offset by higher costs for

electricity and cleaning. Overall a small profit was made last year, but this is still lower than pre-Covid levels.

Maintenance is always an ongoing issue and the committee are seeking ways to improve the facilities of the hall. The next big project is to revamp the external area with improved parking, better accessibility and some wildlife-friendly planting areas. Some grant funding has already been obtained towards this big project, but more is needed; the committee are applying to the Parish Council and other local businesses and organisations for contributions towards this work. Once the outdoor area work is underway, the committee hope to improve the internal space by putting in an audio-visual system.

The AGM will be held on 21st May from 7pm and residents are invited to attend.

Poors Allotment Charity

David White, a trustee of the Poors Allotment Charity, explained the purpose of the charity which is to provide financial support to “the poor of the village of Cromhall”. Their main income is from land held on Jubilee Lane. Funds have been distributed to the older residents of Cromhall in the form of vouchers to use at the village shop. The charity has also funded places on residential trips for several pupils at St Andrew’s School. A full annual report from the charity is appended.

Cromhall Chapel

Simon Carey presented a summary of what the Chapel congregation have been doing recently. They are committed to building a strong and vibrant community in the Cromhall area and to supporting charities both here and overseas. Regular services and social gatherings are held, including an open coffee morning each Thursday morning 10am-12 noon, to which all residents are warmly invited. The Chapel also has links with St Andrew’s School, who sometimes use the Chapel facilities. Future plans include a possible youth club night for local young people.

St Andrew’s Church

Ann Greenhaugh reported that although there is still a core of dedicated congregation members, attendance at church services is shrinking and the age profile of church members is getting older. The historic church is probably the oldest building in Cromhall and requires an increasing amount of maintenance, with the state of the roof and tower being of particular concern. The churchyard is open to all local residents but is now running out of space. Church members are doing their best to support the wider community, with social groups and charity funding including the Changing Lives in Chongwe charity which is based in Cromhall, but without new members they will not be able to keep up the current levels of community involvement.

1st Woodend Scouts

The Scout group were not able to send a representative.

Community Speedwatch

Hannah Bryan reported that the Speedwatch group is very active, with an average of two or three monitoring sessions each week over the last 18 months. Speeds are measured at three locations across the village, and the group are trying to get new sites agreed at Leyhill and near Cowship Lane. They work closely with the police and the local PCSO attends about once a month.

A website has recently been set up where speedwatch results can be seen; the highest speed recorded having been 73mph! You can see these at www.cromhallspeedwatch.org.

St Andrew's School

Tony Parker, Chairman of the school governing body, reported that the school is refreshed and reinvigorated under the new Headteacher who started in September 2023. Pupil numbers are increasing and the school has seen a lot of changes recently thanks to a lot of hard work from the staff, governors and parents. They are currently implementing a 3-year improvement plan which will include a new area for the Reception class, and are looking forward to successful growth in the coming years.

5. Items raised by electors

No further matters were raised.

Appendix - CROMHALL POORS ALLOTMENT CHARITY

Registered Charity No: 204061

Annual Parish Assembly Report 2024

Brief outline of the charity.....

The object of the charity is for the relief of the poor in the parish of Cromhall and its income, mostly through land grass keep rent, continues to be distributed to people over 65 who have been in the village 5 years or more. This is currently in the way of vouchers to be used in the village shop. Individuals can apply for assistance if they find themselves in need, and all requests will be considered.

The charity is run by four Parish Council appointed trustees – currently, David White, Caroline Massey, Doug Collett and Clive Young. (David White and Clive Young have both come to the end of their four year term and are due for reappointment, or replacement, by the council at the council's Annual Meeting in May. Both are willing to be reappointed and continue.)

A land agent is employed to oversee the the administration of the charity owned land.

Brief presentation of Accounts 2023....

Income was generated, as usual, by the Grass Keep, a Rural Payment Agency payment and electricity wayleave which totaled £2,786.50, £437 less than in 2022 (The RPA payment is being reduced annually and consequently the amount paid to the charity is falling.)

Expenditure included water rates, secretary fee, agent's fees and the Christmas Gifts (62 at £30 each = £1,860) plus, an additional £1,500 to St.Andrew's School to fund 5 pupils to go on a three day activity camp. Their parents were all known to be in financial difficulties which could have prohibited the pupils attendance.

So this year, 2023, the charity spent £1,410 more than its income, using reserves.

Other than the school, individual requests for assistance continues to remain rare and no other requests were made in 2023.

As ever, the charity is committed to fulfilling its brief and had no other matters to consider in 2023

Sue Wray, Secretary 06.04.24