MINUTES OF THE ALMELEY ANNUAL PARISH MEETING
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 11TH MAY 2022
AT 7.00PM at ALMELEY VILLAGE HALL

Present: Mr. M. Handley – Chair – as Chair of the Parish Council

In attendance: Mrs. E. Thomas – Parish Clerk

Public: 7

1. **Apologies for absence.**
   None

2. **To receive report from the Chairman (1 April 2021 – 31 March 2022)**
   The following report was RECEIVED:

Good evening ladies and gentlemen and fellow councillors. I moved into this chair in September 2020 when Covid was at its highest level. This is the first Annual Parish meeting since April 2019. Since 2019 we have held meetings on Zoom. Our first meeting back after Covid restrictions had eased was the 14th July 2021. We were all glad to be getting back to a normal routine of Parish Council meetings.

First of all I would like to mention a former Councillor Barry Hall who has sadly passed away. Barry served for several years as a council member and Vice-chairman. Rest in peace Barry.

Thanks also to former councillor Monica Jones who retired through other commitments.

Thanks to our county member Graham Jones who is our county councillor rep for the Castle Ward. Graham has kept us up to date of County Council decisions and supported us with our queries to the said council. Graham has had a very hard twelve months after suddenly losing his wife. Thanks Graham.

Thanks also to our lengthsman Graham Keeble who has had a hard time following behind or trying to get to jobs because of the many road works and pipe laying ready for fibre optic cables.

Thanks also to my fellow councillors who have kept me in order and to Paul and Sandra who report back about the N.D.P. and also about SID. Sid keeps popping up now and again, flashing as we go by.

The Parish Council meets normally 6 times a year but with a lot of planning on hold because of Covid we had to have three extra meetings. We had in total 12 planning applications . The large broiler site which was on our Parish border at Green Farm Lyonshall has with great relief to residents and farms below site been turned down on environmental grounds. This will probably come up for planning again in this following council year.

One of our main tasks in this following year is to try and get weight limits on the bridges on these narrow roads. This we hope will stop heavy vehicle's taking shortcuts through the village. Speed also through the village of Almeley is also a concern which we hope we can address. The dragon teeth marks on the main road into Woonton at either end have made a lot of difference to the speed of traffic. Upgrade the speed signs so they are more noticeable, and get the footbridges repaired on the foot paths.

Last to the young lady we could not do without, who also keeps us on the straight and narrow, Emma our Clerk. On behalf of the council and the parish, thanks for all the hard work you do Emma.

3. **To receive reports from local community groups.**
The following reports were RECEIVED:

Women's Institute

The pandemic continues into another year and Almeley WI also keeps going. As the restrictions are lifting, we meet with caution and it began with outdoor meetings for the next 3 months. We visited Moorcourt Fruit Farm and with invites to Elizabeth Russell's Garden for afternoon tea. We had a supper invite to Sue Smith's Garden and all were enjoyed and glad to be together for socializing again.
With the village hall opening again we began our meetings in September with a long overdue speaker, Malcolm Penny who was a wildlife photographer of 25 years. He showed us some spectacular wildlife. Michelle from Madley Plants gave us another demonstration of planting up pots for winter. Our Christmas party was enjoyed by everyone with good food and company. St Michael Hospice was chosen for our secret Santa donation.

We all hope that 2022 would be a lot better.

Our January meeting didn't get off to a good start as the infection rates were increasing again, so our speaker was cancelled. We still met up and had a social evening instead. In February we had a lovely speaker Meriet Duncan, a children's author and a beekeeper. It was a lovely evening learning about our humble hardworking bee. In March we had our Annual Meeting and with everything happening over the past couple of years with no new members joining, costs of speakers and attendance levels, a vote was taken by all members to suspend our WI for 3 years. We also had 2 members pass away in October and January. This reduced the membership to 15.

Almeley WI was founded in 1923 and has supported the women in the village for many years. It would have been our 95th anniversary but at the moment the members have changed how they feel about what we are achieving in their membership.

After a productive debate and thoughts for the future, a new venture of a Ladies group would be set up. Our first meeting was in April to iron out the way it was going to proceed. We are calling ourselves Almeley Ladies Thursday Club. It is early days with organizing events for us this year but just watch out for announcements in the local newsletter and posters.

The Green Group

The Green Group started from small and informal beginnings almost exactly a year ago. It brought together a number of individuals from around the parish who shared an interest in the environment and sustainability.
Over the year the group has grown to around 30 people, with 15 or so attending each meeting and actively involved in our projects. For a small parish this is really encouraging and shows that it a topic of both interest and concern. The recent coffee morning was well supported (approx. 40 came), raised a little money for the group and yielded several new members.

Within the group there are a range of different interests and people prepared to lead a variety of projects. This is brief update on our current projects: Meer Common – we have appointed a tree surveyor to report on the condition of the trees and make recommendations to improve the woodland. Soft Plastic Recycling – the bin is being well used and members of the group are emptying it every 2-3 days. A future project on Household Energy is being discussed.

Both the Herefordshire Wildlife Trust and the Herefordshire Green Network are interested in what we are doing, are encouraging us, and have helped us link with other similar groups across the county. Most recently we met with the Eardisland PC Environment and Sustainability Group – we are keen to learn from one another, share resources and events and collaborate where it makes sense to do so.

There are an increasing number of grants available for projects to build community resilience to climate change and to increase biodiversity, and we are keen to ensure that our community will benefit from these where relevant. As it has not been possible for us to partner with the Parish Council or the Church, our current focus is on establishing a constitution for the group and opening a bank account so that we might be in a position to apply for these as and when they become available.

We are keen to hear from the Parish Council on the actions agreed at the last meeting:

7.2 To consider joining the HGN with a view to launching the Great Collaboration portal within Almeley - £50 joining fee. It was RESOLVED to join this group.

7.3 To consider developing an action plan for the community to reduce carbon emissions and increase biodiversity within the parish, using the Great Collaboration tool and working with the Green Group to do so. It was RESOLVED to defer this item until a later date.

7.4 To consider forming a "Green Working Party" and making "an update from this group a standing item on agendas. It was RESOLVED to defer the forming of a working party until a later date but to welcome the submission of an update by way of a written report before each meeting. It was AGREED to set up an informal meeting to discuss issues further

CPRE Herefordshire
CPRE wish to expand their team of volunteers who monitor planning applications. If you would like to get involved contact admin@cprehereford shire.org.uk

Almeley Craft Club
We are a friendly and sociable club and new members are always welcome. We resumed craft meetings after Covid lockdowns in September 2021. The club is good financially and we have managed to keep subs low, which just about covers the cost of hiring the village hall and providing refreshments etc. Work is being carried out for a display in the hall cabinets for the Queens Jubilee.

Other activities are taking place, such as knitting and crochet work to produce blankets to be raffled at the village fete, with proceeds going to Ukraine.

Four members of the public joined the meeting

4. **To receive views of local residents on parish matters.**
   The following items were RAISED:
   - The over-sized vehicles coming past the church and turning left to the village hall are casuing damage to the highways not suitable for such traffic.
   - The private lane by The Bells is being used by too much public traffic which is causing large potholes to form.
   - A noticeable amount more litter is being dropped around the parish lately.
   - Why are some potholes on Manor Close earmarked for repair and others not.?

The meeting closed at 19.25

Signed: [redacted] Dated: 17-5-22.