

WEST DEREHAM

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING REPORT 2020-21

West Dereham Parish Councillors

NAME	ADDRESS	CONTACT
Mr Nick Drew (Chair)	Lime House, Lime Kiln Road, West Dereham, PE33 9RT	
Mr Stuart Glover	The Old Coach House, Ryston Road, West Dereham PE33 9RQ	
Mr Tim Glover		
Mr Keith Gore	Bath Springs, Bath Road, West Dereham PE33 9TP	
Mrs Susan Pepper (Vice-Chair)	Thistledo, Church Road, West Dereham PE33 9RF	

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**Record of West Dereham Annual Parish Meeting
held in West Dereham Village Hall on Wednesday 27 May 2021 at 7.00pm**

In the chair: Mr Nick Drew - Chairman of West Dereham Parish Council - 11 parishioners were in attendance

1. The Chairman of the Parish Council welcomed everyone to the Annual Parish Meeting.
2. Copies of the record of the 2019 Annual Parish Meeting were available at the meeting It was agreed that the report was a true account of the meeting held on 24 April 2019.

3. Parish Council Report (Prepared by Lorraine Hunt – outgoing Chair of the Parish Council)

The past year has been interesting, busy but very different from previous years. Naturally the COVID-19 pandemic has had a major influence on the work of the Parish Council. At the start of the council year, we were already in lockdown and had been forced to cancel the Annual Parish Council Meeting and the Annual Parish Meeting. However by August we had taken the plunge into the virtual world and thanks to our then clerk, Peter King, and his crash course in facilitating online meetings via Zoom, this was to become our way of working for the remainder of the year.

In summary we held seven virtual public meetings which were attended by 33 members of the public in total. County Councillor Brian Long joined us three times and Councillor Alan Holmes twice.

Personnel

Peter retired from his post as clerk in November 2020 and following a thorough recruitment process, Linda Arthur joined us in October 2020. Clerks have a varied and busy workload. Of particular note is Peter's sterling efforts in ensuring the Parish Council website remained updated with information on COVID-19. At one point this had resulted in sifting and extracting useful advice from no less that 775 emails from public bodies. The Parish Council recognises the work of the clerks and records thanks for this.

In August 2020 there was a full complement of seven councillors but there are now two vacancies.

Precept

Requests for contributions on setting the precept were published on the Parish Council's website. Following a careful budget analysis, there was no change to the precept which remained at £17403.74.

Glazewing

With a newly appointed manager in the summer, lines of communication were improved however challenges continued with reports of un-netted loads, out of hours movement and damage to verges and bollards. In most instances, responsibility was unaccepted. A funding application to the Parish Partnership scheme for extra signage on the A134 will assist in solving the problem of drivers taking incorrect routes into the village and subsequently help to preserve roads and the environment.

Flooding

The exceptional wet weather put a strain on the village ditches and drains particularly in Station Road. A Parish Councillor personally assisted residents to alleviate the situation. The Parish Council raised concerns on behalf of residents to local landowners, Norfolk County Council and the Borough Council of Kings Lynn and West Norfolk.

Grounds Maintenance

The contract with Holly Landscapes came to an end in November 2020 and there followed a rigorous tender process by sealed bid. A new three-year contract was awarded to CGM which commenced in March 2021.

Play Equipment

Parish Councillors were pleased to support an initiative from two parishioners who wished to fund raise for play equipment on the recreation area in St Andrews Close. Following consultation via a village questionnaire,

parishioners were 97% in favour. Next steps for the Parish Council are to negotiate planning permission and terms of agreement with the Borough Council of Kings Lynn and West Norfolk who are the landowners. Initial enquiries are very favourable and we look forward to seeing this project come to fruition for the benefit of children and families.

As outgoing Chair, I would like to record my thanks for the time and commitment fellow councillors give to this community. I have been extremely grateful for their support, which during my term of office, has at times been highly challenging. That said, I have been proud and privileged to have served on the council for almost eight years.

As we continue the journey on the 'roadmap' and into the summer, we look forward to a brighter future and I wish the Parish Council well, and indeed all the village organisations, in their endeavours to continue making West Dereham a better place to live.

4. Report from West Dereham Handyman - April 2019 to date

On 17th April 2021 along with Councillors of the Parish Council, an inspection of village assets was undertaken and this was an opportunity to review the Handyman's duties too.

Over the period the following items have been carried out:

- The cutting of hedges to the cemetery and the tidying of the Garden of Remembrance (on going)
- Painting of bridge structures in the village along with trimming of the grass around signage.
- Repositioning of the Speed Monitor (every three weeks).
- Repair to the timber planters in the grass verge on Station Road, where they had been damaged by grass cutting.
- Remove redundant and obsolete fencing, including clearing of brambles to the footpath which runs between the hedge and the Parish Council Farm tenancy land.
- Cutting back of holy tree in the St Andrews Churchyard to give safe access to the War Memorial.
- Erect replacement dog bin damaged on the junction of Hilgay and Station Roads.

From the assets inspection meeting, the following items were identified as needing attention:

- Excessive brambles around the BT cabinet and telegraph posts in the Stocks Bridge area and opposite the Old School had grown wild and encroached on to the footpath. At the time of meeting, these have been cut back and removed.
- Also at Stocks Bridge, the grass verge had suffered extensive damage from either a passing lorry or tractor leaving deep wheel ruts. At the time of meeting, these have been filled with 2 tonnes of imported topsoil which has been spread and levelled ready for the grass to re-establish.
- Items for the near future include refurbishment of the old telephone boxes in the village (2 No). It is proposed to repaint them and re-glaze with perspex and create information hubs. This is to be further developed and awaits more settled weather before the painting can commence. The village signs are also in need of refurbishment and repainting.

5. Report from West Dereham Allotment & Farm Tenancy - April 2019 to date

Allotments

Councillors carried out inspections on 3rd October 2020 and 17th April 2021. Surprisingly, a number of plots still remain vacant, despite recent interest. Thanks should be extended to Councillor Gore who has donated his own time and resource to clear, level and grade the unattended plots, which had become overgrown in recent

months. It is hoped that with this being done, the vacant plots will appear more attractive to potential takers. The Parish Council are looking at alternative ways of advertising the plots.

Farm Tenancy

The farmland adjacent to the allotments is owned and managed by the Parish Council on behalf of the village. The current tenant had their 3 year term extended by one year 2020-21, however, a 12 month notice of period was issued prior to October 2020. The Parish Council are currently putting together a tender package for the next 3 year term (2021-2024) to invite bids which are to be returned by September 2021.

6. Village Hall Report (provided by Andy Challen, Chair)

Introduction

1. It is with great pleasure that the current West Dereham Village Hall Management Committee (WDVHMC) were able to open the Village Hall (VH) to the community on 21 May 21 following a turbulent time for the entire community. This report to the Annual Parish Meeting may 21 outlines the current position of Management Committee and the VH and the plan for moving forward in the Summer of 2021. Please accept the apologies from the Chair, Andy Challen, for not being able to report in person, he is overseas on essential business.

Recent context

2. A New Year and release from COVID-19 restrictions brings a new start. Several changes in Management Committee membership occurred in the West Dereham Village Hall throughout 2019 and 2020 for a number of professional and personal reasons. A degree of animosity was shown towards a number of committee members by the public, making the job of running the VH more difficult.
3. Concurrently, Government restrictions relating to the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in the VH not being available for use for much of 2020 and the early part of 2021.
4. As of the end of 2020, the Management Committee comprised of 3 entirely new members, all co-opted and voted in by previously WDVHMC members.

Working to rebuild trust and maintain the VH

5. During 2020 and 2021, significant effort has been expended to set out new governance, review policies, set up a new bank account for the Village Hall separate to the Bar Account, add new signatories and mandates and keep the Hall maintained. Much of this activity has been hampered by COVID-19 restrictions both relating to service providers and members of the Committee.
6. As of May 21, the 3 Management Committee members in post, who have limited experience of previous workings with the WDVHMC have worked hard to enable a limited opening of the White Hart Bar and VH for meetings.
7. Bookings are starting to come in for larger functions and regular activities and we hope to be fully operational for the summer of 2021.
8. The current committee recognises that trust must be rebuilt across the community and services will be resumed at a controlled pace commensurate with the limited membership of the Management Committee.

Activity over the COVID-19 period

9. During the period of closure, routine maintenance has been conducted and the Management Committee have met one a month on line to discuss options to bring the VH back on-line again. COVID-19 safe measures were put in place including:

- NHS Track and Trace registration
- Purchase of bar screens

- Sanitation products
- A deep clean

10. Maintenance carried during the period includes:

- Purchase and fitting of new security doors at the main entrance
- Treatment and wash of the exterior
- Replacement of a broken water heater in the male toilet sink unit
- Fire inspection
- Trim of the car-park hedge (thanks to Mr Glover)
- Updates to the Web Page including new MC email addresses

The Hall opened for the local elections in May 21, and the socially distanced May Parish Council meeting prior to lock-down rules being further eased on 17 May 21.

Financial Report

11. Changing the account mandate in line with the frequently changing committee membership and setting up a Village Hall account separate to the Bar Account has been hampered by COVID-19 restrictions affecting the bank's responsiveness. However, these matters are in hand and we hope the Village Hall account will be up and running soon to be compliant. Although efforts were made to reduce financial outlay during the COVID-19 restrictions period, routine maintenance and services bills have continued to be paid at reduced rates.

- The Bar account balance is currently: £1602.68
- The Reserve account is currently: £1968.00

Help needed to run your Village Hall

12. The VH cannot fully function with a committee of 3. For proper governance, we need a Treasurer and representatives from the various interest groups within the community. For the VH to reach its full potential, volunteers are needed to join the WDVHMC to help run this excellent facility for the community. Positions that need volunteers as a matter of priority are:

- **Treasurer.** This is an important role that is currently being conducted between the 3 MC members, with oversight of each transaction for the accounts.
- **Secretary.** The current Secretary took on the role at short notice but has also recently been voted in as the Chair of the Parish Council. To enable him to continue to be on the MC but also Chair the Parish Council, we need someone to take on the Secretary role from him.

13. We also need volunteers to help in the White Hart Bar and Kitchen. Thank you to all those that have contacted the Chair to offer help. As a new start, all volunteers will be asked to undertake a short training session in the Bar, even if previously inducted, to ensure everyone is working in the same way. Volunteers wishing to cook in the kitchen should adhere to the latest Food Standards Agency advice and guidance, and where possible, undertake online training for food hygiene.

Summary

14. The WDVH is an excellent facility that should be at the heart of the community. It is time to move forward to provide the community with the best possible service possible. The plan is to do so in a controlled manner and we need your help to do so. Do please follow our announcements on the website at <https://westderehamvillagehall.co.uk/> or contact us at the following email addresses or via our Facebook page.

- Chair: Andy Challen wdvhchair@gmail.com
- Secretary: Nick Drew wdvhsecretary@gmail.com
- Bookings Manager: Fran Housden wdvhbookings@gmail.com

7. West Dereham Village Trust Report (provided by Claire Williams, Chair)

West Dereham Village Trust (Charity No. 1134420)

The Village Hall Committee repayments of £10 per month to the Village Trust following the loan of £40,000 to assist with the extension and improvement works to the Hall continued. However following a meeting of the committee on 11th November 2019 the decision was made to increase this amount to £50 per month to enable the Village Trust to build up some reserves to carry out its own charitable remit i.e. to apply Trust funds *for the benefit of the inhabitants of the village of West Dereham by providing and assisting in the provision of facilities for the use of said inhabitants, in particular, but not exclusively for recreation and leisure time occupation with the object of improving the conditions of life for the said inhabitants.*

The Village Trust wrote to the VHMC at the beginning of the Covid closure and notified them we would reimburse any payments made during this period. We are currently waiting to be informed (a) if the hall is fully active and (b) if the Committee is working within the guidelines of the Trust Deed/Charity Commission as naturally all Charity moves must be accountable.

The Millennium Project/Village Trust funds donated £100,000 from the sale of the old school to the refurbishment of the Village Hall.

The Village Trust still owns a large part of the village hall car park; the intention is to transfer this land to the Parish Council as Custodian trustees of the Village Hall but owing to the complications with Parish Clerks and the complex requirements for permission from the Charity Commission this has taken much longer than originally thought. In the interim period a need has arisen for a storage facility for children's play equipment by the Church group Cre8. Siting of the shed has been further complicated because of the ownership of the land by the Village Trust as mentioned above, so a lease agreement has been drawn up between St Andrew's Church (on behalf of Cre8) and the Village Trust with evidence of the appropriate insurance policies in place. The lease is for a nominal rent which is subject to annual review.

Finally, we are now in a situation where all our trustees, many of whom are long standing, for various reasons need to resign their Trusteeships hence we need to recruit suitable candidates. We will be looking for people with skills and local knowledge that they can bring to the committee that fall within the guidelines of our Trust Deed and the Charity Commission.

Interested parties should contact the Secretary, Pam Bullas on 01366 501287 or pambullas@btinternet.com for further information.

8. West Dereham Heritage Group (Presented by Pam Bullas)

2019 - The programme for the year before this AGM consisted of consisted of twelve meetings - from Nov 2018 to Oct 2019. Due to various unforeseen circumstances, unusually three meetings were cancelled this year.

The meeting for May was cancelled because the hall was closed.

The July outing had to be cancelled because of lack of support; only 12-14 people had booked, so we could not run a coach to Gunton Park as planned.

The outdoor August Pizza evening was cancelled at short notice as the venue became unavailable.

In January we had a very interesting 'Round the table' with Paddy which we are hoping to repeat. The summer meeting in King's Lynn with Dr Paul Richards continues to be popular. The Antiques Appraisal in April was well attended. Unusually, this past year we only paid four speakers and paid for the main hall on seven occasions and the Abbey Room once.

The Committee remain enthusiastic but we do need the input and support of our membership. Also we need to increase our membership and want to provide a programme of interest to all.

2020 to present - The early part of 2020 had been reserved for research and then of course the hall was closed in March and all further speakers/activities were cancelled.

A Facebook page was started by Paddy in February 2020 with currently 213 members.

At the present time, the Heritage Group committee is reduced to 4 members, at least 2 of whom wish to stand down in due course. A notice on the Facebook page has not generated any interest in attracting new committee members despite the 213 members although we now have 1/2 potential volunteers who have expressed an interest by personal contact.

The Heritage Group committee will be holding a meeting on 2nd June to discuss 'the way forward' for the group; their decisions will then be shared and further discussed with the members of the Heritage Group at the later meeting.

9. West Dereham Royal British Legion (Presented by Nick Cann)

Today, 27 May 1940, was the beginning of 'Operation Dynamo' which lasted 9 days until 4 June. This was the evacuation of the British Expeditionary Force from Dunkirk when over 338k servicemen were returned to England - the miracle of the small boats. And 2021 is the centenary of the formation of the Royal British Legion.

West Dereham Branch was formed in April 2014 and has been in existence now for 7 years. We started with a membership of 16 and, when I reported in April 2019, this number had increased to 31. There was no report in April 2020 due to the Covid-19 lockdown restrictions.

Sadly, Fred Lucas, our Chairman, died on 18 April and his funeral was held at Mintlyn on 17 May (a separate tribute to Fred Lucas was circulated to the meeting). The Branch sent a letter of Condolence to Wendy. Tom Foy, our Standard Bearer attended the Service in his official capacity and Branch members were present at both Horseshoe Farm and Mintlyn on Monday 17th. In 2019-20, the Moons moved from the village to Denver, the Kellingrays moved to Stoke Ferry and the Elmers and Richard French departed our ranks; therefore our numbers reduced to 24 but with Clive and Amanda Clarke joining, we are now on 26.

We hold 4 meetings annually in the Village Hall, on the 2nd Sundays in March, June, September (the AGM) and November (Remembrance Day). Our last meetings was held on 8 March 2020 and 4 meetings have now been missed. Our next meeting is programmed for Sunday 13 June at midday but whether this will go ahead is not yet known.

Despite the lockdown, last year a service to commemorate the village's fallen still took place on Remembrance Sunday, 8th November. This service was held at the War Memorial with some 40 people in attendance, grouped around in family bubbles and wearing face masks. Janet Tanton took the service and Chris Young played Nimrod, The Last Post and Reveille on his electric keyboard. There was no singing, no collection for the Poppy Appeal and no lunch in the Village Hall afterwards, as has happened for the last 8 years.

Peter Starling had handed over as Branch Chairman to Fred Lucas on 11 November 2018 and Peter soldiers on as branch president. After Fred died in April, Jack Walker, our Vice Chairman, agreed to become Acting Chairman - until we are able to meet again to elect Fred's successor. Lorraine Hunt remains as Treasurer, Tom Foy as Standard Bearer and I am still Secretary. Our small branch fulfils its purpose in support of the aims and objectives of the Royal British Legion contained in the Legion's Charter. Any person over 17 years of age who

accepts the Legion's Aims and Objectives may become a member and the annual membership fee currently is 317.00, although this will increase to £18.00 in September.

Report from Lovell's Dole Charity (Presented by Pam Bullas)

The Lovell's Dole Charity of West Dereham like everyone else has had a quiet year. The Trustees have not been able to meet due to the Covid pandemic .

As a result of the continually changing situation and the Government restrictions, together with the well-being of all involved, the Christmas payments for 2020 were held over to Christmas 2021. It's recipients will then receive a double payment.

The annual payment made is given to those who have lived in the village for at least 10 years, are over the age of 75 and who the Trustees feel will benefit from some extra financial help at that time of year.

The charity hopes that as restrictions are lifted that it will be able to meet again soon and begin to plan for the coming months.

10. Saint Andrew's Church Report (Presented by Graeme Pressley, Churchwarden)

Churchwardens Report May 2021

This year has been like no other, COVID lockdowns, Shielding and closed churches has meant we have done hardly any renovation work, very few services, cancelled weddings and other things in the way of worshipping God. We even had to have funerals outside with minimal congregations, baptisms were re arranged and in all the church was reduced to a bare minimum service.

However, thanks to our church family, Zoom brought the church to the people becoming an online lifeline for the shielding housebound Christian. It was probably the only place some people could socialize with others outside their household. We must thank our clergy and lay ministers and numerous others for the lively online services where at least we could sing along to the hymns.

Regarding the church building we have had the east window rebuilt after storm damage with our Lay Rector paying the lions share of the cost. As part of the repair the Diocese employed our church architect Ashley to survey the rest of the chancel looking for any needed repairs to the chancel. When I met him on site, I pointed out that the tower and some parts of the Nave and chancel had erosion of the ironstone and rubble walls due to rain, wind and frost along with damp soaking the walls.

We are lucky to be one of the few churches in the UK to still have a lay rector as new laws meant that many historical lay rectors were able to be released from their duty as paperwork was lost or just not passed on to owners of property that had a lay rectorship in the deeds. As such the chancel is repaired by the Diocese who have a fund for this duty and the PCC only pays for wear and tear to the gutters, windows and furnishings.

This work to protect and repair the window and chancel walls is being paid for by the Diocese coming to about £110,000 pounds plus VAT. There is some work for the PCC which is up to £4000 plus VAT. This part of the work is at present not required by English Heritage and the DAC as usual cannot make up their minds. However even if they want it we can say no if we do not have the money at the time. We will have to carry out the work eventually, probably when we protect the tower and nave which English Heritage consider to be in distressed condition and need timely repairs. To save the PCC around £6500 we broke up the ground gutter to the chancel and biocided the roof to the chancel. Which cost the pcc £450 plus VAT for the Cherry picker which was much larger than the one we used in the nave for the lighting which I have just remembered about.

Thanks must go to the work parties who did the manual work and Chris Peach who drove the Cherry Picker to spray the roof.

We have as much as possible kept the church open and thanks must go to the volunteers who cleaned and sterilised the pews and access so that quiet prayer could be had. I spoke to the Architect and English Heritage about the lightening of some pews due to the sterilising for COVID. This was considered to be of no concern as the wood of the pews was the same colour as the wood on our new toilet which is made from our redundant pews. They said the colour (patina) was mostly dirt polished in and some churches have the wax rubbed back to expose the finish and a new clean layer of wax applied. This makes for a lighter more airy church than the finish left by A** polishing of mr sheen (their term) on pews.

The church is back in use and I would like to thank all those not mentioned above who helped and ask God to bless all at this church and pray for a rapid return to normal services.

11. cre8 report (Presented by Janet Tanton)

In the past St Andrew's Church, cre8, has run two events café cre8 and cre8

cafe cre8

We have held cafe cre8 at the Village Hall on a Wednesday morning since March 2017. The Abbey Room was used as a café and the main hall for mums and toddlers. We stopped in March 2020 due to the pandemic although we continued an online version for a few months.

Restarting cafe cre8 is still under review. At present we do not have enough volunteers to run it safely and in accordance with safeguarding guidelines from Ely Diocese. If and when this changes we would not restart until all restrictions are lifted.

cre8

cre8 is our version of Messy Church. We have been running cre8 since 2014 in the Village Hall every two or three months. In 2020 we held one cre8 on March 7th. The theme was Joseph and his Amazing Coat of Many Colours. The children made their own colourful coats, decorated man shaped biscuits with smarties etc, made spice bags, dancing ribbon streamers and a working model of Joseph down the well.

We also decorated camels to make a camel train. Chris Young wrote some words to the tune of London Bridge is Falling Down. Food was pitta pockets with lots of colourful fillings.

Due to Covid all of our other dates had to be cancelled but we have tried to remain in contact with our 17 cre8 families (35 children). We ran Joseph part 2 online on May 23rd. We prepared the craft bags and parents picked them up from our front garden. We had around 7 families participating in the crafts with three attending the online session. Crafts included, making a pyramid, lean and fat cows, and pharaoh's headdress.

In November 2020 we prepared craft bags for Christmas including an Advent Calendar for our 35 children. These were distributed to the families. We again ran cre8 online on December 5th, this included, carols, a video, online bingo and a quiz.

This Easter we prepared craft bags, including chocolate eggs which were distributed to the families. Also at Easter we joined with Angela Caley and the Fountain West Norfolk to run an Easter Trail in the village. This was very well supported and it was great to see so many families from the village participating.

We are hoping to restart cre8 as soon as restrictions are lifted. We now also have three 'junior helpers' who are eager to get started.

12. Public Forum

Tim Glover commented that if the village support each other, then local events will be come successful and this will happen in time. Keith Gore commented that Armed Services Day brought people into the village.

The Chairman thanked everybody for attending and to those who provided the reports.

West Dereham Parish Council Meetings

West Dereham Parish Council meets monthly, 11 times a year, usually on the first Thursday of each month with the exception of January. Meetings are held in the Village Hall. Agendas for meetings are posted on the Parish Council notice boards and on the Parish Council's website.