



Draft minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 22nd May 2023 at 6pm at Combe Martin Village Hall.

Present: 7 Members of the public and CMPC Cllrs. T. Seldon (Chair), J. Cass, A. Corner, A. Everett, C. Galloway, L. Lethaby, C. Masters, D. Optix, D. Richards, E. Smallridge, R. Watkins, and M. Worth.

Also in attendance: Andrew Wyer (Clerk)

1/23 Welcome – Cllr Seldon (on behalf of CMPC, who hosted the event) welcomed everyone present and explained the format of the meeting. Some of the organisations invited to attend had sent written reports which the CMPC Clerk would read on their behalf, while others were present to give their reports in person.

2/23 Minutes – Copies of the draft minutes from the Annual Parish Meeting held in 2022 had been printed and shared with attendees prior to the start of the meeting. The minutes were agreed as being accurate and were signed by the Chairman.

3/23 Reports – Reports were given by (or on behalf of) the following local organisations:

Combe Martin Bowls Club
Combe Martin Coastal Community Team
Combe Martin Community Shop
Combe Martin Football Club
Combe Martin Museum
Combe Martin Parish Council
Combe Martin Village Hall
Leys Charity

These reports are attached as appendices.

4/23 Matters raised by Parishioners – One Parishioner asked for an update on a couple of planning matters. The Clerk was able to confirm that the application for siting the Council noticeboard at the Community Centre is in the queue of applications being worked on, so delayed but not forgotten. The application for improving the steps onto the Beech had got the go ahead from Exmoor National Park but the project was no waiting for the MMO go-ahead.



Another Parishioner wished to put on record how impressed he was with the new benches in Kiln Car Park and the state of the flower pots there and to thank the Parish Council for these. He suggested that the beach sign which is bound in lumps of concrete at the end of the slipway is the only downside. Cllr Worth confirmed that the Council are in the process of trying to relocate the sign to the wall of the slipway, rather than have it on the beach. The Clerk also pointed out that the flower pots and flower beds in Kiln Car Park are all looked after by volunteers rather than the Council (although the Benches were done by the CMPC). The Clerk also confirmed that issues with the water quality signage and the dog ban signage were being addressed urgently.

The Council were asked by a third Parishioner about 5-year plans / strategic plans feeding into short term actions. The Clerk confirmed that this had started last year but with little public feedback. The consultation would be re-run again this year, especially as we had a new set of Councillors now.

Appendices:

COMBE MARTIN BOWLS CLUB ANNUAL REPORT

Once again the lack of touring bowls clubs that came to Combe Martin in 2022 and indeed North Devon not only affected the bowls club but also impacted upon the visitors spending power in Combe Martin in general. As reported last year the post-COVID trend continues to impact us all.

Nonetheless, we are returning to a somewhat normal calendar against local clubs and hopefully this will give us a return at our bar to maintain the club's main source of income.

Our membership numbers have dropped in recent years, although an advertising campaign last year for our annual Open Day proved popular in attracting new members both playing and social.

Once again our monthly bingo still proved to be a popular event for many in the village along with our participation in the local skittles league.

COMBE MARTIN COASTAL COMMUNITIES TEAM REPORT

River Wall Repair

The retaining wall that runs alongside the River UMBER along the left-hand side of the beach has been in need of repair for some time. The repairs planned for 2019, were delayed until 2020. Then COVID caused further delays. The work was then scheduled for May 2022.



During that three-year period the cost of materials and labour had increased incredibly. The quote now stood at £35,000 inc vat, if the work was done in a single job. This meant the remaining money our committee had assigned for the work on the beach, was now only enough for the wall repair. We had £26,783 left available to spend in the funds held by NDC on our behalf plus the remaining £6,500 money we held from the original funding raised for the Team on its inception.

An advanced payment of £14,016 was agreed for Michael Johns to start the work with Martin Worth overseeing the work, reporting to Bryan Cath. Michael Johns agreed to continue to build the wall as far as our £26,783 would allow. After further delays caused by tides and availability of Michael Johns, the work started early July 2022.

After the first section was completed, I was contacted by a member of the Council who said the work was not within the specifications of the MMO licence which he had completed for the CMCCT with Peter James (who was then chairman). I assumed this complaint was made on behalf of the Parish Council and the work was put on hold until the matter could be looked into. I subsequently found that the complaint had been made as a village resident, not a Councillor, and had this been made clear to me at the time the work would not have been halted.

Councillor David Woodbury contacted the MMO and the EA, asking them both to come and see what had been built. The MMO officers came quickly, meeting myself and David Woodbury on the beach. They were very pragmatic about the work done and asked that we reapply to the MMO for a full licence as the self-service licence does not cover the work undertaken. As far as I am aware (and I should be) the EA has never been or commented. All this put me, as stand-in Chairman in a most insidious position. The tourism season was now upon us, and I had no wish to restart the work or try to complete a full MMO licence, something which is far from my strengths.

On 27th September we called a meeting with Councillors David Woodbury and Yvette Gubb, Jenny Easton, Shirley Willoughby and I to discuss the situation. We were advised by David to write a 'position statement', pointing out the work done was not in accordance with the MMO licence. Peter James has consistently stated that he deliberately did not specify the dimensions of the wall repairs. He felt this would be determined by the state of the wall at the time of repair. I looked up the MMO instructions and it was clear they were not definitive and open to interpretation. We need to remember the original licence was applied for in 2019 when the self-service licence might have covered the necessary repairs. The rest of our committee were not involved in writing the self-service licence application, so did not appreciate any limitations. At this meeting David said the MMO licence had not been rescinded.

To complete the river wall repairs, a full MMO licence now needs to be completed. I have asked the Parish Clerk to help do this, as this is on their land and their responsibility. I am



hoping for the final repair work to be completed this season. Once this is done the CMCCT is likely to disband.

CMCCT Bank account

Due to the death of two of our committee members and the poor health of our previous chairman, coupled with our treasurer moving away, looking after our finances became difficult. The bank was not happy as the account was, in effect, dormant. We have recently closed that account and moved the money back to the Parish Council for safe keeping. I have stipulated in writing that it can only be used for the river wall repair, as a top-up to the money held by NDC.

I am concerned that all these delays we have experienced may put using this money in jeopardy, at no fault of the CMCCT.

COMBE MARTIN COMMUNITY SHOP REPORT

- Combe Martin Community Shop has a new 5-year lease at the new shop.
- £77,000 has been distributed to local good causes, with another £10,000 allocated to the Pump Track.
- All thanks to people who donate and the team of volunteers who work in the shop.
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COMBE MARTIN FOOTBALL CLUB REPORT

- As a consequence of Covid several other clubs had ceased to operate which has affected fixtures.
- Both Senior teams finished 2nd in their leagues and have been promoted.
- There may be one advertising left to sell but all of the others have been sold.
- The toilets and kitchen have been refurbished following a grant from the Football Foundation.
- District Cllr Gubb had accessed money to pay for the recovering of the benches.
- Two prominent figures within the club have passed away over the year so there will be projects in their memory.
- The MUGA pitch project is progressing with the preliminary reports complete and planning permission the next thing to do.
- The clubhouse has had the roof and wall repairs completed with the entrance way and steps the next areas needing some work.



COMBE MARTIN MUSEUM REPORT

The museum has been undergoing a period of recovery after the pandemic. With reduced numbers of volunteers returning last season, we have been open for fewer hours than normal. We are currently open 3 hours per day, 5 days a week and looking to extend these hours this year, to include weekends, as more volunteers become available.

With reduced opening and fewer fundraising events than normal, general income has been lower as a result. And while running costs continue to rise due to the cost of living crisis, we have needed to look for other sources of funding. This is on-going, and time consuming, but is bringing some good results. We were grateful to receive a sum of money from CM Community Foundation that will help with running costs.

All our usual functions have been going on behind the scenes as normal - including collections care and conservation, premises maintenance and monitoring, keeping in touch with all our volunteer staff with monthly newsletters, reaching out to our audiences through virtual routes using the website and Facebook, with local information being posted in the museum windows and display boards and also via the Shammickite village magazine.

The Friends organisation remains open for new members and volunteering opportunities are many and varied.

We have also re-started our work with schools and local interest groups, and have two students booked in for work experience weeks in July. Recently we participated in the national Wild Escapes project funded by the Arts Council, working with an artist and other museums to showcase our natural history collections.

Our programme of events for the year is developing well and this includes a series of Seashore Safaris, fortnightly coffee mornings, children's craft events, monthly Farmers Market book sales, winter projects, half term challenges, along with other seasonal activities. We have new temporary exhibitions planned and hope to offer a space for community exhibitions very soon too.

Management Committee meetings are held monthly and the Trustees meet regularly to deal with charity governance issues. All record keeping continues, taking note of visitor numbers, volunteer hours, purchases made, etc. and contact with our partner organisations has been strengthened recently through more in-person meetings, e.g. Exmoor National Park, 2 minute Beach Clean, Devon Museums Group, North Devon Museums Forum, Coastwise, ND AONB and through work with our newly appointed Museum Development Officer. We also work with CM Business Association, local bus companies and two area leaflet suppliers to keep information for tourists as up-to-date as possible.



Plans for the coming year centre around fundraising events and making better use of the facilities. We would like to put on more walks and talks, re-start weekend crafting activities, boost Sail Loft bookings, re-start weekly meat raffles at the Dolphin Inn and hold open evenings for the local community to come and visit their museum. Last year we were given a set of indentures by the Earl of Rone Society, on a long term loan, that list children of the village from the 1800s and we have since been successful in obtaining grant funding to display these in a prominent position – so we would encourage local residents to come in and take a look and see if any of their ancestors are featured there!

Key achievements/milestones during the year 2022-23 were as follows:

MAY 2022

- Museum and information point open to the public Monday – Friday 11am-2pm, with core team of volunteer staff.
- Events resuming
- Jubilee exhibition set up in Sail Loft

JUNE 2022

- Museum and information point open to the public Monday – Friday 11am-2pm, ongoing
- 2 New volunteers recruited
- Thanks given to Volunteers during Volunteers Week 1-7th June
- School visit and Local History group visit

JULY 2022

- Volunteers Tea Party event
- New items donated on long term loan – 6 indentures for children working in Combe Martin 1800s
- Develop contact with North Devon Artists Residency with a view to shared exhibition work

AUGUST 2022

- Flower show display at church
- Jubilee exhibition created by CM school for church display on loan for summer holidays
- Visit from Dan James, ENPA to museum
- Weekly ESOL classes for refugee families started in Sail loft, run as a DCC initiative

SEPTEMBER 2022

- New crest flag acquired for promotion of the museum
- Exhibition in Sail loft to mark the passing of HM Queen Elizabeth II

OCTOBER 2022

- New cleaner recruited for weekly cleans
- New volunteer inductions

DECEMBER 2022

- Museum closed for winter period – 2 winter projects – CHILDREN'S CHALLENGE 'make a festive creature' and PHOTO FEST challenge on the theme of 'WILD WINTER'
- Completion of remedial works/redecoration after leak above ground floor kitchen area
- Visit from Helena Jaeschke, SW Regional Conservator to assess/advise on collections care
- Volunteers 'Winter Warmer' event



JANUARY 2023

- Review of opening hours and service offer, preparation for re-opening, update of documents
- Start of participation in 'The Wild Escape' project working with artist and local schools

FEBRUARY 2023

- Museum open again 6th Feb, Monday 10.30-1.30pm and Tuesday-Friday 11am-2pm, on-going
- New Trustee involved
- Events resuming with planning and resourcing underway
- Coffee mornings running again, every other Tuesday 11am-1pm

MARCH 2023

- Pre-season meeting, all volunteers & Trustees invited (first one held since pre-pandemic)
- Major overhaul/repairs to heat pump system and electrical system
- School visit

APRIL 2023

- Children's Craft events underway in each holiday period
- Community and Volunteer seasonal events being planned
- School visits planned for June, Seashore Safari dates planned for summer
- Conclusion of 'The Wild Escape' project
- New card reader facility up and running

And all achieved by a dedicated TEAM of Volunteers! So, our THANKS must go to them!

COMBE MARTIN PARISH COUNCIL REPORT

I please to be able to report that it has been a very productive year with even more improvements than the year before. Many being visible for all to see – 20+ extra parking spaces, a proper bridge on Rosea Bridge Lane was donated (no more walking the plank!), Hollands Park is well on the way to being a properly maintained park, for all to enjoy, not just a football pitch in the middle of a scruffy unmaintained field.

The Community Centre is fast becoming the hub of the village, hosting things such as Covid jab walk in clinics a Warm Space and the Food Pantry, among many other things.

Maintenance issues are being addressed but as it is a listed building this is taking frustratingly longer than we would like.

Bobbies Bakes are doing great things with the old toilets at Newberry (under Parade Car Park), but not just inside, but also on the outside – thanks to them for tidying up the surrounding area.

These are just a few, but what I can say is that we would not have achieved many of these without the hands-on contributions of our Councillors, using their professional skills and giving their time for free and at times, even using their own plant machinery. This has saved literally thousands of pounds of public money. A great big thank you to them.



I would also like to thank the local tradesmen that we employ over the year and for their excellent service.

Similarly, thank you to Andi and Tanya in the office, without this dynamic duo we wouldn't be able to achieve any of the above. And Well-Done Tom, who has only just started but a lot of positive reports are already filtering through.

Finally, we had to say Goodbye, to Rachele who finished in December. We wish her a great retirement.

COMBE MARTIN VILLAGE HALL REPORT

After finishing the floor and the bar, this year has included various improvements, like a new boiler upstairs, lighting improvements, etc. but works like this are always ongoing.

The Hall is quite busy with a good level of bookings (3 weddings next month).

We would always welcome any new volunteers.

LEYS CHARITY REPORT

The charity gets its revenue from the rent of a small farm which was left to the charity by George Ley in the 1700's. The constitution of the charity have been tweaked over the years so it meets the challenges of the modern world. Now the charity can give funds to anyone in the parish to help further their education, including apprenticeships and back to work schemes.

In the last year we helped 29 people in the parish.

The trustees meet up at least once a year to discuss applications, so people can apply at any time. There are funds available, so we urge anyone considering getting back to work or retraining, to apply, in writing through the Charity secretary.