

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING OF
BROCKENHURST PARISH COUNCIL HELD ONLINE VIA ZOOM
TUESDAY 27TH APRIL 2021**

In attendance: Cllr Pete Wales (Parish Council Chairman), Cllr Michael Harris, Cllr Ros Bowles, Cllr John Korbey, Cllr John Wingham, Cllr Michael Croker, Cllr Alan Bartlett, Cllr Russell Horne, Cllr Richard Wolstenholme, Cllr Kevin Whittle, Cllr Pauline Mueller (joined at 7.45pm), HCC Cllr Keith Mans and D Cllr Maureen Holding. Heather Lawrence (Parish Clerk) and Mina Beckett (Planning & Communications Officer) Jane Overall and three members of the public

1. Welcome and Apologies – Pete Wales welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies received from Joyce Kolaczowski, Kevin Plummer and Bronya Szatkowska.

2. Minutes of last Meeting – 23rd April 2019

The chairman advised minutes were approved at the next full council meeting after the 2019 Annual Parish Meeting.

3. Business of the Parish Council 2019 - 2021 - Chairman's Report - Pete Wales

Pete Wales gave an overview of the council and village during the last two years. See Appendix one for the full report.

4. Report from County Councillor – C. Cllr Keith Mans

C. Cllr Mans gave a short report reflecting on the pandemic and the community. See Appendix two for the full report.

5. Report by the District Councillors – Cllr Michael Harris & Cllr Maureen Holding

Cllr Harris gave a report on New Forest District Council during the last twelve months. See Appendix three for the full report.

D Cllr Holding thanked Parish Councillors and staff for playing their part in supporting the community, empathising with residents who had to go into full lockdown and isolate like herself.

6. Report of the Nalder Trust Charity

Cllr Croker reported the history of the trust, its activities and future plans. See appendix three for the full report.

7. Report from Brockenhurst Village Trust

In the absence of Kevin Plummer there was no report.

8. Community Group presentations

Food Rescue Kitchen

Jane Overall reported how the Food Rescue Kitchen started, where the food comes from and how it is accessed by the public and her future plans. See Appendix four for the full report.

Pete Wales congratulated Jane on her recent Citizen of the Year Award and expressed the Cllrs thanks for her efforts.

Brockcare

Pete Wales read out a report on behalf of Joyce Kolaczowski about the Brockcare Coronavirus Team activities in provided support to the local community during the pandemic. See appendix five for the full report.

Pete Wales, on behalf of Cllrs, thanked not only Joyce but also George Havers and Julie Wootton in particular, amongst all the 140 or so volunteers who stepped forward during the year to support this initiative.

9. Questions/comments from Members of the Public

The absence of NPA representation was noted. Pete explained that this meeting was focusing on the communities' covid-19 response. Whilst the audience agreed that virtual meetings work it is hoped that the 2022 APM will be held with a physical audience present including participation by a wide range of organisations once again.

10. Chairman's Closing Remarks

The Chairman thanked the members of the public for attending and all those who had made presentations.

The meeting closed at 8.00pm

Appendix one

Chairman's Report given by Cllr Pete Wales

We have 5 new Parish Councillors since the last APM namely Alan Bartlett, Ros Bowles, Michael Harris, Pauline Mueller and Richard Wolstenholme. I welcome them to their first Annual Parish Meeting along with our new Parish Clerk, Heather Lawrence. We gave thanks to our previous long serving Parish Clerk, Mary Pattison, by awarding her the Freedom of the Parish on her retirement. It is also appropriate at this point to thank previous Councillors who have left and particularly remember ex-Cllr Adrian Burks and Cllr Harry Oram who have both passed away and are sadly missed.

At the last APM which was held 2 years ago I opened the meeting by commenting on the support of the Parish Councillors and many organisations who had contributed to the wellbeing of the village. On my return from lockdown in New Zealand last May, I saw a banner on the village entrance sign proclaiming Brockenhurst 'Voted best village to be in a pandemic' and how true that has been! We will hear from two residents how Covid-19 brought the village together to face the crisis. This evening I would like to take the opportunity of thanking all who helped each other showing kindness and caring for one another during these unprecedented times. I would also like to thank Councillors for responding thoughtfully and considerately during this time.

The Parish Council has now moved into its new office in Brookley Road and we look forward to opening it to the public once restrictions allow. The front is presently being used as an exhibition area and we have celebrated the local Brownies 100th birthday. This week we are recognising the Friends of Brockenhurst Station being awarded second prize in the national awards scheme for its innovative contribution to "Food on the Move" and third prize for small projects relating to its leaflet and the Carols under the Canopy in 2019. Next we will be celebrating the local branch of the British Legions' 100th birthday. It is great to have a central location and to be able to showcase some of the wonderful things happening in our village.

We have also completed the refurbishment of the playground which is well used by local families and have now created 'Happy to Chat' benches in the village.

Two years ago one of our major concerns was that we would no longer have a Post Office in the village. It is pleasing to reflect on how the Parish Council has been able to work in partnership with Richard and Karen Dance. We not only have a well used and thriving Post Office but a great Welcome store. When the central post-box was closed we applied pressure on Royal Mail to not only erect a new one at the end of Fibbards Road but also a Covid Priority box in Butts Lawn. The Parish Council has also supported the installation of a free cash withdrawal machine at the Premier shop. All benefiting our local residents.

It has been a difficult time and we need to reflect on things we have learnt. The changes in Brookley Road have attracted much debate. Brockenhurst Business Association supported the introduction of the Brookley Road one-way with extended pavements and cycle racks which was also discussed with the Friends of Brockenhurst. This one-way system was withdrawn when the Watersplash became impassable and full public consultation has now taken place on the extended pavement parklets and cycle racks with the results eagerly awaited. Discussions on parking throughout the village continue with no easy resolution. A strategy for the village centre is being developed which should provide a framework for the future.

There have been visitor pressures on both the forest and village. Concerns along Balmer Lawn Road were expressed with litter issues, flouting of byelaws, erosion of land, parking violations and wear on the verges. From this our proactive Cllr Mr John Wingham facilitated discussion among local organisations out of which the New Forest Ambassadors scheme emerged. The scheme has been successfully implemented not only here in Brockenhurst but across the forest. I, myself, have become a New Forest Ambassador and whilst I am amazed at some of the litter I find the support and encouragement for the work from the public when you are out and about is heartening to hear.

Whilst we have enjoyed the recent sunshine Cllr Horne should be thanked once again for ensuring the village Christmas lights are working and a credit to our village during the winter months. He has also helped see SuperFast Broadband completion in the north west quadrant of the village and is now supporting some local residents with the Full Fibre to Property initiative. As a result, Brockenhurst is moving faster forward in the 21st Century!

Events have been difficult to organise. I thank Bronya Szatkowska for her sterling efforts pulling together the 'Virtual' VE Day. I would like to thank our vicar, Simon Newham, and Mike Matthews for the special church service recorded on video including wreath laying at the War Memorial for the Remembrance Day Commemorations. Even in adversity Brockenhurst has staged village events for all to enjoy. We look forward to organising more events as we move on from the pandemic including Fun evenings and the ever popular Pancake races.

I would like to highlight more exciting projects with Cllr Ros Bowles leading the Council's Climate Action Group. They have arranged seasonal culvert clearing to alleviate flooding and promoted the Greener Brockenhurst scheme whose first initiative is the new recycling shed at the Village Hall.

It would be remiss of me not to mention our fantastic hardworking, dedicated and loyal staff. Whilst Mary retired as Clerk she has continued to look after our financial records as the Responsible Financial Officer. She has also supported both Jim and latterly Heather in getting to grips with the office of Clerk, stepping up as Acting Clerk during the interregnum. Then there is Ray who has filled the boots of Groundsman Kevin Baker after he resigned to take up an offer he found difficult to refuse in the village after many years of excellent service to the community. What can you say about Mina - well quite a lot actually but I'll save her embarrassment for another evening! Mina our Communications and Planning Officer not only looks after our website but is quite often the unseen face behind Zoom sorting out all the technicalities so that meetings run seamlessly. She has also supported a 20% increase in her duties covering Planning issues as people have moved or improved their properties in the village. She has clarified flight paths into Bournemouth airport and its associated Airspace not to mention the Habitat Mitigation scheme. I'm sure Cllr John Korbey, our Planning Chairman, will join me in giving a heartfelt vote of thanks to Mina for all she does.

So, it has been a time of real challenges for us all but as we consider the past and look to the future, we can be proud of what has been achieved by individuals, groups and residents.

Thank you so much.



**Parish Council AGM
Annual Report 2021 – Cllr Keith Mans,
Leader of Hampshire County Council**

This last year has been dominated by the pandemic.

At the start of this difficult year I made it clear to the County Council that our aim was to reduce and eventually stop the spread of the virus. We should do so by working as one team within the public sector and with our colleagues in the private and voluntary sectors, and by helping each other through this crisis.

In my view the whole community has stepped up to the mark and worked brilliantly together. We now have low rates of infection, reducing hospital admissions and very few deaths.

Throughout the pandemic Hampshire's figures in all three areas above have been below the national average. This indicates how well relatively speaking we have managed across the Forest and across the County. In the weeks and months ahead the County will be helping the recovery in any way we can.

Finally I would like to thank this Council and all the local community groups for all their help and assistance during the crisis.

Appendix three

Nalder Trust Report given by Cllr Michael Croker chairman of the Nalder Trust Committee

Introduction

The Nalder Trust (the trust) was created under the will of Miss Nalder to provide a home for elderly people. Under the will, Brockenhurst Parish Council is the sole trustee of the trust and runs the Trust under the terms of the will and a separate Administration Deed and under the umbrella of charity law, rather than local government law. The Trust is a charity (1173530 - details of the latest return to the Charity Commission can be found here:

(<https://register-of-charities.charitycommission.gov.uk/charity-search/-/results/page/1/delta/20/keywords/1173530>).

Whilst the Council is the sole trustee, the running of the Trust is greatly assisted by a Committee (reporting to the Council) which consists of both councillors and non councillors. Over the years these non Councillors have provided much support and encouragement. Sadly, one of those non-councillors was Dr Derek Browne, who died last year. He was always committed to the Trust's work and his local knowledge will be greatly missed.

Activity

The Trust owns four flats in Homeforde House. The flats continue to be fully occupied by tenants with a local connection. During 2020 one of the flats became vacant and, although it has now been relet, the (non Covid related) death of the former tenant without heirs during the pandemic led to unprecedented difficulties in both clearing the flat and preparing it for reoccupation. I would like to acknowledge the very time consuming and difficult work of the Clerk/Trust Administrators (Jim Bailey and Mary Pattison) in sorting out these issues with our agents, English Rural Housing Association during the various periods and types of restrictions in force in the last year.

Future possibilities

The Trust's activities in providing charitable housing qualify it to be classified as an Almshouse. The Almshouse Association granted membership to the Trust in December 2020 (reference number M9777). Almshouse status will allow the Trust to explore sources of capital finance to expand its currently small number of flats.

The Trust has accumulated some reserves and its priority strategy is to extend the lease of the one flat it owns where the term remaining is close to 60 years. This may be costly but the reserves are sufficient to purchase it. However, the Trust has decided not to take immediate action as the government has indicated it may legislate to reduce the capital payments owners need to make to the freeholder in these situations. Building on its Almshouse status, the Trust hopes to proceed with a fund raising strategy in the next financial year, 2021/22.

Appendix four

District Councillors Report

What an extraordinary year! How on earth does one summarise the past 12 months.

New Forest District Council (NFDC) has certainly played its part in supporting the communities of the New Forest.

Tens of millions of pounds have been distributed by the District Council on behalf of the UK Government to our businesses.

And monies are still being paid out now as businesses begin the delicate journey back to some form of normal trading.

I am very proud of the entire staff at NFDC who have all rallied to make this happen. We have been one of the quickest Councils to distribute these funds. We have also tried to make the process as simple as possible – AND at the same time trying to ensure the correct controls and procedures for Public monies.

Meanwhile quietly and resolutely everyday duties have continued. Bins have been emptied, Planning has continued and Housing has been continuing its very bold path to provide 600 new Council houses by 2038.

Then there are other unforeseen matters (apart from a Pandemic) – the collapse of a sea wall, the sudden erosion of beaches. These have had to be dealt with as well during the past 12 months.

Looking back over the past year I must mention Councillor Barry Rickman. A New Forest Councillor for some 30 years and Leader of the District Council for the past 12 years. He has had to stand down for unimagined and unforeseen family related matters. This was a great shame. He has done so much for the New Forest over so many years. I have had so many Parishioners contact me to say how sad and shocked they were that he had had to resign as Leader. I share their views. Thank you, Barry Rickman for all that you have achieved and contributed over so many years.

I have three final matters to report. I am very proud to have been asked to join the Cabinet of our new Leader Cllr. Edward Heron. My responsibilities are still very much to support the economic development of the New Forest.

I hope to very shortly announce an initiative to support our High Streets throughout the New Forest. This will both involve and require the support of Parish Councillors. Watch this space.

Finally, in October 2020 I was both proud and humbled to be awarded the Order of the British Empire in the delayed Queens Birthday Honours list.

2020/2021 – What an extraordinary year!

Councillor Michael Harris OBE

Appendix five

Brockcare report provided by Joyce Kolaczowski

Brockenhurst: Response to the Coronavirus Outbreak 2020

When lockdown was clearly on the horizon in mid-March last year (2020), it seemed that the Church's pastoral arm – Brockcare – was well placed within the village to respond quickly to help those who would most need it. The Church already had a working network of pastoral visitors, and indeed many other helpers, available to support the elderly and vulnerable especially.

Very quickly other volunteers from across the village signed up on a list held in St Saviour's Church or offered their services through the Church Office. The list soon stood at over 100 – far more volunteers than we could ever use. This large number was testament to the desire that most felt at the time to help those in our midst who needed support, and it was a measure of just how caring a village we are all privileged to live in. Other self-help groups which had formed in Balmer Lawn Road, on New Forest Drive and in other roads across the village, joined forces with us to work together.

The Brockcare Coronavirus Team members were able, using some of our newly recruited volunteers, to arrange for every household in the village to receive a card of 'Useful Numbers'. These could be used by villagers to access volunteers to help with shopping, run vital errands or offer telephone support. Once in lockdown, the team 'married up' volunteers with those who required help of any kind. Some volunteers who themselves felt too vulnerable to shop for others, chose instead to make regular telephone contact with the elderly and vulnerable. These links with the outside world proved vital for those facing isolation.

Over the months which followed many new friendships were made across our village. Our volunteers often commented that 'giving' really is better than receiving, and they were pleased to have been part of the village response to Coronavirus. In more recent times, some of these volunteers have joined the Brockenhurst Care Car group as drivers, and others offered to take elderly villagers for their vaccinations when the roll out got underway in December. Perhaps the experience of volunteering is something that can be encouraged going forward – there are so many wonderful groups and activities within Brockenhurst which need ongoing support.

We cannot thank personally, all of those who came forward to help last March, even though we would like to. We have all learned many lessons as a result of the experiences of the past year, not least that what many of us thought might be the important things in life, turned out not to be so.

As a village we can never go back to how we were BC – before coronavirus. We can never 'unknow' the people we have made contact with as a result of this crisis. Across our village, many fine relationships have been forged, numerous kindnesses have been performed, and a great deal of goodwill has been generated. Much good has come out of bad, and for all of that we should be enormously grateful.

Joyce Kolaczowski – on behalf of the Brockcare Coronavirus Team and the many volunteers from our village.

Appendix six

Food Rescue Kitchen report given by Jane Overall

Good Evening – and thank you for the invitation to join you tonight to talk about two of my great passions – Rescuing Food Surplus and cooking. Luckily, I have been able to combine these passions and in the process have been able to help some of our local community.

For those of you who do not know me – I have lived and worked in the Village since the early nineties operating several catering businesses here during that time until my retirement 7 years ago.

I have always been concerned about the amount of food that is wasted each day by the supermarkets. With the pandemic affecting all our lives in so many ways wanted to find a way to rescue this food and redistribute to those who maybe struggling for whatever reason.

I started collecting a small amount of surplus food from a couple of supermarkets in September 2020 and delivering it to local families. As the amount being offered to me to collect grew and grew it became clear that there was a need for this to become a proper community project and so The Food Rescue Kitchen was born.

At present I collect from between 6-8 local supermarkets each day – some first thing in the morning with the majority being collected between 9-10pm each night before they close. These collections consist mainly of fruit, vegetables, bread, eggs, cakes, and pastries deemed past their best, but are perfectly safe to eat.

With an incredible amount of support from the team at Brockenhurst Village Hall and its Trustees I was able to open a Food Hub during the second lockdown, allowing local people to come and help themselves to any of the food that I had rescued from the supermarkets that would have otherwise gone to waste.

We have also tried to break down the stigma of people feeling embarrassed about asking for help - it could happen to any of us at any time - especially now - and through chatting to people visiting us have found some who have really been struggling but did not realize that they could get additional help and support from our local wonderful New Forest Basics Bank.

We do not means test – or ask questions about their circumstances - just simply ask that they take what they need. No charge is made.

The project is funded by myself, but I have been extremely grateful to have received donations from Brockenhurst Parish Council, New Forest Rotary, Brockenhurst WI, The Groomes Trust and Waitrose Lymington to help towards the costs of keeping the project going. Sadly, as I am not set up to be a charity, CIC or association at this time I am prevented from accessing some grants that are available.

At present, The Hub is open seven days a week between midday and 3pm - in addition, I also bake between 80-100 cakes each week which go to the New Forest Basics Bank to go out in their food parcels. These cakes are made using surplus foods collected and supplemented by additional ingredients I purchase myself.

The cakes for the next few weeks are Banana as there is a massive glut of them being discarded by the supermarkets at the moment – but I can make cakes out of the most bizarre ingredients presented to me – I love a challenge and always have willing testers to try out my strange creations.

I have also been able to cook a small amount of soups and basic ready meals to freeze for the older members of our community using surplus. However as refrigeration and freezing capacity available to me at present is extremely limited this has had to be put on hold until I can find a commercial kitchen that can accommodate me to produce meals on a larger scale.

We are also in the process of producing a range of jams and chutneys again making good use of gluts of surplus, which we plan to sell in the future to help with ongoing costs. Sometimes there is just too much of one product to just be given out in the Hub, so this is a way to preserve the life of these items for a little longer.

We also send some of our surplus out to other charity and community groups that may need a little bit of help. As well as the cakes I bake each week, I also give bread and pastries to the New Forest Basics Bank together with any other gluts of fruit and vegetable surplus that I cannot use.

Sway Little Flyers Pre-school collect bread, biscuits and fruit weekly and we have just started to send bread and fruit to Eaglewood School in New Milton. Basically, if we have it anyone in need can have it to make use of so that it does not go to waste.

I have many more plans going forward to find ways to help the community further including offering basic cookery lessons and recipe cards showing people how to make the best use of the surplus they get.

Sadly, but inevitably with the country beginning to open up and the Village Hall being used again, I have had to move out but have been generously given a few weeks at the Brockenhurst Masonic Hall until they open up there rooms again. I am actively seeking another temporary home until a permanent base can be found, where I can either operate the Hub as before, where people can come and select what they need or a distribution Hub where we pack up the food and deliver it out to the community in need.

I welcome any who have not seen what we do to visit us at the Masonic Hall whilst we are there to see first-hand what we do and see the incredible amount of waste that is collected that would otherwise be thrown away.

Thank you.