



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

18th July 2023
at Crawcrook Pavilion
7.00 p.m. – 8.30 p.m.

MINUTES

- 1. Chair's opening remarks:** Chris Beer (acting Chair) welcomed everyone to the AGM of Our Villages Crawcrook and Greenside.
- 2. Apologies for absence:** Helen Haran, Stuart Lowerson, Norma Blackith, Maureen Forster, John Forster, Diane Cadman, Anne Farrow, Kath McCartney
- 3. Talk on Hope for Hedgehogs Woodside presented by Penny Laverick:**

Penny started by explaining that it's not possible to bring live hedgehogs to talks and events as it's too stressful for the animals. Previously Hope for Hedgehogs had operated out of two sheds situated at the house of Sandra who is one of the founders. The sheds were vulnerable to the weather, difficult to keep clean and warm. They now have a hedgehog clinic on Crawcrook main street. There is strictly no public access as the hedgehogs need peace and to be treated with respect. The clinic has been very busy and currently all hedgehog cages are full with admissions. The hog phone rings constantly during the busy season.

Penny is one of the hardworking volunteers and performs 'tuck down' most days, this involves topping up the hedgehog's food, checking their well being and providing fresh water. The hedgehogs require daily medications depending on their condition and each cage has a status board similar to a hospital patient.

Hedgehogs have a strict diet; their favourite foods are beetles and slugs although the latter can give them parasites. They also enjoy meaty cat and dog food but they can't tolerate gravy or fish. Hedgehogs will eat most things when hungry even if it's not appropriate to their diet, some of the hogs admitted have unfortunately been made worse by well intentioned bread and milk provided by humans. Baby hedgehogs can suffer when fed inappropriate food as their immature digestive systems cannot handle solids.

Hope for Hedgehogs aim to preserve life and release healthy hogs back into the wild. Release sites require a hedgehog house and support feeds. Their organisation has been active for 3 years although Sandra had single handedly looked after Hedgehogs

previously. All volunteers receive a full induction, trial sessions and a buddy. They use the Sling app to manage the rota. There is a waiting list of volunteers, however, people with lab skills are particularly sought after due to the nature of the work as microscopes are used to investigate hedgehog's illnesses/parasites.

Hope for Hedgehogs rely on donations, donations can be made via paypal and they also have an Amazon wishlist. A donation bin will be put in Crawcrook Pavilion for donations of suitable cat and dog food (no fish or gravy).

The estimated hedgehog population in the UK is now less than 1 million compared to the estimated 30-50 million in 1950's. This sad decline is largely due to human activity and expansion of urban areas destroying wildlife corridors.

Hope for Hedgehogs are looking to revamp their website, they also use Facebook for hog updates. After the Autumn babies have been cared for they will look to do school talks. They are working towards charitable status too.

4. Presentation of Annual Report (Chair): Chris Beer presented the report verbally, he explained that the charity has several regular activities and events as well as specific projects and activities in progress and on the horizon as follows:

- Gardening. Sue Welch and Judy Smith have continued with their gardening activities within Crawcrook park and around the village of Crawcrook, creating beautiful and colourful flower beds and containers. Volunteer gardeners are always welcome, please get in touch with Our Villages via OurVillagesCAG@gmail.com if you are interested in getting involved.
- Litter picking. There is a team of regular litter pickers around Crawcrook and Greenside led by Stuart Lowerson who tend to the litter picking of areas close to their homes. Volunteer litter pickers are always welcome, please get in touch with Our Villages via OurVillagesCAG@gmail.com if you are interested in getting involved.
- Graffiti wall and workshops. A designated Graffiti wall has been created on the side of Crawcrook Pavilion. It was noted that since it's been in place antisocial graffiti around the park and village has reduced. Matt who is one of the Charity's trustees has also run a couple of successful graffiti workshops and has plans to do more.
- Community Garden. This project is a joint venture with the Church of the Holy Spirit and is situated on the land behind the church. 4 raised beds have already been installed, 2 of which are tended by children from the local primary schools. A gate is to be installed to allow access directly from Crawcrook Park, however, access is also possible at any time via the side alley next to the church. Hedglings donated by the Woodland trust were planted towards the end of last year, an insect hotel has also been created alongside the planting of fruit trees and wild flowers.
- Crawcrook Pavilion refurbishment. Our Villages have successfully raised £38k in grant funding and have used some of the funding already to install new windows, new flooring, a café counter, cctv, security lighting and an outdoor paving area. A community café is now running 3 days a week in the pavilion and has been well received. There are further plans to install new electric roller shutters and new benches and seating in the bowling green. For the summer

holidays it's anticipated the café will be open longer hours and the volunteers will trial running for 5 days a week.

- **Events.** The popular annual Crawcrook Fair will be back on Saturday 5th August 2023 with all money raised used to fund the annual Christmas lights in the village. An Autumn Fair was held in Greenside September 2022 and the money raised fully funded their Christmas lights. In addition a joint event was held with Transition West in Gateshead (TWiG) to promote recycling, reusing and repairing. A Christmas food and craft fair will be held in Greenside 18th November 2023 to raise money for this year's lights.
- **Redevelopment of Crawcrook Park.** Our Villages raised £19,000 towards the cost of the play equipment installed summer 2023. We are also raising money to install a new fence around the young children's play area to keep the children safe and reduce dog fouling.

5. **Adoption of Annual Report:** This was verbally adopted.

6. **Presentation of Accounts (Treasurer):** Laura Clark, Treasurer, presented the accounts verbally. Details below for the period 1st December 2021 to 30th November 2022 where 30th November 2022 is the year end.

Finance Report	Up to 30/11/22						
Bank Account Balance	£ 9,824.61						
Petty Cash Balance	£ 587.61						
Total Funds	£ 10,412.22						
Restricted Funds	B/F 1.12.2021	Income 2021/2022	Spent 2021/2022	Balance	Comments	Actions	
Crawcrook Park Play equipment	£ 14,290.14	£ 5,000.00	£ 19,000.00	£ 290.14	B/F corrected after VE accounts review	19k paid to Gateshead Council July 2022	
Park Feasibility Study	£ 840.00		£ 1,560.00	£ 720.00	Original grant £3,000		
Offset to unrestricted funds				£ 429.86	£429.86 taken from unrestricted funds to cover park plan revisions.		
Lights Greenside	£ -	£ 832.55		£ 832.55			
Lights Crawcrook & General	£ 1,012.45	£ 2,425.16	£ 1,542.26	£ 1,895.35			
	£ -	£ 2,400.00	£ 13.50	£ 2,386.50	Donations from AkzoNobel (£1k), Essity (£0.2k), Thompsons of Prudhoe (£0.5k) and Denise's fundraising (£0.7k)		
Community Garden					Original grant £1,109	£2.23 released to general funds	
LEAF Fund	£ 1,018.00		£ 1,018.00	£ -	For Jubilee Event (£1450) and Mural (£500)		
Jubilee Lottery Community Fund		£ 1,950.00	£ 1,844.78	£ 105.22			
Arnold Clark Community Fund		£ 1,000.00	£ 561.05	£ 438.95	£1000 to cover Pavilion interior notice boards, cleaning, storage & sundries	Received July 2022	
Restricted Funds				£ 5,658.57			
Unrestricted Funds				£ 4,753.65			

7. **Adoption of Accounts:** The accounts were formally adopted.

8. **Appointment of Auditors:** Heritage Accountancy, Prudhoe were formally appointed.

9. **Election of officers:** Firstly, the main officers:

Position of Chair: Following John Neill stepping down as Chair Chris Beer has been acting Chair. It was suggested that Chris take over the position of Chair permanently by Laura Clark and seconded by Barbara Williams.

Position of Vice Chair: Chris Beer suggested Kathryn Henderson take over the position of Vice Chair, the motion was seconded by Caroline James.

In addition Helen Haran and Eddy Hope stepped down as Trustees. The remaining Trustees will retain their positions. The remaining Trustees are Chris Beer (Chair),

Kathryn Henderson (Vice Chair), Laura Clark (Treasurer), Caroline James, Barbara Williams, Stuart Lowerson, Sue Welch, Norma Blackith, Derrick Marris and Matt Broderick.

- 10. Motions to be put to the AGM (to be received in advance of the meeting):** None received.

- 11. Any other business.**

Carl Hattersley spoke about the Robert Hattersley foundation and his work to promote water safety. Carl is keen to do talks in schools to promote water safety and is also looking for support to seek charitable status for the foundation. Carl and Stella Hattersley will have a stall at Crawcrook Fair to promote water safety and raise money for the foundation.

A new notice board has been installed at the entrance to Crawcrook Park. Judy has 2 keys to access the notice board and further keys will be provided by Jayne Calvert at Gateshead Council. One of the keys will be left at Crawcrook Co-op and a further key at Crawcrook Pavilion to allow the community to access the board easily.

- 12. Closing remarks.** The Chair thanked everyone for attending.