



The Chairman opened the meeting by thanking those present for attending.

Members present: John Mackay (Chair), Lesley Barlow (Secretary), Tim Barlow, Kath Cook, Anne Dickinson, John Dickinson, Alan Kiel (Treasurer), Ian Perry, Sue Perry.

1. Apologies received: Hilary Cowley, Doreen Head, Douglas McDevitte, Andrew Moore, Sarah Moore, Geoff Nugent, Keith Woolley, Margaret Woolley.

2. Previous meeting minutes

2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 5 October 2022 were approved.

2.2 **Reading Rooms WiFi** (min ref 2.2): It was agreed that Reading Rooms CiC should be approached to determine progress made with respect to the installation of a new pole.

2.3 **Swing Bridge Repairs** (min ref 2.5): Repairs had been completed.

2.4 **Repairs to benches** (min ref 2.6): ongoing Parish Council business.

2.5 **Cherry tree area landscaping** (min ref 2.7): ongoing Parish Council business.

2.6 **Churchyard lighting** (min ref 2.8.2): The latest information from the GDF Partnership was that funding for Churches was not permitted. The BVA chair had met a member of the Partnership body who had agreed to supply a further explanation of its position.

2.7 **Traffic Management Speed Monitoring** (min ref 2.9): ongoing Parish Council business.

2.8 **School Green Playpark** (min ref 2.10): Refurbishment had commenced on 5 December but had significantly exceeded the anticipated 2 week timescale due to bad weather and illness. Completion and final inspection was expected within the next week or so.

2.9 **Merger of BVA with RR Community Interest Company (CiC)** (min ref 2.11):

Given:

- the level of work currently facing the RR CiC in terms of establishing the CiC itself and overseeing the restructuring works of the building
- the recent success of the BVA chair in applying for grants and funding as a stand-alone BVA
- that the aims of the BVA in terms of social impact and wider village support may not fully align with the responsibilities of the CiC in terms of its obligations to the financial stability of the Reading Rooms

it was agreed that the BVA would review the option of merger at its AGM later in the year.

2.10 **First Responder update on Facebook** (min ref 3): no action yet.

2.11 **Garden fires being set during the day** (min ref 9.1): there are no legal restrictions on when to set a garden fire – however, there are environmental laws that stipulate against a bonfire causing harm to health, the environment, or to the neighbours' enjoyment of their property by producing excess smoke. For the local council to consider a bonfire a nuisance, it must happen regularly over a period of time and the council needs proof that the bonfires are occurring regularly: if a resident feels adversely affected, it is suggested that they keep a log of how often and when the fires happen – possibly with a video on a mobile phone as long as the neighbour's privacy is not invaded.

3. First Responders Update

Alan Kiel reported that there had been no activity on the account – the ongoing balance is £1548.21.

4. BVA Finances

4.1 Financial Update

Alan Kiel gave an update on the finances of the BVA for the financial year to date:

income since October's meeting amounted to £1735

(events in the Reading Rooms, an anonymous donation, LLWR grant and Cumbria Community Fund grant)

expenditure since October's meeting totalled £485

(donation of £242.75 to St John's church, £242.75 to the RR)

current balance is £2347.30.

The meeting was reminded that this figure includes a ringfenced £150 raised by the 2021 Village Show which was being held for the use by the show organisers. Claims against this amount for the purchase of trophies for the 2022 show were expected. It was noted that the RR CiC was in the process of establishing an Events Committee which could possibly include the running of the Village Show – if this was the case, it was suggested that the £150 (or its balance) be transferred to the new committee.

4.2 Cumbria Community Fund grant

A total grant of £1500 had been awarded (50% at £750 received to date) from Cumbria Action to support the coffee mornings as an equivalent to 'Warm Hub' support. This would cover the rent of premises from November to the end of March (paid to RR and – during renovation period – St John's Church) plus incidentals associated with providing the refreshments.

4.3 LLWR grant

A £300 grant had been received from the LLWR to cover the cost of hiring a portaloos to allow the coffee mornings to relocate to St John's church during the renovations to the RR. The closure of the RR had initially been notified as 8 weeks but, after the submission of the grant application, this became 11 weeks which will leave a shortfall of £90 in the cost of the hire. Currently any surplus generated by the coffee mornings is being split 50/50 between the church and the RR; it was agreed that the 'RR element' would be used to fund the outstanding £90 hire charge.

The chair's hardwork in successfully seeking out grants and the generosity of the anonymous donor were commended.

4.4 Request from Resident towards funding for World Challenge Expedition

A request had been received from a resident for support to cover the cost of hire of the RR (£40) for the Gin Tasting fundraiser on Sat 28 January as part of her own and her family's efforts to raise funds to enable her to take part in the World Challenge Expedition. She had already raised £1500 towards her target of £2500 for her trip in July 2023. It was agreed that the request aligned with Aim 3.10 of the BVA's constitution ('To assist in the development of young people living in the village') and that, allowing for inflation, the amount awarded should be in line with previous requests. As such, it was agreed that a cheque for £60 should be drawn up and presented to the application with the BVA's best wishes for a successful experience.

5. GDF Update

There had been an Open Afternoon at the Reading Rooms on 25 January. The chair had discussed options for funding community activities at a church with a GDF representative (see minute 2.6).

6. Parish Council (PC) matters

The last meeting had been in January, and the next is scheduled for February at Thornhill. The most recent meeting had focussed mainly on housekeeping issues such as policy updates which will appear on the Parish Council website (also to be updated this year). Items of specific relevance to the village included:

1. the award of a new grass cutting contract
2. assuming responsibility for the hanging baskets at the bus stop
3. a handyman had been employed to carry out routine maintenance jobs across the parish and it was anticipated that as Spring approaches work will get underway on items such as bench repairs mentioned at the start of the meeting.

The PC was aware of the number and significance of potholes in the village. These fall under the responsibility of the Highways Department and need to be reported by individuals using the county

council's online services and the What3Words location reference. It was agreed that the BVA would arrange for a notice highlighting this to be put in the noticeboard in the village and on Facebook.

7. Community Led Plan

The incorporation of the RR Committee as a CIC and the grant application to the GDF covering a new roof (with solar panels) and new heating system (with associated rewiring) had been successful. Subsequent bids would be made for internal and external refurbishment/development. Roof work is due to start in February and the RR will be out of commission from 10 February to the end of April.

It was unanimously agreed that the RR CiC be asked to consider including the provision of a defibrillator in the refurbished building – and that the cost of this could form part of a funding bid.

8. Newsletter

No progress had been made in identifying a newsletter editor. The minutes of BVA meetings are now hyperlinked via a notice on the village facebook page to the PC website – after the last post, 9 people had clicked through.

9. Matters of concern to residents.

Nothing was raised:

10. Dates for 2023

To be decided – next meeting is likely to be May, with the AGM in July.

Lesley Barlow
Secretary – Beckermest Village Association
January 2023