

WOLVERCOTE AND WYTHAM MIDSUMMER FESTIVAL 2021

AGM

Held in the Baptist Church Hall on Thursday 4th November 2021

PRESENT: John Winterbottom, Jo Malden (Secretary), Bill Clarke, Caroline Jess, Teresa Woodbridge (Chair), Christopher Gowers, Pam Dale, Elisabeth Rozeboom, Kim Priddis, Jon Price (Treasurer), Lynn Alexander, Lorretta Knox.

APOLOGIES: Charlotte Fenton, Amanda Saville, Sue Allen, Nick Malden, Lizzy Newton, Sue Geddes, Val Tate, Kate Tucker, Maggie Hamilton, Ros Bleach, John Bleach, Ally Bradley, Claire Buckley, Noel Buckley, Jane Ivimey.

TW welcomed everyone to the meeting and was pleased to see some new faces.

The Minutes of the last meeting were previously circulated to those present at the last AGM and amended. They were read and agreed as correct. JP proposed to accept them and this was seconded by CJ.

CHAIR'S 2021 FESTIVAL REPORT

Planning a community festival while still in the throes of the Covid pandemic, with all the attendant uncertainties regarding potential government restrictions over the festival period, is not for the faint hearted. Fortunately, the festival committee and volunteers are far from faint hearted, and dealt with the 'known knowns, known unknowns, and unknown unknowns' with creativity, flexibility, cheerfulness, and commitment.

From the very early stages of planning, the crucial importance of bringing the community together by whatever means allowable in this difficult period was acknowledged. The theme of Colour was adopted as a focus point, and the idea of inviting residents to take part in a Colour Trail by brightly decorating homes and other buildings took shape. There were some 82 participants in the 'official' trail, which extended through Wytham and Wolvercote to Summertown and Cutteslowe, though in the event more households actually took part. This initiative, helped on its way earlier in the year by free children's planting sessions organised by the Wolvercote Horticultural Society, gave local people the opportunity to follow the Colour Trail at their leisure over the festival period – and to marvel at the creativity of the participants. An additional Treasure Trail was also available online for those interested in exploring the neighbourhood further.

Some of the regular events which normally attract greater numbers than would have been compatible with the then current government regulations, such as Fun on the Green, St Peter's Church Fete, various indoor concerts, and the Wolvercote Young People's Club Open Evening had to be replaced, modified or postponed. The Children's Parade was cancelled as it would have been impossible to ensure social distancing, though the haystack was still available on Wolvercote Green to receive individual offerings of hayslings. Some live events such as the Saturday Music Night and the History talk were delivered via Zoom for people to enjoy in the comfort of their own home and, in the case of the latter, to re-visit at leisure. However, the WHS Summer Show, Alison MacDonald's nature walk, and the festival service at St Peter's ran very much along the usual lines while still observing government regulations.

Being forced to think outside the box, however, brought about some very imaginative alternative events and ways of doing things in the open air. Enormous thanks are due to Clare Hill at the FAI

for allowing us to put on a Fun on the Farm event at Wytham, giving the opportunity to monitor numbers and providing a safe and airy space for the Art and Craft exhibition and an outdoor venue for live music (with socially distanced hay bales for seating), family friendly activities such as Splat the Rat and Bowl for a Pig, tractor rides, and other entertainments including bubble blowing and Morris dancing displays. In addition, having appropriate premises at the farm made it possible to regulate the serving of the usual delicious refreshments. The Community Bus ran a regular service to and from the farm over the duration of activities as well as providing transport to and from Oxlip Theatre Company's production of A Midsummer Night's Dream in the magical setting of Wytham Woods. Other open-air activities included a very special Poetry and Music evening in the garden of Wolvercote Village Hall.

The involvement of Wolvercote's Community pub, the White Hart, was very much at the heart of the 2021 festival. Members of the Monday Lunch Club were welcomed there for a special festival tea, as the Baptist Hall premises, where the usual festival lunch is held, were deemed not roomy enough to ensure adequate ventilation and distancing. The Community Market organised their first (and very successful) Food Fest Wolvercote, with an extended number of stalls and live music around the pub and the lower green, while the Baptist church very kindly facilitated the use of its garden for children's craft activities. The White Hart also hosted a popular Friday evening Fish and Ships night, with food supplied by Go Dutch and Sea Shanties provided by the regular Shanty crew and friends. This followed an earlier children's event on the lower green which included nautically themed storytelling, games and songs. A lot of pirates were spotted quite a long way from the sea that day.

Inevitably, some of the best laid plans did what they do best (gang aft agley), and it proved difficult and time consuming for those concerned to align the publicity with the moving goalposts of government requirements. It was, however, very heartening that thanks to the enthusiasm and extremely hard work put in by so many people (some of them old hands plus a number of very welcome new recruits), the festival was able to achieve its goal of providing a range of events to be enjoyed by a variety of age and interest groups.

Teresa Woodbridge

Thanks were given to TW for her comprehensive report and also to Charlotte Fenton who was new to the committee but put so much work into this year's festival from facilitating the very successful Fun on the Farm to the equally successful Colour Trail that engaged so many of the villagers from Wytham to Cutteslowe. Sadly Charlotte is standing down this year but her efforts during this difficult year were much appreciated.

FINANCIAL REPORT

JP circulated the summary of the year's accounts and was pleased that, contrary to expectations the festival finances are in a healthy state with the final balance at £2,704.72, after grants to local groups have been allocated. JP expressed thanks to the catering team who raised £312.90 but mentioned also that donations were much increased across the festival. This meant that £700 was available for grants to local groups including Dandelions, Possums, Toddler Group, the Baptist Church, and the Young People's Club. However, JP said that there could be a further £1,094 made available for grants and would welcome any suggestions. TW said that the £250 grant to the festival from Midcounties Coop for the Fun on the Green in 2020 had been deferred to the 2021 festival and as the Fun on the Green was replaced by the Fun on the Farm they will be requiring a

report on how this money was spent. JM, TW and JP will meet to put a report together. KP questioned the figure of £77 against Community Market. JP explained that although the CM made a donation of £75, the cost to the festival of insuring the event included the expansion onto the Lower Green was £77.

COMMITTEE ELECTIONS

The following members of the committee had served their three year term and need to be re-elected if they wished to stay on the committee: Teresa Woodbridge, Jo Malden, Teresa Hall, Sue Allen, Bill Clarke, Val Tate.

OFFICERS

Chair – Teresa Woodbridge - happy to stand again. Proposed by JW and seconded by JP

Secretary – Jo Malden - happy to stand again. Proposed by TW and seconded by CJ

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Teresa Hall – happy to stand again. Proposed by CJ and seconded by KP

Bill Clarke – happy to stand again. Proposed JM and seconded by KP

Val Tate (not present) – happy to stand again. Proposed by JP and seconded by JM

Sue Allen – happy to stand but will stand down if space needed for new members. Proposed by JP and seconded by BC.

Caroline Jess also offered to stand down if space needed as Sue Geddes could represent the catering team.

BC asked if we could find a replacement for Charlotte Fenton to represent Wytham on the committee. JM said that Kate Day Dawson is very happy to liaise with members of the committee on the Wytham events such as the concert in Wytham Church and walks in Wytham Woods but she was unable to suggest anyone else at this point. CG suggested Kim Polgreen who works for the university and is involved in education. JW suggested Emma Collett. TW said that we could co-opt someone later if we find a willing volunteer who could also liaise with KDD.

NEW MEMBERS

Kim Priddis – proposed by BC and seconded by TH

Elizabeth Rozeboom – proposed by JM and seconded JP

Lynn Alexander – proposed by JW and seconded by BC

Lorretta Knox – Proposed by JM and seconded by TH

TW welcomed the new members onto the committee and looked forward to the fresh ideas and enthusiasm they would bring.

FESTIVAL 2022

THEME - Footprints

With the Climate Change issues high on everyone's thoughts the suggestions followed this thread. Earth Shop, Our World, Our Climate, were offered but Footprints seemed to offer a name that could have a wide application across the festival so this was unanimously accepted.

IDEAS

LK – Thames water group and Wild Swimmers campaign for clean water.

Footprints trail

Carbon footprint – TW said the festival committee already had a mission to reduce its carbon footprint but the theme will give this a more prominent emphasis for this coming festival.

Fun on the Farm or Fun on the Green?

Although the FOTF was a great success a lot of changes have been happening at the farm and it may not be able to offer the same co-operation as this year. However it might be possible to have an event at the

farm included in the festival programme. Also many Wolvercote villagers missed the FOTG with the dog show and stalls and TH is very willing to organize this again this year.

Community Bus

CG gave an update on the community bus transport scheme. At present they need a funding deal by the 20th December to continue providing a transport service. There would be a meeting in the Baptist Church Hall in the coming week including the Wolvercote School PTA, along with Cutteslowe and Sunnymead Community representatives to discuss the future of the scheme and to create transport hubs. TH said there was a bus at the WYPC that is fully insured and the Club are happy to offer its use to any registered bus driver. TW thanked TH and CG and said the community bus had again been a great asset to the festival particularly for the FOTF and the Midsummer Night's Dream performance in Wytham Woods. TW asked if we could earmark the bus for next year's festival if the scheme is still running at that time.

Wolvercote Young People's Club

The WYPC postponed their Wolvercote Rocks event from the second Saturday of this year's festival to mid September due to the Covid restrictions. TW asked if they would be up for a similar event during the 2022 festival. TH said she was sure they would and the person for contact is Roy Peach.

AOB

JP mentioned the Tree Group recipe book and calendar.

FIRST PLANNING MEETING

Monday 6th December at the White Hart Community pub 7.30pm in the garden room. Action: TH to book.