

Minutes from the meeting held on 5th September 2018 in the Church Hall

Rachel Hitchcock welcomed members to the meeting.

- ♦ **There were 31 members present:** Rachel Hitchcock, Julie Clark, Maggie Ryan, Lorraine Brooks, Claire Buller, Vicki Sargent, Colin Ramsell, Bryan Smith, Luke Rumbelow, Justin Dowding, Trevor Smy, Rob Swan, John Partridge, Sally Dalton, Iain Wright, Mary George, Shirley Williams, Mike Hunter, Simon Carter, Liz Mellon, Karen & Richard Freeman, Andora & James Carver, Gerry Battye, Mike Almond, David George, Andrew Ryan, Mandy Cook, Peter Drew, Viv Turnbull
- ♦ **Apologies were received from:** Colin Moule, Ken Willingale, Wendy Sparrow, John Parsonson, Tricia Hall, Martyn Booth
- ♦ **Minutes of the last meeting** held on 4th July were approved (*proposed Iain Wright, seconded Bryan Smith*).

COMMUNITY POST OFFICE:

Iain Wright began by saying: It is my sad duty to have to comment on the failure of the Community Shop and Post Office project. As you all know, Simon, Maggie, Mike and Liz and all others who have helped them, have expended a considerable amount of time over the last 2¹/₂ years to enable our village to have a Community Shop and Post Office. Their professionalism in this respect is second to none. Their dogged tenacity in overcoming difficulties, preparation of the business needs, dealing with the Post Office and Mrs Ford are clearly beyond the call of any normal village committee. I know that both Maggie and Simon have placed money into the company formed for the Community Shop and Post Office; sadly I suspect this will be lost and, before Simon gives us the bad news, may we show our appreciation in the normal manner, as a thank you for their great dedication and efforts.

Simon Carter reported:

Over the past two and a half years, in our attempt to save Nayland Post Office, we had established Nayland Community Store Ltd (NCSL) as a Community Benefit Society (regulated by the FCA); secured a contract to provide Post Office Ltd services (conditional upon us raising community funding); concluded a contract for the Royal Mail sorting office and successfully negotiated a LEADER Grant from Suffolk County Council to contribute towards the necessary refurbishment and upgrade of the premises to meet current Post Office standards. We had also obtained the building regulatory and Listed Building consents and agreed a schedule of works for the premises' refurbishment between our agent Fenn Wright, Post Office Ltd and our chosen contractor, Ian Harris. We had received 250 pledges for donations totalling £58,491 towards the launch cost of the business and were hopeful that the total sum needed of £90,000 (which included covering a salary for a retail manager for 18 months, repaying a Community Council loan and covering the increased building costs resulting from the delayed contract negotiations), would be met from the sale of shares in NCSL. We had formed a small retail advisory team to take charge of buying and had started to meet and scope suppliers. Following our public appeals, we had secured five volunteers to assist in the shop and confirmed Sylvie Bond would continue to be employed to run the Post Office counter.

However, there remained some substantive outstanding negotiating issues on the lease and asset purchase contract with Mrs Ford and slow progress was being made. In order to complete the legal purchase to take possession of the premises and the business, and manage the closure period for refurbishment to reopen in time to catch the Christmas period trade, we set a final deadline for exchange of contracts of 31st August.

We had already missed several deadlines and we could not afford to miss another, as any additional delays would result in yet further increases in costs and fees and put more pressure on our funding target, as well as losing the momentum to conclude the whole transaction.

We had recently been informed that Post Office Ltd was reducing some of its fees, so we were already facing a reduction of income for a range of Post Office services. Then, on 7/8 August, three things happened: first, the PO newspaper delivery man resigned through ill-health at just a few days' notice. This jeopardised some 50% of the turnover of the business, not just in lost newspaper sales, but also in loss of footfall as those people no longer come into the Post Office to settle their accounts. Second, the one candidate for the financially-skilled Chair needed to run the NCSL Board after launch cancelled his interview, also due to ill-health. Third, and within 24 hours, the sole candidate to be the manager of the in-shop retail business withdrew her candidacy. With three weeks to go to our final deadline of 31 August, the uncertainty that these developments threw into an already fragile business plan was untenable.

Our role as a Board is a position of trust. Our draft Share Prospectus was already heavily red-lined and caveated, as our trading projections were based on assumptions from past trading data. These new developments created an unacceptable risk profile. With extreme reluctance, the Board concluded that there was no longer a viable business case to present to the community. While an individual sole trader might make a financial success of the business, a limited company with no retail experience, employing two staff (albeit one on a short-term basis), would likely require ongoing subsidy, something we had promised the village we would never recommend. In

that light, the directors resolved that they could not continue with their quest to save Nayland Post Office.

We met with Patsie Ford and informed her of our decision and made it clear that this is not a reflection upon her current business which is remunerated in a different manner.

We are so disappointed that this transaction has not come to a successful conclusion after all the efforts we have all made over the past two and a half years. By the end of August, we had informed Mrs Ford, our lawyers Birkett Long, our pledgers, the Post Office, Ian Harris and Donald Barber at Fenn Wright (the latter has graciously waived outstanding fees), Suffolk County Council and the LEADER team and all villagers via community websites.

To all of you who made a financial pledge, offered your help, advice or support along the way or came forward as a volunteer, we say thank you. We are truly sad that we were unable to complete our journey. The future for Nayland Post Office will now be a matter for Mrs Ford and Post Office Ltd to resolve.

MATTERS ARISING:

◆ **Executive Committee:**

The Community Council Executive would welcome more members of village groups or individuals to join them as members of the CC.

Action by:

◆ **Fundraising Activities & Events:** The CC are focused on events for 2018 but ideas for fund raising projects to benefit the CC are always welcome.

◆ **Community Defibrillator:** Rachel Hitchcock said the public access defibrillator (financed with a grant from the National Lottery) has been installed at the Village Hall by the Community Heartbeat Trust (CHT). There is another defibrillator on the outside wall of the Fire Station.

We are registered with the Community Heartbeat Trust for their Webnos Governance System which allows full and complete records to be maintained about the use and management of the defibrillator. We will make simple but regular checks of the equipment - ideally once a week - and then update the Webnos system online. Volunteers for the rota are: Rachel Hitchcock, Iain Wright, Claire Buller, Julie Clark, Mary George, Kathleen Cannings.

**Rachel
Hitchcock**

The defibrillators are accessible, 24/7. When dialling 999 the operator will be able to give the code to unlock the defibrillator cabinet. Training is not necessary as the device provides clear visual and audible instruction.

A training session, which will provide confidence and raise awareness, will be organised in liaison with CHT and the Nayland First Responders. We are hoping to hold the training session, which will be open to all, in October.

◆ **Nayland 10k Fun Run:** Following previous proposals that, going forward, the balance between the commercial/charity elements of the event should be communicated more clearly, Rachel Hitchcock said that Luke Rumbelow was happy with this and had provided a debrief of the event including the split between costs/profit and charitable donations. Following a query from the Nayland Land Company, owners of Nayland Meadow Rachel will share this information with them.

**Rachel
Hitchcock**

Maggie Ryan

Rachel also confirmed that she and Maggie Ryan would follow up with the Charity Commission to check how best to proceed so that the Community Council can continue to support the event (which it was agreed was a fun event, enjoyed by many in the village, complementing events already in the village calendar without responsibility falling to the village organisations) whilst ensuring that we are meeting our obligations as a registered charity.

◆ **Village Hall Garden:** The next gardening morning is on 13th October from 9am. Please come along to help if you can to tidy the CC garden, or your own society gardens.

◆ **Correspondence:** There had been no correspondence not included elsewhere

TREASURER'S REPORT: Maggie Ryan gave her report.

- **Activity year to date:** Grants awarded have been £1,860 to Nayland Cinema and £300 toward 10k Fun Run road safety. Other income includes a donation of £300 from the Nayland Table Tennis Club. Note: we have a cheque of £1,433 from Event Nations Holdings Ltd, for Nayland 10k, being £300 for repayment of grant and £1,133 donated to the CC – this will be recognized in the October accounts.
 - **Breakdown of profits:** Quiz £395.04, Community Times £1,155, Calendar (£123.50), Fireworks (£1,265.22)
 - **Current Position:** The accounts show reserves of £17,682.76, represented by Deposit a/c monies £10,619.42, Current a/c monies £7,005.64, Cash in hand £66.70. We hold £318.50 for the Services Fund.
- Unencumbered assets are therefore £17,364.26.**
- **Administrative matters:** The Charity Commission annual return is due for filing by 31st October 2018; Insurance costs this year include an additional premium of £76.79 to cover the newly installed defibrillator bringing total insurance costs this year to £477.40.

♦ **Grants & Donations:** There were no grant applications

♦ **Community Times & Websites:** Lorraine Brooks gave the usual plea for contributions for the next issue. There have been two losses of annual advertisers this issue. This year annual advertising subs lost are £325 against gains of £162. We have 53 annual advertisers. Please take and submit photos of village activities and for See It Snap It.

Lorraine
Brooks

All is quiet on the CC website. The General Data Protection Regulations Privacy Statement for the CC has been added.

The Nayland &Wiston website is now a year old and has proved very useful.

♦ **Village Calendar:** Lorraine Brooks said the calendar is now on sale at the Post Office and Forget Me Not and will be available at as many village events as possible. Sales of calendars at the Flower Show were £160.

Calendar
Team

An appeal for additional help with selling was made; at local events/venues/groups. Maggie Ryan agreed to make enquiries with Littlegarth PTA, Rachel Hitchcock will co-ordinate for Woodland Corner Foyer and Nayland School HSA events, Bryan Smith would co-ordinate for Village Players' productions.

Maggie Ryan
Rachel
Hitchcock

♦ **Forthcoming Activities:**

• **Bonfire Night on Monday 5th November:** Iain Wright said the fireworks have been ordered and he will liaise with the lighting team.

Iain Wright

Discussing solutions for long queues at sales points: it was felt more volunteers were needed on the gate and for sales; there would be more cash boxes and larger change floats; some sales items would be sold together – hot dogs with mulled wine (2 points for mulled wine), sparklers with necklaces, soft drinks with hot chocolate. This should still enable a breakdown of sales for the accounts. The layout would be expanded.

Maggie Ryan

Rachel
Hitchcock

Rachel Hitchcock will discuss the possibility of Guys for the bonfire with Nayland School and Woodland Corner.

Claire Buller

As well as volunteers on the gate and sales points from 6pm, help is needed for setting out tables etc from 3pm and litterpick the following morning. If you can help or have encouraged others to help please contact Claire Buller 263344 for sales, Rachel Hitchcock 233169 or Iain Wright 263646 for gate, setting up, etc.

• **Christmas Fayre on Saturday 1st December, 10.30-1pm:** Rachel Hitchcock said the School Choir would provide entertainment. She would begin contacting potential stallholders.

Rachel
Hitchcock

• **Village Quiz:** The next quiz is scheduled for Friday 7th February.

SOCIETY REPORTS

- ♦ **Art Group:** Colin Ramsell said sessions resumed today following the summer break; they continued work on 6 inch poppies in a variety of mediums, these will be sent to the Leisure Painter magazine for an exhibition they are holding. One of their regular visiting tutors, Vernon Lever, will be attending next week.
- ♦ **HortSoc:** Trevor Smy said the Flower Show had been successful despite the heatwave. They have an outing to RHS Hyde Hall on 16th September, and their talk on 16th October is '*Hidden Nurseries of East Anglia*'.
- ♦ **Book Club:** They recently read and reviewed '*Eleanor Oliphant is completely fine*' by Gail Honeyman. They are currently reading '*The Prince of Tides*' by Pat Conroy which will be reviewed in October.
- ♦ **Women's Institute:** Shirley Williams said they have a talk and demonstration of water colour painting by Vernon Lever on 17th September, all visitors are welcome, not limited to women only, men are welcome too.
- ♦ **Friends of Caley Green:** Sally Dalton said they have gained permission from SCC to reduce reeds along the river bank again this autumn. The work will take place in September and October on Monday and Thursday evenings and Sunday mornings – please contact Sally on 262675 if you can offer any help.
- ♦ **Parish Council:** Mary George said it is hoped results of the Housing Needs Survey will be available in October; a community litterpick will take place on 27th October; the PC urgently need two more councillors (they can live outside the village, but it must be within 3 miles of the parish boundary); the agendas for their meetings are posted online on the Friday before each meeting.
- ♦ **Conservation Society:** Mike Hunter said they had an enjoyable visit today to Coggeshall Abbey. On 10th October Peter Minter will be talking about the *Bulmer Brick and Tile Company* which has a fascinating history. At the joint meeting with HortSoc on 12th November Dougal Urquhart will talk on *The Perils of Bird Migration*. The Dedham Vale Society are holding their AGM on 10th September, 7.30pm at Nayland Village Hall with a talk on *The History of the Stour Navigation*.
- ♦ **Royal British Legion:** John Partridge said their next meeting is on 24th September when the subject of the talk will be the Treaty of Versailles; this was an important treaty in bringing World War I to an end. On 6th October the poppies knitted will be dropped off and sewn onto the netting for display. Events to commemorate the end of WW1 begin on 8th November with a small service on Caley Green and school children will lay 48 crosses as a Field of Remembrance. On 11th November the commemoration will begin at the War Memorial followed by a service in St James and then a historical display, refreshments and singing at the Village Hall.

- ◆ **Nayland Choir:** Rob Swan said their *Lunch at the Movies* concert and barbecue in July had been very well attended and was a lovely day. They are about to start rehearsals for the '*Airs for Armistice*' concert on 24th November.
- ◆ **Village Players:** Justin Dowding said their Christmas production will be the pantomime Peter Pan with fun and frolics guaranteed; performances, including a matinee, will be on 6th-8th December. They have received six nominations for the North Essex Theatre Guild awards which take place on 13th September.
- ◆ **Village Hall:** Iain Wright thanked the CC for the grant towards equipment to improve the sound system for the Cinema and other users of the hall. The Cinema relaunch takes place on 14th September with further films on 5th October, 9th and 24th November. He said their maintenance fund is currently stretched and warned hire costs will be increased in January. A planning application for replacing the roof has been submitted.
- ◆ **Home School Association:** Rachel Hitchcock said the Summer Fete and Pop-Up Circus had been very successful. Autumn term is just about to start.

- ◆ **AOB:** It was announced from the floor that on the 28th August it has become known that a regional retailer was expressing an interest in opening a new retail unit in Nayland. On making further enquiry their representative confirmed that the situation was at the very earliest stage of investigation but if they decided to proceed then (a) they would be anxious to work with any existing retail outlets to ensure the absence of any trading conflict and (b) if asked to do so they would consider a Post Office counter but would not do so whilst the current Post Office was continuing.

- ◆ **Date of next meeting:** will be on **Monday 29th October 2018** at 8pm (*Exec 7.30pm*) in the Church Hall.
Meetings for 2018/19: General meetings will be Tuesday 8th January 2019 at 8pm (*Exec 7.30pm*) Church Hall.
The AGM will be on Wednesday 6th March.

The meeting closed at 9pm