**MINUTES OF THE ROWLANDS CASTLE ASSOCIATION (RCA)**

**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

Held on Monday 18th February, 2019 in the Parish Hall

**Apologies for absence**

Gordon Charlesworth, Felicity Spruell, David and Ann Denny, Jane Pickering

Present: Committee Members: Helen Penfold (Chair ), Martha Dombey(Treasurer), Sue Leonard (Secretary), Sue Morrison, , June Halford , Ben Brittain, Rodney Duggua

President: Alan Drinkwater

Vice President: Alan Eyers

Guest Speaker: Christine Funnell

Members: 46

**Minutes of Annual General Meeting of 2018**

These were read by those in attendance and were agreed as a true representation of the meeting. The Minutes were signed by the Chair, Helen Penfold.

**Matters arising**

**None**

**Chairs report**

**RCA Chairman’s Report**

**Welcome. Thank you for coming this evening and thank you to the RCA for inviting me to be chairman. Thanks to Fiona Charlesworth for all her hard work for the RCA over the last three years.**

**‘Aren’t we lucky?’ to be part of this wonderful village. These are not my words, but I so much agree with them. They are the words of Eugene Billam, who started the RCA. In 1972, Eugene was part of a group of local residents who successfully opposed the plans for a large housing development at the end of Wellsworth Lane. They then decided that Rowlands Castle needed a permanent organisation to protect its interests, and the Rowlands Castle Association was born. Eugene edited the magazine and he and Frank Philpot started the annual fireworks display – with just a few fireworks they set off themselves. He also started the village fair. We have a lot to thank him for.**

**The RCA was set up with the aims ;**

**To conserve the character of Rowlands Castle,**

**To provide a channel of communication on matters of local interest,**

**and to Enhance the life of the Village.**

**We are very conscious that we want to adhere to these aims, particularly as it becomes increasingly difficult to resist the building of more and more houses around the village. We would very much like to have your views on how we can do this, which is why we have put this on the agenda this evening.**

**A lot of time and effort is being put into drawing up the neighbourhood plan for Rowlands Castle, by Ian Young and his team, and the RCA is very supportive of this. It is hoped that making this plan helps to protect the village from development which is felt to be inappropriate to the village.**

**We all belong to the Rowlands Castle Association, just because we live in the village or nearby and we have much to celebrate in the village. As well as running the various annual events, the RCA has given financial support to the Rowlands Castle Heritage centre, which is thriving, and we have our very own U3A, set up by Kevin Connell, a few years ago.**

**The RCA runs the village website, Grapevine and the RCA magazine and we have a notice board outside the Londis shop. I hope you like the new look of the magazine and we want to thank Kelvin Schafli, who we think is doing a great job as our new editor. We are also grateful to Prue Amner who manages the advertising for the magazine which now more than covers the cost of producing it. Thank you too, to our loyal band of magazine deliverers.**

**Many thanks to Gillian Lovegrove, who has done a great job of managing the website for many years. Gillian is now stepping down and Mark Dombey has kindly agreed to take over this role. Thank you Mark.**

**The Grapevine now reaches more than 600 subscribers and works well for communication of all manner of things in the village, from local jumble sales to lost cats and earings. Anyone can sign up, and send a message on grapevine, so long as the grapevine monitors feel that the message is appropriate.**

**And our annual events;**

**The May Day Picnic**

**We have now taken over the running of the May Day picnic on the Green, on May bank holiday. The last few years the RCA has run the BBQ, and we’ve given all the proceeds from this to the Rowans Hospice. The Blendworth brass band creates a lovely country village atmosphere, and the Evolution Twirlers, the vintage cars and the other stalls all add to the fun of the event.**

**The Children’s Christmas Party**

**We are grateful to Anita King who helps us organise this annual party for 60 plus village children. Magic Mikey entertains them; there is party food and, with any luck, Santa arrives with his sack. (Thank you Alan) The children pay £1 each, and the RCA pays the rest of the costs.**

**The RCA quiz**

**The quiz, in October, has become very popular with about 100 people rising to the challenge of tricky questions and enjoying fish and chips, midway through the evening. This year the money we raised went to the Parish hall to help fund repairs. The parish hall is crucial to so many of us in the village, for everything that goes on here, and the RCA is glad to be able to support it.**

**The annual fireworks display**

**The RCA has been putting on the firework display for 40 years, and I think this is an event which the village can be proud to host. I started bringing my own children to the fireworks here, 30 years ago, long before I lived in the village. The fireworks have become increasingly popular, even without the bonfire, and in 2016, and 2017 we had a record numbers of spectators, between 3000 and 4000, which was great for our funds, giving us a lot more money to give back into village organisations. But a few of us became concerned as to whether it was wise to have so many people there. We, in the RCA, took action to address our concerns. We took expert advice regarding crowd control and we talked to the appropriate staff at EHDC, and we talked to the parish council who are stewards for the recreation ground. A working party was set up, with members of the PC and of the RCA, and we agreed guidelines, in conjunction with the EHDC and Hampshire fire and rescue services, as to how we could run a safe event which met the current health and safety guidance. The 2018 fireworks nearly did not happen, but in the end, it did! We had 2000 people enjoying a wonderful display on a fine evening! Thank you so much to everyone who worked so hard to find a way to make it happen, and to all our volunteer stewards, whose help was crucial, and to Julia Maile who provided coffee and cake for all the volunteers who helped to clear up on Sunday morning. A real community event!**

**There is now a question as to how we continue to address health and safety guidance for the fireworks. The working party, which now also includes a member of the recreation ground management committee, is looking at the options. There will be a short meeting about the fireworks, immediately after this AGM, when we can talk more about this and answer any questions and concerns that you may have.**

**Litter picking.**

**For the last few years the village has taken part in the National Spring clean event, and this has been organised by the RCA. The hi viz jackets, litter pickers and the rubbish bags etc have to be collected and returned to Petersfield, and the rubbish all gets piled up on the Charlesworth’s drive, from where it is collected. A lot of people help pick up litter over that weekend, in March, and the village does look cleaner for a week or two. To try to maintain this benefit, Fiona Charlesworth has now set up a monthly litter pick, on the last weekend of the month, but sadly this is poorly attended, despite our attempts to advertise it, and encourage villagers to get involved. Often only one or two people come to help.**

**This year’s annual litter picking will be on the weekend of 30-31st March. Please support us if you are free.**

**RCA Donations**

**The RCA gives the money that we have raised, to local organisations and groups which need and can benefit from it.**

**It is mainly the funds raised from the fireworks which have enabled us to support many local organisations and groups over the last few years.**

**In the financial year up to January 2019 we have given the following donations:**

**Donation​ Village Notice Board​ £ 500.00**

**Donation​ Village Lectern​ £ 500.00**

**Donation​ Garden Club​ £ 520.00**

**Donation​ St John’s school PTA​ £ 500.00**

**Donation​ Chair for Cancer Care​ £1,350.00**

**Donation​ Rowans Hospice​ £1,000.00**

**Donation​ Toddler Group Hall Hire £ 500.00**

**Donation ​Donation to Parish Hall £1,000.00**

**Donation​ Scouts/fireworks2019 £ 500.00**

**Total donations given in 2018 £6,370**

**I hope that this summary of our activity over the last year gives some insight into what the RCA does, and how we fulfil at least some of the RCA aims, that I spoke of earlier.**

**We do need a few new members on the committee. It is much easier if we can spread the jobs between a few more people. So speak to any of us, if you would like to join us.**

**Thank you**

**Treasurer’s report**

The RCA financial year ended on 31st December 2018

The accounts were audited by Mrs L White

Receipts for the year £14,005.88

Payments for the year £18,169.41

The Bank Account stood at £13,829.53 on 31.12.18

Cash in Hand £165

**Confirmation of President and Vice President**

The RCA Committee unanimously confirmed Alan Drinkwater as President and Alan Eyers as Vice President.

Alan thanked the committee for their work.

**Election of officers**

This part of the AGM was presented by Alan Drinkwater and the election went as follows:

Chair – Helen Penfold voted as Chair, unanimous

Treasurer – Martha Dombey voted as Treasurer, unanimous

Secretary – Sue Leonard voted as Secretary, unanimous

**Election of committee**

The remaining Committee members were announced by Alan Drinkwater, all of whom were also voted in unanimously –Sue Morrison, June Halford, Ben Brittain, Gordon Charlesworth and Rodney Duggua.

There are 3 vacancies on the committee. If anyone is interested they could attend a committee meeting and see what is done. The committee can co opt members during the year to help.

Helen Penfold closed this part of the proceedings and thanked Alan.

Aims of the RCA

HP reiterated the aims of the RCA and asked for comment on how the RCA could more effectively adhere to the aims.

Lisa Walker asked had the RCA considered the impact of the new developments on printing costs of magazine. GC has thought about the extra people and a need to get deliverers from the new developments.

RCA need to encourage new comers to get involved maybe with a welcome letter.

Is the character of the village a physical attribute? AD talked about the Parish Plan and gave some of the reasons given why people like living in Rowlands Castle. The positive attributes of the village were as follows- Countryside, hedgerows, medical services and a retirement area.

Parking is an increasing problem.

C Shawcross commented on the friendliness and welcoming nature of the village. We need to welcome new comers into the village with a welcome meeting and a welcome letter.

D Mitchell commented on making it possible to get to the village without driving so footpaths need to be created and reinstated.

We are lucky with the person who runs the railway station.

B Openshaw has said that new comers make a big contribution to the village.

**Any other business**

**None**

Helen Penfold introduced Christine Funnell who spoke about the work of Good Neighbours in the village. Christine gave a very informative talk and she informed us that this is the Year of kindness.

Helen thanked Christine for her very interesting talk on Good Neighbours.

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The meeting closed at 7.55 pm and was followed by nibbles and drinks.