

**MINUTES OF THE ROWLANDS CASTLE ASSOCIATION (RCA)  
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

Held on Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> February, 2020 in the Parish Hall

**Apologies for absence Rod Duggua, Lisa Walker, Barbara Openshaw, Claire Stanley, David Lown, Mary Sinclair**

Present: Committee Members: Helen Penfold (Chair ), Martha Dombey(Treasurer), Sue Leonard (Secretary), June Halford (Vice Chair), Sue Morrison , Ben Brittain, Gordon Charlesworth.

President: Alan Drinkwater  
Vice President: Alan Eysers  
Guest Speaker: Michael Prior  
Members: 55

**Minutes of Annual General Meeting of 2019**

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**

**RCA Annual Report 2020**

**Thank you for coming to our AGM. The Rowlands Castle Association is your association - everyone who lives in the village, or nearby, is part of the association, and we, on the committee are just that – the committee of your association.**

**The RCA was set up, over 40 years ago, 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.**

**These aims are very important to us, particularly as the village grows. We support the preparation of the neighbourhood plan, under the leadership of Ian Young, which we believe will help to provide some resistance to heavy handed government over ruling of local planning.**

**The RCA runs the village website, Grapevine and**

**the 'Village and Valley' magazine. This seems to get better with every issue and we thank Kelvin Schafli, who is doing a great job as editor. We also want to say a big thank you to Prue Amner who, for 25 years, has successfully managed the advertising - which now more than covers the cost of producing the magazine. Prue is now stepping down from this role, and we are grateful to Mark Dombey for taking it on. Mark is now also managing the RCA website, which he has been updating. Thank you, Mark.**

**Thank you too, to all our magazine deliverers. We really appreciate your help.**

**The Grapevine now reaches more than 700 local residents and works well for communication in the village, from advertising local jumble sales to seeking help with lost cats. Anyone can sign up, and send a message on grapevine, so long as the grapevine moderator feels that the message is appropriate.**

**And our annual events;**

**The May Day Picnic**

Barbara Openshaw started this tradition and ran it for some years, before asking the RCA to take it over. We now organise the day and run the BBQ. The Blendworth Brass band play, the Evolution Twirlers dance and the vintage cars add to the occasion. The RCA gives the proceeds of the day to the Rowans Hospice, and last year we were able to give them £1200, having added a bit from our funds.

This year, 2020, the bank holiday has been moved by the government to Friday May 8th, so that the day can also be a commemoration and celebration on the 75th anniversary of VE Day, in 1945. The RCA is working with other organisations in the village to make this a suitably special occasion.

### **The Children's Christmas Party**

This year, Emma Barnes, and her sister, Sally Lumley, organised another great party for village children. Our thanks to them and to Anita King who ran the party for some years, before Emma and Sally took over. Magic Mikey entertains 60 children who then have party food and, then, 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 a popular annual event, with more than 100 people enjoying the quiz and the fish and chips. This year the money raised went to help with funding for the second exit from the recreation ground.

### **The annual fireworks display**

The RCA has been putting on the firework display for 40 years, and we are pleased that we can continue to do this. The future of the fireworks has been in question over the last few years, as many of you know. Health and safety guidelines have meant that the fireworks could not continue unless a second exit was made from the recreation ground, to be used only in an emergency. For a while it seemed that the challenges would be too great, and we would have to accept that the years of fireworks were over – a sad prospect.

We all appreciate the help and support from the parish council, led by Chris Stanley, in agreeing the need for a second exit, and we are particularly grateful to Councillors Jon Moss and Frank Ball, who were on a working party with, Stephen Crooks, myself and Gordon Charlesworth, to try to find a solution. None of us had anticipated how huge the challenge would be, and we say heartfelt thanks to Frank and Jon for the endless hours they put into meetings, phone calls and emails to find a way to make the exit happen. Funding was a challenge, but there was some 'development' funding, some from the community funds of our district and county councillors, and the RCA and the Paris Council shared the rest of the cost between us. Thank you to everyone who contributed to our appeal for funds late last summer.

**And amazingly – it did happen! In time for the fireworks!**

It seemed unfair, then, after all that effort, that the forecast of gales, forced us to postpone the fireworks from the planned 2nd November, until the following Saturday. We don't think this has ever happened before. The following Saturday there was less wind but it was a miserable, cold and wet day – but the rains did stop around 5pm, and in the end there was a wonderful display on a perfect evening – even if it was very muddy underfoot. Despite all the problems, we did make a modest profit and we have now given this money to various organisations and groups in the village.

Thank you to everyone who worked so hard to find a way to make the fireworks 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 clear up on Sunday morning. This is a real community event, which the RCA is proud to be organising.

### **Litter picking.**

For the last few years the RCA has organised for the village to be part of the National Spring clean event, in the last weekend in March. This weekend event is successful with many residents coming to help, and the village does look cleaner for a week or two. We now organise a monthly litter pick, on the last weekend of the month, but sadly this has not been well attended, even though we offer free bacon butties at the end of the morning. Now we don't know whether we should continue these monthly litter picks, or not. Please tell us how we can encourage more residents to take part.

## **RCA Donations**

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

**In January 2019 we gave money to the Scouts, and in the last six weeks we have given money to :**

**St John's school    to improve an outside play area**  
**St Hubert's church    to help to preserve the murals.**  
**The Parish Hall    to help to improve the lighting**  
**The doctors' surgery    to fund new chairs**  
**R C heritage centre,    an audio visual presentation unit**  
**The gardening club    to buy trees for the village**  
**The Parish council    for defibrillator maintenance**  
**The scouts    to buy a wooden log store**

**And we are always open to requests for funding for good causes in the village.**

**I hope that this summary of our activity over the last year is helpful, and shows how we try to fulfil the RCA aims.**

**We do need new members on the committee. If all of us, who have been on the committee for more than four years, resign, then there will be only Mary left, which seems a bit tough on Mary!**

**Do 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 2019

The accounts were audited by Mrs L White

Receipts for the year £16,914.85

Payments for the year £17,032.43

The Bank Account stood at £13,711.95 on 31.12.19

Cash in Hand £165

### **Confirmation of President and Vice President**

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

Alan thanked the committee and especially Helen for all her work with the second exit.

### **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

Vice chair – June Halford, 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, Ben Brittain, Gordon Charlesworth and Mary Sinclair.

Alan thanked Rod Duggua for his work on the committee.

Alan reiterated that other people help at the events such as stewards at the fireworks.

Helen thanked Alan for his help and advice.

There are vacancies on the committee. If anyone is interested they could attend a committee meeting and see what is done.

#### 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.

As the village gets bigger and less cohesive we need to think about what to do.

Andrew Callender commented how invaluable Grapevine is as a way of communication in the village.

A leaflet drop has been done for the new houses to invite them to the AGM and as a result a number of new residents have attended the AGM. The RCA is for everybody.

Alan Eyres spoke about the Heritage Centre arranging all organisations (clubs, societies and groups) meeting to showcase what they do on Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> February, 10am -1pm at St Johns Church Centre. Each has a table. Village shops and businesses are helping to fund this.

Model railway will be in the village on VE Day and Village fair day. It can no longer be at Stansted so looking for a new place to exhibit it.

Helen thanked all for coming and all new residents.

#### **Any other business**

#### **None**

Helen Penfold introduced Michael Prior, Head Forester at Stansted who spoke about tree felling in Stansted forest. Michael gave a very informative talk.

Helen thanked Michael.

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The meeting closed at 8.05 pm and was followed by nibbles and drinks.