

**Minutes of the Reconvened Wellow Recreation Annual General Meeting
Held at Wellow Village Hall on 2nd March 2017**

Present:

Trustees Hugh Prentice (Chair)
 Mike Clarkson (Treasurer)
 Rob Greig (Secretary)
 Bea Dowty
 Beth Jackson
 Ollie Hartnell
 Peter Gaines
 Debbie Clarkson (PC Rep)
 Heather Andrews (PC Rep)

And 25 members from the village

Apologies from Marcelle Speller (Trustee)

1. Chair's Report

Hugh Prentice outlined the purpose and history of Wellow Recreation. It had been established at the request of the Parish Council (PC) so that the field and the activities on it could operate underneath the umbrella of Wellow Recreation, to avoid duplication of insurance, trustees, bank accounts and fund raising and, in the process, to create limited liability and charitable status. This was also in recognition that:

- Wellow Recreation would be a more effective way of managing the facilities and activities than the PC doing it itself.
- Wellow Recreation would be better placed than the PC to raise funds to meet the costs of the facilities through sources including funding from the PC, grants from charitable bodies, fund raising events and payment for use of facilities where appropriate – with different sporting groups being largely responsible for their own funding.

The Parish Council's intention had been that all activities and facilities on the area would become part of Wellow Recreation, including the tennis and village hall.

The Chair invited representatives of different activities to outline progress and success over the last year.

- Mike Clarkson reported that the cricket nets had been used regularly throughout the summer with organised practice sessions and particular interest from children. /teenagers. A successful fund-raising event had been held through the traditional east versus west match – held at Hinton Charterhouse.
- Beth Jackson reported that the football group (around 18-20 people) had used the pitch regularly throughout the summer, contributing to the costs on each occasion. (They move indoors at Writhlington in the winter). It was also noted that there has been much increased informal use of the football pitch by young people on an almost daily basis and that the school are also using it for coaching and play as part of an agreement to use the field in return for a financial contribution.
- Debbie Clarkson reported on both netball and tennis. Netball had established regular games and coaching sessions but these had lapsed recently because of a combination of the winter weather and the main organizer temporarily moving out of the village. It is expected that netball will recommence in the near future. Tennis has been a great success, with over 100 family memberships, regular doubles sessions, coaching for both adults and children and informal play.
- Bea Dowty reported on boules. Advice and support has been received from Bath Boules group and ten or more people regularly play on a Wednesday evening. A New Year's Day fund raiser was held and a team entered into a tournament in Hinton (reaching the semi-final). An open boules day is planned for Easter Monday, more fund-raising and hopes for an inter-village match and entering a team into the local boules league.
- Gair Burton, Rachel Kotchie and others reported on the play area. This is indispensable to many families and is widely used but in need of major repair and maintenance. Fundraising to

meet these costs is the biggest and most immediate thing that needs to happen. If the B&NES inspection states that a piece of equipment is beyond its usable date, it has to be withdrawn from use. Weekly health and safety inspections are required. The use of the play area by Magic Box was noted.

- Ron Humphreys reported on cultural aspects. A highly successful theatre production of Life's a Dream by the Miracle Theatre professional touring company had taken place last July. Though not intended as a fund-raiser, it had generated a surplus of around £400 that is now being held by Wellow Recreation to subsidise a performance this summer. A further £1,000 has been raised from the Tesco 'Bags of Help' initiative and a local sponsor has pledged a significant sum to fund this year's production – which is on July 6th.
- It was reported that Ollie Hartnell had done work to explore how to involve young people more in the use of the field. He has had 20 responses to a short questionnaire and this work and information will be taken forward by the Trustees.

In summary, the year has seen substantial progress with a notable increase in the range of activities taking place on the field and the number of people making use of it.

2. Financial report.

There were no formal accounts to present to this, the first AGM, as the first financial year does not end until March 31st 2017.

Hugh Prentice and Mike Clarkson reported that a £3,675 balance in the bank account at the end of January, with funds coming from the sources as follows.

	WR Central	Football	Theatre	Cricket	Tennis	Total
Contributions from teams		475	434	270	250	1429
Fundraising						
Wine tasting	414					414
Donations	172					172
Safari Supper	810					810
Parish Council	850					850
Total	2246	475	434	270	250	3675

3. Future of Wellow Recreation

Hugh Prentice explained that the Trustees wanted members to consider the current remit and constitution of Wellow Recreation, and decide what they want from the field, how they want the management of the field organised generally, and specifically in regard to relationships with Wellow Valley Tennis and the Village Hall Committee

Rob Greig explained that the Trustees have proposed a motion (see below) to the meeting because Wellow Recreation has no formal authority to do anything on the playing fields in the absence of a lease being granted to us by the Parish Council. That lease can only be granted once Wellow Valley Tennis surrenders its lease over the tennis courts – as had been the Parish Council intention when that lease was granted. The Village Hall lease integration would then be the next matter to consider. The absence of this lease to Wellow Recreation results in confusion over matters such as drainage or the proposed pavilion. Wellow Valley Tennis, the Village Hall and the Parish Council each are legally responsible for elements of the areas involved, with Wellow Recreation having no authority over any of it but being viewed by some as being responsible for making things happen. The Trustees are of the view that without the formal authority to take action, Wellow Recreation cannot continue to pretend it is responsible for things over which it has no power to act.

There was then considerable discussion about this matter.

Shirley Betts (Village Hall Committee Chair) stated that the Village Hall Committee would not support joining Wellow Recreation until they had seen for a couple of years how it had progressed.

Debbie Clarkson (WVT Chair) reported that the Wellow Valley Tennis Committee had not yet agreed that it would surrender its lease. It was hoped that, over the next 6-9 months, their concerns over the level of activity in other sports on the field could be overcome.

In response to a question from Pat Caudle, it was noted that the Lawn Tennis Association do not have to approve the lease to Wellow Recreation as it contains the same provisions to guarantee their investment in the tennis courts that the original lease to WVT contains.

In response to questions and comments about the drainage, it was noted that the sports facilities had not caused an increase in the amount of water on the field, but rather had resulted in the unintentional diversion of water from the neighbouring farmland from its previous flow into a number of gardens to a concentration on just one garden – resulting in problems for that household but less problems for others. Debbie Clarkson reported that the Parish Council (who are responsible for this) were taking action to use the existing remaining grant to provide a solution and explore how to find additional funding if that is needed.

Trustees and others noted how they recognise the great success of Wellow Valley Tennis and want to get as many local people to have benefit from it as possible. The surrender of lease would not in any way compromise the activities of the tennis club. Like the Village Hall (should that join) it will have autonomy to operate in its own way under the umbrella of Wellow Recreation.

Richard Holland proposed that a lease should be granted to Wellow Recreation for the non-village hall and non-tennis elements of the field and the three organisations could then be responsible for their own areas, liaise to take action and consider coming together in the future. Several members noted that this just created complexity when the village should be working as one.

Hugh Prentice noted that speaking of Wellow Recreation and the Village Hall as separate things was a 'false construct', as the membership of the two organisations is exactly the same and Wellow Valley Tennis's membership is largely the same. Several other members from the floor commented in support of this, noting it was incomprehensible to have different organisations in the village, representing the same people, refusing to operate as one entity.

It was noted that Wellow Recreation had not been set up by a group of villagers without good reason, but had been set up at the request of the democratically elected Parish Council. This was because it was a condition of the Parish Council supporting the development of the sports facility that a single organisation (Wellow Recreation) with charitable status and limited liability be established to manage all the facilities. Some members noted concern that some people in the village were now trying to propose additional conditions on Wellow Recreation becoming operational - as intended by the Parish Council.

Peter Downey (vice Chair of Wellow Valley Tennis) stated he was confident that, within 6-9 months, any objections to joining Wellow Recreation from within Wellow Valley Tennis will have been resolved.

The previously publicised motion, proposed and seconded by the Trustees, was then put to the vote:

This AGM notes that:

- 1) Wellow Recreation was established at the request of the Parish Council to provide an integrated management/support structure for all the activities on the playing field site.*
- 2) Wellow Recreation has been unable to carry out those responsibilities to date because it has not been granted a lease for the playing fields from the Parish Council. Hence it has not (for example) had the authority to take forward action on issues such as the drainage, pavilion or play area.*
- 3) The lease has not been granted because Wellow Valley Tennis has declined a request to surrender its lease over the tennis courts to enable the one, integrated lease to be signed as drafted by the Parish Council.*
- 4) Wellow Recreation only has a reason to exist if it is carrying out those full responsibilities. Otherwise, it is just another organisation adding to the complexity of village activity.*
- 5) Were Wellow Recreation to close down immediately, then that would create difficulties for the Parish Council and some of the other activities on the field*

This AGM therefore resolves:

- 1) *That it will continue for a period of time to provide a basic site management resource to enable activity organised by different sports groups and the theatre production to continue*
- 2) *To confirm to the Parish Council that, in the absence of a lease, the Parish Council remains and will be responsible for all major site issues, including the drainage, future of the play area and the pavilion*
- 3) *That if it is not granted a full lease over the playing field area, including the tennis courts, within 9 months, to hold an EGM to close down Wellow Recreation at that point in time.*

This AGM asks the Parish Council to make a clear statement at its next meeting about what the Parish Council, as the representative body of the village, wishes to happen with Wellow Recreation and the present Wellow Valley Tennis lease, including whether it also wishes the Village Hall to become part of this entity in due course.

The resolution was passed unanimously, with no votes against and no abstentions.

Hugh Prentice then asked for an indicative show of hands on three matters from those present which, whilst having no authority on these matters, would indicate the feelings of people in the village. These were:

- Whether Wellow Valley Tennis should join Wellow Recreation. This had support, with four abstentions, no hands against and all others being in favour
- Whether Wellow Village Hall should join Wellow Recreation. This had support, with three abstentions, six hands against and all others in favour.
- Whether an annual meeting should be held of all organisations in the village where the membership was all villagers. This did not have clear support either for or against.

4. Election of Trustees

All the original Trustees stood down as required by the constitution. Elections were held to the eight vacancies up for election. The following had been nominated prior to the meeting and expressed their willingness to stand: Hugh Prentice, Mike Clarkson, Beth Jackson, Ollie Hartnell, Bea Dowty, Peter Gaines. Lyn Doman was then nominated from the floor and agreed to serve. These seven people were thus declared duly elected.

It was proposed from the floor that Andy Smith (not present at the meeting) might be willing to be a Trustee. Prakriti Kauthauser also expressed an interest in becoming a Trustee. The matter of the eighth elected Trustee was referred to the Trustees to explore and consider for co-option as permitted by the constitution. The Parish Council nominees are a matter for the Parish Council. It was also noted that, if/when Wellow Valley Tennis and the Village Hall join Wellow Recreation, the constitution provides for them each to have an automatic right to nominate a Trustee given the scale of their activities.

5. The meeting was declared closed.