**Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting for HEATHER held on**

**Tuesday 16 May at the David Taylor Memorial Hall at 7pm**

The Chairman of the Parish Council had tendered his apologies for this meeting due to illness. Therefore, Cllr Pettitt proposed that Cllr P Harris chaired this meeting. The proposal was seconded by Cllr Petty, and all were in favour.

Present: Parish Councillors A Wright, P Harris, S Pettitt and J Petty

 District Councillor Guy Rodgers

 Allotment coordinator Paul Taylor

 Peter Fell, Stuart Rodgers, Susan Dance – representatives of user groups

 Jan Shepherd, Parish Clerk

Apologies had been received from Cllr J Clarke and a number of user groups.

**Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held Monday 10th May**

These had been circulated and posted on the website in advance of the meeting. It was proposed by Cllr Pettitt and seconded by Cllr Petty that they were accepted as a true and accurate record of the meeting. The minutes were approved and signed.

**Report from the Chairman on events of the past year**

Cllr Harris gave the report relating to the work of the council over the past year, as follows:

The Play Areas in the village are all used much more now we have more equipment and more modern equipment. They are all well-kept and inspected weekly by trained councillors. There is also an annual inspection carried out by Playsafety.

The allotments are all being cultivated and pretty well kept overall. There is a waiting list for plots, and we operate a next on list process for allocating plots.

There is some litter most weeks, but it is removed as part of the inspection and is not too bad on any area.

The situation with dog fouling is considerably better than last year.

It was really good to have the Scarecrow Festival back up and running in 2022 and it was an excellent event making the village very high profile and bringing many people into the village to view the displays. It is a really good, inexpensive day out for families.

The cemetery is well kept. An audit has been carried out to enable the council to plan for when it needs to be extended. An action plan has been prepared and the actions have been started. It can take up to 6 years for the process to be completed. Some money has been set aside by the council to carry out the work that may need to be done in relation to extending the cemetery.

The Village Hall is very well used and a great asset to the village. It is now used at least once every weekday, some days it is used by three different groups. It is also used for various private parties at weekend e.g. children’s birthday parties.

**Observations on finances for this coming year**

A budget was prepared for the year 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024 in December and approved by the council. This indicated that an increase in council tax would be required. Therefore, the precept request to the District Council was for an increased amount. The increase was kept as low as possible and was equal to less than 25p per week per household.

There had been no request from any resident to make available last year’s audit papers.

The clerk reminded attendees that they are on the Parish Council website which is accessible to all residents of the village.

**Report on the activities at the Village Hall over the past year**

(Heather Recreation Ground Management Committee)

The Management Committee had met earlier in the year. The rent for the hall was increased at that meeting due to the fact that the electricity and gas costs are increasing, as in our homes, but on a higher tariff than in our homes. This is the first increase since the hall opened. The charges are now as follows:

Large Hall £12 an hour

Small Hall £8 an hour

Both rooms £16 an hour

A number of new groups are using the hall since last years meeting.

**Reports from any village groups who wish to make representation at this meeting.**

Heather Craft Club

They have had a successful restarting of the group and regularly have a good number of attendees. They planted an oak tree in memory of Her late Majesty Queen Elizabeth 11, and also held a Coronation Tea Party. The tree was planted by Olive Marston.

They are raising money for the Air Ambulance and have also had feedback on the Guide Dog funded previously. Wednesday of the Scarecrow Festival week, they will be fundraising at the hall, and they are also holding a joint event with the Country Colours Art Club in June.

Country Colours Art Club

They made a very satisfactory move to the hall 6 months ago and regularly have between 12 and 18 attendees. It is not a teaching club, but they do occasionally have a visiting artist for special skills. They are looking forward to holding a joint event with the Craft Group on 17th and 18th June from 10am until 4pm when an exhibition of local art and craft works will be on display and for sale.

Ibstock Community Choir

The choir moved some time ago to the hall and have found it was a satisfactory move, due largely to the better parking facilities. The numbers on the choir are really good and growing. They are performing a concert “Sing for the King” just after the coronation at Nailstone Church with three concerts being prepared for Christmas and one in September which will be for Choir funds.

Heather Parochial Church Council

The congregation are trying to introduce some new things and are working with Churches Together in Ibstock. They have a congregation of between 12 and 20 on a Sunday but they need more money than they are receiving due to the cost of the repairs that are needed to the Church, despite all the work that has recently been done on the tower. The clock is now in good working order. New heating is required since the current heating estimates with what they have now is in the thousands each month and totally unrealistic for a village of the size of Heather. A strawberry tea is planned for the week of the Scarecrow Festival. Jenny Minkley and Peter Fell are still doing the work and taking the responsibility for the running of the church, despite the fact that both have resigned from the role of Church Wardens after 12 years each.

Heather Brownies

The brownie group in the village also planted an oak tree on the Recreation Ground on Swepstone Road in memory of the late Queen. They continue to meet regularly, but were unable to attend this meeting.

There being no further business, the meeting was declared closed at 7.30pm.