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

**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

Held on Monday 22nd February, 2016 in the Small Parish Hall

**Apologies for absence**

Gordon Charlesworth, Martha Dombey, Gillian Lovegrove, Lisa Walker, Malcolm Johnson, Tim and Ann Haigh

Present: Committee Members: Fiona Charlesworth (Chair ), Sue Leonard (Secretary), Sue Morrison,, Deborah Richards, David Hooper, Helen Penfold, Geoff Jacobs, Joyce Jacobs

President: Alan Drinkwater

Vice President: Alan Eyers

Guest Speaker: Alan Drinkwater

Members: 26

**Minutes of Annual General Meeting of 2015**

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

**Matters arising**

Greening was brought up. Fiona spoke about the Greening campaign. Only 60 cards were put up out of 1200. So this was disappointing. Andrew Whitmarsh is going around using an infra red camera to look at where heat has been leaking out of houses. There is another public meeting in May to decide the way forward. Westbourne Greening wants us to join them for a bike ride in the summer. Need ideas on how to move forward.

The poor response could be that the magazine went out late in the middle of December which was too near Christmas and the cards weren't counted until the middle of January. Asked for feedback on the cards and Greening. The following suggestions were made:

1. Have an on line survey
2. Do it again- cost to consider
3. At the village fair have more information on Greening
4. The name – the RHS are using the same name for a Greening campaign
5. Establish aims- is it to make Rowlands Castle green or about global warming
6. Survey- did anything change as a result of the card?
7. Results will be published in the magazine – there will be feedback
8. Good to concentrate the mind on issues
9. On line-16 replies that people had put the cards up

RCA Chairman’s Report

The aims of the RCA are: 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.

Our first aim - to conserve the character of Rowlands Castle

With the imposition of housing targets on local authorities by government it has proved a difficult year. We have sent representatives to public meetings and have been supportive of our Parish and District councillors in their efforts to minimise the impact of house building on the local environment. However, with so many new homes earmarked for Hampshire, our main focus has to be trying to ensure development takes place in the least environmentally sensitive areas.

The RCA is currently involved in the nationwide initiative to clean our country of litter this year as it is the Queen’s 90th birthday. A number of villagers have offered to help pick up litter around Rowlands Castle 4-6 March.

Our second aim is to provide a channel of communication on matters of local interest

We continue to publish the Village Magazine under Kevin Connell’s editorship. Thank you Kevin for all your hard work providing us with such an excellent magazine. It is wonderful how much copy is provided by villagers both on an individual basis and as representatives of village organisations.

I want to thank the army of deliverers, without whom you would not get our magazine, organised by Martha Dombey and now by David Hooper. Thank you also to Prue Amner who manages all the advertisements.

We also have an RCA noticeboard outside the Londis shop, which advertises village events as well as RCA information and which you are all welcome to use. Just give notices to Sue Leonard or myself to put up.

My thanks to our webmaster, Gillian Lovegrove, who does a first rate job of managing the Rowlandscastle.com website and the Grapevine email list. Grapevine is run on behalf of the Village by the RCA, for everyone to use. It is moderated by Martha Dombey with myself as deputy.

The grapevine is continuing to grow and currently has over 400 subscribers, which means about one-third of the homes in the Village are now reached by Grapevine messages. In addition to running the Grapevine, we host mailing lists for other village organisations, like friends of St Johns Parents and Teachers, the U3A and the Village Fair Committee.

Our third aim is to enhance the life of the village.

We enhance the life of the village through the events we organise.

May Day Picnic on The Green:- Last year, Barbara Openshaw asked the RCA to take over running the May Day picnic on The Green. Thank you Barbara for organising this for the last 20 years. Luckily, for our first year of running this, it was a lovely warm sunny day and The Green was packed with picnickers. The BBQ was very popular, we will try to ensure the queues are shorter this year! Our thanks to Blendworth Brass Band for the music, Jan Halliwell for ensuring The Green is cut just before May Day and organising the interesting display of vintage cars and Pat Carter and Rita Sandy for plant sales. Many thanks to all who donated to the Rowans Hospice during the picnic, enabling us to give Rowans £721.

Bonfire and fireworks:- For many years we have run the bonfire and fireworks display for bonfire night in November. Running the fireworks night is quite a logistical feat and we are very grateful to Geoff Jacobs and Sue Morrison who did all the organising. I would like to thank all who make it possible, including Selstar for the fireworks, Bill Burnett for the fairground attractions and the Scouts and Guides for refreshments and St Johns Ambulance and the Police for keeping us safe. Thank you to everyone who helps to build the bonfire. Many people of all ages from across the village help, under the direction of our bonfire commander in chief Alan Eyers, and there is a real sense of achievement once it’s built. An added incentive is that if you build the bonfire you get into the fireworks for free.

Thanks also to two local businesses – Keyline and Carroway who provide pallets and Carroway a flatbed truck and driver and a skip. I’d also like to thank all the volunteers who get up early to clear up the morning after to make the pitches safe for the footballers.

The fireworks night was a great success last November, with a fantastic display from Selstar watched by a crowd of 2,000 +.

Children’s Christmas party

We organise the children’s Christmas party at St John’s Church hall or the Parish Hall each year. Many thanks to Anita King, who kindly arranges the party. Many thanks also to Alan Eyers for his appearance as Santa and Koko King for being such a lovely helper to Santa.

RCA Quiz:-For the last few years we have had a quiz night, which is now a regular part of the RCA calendar. Many thanks to Sue Connell for setting such excellent questions, Kevin and Teresa Connell for marking and Dave Richardson for acting as a superb quiz master. This year we donated our quiz profit of £500 to the Parish Council to go towards village defibrillators.

Supporting other village groups

We also enhance the life of the village through supporting other village groups by making donations.

• This year the RCA has been continuing to support an initiative to set up a Rowlands Castle Heritage Centre. For some time villagers have been trying to set up a museum and visitors centre with a number of venues suggested. The RCA is supporting the setting up of a committee to investigate how this might be achieved. The plan will be to have a self- supporting committee in the same way that the U3A was formed. The RCA donated £720 for the survey of the vacant premises at the station and paid to hire the Parish Hall for a number of public meetings. Alan Drinkwater is going to speak about developments in a few minutes.

• Following the talk by Terena Plowright about Greening at the RCA AGM last year, a number of people have met several times and established Greening Rowlands Castle. This is still under the umbrella of the RCA who donated £282 for the printing of Greening leaflets which were kindly distributed with the December RCA magazine. The RCA have also paid for the hire of the Parish Hall for a public meeting.

Closing remarks

I’m happy to report that the RCA is in good shape both financially and in terms of the very able people who are currently running the Association on behalf of all of us. We always need new faces on the Committee, so if you would like to join do ask.

**Treasurer’s report**

The RCA financial year ended on 31st December 2015

The accounts were audited by Sandra Hodgetts

Receipts for the year £8624.14

Payments for the year £5380.09

Excess of Income over expenditure £3244.05

The Bank Accounts stood at £ 16,151.94

Cash in Hand £100

**Confirmation of President and Vice President**

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

Alan Drinkwater thanked the committee for their hard work over the year, especially for the fund raising. Alan also thanked Kevin Connell for being Chairman until September and Fiona for taking over.

**Election of officers**

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

Chair – Fiona Charlesworth 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, Deborah Richards, David Hooper, Helen Penfold and Gordon Charlesworth.

Joyce Jacobs and Geoff Jacobs were voted in as new committee members. Kevin Connell will continue as Editor, and Gillian Lovegrove will continue as Webmaster.

Fiona Charlesworth closed this part of the proceedings and thanked Alan for his presentation.

**Any other business**

Alan Eyers asked are there any plans for the surplus. Fiona is in contact with the scout group about renovations to the scout hut. Any groups that need money can approach the RCA for funding. Funding may be needed for Greening, Heritage Centre and fireworks.

Ian Hewitt bought up about charities and retaining a surplus for 3-6 months incurs running costs.

Fiona Charlesworth introduced Alan Drinkwater who spoke to the meeting about “The Rowlands Castle Heritage Centre”.

**“The Rowlands Castle Heritage Centre”** by Alan Drinkwater

Alan spoke to the meeting about what had happened in 2015 and what the future holds.

Fiona thanked Alan for his very interesting talk.

Many thanks again to Alan Drinkwater for being our guest speaker this year.

The meeting closed at 8.15pm and was followed by nibbles and drinks.