

DRAFT Minutes of the Curry Rivel Parish Annual Assembly

Held on Wednesday, 3rd May 2023 Village Hall at 6pm- 8pm

Approximately 50 people were in attendance.

1. Welcome

Marcus Hembrow, Chairman of the Parish Council welcomed everyone to the meeting. He encouraged people to attend the Coronation celebrations and thanked the organisers for their considerable efforts.

2. Apologies for Absence (notified in advance)

Received from Cllr Matt Geen and Bernie Graham.

3. The minutes of the Annual Assembly 2022

These were accepted and signed.

Speakers from the community

Note: Some speakers kindly provided speaking notes from which a summary (edited to under 300 words) has been provided below.

4. Ali Pooks, Headteacher, Curry Rivel Primary School

Curry Rivel Church of England Primary School's vision is 'Healthy trees bearing good fruit' (Matthew 7v17). The tree represents our school community, the fruit our children living out our core '5-a-day' Christian values of forgiveness, kindness, respect, thankfulness and perseverance. Building on these we develop resilience, confidence, creativity and independence through our innovative and diverse curriculum, inspiring the children to thrive.

We have 165 pupils (up from 146 pupils when I arrived in April 2020) with 70 children in our nursery. The school went through a turbulent time 2017-2019, but with strong leadership our reputation has been growing. What is special about our school?

- Our Christian distinctiveness
- No Outsiders (Inclusiveness)
- 13 subjects carefully constructed and monitored.
- A year-round sports competition fixture list; also, the Daily Mile.
- Excellent Early Years and Foundation Stage provision and *Apple Trees* wrap around care,
- Fantastic team and amazing PTA
- Focus on well-being with Emotional Literacy Assistant and mental health support.
- A focus on reading and reading for pleasure.
- Community links e.g Coronation Play.
- Strong SEND provision
- Preparing children for their future careers.

Our current priorities for improvement are around:

- Equality and diversity
- Developing a relational approach to behaviour
- Improving attendance

- Improving writing
- Embedding our vision and values in all that we do

I welcome anyone to come and visit us. We have open days throughout the year. The Parish Council supported us with funding for Ukrainian pupils for Ipads, bilingual books and tutoring and I welcome them to our parents' evenings and events.

5. Revd. Scott Patterson, St Andrews

Sunday services are growing with 40-50 adults and children attending and *Kid's Church* offering age-appropriate provision during 'grown-up' services. But it's also important to acknowledge the 'hidden stuff'.

We help with shaping the school's Christian Distinctiveness by being governors, helping with reading, taking assemblies and so on. The church hosts the 'Big Coronation Play' this Friday.

St. Andrew's 'houses' the Foodbank and 'Winter Warmer Rack'. *Messy Church* and monthly *Craft and Coffee* gatherings are growing in popularity too.

We seek to love and support each other in deepening friendships and our two new Bible study/fellowship groups have supported members through tough times, in both prayerful and practical ways.

Rev Mark MCnight a training Curate arrived this year with his family bringing a lovely new dimension to the church. He will stay for up to a further 2 years.

The church will soon be part of a five parish Benefice with Drayton and Langport/Huish joining Curry Rivel, Fivehead and Swell. This will double the parishioners and it does sometimes keep me awake at night!

Another cause of insomnia is the challenge of maintaining a Grade 1 listed building. The most recent need is for an 8-year £75,000 restoration programme for 13 windows.

Overall, we are seeking to grow in our loving and practical support of families all the way through to the care of the elderly. We are about 'the love of God being shown through the love of the church family and community'. If that sounds attractive and you'd also like to share the journey of Christian discovery and discipleship with us, then please hear that everyone is warmly invited to join in.

6. Mike Stanton and Richard Wilkins Councillors, Somerset Council

Both Mike and Richard are Liberal Democrats. The change to Somerset Council and the budget challenges was explained and they look forward to working with the community going forward.

The new Council is are working for a greener, more sustainable Somerset, one which is fairer, more ambitious, flourishing and resilient – that means looking after our health, caring for our elderly, our young and our less able residents. Overall the Council has got off to a good start with few glitches.

Councillors will each have many more parish councils so although they will try to attend Curry Rivel parish council meetings it may not be possible to come to as many as before. Curry Rivel Parish Council are part of the Levels and Moors Local Community Network. This is a new and vital way for Somerset Council to work with parish councils in the area.

Richard is working on the Active Travel path which will make a real difference to how people can get about in the local area.

Mike lives in South Petherton with his family. Originally from Bristol with a degree in politics he is working on Adult and social care portfolio which accounts for half of the budget and also on flooding issues

Both councillors are happy to be contacted in respect of any local matter they may be able to help with – emails and phone numbers are on the Somerset Council (and Curry Rivel) website.

7. Revd. Tim Richards, United Reformed Church

In 1936 the Mid Somerset group was formed and in 2005 there were 9 churches in the group. There are presently 4 churches, that are now called United Reformed Churches.

The church is open and inclusive, welcomes everyone and provides an opportunity to chat after services with tea and coffee available. There are also additional lunches, coffee mornings and a Harvest Services to name just a few activities.

There is lots of involvement with the village, for example the church sponsors a children's club at the village school and joins with St Andrew's for some services like Remembrance.

Tim is to retire next year and the make-up churches may change, but details are not yet known.

8. Peter Sleightholme, Chairman of Village Hall

Peter began by thanking the WI for the splendid Coronation bunting in the village hall.

He explained that a decision has been made to hold the hall hire prices at present levels for this year, despite the press of higher costs for themselves. This will make it the cheapest in the area and hopefully that will lead to increased use and occupancy rates which will be of overall benefit.

The committee feel very strongly that the Village hall is there for the people and they run the building with this in mind, welcoming community groups of all types. They are proud hosts of the very successful Big Breakfasts (and a Coronation will take place one this week) to which all are welcome.

9. Cllr Marcus Hembrow, Chairman of Curry Rivel Parish Council

Cllr Hembrow paid tribute to his hard-working clerks, both the previous and present one and highlighted some of the activities of the parish council over the past year, before reading the below.

Heating Initiative (provided by Cllr Matt Geen)

The initial, Somerset Council funded, first phase of the Curry Rivel Parish Council Heating Initiatives project is drawing to a close. We have received a final report from the selected specialist consultants, which is available from the project's page on the Curry Rivel website.

We are now in the process of selecting a date for a village meeting on the subject, and are in the process of discussing possible dates with a range of Somerset specialist organisations who can contribute to it. This will be an opportunity for the people of Curry Rivel to find out more about the fast-changing world of efficient and climate-friendly heating and insulation. This meeting will also be an opportunity to agree the way forward.

10. Cllr Tony Greenaway - Active Travel Plan, Curry Rivel Parish Council

It's now 2 years since this project started and there has been plenty of progress. For anyone who does not know the plan is to link Curry Rivel with Huish Episcopi and Langport with new safer routes for pedestrians and cyclists.

With the first land deal now in place work may start in Autumn. Another land deal is also in train There have been objections to one section, but an alternative option is being looked at and the issue can be overcome. Langport and Huish parishes are now involved and keen to link up.

An Active travel policy has now been adopted by CRPC and it is therefore highlighted to local developers as being a priority for the area that they should take account of in their applications for planning permission. The plan can be downloaded from this link.

<https://www.curryrivel.org.uk/lib/active-travel-key-priorities-2023-F740361.pdf>

Table Tennis Club Cllr Greenaway also mentioned the table tennis club which has 3 tables and meets on Monday mornings. It's great fun, please come along!

11. Anne Geech, Women's Institute (WI)

The WI meets second Thursday each month. We have about 45 members and are part of the Somerset Federation of WI who had their 100th anniversary last year, one of the oldest in Somerset. This was celebrated with a lunch, and speakers including Lucy Pollock author of *Aging well*. This event was opened to the community and attracted about 70 people.

This year there will be many interesting speakers at the meetings including on yoga, The Woodland Trust, Forde Abbey, St Giles Animal Rescue and others.

The WI has a Book Club, craft group and is a major manufacturer of bunting! Members can be involved in the wider Somerset Federation activities that includes visits to places such as Hinckley Point, and the opportunity to attend craft taster days.

12. Laraine Hayes, Curry Rivel in Bloom and Art Club

CRIB

won a Gold Award in 2022 from South West in Bloom and Laraine thanked everyone who has supported it including volunteers in the village. CRIB worked with the school PTA and the children at the War Memorial and in Grannies garden where they were brilliant at removing the weeds

Plenty of people help in many ways and every bit of help is welcome. The Parish Council sponsors the cost and the theme this year will be red, white and blue planting.

Art Club

This is a group who meet in the Chatham Room. They were responsible for exhibition in the foyer, please look at the painting while you are here, some of them are amazing and may be for sale. If any are sold, then a percentage goes to the village hall.

13. Ian McNab, Community Shed

This is a Men's Shed concept, which has gone thanks to the generosity of the parish council and other people.

Everyone is welcome and no particular skills are required. It's a wonderful opportunity to use lathes, and do woodwork and metalwork, all sorts of creative work without having to invest in the equipment yourself.

The Shed will be giving back to the community by taking on restoration of the bench in the Cemetery.

There is presently plenty of room for new members so please come along to the Parrett Shed.

14. Steve Allinson, Curry Rivel Entertainers and Foodbank

Foodbank

This was formed in March 2020-Covid with the wonderful support of a small band of willing volunteers. We originally worked out of the URC "upper room", and now reside in the north chapel at St Andrew's church.

We support around 16 families each week, over 60 persons including children and sometimes grandchildren. We deliver to save any embarrassment of people coming to us and also supply many of the families with a Tesco food voucher.

We rely totally on donations of food, essentials and money. We were very grateful to receive a grant from Curry Parish Council and a further part is also promised. Grants have come from the other villages. However, as the cost of living crisis bites we are seeing less donations and at the moment expenses are outstripping income by a three-figure sum each month.

A full article about our work is in the CRN this month and I make no apology for appealing for those who can afford it to support us more. There is much poverty even in leafy Somerset and we also get late night calls for emergency support.

We regularly debate our strategy for the future. Should there be a larger all-encompassing support group? Can we do more in our community on this and other projects?

I would like to end by thanking those who do support us, quietly and privately. The wonderful team of volunteers is led by Lesley Frost of Drayton and they go about their work without fuss and out of love and kindness.

Curry Rivel Entertainers

For over 40 years village pantomime and other variety entertainment has been 'part of the furniture' in Curry Rivel. Many of our generation (and before) have enjoyed seeing friends and family tread the boards. We have laughed with them (sometimes at them) and there is nothing like it to allow a little bit of escapism and to see people we know in a different light!

We even won some awards in the Somerset local drama annual celebrations. Profits were donated to local charities. However, this is all at risk of being no more.

Due to COVID we had to cancel our performances in 2021 and 2022. We started rehearsals last Autumn, but unfortunately the ceiling alterations in the village hall meant that significant and expensive scenery and lighting work were required. This led to the Entertainers taking an honest look at itself. Many of us have been with the group for a long time. We had two or three new members join us, but we all realise that more 'new blood' is necessary to thrive and flourish and expand.

So, I am calling for anyone who feels that they have creative juices flowing in them, to come forward. We will give full support and will encourage a new direction, offering a blank canvass and a chance to encourage young people to look up from their phones and express themselves in other ways.

One of the joys for me was being part of the Entertainers with my children as they grew up. Hopefully, this may strike a chord with a younger family.

I do hope we will be sharing a "new" Entertainers group in the Parish Assembly next year.

15. Alison Cockrell, Movies in the Village Hall

Movie nights are the 3rd Friday of every month (except December). We have a professional projectionist with superb screen and sound quality. Usually, the films are recent cinema releases. There is a bar and drinks, ice creams etc. The price is £7 a head and has not been raised for many years.

Our audiences numbers average 40 people, but can be lot more. All our profits go to village hall to improve the facilities and have included the purchase of more comfortable chairs. The next two films are:

- 19th May – A man called Otto (Tom Hanks)
- 16th June Empire of the light (Oliva Coleman)

We look forward to seeing you.

16. Roger Hampton, Forget-me-not Memory Café

The Forget Me Not café is every Tuesday afternoon, from 2.30pm till 4.30pm, at Curry Rivel Village Hall. During the afternoon we do activities like Indoor Kurling, Skittles, Boule, Name that Tune, and quizzes. We then play Bingo or Dominoes.

At around 3.30pm we have tea and homemade cakes, and for the last half hour we have a Singalong. We also invite local groups like Take Note, and the Ukulele Band to entertain us. We also have themed afternoons for Easter, Coronation, Valentines Day and Christmas.

We have around 16 to 18 clients attending every week and have a Leader and four helpers to ensure the afternoon is fun and safe. We have a team of 7 leaders and 16 helpers, of which Chris, Adrienne and myself are part of the team.

We are looking for anyone who can spare 2 hours a month as a helper, and also any musicians (Pianist/guitarist) who can spare 30 minutes a month.

All contact details are on our flyers, and on our website which is www.myforgetmenotcafe.co.uk
Our website shows photographs, of what we do.

17. Peter Goodenough, Curry Woods Conservation Trust

Curry Woods Conservation Trust was set up in 2020 to protect Curry Rivel village, especially the school, from flooding by buying land and planting trees on it.

The initial arable land brought by the Trust is at the highest point of the Parish. This initiative will break up the compaction of the arable land and allow water to be absorbed, thus preventing run off in times of heavy rain.

The land has been planted with 1000 native shrubs and trees since 2020 and these will continually sequester and store considerably more carbon than agricultural land would and so benefit the wider community. The land also contains existing woodland on the steep slope down to West Sedgemoor on the northern flank of Curry Ridge. This woodland is being protected by erecting deer netting around glades where regeneration of young trees will occur.

Finally, the vegetation will increase biodiversity in an area where we have lost 90% of biodiversity due to intensive agriculture since the 1950s. Already many species of wild flower are returning to the land between the trees and some land has been held back specifically for a wild flower meadow; for instance many pyramidal orchids were recorded in 2022. Hares, foxes, buzzards and yellowhammers are some of the many animals nesting in this area. For further details, articles on nature and photographs, go to www.currywoodsconservationtrust.com

18. Andrew Jordan, Health Walks

Health Walks in our area are co-ordinated by Somerset Activity and Sports Partnership (SASP) who are funded by Somerset Council to encourage more people to be active and become fitter and healthier. The Health Walk scheme is a part of SASP's plan to get people out and walking and meeting other people.

SASP support the Health Walk groups with publicity information, training days and First Aid Courses. All Health Walk leaders are volunteers.

Curry Rivel Health Walks are easy walks lasting 1hr - 1.25hrs. The walks are an ideal way to get to know the lovely countryside around us and we generally have between 5 – 10 people walking.

We meet on the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of each month at 10.15 for a 10.30 start on The Green in Curry Rivel, any weather. In the summer months the first walk in the month will be around Curry Rivel. The second walk we will drive out of Curry Rivel and walk in different areas. There are other Heath Walks in the area – Langport, Martock, Ilminster, Somerton. All these walks welcome new or seasoned walkers.

If you'd like to join us please ring me for details or just turn up at The Green. My number is in the Curry Rivel News and on the website.

19. Marlene Gibbs, Short Mat Bowls Club

Tuesday evenings 7-9 and Thurs Afternoon in winter. New members are welcome to this friendly club.

We meet on Tuesdays 19.00-21.00 and Thursdays 14.00-16.00 (in winter) in the Village Hall where we have three mats for short mat bowls.

No dress code apart from flat soled shoes

Some help would be appreciated to put an advert on the village screen. (It was suggested to get in touch with the website editor

20. Submitted by Bernie Graham, Website Editor editor@curryrivel.org.uk

I took on editorship of this website just over a year ago, after responding to a call for a volunteer. Many calls for volunteers on behalf of Curry Rivel organisations have been posted on the website since – and it is nice to occasionally receive the feedback that tells me there is someone out there 'listening' and that there are good people who will give their time. And more.

My aim was to make this website interesting and varied, posting regularly on local matters and events alongside other County wide bulletins, and trying to bring out some human interest stories too. I remain keen that articles – apart from having interesting content – should look attractive and encourage people to 'click the link'.

The Parish Council, churches, campaign and special interest groups have their own pages on the website, and of course the more people are enticed to visit the site by an eye-catching image, a punchy headline and an interesting article, the more these stories are heard too.

The website has a select cohort of regular contributors to whom I am extremely grateful. I am sorry I could not join you this evening. It would have been ideal to meet those of you who contribute so much, but I have a long-standing date with a theatre.

This coming year I would like to encourage more people to share their photographs, walking routes, hints and tips, life stories – whatever you'd like to say. I can't stress enough that this Curry Rivel website is for you and about you. If there are topics you'd like to read about that you don't presently see, then you need to tell me! Without your feedback it's all just guesswork. Thank you

21. Graham Finlayson, Curry Rivel News

I am the treasurer for the Curry Rivel News (CRN) which is your local newspaper. Curry Rivel News was first published in 1996 and it has been produced every month since then. It has grown from 8 to 16 pages.

The first copy included news that 15-year-old Joanne Honey was appointed to Head Girl at Huish Episcopi School, complaints about the One Stop taking over the grocery store and an advert for the Post Office (Trevor and Janet Smith).

During the Pandemic CRN could not be printed, but it was still published on the village web site as it is now. Each month, 1200 printed free copies are distributed to all households by 33 volunteers. Copies are also made available in the church, post office, One Stop and Sandpits.

There may be occasions (hopefully rare), where, in the event of unforeseen circumstances, we miss a few houses so we are keen to have list of potential extra distributors. If you are able to help, please contact Bernard of Jane, whose details are in CRN.

There are 7 volunteer Committee members and we each have a role in the production and distribution of the magazine. Our details are inside the back page.

We are a non-profit organisation and the only source of revenue comes from the adverts so if you know of any organisations that would benefit from our advertising then please let Nigel know. The rates are very reasonable and have not been increased for over 8 years. (If funds permit, we do like to help local causes.)

If you have ideas for changes or additions to the CRN, we would welcome your suggestions and it is your magazine, so articles of interest are always welcome.

22. Simon Gambrill, Curry Rivel Cricket Club

I am the Treasurer of the Cricket Club and moved into village about 8 years ago. My children are at the school where I am a governor.

The Cricket Club may have been going as long as 125 years. There is a senior team, an under 13 team and an under 15 team. We would welcome a girls team. Junior training is on Wednesdays from 4.30 to 6pm. The decision was reluctantly taken to have to charge juniors a membership fee.

The cricket team plays on land owned by the Laing's for which thanks are given. A successful season last year with only one game lost.

Several local businesses sponsor the club, for which we are very grateful. Some equipment is needed this year which we are looking at options to fund.

23. Victoria Fransham, Twinning Association

Cuurrie Reevel (as the French call us) has enjoyed over 20 years of Twinning with a small town in the Loiret district of France called Chevilly. We provided hospitality with families here and enjoyed trips with them to places of interest. We would also have a big gathering in the village hall with dancing or games and always good food and drink.

On alternate years, up to 40 English friends would go to Chevilly where we stayed with them in their homes, experiencing the French way of life and visiting Paris, Loire chateaux, beautiful gardens & towns such as Chartres & Orleans.

Covid, Brexit, and other factors mean we have had no official visits for 3 years. Twinning associations generally are struggling to survive; many have closed. But we do not want to lose such strong friendships so encouraged small groups of French to come to the UK and reciprocal visits of English to France. This has been successful over the last two years and we have thus found a way of maintaining a very warm relationship.

The English friends are keen to keep going also and we recently had a very successful bring and share supper where we enjoyed excellent food and drink, saw photographs of our French friends and heard a very warm and interesting message from Benedicte, the latest President of The Twinning.

In the main hall here (above the door) there are gifts that we have received over the years and in the school there is the bell, a painting of the Chateau of Chevilly and a glass plaque showing hands meeting in friendship.

On behalf of the French & the English, I wish to thank the Parish Council who have previously funded French lessons.

Finally, en francais.....Vivent les relations entre les anglais et nos amis les francais!
Long live the friendships between the English & our French friends!

24. Anne Michell, Curry Rivel Music Club

The club has been bringing world-class music to Curry Rivel for over 35 years

Children and students are always admitted free to our concerts in order to make attendance fully accessible to them and there is a focus on encouraging young musicians.

On 17th June at 7pm the Welsh Chamber Orchestra are coming thanks to funding from different organisations that makes it affordable for this professional group to come and perform for us. It will be a very good concert of music of the highest quality in St Andrews Church.

Tickets on the door are £12 each

In Sept the Amici choir from Taunton Choir will be coming with their mix of classical and lighter music for an entertaining evening.

In November Gordon Stuart organist and trumpeter and Tom Osborne trumpeter will be returning for another virtuosic concert

Please look at <https://curryrivelmusic.wordpress.com/> for more details

25. Additional Speakers – no one else requested to speak

26. John Casebourne, Parish Paths Liaison Officer, Speedwatch and Litter

Litter

John gave sincere thanks to all 10 litter pickers in Curry Rivel and the 4 in Drayton. Litter is often discarded alcoholic drinks containers. Most people don't litter, and it probably comes from relatively few people.

Many people don't realise that domestic litter bins put out for collection are a significant source of litter. It blows out of the bins while they are out, perhaps round a corner, or along the road so people don't notice. The litter collectors often get the blame, but the litter collectors have established that the litter collection process is not generally the source of the litter on bin days

Speed watch

John thanked Robert Crowley and Ted Oakley. The team is strong and committed and it is known to be a deterrent to speeders. When speed watch are out people DO slow down.

Everyone probably oversteps the limit unintentionally. But the team ask you all to slow down more at school times when children are in the roads and the speed limits are not the limiter at that time and you, as motorists are responsible for driving at a speed suitable for the conditions. So if there are lots of children about, then please pay special attention at that time and slow down.

The top speed recorded by the SIDS at night was 84 mph and 70 is not uncommon.

27. Electors motions

No Motions were forward by Curry Rivel electors

28. Questions (answers by various people)

Q. Which fingerposts will be fixed and when?

A. This is in hand and includes the war memorial post as a priority

Q. Langport car park is always full. Do people park there and catch a bus in?

A. Some people are parking and car sharing. The Town Council is aware and they are looking at it (as well as additional parking.)

Q. Resourcing for Planning applications and enforcement action has been taking too long (due to winding down of previous council). Will things now improve?

A. there is not an influx of new people, but they are trying hard to sort out the issues.

Q. How is the new Somerset Council liaising with Wessex Water over phosphates?

A. Yes, discussion are in hand and all sorts of projects are ongoing both to reduce phosphate pollution and reduce flooding. A mitigation scheme is coming to unblock planning applications.

Q. It was pointed out that there is not enough caring resource in the area.

Minutes by



Elaine Owen, Parish Clerk

DRAFT