

MINUTES
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of ROWLANDS CASTLE HERITAGE CENTRE

Thursday 16^h November 2023 at 7.00 pm in Parish Hall

Trustees Present: Alan Evers, Prue Amner, Rodney Duggua, Alan Drinkwater, Kevin Connell, Paul Griffiths, Annabelle Cameron.

Apologies: Ania Shawcross

In attendance: From the Management Group, Lorraine Moriarty, Caroline Bird, Malcolm Smith, Gordon Charlesworth.

Introductions

Alan Evers welcomed all to the meeting and each Trustee introduced themselves.

Minutes of the last meeting:

Minutes were accepted and there were no actions.

Formal Re - election of Officers

The following Trustees were confirmed to continue in these roles:-

Chairperson - Alan Evers

Vice Chairperson - Ania Shawcross

Secretary - Prue Amner

Treasurer - Lorraine Moriarty

Approval of Financial Statement and Accounts

Lorraine Moriarty presented the information and the report is Appendix 1.

[Financial Statement and Examiner's Report will be attached to the email with these minutes].

Chairman's report - progress on Interim Business Plan

Alan Evers presented his report which is Appendix 2.

He gave many thanks to Annabelle Cameron for her kind hosting of the summer event and to Ania Shawcross for organising it. Alan gave further thanks to Model Railway volunteers for their presentation of the model during the event. Many thanks to Driftwood and Tod and Frodie for their entertaining music making. Thanks to the Tim Cowin and Brian Tompkinson of the Historical Society for their conducted tours of the Castle site.

More people were thanked:-

- Paul Marshman for his help with gathering village information for Charlie Shawcross for the new Trails project .
- Graham Dale for his technical support for the Website and Trails project.
- Malcolm Smith, Gordon Charlesworth, Charlie Shawcross Caroline Bird, and Lorraine Moriarty for their continued membership of the Management Group
- Local businesses who are very supportive in many ways especially for raffle prizes.

Proposal for Relationship with Rowlands Castle Historical Society

Alan Evers explained the progress on this matter which has been going well. The Charity Commissioners have been contacted and there are delays with their responses. The target is to

have this all resolved by October 2024 before the AGMs of both organisations when there will be a Trustees meeting to discuss.

Reports from Working Groups

- **Model Railway**

Malcolm Smith presented report see Appendix 3.

There were two displays of the model this year in the Church on the Green one of which was during the Village Fayre which was supported by the Historical Society and Ted Redsull's photographs.

A new flutter flag has been designed to increase visibility of the model at events.

Malcolm reinforced the shelf life of the model and the issue of continued maintenance. He was pleased to add three more volunteers to the group but always needs more.

- **Website and Trails**

Caroline Bird presented the Website report see Appendix 4.

She explained that the team now involves the Historical Society. Graham Dale supports the website development and maintenance with his great technical ability. Caroline thanked Brian Tompkinson for the new oral histories and the redesign of the access to these.

Caroline then described the Trails project Appendix 5.

She explained how they will be accessed via mobile phones and that the trail round the Green will be the first to be tested. She gave thanks to Charlie Shawcross, the project leader, Paul Marshman and the team.

Date of next Trustee meeting November 2024 date TBC

AGM Meeting closed at 19.45.

Open Forum

The Trustees were joined by 17 residents

There were no questions so all enjoyed the refreshments and had an opportunity to talk.

Signed _____

Date _____

Appendix 1 Treasurer's Report

Antony Bird has examined the accounts. He reports to the Trustees confirming that no matters have come to his attention and that the Profit and Loss accounts and Balance Sheet are an accurate reflection of the Charity's transactions for the year ending 30th September 2023.

RCHC Funds

The Barclays bank account is now fully operational and dual authorisation is in place. There has been a significant increase in the RCHC funds this year, with the bank account and petty cash balance as at 30th September 2023 being £4,122 (Bank £4,045.45 and Petty Cash £76.69) up from a total of £2,676 at 30th September 2022.

Income

Early in 2023 we applied for and received a donation from the Rowlands Castle Association for the Heritage Trails software.

In September, the Deerleap event raised £3,248.01 and incurred costs of £602.46 resulting in a net profit of £2,645.55. This was thanks to the generosity of the Cameron family, the organising committee for planning a very successful and enjoyable event, plus numerous volunteers on the day. These funds provide financial security for the running of the website and the display and maintenance of the model railway for the next few years.

During the year, closer working with the Historical Society has benefitted both organisations and the Historical Society made a donation to the RCHC of £365, for which we are very grateful, and they have pledged more for the coming year.

Outgoings

The RCHC were required to repay to EHDC £400 in unused grant funding. There were the usual costs for insurance and software plus hall hire and some repair costs for the model railway. We invested in the design of a new logo, some sturdier new posters and a feather banner for the model railway.

Next Financial Year

Insurance and software costs are likely to rise by approximately 10-15% due to inflation. The biggest unknown cost is for the model railway maintenance but we start the next financial year in a comfortable position.

Treasurer Lorraine Moriarty 12/11/2023

Appendix 2 Chairman's Report

You are all welcome to our AGM, thank you for coming.

Well, another year nearly gone, where does time go, they say the older you are, the quicker times goes, I am beginning to believe it to be so! Possibly 'Wiser' with age, open to debate?

At least we managed to have the Model Railway up and running over both the Coronation weekend and for the Village Fair, where we did raise some donations to help swell somewhat depleted coffers. There are of course on-going expenses the RCHC incurs each year; insurances, maintenance of the Model, Website soft and hardware, hall hire etc, so any donations are more than welcomed. Malcolm will up date us on the years events with the Model later.

A much closer working relationship with the Rowlands Castle History Society, was on the table at last years AGM, well we have made some good progress here, the RCHS at their recent AGM voted to peruse this on a formal basis, Charlie (Shawcross) last year outlined the proposal, which have discussed at our monthly meetings. I wrote to all the Trustees a few months ago with our outlining the way forward, we will discuss this later this evening. I also approached the Charities Commission for advice, (they are currently in some disarray with a back-log to August on giving advice) we will need to take this into consideration during or discussions.

Our main concern is raising sufficient funds throughout the year, we will next year be looking to raise funds by displaying the Model on mote occasions than this year, looking at planning one or two 'Social Events' either in one of the Village Halls, we held a Tea Party in Deerleap, curtesy of Annabelle & Jim in their garden. Anaia and some volunteers organised the event, food, drinks, music, thanks to Tod and Fred aka Froddie + Fred's sons & Gordon & David, Driftwood, for the time a talent for this excellent entertainment. They even had a few Groupies sat in front of them mid-afternoon, (perhaps a result of too many glasses of Prosecco, who knows?) Tim & Brian from the History Society, gave guided tours of what remains of the Mott & Bailey Castle which proved very popular, Jim kindly ferried a wheelchair bound lady up there in impressive Garden Tractor, much to her delight. for may a highlight of the afternoon. We cannot thank everyone who chipped to help before during and after the event, enough, kind sunny weather, great atmosphere, much enjoyed by those lucky enough to be there, the Tickets having sold out in a matter of a few days.

We also had a display in one of the rooms bordering the garden, of part of the model, some information Posters and volunteers to explain more about the model and the D-Day & the villages role back then. Brians Info Boards on the Motte & Bailey, everyone found to pf great interest.

The younger generation have a thirst for knowledge, so we are embarking on a program aimed specifically for them. The Website, 'Children's Page, is an on-going process, we had applied for an Arts Council Grant, which was oversubscribed, so no luck there. We hope to do more with the funds raised at the tea party may be able to cover some of these development costs. As a charity we are more than keen on developing this side of our workings, indeed it is one of our remits.

Charlie will update us on another development which arose from the meeting, several History & Heritage Trails around the Village and surrounding area, soon to go live, in the New Year we are aiming to do this. Basically, using your Mobile phone as you move round various 'hot-spots' in the village, with information & links to other websites etc. a very interesting development, the RCHC entering the modern hi-tech age!!

As with all organisations, there are a list of people, without whom, it would not be possible to manage and run things to everyone's satisfaction. Firstly, the Trustees & the Management Team, thank you for the support they have given me this past year, there has been a lot going on it has been very much a team effort. Given nearly all the other groups in the Village are short of bodies, I am indeed very lucky to have such a great team to do all we do and how we do it, all of whom have skills & knowledge which is applied to best advantage.

Thankfully the Bank problem has been solved. So, thanks to Lorraine for the surviving the tribulations, she went through to do this.

Many thanks to Graham Dale who maintains our website, his ideas and technical know-how is invaluable, along with the Web Team, in producing a first-class website which is growing continuously with new content almost daily! The website is valuable tool in forming a base from which the Heritage Centre can grow and develop into the future. The new format Home Page is looking very smart and user friendly, please have look if have not already done so.

Prue our secretary whose wise council I often call on, Caroline for her work on the website and the children's program, Malcolm for his 'Control' of the Trian Drivers, Gordon for his assistance along with Fiona for their help with the Tea Party in particular, Ania for her assistance as the Vicechair, Mark for his help in transporting the Model to and from its storage home and all the local businesses / pubs, who donate raffle prizes and donations throughout the year, they never fail in coming up trumps when asked.

We are always looking to recruit new volunteers, if any of you would like to be involved at any stage please do get in touch, we would love to hear from you.

Appendix 3 The D Day Model Railway

Our thanks go to Annabelle and Jim for keeping our boxes safe and well for another year and to Mark for transporting them to and from our display venues

This year we gave two displays, firstly two days over the Coronation weekend in May and secondly our annual outing at the Village Fair in July, both in the Church on the Green. We were unable to show the Model to the St John's School children as we could not get the hall until the Thursday and they were also involved in school activities. If we can have the Model up longer we may be able to arrange something for next year. Both times our efforts were augmented by displays from the Historical Society and a range of Ted Redsall's photo collections.

Our thanks go out to our willing band of volunteers especially our assembling and dismantling teams who seem to get quicker every year although for the first time since we have owned the layout it did not work immediately. It was quickly found that one of the plugs had not been pushed in far enough. Sadly we lost David Symonds one of our early volunteers but on a happier note we recruited our version of the three R's namely Richard, Roger and Roy who have been a great help. We have two potential new volunteers for next year but always need more helpers as some of us, especially yours truly are fast approaching our sell by date.

In September Annabelle and Jim kindly hosted a Garden Party at Deerleap which was a resounding success. The initial plan to have the railway set up was quickly ruled out because of the time taken to set it up and put it away. Instead we set up two sections in the house along with a range of our display boards. Outside the Historical Society once again provided a highly interesting display At the risk of being paternalistic we premiered our new flutter flag advertising our presence. Thanks go to my son Matthew who not only suggested the idea but took the photos, designed the artwork and arranged for its manufacture and delivery. We are hoping that it will make our presence in the Church much more visible especially at the summer fair.

The Model was built by Peter Goss to have a finite life as a touring display and is now well past that date. There is wear and tear each time we build and take it down which is why we are limiting the number of displays to extend its life. Whilst most parts are repairable or replaceable this can only be done when the model is up and we currently have no long term area to do this. We are increasing our "maintenance team" as part of our succession planning. We were incredibly lucky to have our three years at Stansted House but any permanent home is still a long way off.

Malcolm Smith November 2023

Appendix 4 Website Report

Review of the Year

The work of the website team has been focused to meet the RCHC's strategy and charitable aims: "To establish and maintain a museum in Rowlands Castle in order to advance the education of the public in the history and heritage of the village, its former inhabitants and the surrounding area"

Website Maintenance and Development

The website is managed by a small sub-committee of volunteers - Lorraine Moriarty, Prue Amner and myself, supported technically by Graham Dale. We are joined at our monthly meetings by Brian and Tim from the Historical society, which has contributed financially to the upkeep of the website, for which we are grateful. We have worked to create a common face on the website to avoid confusion between the two societies and we now bear the revised logo.

Building on the feedback from our user experience surveys last year we have taken on board the need to simplify the structure of the website to allow easier access to the main topics, as well as showcasing the Model Railway; and to this end the new-look Home page will be launched shortly. As you can imagine this is no easy task and we are grateful to Graham for his technical advice in how to achieve this. Local photographers and artists Ann Page and Rilia Varandas have supplied a range of beautiful photos for inclusion on the home page.

Model Railway

We have updated the website with a What's On page so people can easily find out when the model railway is next on display in the village.

Heritage Projects

Working together with the Historical Society, and with particular thanks to Brian Tomkinson, there has been significant progress in expanding the Oral History section, which serves as a vital repository of personal stories and experiences from the past. Several new interviews have been carried out, focusing on preserving the rich history of Rowlands Castle as narrated by those who have lived it. These interviews cover a wide range of topics, from everyday life in the village to significant historical events, such as memories of the Great Storm of 1987, and these are now readily accessible on our website. This update ensures that the oral history section remains a valuable resource for researchers and history enthusiasts.

We also added a section to the People page to commemorate the life of the late Queen Elizabeth, containing villagers' tales of meeting Her Majesty between 1953 and 2022. Also in the past year, our WW1 page has received significant updates. We've added more in-depth profiles of local soldiers, who are commemorated on the War memorial, recounting their stories, heroism, and the impact of the war on their families and the community.

Educational Activities

We understand the importance of engaging the younger generation with our local history. To achieve this, we've revamped and expanded our Children's Page. It now features interactive activities, educational resources, and fun quizzes to make learning about Rowlands Castle's heritage a delightful experience for kids. We believe that instilling a love for history at a young age will help cultivate a strong sense of community and appreciation for our village's unique past. Plans for next year include creating a Children's History trail to sit alongside the Heritage Trails.

Plans for the future

We will continue to refine the content at each level of the website to ensure links are logical and information easy to find.

The website will be hosting the new heritage trail walks, accessed from a tile on the front page of the website and can be undertaken on foot with a mobile phone. Thanks go to Charlie Shawcross for his hard work in driving this project forward.

We aim to continue to collect memories and stories from our village history and develop the website as an online museum; a one-stop shop for the history and the heritage of Rowlands Castle.

Volunteers

We always welcome volunteers who have their own research interests and who can help develop the website as an online museum. We would also welcome volunteer photographers who have an interest in recording the village as it is currently, in order to create an archive for the future. If anyone has anything they would like to contribute, in terms of research, family histories, photos or other ideas please contact me via the website.

Finally, a big thank you to the volunteers who give up their time to make the website what it is.

Caroline Bird 16th November 2023

Appendix 5 Trails Report

Since May 2022, I been developing Heritage Trails for Rowlands Castle and surrounding areas. I now have 32 stops in draft or final form.

I have been helped by numerous people in this endeavour and I thank you all but I want specifically to single out Paul Marshman for especial thanks.

When completed, I hope to have a number of trails. These will be both physically contiguous but also trails based on other common features.

The first trail is nearly complete and covers twelve stops around the Village Green.

Each stop includes:-

- Information as to its location.
- A photograph of the stop.
- Brief bullet points about the stop
- More extended information
- Photographs relating to the stop.

Sometimes, external links to more extensive information about the stop, which takes you off the trail.

You can follow the stops sequentially or via stops viewed on a map.

There is an introduction to the trails with acknowledgements.

The stops will be accessible on a range of devices including mobile phones, tablets and PCs. We have, with a donation from the RCA, purchased software that interfaces with our website for this purpose.

People can follow the stops by limiting themselves purely to the bullet points or they can explore the stops in much more detail whilst on the trail or at home.

It is our hope that these trails will be an enjoyable way to explore the history and heritage of Rowlands Castle and it's surrounding area, as well as being a useful educational tool and an additional way of accessing our Website.

During 2024, we hope to fully trial, then launch the Green Trail and I hope, at least two other trails.

The current plans for stops are:-

- The Green Trail
- Redhill Road, Manor Road and Castle Road
- Links Lane and Bowes Hill
- Finchdean
- Trail of other notable stops.

As the stops are unique, we might cut them according to a function. Like businesses, notable people etc.

I hope early in 2024 to present the trail on a Tuesday evening History and Heritage talk, then later publicise it on Grapevine. I would like to look into ways that our school might make use of this resource.

I will be encouraging people using the trail to correct any errors found or provide additional information and feed these back to me. From time to time, these amendments will be made, en-bloc, to the trails.

Charlie Shawcross 25.10.23