RIVER YEALM & DISTRICT ASSOCIATION
Registered Charity Number 262929

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING held at The Village Hall, Noss Mayo on Tuesday 19th April 2016

1. **Apologies for absence**
Were received from Peter and Sandra Riley, David Marchant, Chris Bradley, Colin Drew, Felicity Garth, Roger and Sue Hallett, Andrew Beveridge, Robin Geldard, Barbra Geddes, Alison Ansell and Mel Ellis.

2. **Minutes**
The minutes of the Annual General Meeting on April 14th 2015 were approved and accepted.
Proposed Robin Hogg Seconded Mervyn Wheatley.

3. **Chairman's Report.**
As all members had received a copy of his report prior to the AGM the Chairman only highlighted a few items at the meeting.

Membership
The Association currently has **320 households of the 929 in the Parish** which are members of the RYDA. The Association does need to recruit new younger people so please encourage your friends and neighbours to join. There is a **membership form in your Village Directory** which you can remove and give to them to submit.

Finance
Thanks to the sponsorship of the Village Directory by Luscombe and Maye last year the Association is in a healthy financial position.
There had been three approaches from local groups for funding for 'The Yealm History Book', the refurbishment of Butts Park play area and the Post Office/ Community Store. All three schemes meet the aims of the association and your committee would be considering these approaches during its summer meeting.

RYDA Web Site
The existing facility for the RYDA is rather basic so your committee has spent £11 to register a domain name for a site just for the RYDA. There is a volunteer currently working on the production of a site for the RYDA which could be made available to other groups which may wish to make use of it for a Community Calendar.

The Village Directory
The Chairman was pleased to note that the 2015 Village Directory had been very well received and that **John Tighe is the current editor** who should be contacted if you wish to submit any amendments.

The Harbour Clean Up
This year there had been **68** volunteer helpers including **5** new Team Leaders who were generally made up of older members of the community. A **younger team is required for 2017** to clean the upper reaches of the Yealm as some of the older members struggle with this section. The section from Coflete Creek up to Brixton is also being considered for cleaning which will also require a younger team.
There had been **one and a half tonnes** of rubbish collected this year which was more than last year; in particular there were a lot of glass bottles deposited on the spit in the estuary. The Chairman thanked Andrew Beveridge for his effort in organising the event.

RYDA Committee

The Committee needs new, ideally younger members of the Parish, to join it. A plea for someone to take over the production of the Newsletter has failed. The response to requests for members to give a view about pre vetted planning applications is disheartening. It takes some time to scrutinise applications and provide a summary of applications of note sufficient for members to make observations about them and a response to this effort would be welcome. The South Hams website has particularly difficult to work with this year due changes in its system this has entailed a great deal more effort. The Chairman reiterated that the Committee does need the help of the membership in these matters as it is unable to give sufficient time to this important issue.

4. **Adoption of the Accounts.**

The Treasurer and Membership Secretary reported that there is now £4000 in the accounts following the RYDA contribution to the Housing Needs Survey. Fluctuations from year to year generally depended on the number of members in arrears and subsequent payment following chase up letters. Last years accounts included expenditure on the Harbour Clean Up and a donation of £187 from Catherine Bateman who passed the funds to the RYDA following the closure of a history group in the village.

The accounts for the year ending 31st December 2015 were approved and accepted.

Proposed John Wilcox Seconded Chris Loftus

5. **Appointment of an Honorary Auditor.**

Thanks were extended to the Honorary Auditor Veronica Ingram who has scrutinised the accounts this year and the Committee requested that she be appointed next year as Auditor.

Proposed Mrs Wilson Seconded Roy Fenner.

6. **Election of Officers and Committee Members.**

The Chairman informed the meeting that he would only be standing as 'Acting Chairman' until he could be replaced as the RYDA rules state that a member of the Committee can only be Chairman for 3 years.

Several members of the Committee wish to stand down this year (as identified by*) and will remain only until replacements can be found. The committee is identified as below:

Christopher Lunn	Acting Chairman
Denise Marchant	Honorary Secretary*
Alan Lomax	Treasurer & Membership secretary
Christopher Bradley	Committee Member
Peter Pritchard	Committee (Planning & Newsletter)
Eric Rodmell	Committee Member*
Suzanne Sparrow	Committee Member*
John Tighe	Committee Member (Directory)

The Chairman asked for the support of the meeting for the approval of the Committee members:

Proposed Peter Brown Seconded Chris Woodd Walker

Christine ? proposed a Vote of Thanks to the Committee which was supported with a round of applause.

7. **Date** of the next Annual General Meeting will be early April 2017 depending on village commitments at the WI Hall Newton Ferrers.

8. **Any other business**. There being no other business the Chairman thanked the 48 attendees and the formal part of the meeting ended at 19.01. There followed a series of brief updates:

9. **Brookings Down Wood by Jeremy Spooner.**

Jeremy reported that he bluebells throughout the wood would be worth a visit very soon.

There had been 10 regular volunteers in the early days of the establishment of the community woodland that had now dwindled to 3 and the team is looking for younger active members to form part of the working group as older members were retiring. In the winter i.e. September until March this amounted to 2 days per month generally on a Saturday morning.

During the last year the paths and steps had been made good and replaced in some areas: from June onwards the undergrowth would be strimmed back to keep the paths clear.

You may note that bramble bushes have been strimmed back and sprayed to clear some of them, this has all been carried out with the approval of the Woodland Trust. The 3 regular helpers all provide their own chainsaws and therefore take their own risk by using them. Ben Horsewell had helped remove a particularly difficult tree as this required more expertise than the volunteers , he is a tree surgeon and very kindly gave his time at no charge.

This year there was extra work required as the stream had to be cleared following floods in January 2016 in the Hannaford area.

Once again children from the junior school came along, checked and cleaned the 20 bird boxes and noted any activity in them.

In conclusion we can report that Brookings Down Wood is in good shape and remains a wonderful asset to the local community.

Eastern Hill Wood in Middlecombe has recently been offered to the RYDA and the Brookings Down Wood team is happy to take it on and maintain it as long as the Woodland Trust clear it first. We are waiting to hear when and if this has been done then final arrangement with a lease can be completed.

The Yealm History Book by Ron Furzeland

Ron revealed a large collection of original postcards which illustrated aspects of life in Newton and Noss and had been produced over many years these would be used to illustrate the development of the Parish over the last century. Some antique pictures had been purchased more recently to help with task of producing a history book.

All individuals involved were giving their time and expertise free to produce the book. So far seven of the 26 sections have been completed by their authors and they have been edited by Debbie Hemming.

Ron would be interested to hear from parishioners who may have an idea for the name of the book and if anyone has any information about the Kitley estate to add to the information already collected.

It is estimated that printing costs will be in the region of £5-7000 and it is proposed to sell each book at £17 per copy. It is proposed that any profit will be returned to the community either through the Revelstoke Trust or the Newton and Noss Network. At this stage it is estimated that the profit could be in the region of £5000.

Robin Hogg reported that so far donations to produce the book have come from The Revelstoke Trust (£1000), The S Hams Sustainable Community Locality Fund (£1000) and a Local Donation (£250) giving a total of £2250.

At the moment Devon County Council through Cllr Hosking has been asked for £2000, South Hams District Council through Cllrs Baldry and Blackler £2000. If the RYDA could possibly contribute £1000 it would be greatly appreciated.
The aim is to publish the book in the spring of2017 and sell the first 750 books locally and some through Amazon.

11. **The community benefits of Newton Downs Solar Farm by Peter Brown**

Peter reported that 'Yealm Community Energy' is to be set up as a Mutual Society able to issue bonds which will give a modest interest to those who invest; it will not be a speculative venture. Any surplus will be given to the community and will be distributed by a committee from it. Each person investing will have one vote as to where the funds are distributed and can bid for funds to be spent ideally on energy saving and environmental projects.
The Society was registered with the Financial Services Authority on the 16th July 2015.
Newton Downs Solar Farm will be produce **4.5MW** of energy per annum which **is sufficient to provide energy for the needs of 1300 average homes which is more than the number of homes in Newton and Noss** (979 households).It will be sited on 28 acres of agricultural land which is designated as 'poor' and will be screened from view. One of the aims is to enhance biodiversity so access will be left for small mammals. Beneath the solar panels there will be wild flower pasture which will contribute to adding 'bee lines 'in the country, after the flowers have finished the site can be grazed. The scheme has been approved by the National Farmers Union and Natural England. After an initial period the original planning permission will need to be extended, the site will still be designated agricultural land.
The Society will purchase professional advice and will be funded by a share / bond sale consisting of 50% bank loan and 50% bond issue which will be advertised and available locally for 3 or 4 weeks before being offered through Crowd Funding with a target of obtaining the £5million required to complete the scheme.
It is anticipated that a bank loan can be obtained at 5%; bonds will be issued for 2 years then refinanced with 7% interest. The shares will be a long term investment and the return will be RPI plus 2.2% and related to energy cost. You will be able to gift these shares to grand children and they will be free of inheritance tax provided you live for at least 2 years from the date of gift. As with AIM shares you can own shares before the age of 16 but you cannot trade them.
The project must be completed by March 2017, will take approx 3 months to install and is planned to start in September 2016.
The panels are guaranteed to be 80% efficient after 25 years and should last for 30 years.
The aim is to return a min of £25000 per annum to a community fund for 25 years.

The Chairman thanked each speaker for their contribution to a very interesting and informative AGM

Christopher Lunn, Chairman

Minutes to be ratified at the AGM 2017.