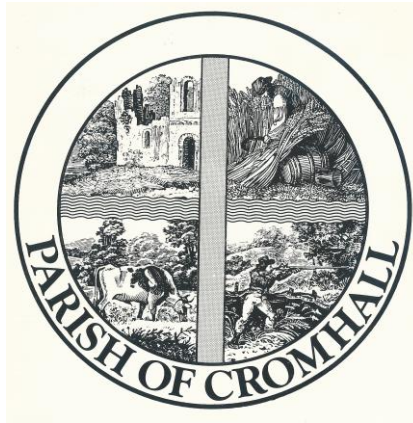




Minutes of the ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY

Held on Monday 14th April 2025 @ 7:30pm at Cromhall Village Hall

Chair: Hannah Bryan, Chairman of Cromhall Parish Council

Clerk: Emma Pattullo

Present: 14 residents and 2 non-residents (external speakers)

1. Welcome and introductions

Cllr Hannah Bryan welcomed residents to the Annual Assembly.

2. Approval of minutes of the 2024 Annual Assembly

The minutes of the 2024 Annual Assembly were approved as an accurate record and signed by the Chairman.

3. Report from the Parish Council

Cllr Bryan gave a report on the council's activities over the past year and plans for the coming year.

The council continues to maintain the children's playground at Townwell, and various open spaces around the parish including Hawkers Knapp, Bibstone Green, and The Green, Heathend. We also share costs with the school for maintenance of the school field. A community litter pick was held recently which was very successful.

We have awarded grants to a number of community organisations, several of which are here tonight to report on how they have spent these funds.

Planning continues to be a major issue for the parish council. We hosted a meeting for residents to find out more about the proposals by Tortworth Estates for development at Longcross, and have made comments to South Glos Council on a number of planning applications including those for larger developments next to Cromhall Chapel and on Church Lane.

We also continue to report issues in the village to those responsible, such as reporting of potholes to South Glos. Council and pushing Wessex Water to respond to sewage flooding incidents.

There is currently a vacancy for one parish councillor; anyone who might be interested is asked to approach one of the councillors or the Clerk for more information.

Residents were given chance to ask questions but none were raised.

4. Reports from local organisations and community groups

St Andrew's Church

Ann Greenhaugh reported that the church is still open but has a very small congregation, with 19 people on the electoral roll. There is no resident priest at the moment, but the PCC is managing to hold services twice a month thanks to visiting priests. The PCC has managed to cover costs this year, including payments to the diocese, maintenance of the churchyard and utility bills. They are also trying to run more events, such as the Flower Festival next weekend.

The church also runs the Tea @ 3 group, which provides a monthly opportunity for social events for older residents. This is a great opportunity to raise community spirit. The group meets nine times per year at the hall and holds two lunch outings each year, partly funded by a grant from the Parish Council. Members also greatly enjoy attending the school Christmas concert each December.

Village Hall

Joanna Carr reported on behalf of the Village Hall committee:

“During the autumn of 2024, diggers and excavators rolled into Talbots End to dig up Cromhall Village Hall's car park. This was in order to improve the exterior of the Hall by making it more accessible, improving the surfacing and encouraging more wildlife and biodiversity into the area.

This project was awarded a £37,400 Rural Community Grant from the West of England Mayoral Combined Authority, funded by the UK government through the Rural England Prosperity Fund. Additional funds were generously donated by Cromhall Parish Council, Renishaw, Tortworth Estate, 1st Woodend Scout Group and De Smit Medical. A proportion of the work was paid for by fundraising. So if you've attended one of our popular Quiz Nights or came to our beer festival last summer - thank you for supporting your local Village Hall!

The existing surface was ripped up and resurfaced with a porous tarmac. The entrance ramp was widened to allow easier access for visitors and the back of the car park was dressed with stone to make maintenance easier.

Since the construction works were completed, committee members have installed a bug hotel, bat boxes and bird boxes to encourage more wildlife to use the area. The existing planters have also been planted with bulbs and plants to give colour and texture to the area to make it more welcoming. Additional planters are due to be donated from local companies.

The Scouts will be tasked with helping to prep and maintain the planters.

We also have plans to improve the acoustics in the Hall in 2025 and are currently in the process of investigating and applying for Grants to fund this, and having suppliers visit the Hall to quote for the works.

We are looking for more volunteers to join the Village Hall Committee or to support the Committee members during events such as Quiz Night. Anyone interested should email hall.bookings@cromhall.com for more information.

We are holding a Cream Teas afternoon and Quiz Night on Saturday 17 May and are holding our AGM on 20th May - all are welcome.

2024 was a good year for the Village Hall, with increased bookings - both from regular hirers for dance classes, dog training and exercise classes, and from one off events such as parties, receptions and corporate training days.”

Cromhall Chapel

Simon Carey, Pastor, reported that the Chapel is going well with a congregation of around 60 people who come both from Cromhall and from further afield. They work closely with the Church for celebrations such as Harvest and Christmas Eve. Other popular events include both Men's and Women's breakfast groups and the regular coffee mornings on Thursday mornings. All are welcome to attend services or events.

The Chapel congregation support people in need both locally and internationally. Help includes donations to a local food bank, provision of a defibrillator and support for missions abroad. The Chapel hall is offered as an overflow building for the school when needed and will be hosting some Parish Council meetings this year.

St Andrew's School

Tony Parker, Chairman of the school governing body, reported that the school has had a successful year, due largely to an excellent Headmaster and staff. The PTFA group has supported the school well. Numbers on roll are good, though this can vary a lot year to year. There is currently one vacancy on the governing body.

Graham Pike, Headteacher, reported that the school acts as a hub for the community whilst also receiving great support from the community. Staff are keen to provide a wide range of experiences despite the small size of the school. The recent Parish Council grant has helped to fund extra-curricular activities including a science show, falconry display and visit, a trip to the Life Skills Centre in Bristol for the older children, and the chance to try street dance and rugby. The school curriculum has been revised for this year and now includes more emphasis on sports provision and music alongside more academic subjects.

Own our Oak

Stig Agotnes from the Own our Oak group reported that since starting in 2024, the group has made huge advances towards their goal of reopening the Royal Oak as a community pub and venue. With support from the Plunkett Foundation (with membership funded by a Parish Council grant) they have set up a Community Business Society as a vehicle to run the pub operation. A share scheme is due to be launched soon and the group are seeking pledges of future funding. The business plan can be found on their website www.ownouroak.co.uk. The current plan is to take on a 5-year repairing lease of the pub, with rents gradually reducing over the period providing certain maintenance targets are met. At the end of the 5 years, the group will have first refusal to purchase the property.

There is a committee in place to oversee the project, but support will be needed from the wider community including volunteers to work on getting the pub ready to re-open and to help with running it once it is back in business.

Cromhall Horticultural Society

James Imrie reported that the Society will be holding the annual Flower Show as usual, on the first Saturday in September. The hire of the marquee has been funded by a grant from the Parish Council and local businesses have generously offered sponsorship for other aspects of the costs. The Society want to maintain the traditional feel of the Flower Show and provide a focal point for the community. Any profit will be shared between supporting next year's Flower Show and donations to local causes, such as helping the school to purchase new tablet computers.

Poors Allotment Charity

David White, a trustee of the Poores Allotment Charity, explained the purpose of the charity which is to support people in need in Cromhall. Until now, this was mainly in the form of vouchers for the village shop which were given to the older residents before Christmas. It is not yet decided what form the support will take now the shop is closed. The trustees will need to consider the longer term funding of the charity but do have enough resources to meet the charity's purpose for now.

A fuller report is given at Appendix A.

5. Items raised by electors

A resident pointed out that a common theme of the presentations tonight was community spirit and how this can be supported within Cromhall. In such a small community, this is not helped when organisations run events on the same day, not realising there is a clash. For example, the parish council's litter pick event clashed with a joint Church & Chapel coffee morning so residents could not attend both. It was agreed that all the organisations represented would try to send the dates of events to the community website www.cromhall.com for inclusion in the calendar, in the hope this would reduce clashes in the future.

There being no further matters raised, Cllr Bryan thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting.

Signed at the next Parish Assembly:

Hannah Bryan, Chair of Cromhall Parish Council

Appendix – Cromhall Poores Allotment Charity – Annual Parish Assembly Report 2025

Registered Charity No: 204061

Brief outline of the charity.....

The object of the charity is for the relief of the poor in the parish of Cromhall and its income, mostly through land grass keep rent, continues to be distributed to people over 65 who have been in the village 5 years or more. [In 2024, for the last time, this was in the form of vouchers to be used in the village shop, due to the impending shop closure.] Individuals can apply for assistance if they find themselves in need, and all requests will be considered at any time in the year.

The charity is run by four Parish Council appointed trustees – currently, David White, Caroline Massey, Doug Collett and Clive Young. All trustees are part way through their 4 year appointments so there is no need to reappoint in 2025. A land agent is employed to oversee the the administration of the charity owned land. Brief presentation of Accounts 2024.... Income was generated, as usual, by the Grass Keep, a Rural Payment Agency payment and electricity wayleave, plus, this year, a £300 'early entry' payment from Wessex Water for works needing access over charity land. Income totaled £2,930.00, (The RPA payment continues to be reduced annually and the amount paid this year was £835, £200 less than in 2023.) Expenditure included water rates, secretary fee, agent's fees and the Christmas Gifts (60 at £30 each = £1,800) plus, an additional £825 to St.Andrew's School to support 3 pupils to go on a three day activity camp. Their parents were all known to be in financial difficulties by the school. There was also a payment of £300 to assist a local family bring their orphaned niece to this county from Sierra Leone. Expenditure totaled £3,760.00. So this year, 2024, the charity spent £830 more than its income, again using reserves. Other than the school, individual requests for assistance continue to remain rare despite regular reminders in '5Alive', and no other requests were made in 2023. As ever, the charity is committed to fulfilling its brief and had no other matters to consider in 2024.

Sue Wray, Secretary 06.04.25