

Fenny Compton Parish Council

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting Of Fenny Compton Parish Council Held at Fenny Compton Village Hall, Fenny Compton on Monday 20th June 2022 At 7.00pm

PRESENT: Parish Councillors: Jon Dutton in the Chair, Emma Briscoe, Samantha Parkes, Roly Whear and David Johnson

2022_06_PM_01: Apologies

Apologies were received from Parish Councillors Carless and Payne, and Councillor Rock (District Council) and Councillor Chris Kettle (County Council) and were **accepted**

The minutes were taken by the Chair as the Clerk was absent due to illness

2022_06_PM_02: Acceptance of Minutes of Previous Meeting

The Minutes of the Parish meeting held on 15th April 2019 were approved at the Ordinary meeting held on 20th May 2019

2022_06_PM_03: Parish Council Chairman's Report

The main things the Parish Council worry about are finances, and keeping the books balanced; most of our money goes on maintaining the facilities in the village, including cutting the grass and repairing streetlights. In the case of the latter we are hoping to agree tonight to replace the remaining lights with LEDs to reduce our ongoing repair bill as well as the cost of electricity

We are responsible for various community facilities such as play equipment, allotments, bowls club and sports pavilion. The village hall is maintained by a separate group of trustees who you will hear from later

Many of the facilities in the village have been here a long time, and are approaching end of life. In particular the sports pavilion, the bowls club pavilion and the play equipment all need significant investment to make them suitable for ongoing use and to meet the aspirations the community identified in the Neighbourhood Development Plan. We are currently in the process of developing plans to do this and have started engaging with the various groups in the village to get their input into this

Responding to planning applications more than 30 in the past year, anything from pruning a tree in the conservation area to applications to build 100 houses

Flooding remains a worry for many but we are grateful for the work of Aqueous in pushing forward the latest project to improve flood defence measures in the village, more on that shortly

Traffic and speeding are also a concern. We have tried and tried to get a Speedwatch group up and running but progress has been extremely slow due to lack of delivery by the relevant people in the police. We understand that as part of the Compton Locks development the speed limit will be reviewed downwards on the road between the village and the A423

Final planning permission has been given for that development and despite several requests we have yet to meet with Orbit to discuss how this will be delivered and how this will impact the village

Thanks to all the councillors who fit in a lot of work between meetings, balancing this with work and home life and everything else, for which I am very grateful, and also and especially our Clerk Lydia who does a sterling job in keeping us organised and compliant with our ever increasing list of obligations

2022_06_PM_04: Annual Accounts of Fenny Compton Parish Council for 2020/21

An account of the income and expenditure for the past year was given, as well as noting the amount currently in reserve. The annual accounts have been through the internal audit process with nothing to report. At the previous ordinary council meetings, councillors have approved the fixed asset report and the figures and explanations for the AGAR. Councillors therefore approved the AGAR and the Chairman has signed the report

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2022_06_PM_05: To receive reports from Local Organisations

(i) Village Hall Committee:

The following report was given by Paul Brand:

Regular/One-off Bookings: The Village Hall was kept afloat during lockdowns by grants but bookings (regulars as well as one-offs) have resumed. It is used by a variety of locals ranging from the Anglican Church which runs the weekly Tots and Toddlers to the monthly Just a Bite as well as the Village Violin School, a sewing group, the WI and the scouts and even a local rock band who uses the hall for rehearsals

The latter use led to a complaint from some neighbours about the noise but a compromise could be achieved which will, hopefully, satisfy all concerned

Fundraising activities: The cinema evening was resumed. We had considered moving the day to Sunday afternoon because we lose out on bookings on Saturday, but our first attempt to do so was met with mixed feedback, and as a result we switched back to Saturday evenings. However, we are still contemplating if it is better to move to an afternoon slot in the winter months to allow the elderly residents to participate in this activity but no decision has been taken yet and feedback will be sought on regular users later this year

The other main fundraising activity is the lottery with, I believe, some numbers still available. We lost some regular ticket buyers because they either moved out of the village or have died and finding replacements in the current financial climate is not easy

Improvements to the Village Hall: Some progress has been made with sound improvements because the Hall inherited the loud speakers from the Methodist Church. Other improvements, like panels on the ceiling, will be put up once the long-awaited re-painting of the interior has taken place

Future of Village Hall: The trustees are in two minds about this whether the Village Hall should stay where it is – in the heart of the old village - or move to a different location where there is good parking available. Since it is fair to say that a new site is not available in the near future the trustees are looking into improvements to the hall which could be moved to a new village hall if that were to be built at some stage. The main disadvantage of the current location is, undoubtedly, the parking issue and the noise from certain bookings affecting the immediate neighbourhood.

(ii) Neighbourhood Development Plan:

The following report was given by Cherie Southgate:

Since the last annual meeting, the NP has been submitted to Stratford District Council who checked over the plan and associated documents. They undertook a round of publicity and invited comments from interested parties

- The comments have been shared with us and the parish council and all documents and comments have been reviewed by an independent examiner
- One of the examiner's key responsibilities is to ensure the plan conforms to all relevant policies and regulations. We are now working with the examiner to determine what further revisions are required to the plan
- Once we have their final report, there will be a further and final round of modifications to the plan prior to it moving to the referendum
- Thanks are due to the small and diligent working group who have kept this project running and are close to seeing it completed. They are Cherie Southgate, John Wickenden and Hilary Birkbeck. Unfortunately the Plan won't have been ratified before Cherie Southgate departs the village but wishes the team the best of luck with the rest of the process

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(iii) WI:

The following report was read on behalf of Jenny Kelley, Vice President:

Our WI meets in the Village Hall on the second Wednesday of every month at 7.30 pm. If we are meeting at a different time/ place the Committee always informs the members in advance.

Currently we have 22 members but we would warmly welcome new members. Do come and try us! To help with expenses visitors pay £5 which includes refreshments and an entry to our raffle.

We try to include a range of activities in our programme which include interesting talks on a variety of subjects and some hands-on too, for example, flower arranging and other handicrafts. We also have social evenings especially at times when we have needed to have a business meeting. Visits are also included in our programme e.g. our visit to Henley chocolates next month. A purely social meeting occurs every August, previously held in a member's garden but more recently in the Village Hall as we never seem to judge the weather correctly!

We are also part of a wider WI group. Ours includes Bishops Itchington and Kineton with which we share a yearly social event and a Christmas Carol service. Alternate years we take it in turns with our friends Boddington WI to host a Christmas Party. These events and those organised by Warwickshire and the National Federation are always very enjoyable and widen our WI experience.

News of us can always be found in the Chronicle

(iv) Allotments:

The following report was given by Roly Whear:

The allotments continue to thrive with the plots producing an abundance of produce.

All plots are currently let with a short waiting list so there are no concerns about medium term viability now we are well established.

The main events during the previous year have been supporting Fenny in Flower (With best kept plot prize) and visits from the pupils from the Dassett School.

(v) Bowls Club:

The following report was read on behalf of Alan Payne:

The club had a good year with membership maintained with over 30 playing members. This included a number of new members who were new to bowls who joined over the Covid year. In 2021 we returned to playing competitive matches in the Kineton & District League where we finished fourth, which a great achievement for one of the smallest clubs in the league.

We also enter numerous competitions and our ladies qualified for the National finals held in Leamington Spa. Robert Maries also won the South Warwickshire singles.

To attract new members we held an open day to coincide with nationwide initiative known as the Bowls Big Weekend promoted by Bowls England. We are always looking for new members and everyone is welcome to join for our club social nights held on Friday evenings throughout the season.

The facilities are generally in poor condition and it is very challenging to raise significant funds for refurbishment. The club house itself is owned by the Parish Council and will require some investment over the next few years to maintain it as safe and usable. We have had survey of the electrical installation and identified priority work which will be completed this year. The grounds are maintained by club volunteers.

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(vi) Aqueous:

The following report was read on behalf of Alan Payne:

After many years of campaigning for investment to reduce the risk of flooding to properties funding of £800k has been secured by WCC from Environment Agency. WCC, supported by evidence supplied by Aqueous, developed a new hydraulic model to support a business case

A number of options were considered including attenuation storage, flood routing and individual property protection. The preferred option which is the most cost effective and aesthetically in keeping with rural location was for property protection. This identified around 50 properties at risk. The process involves a specialisation survey to identify options and for the property owner to sign a legal document to maintain the installations. Whilst this will not reduce the risk of flooding it will protect the properties from internal flooding

31 properties have shown an interest and had surveys undertaken. WCC are in the process of appointing a contractor and seeking consent where modifications to listed buildings is required. The plan is to undertake the installation works in the 2022/23 financial year

In addition to the capital investment there remains a number of other issues to address

As part of the Ridge Way development a payment was made to WCC for off-site works to divert flood water from Station Road to the watercourse. This would also protect the surgery from flooding. This has not yet been undertaken but after pressure from the PC WCC now developed a scheme and seeking consents to install

Concern also remains over why flooding continues in Memorial Road. WCC are planning undertake further investigations into why the water does not drain freely. This remains outstanding and on our agenda for future

A key part of the flood management strategy is to continue to maintain the watercourses through Aqueous volunteers and riparian owners. Clearance over recent years has improved flows and lowered general water levels

Overall the flood risks to properties has been reduced considerably and we look forward to completion of the property protection

(vii) Fenny In Flower:

The following report was given by Cherie Southgate:

Funds raised:

Entry Tickets £1151

Raffle £255

Plant Sales £285

Refreshments £526

Tombola £304

Advertising in ticket £200

£2721

There was less money raised in 2021 than in 2019. This was due to the fact that Open Gardens was only run over 1 day due to concerns about COVID 19

In future it would be useful to have a car park, in 2019 people were allowed to park at Manor Farm units, several

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people commented on the lack of carpark

The Scarecrow competition was a great success as it appealed to lots of the villagers, especially those with children. People whose scarecrows were at the eastern end of the village noted that they didn't have many viewing so perhaps it needs a bit of a rethink

The Merrie Lion was very supportive and did a great job of judging the scarecrows and giving out prizes

Village planters: The planters were a riot of colour through the winter and spring. They have recently been replanted for the summer season. There are now 2 additional planters in Memorial Road

Jacci Gooding has taken over the care of the planters with support from Larry and Dawn Wosket

Handing Over Fenny in Flower: Some people will have noticed the For Sale sign on Blacksmiths Cottage. We, Greg and Cherie Southgate, are leaving the village, moving to Cambridgeshire to be closer to family. Therefore we have to hand over Fenny in Flower to the Village Hall Committee. A set of paperwork and relevant electronic files will be handed to the Secretary

The green plastic plant stands and various sign boards are being looked after by Fiona Meyrick at the Red House

(viii) Playground: to be submitted electronically

The following report was given by Sam Parkes:

The playground project was started as the playground area required updating and repairs. After a slow start to get and maintain support the Parish Council created a short survey to determine residents thoughts on what was needed in the playground and this generated over 60 responses which revealed a preference for wooden, multi age range equipment to replace what we had. The survey also helped gather names of those interested in supporting the project

To determine costings for such a project we have now started to gather estimates for the cost of the work, the first estimate coming in at over £60,000

When we have both designs the designs will be shared with supporters of the project to gather opinions and start the process of sourcing funding

(ix) Footpath Group:

The following report was read on behalf of Brian Peers:

Covid hampered our activities but we are now fully operational. We are quite busy and membership remains high at about 10 regular volunteers. We continue to have a good relationship with the landowners and WCC and the footpaths and bridleways in Fenny Compton and surrounding parishes are in generally good order. We are now in our 25th year and intend to continue for many more

Our expenses are reimbursed by WCC and we do not need additional funding

(x) Violin School:

The following report was read on behalf of Veronique Matarasso:

The Village Violin School has been rehearsing on Mondays during term in our excellent Village Hall time since the new school year began last September

There are currently two groups, the All-comers with 11 players, and the Seniors with 14 players. The aim of Village Violin School is to deliver the best possible violin teaching with the main focus on the young players, but I am delighted to welcome adult learners too, and we currently have four regular adult participants. The wide age range is very positive and hopefully we all model good qualities to each other. I have learned at least as much as anyone else since

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Village Violin School started in 2015. I can't believe it is 7 years now

I have not started a new Beginners group for two years because of the issues with Covid – you need quite a lot of hands on with beginner teaching – but I hope to liaise with The Dassett School in September and that they will support the idea of starting a new Beginner group for children in Years 3 and above

We had a wonderful concert last June 2021 following a performance at the Leamington Spa Competitive Festival, but through this period we decided to limit audience numbers because of the risks of spreading Covid infection. The Allcomers and Seniors played a concert for parents and friends at Christmas 2021, playing jazz and folk tunes mostly from memory. We have had several informal performances on Mondays, and we are working towards our Summer Concert on 3rd July (please come!). It's in the Village Hall at 3.30 pm, and is followed by tea and cake at 4.30. Tickets are available from Deborah Lea. On this occasion VVS will be raising money for the Ukraine Relief Appeal

In addition to the ensemble and string orchestra repertoire that we play, most children have taken ABRSM or Trinity exams in the course of the year. Two children have won full time places at Chethams School of Music, a high level specialist music school in Manchester. Emily, a VVS member since 2016 took up her place last September in Year 10 following a long audition process and Dan (who started playing the violin at VVS aged 9) takes up his place for 6th form this coming September. Emily's success directly encouraged Dan to apply for an audition and I am constantly reminded that the inspiration the children get from each other is very powerful. But the experiences of the other players, not all of whom are high fliers, are equally important and successful in their own way

I often reflect that VVS seems to be a project that is worth more than the sum of its parts because of the amazing power of doing it together

The project is completely free to everyone – violins are lent out and music /folders are given to each participant free of charge. I cover the costs of the project because I so strongly believe that music education is a fundamentally transformative process. I believe it should be available to all and it's fun, too

Thank you to the Parish Council for the grant we had earlier this year. Donations help me to fund extra activities such as workshops and to buy new sheet music. I very much appreciate the friends I have made through this project. Thank you for making VVS a valued part of our village community

(xi) Wildflower Meadow:

The following report was given by Emma Wilkinson:

We are pleased to report that the first wildflower meadow in Fieldgate lane is now flourishing with many species of native wildflowers and grasses re-introduced to the area

There are a good amount of yellow rattle flowers aka 'Meadow Makers', which will, when established slow down the growth of domineering species thus allowing more native grasses and wildflowers to thrive

Newly re-introduced corn-cockle flowers were once abundant in crop fields but are now quite rare, so we are very pleased to see many of these pretty purple flowers in our new meadow. Species such as Field Poppies, Speedwell, Trefoil Clover, Chamomile, Ox-eye daisies, Cuckoo flower, Love-in-a-mist, flowering grasses including 'Yorkshire fog' and a host of white and purple clover, Buttercups and Daisies are also flourishing. As it's the first season, there is a lot of grass as opposed to pretty flowers. Grasses are very important in the food chain however as grass=invertebrates=birds and mammals. Some species of butterflies i.e. skippers and browns have grass as food plant, so it will help increase biodiversity

The majority of villagers have been very pleased with the new meadow, bringing children to see the flowers and wildlife or enjoying a moment of peace sitting on the bench. It is certainly boosting the biodiversity of the area which is desperately needed. 'No mow May', and 'Let it bloom June' are transforming the way people manage lawns and

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verges across the country for the benefit of nature. All the wildlife charities support it, and the importance of every piece of land we can give back to nature. The pollinators are in decline, especially the bees - we really all need to be doing this rather than worrying about neatness. Neatness = lifeless. Plus it looks beautiful!

We are aware of one complaint relating to the area being 'messy'. We would like to reassure people that the edges and path through the centre will be mowed regularly and invasive plants such as docks and thistles removed. The whole meadow will be mown from August until the following March. It will take a few years for new species to be fully established in the meadow, and it will get better every year as this happens

We have plans for a guided walk later in the summer to show people the newly re-introduced flowers and explain their importance for local biodiversity

Other areas in Fenny Compton under consideration as new meadows:

Bear and Ragged Staff area: Our proposal is to scarify and sow a long flowering summer wildflower seed mix on the area in front of the houses and a triangular area on the top of the mound this autumn. The edges of the mound and around the bench would be kept mown so as not to obscure motorists' view of the road. As with the Fieldgate site, the plot would be kept mown until March and then again from August to March. We are awaiting final PC approval for the area on top of the mound.

'Sub-station corner' Station Road / High street near Dr Surgery: This currently neglected area is owned by District council. We would like it to become a woodland glade habitat planted with native bluebells, ferns and other appropriate species. This is currently being looked into by the Parish Council

(xii) Over 60s Club:

Carol Walker asked that the Parish Council to note that since COVID the Over 60s Club has now become a lunch club that meets monthly at The Merrie Lion

(xiii) The Scouts and Colts were invited to submit a report but declined

2022_06_PM_06: Report from Trustees of Charities

The following report was read on behalf of Keith Distin:

There are just two trustees: Reverend Nicki Chatterton (ex-officio) and myself.

I understand that the Parish Council may appoint two trustees if they so wish, and would therefore like to ask if anyone would be prepared to become a trustee.

There were no applications for support and therefore no payments made during the last few years. The charity holds 67 investment units with the CCLA's COIF Charities investment fund. These were valued at £1375.97 at 31st December 2021. The realised dividends have been paid into the charity's bank. The account balance at 31st December 2021 was £658.56

2022_06_PM_07: District Councillor and County Councillor Reports

The following report was read on behalf of Councillor Nigel Rock, District Councillor

The last council year has been a particular busy and challenging one as far as the District Council is concerned. I am only too well aware that matters that seem important in the council offices can appear somewhat far removed from the day to day lives of residents, at least until the effects are felt by some, and sometime later. At least the covid pandemic has receded for which we are all grateful

During the year the Council started the process to investigate a merger with Warwick District which after almost exactly a year fell apart for reasons with a root cause that are not yet completely clear. Although I had some

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reservations about the detail, on balance I judged the merger would have benefitted residents, but some of the working together aspects are expected to remain. Amongst these is the cost and administrative overhead of creating a new local plan

It seems to take forever to get anything done in both national and local government - and setting planning policy is something that is particularly protracted. We have had several versions of the site allocation plan with a new one coming along now. However there are signs that some of the more undesirable reserve site in Fenny Compton will not survive into the next set of consultation proposals

The new 123+ waste and recycling collection system is also something that has taken the best part of a year with the devil in the detail. Like the merger, the principal is less contentious than method of implementation and communication with residents as key partners

The restructuring of ward boundaries has taken up a great deal of time during the year, and is set to be a poor outcome for local democracy for next year with Fenny Compton in a huge two member ward despite an increase in councillor numbers overall. This means we are on the lookout for new councillors across the district!

The orbit development on Station Road will be the big thing in Fenny Compton of course and we all hope we can get a good working relationship with the developer's team. We also hope that we can finally get the highways, speed limit and drainage elements finally sorted

HS2 has had an impact on the wider area, most notably on traffic and diversions, but I spend a good deal of time with the EKFB contractor attempting to minimise this, some of which relates to cross county boundary issues

Having determined we have a climate emergency and budget crisis, and a central government that has unclear intention towards local affairs, things will continue to be challenging. The international situation and impact locally shows we live in an interconnected world and we as go forward, we should do all we can to work with our neighbours for the common good

2022_06_PM_08: Other Matters Raised by an Elector of the Parish

No matters were raised.

The meeting closed at 19:35