

FINMERE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of Annual Parish Meeting held on 9th May 2017

in Finmere Village Hall

Present:- Councillors, Mike Kerford-Byrnes (Chairman) (MKB), Katherine Grimston (Vice Chair) (KG), Kevin Ochel (KO), Stephen Trice (ST), Amanda Hodgkins (AH), Mike Kirby (MK), Joanne Brooks (JB), District Councillor Barry Wood (BW) and County Councillor Ian Corkin (IC)

In attendance:- Sharron Chalcraft (Parish Clerk and RFO) (SC), and 18 members of the public

1. Apologies Apologies were received from PC Shaun Sullivan, Hugh Smith (Poors Plot Chairman) and Mike Geelan (Finmere Cricket Club Chairman)

2. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of 10th of May 2016 were circulated and approved.

3. ANNOUNCEMENT OF APPOINTMENT OF OFFICERS

The PC officers for 2016/2017 having been appointed at the PC meeting on May 3rd 2016 these appointments were announced as follows:

Chairman Mike Kerford-Byrnes (having indicated his willingness to continue)
Proposed: Steve Trice
Seconded: Joanne Brooks
Carried unanimously

Vice Chair Katherine Grimston (having indicated her willingness to continue)
Proposed: Steve Trice
Seconded: Amanda Hodgkins
Carried unanimously

RFO Sharron Chalcraft (having indicated her willingness to continue)
Proposed: Mike Kerford-Byrnes
Seconded: Steve Trice
Carried unanimously

Parish Clerk Sharron Chalcraft (having indicated her willingness to continue)
Proposed: Mike Kerford-Byrnes
Seconded: Kevin Ochel
Carried unanimously

4. OPERATION PLAYGROUND

Jacky Horwood and Emily Ackland of the Operation Playground group gave a presentation on their play area project, the successful fruition of which could be viewed on the playing field.

The Finmere play area had seen better days and many children were travelling to other villages to use their facilities. Then a group of Mums got together with the first official meeting held in the Red Lion pub. The first fund raising event was at the Finmere Fete in September 2016, a bake off competition with a play ground theme that proved very successful.

The group then went door to door through the village distributing flyers explaining their aims and asking for direct donations. By the time the Bonfire night event was held at the playing field the fund had already reached £3,000 of the £4,170 required. A number of other efforts followed with a sweet stall at the Christmas Fair and carol singing as well as families performing a variety of tasks from dog walking to mucking out. There were also generous donations from corporate sponsors.

Once the sum had been reached a landfill grant could be applied for, to be administered by the PC. The group then gathered working parties to clear the ground and also make improvements to fencing and install gates so that the environs of the new play area would be secure. The build went remarkably quickly after a lot of hard work to make sure that the positioning of the equipment was correct and not obstructing either the football pitch or the right of way. The results speak for themselves.

There is to be an afternoon tea on 17th June at 3pm to celebrate the opening of the play area. MKB leads a round of applause for the group and all their hard work. The children of Finmere will certainly be grateful for many years to come!

5. POLICING REPORT

This was postponed until a future PC meeting as PC Shaun Sullivan had been deployed to Banbury at the last minute and was unable to attend.

6. CARERS OXFORDSHIRE

Kay Francis delivered a talk about the work of Carers Oxfordshire (CO). The purpose of (CO) is to support unpaid carers, both adults and children. This is a county wide organisation commissioned by OCC which also works with NHS commissioning. The former High Sheriff of Oxfordshire, Sarah Taylor, made CO her charity during her year in office. There are currently some 62,000 registered carers in Oxfordshire but many more people do not actually recognise themselves as carers and so do not register. The saving to public funds

brought about by their efforts is just short of £1 billion. Nationally the figure contributed by carers is some £174 billion.

One characteristic of carers is that they do not take care of themselves very well. CO aims to identify those in the community who are carers and make them aware of that fact, and of how valuable their contribution is. CO wants to make their role as carers sustainable, keeping them healthy in order that they can deliver their care.

CO have chosen the colour yellow as their image, all literature and any official clothing are that colour and thus easily identified. At the moment CO are actively reaching some 20,000 of Oxfordshire's carers. This is a higher percentage than the national figure but is still not enough. Even earlier at tonight's meeting Kay spoke to someone who said "I wish I had known about you when...." This shows that much more needs to be done. At the moment 1 in 8 will become carers, this figure is set to grow within the next few years to 1 in 5 and then to 1 in 3 with the increased longevity of the population.

CO offer support on many levels. The most basic help is a booklet distributed 4 times a year which gives information on delivering care, legislative changes, advice etc. At the other end of the scale is 1 to 1 support given by an outreach worker. Christine Stanbridge is the outreach worker for the Finmere area. CO also run groups where carers can meet and discuss their problems.

There are considerable changes taking place at the moment with day centres closing and respite care becoming much more difficult to access. These pressures will only build with continuing austerity. Kay asks that the parish should make sure that anyone affected knows about CO as with changes over time more people will be struggling.

MKB asks how CO is funded. Kay confirms that OCC used to totally fund the group but that year on year that funding is now being reduced by some £100,000. CO are now fund raising to cover their costs and need to be constantly more inventive to keep the service going. They currently operate a partnership with Witney and Abingdon College who offer free courses, sometimes on subjects necessary for carers to carry out their caring but also some recreational courses for the carers themselves to enjoy as a break. CO also offer an emergency cover service where if the carer is taken ill suddenly OCC operatives can step in for up to 72 hours, this service can be activated within 1 hour. This is a free service.

CO has recently lost its publicity funding and so in an effort to boost awareness they are coming out and speaking to meetings all over Oxfordshire. Any offers of help with fundraising or ideas for fundraising schemes would be much appreciated.

7. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The report is attached.

8. FINANCIAL REPORT

The report is attached.

Copies of the receipts and payments account for 2016/17 and the bank reconciliation for 2016/17 were made available, these documents are also attached.

9. REPORT OF COUNTY COUNCILLOR

This was actually given after Item 11 as the newly elected County Councillor Ian Corkin had three meetings to attend this evening.

MKB confirmed that the PC had sent a letter of thanks to Catherine Fulljames for her many years in the role of County Councillor for Finmere.

Ian Corkin (IC) gave his thanks to the PC and the Clerk for all their efforts for the village. IC explained that his main purpose in standing for the County Council elections was to be able to represent the electors at this level, being already a District Councillor. The electors will be his first priority as they have been at District level.

There are no handover notes so at the moment he is getting up to speed and will be talking with the Chairman MKB regarding village issues shortly. The main issue has been the landfill site and IC made sorting this out and keeping on top of it an election promise. He has already spoken to Ben Wragg, Site Manager, and is trying to sort out a date for a quarry liaison meeting. If he is unable to make the date chosen he will make a separate arrangement to meet with the new owners. HS2 is also a local issue and IC has spoken with the local group. The primary school is also very important to the village and IC will meet soon with the Head Teacher.

The District Council has provided a great model in its efforts to cut costs and maintain services and the County Council need to explore this example. At the moment 50% of the budget is spent on 2% of the residents in the form of adult social care. At this rate OCC will run out of money by the early 2020's. There will need to be an increase in central government funding or the situation will not be sustainable. There needs to be fresh thinking, a more proactive approach, with possible use of the asset base of the council to bring in more funds. This would provide more pleasurable working conditions with some of the strain removed. There could be a commercial arm to look at alternative funding sources. These things are currently not as much in the psyche of OCC as they should be. IC is hoping to win hearts and minds and get people into this way of thinking. With current changes and threats to the bus service, children's centres and the day centre in Bicester there will be a cost to the community if OCC doesn't get it right.

10. REPORT OF DISTRICT COUNCILLOR MR BARRY WOOD

BW explains that CDC are doing fine at the moment and have held their precept unchanged for the 8th consecutive year. CDC finances are sound. This is mostly due to the new joint management of every service with South Northants council. Backroom costs have fallen away and services have remained stable or improved with CDC achieving high customer satisfaction ratings.

OCC is seeking to do away with CDC and other District councils and to set up a unitary authority. As can be seen just at this meeting with their care cuts, grass cutting cuts and potholes out of control it is clear that OCC are desperately short of money and they are indeed close to technical bankruptcy. Despite the issue of care service funding which is a national problem it is still clear that funding is an issue. CDC and other District councils are seeking to offer an alternative council authority for Oxfordshire. Which council would Finmere residents choose to deliver their services?

BW thanks the PC for all their hard work for the village. Not enough people say thank you these days. As can be seen by the topics at tonight's meeting Parish Councillors are volunteers who take on a significant responsibility.

11. REPORTS OF VILLAGE ORGANISATIONS

Church – The report is attached. Revd Alice Goodall also pointed out that the Shelswell History Festival would be taking place between the 7th and 9th of July. Finmere are to put on a display run by Anita Bilbo, villager. Volunteers are needed for duties in the car park area or to help run the tea stall.

School – Caroline Tucker gave a report on her first year as Head Teacher at Finmere School. The pupils and staff gave her a very warm welcome and she has very much enjoyed being here. There are currently 12 other staff, 3 part time teachers, 5 part time classroom assistants, a bursar and a cleaner. There are currently 25 children on the roll. In November the school won the Outstanding Church School award. The families of the children give the school lots of support and fundraise prolifically.

There is a good focus on activities in the school with two visits this year to Water Eaton Farm in Tingewick, one for lambing, the other for harvest. PC Shaun Sullivan has visited the school and explained internet security and issues to the pupils. They have also visited the Horton Hospital in Banbury and learnt first aid. The NSPCC have visited the school and everyone took part in the Children in Need red nose day. The school has also staged its own art exhibition, supported by local artist Keith Jantz and reported in the press.

The Friends of Finmere School Association (FOFSA) have held a movie night and a Christmas fair to fundraise. The Spring Fair will be held soon, this will raise the profile of the school for prospective pupils as well as raise funds. These monies are used to fund coaches for trips and buy certain equipment.

Despite all these positives there is a concern for the future of the school. The budget for next year has been balanced but beyond that the viability of the school is uncertain. It was built for 70 pupils and needs 40 in order to be viable.

Comment – Barbara Cunningham, villager – In 1979 when we first came here there were 84 pupils and the school had to build a new classroom to deal with them all.

There is not a large number of children in the village but a lot of those do not attend the school anyway. We need to work out why they don't and give them positive reasons to come. A recent open day was well attended by the families of current pupils but brought in no new children at all. Many parents say that the school is too small and it may be that they do not appreciate just how much the children take part in.

Question – Sharron Chalcraft, Parish Clerk – Do the children still go swimming and take part in swimming competitions?

Yes the school is involved in sporting competitions of all kinds with other schools. It is important that we stress to prospective parents that the children do not miss out on all these activities despite the size of the school.

Comment – Mrs Taylor, Chair of Governors, – Yes it is very important that people realise just how full a range of activities the children take part in.

We would like to stress that the people of the village are very welcome to come to our open days and see just what the school is doing and how much good a village school can do.

Poors Plot Charity – The report is attached.

Village Hall and Playing Fields Committee – The report is attached. One thing that must be stressed is that the hall needs more users, especially regular village users, to keep it viable.

Football Club – Mr Jon How gave a report on the football team's year - this is the 33rd consecutive year of the club's operation. There was a club back in the 70's but it disappeared and the club was reconstituted in 1984. The club plays in the Banbury District and Lord Jersey League. The first team finished 8th out of 11 teams in the league last year. There are currently 40 players on the books with both a first and a reserve team playing.

The committee meetings are held at The Royal Oak, Tingewick where there are plenty of quiz nights for fundraising. The club is solvent and is currently submitting a planning application for the addition of showers to the sports pavilion on the playing field. There are plenty of social events for players and families with barbecues and trips. The team draws players from a large area but it would be nice to have more actual Finmere residents involved. The team has attracted a sponsor, Buckingham Garage, and will have a new kit for next season.

The club would like to thank both Alan and Trevor Jones for all the work they do maintaining and mowing the pitch.

Cricket Club – Chairman Mike Geelan was unable to attend as he was on holiday. A report was submitted just after the meeting and is attached.

Brackley and Buckingham Districts Dog Training Club – No report was given this year.

Dog Scent Training Club – Heather Donnelly (HD) gave a report on the Club's activities.

The club meets on alternate Wednesday and Thursday afternoons for 3 hour sessions. They also meet monthly on Saturday or Sunday. People travel to take part from Tingewick, Bicester, Deddington and even from as far away as Birmingham or the Cotswolds.

HD also holds sessions to train the trainers who come from around the country. Last year some 100 came to learn all the skills necessary to carry on this fun activity and this year the number booked is 200. There are even 3 coming from Dublin and 1 from Croatia! Some competitions are held here, with 10 – 30 entrants. HD travels to competitions in Scotland and Essex and judges in some of them.

There is to be a community involvement day in the autumn; getting the public involved and showing that this is a really user friendly activity. Meanwhile the club has attended two shows, the Stoneleigh Pet Show and Just Dogs Live at Peterborough. HD is currently talking to the Kennel Club about involvement with Crufts, possibly giving a demonstration there.

One thing that the dogs are very good at finding is the Vicar's cat, whether it wants to be found or not!

CEROC Bucks – No report was submitted this year.

Drama Group – No report was received this year.

12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Cooperating with neighbouring councils John Taylor, villager, raises the point that there may be benefits to be gained by associating with neighbouring councils on matters like grass cutting, it is possible savings could be made.

Notice Boards Barbara Cunningham (BC), villager, raises the point of the state of the notice boards. These are often very overcrowded with out of date material on them. Caroline Tucker confirms that she often clears the one at the school as it becomes overcrowded and messy. ST points out that often when SC puts up agendas or puts minutes in the folders it is late and dark and she is unable to clear the boards easily. SC confirms that her husband is usually pushed for time when he drives her to the village and it is often late. She herself has had to remove many items in order to make room for PC materials and often non-laminated items become very tatty. The minutes are now displayed in zip folders and fortunately people seem to have realised that they should not post material over the top of these folders. BC points out that if councillors took a board each it would not take them long to tidy them each week. Peter Ing, villager, points out that as the partner of one of the councillors he can

confirm that they already put in a lot of time working for the council. SC suggests that commercial items should be removed from the boards as they are really only for the use of the village. It is felt that this might reduce congestion.

Fly Tipping KG asks if anyone else has seen the fly tipping on the Banbury Road, there are bags of concrete among other items. MKB confirms that there is some material deposited along the Fulwell Road also, including a bath. Sandra Kerford-Byrnes, villager, points out that there was a fridge on the Fulwell Road at one point, but someone came and took it away for themselves. Peter Ing, villager, has pictures which he will send to the PC and this matter can be reported.

Cross Tree Road Sign JB asks if anyone in the village knows where the broken piece of the Cross Tree sign might be. OCC can only get it repaired if we can find the broken piece. Nobody present is able to help.

MKB thanked those attending on behalf of the PC.

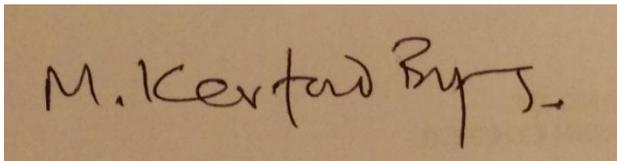
The public meeting closed at 21.30

Members of the PC still present then discussed the matters of the grass cutting agreement and the valuation of the bund.

Bund valuation JB has secured a price of £200 for the valuation of the bund, she will ask that if the agent actually handles the sale of the land for the PC this sum be taken into account. MKB has confirmed that the bund land is within the limit of the planning application and that therefore a planning application will be needed to change the use to garden land. This may affect the value although JB believes that the valuation will be based on uplift to value of the property which will possibly be quite a sum. JB is to meet with the valuer and get the work carried out. Proposed JB, seconded ST, carried unanimously.

Grass cutting agreement This needs to be returned before the next meeting but issues of insurance are still to be resolved. ST suggests that the agreement could be signed, by two councillors at the meeting, but not submitted until the insurance is sorted out to everyone's satisfaction. Proposed ST, seconded KO, carried unanimously.

This meeting closed at 22.00

A photograph of a handwritten signature in dark ink on a light-colored, textured paper. The signature reads "M. Kerford Byrnes" in a cursive, slightly slanted script.

2017 05 09 Chairman's report

Thank you all for attending. I am pleased to report on the activities of Finmere PC over the past year.

As always, I will start by acknowledging the support and assistance that I have received from the volunteer Parish councillors this past 12 months. Without them, the PC would cease to function.

Similarly to Sharron Chalcraft, in her dual role as Clerk and responsible financial officer. As such she is responsible for ensuring that we act properly and with due diligence, especially where finances are involved. The burden of yet more governance, imposed upon us from afar, has increased the work load still further.

Thank you all. Very much.

In addition, we must record our appreciation of our retiring County Councillor, Catherine Fulljames. She has been our representative at County Hall for over 25 years – remarkable. We wish her well for the future. We now have a new County Councillor, Ian Corkin, who is here tonight. We wish him well for the future – but with our capacity to raise issues – that may be more of a challenge.....

This year has been the first year of the “3-member ward” organisation for the District Council. Barry Wood continues as our representative and he has been joined by James Macnamara and Ian Corkin (again). We have managed to occupy them over the past year and I expect that we will continue to do so throughout the next. Yet again we thank them for all their efforts on our behalf.

Throughout the year, we have had a full complement of Parish Councillors, and meeting attendance and involvement has been very high.

Thank you all.

This year we have been active on a number of fronts. The most significant activity in the village has been Operation Playground, which has already been covered. I think it is a truly remarkable effort and the organisers really deserve

our congratulations. It is also appropriate to mention the supporters who turned out and cut hedges, opened gates and generally kept order. Without their assistance all these projects would struggle to make any headway. Long may it continue!

The major issues with which the PC dealt revolved around planning. The PC supported the village in objecting to both the development at Heatherstone Lodge (which was rejected) and to the establishment of a single gypsy pitch on the land opposite the Red Lion (which was granted).

The Heatherstone Lodge refusal is the subject of an appeal, currently in progress.

The gypsy pitch application led us into new territory, since it was on land outside the Cherwell District. So we had no District Councillors on whom we could call. We tried to gain the support of Tingewick Parish Council, but were not very successful. Cherwell District Council did lodge a letter of objection, but, like us, they were effectively 'outside the area'.

We had the annual village clean up in March of this year. Encouragingly there was slightly less to collect when compared to previous years. But any dog mess is too much, and that is still a problem in the village. We also cleared the vegetation (and there was a lot of it) from the cycle path along the old Banbury Road at its western end.

As we reported last year we have addressed the problem of the paving slabs on Chinalls Close. They have been re-laid and a group of volunteers has been established to maintain them. This demonstrated two aspects that are becoming more important to the PC and the village of Finmere – the reliance on the contribution of volunteers and the need to ensure that all those who are going to help in Chinalls Close are on the Parish Council Insurance.

More volunteers and more governance.

We are still progressing both the acquisition and governance of the Playing Field- we are finding that, not only do we have to get it right, but we must not get it wrong – this is particularly relevant with the governance issue where long leases may be involved.

As you will hear, our finances are in reasonable shape. We are under permanent threat of a capping of the precept, along with a gradual reduction in the support provided by the county. So we are making some allowance in anticipation of our income being scaled back in the future. Yet again this highlights the value of volunteers who do some of the tasks that would otherwise be left.

Finally the landfill site. New owners have now taken over, and we await our first Quarry Liaison meeting with them. This should take place before Whitsun, diaries permitting. The Northern aspect of the mound is now truly green, after interminable years of muddy brown and plastic white. The planning conditions expected the Southern aspect to be largely covered by now, but that has not happened. As of today, when I walked round the perimeter of the site, there seems to be little sign of any restorative activity at present. We will, of course, be ever vigilant – we have had the practise!

And we will cut the grass, complain (loud and long – and often) about potholes and strive to do our best for this lovely village.

Thank you for your attention.

Mike Kerford-Byrnes

May 9 2017

FINMERE PARISH COUNCIL RFO'S REPORT 2016 – 2017

Income this year was higher than last by some £3,900 despite the fact that there was no council grant this year and the VAT repayment and grass cutting grant did not arrive, more on the last two items in a moment. This rise was due to the rise in the precept of £1,100 and a donation from the Village Hall and Playing Fields Committee, on behalf of Operation Playground, of funds raised in order to apply for a landfill tax grant for a new play area. In order to apply for the grant you have to raise 10% of the amount you are asking for.

Outgoings this year were higher than last by some £5,800. In addition to a 1% pay rise for the Parish Clerk/RFO (£43) and additional flowers for the war memorial (£14.85) there was an extra grass cut required (£185). There was also the cost of computer repairs (£63), higher electricity costs (£10) and higher expenditure on upkeep of the village hall (£400). In addition the PC paid for the paved area in Chinalls Close to be re-laid (£640) and valuation fees (£300).

These rising costs were partly offset by an absence of legal fees (£270), a reduction in insurance costs (£29) and audit costs (£119) due to the PC turnover being low enough to be exempt from paying audit costs at all. There was also a reduction in subscription payments (£238) partly as last year one subscription was requested twice; the first time being the late arrival of the previous year's request. Dogbin collection was cheaper for the same reason (£275) and there was less expenditure on the defibrillator (£49), the Clerk's society membership was reduced (£10) and there was less expenditure on general maintenance (£73).

But there was a higher expenditure on S137 this year; this went from £370 to £1,454. This was because there were more worthy causes applying for funding this year notably the PCC needing a new mower for the churchyard and HM the Queen's birthday celebrations. This amount is still well below the S137 threshold for the village which is currently some £2,900, this sum can be spent on benefitting the village and can be applied for by those with a project.

Lastly the payments were higher due to the expenditure of the money donated by VHPFC in order to trigger a landfill tax grant for the new play area (£4,168), we have heard all about this project from Operation Playground.

The expenditure over income balance for the year is £1,644.11 (this compares to an income over expenditure balance for the previous year of some £320) this has come about partly due to higher spending of the S137 allowance and partly due to the lack of VAT and grass cutting payments. The balance carried forward is below the recommended amount of one year's precept in reserve; it will take some time for the PC to build up reserves to equal the new precept amount.

The PC's total fixed assets have decreased by £200 (from £28,485 to £28,285). This is due to the annual repayment from the Sports Club of the loan made to them by the PC (£200 – with £1,200 now remaining). The loan was originally listed as an asset and BDO have agreed that it should remain so to avoid confusion but that any future loans should not be so listed.

Now an explanation of the missing income:

VAT The PC can reclaim VAT on invoices. This is usually done once a year at the year end. This is because there is a minimum amount that can be reclaimed and usually in a year the PC is over that minimum. I filled in the form with all the details and submitted it as usual. This money is paid straight into the PC account by HMRC. Sometimes repayment is very quick, at other times it can take quite a while to arrive. I realised in March that no payment had yet arrived and I contacted HMRC who explained that the system had changed, I wish they had informed me, and that I would have to submit the information online. It's quite a complicated system, you input all the invoice details online and then print out all the pages and post them off! Unfortunately the payment did not arrive until April 7th so no VAT repayment is shown for this year but we will get two next year.

Grass cutting grant The PC normally receive a letter confirming the amount of the year's grant, the money is paid directly into the PC account and a printed payment sheet is then received by post. Last year it was strongly implied that the grant, which had been halved, would be withdrawn and so I was not surprised when no letter confirming an amount arrived and no payment into the PC account was made. In order to have everything in order for the audit I asked OCC for a written confirmation of the withdrawal of the grant. They then explained that a purchase order for the money should have come to me from Hampshire County Council. Again a total change of procedure with no information sent out first. The matter is in hand and the PC will receive the amount shortly so again having no grant showing this year we will receive twice the amount next year.

As you will know the PC decided to raise the precept by quite a substantial amount this year to £11,000. At the time the precept was discussed it was still not clear that the grass cutting payment was not going to arrive this year but the fact that it could well be withdrawn in the near future had to be considered. The main reason for the large rise was the fact that it is highly likely that parish councils will have their ability to raise the precept capped as is the case with County and District councils at the moment. The PC currently holds a lot less than one year's precept in reserve which is not in line with best practice. There are likely to be considerable legal costs next year, with the possible purchase of the spinney for the village and also the constitution of the new charities to administer the village hall and playing field. The PC laptop will also need replacing very soon; the expert who repaired it explained that the problem was caused by accessing the internet with unsupported search engines. The system used is Windows Vista and only one search engine now supports that, this support could be withdrawn at any time. Christmas lights may also need to be purchased and there is likely to be a slight rise in overall administration and running costs due to inflation. Grass cutting costs can also be affected by the weather, resulting in a longer growing season with extra cuts, and the cost of each cut is considerable. It is also possible that new areas will need to be added to the schedule if the new play area proves difficult to cut by volunteers using the cricket club mower.

In comparison to parishes of similar size the Finmere precept is very low and it is the responsibility of the PC to make sure that they can meet all their responsibilities in the future. Although demands on the S137 section of the budget have not used the full amount this year it would be a shame not to have the full amount available in future years, projects like the defibrillator installation or grants and loans to village assets like the sports pavilion would be increasingly difficult to fund if S137 availability declines. To give some idea of how difficult a cap could make things 2% of the current precept would only amount to £220 to cover all rising costs or any contingency.

It may be of course that these expenses are transitory and with the PC having put the precept up this high it may be excessive in future years, especially if conditions improve and grants are not withdrawn and capping is not introduced. If that is the case the PC can and will reduce the precept for future years.

This is perhaps a good time to remind everyone that the monthly financial report, given at the PC meeting and detailed in the minutes is available to view online, following transparency changes the draft minutes are now published within a week of the meeting on both the website and notice boards. Anyone wishing to apply for S137 monies can contact the Clerk or approach any of the Councillors who can explain the criteria for eligibility.

Finmere Parish Council

Receipts and Payments Account – Year Ended 31 March 2017

2015 - 2016	Transactions Receipts	2016 - 2017
£7,500.00	Precept	£8,600.00
£350.00	Council grant	£0.00
£284.20	VAT Refund	£0.00
£3.68	Bank Interest	£3.02
£760.76	OCC Grass Cutting Allowance	£0.00
£200.00	Sports Club Loan Repayment	£200.00
£0.00	VHPF Committee donation	£4,168.00

£9,098.64 **TOTAL RECEIPTS** **£12,971.02**

Transactions Payments

£3,757.23	Running costs	£4,650.31
£1,263.52	General administration	£907.97
£3,357.00	General admin - salaries	£3,390.00
£370.00	S137 (LG Act 1972) Vllge Benefit	£1,454.00
£30.00	S144 (LG Act 1972) Enc Visitors	£44.85
£0.00	Capital expenditure	£4,168.00

£8,777.75 **TOTAL PAYMENTS** **£14,615.13**

Summary Receipts / Payments	2015 - 2016	2016 - 2017
Balance brought forward	£6,509.97	£6,830.86
Add Total Receipts	£9,098.64	£12,971.02
Less Total Payments	<u>-£8,777.75</u>	<u>-£14,615.13</u>
Balance Carried Forward	<u>£6,830.86</u>	<u>£5,186.75</u>

These cumulative funds represented by:-

	31-Mar-16	31-Mar-17
Community Account: Balance	£1,530.57	£383.44
Money Manager: General Funds	£5,300.29	£4,803.31
	<u>£6,830.86</u>	<u>£5,186.75</u>

(Chairman) ----- **(Finance Officer)** -----



Finmere Church

St Michael's and All Angels held its Annual Parochial Church Meeting on 5th April.

- there is no change in the number of people on the electoral roll (26)
- attendance at Sunday services varies, but on average is about 15.
- Festivals and celebratory services have been well attended. Nearly 90 people came to the service to celebrate the Queen's birthday, and it was lovely to see the church decorated with the portraits of the Queen done by the cubs and beavers, and everyone enjoying a glass of something in the church after the service. There was a fall in the number of people coming to the Remembrance Service, a combination of the change in time and the lack of cubs and beavers.
- We continue to link with the school, and as always, it was wonderful to welcome the school into the church for services at Harvest, Christmas, the end of the school year and Easter. In conjunction with the school, we plan to bring back the village pancake race next Shrove Tuesday.
- We have had some special benefice wide services over the last year, including a Pentecost celebration in May in Evenley Wood Gardens followed by a barbecue, the All Souls service here in Finmere, and a Plough Sunday service in Pete Rymer's barn in February, with beer from the Vale Brewery in Brill and pasties.
- there were 2 baptisms, 3 weddings and 3 funerals in church, together with 3 funerals in the crematorium.
- finances continues to be a bit of a struggle, and Finmere Church was one of the two churches in the Benefice that was not able to fully pay its contribution to the Diocese, although it did better than last year. We had some good fundraising events though, including the Open Garden at Tile House Farm, the Feteabilitea, the Autumn Fayre and the Harvest Supper.
- the church building is generally in good order, and all urgent maintenance work has been done. The clock continues to be problematic but is currently working.
- we are very grateful to the contribution of the Parish Council to enable the purchase of a new mower.
- There has been some change in the PCC this year. Barbara Cunningham has stepped down from being churchwarden after three years of service, and Buzzy Lepper and Sylvia Nash are taking a break from the PCC. Grateful thanks to all they have done, and also to all who give of their time, energy and money to keep the church going.

Excitements coming up in the next few months:

- two weddings
- fete in September.
- the Shelswell History Festival, 7 – 9th July, Shelwell Park

And finally, thanks the Parish Council for all the work they put in that helps make this village a good place to live. Thank you.

Alice Goodall, Rector, Shelswell Benefice (9th May 2017)

POOR'S PLOT CHARITY

Annual Report 2016/17 to Finmere Parish Meeting, 9th May 2017

The Poor's Plot trustees make their report to the Parish Meeting as follows.

The trustees comprised Anita Bilbo (secretary), Hugh Smith (chairman), Paul Nash, Phillip Rushforth and Sandy Tresise and met during the year.

Activities and Financial Position

The charity holds the 12 acre Poor's Plot field which it lets out on agricultural rent. It also administers the village allotment area, which is kindly made available by Mr Peter Lepper who also plays a very active part in running it. There are 24 allotment plots, of which 18 are currently occupied in varying states of cultivation, and 6 available to let.

During the year the trustees gave consideration to the causes to which the charity's small funding reserve could be put. Expenditure as a result was as follows:

Finmere Parochial Church Council sought assistance with the purchase of a new mower for the churchyard. Poor's Plot contributed £2000 towards this on the condition that nominated people may use it for mowing the common areas around the Poor's Plot allotments.

A recent resident of the village suffered a sudden bereavement, and the charity learnt that she had very few funds with small child to care for. The trustees decided to contribute a donation of £500 towards funeral expenses which we paid on her behalf directly to Boswell Funeral Services.

A skip was provided for a second year to allow allotment holders to dispose of debris. It is not proposed to repeat this service generally in future as it is felt that holders can now deal with waste removal as the need arises.

Annual public liability insurance cover was maintained.

As a result of these donations, the charity operated a deficit over the year of £2,586.34 reducing its year-end bank balance to £2,936.24

Income £510.00

Expenses £3,096.34

Deficit £2,586.34

Outlook

Any village resident who is interested in taking an allotment or in trusteeship should please register their interest with the Secretary, Anita Bilbo who will advise them further. The trustees continue to discuss options for the further application of Poor's Plot funds, and welcome any viable suggestions that Finmere residents may wish to make in this regard.

Hugh Smith

Chairman

9th May 2017

Chairman's Report on Village Hall and Playing Fields 2017

Principle activities in pursuit of our objectives

The hall is available for hire for variety of clubs. With regret we saw folding of Cubs and Beavers. Dawn and Gloria had been running the club for over 25 years and sadly could not find anybody to take over running of Cubs and Beavers. Currently the hall is used on regular basis by a dog training club and by a specialist dog scent trainer.

The hall also hosts annual events such as the Finmere School Fireworks Night. We have bookings for parties for children of varying ages, wedding parties and we have seen an increase in hire for such events. The hall is also used as a polling station. The village hall and playing fields require maintenance like any other building and grassy area. Our thanks go to Alan & Trevor Jones who spend many hours each summer looking after the playing field, Alan also looks after the interior of the hall.

Funding strategy and reserves policy

Our strategy is to maintain the revenue budget on a self-financing basis i.e. lettings and hires. Currently we have sufficient reserves for day to day expenses and it is our aim to keep it up. Management Committee approval is needed for any expenditure from the reserve fund.

Volunteer contributions, grants and fundraising

The village hall and playing fields require maintenance like any other building and grassy area. The costs of maintenance are minimised through use of the time and commitment of the committee members, namely Alan Jones, Trevor Jones, Paul Nash, Phillip Rushforth, Steve Trice and Pat White. Our thanks go to all the members and especially to Alan & Trevor Jones who spend many hours each summer looking after the playing field, Alan also looks after the interior of the hall.

In later part of the 2016, a group of Finmere residents approached Finmere Village Hall Management and Finmere Playing Field Committee seeking advice on refurbishing of the playground. It was decided that they would form a sub committee and take on raising funds and applying for grants. They would report to Finmere Village Hall Management and Finmere Playing Field Committee on their progress. In brief the committee were very active in raising funds and additionally secured a grant through Grantscape and you can see the result of their hard work, as presented by Jacky the chair person of the Playground Committee. Our sincere thanks for the sheer hard work to the Playground Committee members, their partners and Steve Trice in bringing the much needed new playground to Finmere village.

The Village Hall Management Committee is still continuing to operate under an informal authority of the Parish Council. I believe a meeting has been arranged by Mike Kerford-Byrnes with the solicitors to identify the steps to be taken to come to a regulatory and formal agreement between the Parish Council and the Village Hall and Playing Field Committee.

We have started the plan to roll Finmere Village Hall Management Committee and Finmere Playing Fields (current two separate charities) into one combined charity.

The new charity has been set up, with thanks to our secretary Paul Nash, and is called Finmere Village Hall and Playing Fields (CIO).

The CIO suffix (Charitable Incorporated Organisation) provides the same limited liability to charity trustees as directors have within a limited company.

The plan later this year is to formally apply to close the two separate charities.

Currently our fundraising plan for this year is a musical night in May and we aim to organise more events. Our musical night on 6th May sadly had a very low turnout for a village of 350 people only 45 managed to turn up but we still managed a profit of £244. We hope to raise funds from other events during the coming year.

Our future plans

Our core purpose is to continue to provide a sustainable, safe and high quality community building for the use and benefit of the local community in line with our charitable objectives. We have been in a steady, sound and well established state throughout the past year and will continue to manage and run the hall, ensuring that we can meet the following priorities:

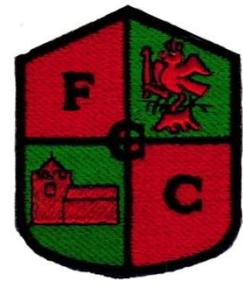
- The hall is properly and fully maintained.
- Running costs continue to be met.
- Build up reserves to cover future repairs.
- Continue to have a strong and dedicated management committee that continuously reviews, updates and improves our management process.
- Monitor and react to the needs of users and the wider community.
- Promoting the hall for use by the local community.

Illa Moss

Chairman

09/05/2017

Finmere Cricket Club Oxfordshire England



For the Love of the Game

2016 Season in Review/Prospect 2017 Season

During the 2016 season, the cricket club continued to focus on “serious friendly” Sunday fixtures, all played at Finmere. As per the previous season, the club was well supported by the village - both in terms of providing players but also with respect to back-room help from the players’ families. We were fortunate again with the weather and the only matches cancelled was due to the opposition not being able to raise a team.

The season opener in May was our now annual 20:20 fixture against one of the club’s sponsors, Lloyd Woodworking of Brackley. We continued to play matches through June, July and August and ended the season playing old rivals Preston Bissett. On balance, we won as many matches as we lost. The high point of the season was once again the continuing good progress made by our youth section. Travis Stone, voted Young Player of the Year at our awards ceremony in December, and Morgan Blane both contributed with bat and ball, and the Odley boys, Bertie and Ed, made their first appearances in the deep outfield. Now that – courtesy of our excellent fund-raising committee lead by Steph Chafor - we have been able to invest in a batting cage and a bowling machine to support regular youth net sessions, Finmere CC can look forward to building a strong back-bone to the team for the future.

Thanks as usual are due to Alan and Trevor Jones for continuing to prepare such excellent pitches and for delivering us a square and outfield that any league side would envy.

For this 2017 season we have another series of 40-over Sunday friendlies scheduled, each starting at 2.00pm up at the ground. We are always on the look-out for new talent – advancing age is no barrier to becoming a member. We trade on enthusiasm and commitment, not talent. Club contact details below for those new to the village who might be interested.

Michael Geelan

CHAIRMAN

michael.geelan@eurospangroup.com

or

David Lloyd – **SECRETARY**

finmerecricketclub@hotmail.com