

FINMERE PARISH COUNCIL

Draft Minutes of Annual Parish Meeting held on 21st May 2019

in Finmere Village Hall

Present:- Councillors, Mike Kerford-Byrnes (Chairman) (MKB), Katherine Grimston (Vice Chair) (KG), Stephen Trice (ST), Peter Goss (PG) and Joanne Brooks (JB)

In attendance:- Sharron Chalcraft (Parish Clerk and RFO) (SC), County Councillor Ian Corkin (IC), Cheryl Snudden (CS) (HS2 Community Engagement Officer), Simon Matthews (SM) (Effiage Kier, Civil Engineers) and 16 members of the public

1. Apologies Apologies were received from District Councillor Barry Wood, Parish Councillor Mike Kirby (MK), Louise Beaumont (Thames Valley Police), John and Barbara Cunningham (residents), Illa Moss (Village Hall Management Committee), Mike Geelan (Finmere Cricket Club Chairman), Collette Crook (Yoga with Collette), Heather Donnelly (Scentwork UK) and Mrs Caroline Tucker (Headteacher of Finmere School), for having to leave before delivering her report.

2. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of 15th of May 2018 were circulated and approved.

3. ANNOUNCEMENT OF APPOINTMENT OF OFFICERS

The PC officers for 2018/19 having been appointed at the PC meeting on May 8th 2018 these appointments were announced as follows:

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

Vice Chair Katherine Grimston (having indicated her willingness to continue)
Proposed: Mike Kerford-Byrnes
Seconded: Joanne Brooks
Carried unanimously

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

Parish Clerk Sharron Chalcraft (having indicated her willingness to continue)
Proposed: Mike Kerford-Byrnes

Seconded: Steve Trice
Carried unanimously

Further items on the agenda were delivered out of sequence in order to facilitate speakers needing to attend subsequent meetings. The minutes record the items in sequence to avoid confusion.

4. POLICING REPORT

The reported crime for the village of Finmere for the last 12 months is as follows:

14/08/18 – criminal damage to straw bales
10/10/18 – theft from vehicle
04/02/19 – theft of two diggers
27/04/19 – theft from vehicle

Please advise residents to sign up to the Thames Valley Alert to receive free crime alerts and info about where they live www.thamesvalleyalert.co.uk

All residents are welcome to attend the Rural Communities priority meeting on Wednesday 19th June 2019 at 7pm at the Community Centre, Geminus Road, Chesterton, OX26 1BJ. This event is where the next rural priorities are set out.

5. HS2/EK LIAISON PROGRESS REPORT

CS and SM spoke about the current and proposed activity in the area.

CS explains that ten schools in the area have been taking part in the Growing Spaces scheme. This is part of the plan to spread the ‘green corridor’ aims of the project to the community. The first phase saw the installation of a raised bed at each school, with a whole day spent learning about nutrition and growing food. The second phase saw Fusion (Enabling Works Contractor) plant flowers, baskets, containers at each school. The third phase will see the production of a recipe booklet, with input from the ten schools, which will be given to the participating schools to sell to raise funds.

There is a 24 hr, 7 day help desk run by HS2 that can be telephoned or emailed. This is now based in Snowhill and liaises with CS on local issues. For community groups there is a community environmental fund which can provide funding. The Green Corridor strategy which is providing trees, ponds and habitats along the route is looking for community engagement.

Statement: A resident points out that this is all very well but in the local area, specifically in Steeple Claydon, there has been a huge loss of ancient woodland with bat habitat and this work will offer no replacement.

CS: I understand your feelings, but we are doing all we can to mitigate the effects of the works.

SM explains that EK are responsible for preparing the ground and carrying out bridging works, tunnelling etc for large stretch of the line from the south of Bucks to Northampton.

The company is committed to community engagement. At the moment EK are awaiting approvals after providing assurances to Highways departments that they can deliver on their assurances. The company has spent 18 months working out what work to do and how to do it and developing designs. Their proposal will be put to HS2 in the next few months and the order to proceed will come by the end of the year. The work will include landscaping, noise barriers etc, ecology and traffic handling.

Traffic numbers and routes locally have been addressed. The main route will be from the A43 roundabout along the A421 as far as the landfill entrance where the traffic can enter the trace, the line of the actual railway works. This proposal will be submitted in July for approval by OCC Highways. After the order to proceed it will take approximately one year to build the site compounds, access routes etc and by the end of 2020 work on the line itself can start. Land possession along remaining sections of the route is expected by July to September of this year, Fusion will carry out initial works (environmental assessments, archaeological investigations etc) and EK will take over the land in January. They intend to use the landscape to minimise the affect of the works and the finished railway.

There will be a compound built at the landfill site but EK are looking to minimise both people and vehicle movements so they will be using off site centres. Much of the construction materials will be prefabricated off site (bridge sections etc), and there is a plan for soil movement.

Ques (MKB): Is it still the plan to move 1/2million tons of soil from Turweston to Steeple Claydon?

Ans: Yes, large dump trucks will be used and a temporary bridge will be put in place over the A421, rather than using traffic lights.

Ques: What if there is no approval?

Ans: The HS2 Act provides outline planning for the works. EK need to demonstrate that they are meeting the environmental standard requirements. Noise control is a priority. Areas of the route differ, there is no 'one size fits all' solution. The applications are being prepared now and there is an 8 week consideration period for these applications. It is always possible that there will be refusals in which case appeals will need to be pursued.

Ques (KG): What trees are being planted at Steeple Claydon to replace the lost ones, will they be large trees?

Ans: They will be whips, there is not enough funding for large trees which would be difficult to source anyway.

Ques (ST): What care will be in place for these new trees? Many of the thousands planted at Warren Farm last year died due to lack of watering and care in the hot summer.

Ans: Lessons have been learned and after care will be in place.

Ques: What is the ratio of trees that will be planted?

Ans: The aim is that there should be no net loss for biodiversity, however this is a project wide commitment, at a local level I can't say.

Ques (MKB): Will the bridge across the A421 be put in place early on in the proceedings and does this mean no earth will be carried across the road itself?

Ans: Yes. It will be put in place before large scale earthworks begin. Actual figures for how much earth will need to cross the road are not definite.

Ques (MKB): At your last visit we were promised that the lorry movement figures would be available in 12 weeks, that was 16 weeks ago, do you have the figures yet?

Ans: No, we do not have them yet.

Ques (MKB): You gave the initial environmental statement in 2013, that changed in January, now there are more changes, will this change again before works start?

Ans: We are going through the process, we are in early discussions with OCC, we will provide all the information to them in July.

Ques (IC): I understand that the statement on Junctions 9 and 10 of the M40 is changing, do you have any clarification? I understand that at the last meeting with OCC, approximately one month ago, no cumulative impact study had been done, is that still the case? Also, what help are you planning to give to local communities to help with the problem of displaced traffic?

Ans: The M40 modelling on Junction 10 will be changing. The cumulative effect is under discussion with HS2 and being looked at. The ripple effect of displaced traffic is something we can do very little about. We can track and monitor our own vehicles to make sure they are not adding to the problem, but we cannot control public traffic. Additional signage can be put in place by the council and for local issues there is a Road Safety Fund that can be approached.

Ques (MKB): Will there be a plan to fix our country roads at the end of the build, we deserve to come out of this with at least something and a decent set of roads would be a start?

Ques: We understand that Mere Road is a designated road, have you checked the traffic at the school?

Ans: We are not empowered to carry out remedial works on roads after completion. We have not carried out traffic monitoring near the school.

Ques: Why is OCC not carrying out any of this work?

Ans (IC): There is a mixed approach in different areas, in Mixbury this conversation has been happening, but every £1 spent is one less for social care in the county. OCC, EK and HS2 should talk. The road safety fund could provide traffic calming, chicanes and additional signage but it is largely allocated now.

Statement: It seems that the left hand doesn't know what the right is doing, there has been no proper project management and no proper programme of works. Not enough is being done.

Ans: We do realise that this scheme will have a massive effect on people's lives.

Statement: There seems to be no timetable for delivery.

Statement: You need to keep your traffic flowing so that we can avoid displacement.

Ans: We do plan to do that.

Ques: Are you tracking your vehicles, will this information be available under transparency?

Ans: Yes.

Ques: Is this scheme working anywhere along the line?

Ans: It is working well in some places.

Ques (MKB): If you are using off site production and bringing in large pieces of prefabricated infrastructure how will you avoid the traffic being slowed down?

Ans: We plan to carry out these movements at off peak times.

Statement (MKB): There is no off peak period on the A421, at 11pm it is busy with non-stop restocking lorries for the large supermarkets, it is very unusual for it ever to be quiet. These 20m sections of bridge will be a sizeable abnormal load.

Ques (KG): Have you carried out any traffic monitoring of the roads you are using?

Ans: We have looked at numbers in general, but no actual figures have been gathered.

Statement (KG): I have no confidence that you are doing your best.

Ans: I will raise the matter of night traffic with our planners.

Ques: Has the archaeological investigation been done?

Ans: The geophysical survey has been done. The trenching has not been done yet, there may be some in the area as a result of the survey. There will only be excavation if trenching yields results. I don't have full details on these activities.

Statement: It would be better to spend some of this money on bigger replacement trees.

Ques: Have HS2 got all your permissions for the whole route yet?

Ans: The London to Birmingham section has all its permissions but the extension to the North does not yet.

Ques: Where is the entrance to the quarry land for all this traffic to be exactly, abnormal loads will really slow the road down?

Ans: That has not been decided yet. Abnormal loads will use another route.

Ques (MKB): The original timescale for the building was 2010 – 2016 from inception to completion. Is this still the timetable you are working to and if so can you fulfil it?

Ans: Yes. EK are looking to have their part finished by 2022-3. I am doubtful that date can be delivered.

Ques: Is the route of the rail line going through the landfill?

Ans: No, it will go round the edge of the mound.

Statement (MKB): It will be going through some of the landfill. The cutting of the old railway line was used for unregulated landfill some years ago and the route crosses that.

Ans: EK will have to discuss that information with the Quarry.

Ques (JB): Will there be any plant crossing the A422 and if so what provision has been made?

Ans: There is a proposal to build a bridge to carry the A422 over the works.

Statement (ST): Traffic calming should be best practice for the whole scheme.

Statement (IC): Mike Wasley (OCC Highways) is monitoring this as HS2 don't know what's needed.

Ans: We are trying to give benefit to local communities who will not benefit from the line. We are using local contractors as well as national. We are aware of the need for SME's to gain and the benefit of upskilling the local workforce.

Ques (JB): I have heard that there are tree planting grants available up to 25 miles from the line, is this part of the green corridor initiative?

Ans: Yes, applications should go in so that we can spend this benefit locally.

SM assures the meeting that he will get the lorry numbers as soon as possible, they should be in by the end of August. CS and an EK representative will attend the September meeting. SC is to email the dates to CS. CS and SM leave the meeting.

Statement (KG): It is important that we all write to our MP's, it is our money that is being spent on this.

Ques: How much has been spent so far?

Ans: MKB explains that £4billion has been spent so far. At the moment the costs outweigh the benefits but the more that HS2 can spend now the quicker that will change and the project will become uncancellable.

Statement: It is arrogant and bloody minded for them to tear up ancient woodland with no approval in place for phase 2 of the scheme.

6. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

When I started to prepare for this, I expected to be reporting on a 'quiet' year. However, on reviewing the minutes, it became apparent that the PC has been as active as ever – and there seems to be little relief in the future!

We started, following the election of the PC, with just 4 parish Councillors. We were fortunate to increase this to 6 quite quickly. We welcomed the appointment of Mr Peter Goss, and the return of Mrs Joanne Brooks. We are now only one short. Thanks to the efforts of the current members, this has gone largely un-noticed. Thank you all for your contributions this past year.

And I must not forget to acknowledge the works done by Sharron Chalcraft, who is both our parish Clerk and 'Responsible Financial Officer' – or Treasurer as it was known. We always have the minutes in good time, and our finances are in the good shape they are, largely due to her efforts. Sharron, Thank you so much.

A lot of our visible efforts have been directed towards improving the village. We have replaced the Christmas lights, and replaced the broken finger post at Cross Tree – Westbury and Fulwell are now signposted. Thanks to the efforts on one of our villagers, all the metal road name signs have been cleaned and repainted, and any vegetation removed from around the edge. The result is quite striking. We had a working party to address the wilderness on the bund behind Stable Close, and this was followed by the Annual Village Clean-up, which managed to attract 19 villagers. We collected so much rubbish that CDC had to make two visits to collect it all! We have also installed another dog bin at the western end of the village, by the bridleway.

We have been reviewing the Play area at Stable Close, which is now over 20 years old. It is showing its age. We have consulted with the Stable Close residents and invited comments from the village as to its future. We have now concluded that it should be decommissioned; and we will take steps to do this over the summer. We intend that the consequences will be more appealing than that which is currently present.

We purchased and displayed a "Silent Soldier" to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the end of WW1. Thanks to the bureaucracy, we cannot leave it as a permanent display, but we will have it in place each year, as a mark of respect. In addition, we have taken up the offer

of two “Trees of Remembrance”, currently no more than whips, organised by Oxfordshire County Council. One has been planted at the entrance of the village by the bench. The other is destined for the Playing Field.

Apart from that, we have also cut the grass, pursued the cleaning of our drains, repair of potholes and manhole covers. All for the same precept.

On other fronts, we have continued to endure the seemingly endless bureaucracy foisted upon us from above. It occupies about a third of the Parish Council meeting time over the year.

We progress with our efforts to acquire the Spinney at the southern end of the Playing Field and may be able to accelerate matters this year. Likewise, we are working with the Finmere Sports Association to formalise the arrangements over the administration of the Pavilion and associated activities. It is never as simple as we originally hoped, but we persist.

There has been very little in the way of significant Planning applications to consider this year. A proposal to build six houses on the land adjacent to the site of the Kings Head was withdrawn. We expect that a revised version will appear sometime in the future.

And of course, we have the landfill site, now operating under new ownership, and the activity appears to be increasing. We had a number of ‘odour incidents’ in February, which were investigated by the Environment Agency, and we have recently pursued the issue of the blocking of the Bridleway across the site. The operators, AT Contracting, have submitted six further planning applications which will extend the scope of their activities. Following a newsletter article and a Village meeting, the PC are objecting to all six.

HS2 is still progressing, and tonight you will have heard the latest position with respect to the implications on Finmere of the construction efforts. We have found it difficult to take any action on this, since the HS2 plans are, to say the least, fluid. Until they produce and confirm a definite plan for us to review, we are very limited in our actions. We will, however, continue to request meeting with them so that we can be up to date with their current thinking.

As I said at the start of this, my original thinking was that it had been a ‘quiet’ year. It wasn’t. I do not expect it to reduce much in the next twelve months. If anything, with HS2 and the landfill site, it may become busier. Your Parish Council will continue to do its best on your behalf.

Thank you very much

7. FINANCIAL REPORT

The accounts for this year have returned to more normal turnover levels as we have not administered any landfill tax grants this year.

Income:

The precept was raised to £11,330 for the year in line with inflation.

There was no landfill tax grant this year.

The VAT refund was large as there was some capital expenditure on equipment for maintenance of the field.

Bank interest was slightly higher, but still only a few pounds.

This year we just received the annual grass cutting grant, rather than a second late payment.

The Sports Club made their annual loan repayment, the amount outstanding is now only £800.

The PC received several donations this year, some anonymous, as detailed in the monthly financial reports.

Under new arrangements concerning the maintenance of the field there was a contribution to grass cutting costs from the Sports Club which is shared with the VHMC.

The VHPFC or Village Hall Management Committee contributed half the cost of the new equipment for the field.

Outgoings:

Running costs were very similar to last years, they dropped by some £167. Electricity prices rose slightly. This cost was offset by lower spending on the village hall.

Administration was also very similar this year to last, only rising by some £23 which was due to election costs.

There was a 1% increase in salary this year as agreed nationally.

S137 expenditure was higher this year with donations to organisations benefitting the village (Friends of Finmere School and Citizens Advice) and a donation to the Royal British Legion for a 'Silent Soldier' in the centenary year of Remembrance, which can be reused annually, this was classified under S137 as it is of long term benefit to the village. There was also the purchase of another dog bin to help prevent litter. This amount is well below the S137 threshold for the village.

There was no S144 expenditure this year.

The memorial wreath was again purchased using the S145 power this year.

There was no landfill tax grant this year.

Capital expenditure was still high, despite not having the VAT refund from the grant expenditure to spend on further play equipment. This was due to the purchase of a new mower to cut the playing field, a storage container to keep it in and also some replacement Christmas lights. In future the PC plans to earmark a portion of reserves each year for the replacement costs of this mower, in order that the funds will be available when needed.

The income over expenditure balance for the year is some £1,135. This is due to the generous donations received and also due to keeping the expenditure on S137 to a lower level than that allowed. There may well be projects in the village in the coming year that need S137 money but for last year there were few applications. This has allowed the PC to build up reserves further toward the target of one year's precept and will also allow the earmarking of reserves for the mower replacement.

The PC's total fixed assets have increased by some £6,317 this year, due to the purchases detailed above.

The precept for the 2019/20 financial year was kept at £11,330, there may need to be a small rise next year if inflation continues.

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 month 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.

Copies of the receipts and payments account for 2018/19 and the bank reconciliation for March 31st 2019 were made available, these documents are attached.

8. REPORT OF COUNTY COUNCILLOR MR IAN CORKIN

Firstly I would like to thank all residents for their support and encouragement for myself in my roles as both District and County Councillor and I thank all those who voted for my re-election in the recent poll.

It has been a busy and productive year with regard to both District and County Council affairs within the village. I am very conscious of the impact growth within Bicester has on the villages that surround it. The increasing levels of traffic it brings can blight satellite villages, who often see no upside from the development and do not benefit from funding to mitigate its impacts. It is a constant campaign for me and one that I promote at every opportunity, including as a member of Cherwell District Councils planning committee.

There are five main areas within the scope of the County Council. The first is highways, the second social care for children, thirdly social care for adults, housing for both of these areas is delivered in cooperation with CDC with social care as a whole taking some 52% of the £500million budget, fourthly is transformation, also delivered in partnership with CDC, and lastly the green agenda. OCC hopes to be carbon neutral by 2030, an ambitious target for an important achievement. Recently the Fire Service have purchased all electric vehicles for their ancillary activities. Solar panels are being fitted to provide energy for charging.

CDC has recently ended its cooperation with South Northants Council, due to the forthcoming establishment of unitary authorities in Northants. A new cooperation is now in place with OCC which should help both councils to deliver services more cost effectively. The primary concern is regeneration.

Currently a large redevelopment is underway beside the canal in Banbury, there is an ambitious plan for a large canal basin with hotels, a cinema and restaurants. Bicester is also developing fast with a task group being established to oversee the regeneration of the High St. There are also plans to deliver housing in the district and to encourage people onto the housing ladder with help to buy/shared ownership and self-build schemes. There have been recent developments in Banbury, Bicester and Heyford Park. To give some idea of the help these schemes provide there have been flats available on one of these developments for as little as £5k deposit and £600pcm payments. There are to be more developments to come with additional plans to plug the gap in social rental availability.

More specifically for Finmere:

Planning applications continue to come forward for the quarry and I am fully engaged with officers at County Hall as they progress. In addition, ensuring effective enforcement of current planning conditions and obligations remains a priority and we have made good progress with both OCC enforcement and the Environment Agency. The community have the right to expect that when conditions are set they are adhered to and I will continue to ensure that is the case.

We await news from Highways England later this year re the Oxams Expressway. Until that happens there is little to report.

Whilst not prejudging planning applications, as a general rule I am very much against speculative and inappropriate development in our villages. We have a local plan and we are making good progress in achieving the rural allocation and we should not feel pressured to accept schemes that do not enhance the rural setting.

I have prioritised cross border working with Bucks and we have seen some good results at both Fulwell Bridge & The Finmere Lido.

I continue to meet regularly with representatives from OCC, CDC and representatives from East/West Rail and HS2 to ensure local communities have a strong voice in these major infrastructure projects. HS2 in particular will have a major impact on traffic, both on the strategic routes and village roads. The recent OCC meeting I hosted was helpful, with some important concessions. I will make sure they continue, with a joint meeting including HS2 in the near future.

I continue to deal with a range of casework for individual residents. By their nature, these are always confidential so I cannot list them here, but I am always very happy to be of assistance.

Finally, keeping in touch with residents is important to me. I do this by attending community events and meetings, trying to get out and about around the patch for a pint on Friday evenings (a councillor's lot is not an easy one) and I am always very happy to discuss issues with residents if you see me. I also have an active councillor Facebook page, @cllriancorkin and my recently launched website www.iancorkin.yourcllr.com

Ques: Is the whole council to be carbon neutral or just the buildings themselves?

Ans: Council services should be carbon neutral also.

Ques: What is to be the size of the Graven Hill site?

Ans: The site will provide 1,900 homes over the next ten years. One third of these will be social housing or in shared ownership. There are to be commercial opportunities too. The houses for the open market are selling well and there are many self builds under construction.

Statement: The site seemed rather messy when I looked at it recently.

Ans: A large area of self builds can look messy during construction, with different designs taking shape at different rates, but the area will look marvellous when they are all finished.

Ques: Are there solar panels on all council buildings now?

Ans: At District Council level yes there are, at County level schemes are now in development.

9. REPORT OF DISTRICT COUNCILLOR MR BARRY WOOD

This report was delivered by County and District Councillor IC and amalgamated with the County Councillor report above.

10. REPORTS OF VILLAGE ORGANISATIONS

Church – Revd Alice Goodall delivered the following report:

1. Highlights from the last year:

- Open Gardens in June – with thanks to Jane Woodbridge and Buzzy Lepper for their organising and to all who opened their gardens
- pet service in September
- carol service in December – lovely to welcome so many from the village, together with both the Benefice choir and the school choir
- the school services in church, and seeing the church full of parents and children eating cake
- messy church for Mother’s Day in Finmere School in March
- the art exhibition which raised £1,398.08 – huge thanks to Keith and Cindy for organising this
- the quiz in the pub which raised £226 – thanks to Tracy and Glyn Jones for organising it and to Tim for hosting it.

Thank you to all who have supported those events in whatever way, and thanks to those who help the church by giving regularly, by helping with the cleaning, keeping the church in good shape, and so on.

2. Challenges are twofold:

a) Lack of people

Sadly, this year we said goodbye to our secretary Corinne Merrick when she and Julian moved to pastures new. This April, Peter Lepper has stepped down from being church warden after 28 years in post, and with him, Charley Grimston. Currently we have no church wardens, and a depleted PCC of four parishioners, helped out by the wonderful Jonathan Davies as treasurer. This makes it very hard to organise things or follow through on ideas.

b) Lack of funds

We need to raise about £15 000 a year to keep the church open and functioning, i.e. about £1250 per month. A dollop of that goes to the Diocese to pay the vicar's wages. A smaller dollop to the Benefice to pay for our administrator and our Children and Families Worker. And another dollop to keeping the building in good shape.

Currently we have a regular income of £390 a month from people who have pledged to give regularly, and an average of £96 a month taken on a Sunday in the collection plate. Which means that currently we are just over £700 short each month of what we need to be contributing. Yes, the art exhibition raised a wonderful amount, but the bulk of that is going to specifically preserve the wooden cross, and the reality is that our PCC is not up to organising another 6 weekends like that a year, and I don't think the village would be up for supporting them!

If we want to keep the church available for the village, then we really do need more people in the village to come on board. Of course we'd love to see you on a Sunday, but even if coming regularly to church isn't for you, there are a couple of ways you can help:

(i) by helping the PCC – we need new members, a secretary, and loads of help with fund raising

(ii) by pledging to give us a regular amount each month – doesn't matter how little or how much. If half the households in the village to pledge an average of £10 a month, we would not need to worry about money. Please contact me or Jonathan Davies if you would like more information or a Parish Giving Scheme form.

3. Later this year, or maybe next, I think we will be inviting the wider village to join church folk in thinking about the future of the church – to get your ideas on the role that the building might potentially play within the village. Please do support that.

Ques: Do other villages have this funding problem?

Ans: Yes, but not to the same extent or for as long as Finmere.

Ques: What other events are planned so far for this year.

Ans: The fete and there will be an open gardens event later.

School – Caroline Tucker (Headteacher) submitted the following report which was read by KG:

Thank you for inviting me to attend your meeting this evening.

Once again, a great deal has happened over the past year. The school continues to grow from strength to strength and this weekend's festivities celebrating the school's 60th anniversary has been a really lovely way to acknowledge what a good place the school is in at the moment.

On Friday we held an Open Day and welcomed a plethora of ex-staff, pupils and governors who enjoyed looking at photographs, memorabilia, being in school and sharing stories. On Saturday our Fete on the school field used the 60 years anniversary as a theme and we enjoyed seeing pupils dressed in 1959 fancy dress costume. And then, just yesterday morning we welcomed The Bishop of Dorchester, the Right Revd. Colin Fletcher, OBE to lead a special service of celebration and thanksgiving. All three events were extremely well attended by the wider community and we were able to raise over £3,200 for school funds.

We have continued to enable our pupils to access an exciting and engaging curriculum by delivering a range of exciting learning opportunities. We have supported key charity events such as Children in Need with a Bring & Buy sale which the children organised and led themselves. We have welcomed the NSPCC into school to deliver key messages about keeping safe and the HS2 Growing Spaces project has built us a new raised vegetable bed and a beautiful growing wall feature.

We especially enjoyed taking part in the art exhibition project with Keith Jansz recently. Keith and Cindy have been fantastic supporters of the school and the children have really been inspired by Keith's artwork.

A particular highlight this year has been our learning as part of our Africa topic. Pupils excelled in an assembly to parents sharing the African songs they had learned and everyone enjoyed a visit from the Junk Orchestra music company making music with drums, shakers, wheels, bells, horns and even flip-flops!

In a couple of weeks time, our Year 5 and 6 pupils will meet with the PCSO from Thames Valley Police to learn about the Age of Criminal Responsibility. Our Year 6 pupils have also completed their Junior Citizen training and the Injury Minimization Programme for Schools (IMPS) at The Horton Hospital in preparation for their transition to secondary school. Rev Alice Goodall and the church continue to support our work and we are proud of the strong link between the church and the school. This year all our pupils have taken part in key services at church, including Harvest, Christmas and Easter. We are especially proud of the small choir we have established and their part in the church Carol Service and we thank the church community for including and welcoming the school to this event.

In April the children travelled to Fringford Church to take part in the Experience Easter event and this, along with the spring themed Messy Church session, which included the special visitors of an ewe and her new-born lambs, really enhanced the children's learning about Easter.

Our PTA group, Friends of Finmere School Association (FOFSA) continue to be extremely active and committed to raising funds for the school and in this current climate of reduced school budgets, their contributions are vital in enabling us to deliver resources to support our curriculum. FOFSA have hosted two big events this year; the Christmas Fayre and this weekend's Spring Fete. Both have been huge successes and are as a result of the hard work of many, many people. We are extremely grateful to the wider community for their ongoing support of the school; the children really do benefit from this whole community approach in support of our school.

Our current focus for fund raising is to facilitate the installation of new timber-trail style playground equipment for the school, which we hope to have in place by September 2019. We are extremely grateful to Finmere Quarry for their very generous donation to our fundraising total for this project.

Having worked extremely hard over the past couple of years to raise the profile of the school, we are delighted to be able to share news of another good intake of new pupils in September 2019. Once again, 11 new 4-year olds will join us which will take the school total to 55. This exciting development will enable us to facilitate three full-time classes, something that has not been in place for many years at Finmere.

Finally, there have been some changes to staff and governors this year that I am keen to mention. Barbara Taylor, long-term supporter and governor at Finmere CE Primary School stood down from her post at the start of the academic year. We thank Barbara for her commitment and dedication to the school over the past 11 years. She supported the school through many changes and fluctuating pupil numbers. It is in part to Barbara's credit that the school is in such a strong place today.

In addition, Catherine Chettle, who has held the post of school administrator for almost 20 years, has also resigned from her post too. Mrs Chettle has been a dedicated member of Finmere staff and has assisted many pupils, parents, families and staff in their time at the school and has been a fantastic support to me over the past three years especially. We wish her well in her retirement.

As I mentioned last year, many of our events are recorded in photographs and are on display on both our school website and school Facebook page. I encourage you to take a look at some of the exciting things we have been doing. School visits are always welcomed, please do contact the school office if you would like to come and see us.

FOFSA – The activities of FOFSA were covered in the school report.

Village Hall and Playing Fields Committee – the following report from Illa Moss, Chairman was read out by SC.

Principle activities in pursuit of objectives

The hall continues to be available for hire by a variety of clubs and equally available for hire by local and district residents.

Regular users of the hall during 2018/19 were dog training clubs, fitness classes, playgroups, the local school tuckshop and the Parish Council. As in the past, it has also been used as a polling station and hosted a number of social events.

The village hall and playing fields require maintenance like any other building and grassy areas and the trustee's thanks go to Alan & Trevor Jones who spend many hours throughout the year looking after the playing field. Thanks also to Alan who looks after the interior of the hall.

Funding strategy and reserves policy

The hall management strategy is to maintain the revenue budget on a self-financing basis i.e. lettings and hires. Currently the hall has sufficient reserves for day to day expenses and it is our aim to maintain that status. The hall is also building a reserve fund for future capital projects.

A major expense that was incurred during the year was related to the replacement of the playing field mowing equipment. The purchase of the replacement equipment, together with more suitable means of storage was accomplished through a combination of hall reserve funds and the purchase being shared with the Parish Council. We are now seeking to reach agreements with the regular playing field users, for the recovery of some of the funds invested and the creation of replacement funds to provide for both regular maintenance costs and the re-building of reserves related to the field maintenance. The mower is an asset owned by the Parish Council and it benefits the community as a whole and the Sports Club, the maintenance being shared by us, Parish Council and Sports Club. The Sports Club reached a provisional agreement with the Parish Council and have paid £500 to the running cost for the mower. The agreement has yet to be finalised on paper, negotiations are still continuing on the running cost of the mower.

Volunteer contributions, grants and fundraising

The hall management welcomed 2 new members to the committee in 2018. The new members had previously been involved in the fund raising and procurement of the new children's play area. They bring welcome 'new blood' to the committee.

The committee has in the later part of the year, appointed a new 'grant procurement' sub-committee. The objective of the new committee is to seek out and investigate new sources of grant funds such that longer term capital investment / development plans may be realised.

The Village Hall Management Committee continues to operate under an informal authority from the Parish Council. The committee believes that this arrangement represents an issue to should be resolved by the Parish Council as soon as possible.

Future plans

The core activity of the hall and playing fields management is the delivery of a sustainable, safe and high quality community building for the use and benefit of the village. This is 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 and capital projects.
- 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.

Poors Plot Charity – The report was delivered by Paul Nash, Chairman:

The members of the Poor's Plot management comprise of Anita Bilbo (Secretary), Paul Nash (Chairman), Phillip Rushforth (Treasurer), Sandy Tresise and Alan Cochrane.

Background: For the benefit of any new members of the village, the Finmere Poor's plot comprises of a plot of land of 12 acres located to the west of the village. The land was originally made available for the use by the 'poor of the village' on a date prior to 1667. Without going into the 'trials and tribulations' of the management of the plot over the intervening years, the plot has never proved to be really suitable for the growing of vegetables, as was originally intended and is currently rented by Peter Lepper for the 'growing' of sheep. For those interested, there is an excellent history of the 'poor's plot' written by Anita Bilbo, available on the website www.myfinmere.com. In addition, Peter Lepper has been good enough to make available a section of a field behind the village hall, that has been sub-divided into 24 allotment plots and this is also managed by the poor's plot committee.

We had hoped to be able to report that, after a period in excess of nearly 400 years, the Poor's Plot has at last been recognised by the Charities Commission and now has an official charity number. Alas, after a year of considering the application, the charities Commission has, amongst other things, requested sight of the deeds allocating the afore mentioned 12 acres. This, despite being already told that all documents had until recently been held on loan at the Bodleian Library and were currently in the safe hands of the Oxfordshire County archives. It was not going to be possible to withdraw the documents from the archives and so we therefore decided to withdraw the application...largely on the basis that the Poor's Plot had been operating for nearly 400 years without the charities commission and although it would have been nice to have a charity number, it is not essential.

But we did make a visit to the Oxfordshire County archives and viewed the documents and for a princely sum of £6, obtained permission to photograph them. (amazing, the documents belong to the village, but Oxfordshire still insisted on the £6 for the privilege of photographing our own documents). A couple of the photos are now framed in the village hall.

Poor's plot Income: Income therefore comprises of the rent paid by Peter Lepper for the use of the original field plus allotment plot subscriptions and a sum is currently held for deemed, charitable use within the village.

Expenditure: The Poor's Plot incurs an annual cost relating to public liability insurance, otherwise there are no normal operating costs. In the last year, the poor's Plot agreed to grant a sum to the Assisted Reading for Children in Oxfordshire Program. A sum that we trust was of benefit to the village school.

Outlook: The committee 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. In addition, any village resident who is interested in taking an allotment should please register their interest with the Secretary, Anita Bilbo who no doubt will advise them on the joys of allotment holding.

Football Club – Mr Jon How gave a report on the football team's year:

The club is currently fielding two teams, each in a different league. There is currently a strong committee who are engaged in getting funding for showers to be built in the pavilion. Unfortunately, the club was declined by HS2, no reason was given. Other villages in the area did obtain funds, Croughton got swings and Padbury got equipment. The club has decided to build the showers inside the pavilion changing rooms rather than in a separate block. This will reduce the cost from some £30k to £10k.

Ques (MKB): Is there a plan to fix the pavilion gutter which has been leaking for some time?

Ans: The gutter has shrunk and will need replacing. This will be on the agenda of the next club meeting.

Crickets Club – The following report was submitted by Chairman Mike Geelan and read by SC:

In my report last year, I referred to our determination, during the 2018 season, to develop a junior squad, the heartbeat of every successful cricket club. In order to achieve that I also outlined the investment we planned to make in securing coaching qualifications, in player recruitment, in training and in equipment. I am pleased to report that, over the past year, all our objectives in this regard have been achieved. Three club members obtained the relevant ECB coaching "badges" and DBS checks; multiple sets of youth pads, gloves, bats and helmets, as well as branded match and training kit were purchased; and each Saturday morning during June and July 2018 up to twenty under-15's – many of whom live in the village – signed up for, and attended youth training sessions run by Marc Odley up at the field.

Things have progressed at a pace since then. During February, March and April this year we held ten, consecutive Junior net sessions at Stowe School, each one attended by kids of all

ages and talents. The Junior squad will also train at the ground each Thursday from 6.30 until the end of July. Looking forward to when the weather turns, Saturday morning training will be a feature again from early June, these aimed primarily at introducing younger boys and girls from the village to the game of cricket. Check the Finmere Facebook page for more details.

Meanwhile, the 2019 season is already underway. Having been invited to join the South Northants U-15's League, our very first match a couple of weeks ago ended in a 100-run victory against Evenly, traditionally the strongest team in the area! We are off to a good start. Junior matches are on Monday nights from 6.30 and usually last around two hours. If you would like to come up and support, we would love to see you. And, if your child is aged between 8 and 15, and is keen to learn the game, develop skills, or just join in, please get in touch (see below).

The adult section remains strong and, although we are not in a league, our programme of Sunday fixtures is both friendly and competitive. Our first game is on **Sunday, 2nd June** - a home match against Buckingham Town – 2.00pm start. Not only is the squad very strong but it is made up, I am pleased to say, of a high proportion of Finmere folk - to include five new recruits this season. Of course, we are always looking for new players so, if anyone from the village would like to join, please contact myself or the Club Captain, Marc Odley. The 2019 season fixture list is attached – (at the end of these minutes)

And, finally.....our 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 club would envy.

The contact details for the club are:

Mike Geelan – Mob: 07860 560748

Marc Odley – Mob 07711 637383

Operation Playground – The members are taking a break from fundraising activities at the moment except for the running of the tuck shop from the hall on Fridays.

Yoga With Colette – the following report was submitted and read by SC:

My name is Collette and I run a gentle yoga class on a Friday evening in your lovely village hall.

My classes are aimed at providing everyone, no matter their age, size or ability the opportunity to relax, breath and stretch in a friendly and welcoming environment wrapped up with the label of 'yoga'. We don't chant or twist ourselves into a pretzel, we just try to

lengthen our breath, gently wring out the stresses of the week and bring ourselves into the weekend with a smile of our face.

Yoga is often seen as something only thin, bendy people can do but that couldn't be further from the truth, yoga is for anybody and any 'body' can do yoga.

Sadly, since setting up my class, attendance has been very poor despite undertaking a leaflet drop and constant Face Book posts, but I'm a positive person and I'm sure that I can grow the class and will be making every effort to do this over the next few months.

My class starts at 6.30pm, I provide all the equipment required and people just need to wear comfortable, stretchy clothes and let me know they would like to attend.

One problem that did occur in the winter months and was mentioned by several people who gave up, was finding the venue in the dark as it's not very well signposted or lit so wondered if anything could be done about that?

Dog Scent Training – The following report was submitted by Heather Donnelly:

Scentwork UK continues to grow from strength to strength with our membership now up to 3,000 members. We have over 150 trainers nationwide which enabled everyone with a pet dog to go along to their local village hall or training venue for classes.

I have made contact with Kim who runs the 'Brackley & Finmere Dog training Club' on Thursday nights here at the village hall as I have three pet dog owners from Finmere who now wish to do some training. Kim has been on one of my training courses and plans to start 'Scentwork' classes at Finmere for beginners very soon.

I now run just 4 trials/competitions at Finmere but others run them too and now we run over 100 each year. 'Scentwork UK' is open to any age of dog and breed and any age of person. We have one lady who is 82 yrs competing and even 3 children with the youngest being just 9 yrs old.

I feel rather humbled to have started with just one class of 8 people at Finmere Village Hall 5 years ago and appreciate all the hard work that those have put in making the hall and grounds clean and well maintained without ever a grumble.

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

Finmere Quarry – No report was given this year.

Yew Tree Motor Works – No report was given this year.

Red Lion – Tim Ayling, Landlord, gave the following report:

I have been the landlord at the Red Lion for nine months now, my aim is to make it a village pub for the village. We support lots of village organisations, holding a quiz on the first Monday of the month and giving the proceeds to a different cause each month. So far, we have raised more than £1,800 including for the Christmas lights as mentioned earlier. I have an agreement to stay at the pub for at least the next five and a half years. There is lots of work to be done and I plan to become as integrated into village life as possible.

Statement: There is certainly a good buzz now when you walk into the pub.

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

No other business was raised.

MKB thanked those attending on behalf of the PC.

The meeting closed at 22.00

.

CRICKET CLUB FIXTURE LIST – 2019 SEASON

as at 1st May 2019

SENIORS/ JUNIORS	DAY/DATE	OPPOSITION	VENUE	START TIME
MAY				
J	Thursday, 9 th May	Evenley	Home	6.00 pm
J	Monday, 13 th May	Middleton Cheney	Home	6.00 pm
J	Monday, 27 th May	Horley	Away	6.00 pm
JUNE				
S	Sunday, 2 nd June	Buckingham CC	Home	2.00 pm
J	Monday, 3 rd June	Woodford/Byfield	Away	6.15 pm
S	Wednesday, 5 th June	Lloyd Woodworking	Home	6.00 pm
S	Sunday, 9 th June	Westbury	Home	2.00 pm
J	Monday, 10 th June	Culworth/MSL	Home	6.15pm
S	Sunday 16 th June	Finnere F.C.	Home	2.00 pm
J	Monday, 17 th June	Brackley	Away	6.15 pm
S	Sunday, 23 rd June	Sutton Courtenay	Home	2.00 pm
J	Monday, 24 th June	PLAY-OFFS	TBA	6.15 pm
S	Sunday, 30 th June	Maids Moreton	Home	2.00 pm
JULY				
J	Monday 1 st July	PLAY-OFFS (cont.)	TBA	6.15 pm
J	Sunday 7 th Jul	SNJCL District Finals	TBA	TBA
J	Monday, 8 th July	PLAY-OFFS (cont.)	TBA	6.15 pm
S	Sunday, 14 th July	Gawcott/Pres. Cup	Home	2.00 pm
S	Sunday, 28 th July	New Bradwell	Home	2.00 pm
SEPTEMBER				
S	Sunday 1 st Sept	Preston Bissett	Home	1.30 pm
S/J	Sunday 8 th Sept	Parents vs Kids 20:20	Home	1.30 pm

BANK RECONCILIATION – MARCH 31ST 2019

COMMUNITY ACCOUNT

Balance as per Microsoft Money £5,116.71

Balance as per bank statement £5,116.71

As shown in accompanying receipts and payments account

BUSINESS MONEY MANAGER ACCOUNT

Balance as per Microsoft Money £4,812.03

Balance as per bank statement £4,812.03

As shown in accompanying receipts and payments account

Signature of ChairmanMKB.....

Signature of RFOSC.....

Finmere Parish Council

Receipts and Payments Account – Year Ended 31 March 2019

2017 - 2018	Transactions Receipts	2018 - 2019	Summary Receipts / Payments	2017 - 2018	2018 – 2019
£11,000.00	Precept	£11,330.00			
£36,543.76	Landfill Tax grant	£0.00			
£7,891.23	VAT Refund	£1,601.41	Balance brought forward	£5,186.75	£8,794.02
£2.25	Bank Interest	£6.47	Add Total Receipts	£57,867.65	£18,205.64
£1,521.52	OCC Grass Cutting Allowance	£760.76	Less Total Payments	<u>-£54,260.38</u>	<u>-£17,070.92</u>
£200.00	Sports Club Loan Repayment	£200.00	Balance Carried Forward	<u>£8,794.02</u>	<u>£9,928.74</u>
£0.00	Miscellaneous Donations	£732.00			
£0.00	Sports Club Grass Cutting Payment	£500.00			
<u>£708.89</u>	VHPF Committee donation	<u>£3,075.00</u>			
<u>£57,867.65</u>	TOTAL RECEIPTS	<u>£18,205.64</u>			

2017 - 2018	Transactions Payments	2018 - 2019	These cumulative funds represented by:-		
				31-Mar-18	31-Mar-19
£3,891.86	Running costs	£3,725.23			
£1,305.85	General administration	£1,328.87			
£3,423.96	General admin - salaries	£3,496.50	Community Account: Balance	£3,988.46	£5,116.71
£200.00	S137 (LG Act 1972) Vllge Benefit	£793.22	Money Manager: General Funds	£4,805.56	£4,812.03
£17.48	S144 (LG Act 1972) Enc Visitors	£0.00			
£100.00	S145 (LG Act 1972) Prov Ent	£100.00			
£36,500.00	Landfill Tax Grant (inc VAT ret)	£0.00			
£8,821.23	Capital expenditure	£7,627.10			
<u>£54,260.38</u>	TOTAL PAYMENTS	<u>£17,070.92</u>	(Chairman) -----	(Financ	

Date and Minute Reference: April 2nd 2019 - Section 5