FIDDINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

Chairman's Report 2015/2016

Fiddington Parish Council have once again agreed to maintain the precept at last year's level, with the knowledge that Council Taxes will increase this year from other Councils. There are still pressures, so far resisted from this Parish Council, from District and County Councils to offload services and thereby threatening future precept levels. You will, however, have noticed a 3.8% increase in your per capita Parish Council bill that has come about purely from reduced Central Government contributions

Parish Council once again have had a modest year on the planning front, with just seven formal and other minor planning applications to consider; a situation that *no doubt is influenced by the punitive CIL Levy that last year replaced RLT2 and RLT3.* However, now that Fiddington is designated a "Tier 5 settlement", it would seem *NOW* the time for The Parish Council to once again look at adopting a villager led Parish Plan; something that was first considered 3 years ago

I reported last year that the fate of Hinkley Point C was to be determined by Government in July 2014. Indeed the "final" decision has STILL to be taken. We are told September this year, and although it had seemed inconceivable that Hinkley Point C would not proceed, the politics and finance issues are far from resolved.

The Parish Council, in association with the Village hall, took advantage of The Greater Quantock Landscape Development Fund, and between September and December last year we successfully protected the bridge from erosion; cleaned the brook; shaped the brook trees; rejuvenated the copse completely in a responsible conservation manner with replanted ash trees and native bluebells. We also stripped topsoil and planted a wildflower strip adjacent to the brook. This was quite a major village undertaking, and I was delighted with the response from villagers who gave over 200 hours of their time to the project.

Councillors have regularly attended both SSG and Cluster meetings, and SALC meetings when available, Development Management Training and kept abreast of new government legislation for local councils. Fast fibre broadband has come to some parts of Fiddington, but more needs to be done for those of us off in outlying areas

We are tonight having elections to the office of Chairman and Vice-chairman. I have been privileged to serve as your chairman for 8 years, but the time has come to stand down. I would like to thank all councillors, villagers and Tina Gardiner our Parish Clerk for their support over this period, and wish the new Chairman well

FIDDINGTON VILLAGE HALL

MAY 17TH 2016

PARISH COUNCIL AGM REPORT

The Village Hall Committee has seen a few changes again in the last year. I am pleased to say we now have a representative from Mill Farm on the committee. This is Alicia Evans. Along with Alicia and Hannah Ovett it is good to see some younger members joining the committee. Despite our efforts we seem to have lost touch with the children in the parish. I hope that now we are attracting some younger committee members this trend can be reversed.

The Parish Council have supported us with a grant again this year towards the upkeep of the grass cutting for the hall verges. With other local cut backs this grant is appreciated even more. Presently we pay Mark Husband to do this work. Mike Short continues to oversee the use of the tractor for the field cutting but Wayne Hawley now supports him with this and does the servicing of the equipment. The committee members work on a rota basis for cutting of the grass around the edge of the hall.

Sheena Shirley remains employed to do the hall cleaning duties.

Along with the usual outgoings for the hall it would appear that we can expect some significant financial expenditure on the up keep of it this year. We were lucky last year in that Asda accepted our application for a grant to replace the failing exterior wood and guttering of the hall. Now this worked has been completed, I hope you will agree this has improved the look of the exterior including the porch, which now has a couple of windows to lighten the area.

Having had this work done the committee decided we should have a survey done to identify what future work needs to be carried out. This survey so far has identified the need for work on the hall roof particularly the porch area; creating drainage for the north wall because presently the ground drains towards the hall and sits higher than the level of the interior flooring. The roof inspection has not been completed yet but infestation of beetle and woodworm has been identified.

A damp survey has identified that most of the interior problems are due to condensation. We need to do an asbestos register. The ladies toilets need attention particularly as one leaks. On top of this, skirting boards need replacing and the general décor needs attention inside and out.

All this will come at a considerable cost. Although the hall funds are healthy at present the above work will have a major impact on them. We hope that our events will continue to be well supported so that the funds do not run too low.

There has not been a lot of change in relation to the hiring of the hall except that we have two weddings booked for July. Both are having the hall and marquee tented which should look lovely. We have been given permission to take photographs of the tenting and will use these to promote the hall on the website and links.

Finances at present are: Current Acc - £8,083.01p ; Gold Acc £12,151.92p

We look forward to another productive year!

Heather Hawley

Chairperson.

M. Holder 17.5.16

Report on the work of the Church in Fiddington 2016

Following the sending of Jenny Kinahane's excellent letter, setting out the ways the Church in each C of E PCC raises the necessary funds to keep the Church buildings in good repair, and the essential life of the Church viable with its services available to all on at least three Sundays here in Fiddington and with further services on the other Sundays available within the Benefice. We are happy and grateful that we can hear our own bells ring out on two of the Sundays and also for all occasions of weddings, National rejoicing etc.

We cannot relax,but we have been delighted to see that, instead of our projected loss for the year, we were able to turn things around to make a tiny profit.

As I say, we cannot relax, but several non-church-goers have chipped in with fund-raising ideas, and with the cookbook at the printers and the Antiques and Collectables evening under way, and the sponsored walk receiving good support, we hope to build up our resources again, ready for the future and inevitable expenses.

We are so grateful for the way the whole village has rallied round.