Fiddington Parish Council

Chairman's Report 2017/18

I am pleased to report that the Parish Council of Fiddington continues to run smoothly, many thanks to all the Parish Councillors and to Tina Gardner our Parish Clerk. Thank you to Robin Kinahan for joining the ranks of Parish Councillor mid term.

To keep abreast of all new legislation and the ever increasing activity within Sedgemoor, Parish Councillors attend almost all meetings of which I appreciate everyone's commitment in sharing the responsibility.

Meetings and activity has certainly increased over the years and the HPC development has only added to the number.

HPC is certainly having an impact on the local area whether we view this as positive or negative the answer is subjective. From the Parish Council perspective we make every effort to embrace the change for the benefit of our community and continue to monitor all activity.

One issue the council will have to undertake this year is to comply to the General Data Protection Regulations, we are waiting on advice how smaller organisations can adhere to such regulations without it been too costly or onerous.

It is great news that Gigaclear have been selected by connecting Devon and Somerset for upgrading broadband in our area, surveys should take place over the coming months with installation and connection later next year.

Over and above the usual Grants provided by the Parish Council extra funds were given to the Village Hall supporting the installation of broadband. The village Hall committee continue their endeavours on improving the Village Hall and the Parish Council will appropriately support the activity.

During the year we received 18 planning applications, 2 were later withdrawn and the remaining supported by the Parish Council, Sedgemoor District Council granted permission on all applications.

I am pleased to report that once again the Parish precept remained the same as last year although Council Tax increased within the District.

Thank you for every ones support and wishing for a prosperous 2018.

FIDDINGTON VILLAGE HALL

22nd May 2018

PARISH COUNCIL AGM REPORT

Trustee wise the Village Hall Committee has had a few changes again in the last year. Hannah Ovett retired from the committee in order to spend more time dealing with family and work commitments. However, we are pleased that she agreed to continue with the News Letter and website management. Already being one member short from Jackie Matthews leaving, Marianne Parr and Sandra Hills joined the group. Sandra has taken over the bookings role. The members, whether working or retired, lead very busy lives. Despite this, the committee has continued to work hard in all aspects of the role and achieved good progress, particularly towards the hall maintenance.

The Parish Council have supported us with a grant again this year towards the upkeep of the grass cutting for the hall verges, Mark Husband being employed to do this work. Wayne Hawley continues to do the field grass cutting and tractor maintenance. 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. However, due to a review of the finances with accountant Anthony Stevens, a decision was made to reduce her visits to once a fortnight. If we have a significant increase in hall use, we will consider increasing her hours again.

As indicated in last year's AGM, significant improvements were identified for the hall following a survey carried out in March 2016. In 2017 over £35,000 of work was carried out on the roof, insulation and damp treatments. This year we are focusing on kitchen and toilet improvements. A CIM/EDF grant application has been submitted for this which includes changing wall and door positions to make the kitchen bigger; 3 phase electrical supply and industrial cooker; and a whole new kitchen, including extractors, stainless steel work tops and shelving, serving hatch and dishwasher. There will be new toilet cisterns and heating in the ladies toilet area, plus new flooring throughout. We hope that this along with Wi Fi which was installed last autumn, (thank you to the PC for financial help with this), we will attract increased hire, particularly weddings which bring in a good income. We are also in the process of applying for a grant from Sedgemoor DC to help with Match Funding for the CIM/EDF Grant application. In relation to this application we have requested further financial support from the PC. I am hoping to get a positive response to this request later this evening.

The Bell Tower project is almost complete. Book shelves have been installed in the Meaker room. A decision was made to do this following back symptoms of committee members lifting boxes of books around for the monthly Book Swaps. A new gate has been made for the field entrance just outside the hall and will be installed soon. A new lawn mower has been purchased. We are also in the process of applying for funding from the Lottery scheme to supply a sound system and projector.

Apologies - attending a meeting of all Churchwardens from the Quantock Coast Benefice.

Report from Fiddington PCC – 15/05/2018

The year since the last AGM started badly with my fellow Churchwarden Meryl being involved in an accident that led to many months in hospital. However, the positive from this event was that during her hospitalisation the breadth of skills that exist in our local community was uncovered and with the help of a number of individuals and local companies Meryl's home was converted to enable her to return home earlier this year, albeit in a wheelchair. Meryl is now able to attend church once again, but has stepped down from being Churchwarden while remaining on the Parochial Church Council.

On the financial front, the Diocese of Bath & Wells has increased our Annual Parish Share, which is the money our Parish pays towards the cost of providing clergy stipends, pensions etc, to £11,669. I am pleased to report that we will be able to meet this cost from the planned giving and collections from people attending services in our church, for which the PCC is very grateful. The money raised from our events during the last year, such as the Sausage Sizzles, the 200 Club, a Concert by the Community Choir and other occasions, goes towards the maintenance of the Church fabric and enable our continuing support of various charities. This year we have supported GOSH, Christian Aid, the British Heart & Lung Foundation, the Royal Agricultural Benevolent Institution and together with all other parishes in the Quantock Deanery area, helped raise sufficient funds to purchase a mini-bus for a girl's school in Devakottai, India, which was required to enable the girls to travel to and from school in safety. We appreciate the availability of the Village Hall for a number of our events, and also the support from the Village Hall committee.

Another personnel change this year is that Pat & David Scott will be stepping down from being the PCC Treasurers after 17 years. Our thanks go to them and also to Kieren Berry, who some of you may know from the Community Choir, and is in the process of taking over the Treasurer's role. There are many activities that go on unseen but are necessary for the smooth running of the church and its support for the local community in happy and sad times. This obviously includes our Rector Nicky, our Associate Priest Andrew and other clergy; and also those from our village involved in flower arranging, cleaning, ringing the bells and the security of the church. Thank you to all.