Fiddington Parish Council

Chairman's Report 2018/19

We are very lucky to have such a harmonious community and many individuals committed to the cause of the Parish. Personally I would like thanks all those people who make our Parish a joy to live in.

Much activity goes on behind the scenes, when things come to fruition it is important we recognise groups and individuals who make things happen. The Village Hall is a perfect example congratulations to the committee guided by there now retired Chairperson Heather Hawley and new Chair Robin Kinahan the refurbishments are fantastic. Equally, the Bell Turret looks super a project driven by Paul Crossland with much support across the community. The Parish Council are always willing to support such projects working within our jurisdiction.

Equally praise must be bestowed on to our Parish Councillors especially this year as both Jim Ridout and John West have decided to retire from the committee. Jim a huge thank you, moved to the village and within one year a councillor and within two years became Chairman for the next eight. For continuity thank you to Paul Crossland and Robin Kinahan for re-election and a big welcome to Wayne Hawley our new Councillor. With one council vacancy still available the Parish Council will hope to co-opt a new member at the earliest opportunity.

Parish Councillors attend almost all external meetings of which I appreciate everyone's commitment in sharing the responsibility. HPC is still and will continue having a huge impact across the wider district it is essential we keep representing the interests of the Parish.
A positive note the Quantock Cluster Group of Parish Councils is now back functioning, this group focuses on topics with specific interest to our area.

It is disappointing to have to report that Gigaclear selected by connecting Devon and Somerset for upgrading broadband in our area have not fulfilled their commitment. Gigaclear totally under estimated the remit of the contract and works has come to a stop.

During the council year we received 7 planning applications, 1 was later withdrawn, 1 was not supported by the Parish and the other 5 applications supported by the Parish Council, Sedgemoor District Council replicated the Parish views on all the applications.

During the year the Parish received Grant support to purchase two defibrillators these will be installed in the coming months, one for Coultings and the other Church Road Fiddington.
This has been a protracted exercise but thanks to our Parish Clerk Tina Gardner for her persistence.

I hope we say it every year but a big thanks to Tina Gardner our Parish Clerk.

FIDDINGTON VILLAGE HALL

May 21st 2019

PARISH COUNCIL AGM REPORT

The Fiddington Village Hall is a very different place from what it was in May 2018. Since then, the Kitchen and Bell Tower projects have been finished. We now have a hall to be very proud of.

With the help of a £69,000 grant from the EDF CIM fund and a £5,000 from Sedgemoor District Council the original plans just to improve the kitchen were extended to add two roof windows to the Meaker Room, restoring the hall and stage floor, improving the toilets and implementing recommendations for fire safety from a report by MGC Fire Services. The kitchen work was far enough advanced to use it for the 2018 Christmas dinner, the hall and stage floors were restored in April 2019 and the fire safety work was completed on May 9th 2019.

The remarkable Bell Tower project was completed in March and looks magnificent. Various ex pupils of the old school have enjoyed ringing the bell. PAP Builders, who built the tower, are applying for various awards for the work. We are grateful to the Parish Council for adopting this project, which saved us the VAT, and to Paul Crosland who raised the money and provided the inspiration for the project.

I would like to record our thanks to the many people who got these two major projects through to completion, but particularly to David Scott and Heather Hawley. David drew the plans for the new kitchen and the Bell Tower and has given advice and help throughout the work on both projects. The fact that he gave his services for free was a huge cost saving. Heather has put in a lot of work supervising the work on the kitchen and has harassed and bullied the various contractors to being on time and (almost) on budget.

Once all the bills are paid, we anticipate having circa £11,000 of remaining funds. This is roughly where we want our funds to be, which is to give us 2 years cover of costs if all income suddenly ceases. It is worth recording that, since the restoration of the hall and kitchen, we have experienced a noticeable increase in hall hiring. There is no room for complacency – the new hall at Holford will provide significant competition.

We are grateful to the Parish Council for the annual grant, which helps with the costs of keeping the grass verges mowed and tidy. Sheena Shirley, our cleaner of many years, retired earlier this year and has been replaced by Sam Henaughan, who is going an excellent job once a fortnight.

There remain various smaller projects still in process. We hope to achieve a Small Lottery Grant to install a modern sound system, projector and hearing aid loop. We will be applying for an annual liquor licence, once the chairman gets around to dealing with the mountain of paperwork it involves. We will try to start indoor bowls once we can sort out somewhere to store the equipment, which is a problem now.

The trustees who make up the hall committee continue to work very hard for the hall and the Fiddington community. With Sandra Hills leaving the committee, we have been joined by Jon Scott. The hall depends on our loyal band of volunteers, who are not all committee members and turn out to help with such things as the erection of the marquee and stream clearing. The hall shares a problem with other villages of trying to get younger members of the community, who are working and have young families, involved in joining events and volunteering to help.

With the completion of all the work, committee embers look forward to organising more normal activities, rather than building contractors. The newly refurbished hall will now give the hall a sound base for the future.

REPORT FROM FIDDINGTON PCC – 21/05/2019

Every five years the PCC holds its' breath as we approach our building inspection carried out by an independent architect. This is the Quinquennial that is due in July of this year. The PCC are however quietly confident that the care and stewardship of previous generations has left us with a building that is basically sound.

During the past year the PCC has responded to the call from the Diocese for support to enable them to expand the work of the church into new areas of the Diocese whilst also supporting existing church's work with their local communities. This support has a financial cost, which has meant that our 'Parish Share', the amount our congregation has to find to support the Diocesan and local teams, has increased this year to £12,780.

Within our village as well as our normal social events we have had the pleasure of working with the Village Hall on two occasions; firstly with the Fiddington Fair weekend incorporating a Jazz Evening and Concert; and secondly with the Wedding Fair where some stallholders were allocated space within the church, which had been decorated in part by the florists exhibiting at the fair. Another opportunity to work with the Village Hall Committee has arisen from a new initiative to make all churches Dementia-Friendly, which is a growing movement to helping individuals live with this debilitating disease and also support anyone caring for that individual. However, in small communities this work would be better expanded to included everyone with a disability and not limit the action to those with Alzheimers etc..

Along with many other organisations the PCC have had to respond to the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulations, and also the important subject of Safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults. For the latter all members of the PCC are undergoing training specific to their roles within the church.

And finally, on behalf of the PCC I would like to express our thanks to all within our community who support the church and our work in many ways.