Fiddington Parish Council – Chairman's Report 2021/22

We are all adjusting to the new normal as we go about our business some meetings take place in person and others are still taking place via internet. At times situations are still challenging as many people still work from home. Thank you to our clerk Tina and all the parish councillors for playing their part in making the Parish Council function professionally.

Fiddington as a parish has become more disturbed over recent years and our sanctuary of a peaceful and proactive community has somewhat been eroded as factors such as more vehicle movements, much larger vehicle movements, speeding traffic, the impact of HPC, deterioration to roads etc these things have taken its toll on village life.

At present we have 2 serious concerns within the parish of which are taking considerable efforts to protect the interest of the community. Firstly, Mill Farm working with HPC proposing an expansion to Mill Farm's activities and secondly the on-going situation with Keenthorne Nursery.
The Parish Council have initiated 2 community meetings to discuss Mill Farm, from those meetings "Fiddington Action Group" chaired by Rod Cole and independent of the Parish Council function are actively pursuing a better understanding of permissions held by Mill Farm and following up on all concerns raised by residents to any future changes to the Mill Farm operation.
Keenthorne Nursery remains active with the Sedgemoor Planners and with the enforcement officer, we as a council press the case on a frequent basis and I would have to say it has been painfully frustrating.

There were 9 planning applications during the year 8 supported by the Council and one not supported. The application not supported is a variation to the Keenthorne Nursery site and this application is still under review with Sedgemoor District Council,

With Somerset deciding to become a unitary authority, elections for Parish Council and the County Council took place on the 5th May, 1 year earlier than the normal term. Fiddington was uncontested, and our existing Councillors were prepared to remain in office, thank you Wayne, Robin, Paul and Greg.
Congratulations to Mike Caswell our District and County Councillor on re-election as a County Councillors. Julie Pay our other District Councillor remains in office over the next year to allow the transition from districts to the Unitary Authority. Julie decided not to stand at this election. Although still in office I would like to thank Julie for her support to Fiddington Parish over the years

Village signs, thank you to Robin Kinahan and Wayne Hawley for securing external funding this has enabled the council to arrange refurbishment of village finger signposts and the purchase of a new village sign on entering the village, we are still waiting delivery of the village sign.

Again, thank you everyone for their support and effort throughout the year.

Derek Buller

VILLAGE HALL

CHAIRMAN REPORT MAY 2022

It is good to write this report when we have a fully functioning village hall again. Our regular users, who are the Home Education Group, and the Art Group are now back in full cry and the Book Swap coffee mornings started again in the autumn of 2021. It was particularly pleasing to see the good numbers who attended in May of this year.

We have 5 wedding receptions booked for the rest on 2022. These are mostly parties that have been postponed due to Covid. It's great to have them back. Our hall is an ideal venue for receptions and family events, and we hope to have many more bookings in the future. Apart from anything else, they are a vital source of income.

The hall finances are in good order, and we are able to keep to our objective of having a minimum of 2 years costs in reserve. Rapidly rising energy costs will put a strain on this, but I am confident that we can manage.

During the year we received a grant from Viridor to replace some ageing playground equipment. Though we have few playground age children in the village, a good playground is a great asset when we try to hire out the hall for family events.

Villagers will have seen six young trees in the grounds. One is planted in memory in memory of David Pay, one is a private donation and the other four are from Sedgemoor District Council. In time, they will be a great addition to the hall and village environment.

The village and its hall owe a vote of thanks to the hard-working committee, who do so much to keep everything going. During this year we have welcomed two new committee members, James U'Dell and Wid Godden. They have significantly lowered the average of the committee and I am sure will make a thoroughly worthwhile contribution in the years ahead!

Acknowledging the risk of forgetting somebody, I would like to thank several individuals. Paul Crosland for standing in for me when I am away and offering sage advice. Heather Hawley, our Treasurer, for not only running our finances but doing many other things as well. Marianne Parr, our Secretary, for calmly looking after bookings and the administration of the hall. All committee members make a contribution, but these three provide vital help. I also want to thank some non-committee members. Wayne Hawley for keeping the grounds in good order, Ruth Brazier for providing Book Swaps with goodies and Richard Brazier for keeping a fatherly eye on the facilities, even though he has retired from the committee.

In summary the hall is in good physical and financial shape and we are able to face the future with cautious optimism.

Fiddington Parish Council AGM – 17th May 2022

From Fiddington PCC

After many months of providing on-line services for our congregations, the archbishops finally allowed our regular in-church services to restart from the beginning of June 2021. Sadly a few of our more elderly members of the congregation have not been able to return for various reasons.

The relaxation of covid restrictions also meant that some of our social activities could return. A very successful Strawberry Cream Tea was held at the end of August enabling £800 to be donated to the charity Toilet Twinning that provides training and materials to enable poverty-stricken villages in Africa and Central America to receive clean water and benefit from basic sanitation. As we were not able to guarantee safe social distancing inside the hall our October Harvest Supper was cancelled, but the Harvest Service was held with all the donated produce taken to the Bridgwater Food Bank and Stockmoor Lodge Care Home. By March of this year, we were able to hold our popular Sausage Sizzle and Quiz, two years after the last event.

Throughout the last year we have been discussing with the Village Hall committee the opportunity to extend the churchyard into the playing field to enable burials to continue to be available for members of our parish. An agreement in principle was made and we have now approached the Charity Commission. Although their initial response was negative, they have agreed to consider the proposal in more detail.

For this coming year, we are looking forward to greeting the new Bishop of Bath and Wells the Right Reverend Michael Beasley, currently the Bishop of Hertford, who replaces Bishop Peter Hancock who has retired due to ill health.

We are grateful for all the support received from the wider parish to enable the church to continue to function through this difficult period and into the future. Thank you.