Fiddington Parish Council Chairmans Report May 2024

This year the Parish Council has purchased an additional grit bin for the junction with Whitnell Lane and replaced finger posts at the bottom of the village, from the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Fund.

Following the formation of the Unitary Council the Dowsborough Local Community Network (LCN) has burst on to the scene, which is made up of Fiddington and 17 other Parishes. The lack of any funding for LCNs has been a big stumbling block.

Somerset Council's lack of funds may push more onus on the Parish Council. The Parish Council is mindful of the current financial situation and has made a small increase to the Precept this year of £400 to £4,700.

I would like to thank Heather Hawley and Frazier Everett for looking after the defibrillators and submitting monthly reports, this is very much appreciated.

We welcomed Nigel Pearce as a new Parish Councillor in July, last year.

We received 10 planning applications over the last year, 6 of which we supported, 3 were for information only and 1 which was outside the village, we did not comment on.

Planning application 28/21/00009 for Keenthorne Nurseries is still pending even though it first came before the Parish Council in January 2022. This is a great frustration to both the Parish Council and the neighbouring properties who would like a decision to be made as soon as possible.

There have been ongoing flooding issues in the Keenthorne area along the A39, resulting in a property being flooded. This is very frustrating as it is the result of poor maintenance of the gullies by Highways.

I would like to thank the Clerk and Parish Councillors for their support and commitment.

Fiddington Village Hall

Chairmans Report May 2024

Welcome everyone and thank you for coming today.

I am pleased to say that as you can see from Heather's report back in November 2023 the first six months were very successful, and we are looking forward to another good year with 5 weddings and 2 parties plus one meeting of the FWAG already booked with our village hall over the next 12 months.

The new caterers we used at Christmas last year were very good and the evening was enjoyed by all.

Many thanks to our Parish Council for the grant of £1,600.00 which includes money towards the grass cutting for the Church

Thank you to the Somerset Community for the grant which enabled us to pay Sutcliffe Play to resurface the Play Park.

Thanks to the dedication of Committee members and volunteers we are able to put on Jumble Sales and book swaps which are always very well attended and along with group bookings provide a stable income to support this facility.

Thank you to all the people that support us with these events. Your hard work is really appreciated

Church report for Village Meeting on Tuesday May 21st 2024

The main issue for our Fiddington Church has been the final authorisation by the Church Commissioners of the reorganisation of the Quantock Deanery and the creation of the new Quantock Gate Benefice ,which we are part of along with Cannington, Stogursey and Stalford, Otterhampton and Combwich and Stockland and Steart Bay. This was finally completed in April of this year. We are delighted with the new arrangements, which make much more sense than the previous Quantock Coast arrangements.

We have organised a rota of three volunteers to help Robin Kinahan, our churchwarden, with the various duties involved. This has worked well. Without it, we wouldn't have had a churchwarden!

During the year we have held the usual events, such as the Sausage Sizzle Quiz nights, the Harvest Supper and the Cream Tea, in aid of the Deanery Charity. We have also held two Deanery meetings in the Village Hall. We are very grateful that the Hall allows the church to use it free of charge. The March 25th meeting was attended by the Bishop of Bath and Wells, who brought his authority and charisma to the event. We also held two Bring and Buy Plant sales at the Book Swap coffee mornings in April and May. These were a success and we hope that they will be repeated in 2025.

Like almost all small rural parishes, who have declining and ageing congregations, we are struggling to pay our parish share and we are facing an uncertain financial future. To help we set up the "Friends of Fiddington Church" fund, which is run by Robin Kinahan, the churchwarden, Wayne Hawley and Matthew Parr. The objective of this fund is to help pay for the upkeep of the church building and grounds. The original idea of people and families sponsoring one of the Apostle Trees for £50 a year was a success, and we had the unexpected problem of too many offers. The church will have its Quinquennial inspection in 2025. We will need all the money we can get to carry out any repairs needed.

In the spring of 2024 the church tower was repainted. It looks magnificent and hopefully will not be needed to be done again for 10 years. Whilst we did achieve a small grant towards the from the Benefact Trust, the costs did make a considerable hole in our finances.

The church is dependant on the volunteers who clean the church, beautifully decorate it with flowers and prepare the church for services and coffee afterwards. The church is an important part of our community, even to those who do not attend the services. We are very grateful to them.