**Minutes of the Fringford Annual Parish Meeting**

**Monday 21st May 2018 at 7.45pm**

**The Chinnery Room, Fringford Village Hall**

**Present: Chairman:** David McCullagh

**Parish Councillors** :- Adrian Thwaites, John Reader, Jan Maciejewski, John Fargin, Michael Cowland and Leslie Harris.

 **Cherwell District Council:** Cllrs Barry Wood

 **16 Fringford Residents**

**Also Present: Cheryl Snudden (HS2)** and a representative of Keir Eiffage (the Construction company responsible for the portion of HS 2 track from Aylesbury to Southam).

**Apologies: Ian Corkin** Oxfordshire County Council**.**

**Apologies:** **Welcome and Apologies**

David McCullagh welcomed everyone to the Annual Parish Meeting of Fringford and thanked them for coming. He introduced representatives from HS2 and Keir Eiffage – the construction company involved.

1. **HS2**

The meeting was advised that the construction of the HS2 railway line had been divided into sections, all of which were being built concurrently. Keir Eiffage (formerly a joint contract with Eiffage, Keir and Carillion) had been appointed to the Buckinghamshire/Oxfordshire section. This is a large civil engineering project involving the construction of 75 bridges, 17 viaducts and some cut and cover tunnels. The earthworks to be moved will amount to some 24M m3 . The company are currently developing the design and considering the logistics of the project – by the end of 2018 these preliminary works will have been completed. About 12 months from now Keir Eiffage expect to have been awarded to contract for the construction works, and the build time is expected to be in the region of 3.5 years.

Preliminary works are being completed by Fusion, and Keir Eiffage are carrying out initial work to understand the geology of the section (with boreholes etc). Notices to gain possession have been served on landowners, and initial site clearance is taking place.

The main issue for Fringford is transport and access. HGV routes are currently being assessed, and if it is necessary to improve roads to enable them to be used, HS2 will do so.

The company is now considering its traffic management of the project, starting with designs to minimise traffic on roads. Muck will need to be shifted along the route, but the present intention is to use the HS2 route as a haul road, with agreed points onto the highway network. Instead of making concrete structures on site, they will be pre cast to reduce traffic, and the company are currently exploring options to minimise traffic from people accessing the site for work. In all this the company is working with the relevant Highway authorities with the aim of having a plan agreed by September 2018.

Q Is HS2 working with East/West Rail – whose construction plans will also have an impact on this area of Bicester?

A There will be a joint consultation event in June. There will also be HS2 drop in sessions, which could be combined with E/W Rail.

Q Who is making the decisions with regard to HS2?

A The HS 2 Project Director

Q What were the effects of losing Carillion? Will there be extra problems?

A The point of the consortium of companies to deliver the project is to ensure there is sufficient capacity. After the collapse of Carillion 50 of their employees were deployed to the joint venture company – Keir Eiffage.

It was confirmed that Keir Eiffage would look to assisting communities with work in kind if possible, and agreed the Parish Council would make contact as their project developed to discuss ideas with them.

1. **Cherwell District Council Report by Cllr Barry Wood**

Cllr Wood expressed his thanks for having been returned as Councillor for Fringford and the Heyfords in the recent CDC election**,** and noted the Parish Council’s success in a recent planning application.

He confirmed that it was important for CDC to bear in mind the need, across the District, to preserve the special character of small villages such as Fringford.

He explained the CDC had had a very effective working partnership with South Northants District Council, but this could be about to end, as the financial difficulties at Northamptonshire County Council meant that the County and Districts were going to be split into 2 unitary authorities, with debts passported into these authorities. He was sad that this successful arrangement was ending, but CDC would be looking to form a similar strategic partnership to replace it.

Q is there an update on the Oxford to Cambridge Expressway?

A CDC have not expressly given feedback on the proposals, but have been in dialogue with Highways England. Aylesbury Vale District Council are looking for growth and better connectivity. An announcement on the proposed route is expected in July , and after that both OCC and CDC will plan options, including proposals to mitigate the effects of the construction of any route on local communities. He stressed that the construction period was mid term – probably around 2030.

1. **Minutes**

The Minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting held on 15 May 2017, copies of which had been circulated and were on the Parish Website, were taken as read and signed by the Chairman as a true record of proceedings.

1. **Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising.

1. **Chairman’s Report**

David McCullagh Chairman of the meeting reported that the Parish Council met 11 times between April last year and March 2018 A wide variety of topics were discussed as reflected in the Minutes which are displayed on the Parish Noticeboard and the Village Website. The Council has had a stable year this year, with no resignations.

**Key issues and activities covered in last year’s minutes include**:

10 planning applications were received. The significant application for a development of 10 houses was very carefully scrutinized by the council using the agreed guidelines. As a result the council decided to support the CDC Planning Department to reject the application.

The Fringford Village Plan, has continued under the chairmanship of Tim Mustill . The Village Voice under the editorship of Helen Fargin and Linda Mustill has continues to serve as an excellent communication conduit on village matters The Village Hall is very well supported and continues to flourish under the active guidance of the committee.

The Council have actively engaged in the two local rail projects E-W Rail and HS2. They have adopted a proactive position with the intention of setting up local liaison groups so that they can minimize local disruption. In the case of HS2 they have every intention of utilizing any grants that may be available.

The Council supported the Playground refurbishment project matching the generous donation from the Cricket Clun Tuck shop fund of £1500 in addition to the £2200 already set aside. Thanks are due to Nick Blyton for completing the successful application to Wren and Tesco for almost £40k. Thanks are also due to Cllr Ian Corkin for the grant which enabled the Parish Council to buy the Vehicle Activated Speed sign – now on the Stratton Audley Road.

A more positive position has been established with the Primary and Pre School with regard to the management of school drop-offs and the damage to the village green. It is hoped that an acceptable solution to all parties will be found in the next 12 months.

He indicated that he would be stepping down from the role of chairman following the meeting. He had enjoyed his term of office and would like to add to add his thanks to all of the Parish Councillors who have given up their time to attend meetings. It is important to note that all of the Parish Councillors are volunteers and make no claims for expenses on travel or other costs.

Finally he reminded the meeting that all villagers are entitled to attend Parish Council meetings and either speak at the beginning if there is something they wish to raise, or observe the whole meeting. Meetings are generally in Village Hall on the 3rd Monday of each month at 7.45pm

1. **Financial Report**

The Clerk presented the Statement of Accounts to the Meeting.

She explained that the Parish Council Books will be inspected by the Internal Auditor on 8th June, and she will then finalise the Statement of Accounts, although she circulated here t the Bank reconciliation and income and expenditure accounts (which gives details of the Parish Finances) to the meeting.

The Council’s expenditure in the last financial year was spent mainly on keeping the village clean and tidy, and on general administration, although, at the very end of the year it did buy the mobile VAS which is currently up and flashing on the Stratton Audley Road.

After producing a detailed budget with a number of options the Parish Council set their precept in January 2018 (for the year 2018/19) at £12500 which is an increase of just over £3 per year for band D properties.

The Parish Council added some money into its Reserves in the year 2017/18 to fund work on the refurbishment of the playground – which is now going ahead.

Last year the meeting was advised that the Parish Council had changed its mowing contractors – this change was short lived. Iverde gave up the contact with CDC, which meant they were not able to keep on cutting the grass in the village, Green Scythe stepped in to maintain the cuts, and, after obtaining competitive quotes, were awarded the contract for 2018/19.

Last year, in her explanation of Council expenditure the Clerk noted how lucky the Parish was that it had not had to pay to snow clearing –the Parish has twice paid for the snow to be cleared over the 2017/2018 winter.

This year the audit requirements have changed, and, at its meeting in June the Parish Council will be certifying that its accounts are under £25000, rather than sending them out to external audit. From 4th June any parish elector is welcome to contact the Clerk to view the Parish Accounts, although these are also posted on the Parish Council web site.

1. **Village Hall Committee Report**

Helen Fargin, Chair of the Village Hall Committee presented a report on activities over the year 2017/18.

She explained that this year has been a year of consolidation, with a new team settling in and getting to know how things work. She became Chair at the last Annual General Meeting, taking over from the previous Chair, who had been in post for 8 years and seen the hall go through many changes and who also stepped down as an ordinary member in December 2017.

Also at the AGM, two new members joined the committee, one as Secretary and in May they received two resignations. Both have resigned due to moving away from Fringford.

It is with much regret to also report the sad departure of the Village Hall Bookings Clerk and Cleaner for many years. She delivered a very good service, keeping all bookings and invoicing in order and is sadly missed. Her husband has taken on the work of bookings and cleaning alongside his existing role as Caretaker.

The Committee are hopeful that new members will join the team at the AGM to ensure they can continue to represent a wide range of villagers and share the workload involved in successfully running the Village Hall.

**Hirers**

The Committee are pleased to report regular hirers continued to stay loyal to the hall and the hall has also been used for a number of new activities including a sleep-over for the Scouts, an evening wedding reception and a Pop-Up Café. The Pop-Up Café was an interesting project using the hall on Fridays to provide refreshments primarily for mums with toddlers using the soft-play area, but also providing another amenity for villagers. Regrettably due to a change in personal circumstances and lack of trade, the Café closed after 6 months.

**Fundraising**

The VH team continue to run fund raising events with surpluses going into their reserve to help cover costs of future repairs and renewals such as the roof and floor.

Additionally, they have run two fundraisers for other charities; Macmillan Coffee Morning in September, raising £602 and Christmas Bingo raising £881 for the Make a Wish Foundation.

**Property**

During the summer break they had a working party to tidy up decoration in the hall and would like to thank all those who came along to help. We are reviewing whether we will do this again this year.

**Security and Legals**

Following a number of incidents, the Committee are reviewing procedures to ensure hirers and users are safe-guarded at all times and the hall remains secure.

Comprehensive Fire and Health and Safety Risk Assessments have been undertaken this year and a number of improvements identified. They are now working on implementing the required changes and are also currently working through Data Protection requirements.

**Operational**

Car parking has become an issue particularly on Tuesday morning and Wednesday afternoon, with one hirer flagging that they would have to cancel their hiring if the situation did not improve. This was discussed within a recent Parish Council meeting and subsequently a survey of car park use was conducted with the Head teacher. The situation has improved and the Committee will continue to monitor as necessary.

Several hirers now pay by BACS, and it is hoped to transition as many hirers as possible to BACS by September.

**Finances**

The accounts for March 2017 to February 2018 have gone to the auditor. Hirings are covering operating costs, they receive pay-backs from both Feed-in-Tariff and Renewable Heat Incentive. A small number of villagers continue to make purchases via Easyfundraising which, since they started has generated donations of over £1,000. A full financial report will be provided at the VH AGM on 25th June.

**Marketing**

A sub-team have had several meetings to review hire rates and marketing material. As a result, they have started to charge for the use of the Chinnery room separately to the main hall and this has generated some good additional income.

The Committee will continue to review rates and plan to create a new on-line brochure in the Autumn to improve their on-line presence.

In summary, it has been a year of settling in as a new team and reviewing and improving various areas of their operation. The Chair of the Committee thanked everyone in the team for their hard work in getting the Hall to this healthy position.

1. **Fringford Friends.**

Janie Thwaites from Fringford Friends reported that they had been busy helping their neighbours in the community since their last report from July 2017.

There are still 8 members on our team all with current CRB police checked and hold OCTA parking badges for the local hospitals. All households in the village have now been given “A Medical Message in a Bottle’.

The Group is represented at the regular ‘Oxfordshire Good Neighbour Scheme Networking “ meetings in Oxford. Sadly, the incredibly helpful liaison officer with Volunteer Link-up passed away very unexpectedly recently; and a new person has now been appointed. These meetings provide a chance to hear what other groups in Oxfordshire are doing and how they deal with problems they come across. At their last meeting they had a speaker talk to them about “Dealing with requests” - enabling them to say NO as a volunteer if they feel uncomfortable about helping in a situation, but then to offer help by calling a professional … i.e. . Clearing out gutters, or climbing up ladders !

Carol Mc Kay from Oxfordshire County Council Emergency Planning Department also provided them with an informative presentation, which has now lead to Fringford Friends applying for funding to the emergency resilience plan as part of the Parish Council application to the Southern and Scottish Electricity Resilient Communities Fund.

December brought a good cover of snow. The village was very pretty, however it also brought a long power cut .The Friends were able to offer help and reassurance to neighbours who were in need with hot drinks and company. The Group continues to be mentioned in the Shelswell News and the Village Voice on a regular basis .

1. **History Group**

The History group currently has 2 significant projects underway :-

1. It is developing materials to show how the Village has developed over the years.
2. It is working with the Parish Council to review old Parish documents. Following the introduction of a Retention Policy the Parish Council no longer keeps old materials without a justifiable reason. Documents in the Parish Council’s possession have recently been passed over to the History group who, with other volunteers, will review the documents and scan any of historical interest so that they can be made available on the Parish Council web site.
3. **Fringford Freewheelers**.

It was with some sadness that the meeting was told have to announce that the next Fringford Freewheelers ride (June 9th) would be cancelled due to the very low turnouts to date. The two people who had attended so far this year are away and it was unlikely anyone else would turn up.

As the turnout has been so poor it has been decided to cancel the future rides for 2018 with possibly the exception of the “ride and stride” for the churches in September.

The maps that the group have been riding over the years are freely available as PDF’s from cyclinggroup@fringford.infoshould anyone want to undertake any local rides either solo or in an arranged group.

The committee thanked everyone for their support of this group over the years of this group but due to declining numbers attending the rides it made little sense to continue.

1. **Village Voice**

With the continuing generous help of their sponsor Webmart, the Village Voice has now regularly been 16 pages for nearly three years and their printer, Vale continues to help them with the design and layout and work miracles with the material they are supplied with.

One family put Anglian Water in touch with us as they needed to get a vital message out to all villagers. Anglian provided editorial copy and an advert for the edition and the offer of free items which were delivered to every household in the village. Posters and stickers were also displayed in the Village Hall.

Village Voice has a mixture of frequent and ad hoc contributions from most of the Village Groups, however unfortunately there are still a couple of groups that are very spasmodic in their submissions. Contributions have been published from a new group, the “Fringford Sewcial”and with the recent exhibition from the newly formed Art & Photography group the Editors hope to have input from them too.

**Distribution**: They are very lucky to have their volunteer distributors, and have added a distributor over the past year who now goes to Fringford Lodge. In March one dedicated villager who delivered the Voice in the wind and sleet and then went on and did the litter pick as well! As from July they will be looking for 2 replacements for Church Close and Rectory Lane and have put out a plea in the May issue.

**Advertising Revenue:**

The donations income received for the period 4/17 to 3/18 is £895 an increase of £197.50 due to additional advertising and earlier settlement of invoices prior to year-end.

All advertisers are up-to-date with their payments, and this year there has been a higher proportion of advertisers paying either 6 months or 1 year in advance, reducing the need to chase.

For the last financial year, April 2017 to March 2018, the publication continued to have a mix of advertisers from within the village and further afield. A selection of sizes is available ½, ¼ and 1/8th page - ideal for sole traders or small businesses.

Current advertisers’ support continues to be very strong, with a high proportion of long-standing supporters.

In January the Editors were approached by Anglian Water to run an article on the problem of wipes and blocked sewers. Anglian Water took the opportunity to include both an editorial and a full-page colour ad on the sponsors back page at a cost of £100. This proved to be very successful and we will endeavour to sell this space again should there be another opportunity for something which touches the whole of the community.

After deduction of expenses, the revenue goes to the Fringford Community Action Fund.

1. **Police Report**

The Police were unable to attend.

1. **Any Other Business**

**GDPR**

Q. How is the Parish Council preparing for the General Data Protection Regulation?

A. A privacy notice explaining how the Parish Council uses information is now on the Parish Council web site, and all members of the Parish Council email list have been advised of their right to unsubscribe. Some months ago the Parish Council agreed a document retention policy and work will take place over the next few months to ensure that obsolete information is not retained.

Cricket Club

The club is concerned that the club may be at risk due to the drop in the number of playing members. Anyone interested in joining should contact the club via its website :

[http://www.fringfordcricketclub.co.uk](http://www.fringfordcricketclub.co.uk/)

The Chairman thanked everyone for coming and the meeting concluded at 8.45pm.

Signed ……………………………………… Dated …………………………….