Minutes of the Annual Assembly of the Parish of Fringford held in Fringford Village Hall – 16 May 2022 7:30pm

1. **Apologies** – Apologies were received for Oxfordshire County Councillor Ian Corkin And Cherwell District Councillor Barry Wood
2. **Minutes** – The minutes of the 2021 Annual Parish meeting were unanimously approved
3. **District and County Council reports** – The District and County Councillors sent their apologies, with no report currently provided
4. **Chairman’s Report**

The Parish Council met 9 times between April last year and March 2022

As always, a wide variety of topics have been discussed as reflected in the minutes which are displayed on the Parish noticeboard and on the Village Website.

Several significant topics have featured in the activities of the Parish Council this year, some of which have been ongoing since the previous year

* The efforts to deliver full-fibre Broadband to the village
* Another planning application relating to a new house development on Rectory Lane
* The redevelopment of the car park at the Butchers Arms
* Recruitment and succession planning
* Chasing OCC Highways to effectively maintain the roadside drainage
* Dealing with significant issues with trees in several areas of the village
* The acquisition of new waste bins and an extra dog waste bin
* The plans to renovate parts of the village green and alleviate the parking problems
* A plan to renovate the area next to the play area where there was once a pond
* The pursuit of grants from HS2 for the two projects above
* Researching the possibility of introducing a 20ph speed limit
* Planning the Queen’s Platinum Jubilee celebrations

**In a bit more detail on the key areas of activity…**

**The efforts to deliver full-fibre Broadband to the village**

After a huge amount of communication with OCC, Openreach, DCMS and villagers the Project to deliver full-fibre Broadband was finally delivered from February 2022 onwards. This has required a huge amount of time and effort to progress through a minefield of administration and changes in government policy. The value of the rural Broadband Vouchers acquired was enough to cover Openreach’s costs of just over £300,000

**Recruitment and Succession planning**

A succession plan and a recruitment campaign were developed and implemented from May 2021 onwards and three new Councillors have been appointed. All three new Councillors have settled in well, have taken on specific areas of responsibility and joined the existing team in delivering regular services and developing new projects.

**The plans to renovate parts of the village green and alleviate the parking problems**

Much work has been undertaken to try to benefit from funding from HS2 to renovate areas of the Village Green and to alleviate the problems of inappropriate parking resulting in damage to the Green. Various schemes have been drawn up and numerous quotations for the works acquired. This work continues and recently involved negotiation with the landowner and with Oxfordshire County Council Highways. Finally in early May 2002 we were informed that the Grant application has been approved in principle. This grant for this project from HS2 is valued at £75,000. Further negotiations with Highways will be required before the work can be completed.

As an aside the various grants acquired by this Parish Council/Village Hall Team to improve village amenities over the last seven years or so amount to approximately £675,000! (Village Green, Broadband, Village Hall renovation, Playground re-build, SSE Resilience, War Memorial renovation.)

**A project to renovate the area to the side of the playground** has been developed. This will involve the levelling up of the former pond area, replanting trees, shrubs and bulbs and the re-building of the wall in front of the Play Group. This is a sizeable and expensive project and will only proceed if an application for funding from HS2 is successful.

Many other topics have been dealt with as reflected in the meeting minutes…

* Consultation with parishioners on planning applications, (mostly minor this year)
* Work with OCC on the issue of flooding
* The ongoing issue of damage to the village green by careless driving and parking
* Speeding, footpaths, playground closure and re-opening

**Finance**

The Parish Council finances remain in a very good state with adequate reserves some of which will be required for the two village green projects.

**Village groups**

On behalf of the Parish Council, I would like to thank many villagers for their contribution to the community…

* The Village Hall Committee that has had to deal with a huge number of changes to legislation and best practice to keep the hall open and safe for key groups and manage the expectations of hirers during the numerous stages of the pandemic.
* Fringford Friends – for continuing to offer aid to those in need.
* The members of the Cricket Club for maintaining the beautiful ground and bringing cricket back to the village
* The Editors and sponsor of the Village Voice for keeping us up to date with village events.
* The initiators and administrators of the Fringford Mutual WhatsApp group – a very useful communication tool.
* The Church PCC and volunteers for looking after the church and churchyard and keeping it available to the community.
* The group of volunteers for continuing to undertake the village litter picks and others who take the time to keep the village tidy.
* The farmers who keep our hedges and verges in good shape.

All these people make a real difference and make Fringford the positive and attractive community we all enjoy. All these groups depend on individuals, and all are keen to attract more support so please, if you are interested join in and do your bit.

On a personal note, I would particularly like to thank all the Councillors and Bobs, the Parish Clerk for their time, effort, and commitment. The Parish Councillors all give up their time to attend meetings, read many documents, carry out planning consultations and undertake many other tasks. (All the Parish Councillors are volunteers and make no claims for expenses on travel or other costs). It is particularly pleasing to work with a group of Councillors who not only attend many meetings but also commit to and undertake numerous projects in the background. In the eleven years I have been a member of the Council the current team are the most active and committed Councillors I have worked with.

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. We generally meet here in the Chinnery Room of the Village Hall, usually, on the third Monday of most months at 7.45pm, if you would like to receive the agenda and minutes by email, please do let Bobs the Clerk know.

John Fargin

1. **Financial Report**

The Clerk updated that the audit has been completed by the Internal Auditor Bridget Knight and will be signed by the Parish Council at the meeting following the Annual Parish meeting. The accounts are available for viewing for any resident. A notice to this will be displayed on the website and Noticeboard following this meeting. The Annual return Audit document and financial spreadsheet are available on request and will, from this year will be added to the website along with the monthly agenda.

The Bank Mandate has been amended with Cllr McCullagh and Cllr Hope to be added to the Mandate as a full power signatories.

There is as of 30 April 2021: £32,466.40 in the current account and £16,235.77 in the Savings Account.

The Precept has been set for 2022/23 at £13,931

It was agreed for the clerk to print the Budget / Year information to be shared with residents at the meeting.

1. **Public Participation** – There were no questions from the Public.
2. **Village Group Reports**
   1. **Village Hall**

**Fringford Village Hall - Chair’s Report 2022 – Helen Fargin**

The second half of 2021 was all about encouraging regular and occasional hirers to return after the full lifting of restrictions. Many class members were cautious about mixing with others and we continued to follow advice from CFO and ACRE to make sure the hall felt safe for all to return. Slowly the requirements have relaxed and now the hall is practically as it was before the pandemic. We’ve lost 3 long-standing regulars and 1 other hirer has moved to another venue due to a change in their circumstances. We are very grateful to our other regulars who continued to support the hall when allowed.

There have been quite a lot of changes on the people front. Sadly, due to his declining health Peter Silver stepped down at our AGM in August 2021. Ju Thomson also stepped down from her Secretary role in February 2022 due to moving area. On the plus side, we are pleased to report Melissa Coke-Smyth and Dennis Bradney both joined the Committee as Trustees in September 2021.

In the latter part of 2021, we advertised for a new paid role of Bookings Coordinator. We had several applicants and finally appointed Simon Knight to the position in January 2022. Simon has fitted in well and building great relationships with all our hirers. Simon is also a Committee member.

At the last AGM those Officers in the roles of Chair, Treasurer and Secretary confirmed they wish to step down at the next AGM. In recent publications of the FVV we have invited villagers to get in touch to hear about what we do, but no response. So, the challenge is on! We do need to find some new members who are willing to take on the Officer roles. It may be that this will end up being a gradual process and current Officers may remain on the Committee so there is a smooth transition. Its work in progress and if you can think of anyone who may be interested, please let me know. We are working on a document detailing all the tasks carried out by the various roles so there is a clear understanding of what happens and when.

Our next area to work on is marketing the hall and attracting new hirers both regular and occasional. A small team will start work on this in the coming weeks.

Financially we are in good shape, having received various Covid Grants via Cherwell and we continue to put aside funds for the eventual replacement of the roof. We are also looking at potential repair of the main hall floor later this year.

All in all, the hall runs smoothly, and we manage our costs carefully. We will set out our objectives for next year in our AGM on 25th July. We hope to see as many people as possible at the AGM and to welcome some new members so we can start the transition to a new team.

* 1. **Cricket Club**

**Fringford Cricket Club (FCC) – Annual update to Parish Council 16/5/22**

* FCC play in the Cherwell Cricket League on a Saturday.

The Club were promoted last season, which was the first season after the team re-joined the league. Continuing strong performances into this year where we are playing in Division 7A

* FCC also play in the Buckingham mid-week league, a 15 over game on Wednesday evenings
* FCC consists of approximately 20-25 playing team members. The team has fostered a great enthusiasm between the group bringing energy, new faces and perspective to the club. We would like to encourage players from within the village as currently only a couple of players reside in the village.
* The club is run by small committee of dedicated members on behalf of the Trustees to the Fringford Cricket Ground.
* Ground & Clubhouse update – overall the ground and aspect remains an asset to the village and a number of activities completed over recent months have contributed to that:
* Replaced back door and facias, block paving lifted and re-laid.
* Replaced hot water cylinder and improved kitchen electrics
* Kitchen area refurbishment – thanks in particular to Alex & John Plested for their donation of time and expertise
* Additional dog waste bin in place
* Purchased outfield roller
* FCC would like to take the opportunity to thank all those neighbours, farmers, villagers who have generously assisted the club in maintaining the ground, clubhouse and surrounding areas for all in the village to appreciate.
* Finance – as a club we are just managing to meet our financial commitments and like the rest of us are really feeling the impact in price of fuel, energy, water etc. Whilst we look to self-generate funds where at all possible, we remain very grateful to our sponsors and a couple of donations received from villagers. In the current season we have 4 bookings for pitch hire and continue to promote the use of the ground for any activity requiring a large open playing or grassed area.
* Some of the future activities in the pipeline include hosting the Fringford Beer festival including Oxfordshire Youth Cricket Stars, the FCC website refresh, ongoing ground equipment replacement / servicing, and opportunities to enhance the practice facilities.
  1. **Fringford Friends**

No Report provided

* 1. **Village Voice**

**Fringford Village Voice Update for Parish Council AGM 24th May 2021**

**Production**

The editors is currently Mark Naylorm who responded to the request for help and Linda Mustill,

There has been a continuing trend in submissions coming in late. The school are a bit erratic in their submissions but here is always a copy submitted by the Friends of Fringford School, however, the pre-school no longer submit copy.

We are currently short of photos from residents, and so we are looking to start a competition for residents to send in photos with Imagex in Bicester providing prizes.

We are still looking for an editor

Understandably submissions over the past twelve months have fallen away as many groups were not meeting and hence nothing to report. Despite this, the Editors manage to produce the FVV using a combination of submissions and “shelf articles” to fill the space as we felt that more than ever it was important to publish for villagers to stay connected.

School continues to be very spasmodic with their submission but luckily FOFS always supply an article. Unfortunately, Playgroup also no longer submit copy. New villagers are encouraged to introduce themselves via the Fringford Folk section.

We are lucky to have a flexible arrangement with Vale Press and are able to alter the number of pages each issue to best match content. We also have a very good working relationship with Adam the designer who has worked on nearly every edition since its inception and continues to help us with the design and layout and works miracles with the copy & photos we supply.

The newsletter continues to be most generously sponsored by Webmart despite the fact that the owner has moved away from the village.

**Advertising** has continued to generate income for the Community Action Fund managed by the Parish Council.

1. **Any Other Business**

No other business raised

Meeting Closed at 8:22pm