**FRINGFORD PARISH**

Minutes of the Annual Assembly of the Parish of Fringford held in Fringford Village Hall on

**Monday 15th May 2023 at 7.30pm**

1. **Apologies**

* No apologies were received

1. **Minutes**

* The Minutes were approved as a true record of the event.

1. **District and County Council reports**
2. **Chairman’s report**

* The Parish Council met 12 times between April last year and March 2023.
* 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.
  + Consultation with residents of planning applications, mainly relating to two new house developments on Crow Lane and Wise Cresent.
  + Recruitment and succession planning to the Parish Council.
  + Dealing with issues with trees in the village.
  + Plans to renovate parts of the village green and help to alleviate the parking problems.
  + Plans to tidy-up the soak away pond area.
  + Liaison with HS2 and the landowner/agent for the two projects above.
  + Application to introduce a 20ph speed limit and the purchase of signs and a second speed monitor.
  + Plans for a memorial to Queen Elizabeth II.

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

**Planning applications**

* The main two applications that the Parish Council was involved in consulting with residents and commenting on were the application for 10 houses on land off Crow Lane21/02553/OUT and land adjacent to Wise Crescent for 6 houses 22/03741/F. Both planning applications were refused by Cherwell District Council. The main grounds for refusal being; beyond the built up area of the village, the negative impact on the open countryside, Fringford is not a sustainable location for large developments and Cherwell’s housing strategy does not state a need for housing in the village. These are consistent and strong points of planning for future objections.

**Recruitment and Succession planning**

* Last May, following the stepping down of the previous chair after 11 successful years in the role, I was nominated and voted in to take on the role of chair for 12 months. Last August we successfully recruited for a councillor vacancy, so that the Parish Council then had full membership. The role of chair is for an annual period. I plan to stand for another year unless anybody else wishes to have the opportunity.

The work to renovate parts of the village green and alleviate the parking problems.

* Following the hard work of the previous chair and Councillors McCullagh and Gue to attain grant money amounting to £99,000 from the HS2 road safety fund.
* We have been given the go ahead by the landowner for the HS2 grant projects to be carried out.

* There are 2 projects totalling £134,000.

* Project 1 - improvements to The Green – known as the HS2 Road Safety Grant for a scheme already approved by Oxfordshire County Council Highways. This includes a passing space on the road across The Green, wooden posts around The Green, repairs to the verges and the creation of 14 herringbone style car park spaces on the playground side of the road. A drawing of this can be viewed on the Parish Council noticeboard.
* Project 2 – General improvements, tidying and removal of dead wood in the pond area and planting of wildflowers and bulbs, the siting of a memorial bench, planting of a commemorative tree for the Queen’s Jubilee, the rebuilding of the old stone wall on the bend by the school and a new decorative village sign on The Green. We are also looking at some kind of memorial to Queen Elizabeth II.
* We will provide further updates once we have the timeframe for the improvements to be done.

**20’s plenty**

* The Parish Council has applied for 20mph restrictions and in the meantime will soon be erecting 20’s plenty signs in the Village. There will also be a new digital vehicle speed monitor with faces erected on the Fringford Road entrance to the village to help people take notice and reduce their speed.
* The 20mph restrictions will help to:
  + Make streets safer by reducing speeds and enabling a more equitable use of the road space for all users (pedestrians and vulnerable road users, sustainable transport, businesses, and car users)
  + encourage residents to walk or cycle by reducing speeds.
  + reduce noise and pollution by amending the way vehicles accelerate/deaccelerate

**Finance**

* I am pleased to report that 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 as costs have increased since the grants were awarded.

**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 for their work to keep the amazing asset of the hall very well maintained and accessible. For organizing and running village events and professionally promoting the use of the hall.
  + Fringford Friends – for supporting villagers when they need assistance.
  + The members of the Cricket Club for maintaining the beautiful ground and keeping the tradition of cricket going in the village.
  + The new Editorial team and sponsor of the Village Voice for keeping us up to date with village events.
  + 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.
* I would personally 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. So far, we have a good track record of attending meetings along with a commitment to and undertake projects in the background, all for the benefit of Fringford.
* 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 meet in 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.

1. **Financial Officer report** 
   * The Parish Council is in a healthy position financially with the current finances standing at £33,979.61 in the Main Treasurers Account and £16,327.41 giving a total of £50,307.02.
   * 2022/23 was a successful year, the Parish Council finished the year with an almost exactly balanced budget with £15,545.26 income of which the bulk comprising of the Precept of £13,931 and spending £15,043. The largest expenditure came from Grass cutting at £3,418.38 which did see a slight increase from the previous year of £2,324.88, which was primarily due to the cost of fuel etc increasing sharply and this is a trend seen nationally.
   * This contract is a three Year Long term agreement and we have completed the first year. The Council has supported the Village Hall with projects with the resurfacing of the car park contributing 50% at £2,570.

2023/24

* + The Council at the January 2023 meeting approved its 2023/24 budget and an increase of 10% to the Annual precept to £15,324 to mitigate the costs of rising inflation. Moving forward the biggest project will be the HS2 project.
  + Whilst this has been well publicised the likelihood is that the costs will have risen following the latest round of tendering.
  + Whilst these costs may now exceed the HS2 grant, as said before the Council is in a healthy position to be able to cover an extra costs.

1. **Public participation**
   * No questions raised
2. **Village groups reports:**
3. Village Hall
4. Cricket Club

* The Club has been promoted for the 2nd year in a row to Division 6A in the Buckingham six week league.
* The ground remains an asset to the village. We have recently replaced the back door and facias, hot water cylinder and electrics and the kitchen has had a make over. Thanks to the PC for supporting and contributing an additional dog bin on the site.
* The ground has been adversely affected by wet conditions and unless there is a dry period, it is likely the May matches will have to be cancelled. In the longer term we are planning to be self-sufficient where possible, but are always very appreciative of donations and sponsors.
* We will again host the annual Beer festival.
* Funding for larger projects have been explored

1. Fringford Friends

* Mrs Davis has been offering weekly trips for the supermarket. Currently the group is not actively publishing, but are there to help if anyone should need anything.

1. Village Voice
2. Parochial Church Council

* Sold approximately 170 programs raising £2,071. Looking to improve the path leading to the church following approval from the Diocesan.
* Our parish is part of a group of 10 churches making up the Shelswell Benefice within the Deanery of Bicester and Islip. The Parochial Church Council (PCC) Secretary is Miss J Petry, Manor Farm, Fringford, Bicester, OX27 8DP.

St Michael &amp; All Angels, Fringford

* The Rector of the Benefice is the Revd. Alice Goodall. She lives in The Rectory, Water Stratford Road, Finmere, Buckingham, MK18 4AT. The Benefice had a Curate, Revd Yvonne Mullins, who took up her post in June 2019 and lived at 10C St Michael’s Close, Fringford, Bicester OX27 8DW. Yvonne completed her curacy in 2022 and in October left to become Rector of the Five Parishes Benefice in Buckinghamshire.
* The Benefice has a part-time administrator, Mrs Becky Adams, who can be contacted at The Rectory where the Benefice office is situated.
* In addition, the Benefice has an Associate Minister, Revd. Liz Welters, who is a retired priest living in Bicester, and a Licensed Lay Minister (with permission to officiate), Mrs Penny Wood who lives in Fringford. Liz assists with Sunday Services, a weekday House Group, Shelswell by the Sea (a holiday at home for older people), and other Benefice initiatives. Penny is a member of Fringford’s PCC, and takes services and supports work across the Benefice.
* The Benefice did employ a Family Ministry Coordinator to support and encourage children and their families within the local communities to learn about, and grow in, the Christian faith. However, the post had to be made redundant during 2021.
* During 2022 the Benefice appointed Mrs Liz Thompson to run Little Lambs (Mums, Carers and Toddlers group) which is held for a couple of hours on a Wednesday morning in Stratton Audley church.

The Electoral Roll

* In 2022 the number of people registered on the Electoral Roll prepared prior to the Annual Church meeting was 26.

Annual Meetings

* The Annual Meeting of Parishioners to elect churchwardens was held in church on 20 March 2022. Mr John Mayo was elected. There remained one vacancy.
* The Annual Parochial Church Meeting was held on 27 April 2022, jointly with other PCCs from the Benefice, in Stratton Audley Church. The clergy, Mrs Penny Wood as lay reader, Mr John Mayo as churchwarden are ex-officio members of the PCC. Lady Joan Alderdice, Mrs Christina McCullagh and Miss Jane Petry were unanimously elected as PCC members for 2021. No Deanery Synod Representative was elected.
* During 2022 PCC meetings were held, on 7 February, 4 July, 17 October.

Fringford PCC

The Parochial Church Council aims to co-operate with the Incumbent and

Ministry Team to promote, within the parish, the whole mission of the Church, having pastoral, evangelical, social, and ecumenical functions.

* The PCC functions as a charity and thus is exempt from registration with the

Charities Commission.

* Each PCC meeting includes updates on pastoral and financial matters, and on the church building, fixtures and fittings. There is a report back from any

St Michael & All Angels, Fringford

* 3 Benefice Council meeting and/or from Deanery Synod. Pastoral care within the village is loosely organised on an informal basis.

Worship

* In 2022 Fringford had two services a month, a Morning non-Eucharistic Service and a morning Communion Service. An evening Communion service was also held every other month. Attendance at regular services is very limited, from 6 to 12 people.
* Special services were also held such as Harvest, Remembrance Sunday,

Christmas Carols.

Activities/Events

* 15. Fund-raising events during the year were a Pudding Evening on 6 May, and the Beer Festival on 18 June. The PCC also runs a 100 Club which raised £1,000 for church funds in 2022.
* On 20th December PCC members, joined by other parishioners, went carol singing around the village in aid of ‘Nai’s House’ a local charity supporting young people with mental health issues.
* During the year the Benefice has held ‘Shelswell by the Sea’ [SBTS - holiday at home for older people] events, a Christmas party mainly for older people,
* Lighthouse [a week of activities for children in the summer holidays ], ‘Fun at Four’ – for Families and Children run monthly, and Little Lambs (Mums, Carers and Toddlers group) run weekly in term time. The Benefice Youth Group run by the Curate, stopped running after she left the Benefice.
* The Benefice Shelswell News continued to be published. Thanks to Rosemary Farmery, the Editor, and to the Benefice Administrator, and also to all those who distribute the News within the parish.

Finance

* The fact that the Parish Giving Scheme was introduced in 2019, and enjoyed a good response, continues greatly to benefit the parish. The PCC was able to pay the Parish Share, and Benefice expenses in full by the beginning of December.
* Support in a time of Covid, and Afterwards
* In Fringford the ‘Fringford Friends’ co-ordinated support for people who needed shopping or help in any way. The Friends set up a ‘What’s App’ group. It currently has nearly 120 members. It has proved a very good way of keeping people in touch and of asking for, or offering, help as required. Members of the church take part in these initiatives.

Church Building and Churchyard

* In 2022 no plans for re-ordering the church to meet the future needs of the parish have been taken forward.
* The roof alarm was serviced as scheduled. PAT testing was carried out.
* St Michael &amp; All Angels, Fringford

Fringford Parish Council kindly share the cost of us employing someone to mow the main areas of the churchyard, and that has helped to keep it looking tidy over the summer. Mr Adrian Thwaites volunteered during the year and has been cutting back a lot of the overgrowth on the east side of the church yard. It has opened out the area greatly. There have been several church yard ‘clear up’ days which got a lot more done. Thanks to all who came and helped.

Church Cleaning

* The cleaning of the church has been done this year by some members of the

PCC, together with Mrs Julie Barrett and Mrs Phillippa Taylor. Whoever is

available, on the Saturday before a Sunday when a service is scheduled, meet

up in the church to clean through. With several people helping, the task is not

too onerous.

* Fringford School

The church has strong connections with the primary school in the village. The

Curate or Rector takes assembly in school once a week, either in person or by

video. The Curate was a school governor. There is currently a vacancy.  Before Easter classes came down to the churchyard for the Outdoor Easter Experience.

In July the Year 6 Leavers and their parents came to the church for a Leavers Service.  In October the school children came down to the church for a Harvest service and they also donated food to the Bicester Food Bank. In December the classes made Christingles and had a special service.

Thank you

* The PCC is fortunate in having a number of loyal helpers who arrange the altar flowers, and help with decorating at major festivals. There are church members who set up for Communion, read lessons and act as sides persons. Yet others assist winding the church clock [Ted Moore, and John Reader when Ted is away], opening and closing the church daily - Chris Singleton and to the Greenwoods, on the Beer Festival Planning Committee [Andrew Davison, Rachel Hall, Damian Hannon, Simon Knight, Phil Nicholson] and helping at other fund-raising events. We are hugely grateful to all these volunteers and thank you for the help you give.

1. Litter Pickers
2. AOB
3. **Village WhatsApp**

* There are currently 146 participants. It was started during lockdown, though we have seen a recent trend away from being a supportive and positive method to provide information to the village to more of an avenue to express feelings over happenings. We have discussed the possibility of some form of education on how to use the group and its purpose. There has been a suggestion of creating rules to relaunch it. We are currently putting together some suggestions over how to move forward and feedback on whether it is a worthwhile venture to continue with. We will post an update and new rules once they have been set in the Village Voice.