

DRAFT MINUTES OF FIVEHEAD AND SWELL ANNUAL PARISH MEETING
Held on Monday 1 June 2022 at 1830 at Fivehead Village Hall, Stowey Road, Fivehead

Present: K Beacham (KB) - Chair; J Parsons - Clerk; 3 further Councillors and 8 parishioners.

1. Chairman's welcome

KB welcomed everyone and introduced those Parish Council (PC) members who were present: Rob Wynn, Bruce Ferguson and Dave Braddock (who had joined May 2022) and Clerk/RFO, Jayne Parsons.

2. Apologies for absence

Apologies had been received from O Howard, L Howard, E Balmer, J Male and C Munday.

3. Approval of Minutes of 2021 APM

The Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 29 April 2021 were agreed and signed by the Chairman.

4. Matters arising from the Minutes

None

5. Reports from Village Organisations (1 April 2021 – 31 March 2022)

Reports were received - see annex page 2-8:

- Parish Council - Chair's report (KB)
- Playing Field Management Committee – Frank Doggett
- Village Hall Management Committee – Dave Cunningham (read by KB)
- Drama Group – Harry Price (read by KB)
- Golf Society – Harry Price (read by KB)
- Rights of Way Volunteer Group – Mary Braddock
- St Martin's Church – Ellen Balmer (read by KB)
- St Catherine's Church – Lorna Conway
- Baptist Church – Rev'd Matt Cottington
- The Stable – Judy Male (read by Matt Cottington)
- Tree Warden – Barry Knox (read by KB)

6. Open discussion

There were no matters raised.

To close, the Chair thanked members of the Parish Council and the Clerk for their work during the year. The Council had recently lost two long-standing members – Ken Male and Nina Cameron. Ken was the Council's longest serving member of 37 years and Nina had been a member for over 12 years. The Chair wished them both well.

The meeting closed and refreshments were provided.

Chairman.....

Dated.....

Annex - reports

Name of organisation: Parish Council

Report by: Kate Beacham (Chair)

This year has again been one where we have struggled with a different kind of normality, but our community has continued to pull together and support one another during this ongoing difficult period. A new 'Village Volunteer' page has been added to our website for local groups to promote volunteer vacancies.

The Parish Council communicates monthly through our minutes and updates bi-monthly in Community Matters our village magazine, so everyone knows what is happening, so I will keep this update brief.

These are some of the projects we have undertaken:

- Langford Corner has had a revamp thanks to our volunteer Dave Braddock who continues to maintain the site.
- We have also applied to the Land Registry for title to Langford Corner but unfortunately, due to current circumstances, this is taking a lot longer than anticipated.
- Fivehead and Swell's Housing Assessment Needs survey was completed with 82% of respondents not wanting any further development in our Parish. Full details of the survey are available on the website.
- PC obtained grant funding via SALC for the card reader for The Stable in October and the village Hall Wi-Fi in March.
- Work has finished on the refurbishment of the telephone box, thanks to our volunteers. The book exchange is up and running. This has been very successful.
- The defibrillator is now in position in the phone box which will also double up as the book exchange (back up and running scheduled for June).
- Spoil has been removed from the Cemetery and the area has been rotavated and re-seeded. The closed part of the churchyard has also been re-seeded.
- Tree preservation order obtained in Oct 21 for a number of trees on Cathanger Estate and parkland.

Plans for the year ahead

- PC is hopeful the historic Pound will be repaired/restored this year. This project has been on hold until the work on the Glendale site is completed. The Pound is regarded as an 'undesigned heritage asset' which protects it from demolition. The PC is also nominating the Pound for the local Heritage List to further raise its status.
- The PC is working with the previous owner of Glendale to complete the transfer of the title for the Pound but as with other matters, there are delays due to the pandemic.
- PC is also looking to repair St Martin's Church wall and is contacting stone masons to repair the bulge behind the bench.

There are numerous other issues under review which will be reported on monthly through the minutes. The PC's 'Green Group' has started to hold meetings again with one of their first projects an initiative to sample the water quality of Fivehead river.

We are so lucky in this village to have amazing volunteers, thank you all for the work you undertake. I would also like to mention Mary Braddock and her team of volunteers who are doing a marvellous job maintaining our footpaths and rights of way.

We have the Platinum Jubilee celebrations coming up, so I am looking forward to meeting you all on Sunday 5 June in the Village Hall.

Name of organisation: Fivehead Playing Field
Report by: Frank Doggett (Chairperson)

Thank you everyone

I would like to thank committee members for all their efforts during a difficult year. Among others who deserve a special mention for helping us are Richard Chedzoy and Michael Troutt (he cut our hedges) and of course, the Parish Council for their continued support.

Storm damage

The winter gales brought down several trees and branches at the bottom of the field. These were cut up and removed by committee members aided by Richard Chedzoy and Peter Bardell.

Fundraising activities

Our traditional fundraising activities have been on hold owing to the Covid 19 pandemic. Hopefully, things will continue to improve, and we have just announced the return of our ever popular Prize Bingo evening at the Village Hall on the evening of Saturday 3 September 2022.

Purchases

We have recently installed a replacement cradle swing, and we are planning to buy a three-person bench to be sited facing the junior swings.

Walking football

Committee member Dave Allen is looking for people over the age of 55 to join in an enjoyable, friendly and not too strenuous game in the Multi Use Games Area. A fun and sociable way to keep fit.

Organisational change

We, together with the Village Hall Committee, are looking to pool our resources. We are consulting with the Parish Council and the Charity Commission as to the best way of achieving this end.

Name of organisation: Fivehead Village Hall
Report by: Dave Cunningham (Secretary)

The main feature of this year's efforts by the Village Hall Committee has been the recovery from the vagaries of Covid. We are now back to pre-Covid booking levels and future bookings are looking robust.

Following kind donations from Roger Eavis of Greenshutters Garden Centre and the surplus funds from the "Save Our Crown" initiative, we have managed to fund the installation of two defibrillators in the village which we hope will never be used! They are, however, there for the benefit of the whole Fivehead community.

Following vandalism to the car park, work has been commissioned to reconstitute the surface. In addition, thanks to grants, we have installed Wi-Fi, soon to be followed by CCTV cameras with numberplate recognition, so that any criminality which takes place in the car park can be recorded and reported fully to the police. This will add security to the frontage and make it safer for local residents to use the Village Hall.

Plans are being finalised to repair and renovate the fabric of the building as it is now almost 18 years old and in need of some TLC.

Moves are underway to focus the Committee better, with working parties looking at the fabric, the finances, marketing and management of the grounds and playing fields. The intention is to merge Hall management with Playing Fields, either by coinciding meetings (which is the simpler), or by legally combining the two charities. Advice is currently underway on this.

With various trustees, having done sterling work over the years, now contemplating retirement, as always, we are looking for new trustees to take their places. The Village Hall is a valuable asset and we hope you will help us to keep it that way.

Name of organisation: Fivehead Drama Group
Report by: Harry Price (Treasurer)

The Drama Group have very little to report having been prevented from presenting anything due to Covid.

Our pantomime **Sherlock Holmes and the Hound of the Basketcases** had to be postponed twice, but we hope to put it on next January. Several tickets purchased have not been returned for refunds. If this is to be considered as a donation to our costs, we thank all those for their generous gifts. If you were unable to access the sales point for a refund, on production of the tickets, they will be exchanged for new tickets for the Pantomime next year.

Aims for 2022

1. To reactivate the group and rekindle the enthusiasm of the young folk
2. To prepare for a new Pantomime and full activities in 2023
3. To resume our donations to local causes

Name of organisation: Crown Fivehead Golf Society
Report by: Harry Price (Chairman)

In 2021, the Crown Fivehead Golf Society had a full programme of events, which despite Covid, were well-attended by the members.

Our main event, our Charity Golf Day held at Long Sutton Golf Club, raised £1003 on the day, which together with our fines and other fundraisers at our regular outings, made the sum up to a magnificent £1400. The two charities supported, The British Heart Foundation & SCAD, received £700 each, which was presented at our AGM in January 2022.

Notable points of the year

1. All the outings were well supported
2. A good sum raised for charity

Aims for 2022

1. To hold another successful Charity Day
2. To maintain full membership
3. To carry out a full programme of activities, including the odd weekend trip

Name of organisation: Rights of Way Volunteer Group
Report by: Mary Braddock (Parish Paths Liaison Officer)

There are some lovely walks around Fivehead and Swell and by mixing the country lanes with the footpaths and bridleways some good walks can be had. The views around the villages are amazing looking out across West Sedgemoor to the north and south towards the Blackdown Hills.

Fivehead and Swell have a great team of local volunteers who go out keeping their eye on our paths to try to keep the paths clear of debris and hedgerow foliage as it encroaches on the paths. We also report to Somerset County Council Rights of Way and Trails office (SCC) when we find there are jobs that volunteers just can't do. For instance, replacing stiles and steps when they get damaged or become unsafe. SCC have also loaned us a brushcutter/trimmer, which helps to keep the surfaces of the paths clear. We have a Ranger, Debbie, assigned to us by SCC and she is our go-to person for repairs and improvements.

Fivehead Footpath team began to meet for a coffee in The Stable in August 2021, to get to know each other and discuss some of the difficulties each of us face. Each volunteer has a path or paths that they look after and it can be helpful to share issues with the group. We only meet quarterly, and it is nice to know who else is on the team. Items we discuss can include issues with farmers stock in fields. As a result, we secured some disconnect handles so the public can safely negotiate electric fences that can appear over a footpath. We try to work together allowing the public to enjoy the footpaths, but also working alongside our farmers and landowners making sure that their land and stock is being respected.

A brief summary of the work carried out through the last year includes installing new gates around the village and removing old worn-out stiles, replacing worn and rotten footpath and bridleway fingerposts, installing new steps and stile on the short path out at Cathanger. It doesn't sound much but our walks are now accessible and if you so wish, a complete circuit of the village can now be made.

Please keep Mary Braddock informed of any difficulties experienced on footpaths and bridleways...and enjoying your walking.

Name of organisation: St Martin's Church
Report by: Ellen Balmer (Church Warden)

At long last 2021 was a more normal year. Rev'd Scott Patterson managed all of our services in the church, at times having to wear masks, but much appreciated by everyone. Our service pattern at the moment is a Family and Friends service on the first Sunday of the month, followed by a short Holy Communion; no service on the second Sunday, but services are held in Swell and Curry Rivel, third Sunday. Morning Prayer and the fourth Sunday is a Parish Holy Communion - fifth Sundays are shared between the three churches. The Remembrance Day Service is now held with the Baptist Chapel which is always well supported.

This year (2021), our Plant Sale was online and again very successful; we did our final Cream Tea Delivery in October and at Christmas we held the Christmas Fair in the Church, which was as always, well supported by the village. We also had a Carol Service, followed by mulled wine and mince pies. The Christmas tree in the church yard was much appreciated, a joint venture with the Parish Council and St Martins, kindly donated and installed by Roger Eavis of Greenshutters.

We have just had our Quinquennial Inspection (March 2022) which takes place every five years and hopefully there will be nothing major. Because of the support for our fundraising events, we have managed to keep the building in good repair, which is a huge relief. Everyone can be assured of a warm welcome to all of our services and our varied fundraising events throughout the year.

Name of organisation: St Catherine's Church, Swell

Report by: Lorna Conway (Secretary)

After the church undertaking Zoom services during the Covid-19 pandemic, the church finally resumed face-to-face services by December 2021. The church offers the 1665 prayer book service on a monthly basis, as well as monthly evensong services. Sadly, it was decided to cancel the Christmas Carol service due to ongoing concerns about Covid. The church has strived to keep its congregation safe during these turbulent times.

The church roll has 20 members, with 12 living inside the parish.

This old church continues to provide a place of solace and contemplation.

Name of organisation: Fivehead Baptist Church

Report by: Rev Matt Cottington (Pastor)

The year began with us still in lockdown, unable to meet together in person in the church building, but services continued via Zoom during this time. Easter Sunday was our first Sunday back together in the building; a lovely sign of new life beginning as we celebrated Christ's resurrection. As time went on, we were able to meet more freely, and eventually sing together again. I think we have all been reminded of the importance of being together and the unique joy of gathered worship. One of the topics we looked at on Sundays this year was "Wellbeing" and how the pandemic has reminded us of the need to focus on our health as individuals and as communities. It has been lovely to welcome new people to our congregation during the year, some who have moved to the village, others who have joined us from elsewhere. It has also been nice to see the children enjoying themselves at church and we have been trying out some interactive all-age services recently.

Other activities were able to resume in person as well, such as Contact Lunches, Women on Wednesday, Men on Thursday, and a new craft group. The Contact Lunches continue to provide an enjoyable place for those living on their own to meet and chat over lunch. We are very grateful to the Contact Lunch team for providing this service to the community each month – the lunches are delicious! Christmas was busy as usual and we enjoyed carol singing at The Crown in Fivehead and The Lamb & Lion in Hambridge, a fabulous Christmas dinner at Contact Lunch, a fun Christmas Party at Youth Cafe, and our church Carol Service on 19th followed by Christmas refreshments and singing outside the Stable. In early April we enjoyed having Oddments Theatre Company with us for a performance of their Easter play "The Road to the Cross".

It has been a real pleasure to join with St. Martin's Church for joint services on a couple of occasions this year - Remembrance Sunday in November and an opportunity to hear about the work of STEP UK in January.

This has been my first year as Pastor at Fivehead Baptist Church and I have been very encouraged to see the church contributing to the life of our local community. Together with all the other local churches, groups, facilities, and committees it really does help make Fivehead a welcoming place and bring something of God's life to the community. There have been many occasions where people have said how much of a difference these things make to their lives. So, be encouraged – Fivehead really is a great place to be!

Name of organisation: The Stable
Report by: Judy Male (Manager)

Throughout the pandemic restrictions we have opened when we were permitted, with the exception of the 'takeaway only' period when we only opened during the Post Office hours. Since reopening fully, we have become increasingly busy, quite often at capacity inside and needing to use the Church's youth room behind the café. We have increased our seating outside, where many have felt more comfortable during uncertain times.

We are seeing new people who have recently moved into the village, as well as providing for the many builders who are currently employed! It is also good to see many 'older villagers' getting to know others with whom they previously just shared a 'hello'.

The visiting Post Office (Thursdays 13.15-15.15) is used by many regulars and after some teething troubles with internet signals and slow service is now established. It provides almost all of the usual PO services and is especially valuable to those with no transport (or just wishing to save fuel!)

On Thursday evenings during term times and the shorter school holidays, we are open from 7.30-9.00 for Youth Café. This is a safe and welcoming meeting point for young people aged 11-18 (secondary school age and the last term of rising year 6s). They can buy all our usual hot drinks at reduced prices, along with chocolate and sweets. All our volunteers are DBS checked and there are always two volunteers. We have been pleased to welcome an increasing number of young people.

The Stable is also providing work experience for secondary school pupils, Duke of Edinburgh students and latterly, special needs students.

We still manage to keep our prices very low, yet there has still been plenty to give away. At the end of 2021, we gave our local donation to St Margaret's Hospice and our donation to a Developing country went to Dreamlands hospital in Kenya to help them finish a new x-ray facility. In the ten years we have been open, we have given away almost £4,000.00 from our tips and a large sum at the end of each year, divided between local needs and needs of developing countries. In the village we have been able to provide adult exercise equipment, a bench by the war memorial and contributed toward secure storage for the playing field.

This year we celebrate our 10th 'Birthday'. As part of these celebrations, we welcome everyone to a 'Summer exhibition' from 7-11 June, celebrating the arts, crafts and skills of those associated with The Stable. During this week, The Stable will be open extra hours and serving cream teas and birthday cake along with the usual goodies!

It's not only villagers who use The Stable, sometimes cyclists, people from other villages and, indeed, those who are house hunting in the village. In addition, some of our volunteers who keep The Stable up and running come from outside the village. Hence, some arrive by car. The village is not blessed with many safe places to park, but please be assured that we do encourage considerate parking with the use of signs and bollards.

Volunteers are always welcome and we are extremely grateful to all the volunteers who help in many ways from serving, baking to washing the Stable laundry and managing our accounts. At this ten-year anniversary, we would like to thank everyone who has helped along the journey including the Baptist Church who provide the building.

Name of organisation: Tree Warden
Report by: Barry Knox (Tree Warden)

I see the role of Tree Warden as primarily reactive; ie my objective is to respond to the Parish Council and community and any community group, and see if I can deliver what it wants. If the PC wants a different approach, it will need to let me know.

Some examples

Several parishioners have sought advice on tree issues which I have treated as private. Whilst giving my amateur opinion, I always point out sources of professional advice.

Discussions have ranged from treatment of damaged trees, removal of large trees from private land, thoughts on which trees to allow in hedgerows, signposting to planning authorities, discussion and monitoring of Playing Field & Wessex Water trees, discussion on planning breaches, caring for saplings donated to the Parish Council, liaising with the SSDC Tree Officer, considering TPOs, discussion on getting others involved in tree wardening [far from opposed, but candidate would need to be aware of commitments].

Observations

Fivehead is very lucky to have a lot of woodland, mainly owned by RSPB. unfortunately liaising with them is difficult.

The parish has seen building sites cleared on what was scrubland. One instance seems to have been in breach of planning commitments.

The vogue for 'managing' wild places so they look neat may meet the aesthetic needs of some, but wildlife like invertebrates and woodland birds like nightingales need tangly undergrowth and ivy. Wild woodland should be left to develop naturally; it will sort itself out over time. Different parameters apply of course for Parkland and timber production.

I have a small stock of native saplings should any organisation [or individual] need any come the winter.