

DRAFT MINUTES OF FIVEHEAD AND SWELL ANNUAL PARISH MEETING
Held on Tuesday 23 May 2023 at 1830 at Fivehead Village Hall, Stowey Road, Fivehead

Present: K Beacham (KB) - Chair; J Parsons - Clerk; 3 further Councillors and 9 parishioners

1. Chairman's welcome

KB welcomed everyone and introduced the Parish Council (PC) members who were present - Bruce Ferguson (BF), Christina Munday (CM) and Dave Braddock (DB), and Clerk, Jayne Parsons.

2. Apologies for absence

Apologies had been received from L Howard, M King, J Male, H Price, M Stanton and T Allen.

3. Approval of Minutes of 2022 APM

The Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 1 June 2022 were agreed and signed by the Chairman. Proposed by BF and seconded by CM. Carried unan.

4. Matters arising from the Minutes

None

5. Reports from Village Organisations (1 April 2022 – 31 March 2023)

Reports were received - see annex pages 2-10:

- Parish Council - Chair's report (KB)
- Fivehead Fixers/Green Group (DB)
- Playing Field Management Committee – Frank Doggett
- Village Hall Management Committee – Kevin Stevens
- St Martin's Church – Trish Allen (read by Lucie Haddon)
- St Catherine's Church – Lorna Conway
- Baptist Church – Matt Cottington (MC)
- The Stable – Judy Male (read by MC)
- Drama Group – Kevin Stevens
- Golf Society – Harry Price (read by KB)
- Fellowship Club – Margaret Knox
- Rights of Way Volunteer Group – Mary Braddock (MB)
- Tree Warden – Barry Knox
- Other – Fivehead Defibrillator Group (supplied in writing to PC by MB, but not read)

Additions from MC were noted to the Baptist Church/Stable reports. Major expenses, running into several thousands, were incurred when the floor in the kitchen/church hall started to collapse due to wet rot. Around 30% of the floor was taken up and the joists replaced, along with a new ventilation system. The Youth Club has introduced a new system, to give clearer procedures around signing in and out, with young people only signing out when they are ready to go home, to help give reassurance to parents.

6. Open discussion

There were no matters raised.

To close, the Chair thanked members of the Parish Council for their hard work in the past year and to the Clerk for her work to keep everything in order. The Council had recently welcomed a new Member, Mike King. Finally, thanks were extended to everyone for their efforts to keep everything looking good.

The meeting closed at 7.22pm and refreshments were provided.

Chairman.....

Dated.....

Annex - reports

Name of organisation: Parish Council

Report by: Kate Beacham (Chair)

This year has passed incredibly quickly, it doesn't seem like 5 minutes since the last report. We had local government elections last May and welcomed 3 new councillors to the PC.

As you are all aware, the PC keeps the village informed of our activities monthly, through our minutes and updates bi-monthly in Community Matters, also posts on our website and our messaging service, Nextdoor. So, this is a flavour of the year's activities:

- We have applied to the Land Registry for title to Langford Corner but unfortunately, due to current circumstances, this is taking a lot longer than anticipated, this has still not been finalised at the end of March 2023.
- Work to repair the bulge in the wall at St Martin's Church was undertaken in September 2022.
- Platinum Jubilee Celebrations, we had a huge turnout for this event, over 170 people enjoyed the day, with picnics, prizes and games. Our two Jubilee walks were a great success, thanks to Mary for organising. A Jubilee rose has also been planted at Langford Corner to commemorate the event.
- Holm Oak, Conifers, and Cedar trees either side of the entrance, have been trimmed to allow light into the area, and improve the general look of the Cemetery.
- The shelves in the Book Exchange (Telephone Box) have been re-arranged to house the defibrillator and we have 2 new volunteers (Jeff and Jose Emler) to run the Book Exchange from June. Dave Braddock has also added some planters to improve the look of the area.

Plans for the year ahead:

- PC is hopeful the historic Pound, which is an 'undesigned heritage asset, protected from demolition, will be repaired/restored this year. We have an experienced stone mason who hopes to undertake the work approx June 2023.
- PC is also looking to repair St Martin's Church wall and will be using the same stone mason, just waiting for diocese permission so we can finalise plans.
- Several villagers (including PC members) have been on a course so they are now able to repair/maintain our 'Fingerpost signs' which are a historical sight in Fivehead.

There are numerous other issues under review, including highway concerns and the possibility of a Speed Indicator Device, which will be reported on monthly, through the minutes.

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.

'Fivehead Fixers' and the 'Green Group' are working groups under the banner of the PC, who are doing much needed work around the village. Special mention to Dave Braddock 'Fixers', and Dave and Rob 'Green Group'. (See separate report below)

Name of organisation: Green Group / Fivehead Fixers (Parish Council-led working groups)
Report by: Dave Braddock (Co-Chair)

Since the last AGM, the Green Group has expanded to incorporate the 'Fivehead Fixers', to cover tasks that are not within the Green Group's remit. The dividing line between both groups is a bit blurred, as there is a crossover with the skills both groups have and both groups are an important asset to the village and the Parish Council, helping to keep costs down. Fivehead and Swell would be a poorer place without them.

There are 7 members of the Green Group and around 32 members in the Fixers Group. Tasks that have been done since the last AGM are:

- Ten Swift boxes have been provided by a former Fivehead resident. These are now up, under the guidance of Mary, and hopefully they will be in use this year with luck.
- Bat surveys are starting up again now the weather is warmer and settled.
- A group of 10 Fivehead Fixers now do litter patrols around the village, helping to keep it clean.
- In February, the Fixers and Green Group planted a couple of hundred trees at Stowey Farm, with coffee and bacon baps provided by Peter and Laura Bardell.
- St Martin's Church walls were weeded and the ivy removed on a couple of days to prepare for the forthcoming repairs.
- Len and Beth helped me clear the Pound and plant up the flower beds in readiness for the repairs there also.
- Isy and Gary help me look after Langford Corner, which is starting to mature nicely.
- The Parish Council purchased some bird and bat boxes for the cemetery which are now up.
- Matt helped me dig and plant up a wildlife bed at the Baptist Church.
- Several of the Fixers helped to prepare for and put up and dismantle the marquee at the Coronation event.

Other tasks that have been started or are about to start are:

- The defib area is having a makeover with some new planters of bee-friendly plants.
- The Stable Café railings and the Baptist Church railings had been repainted by 5 Fixers.
- The BT exchange box has been painted by BF with a first coat, to help make the green area look tidy.

Future tasks are:

- St Martin's Church gates are to be painted.
- The War Grave in the cemetery will be cleaned up and made tidy.
- The old signposts around the village will be having a makeover.
- The wooden posts around the green and memorial will be replaced and painted.

If you want to join in with the excellent community spirit, and become a 'Fixer', or if you have any ideas on tasks that the Fixers might be able to help with, get in touch with me.

My thanks go to all the Fixers that have helped or donated this year.

Name of organisation: Fivehead Playing Field

Report by: Frank Doggett (Chairperson)

The past twelve months has been a period of fundamental change when the Playing Field Committee and the Village Hall Committee decided a new structure, in which the two groups merged, would be the best way forward to ensure successful management of our resources to deliver top quality facilities for everyone in Fivehead.

At the outset, each committee held an Extraordinary General Meeting at which members of the public voted unanimously in favour of the proposal. Subsequently, the wheels have been set in motion for us, to become a single new registered charity in place of the existing two, plus many other necessary changes.

Progress is continuing. The present two committees are now holding joint monthly meetings and we look forward to the new structure being officially confirmed in the near future.

Whilst all this has been going on behind the scenes, the necessary work to keep the Playing Field as a safe, well-maintained recreation area continues. The two football teams had a successful season; we had the marquee up for the King's Coronation celebration; and we installed a new bench in the children's play area, the cost of which was donated by a well-wisher.

Our Christmas Bingo was a huge success, raising a substantial amount for our funds.

Committee members have worked hard and we have been helped a lot by many neighbours and friends – in particular, I would like to thank Adrian and Michael Troutt for cutting our hedges and doing difficult groundwork in the playground. And, as always, we are grateful to the Parish Council for their support and for supplying our grant to cover essential expenditure.

Name of organisation: Fivehead Village Hall

Report by: Kevin Stevens (Chair)

We have, since the EGM allowing us to merge with the Playing Field Committee, been holding joint meetings and we are in the middle of the legal discussions with the Community Council. We are pleased to say that we have new joint secretaries, Jeff and Jose Emler, who are already bringing a refreshing approach to our meetings.

We have installed CCTV and Wi-Fi; but because of the aged of the Hall, we do need to spend some money on updating things around the Hall – electrics, boiler, heating, outside lighting and other external repairs/renewals. We do have a plan set out for this, but obviously, for financial reasons, we have to take it step by step; with all this in mind, we do have some fund raising events organised, such as a quiz on 2 June and bingo on 9 December. So, I would ask everyone to look out for these events and support them if you possibly can.

With the merger of our two charities in progress, it is worth saying that we are badly in need of new Trustees and helpers to bring fresh life to the new committee, which after all, can only be of benefit to our village community of which we can be so proud.

Name of organisation: St Martin's Church
Report by: Trish Allen (Church Warden)

Following the Pandemic, this year has been much more normal in terms of church life. There are 3 or 4 services held each month at varying times. Our congregation at Friends and Family Service held on the first Sunday of the month is particularly well supported and everyone enjoys chatting over coffee after and before the Communion service which follows.

We have been very pleased to welcome Rev'd Mark McKnight as Curate. We have benefited greatly from him joining us and he has become a valued part of the Benefice Team. Following the sad death of Oliver Howard, we have welcomed Renata Lawrynowicz, as PCC Treasurer, and we thank her for helping us at this difficult time. Oliver is much missed. He was such a steady and strong support for us all.

We were able to hold our regular fund-raising events during the year and we are very grateful for all the support received from the village. Last year we had Soup & Pud Lunches in the church in April and October, and then this year in March. On a beautiful sunny day last May, we held our Plant Sale, in Ellen and Gordon Balmer's garden. This was very successful and was very well attended, by not only villagers from Fivehead, but surrounding villages. We then provided teas at Mervyn and Margaret Wilson's Open Garden and this, again, was a very successful afternoon. In September, the Teddy Bears parachuted off the tower and cream teas were served. Over the Christmas period, we held a Christmas Fair, Carol Service and Carols in the Crown. This year we had a Midnight Communion Service on Christmas Eve.

St Martin's has had a very eventful year regarding repairs and maintenance to the church. The church was closed at the end of August, as a result of large pieces of plaster falling from the vestry wall, leaving it unusable and much of the church covered in dust. A local builder made the wall safe and the church was cleaned by a team of willing volunteers and was usable again by the middle of September. Following further inspection by the Church Commissioner's builder, it became evident that there was considerable work needed internally and externally to the church. This work was completed in February. As we were unable to obtain Grants for routine maintenance and repairs to the church, we are particularly grateful to all for the generosity at our fundraising events and for the donations we have received.

We have another busy year ahead of us and the PCC would like to thank everyone who contributes to the upkeep and running of our beautiful church. The continued maintenance could not be undertaken without all this help, the fundraising activities and the generosity of the villagers.

Name of organisation: St Catherine's Church, Swell
Report by: Lorna Ferguson (Secretary)

With the lifting of Covid restrictions, face to face worship has resumed at St Catherine's. The services over Easter and Christmas were well attended, as was the annual progressive Rogation and Beating of the Bounds service last Sunday. Our fundraising efforts have also resumed raising much needed funds for the mission and upkeep of St Catherine's Church.

The year has been a busy and challenging one. The Benefice welcomed Rev'd Mark McKnight, as a Training Curate, whose ordination as priest will take place on 24 June 2023. Mark will be with us for about another 2 years.

The significant impact that the pandemic had upon the Diocese, particularly upon its finances, has meant a re-shaping of many Benefices. For our Benefice, this will mean the inclusion of at least two additional parishes, doubling the population covered. This will inevitably mean a change to the workload and working pattern of our Rector, Scott Patterson, and our Curate, Mark. The final shape of our 'new' Benefice has yet to be confirmed, and we should know the outcome later on this year.

St Catherine's has declared a 'Wilder Church' area behind the church. We have not joined the official Wilder Church scheme because of the position of the church within a working farm.

The PCC continues to practically support *Messy Church* with the provision of food for the shared meals that are a part of this. The PCC also continues to ensure St Catherine's remains a place of quiet Christian worship and spirituality, to which all are welcome. Our traditional Prayer Book services are held on the second and fourth Sundays of each month, and are advertised in the 'Fivehead and Swell Community Matters'.

Name of organisation: Fivehead Baptist Church
Report by: Rev Matt Cottingham (Pastor)

It is wonderful to be part of such a thriving and active village community as Fivehead. As a church, we are so grateful to be able to provide some spiritual input to village life alongside St Martin's parish church. It has been a busy and blessed year for us at Fivehead Baptist Church and we continually pray for the local community in all its opportunities and needs.

We continue to meet for worship on Sunday mornings as an essential part of our church life. Once a month, we have tried something different in the form of "Café Church" with a light breakfast. This is also an opportunity to involve the children and young people more in our services. Sundays are an important time for us, as we join together to open our hearts to God's leading and to open the church doors to our community, as we walk together on this journey of life. Whether people go to church or not, we believe there is something very precious about churches being present, as places for people to gather together, should they wish to.

Various other regular church activities continue to be part of church life at FBC: Tuesday Bible Study, "Women On Wednesday" and "Men On Thursday". Contact Lunches once a month continue to provide a valuable place of friendship and encouragement for local people who are living alone. We have started a new discussion group at St. Martin's Close community lounge, exploring questions of faith. A new monthly Craft Group has also been started for anyone who wants to get together informally and enjoy some art & craft ideas. We have also started a new Men's Breakfast on the first Saturday of each month. As well as these regular activities we have enjoyed occasional events such as an Oddments Theatre Company performance, Art & Craft Exhibition, Harvest Supper, Christmas events, the Tearfund Big Quiz Night, and other social get-togethers. It was a great privilege to join St Martin's Church for the Remembrance Sunday service once again.

The children and young people's work at the church is something we've been encouraged by this year. Three main groups have met during the year: Sunday morning children and youth, a Sunday afternoon youth group, organised together with Curry Rivel parish church, and Thursday evening Youth Café at the Stable. We have also arranged a couple of trips to Taunton for the Youth Cafe group, which were well attended.

During the year we have had visits from various overseas missions and charities. We also continue our regular support of Baptist Missionary Society, ToyBox children's charity, and various other charitable causes. With help and advice from Dave Braddock, we have also turned part of the church garden into a wildlife area to keep a focus on environmental issues.

We have been delighted to welcome some new people to the church this past year and we continue to be grateful to all those who contribute to the life of the church in so many different ways. The year has not been an easy one for some in our community and we pray the local churches can be a support to any in need.

For me personally as minister, it has been a privilege to serve as pastor of Fivehead Baptist Church for another year. Fivehead is such a wonderful place with so many kind-hearted people. May God bless us all throughout the coming year.

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

The Stable has continued to be very busy throughout the last year. We frequently need to open the church youth room at the rear. We are looking forward to better weather and being able to use our outside space fully. Many villagers use this as a space to meet up on a regular basis. In addition, we are also a stopping point and a meeting point for cyclists.

The visiting Post Office (PO) now has a dedicated internet connection and can provide most services that a static PO provides. The PO visits from 1.15-3.15 every Thursday afternoon. We have just begun a monthly Talking Café, where a representative of the Community Council for Somerset is available to give help and advice on many issues. This is on the first Thursday of the month from 1.30-3.30.

On Thursday evenings during term times, 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 6's). 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. Once again, thanks to all our volunteers who are DBS checked, we have the flexibility to accommodate the young people at any time that we are open.

We are still managing to keep our prices very low, despite our rising costs. This is largely due to our 'no waste' policy and the fact that we are staffed by volunteers. Our volunteers come from The Baptist Church, The Parish Church, the village and other surrounding villages. At the end of 2022, we were able to give away a total of £1500.00 This was divided between local causes and international causes as usual. On this occasion we gave £750 to the local Air Ambulance and £750.00 to Dreamland Hospital in Kenya. In addition to this, we donated a large sum (donations and tips) to The Ukraine appeal via World Vision. Our current tips are going to The Earthquake appeal in Turkey. We have been open almost 11 years and have managed to give away over £10,000.00, thanks to our volunteers and customers. Villagers will know that we have provided the seat at the war memorial, adult exercise equipment, storage at the playing field over the years.

Just after last year's Annual PC meeting, we celebrated our tenth anniversary with a week of longer opening hours coinciding with an exhibition celebrating the talents within the Stable and church community. We welcomed many visitors during the week and the displays included, local pottery, art, products like honey and apple juice, textiles and much more. It was a huge pleasure to see such talent celebrated.

Some of our volunteers come from outside the village and we also welcome customers who would need to arrive by car. We do endeavour to encourage visitors to park with consideration for others. Once again, I would like to thank all our volunteers who are so generous with their time, serving, baking, laundry and maintenance. We are always extremely happy to hear from anyone who would like to volunteer to help in any way. Our thanks also go to The Baptist Church who provide the building for community use.

Name of organisation: Fivehead Drama Group
Report by: Kevin Stevens (Chairman)

At long last, we were able to hold our two annual events – the Summer Revue and Christmas pantomime. We were delighted with the attendance at both events, with the pantomime our largest ever.

We had several new members, who are a massive asset to our Society. I have always been excited with our younger members who we have made a part of the cast and not just chorus or extras, and all of the juniors this year did not let us down and were excellent.

As a village drama society, we are not about to perform at the Palladium, we are not here for that. We are here for you, the village, and it's worth noting that I still have 20/30 year olds coming to me, saying how much they enjoyed their time with us. So, if there is anyone out there who fancies a bit of fun, in whatever aspect – acting or back stage, you will be most welcome.

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

In 2022, the Crown Fivehead Golf Society had a full programme of events, which were well attended by the members, with increased numbers over previous years.

Our main event, our Charity Golf Day, held at Long Sutton Golf Club, raised **£1449.50** on the day, which, together with our fines and other fund raisers at our regular outings, made the sum up to a magnificent £1700. The charity supported this year was SENSE who support the families and children who are born deaf and blind.

Notable points of the year

1. All the outings were well supported.
2. The sum raised for Charity this year exceeded the previous year.

Aims for 2023

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

Name of organisation: Fivehead Fellowship Club
Report by: Margaret Knox (Chair)

I, as the Chair, am delighted to be able to report that the Fivehead Fellowship and Leisure Club, which closed its doors due to Covid, has been restarted by popular demand as of February 2023. Membership numbers are encouraging. We can't please everyone all of the time, but our aim is to provide a club where there is social interaction, friendship, entertainment and learning, with some cake and/or other edible goodies to round off hall meetings, at a reasonable - £1 per person. We have kept the membership fee at £7 for this year, because of the impact of Covid on the membership in 2020, when value for money was certainly not possible.

A newly-elected committee leapt into action to produce at very short notice a programme for this year. To achieve this, we made good use of the talent within our local community and have had, and will be having, a few more visits out and about, including the Mystery Tour in September.

I wish to record thanks to the retiring Chair, Chris Jackson, who ran the club with great efficiency until the forced Covid closure. Much has changed over the intervening three years and Fivehead Fellowship Club is just starting its new journey. On the record must also be appreciation for the innovative hard work of the current committee.

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

Fivehead and Swell have a great team of local volunteers who go out keeping their eye on our paths to try to keep them clear of debris and hedgerow foliage, as it encroaches on the paths. We also report to Somerset Council Rights of Way and Trails office (SC) 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. SC has also loaned us a brush cutter/trimmer which helps to keep the surfaces of the paths clear. Debbie, remains our SC Ranger, and she is our go-to person for repairs and improvements. Debbie has stated that SC has guaranteed our footpath budget following the unification of the Council.

We have a team of 14 volunteers who manage the paths around Fivehead. We meet quarterly to get to know each other and discuss issues that are outstanding. 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.

The recruitment process for volunteers is cumbersome and many training issues irrelevant for footpath volunteers. This has been raised with SC who are looking to adapt the system.

At May 2023, we only have 4 current issues outstanding with SC:

1. We had new steps put in on the bank from Swell to access land at 'Isle Brewer. Unfortunately, these were washed away by flood water and we are waiting for these to be repaired and made more permanent.
2. A watching brief is ongoing on the bridge over the Fivehead River, which will be an expensive repair. It is considered safe to use for the time being.
3. A blocked drain (which comes under Highways division) has caused the surface of one footpath at Lower Swell to be washed out.
4. A stile on north side of Fivehead River is due to be replaced.

Besides the 4 current issues, Green Lane, a popular footpath with residents, has had extensive work carried out to improve the surface. A new volunteer has taken over its maintenance and Debbie has promised ditch clearance once a year and possibly more surfacing material. This remains an ongoing issue. There are 4 old reports that show on the Explore Map, but these are historic issues and not ongoing. They have not been removed by SC.

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

As I've often pointed out, there are many ways of being a Tree Warden (TW). My personal choice has always been to adopt a reactive role, as a resource available to the PC and parishioners. However, again as I've said before, if anyone would like to commit themselves to a more active approach, I'd be happy to discuss it. Sharing the TW role would need to be agreed with the PC.

The growing activities of the Green Group and Fivehead Fixers have usefully advanced some of the things a TW might do. The TW role shares the environmental umbrella, and some aspects may well have been covered in their report - duplication or competition's not something that would be helpful!

As readers of the Parish Magazine will have seen, during the course of the winter, I have been offering a variety of native plants and seedlings via the Green Group. The stock I hold is still available, but probably should not be planted out now as the 2022/3 propagating season's really over.

Other:

Name of Organisation: Fivehead Defibrillator Group, a sub-group of Fivehead Village Hall Management Committee

Report by: Mary Braddock - previously submitted to Fivehead Parish Council, year ending March 2023

Finances

From last night, we were concerned that our balance of Defib money may get lost in the amalgamation of the Village Hall and Playing Fields. There is also £30, that was raised from donations at the awareness evening, which is being held as cash by myself until the finances are settled.

Training

Three awareness sessions have been held since installation of Defibs - one was run by Community Heartbeat with their trainer, the other two by Bruce Ferguson and Mary Braddock. The one held in January 2023 discussed how residents of Fivehead could set up their own contact system for help in an emergency. There is no First Responder scheme that the village can sign up to, so it is about highlighting to residents what the procedure is in an emergency.

Further awareness sessions are planned this year, the first one in July. It is also proposed to go in and do a short presentation to the congregations of St Martins and Baptist Church in order to reach as many residents as possible. We have a regular article in Fivehead Newsletter to keep highlighting awareness.

Fundraising

Funds are required to keep the system going. We currently have £965 in the account, which is being held by the Village Hall Committee. (Richard Hadfield has the details.) An invoice was received in February 2023 for £324, being the annual cost of maintenance for both Defibs.