

**Minutes of the ANNUAL PARISH MEETING of the PARISH OF FARNHAM ROYAL  
held on Monday, 5th March 2018 in Farnham Royal Village Hall at 7.30 pm**

**Parish Councillors Present:** Mr. T. Clapp (Chairman), Mr. R. Milne, Mr. C. Robinson, Mrs. V. Thompson, Mr. R. Thomas, Mrs. J. Tipping, Mr. B. Baker, Mr. P. Rowley, and Mrs. M. Rolfe.

**In attendance:** County Councillors Lin Hazell and Ralph Bagge, District Councillors Dev Dhillon and David Anthony, the Clerk and 21 members of the public.

**Apologies for absence:** Apologies were received from District Councillor Mrs. Marlene Lewis, and parish councillors Mr. John Hodges and Mr. R. Home

**1. Report of the Parish Council 2017-18**

Given by the Chairman, Councillor Trevor Clapp

*appended to these minutes*

**2. Report on Buckinghamshire County Council**

Given by County Councillor Hazell

*appended to these minutes*

**3. Report from Farnham Common Community Library**

Given by Michael Mills

*appended to these minutes*

**4. Report from the Farnhams Magazine**

Given by Jerry Houdret

*appended to these minutes*

**5. Report from the Rotary Club of Burnham Beeches**

Given by Michael Holehouse

*appended to these minutes*

**6. Report from The Royal British Legion**

Given by Naomi Arnold

*appended to these minutes*

**7. Report from Farnham Royal Village Hall**

Given by Jerry Houdret on behalf of Roger Home

*appended to these minutes*

**8. Guest Speech on 'How Councils are adapting in Challenging Times'**

Given by County Councillor and  
former Leader of South Bucks District Council, Ralph Bagge

*appended to these minutes*

**9. During the evening written reports had been read out from:**

Farnham Common Village Hall

St Mary's Farnham Royal C of E Primary School

Farnham Royal Charities

Burnham Beeches

Farnham Common Sports Club

Farnham Common Village Schools

The Police

*all appended to these minutes*

**10. Close of meeting**

The Chairman thanked everyone who had attended the meeting and especially Cllr. Bagge for his interesting talk. The meeting closed at 9.15pm

## **APPENDICES**

### **Item 1: CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

The Parish Council quietly gets on with things and the measure of our success in the past has often been how many complaints we get! So we continue to maintain/ run in good order the process of local democracy largely thanks to our Clerk.

We also routinely keep up paying for the maintenance of many of our local amenities. Not just our green spaces but also the streetlights in side streets; street furniture such as benches and bins; the public toilets; the play areas and some litter-picking to name a few.

But we do so much more and it really is important at this stage to thank all our committed and hard working councillors who act in a voluntary capacity.

In terms of what else have we been doing?

- This year sees the Centenary of the end of WW2 – we have invested in maintaining the war memorial and supporting scouts' poppy planting scheme, we also continue to clean the war graves every year and lay poppy posies on each of the 15 war graves and a wreath at each memorial service in the parish as well as maintaining the flags and paying for flag flying.
- LAF projects – we are match funding several proposed capital projects which BCC should be doing but won't do without match funding. We are moving along with projects to
  - reduce the yellow lines along the Broadway
  - install dropped kerbs in Langtons Meadow
- We continue to support and run events such as the Carols on the Green and are looking to make special provision for these events in our re-vamp of Kingsway Green.
- Ongoing projects such as organising the flowers in the villages, Christmas lighting (we have plans to extend and improve these) and we will soon be putting up flags for the royal wedding in May.

But we are ambitious to play a more active role in the parish which will encourage community cohesion and more opportunities for residents to get involved. We want to see more work done in Partnerships /Working groups

You can join in by joining working groups / volunteering as councilors when vacancies come up or to help in many other ways. It is your community.

- One example of a working group is the Open Spaces and Environment working group – its remit is to maintain and improve our green space amenity and that covers
  - woodland areas ( we adopt high standards of care – bi annual surveys and quarterly maintenance visits)

- other green spaces (Temple Dell with its orchard and fruiting hedge)
  - St Mary's churchyard
  - Monitoring performance under our devolution contract – eg grass cutting verges/illegal signage
- We continue to work closely with our partners– in particular FCSC and the Farnhams Magazine and through the analysis of stakeholders in the Farnhams, such as the schools, we look to develop more working relationships with the key groups. We are reviewing community facilities and a stakeholders group is meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> March at the parish office. So this is another working group which you might feel you would be able to contribute to.
  - The other working group we have on the go is the Kingsway Green working group– this project will see progress next year making provision for the use of the green for rest relaxation and our community gatherings such as Carols on the Green. We are seeking three different proposals for landscaping schemes for the community to consider and decide upon.
  - We have longer term plans for the replacement of the FC play area. We are seeking interested volunteers to get involved and develop the project. Once we have those volunteers the project will be able to progress and the funding put in place.

Aspirations for development in our small Parish continue unabated. Most recently we have seen potential schemes coming forward for housing replacing parts of the green belt. The PC have sought input from the parish through consultation. There is a discussion to be had as to whether the Parish should get involved in the early stages of applications where it has a chance to shape proposals. We have organized a Green Belt Consultation Meeting on 17<sup>th</sup> April at Farnham Common Village Hall at 7.30pm.

We believe that we need a Neighbourhood Development Plan. An NDP, once 'made' or adopted, is part of the statutory development plan for the area and regard must be had to it in all planning determinations. This alone makes an NDP worthwhile because even if there appears to be no imminent need for an NDP in your area, things can quickly change and an NDP can make a real difference.

The second main reason an NDP is worthwhile is that it increases the credibility of the parish council on all planning matters. This is not only significant when dealing with the LPA but in how the parish council and the area it serves is perceived by developers. In short, the parish council will be better placed to achieve wider objectives if it has an NDP in place.

Neighbourhood planning is here to stay and increasingly is an integral part of the ever more complicated and contentious planning system. This is confirmed by the recognition given to NDPs and the parish councils making them, in new planning legislation and policies. If FRPC goes ahead with its NDP you will have more influence on a range of local planning issues. However an NDP can ONLY come about by residents involvement it cannot be purely a Parish Council driven project. We would encourage you to sign up for the newly formed working group to take this forward now. Please contact the Clerk.

The precept has been increased this year by £10,000 to cover the anticipated costs of delivering under the devolution contract and what might happen when the contract comes up for renegotiation in 2019.

Finally we are happy to launch our completed Parish Plan. This follows a lengthy process of professionally preparing a questionnaire, analysing the results and producing a document which will provide a mandate for the future. The final document will be distributed to every household in the Parish in June. It is full of ideas on how to steer the parish for the future. We will need to mobilise our residents to work with us to get things done. This is the first step. Please read it and let us know if you can help us.

**Trevor Clapp**  
**Parish Council Chairman**

### **Item 2: BUCKS COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT**

Cllr. Hazell explained that the biggest issue for BCC was its budget which had been fixed for two years last year. About 60% of spending was on children's services and adult social care. It was in a difficult position and needed to focus on income generation possibilities. However for most residents the main concern will be potholes. BCC will continue with its policy of dealing with emergency repairs and relying on the public to notify them of potholes.

In response to queries on the loss of the 35 children's centres and the move to a new hub model Cllr. Hazell said that the new system had been checked and approved by ofsted and it was believed that using family support workers to target families in need would be more effective as they would be a more mobile and directed form of support. A complaint was made by David Banks that commissioning teams had not provided centres with the tools to do their jobs properly such as birth rate information. Cllr. Hazell said she now worked with adult social care rather than children's services but she would try and get an answer.

In answer to several concerns raised about the state of the roads in the county compared with other counties and the need for a more preventative approach towards potholes she replied that there were resource issues over a county as big as Buckinghamshire and that even though parts of the county might appear more affluent everyone pays the same tax and the pot of money is fixed. Judy Tipping asked why workmen would fill two potholes and leave one almost as bad alongside. Cllr. Hazell responded that if they did fill additional holes because they were nearby but not category 1 yet it would have a knock on effect and jobs scheduled for later in the day would not be done.

**Lin Hazell**  
**Buckinghamshire County Council**

### **Item 3: Farnham Common Community Library Report**

The last year has seen us continue the established format of services although there have been a couple of developments that will have a longer-term impact on our finances and operations.

The community library has been operating independently for over 6 years during which time we have expanded the library operations. We have also developed a wide programme of events and activities with the help of a loyal group of unpaid volunteers.

**The conventional library service** continues to perform well and although book issues have declined in the last year we are still one of the top performing community libraries in Bucks. Increased use of the county electronic reading catalogue means that book issues will inevitably continue to decline. However, we have added more shelving and increased book stock much of which we have financed ourselves and our book offering is better than ever.

**Children's activities** continue to attract great interest with the weekly storytelling session for pre-school children, holiday arts and crafts sessions all helping to increase book issues to children. The Annual Summer Reading Challenge and Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme volunteers are also aimed at young readers and students.

**Visits, Excursions and Social Events** - over the last year we've had numerous well attended events, including "Christmas at Waddesdon Manor", John Rutter's Christmas Celebration Concert at the Albert Hall, An Evening with Johnny Ball, 'Crazy For You' at the Wycombe Swan plus others. The Annual Quiz in September was a sell out as usual. We held coffee mornings for two external charities, Parkinson's UK and Crohn's Society and we have also 'Twinned' our toilet along with several other local organisations. Other activities include the annual Christmas Supper, Lunch Group and Reading Group.

**Services & Communication** - access to free Wi-Fi, use of our computers, photocopying and printing. We provide free IT clinics and have a group researching ancestry. Our newsletter is published 4 times a year and we post information on our Facebook page, website and the Farnhams FB page. We also have a small meeting room available for anyone to rent.

Having listed the positive points I need to deal with the challenges facing us.

First our **volunteers** – we have a group running the library operations and a second group who distribute the newsletter. As a result of the popularity of our children's activities, we need to create an additional group to help with this, which includes setting up and clearing away for the holiday projects. Anyone interested please get in touch.

**Our finances** - since 2012 we have had two 'tenants' in the library building providing us with a modest income. One of these, Thames Valley Police has now closed its office and the other, the Children's Centre, run by Bucks CC Children's Services will be closed later this year when the service is relocated to Burnham. This will result in our income reducing. While Bucks CC continue to provide us with support and free services realistically this is likely to continue to decline. To offset these future funding shortfalls, we have been exploring further sources of financial support. We recently secured support from a corporate sponsor and hope to add more over the coming year and of course, we always welcome new 'Friends of the library' who provide us with valuable income.

While many people are vocal about the need for a local library relatively few actually pay us a visit. We need more people through the door, taking out books in addition to supporting us through annual donations as Friends of FCCL.

Finally, I must give credit to our small army of unpaid volunteers and supporters who contribute their time, energy and enthusiasm to ensure the smooth operation of the Community library. With their support we look forward to another year providing you with a thriving community facility.

Steve Turner asked a question about the Library's policy on accepting donations. Mr Mills responded that if a book was in good condition and less than 2 years old it was generally

welcome but that reference books would not be accepted. They had limited capacity and surplus books were sent to charity.

**Michael Mills**

#### **Item 4: FARNHAMS MAGAZINE REPORT**

I am pleased to present a short report of the magazine's 2017 year, and how changes have been introduced and successfully implemented.

During the year, Jessica Houdret, the lead editor and now editorial advisor, having successfully taken the magazine from its prior format to full colour on quality paper, worked to hand over the editorial controls to Jenny Harper-Jones and new editor Paula Morris.

Paula and Jenny have now produced their 3rd issue, which we think is successfully holding on to the high standard Jessica had set. Certainly the advertisers continue to seem happy with the result, even if they were unwilling to consider a rate hike for adverts. In fact we lost some well known names, and had to work very hard to fill their spaces.

Also the reading public, who already had expressed their pleasure with the changes over the last two years, continue to show appreciation and interest. They also give us regular and enthusiastic feedback. The magazine is now on line via the Parish Council website.

With professional and guaranteed delivery door to door, satellite monitored, the magazine is now getting to more households than before the change. With increased numbers of dwellings in the area, and new people coming in who do not know the village, our Farnhams Magazine is an extremely valuable asset for promulgating information about what goes on in the villages to previous and new residents, with telephone numbers to contact and Parish Council information. This coupled with interesting stories of things happening around us, makes our Magazine the only Parish Magazine of its type in the County.

During the next month Barrie Luscombe, our treasurer, and I, will be looking at the 2017 accounts, and planning the extra costs that we predicted a year ago thanks to increased dwellings in the area, and rising costs. I will then share this as agreed last year with the Parish Council, with Councillor Paul Rowley, so he can ensure that at the April Parish Council meeting, the PC becomes fully aware of the 2017 year, the projections for the 2018 year, and the probable level of on-going Parish involvement for consideration.

We believe we must not forget that our "free" magazine, in 2018, will be going absolutely FREE to more than 4,500 homes and businesses in our villages, 4 times a year. Whilst there are events and activities which the Parish Council supports, often promoted in the magazine, which bring in 200 to 300 people for a half day, the magazine gets to be seen by nearly 10,000 adults each quarter.

We believe this level of contact with Parishioners is vital to the wellbeing and future of our Parish and hope you all do as well. We thank the Parish Council for their commitment and support. Thank you.

**Jerry Houdret**, the magazine business manager

#### **Item 5: ROTARY CLUB REPORT**

The Rotary Club of Burnham Beeches is affiliated to Rotary International which has 1.2 million members worldwide based in more than 200 countries. Our motto is Service above Self and we concentrate on helping communities locally, nationally and internationally. Rotary International is ranked as the 6<sup>th</sup> most effective humanitarian organisation in the world (Source CBNC.com).

Our international charity, The Rotary Foundation, brings together a global network of volunteers who dedicate their time and skills to tackle the world's most pressing humanitarian challenges by focusing on disease prevention and treatment, water and sanitation, and maternal and child health. *Polio Plus* is one of its biggest initiatives and seeks to eradicate polio around the world. Since the programmes start in 1985, Rotary and its partners, including the World Health Organisation and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, have immunized more than 2.5 billion children in 122 countries. To commemorate this achievement we have planted purple crocuses all over the world and our local effort can be seen at the junction of Templewood Lane where we have planted 5000 crocuses.

**At a local level** The Rotary Club of Burnham Beeches comprises 33 men and women who live in the local area (Burnham, Dorney, Taplow and the Farnhams). We meet weekly to raise funds, assist the community, organise events and make charitable donations. Recent beneficiaries have included Marie Curie Cancer Care, Thames Hospice, the *new* Alexander Devine Children's Hospice, and The Thames Valley Adventure Playground and Padstones to name but a few. In total this year we hope to raise in excess of £40,000 including Rotary grants.

Our other major fund raising activities include the ever popular Burnham Beeches Donkey Derby which is now in its 26<sup>th</sup> Year; the Burnham Beeches 10K and 5K Fun Runs. Next week we will hold a collection for Marie Curie Cancer Care at the Beaconsfield Service Station. Last month we held our annual musical evening at Caldicott school and raised an outstanding £4,700 – a record. We are grateful to the local community for their continued support of these activities.

We work together closely with local school. We continue to organise an inter-school football competition at Dropmore Infant School; plus local school's Carol Concert at St Peter's Church, Burnham- standing room only last year!. Additionally we have supported our local schools by providing Dictionaries for Life for Year 5 pupils, CV mentoring, mock job interviews, and support student achievement awards. We also sponsor student character building initiatives on Tall Ship voyages and Rotary Youth Leader Awards (a type of Outward Bound style week away). Sadly we have real poverty in this community and to help alleviate their circumstances we organise Christmas meals and gifts.

We enjoy working on the Farnham Common Carols on the Green. Seven years ago the Rotary Club of Burnham Beeches organised, funded and planted the Farnham Common community orchard together with information boards and we still take a keen interest in the orchard.

Internationally we are supporting a project for a school desperately in need of help in Malawi. One of our members cycled 1000 miles from Hedgerley to Marseilles and raised over £7000 in sponsorship.

All these activities require volunteers who are prepared to give their time and expertise to make them successful. We accordingly welcome new members and invite you to look at our website [www.rcbb.co.uk](http://www.rcbb.co.uk) to find more details about what we do and the fun we have doing it.

I must conclude on a sad note to tell you that just before Christmas we lost our past president, my predecessor Ray Dance. he was only 65 and his personal commitment and dedication to rotary is a major reason for our current success.

**Michael Holehouse, President  
Rotary Club of Burnham Beeches**

### **Item 6: Royal British Legion Report**

Whilst we have been able to hold just a couple of social events for our Members - in fact two very convivial and enjoyable lunches at The Victoria - we directed considerable efforts to ensure another highly successful Poppy Appeal in OCTOBER and NOVEMBER.

In the event, we raised a new record total of £ 26,218 and whilst we continue with our house to house collections, our Poppy collection at the Beaconsfield Motorway Service Area - which actually falls in Hedgerley, therefore within the boundaries of our Branch area, and where we are now in our 3rd year of collecting - has proved most rewarding, and our Appeal benefitted by more than £ 8,000 from this venue alone, due to the high footfall in this Service Area.

Our sincere thanks to the many Poppy People who gave so generously of their time, however they helped with our Poppy Appeal - and especially those who enabled us to fill our rota at the MSA from 7 am to 7 pm, on each of the 10 days we covered.

We have also ensured that some of our Members who need help and support due to health issues, receive assistance from the Royal British Legion, who actually spend more than £ 1.7 million a week to help ex servicemen and -women.

The Branch will be represented at the forthcoming Royal British Legion-organised GP 90 (Great Pilgrimage 90) to commemorate the end of WWI taking place in France and Belgium in AUGUST 2018.

I would also mention that we are pleased to let Villagers and Businesses have one of our attractive all-year-round red Poppy Boxes - available in both large and small - and they are ideal for collecting loose change and - dare I say it - acting as a swear box, throughout the year, and the contents help swell the Poppy Appeal each November.

**Naomi C Arnold MBE - Chairman, RBL Farnham Common Branch**

### **Item 7: FARNHAM ROYAL VILLAGE HALL REPORT**

The Village Hall continues to flourish. We are proud to be fulfilling the purpose and ethos of Village Halls, which is to provide good quality venues, with good parking facilities, at a reasonable cost.

**To achieve this** we are fortunate to have a great booking secretary/caretaker team in Marie and Vincent Edwards, and good oversight by dedicated members of the Management committee and our Trustees.

**Since the last FRPC AGM**, two long serving members of the Hall Management Committee have retired. Stanley Swann was our chairman for many years and Frank Oakes, Trustee, who together provided wisdom and guidance to the running of the Hall.

**New members of the Hall Management Committee.** Lee Chapman & Trevor Egleton have joined the Committee, and have immersed themselves in the Halls affairs. Lee has been diligently reviewing the latest Fire Regulations to ensure we are fully compliant at all times.

**Two important challenges** that face all Halls, are: Deriving regular income through hiring out the hall, & ensuring the Hall is an attractive venue for hirers.

Thankfully we have high Utilisation of the Hall, meeting costs and creating income for upkeep and continually raising standards.

**Hall users include**, dance classes, fitness classes, Sure Start, Baby Sensory, the PC, **The Farnham Royal Montessori School**, has been with us for 18 years, and now has a new owner **The Social Club**, continues to operate and provide a good venue for small parties, watching televised Sport, and as a social meeting point and always welcomes members.

**Good Maintenance and upkeep.** Keeps us attractive to hirers. In 2017, we spent more than £15,000 on upgrades to roofing, drainage, heating and lighting.

We also Installed a CCTV security system and broadband service with WiFi connection.

We thank the Parish Council for continuing to use our Hall.

**Roger Home, Chairman  
Farnham Royal Village Hall Management Committee**

#### **Item 8: Talk by Guest Speaker; Ralph Bagge**

Cllr. Bagge explained the different responsibilities of the County and District Councils. County is across highways and over 300 footpaths, country parks. planning authority for minerals and waste, adult and children's social care, schools and schools transport, bulk waste and disposal, libraries and community safety and public health. The District is the local planning authority and strategic housing authority, deals with Council tax collection, waste and recycling, homelessness, building regulations, licensing and environmental health.

The challenges all councils face include the move from central government to see more devolved services whilst putting pressure for an increase in housing delivery; the fact that there is an ageing population (the number of over 75s will double over the next decade); Councils can now use a new power under the Localism Act to expand their activities such as investing in property to generate incomes.

The greatest challenges are financial. Following the 2008 financial crisis the Budget deficit continues to rise and the National debt continues to increase – currently £1.83 trillion forecast for March 2018. The government's austerity measures are seriously affecting local government spending in two ways. Firstly, there is a council tax cap of 2.99% for this and next year. Council tax receipts count for 91.7% of BCC's income. Secondly, Revenue Support Grants have decreased from £60 million in 2013/14 to £8 million this year and the figure will be zero next year. In future years the treasury demands monies be paid back to them in the sum of £11million for 2019/20 increasing to £22 million for 2012/22. We are only one of the two councils who will be getting no grant next year. The government say we are a low needs/ high resource area.

SBDC's Revenue Support Grant reduction follows a similar profile and they will be required to pay back £414,000 to the Treasury in 2019/20.

SBDC are starting to make savings by shared working with Chiltern District Council. The Lanes Golf course has closed and will be converted to a Country Park so as to become more self - sustaining. They have established 'consilio' – a wholly owned property company to bring forward market rent homes on land owned by the council. They are trying to fulfil the homeless

need by developing the Bath Road depot site in Burnham. They are also increasing car parking capacity, new customer service strategy with internal efficiencies and agile mobile working – officers being out in the community instead of in the office.

The County have the EFW facility – an incinerator/power station which saves over £1m per year. It is working closer with CCG and hospitals to implement integrated care; moving to community libraries; transforming country parks from cost to profit centres; transforming children's services to deliver early help and move away from universal service; adult services – focus on clients strengths and capabilities; sustaining independent living. Focus on delayed transfers of care /hospital discharge.

He noted that the winter weather made road/pothole repair impractical and that the budget of £15 m is intended to keep traffic flowing. He acknowledged that it was not effective just repairing defects that meet the criteria and leaving others that don't. He noted another £1m had been released from reserves to help with this. He personally asked for certain roads to be prioritised for resurfacing. He felt the highest priorities were Templewood Lane and Blackpond Lane.

In terms of the future the focus will be on health care – making every contact count – promoting well being and healthier living, influencing lifestyle choices, provision for appropriate physical activities, move to more day procedures and out patient clinics.

Also enabling more community self-help – examples include community libraries, environmental programmes like Stoke Poges 'Friends of Bells Hill Green', the Good Neighbours' schemes (Stoke Poges and Ivers) which gets people without transport to medical appointments and activities for lonely and isolated older people eg movers and shakers clubs; shedders; and the Wexham social library – community led and more than a lending library.

## **Item 9: WRITTEN REPORTS**

### **Thames Valley Police report** **INTRODUCTION**

Crime statistics cover Burnham/Farnhams/Taplow. Rolling 12 months figures show a drop of 4% in all crime for our area. Despite an overall increase in theft from motor vehicle offences across the force, we have seen a drop by -29% - down from 149 offences to 106. All theft offences down -13%.

#### **Burglaries**

Burglaries are down by -9% over the past 12months. We have had some good results recently with 8 burglary offenders across our local policing area, remanded by the courts over the past three weeks. This seems to translate to our crime figures which show a reduction in burglaries over the past four weeks by -57%

While the number of burglaries annually falls over the spring summer months, due to the lighter evenings, this will remain a priority for us and we will keep targeting those who we believe are responsible.

A property in Beeches Road, Farnham Common was a problem address for a long time. We as the Police found it particularly difficult to resolve as it was a privately owned property address and none of the victims we identified, were willing to talk to us. We worked with the mortgage company, the council and environmental health to reach a resolution with the owner finally evicted around December last year.

### **Unauthorised Traveller Encampments**

As you will no doubt be aware, this area had a number of unauthorised encampments last year. This drops off during the winter months however with the better weather, we will see an increase in the number of travellers seeking to find somewhere to stay.

TVP is in the process of issuing a new policy and procedure for how we deal with these encampments. Should be signed off within the next few weeks and will hopefully give us clear unambiguous guidance as to how to deal when this occurs.

We are clearly bound by the law in what we can do, and unauthorised encampments need to tick certain boxes before we can use our powers. We do however hope that the new guidance will help the senior management make decisions to use the powers when circumstances allow.

**Antony Mee**  
**Police Sergeant**

### **FARNHAM COMMON VILLAGE SCHOOLS' REPORT**



As you might recall, the Infant School and the Junior School came together in September 2016 to form a Federation called the Farnham Common Village Schools. So we are now into our second year as a Federation. Each school has retained their individual identity, but we have one Head Teacher (Mrs. Fischer) and one Board of Governors. I have been Chair of Governors from the inception of the Federation and Fiona Hewin Vice Chair.

After careful consideration and extensive consultation, we launched a new website: [www.farnhamcommonvillageschools.co.uk](http://www.farnhamcommonvillageschools.co.uk) in the last year and formalized our values. These are values the schools have always separately embodied, but which we are now driving forward together. Values of Respect; Resilience; Innovation; Empathy; and Integrity . And we launched a new logo, taking the best of the logos of both schools.

The Junior school celebrated its 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2017 and marked it with a hugely successful celebration event. The integration between the schools has been increasing in many practical, on-the-ground ways. We share facilities, on World Book day we have children from each school spending time with each other. Children who move from Infant to Junior School find the transition from the Infant to the Junior schools to be easier.

We held another child-focused e-safety day for both schools and had a very practical and useful evening session for parents. Next year we were thinking we might open the invitation to everyone in the village, as e-safety is something that could be of benefit to all.

We have developed very close and very fruitful collaboration with half a dozen schools in the area and, in common with many nearby schools, we do have some free places in certain years. It would be a pity for these not to be filled, so please pass on the message.

Last year I mentioned the pressures on funding. These continue and we know from the collaboration we have with local schools, that this is true for all schools. Funding has not had an impact on the core tasks of education, it does restrict certain things we would dearly like to do and have done in the past. Governors have lobbied the Bucks Cabinet Education member, met Dominic Grieve. We have a growing and increasingly successful fund-raising effort, driven largely by parental involvement but increasingly too by community support, for which we remain thankful.

**Andrew Parry, Chair of Governors**  
**Farnham Common Village Schools**

### **FARNHAM COMMON VILLAGE HALL REPORT**

We have had a very successful 2017 with bookings increasing steadily, in fact, we now have on a lot of occasions all three rooms hired at the same time which has really assisted us with our improvements plan.

#### **The work we have been able to carry out during 2017**

- the re-finishing of the small hall floor which now looks amazing
- upgraded all the external lighting
- upgraded our committee room so that it is now self contained giving the hirers the ability to make hot and cold drinks and refreshments without using the kitchen facility.
- Full replacement of the flat roof to the hall.
- enhanced social media presence

#### **Future plans**

- upgrade the kitchen by replacing the range cooker and an upgrade to the kitchen units to bring a fresh look to the area
- upgrade the lighting in the kitchen and corridors with LED lighting to improve efficiency

this will be carried out as soon as we have sufficient funds which hopefully will not take too long.

Farnham Common Village Hall is run purely by volunteers and self funded from hiring charges we would like to take this opportunity of thanking all of our hirers in the community for using Farnham Common Village Hall it means a lot to the Trustees and Management Committee and

provides the ability of ensuring that we can continue to improve the hall for the benefit of the users and the continued availability of the facility.

We are looking for more volunteers to join the management committee to enable us to continue making a success of Farnham Common Village Hall please contact 07736 890877 if you are able to help us.

We look forward to continued success during 2018.

**Marilyn Rolfe**

### **St Mary's CE Primary School Report**

It has been yet another busy, yet highly productive year with SATs Tests and Assessments carried out, especially for Year 2 and Year 6 pupils, who all did extremely well with Year 6 performing above National in many areas.

We at St Mary's continue to ensure that sports is encouraged and we are delighted to report there have been an even wider variety of outside activities that pupils have been involved including seated volleyball and re-telling stories through dance in Key Stage 1.

Included in our Sports focus, the school was able to have a fabulous Sports Day, which was a new design of activities and allowed parents to follow their child to each event and cheer on heartily. The annual picnic lunch was a roaring success and it was wonderful for families to have the opportunity of all sitting together and sharing the special day.

We were successful in obtaining a free Football kit from the National Premier Football league and we received a certificate from Sport Relief to say we are now officially a Sport Relief Super School. This is as a reward for all the amazing effort our children have put in over the past year in a variety of events.

In the autumn term we held a 'skip-a-thon week' involving the whole school, fund raising for the British Heart Foundation. The Mile a Day initiative was also launched throughout the whole school proving to be a huge success with our children, enjoying 10 minutes of walking every day.

With such a strong focus on sports we delighted to announce that we achieved the School Games Mark Award for the 2016/17 academic year. School Games Mark is a Government led award scheme.

The Year 6 thoroughly enjoyed their 5 day residential and returned with a wide range of interesting stories both of the day's activities and their evening. The staff that were good enough to give up their time to ensure it was possible for the children to attend also came back with a few stories of their own.

The annual The Harvest Festival was a recurring success with parents generously donating food and other provisions in order to give a hand up to families in the community. The church service for this event was very popular with parents and members of the community. In addition, the school provided a food tasting opportunity in the hall with all the produce that had been grown and cared for by the pupils for all to try.

At Christmas the annual Third Age Lunch was as successful as it has always been in previous years, as was the annual school Christmas Carol service. A warming event with staff, pupils and members of the community.

We continue to flourish as a family friendly church school with small class sizes of 25. This enables us to provide a personal and caring atmosphere which is often praised by visitors and new families.

**Mrs Vania Eaglen**  
**Headteacher**

### **Farnham Royal Relief in Sickness Charities Report**

The Trustees continue to run the affairs of the Charities in good order.

The Charities hold approximately £19,000 in investments and currently have approximately £5,000 available for distribution.

Only one application for a grant has been made in the financial year 2017/18 so far and no grants were paid out the previous financial year.

We would encourage any resident who through sickness or other need finds themselves in need of some financial assistance to contact us. All applications will be treated in confidence and there are no difficult hoops to jump through. A recommendation from a doctor, a school or other professional person would be ideal but not essential.

Please address enquiries to the Clerk to the Parish Council in confidence.

**Peter Cathcart**  
**Chairman**

### **Burnham Beeches**

#### **1. Awards**

In 2017 Burnham Beeches received its 14th successive Green Flag Award and its 13<sup>th</sup> successive Green Heritage award. The awards recognise the high standard of management of the Nature Reserve.

#### **2 Finance**

The budgets for both sites remain under considerable stress with further reductions in central, non-tax payer funded, City of London funding for the Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common charities expected between 2018 and 2021.

Current European grant schemes, that help fund the work at the Beeches and Stoke Common, are coming to an end. The future of any such European funding is uncertain and 2018 will see the team applying for new funding sources to support work at both sites.

Previous investment in projects to increase the funds available for the years ahead and lower running costs are still of some help. The use of bicycles and electric vehicles have reduced vehicle running costs and made staff more approachable/visible to visitors. A Wood chip boiler at the Beeches office and photo voltaic cells on buildings continue to help offset running costs and provide regular income to support on site works.

### **3. Projects**

#### **Ancient trees**

61 of the old Pollarded trees were worked on or around this winter. These trees are one of the most famous features of the Beeches and one of the key reasons the site is of international importance for wildlife. Each of the old trees has its own individual work plan, tailored to its current condition. As ever the aim of the work plans is to keep the old trees alive for as long as possible, so that the unique habitats they provide for wildlife continue to be available in future years and so that younger pollards, created in the last 25 years, have chance to develop some of the habitat features found on the old trees before the older ones finally die.

#### **Livestock grazing at Burnham Beeches**

The use of invisible fencing continued in 2017 with 160Ha (73%) of the Beeches grazed by cows and ponies. The agreed management plan vision for the site is still that as much of the remaining un-grazed area as is practical will also be grazed in future.

The experience that Burnham Beeches has gained in using this system continues to be shared and the site has hosted numerous visits from other organisations such as the National Trust, Wildlife Trusts and other site managers who are looking us the system to graze other sites throughout the UK. For the first time in several years we hope that the very popular pigs will return to the Beeches in the autumn of 2018.

#### **Public Spaces Protection Orders**

Following public consultation, 2017 saw the existing Dog Control Order provision at Burnham Beeches extended until December 2020 as Public Spaces Protection Orders (PSPO). There have been no changes to the rules introduced in December 2014. This means that the vast majority of the 540 acre site remains available for dog walking – (there is a very small exclusion zone directly around the café). The area where dogs can be walked off lead at the Beeches is bigger than the whole of Stoke Common and the rest of the site is still available simply by visitors popping their dog on a lead.

#### **Travellers**

For the first time in over 15 years the Beeches was visited by groups of travellers in the last 12 months. On two occasions travellers encamped in car parks and on the main Common on Lord Mayors drive. Our thanks go to Thames Valley Police for their support of our efforts to ensure the site was back to normal as quickly as possible on both occasions, with the longest stay being just 31 hrs. Both visits resulted in costs to secure the removal and subsequent clear up and damage repair costs.

### **5. Stoke Common**

We are now in the last year of the site's current management plan. Over the last 9 years extensive works have been carried out to restore the rare and important heathland habitat on the site. Much of this work has been carried out by staff & volunteers including the Friends of Stoke Common. Heavier duty works such as tree felling, and mulching have also been carried out by specialist contractors, but these have now pretty much come to an end for the rest of the plan. Recent inspections by Natural England and other experts have provided very positive feedback on the work to date. The grazing scheme continues to be vital for the restoration programme and long-term future of the site. Cows and ponies have been successfully used on all three sections of the common in the last year.

A new management plan for Stoke Common will be produced this year and will again need to reflect the very special nature of heathland found there and its importance as a site for local people. Wildlife surveys in the last year have confirmed the presence of many different types of wildlife that indicate a thriving heathland.

## **6. Events**

The Beeches, as ever, has been a focus for numerous community events and activities with several each week throughout the year. As far as guided walks and other events are concerned the team at Burnham Beeches has delivered - 30 events - enjoyed by over **3000 people**.

The Beeches also hosted and supported **91 local community events**, from photo workshops to orienteering & cycle events and group walks. These included visits by over **3550** students of all ages from local schools. Many coming to study natural processes, old trees and wildlife, history or to use the Beeches as a place for recreation and team building exercises. As many of these school groups focus activity around the ponds, paddocks, heath and easy access paths they have, in particular, benefited from the provision of a dogs on lead area in these locations with its associated reduction in fouling and giving certainty that groups of children will not be approached by a loose dog, no matter how friendly. This is reflected in the near doubling of school visits to the Beeches since 2015

Other events/activities supported include

Regular scouts, guides, cubs and rainbow and activities,

24 simply walk events run by BB staff or with partners Burnham Health Promotion Trust. The Beeches also hosted around several larger scale community events including - orienteering events, cycle rides, community picnics, 10Km run and health walks, etc. attended by a few thousand participants.

## **7. Volunteers**

Input from volunteers has again been vital for the running of the reserves with over 5500 hours of assistance being provided in the last 12 months. Tasks have included, scrub clearance and path widening works at Stoke Common and at the Beeches substantial path repairs, the continuing clearance of scrub from the heath and wetland areas and along path sides to improve access for visitors. Volunteers have also acted as

'Eyes and ears' - reporting faults and problems they find out on site,

'Livestock lookers' – carrying out daily checks on animals when they are off site freeing staff for other duties.

They have also led walks and events, provided admin cover, and have carried out significant amounts of scientific monitoring through a weekly Tuesday group.

Some volunteer effort is not included in the figures as their time is very much part of their regular use of the site. For example, Volunteer litter pickers who, provided with litter pickers, collect any litter they find when walking around the Beeches. Some also collect on their way to and from the Beeches helping keep the site and indeed its surrounding free from too much litter. The support of all our volunteers is greatly appreciated and helps make the sites the lovely places they are for everyone to enjoy.

## **8. Forthcoming projects**

The Grazing project will continue to use invisible fences in 2018 and look at future expansion towards the long-term vision of grazing as much of the Beeches as is practical.

The Conservation Officer will continue to liaise with local planning authorities and Natural England to ensure the needs of the Beeches are considered in future development plans.

A new management plan for Stoke Common will be prepared and consulted on during 2018.

**Martin Hartup**  
**Head Ranger**

### **Farnham Common Sports Club**

2017 has been a year of change and one of sadness. After many years of sterling service Pauline Gregory stood down as Chairman and the club lost one of its own in Geoff Hewes. Geoff sadly passed away after a brave battle with Alzheimers Disease. Geoff was a stalwart of the club as Chairman, President and committee member over 4 decades.

The club is a very different place from when Geoff first joined. Nationally Adult participation in team sport is reducing, however the importance parents are placing on sport for their children is rising. The club reflects this in the number of junior sportsman it now coaches and develops. The club has around 650 members 250 of these are Juniors. The challenge the club faces is transitioning these young people into the adult teams.

Many local people have no idea we have two modern squash courts, or that we have fitness trainers who offer all sorts of exercise regimes. In fact, many don't know we exist! Our plan is to improve the club's marketing to ensure everyone in our target area knows what the club has to offer and how to join.

There is a need for the club to continue to reflect the recreational needs of the community. As a club offering 5 different sports we are unique, however we must plan for the future, perhaps introducing new sports and utilising our space efficiently.

Even though we have been hiding our light under a bushell, we are financially sound and our membership is stable. With our plans to improve visibility and marketing etc. the future is good for the club.

I would like to thank the Parish Council for their support in 2017 and look forward to working closely together in 2018

**Richard Thomas**  
**Chairman**

**This concludes the minutes**