

FRPC Parish Council for The Farnhams

**Minutes of the ANNUAL PARISH MEETING of the PARISH OF FARNHAM ROYAL
held on Monday 20 May 2019 in Farnham Common Village Hall at 8.00pm**

Parish Councillors Present: Mr. P. Rowley (Chairman), Mr. R. Milne, Mr. R. Thomas, Mrs. J. Tipping, Mrs. M. Rolfe and Mrs. J. Jebson.

In attendance: District Councillors Dev Dhillon, David Anthony and Marlene Lewis, the Clerk and 19 members of the public.

Apologies for absence: Apologies were received from parish councillors Mr. J. Hodges, Mr. R. Home and Mr. C. Robinson

1. Report of the Thames Valley Neighbourhood Police

Given by Police Constable Trevor Walker

appended to these minutes

2. Report of the Parish Council 2018-19

Given by the Chairman, Councillor Paul Rowley

appended to these minutes

3. Report of South Bucks District Council

Given by District Councillor David Anthony

appended to these minutes

4. Report of Buckinghamshire County Council

Given by District Councillor Dev Dhillon

appended to these minutes

**5. Guest Speech on 'Steering towards the
Farnhams' Neighbourhood Plan'**

Given by Chairman of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering
Group Phil Rudd

appended to these minutes

6. Close of meeting

The Chairman thanked everyone who had attended the meeting and especially Phil Rudd for his interesting talk. The meeting closed at 9.35pm

All present were given a report pack containing written reports from:

Buckinghamshire County Council
Farnham Common Village Schools
St Mary's Farnham Royal Church of England Primary School
Farnham Common Community Library
The Farnhams Magazine
Farnham Common Village Hall
Farnham Royal Village Hall
Burnham Beeches
Rotary Club of Burnham Beeches
The Royal British Legion (Farnham Common Branch)
Farnham Royal Charities
Farnham Common Sports Club
Farnham Common Short Mat Bowls Club

These reports are also appended to these minutes

APPENDICES

1. Thames Valley Neighbourhood Police's Report

Crime statistics cover Burnham/Farnhams/Taplow and rolling 12-month figures show an increase of 16% in all crime for our area.

Burglaries

Burglaries continue to be a major problem and is still the forces no 1 priority.

Over the past 12 months there has been an increase reported incidents. (48) Although the figure is higher than the previous year it doesn't really reflect the actual number of house burglaries as this figure now includes shed and garage breaks. Having said that, there has been an increase in dwelling burglaries of 9 offences to 14, which equates to 56% over the past 12 months.

This is due Changes to the National Crime Recording Standards (NCRS) meant that accurate comparisons then became far harder to achieve, as incidents which would formerly not have been included, such as a break-in to a shed, were then deemed to qualify as a residential burglary.

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.

To combat the rise there have been several successful Police operation involving Thames valley police and our neighbouring forces, including the Met Pol, Hampshire and surrey. These operations are intelligence led and target organised crime groups and cross border criminals.

Theft of/from Vehicles

There's also been an increase from 18 to 39 in theft from motor vehicle offences, this equates to a 61% increase.

Again, due to the changes to the National Crime Recording Standards (NCRS) in April 2018 meant that accurate comparisons then became far harder to achieve, as incidents which would formerly not have been included, such as a vehicle interference and criminal damage, even if entry is not gained to the vehicle.

The NHPT conduct daily patrols of all the car parks in the area and check all vehicles as part of a joint campaign with SBDC called "Clear Car" potential target vehicles are identified and letters are sent to the owners in an effort to reduce car crime. Also, crime awareness signage being placed in locations being targeted by offenders.

Unauthorised Encampments

This is a regular issue in this area and we have already seen a number of unauthorised encampments this year. The NH team have been contacting local landowners to ensure that access to their land is restricted to vulnerable locations to try to combat this. A Land Watch WhatsApp group has also been set up for local landowners which is being managed by Burnham Parish Councillor Adam Prince and TVP.

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.

Police Constable Trevor Walker

2. Parish Council's Report

I would like to thank Trevor Clapp, Vicky Thompson, Bill Baker and Hilda Holder for their efforts during the year and we wish them well for the future. I would also like to welcome Jenny Jebson as a councillor and Judith Hall as our clerk and to thank all our committed and hardworking councillors who act in a voluntary capacity.

During the year the Parish Council has continued its work to maintain 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.

We have taken on board the findings of the Parish Plan and have worked to fulfil residents wishes in a number of areas. We have opposed development sited within the Green Belt and have formed a planning committee which now reviews all applications, decisions, appeals and enforcement issues submitting comments and discussing issues directly with the Planning Authority. The process of developing a Neighbourhood Plan has started and there is a highly committed team of residents who are driving this forward. We continue to monitor litter within the Parish and whilst we thank our litter pickers for their efforts, we have been exploring the possibility of holding community challenges or events to encourage residents to join the fight against this antisocial behaviour. We worked in partnership with BCC to improve the pavement in Old Beaconsfield Road and drop several kerbs in Langtons Meadow to improve accessibility for residents. Discussions are ongoing regarding the regeneration of Kingsway Green and draft designs have been produced. It is likely that a phased approach will be adopted over a number of years to finish this project and phase one will include the introduction of measures to prevent vehicles from parking on the green. We have purchased dog waste bag dispensers for owners to use when exercising their four-legged friends at Farnham Common Sports Club in an effort to encourage all owners to pick up after their dogs to ensure that the sports field is safe for all to use. As part of the neighbourhood plan process there will be an audit of all parish facilities to ensure that the needs and aspirations of our clubs, societies and residents generally are catered for.

Recently, long overdue road resurfacing works have been carried out by BCC.

Sadly, the Parish Council's attempts to persuade SBDC to reintroduce free or reduced cost parking in The Broadway car park were unsuccessful although a consultation has been launched as part of the review of charges which seeks to create a one-hour parking period so this will hopefully be of benefit to residents and local businesses.

I would like to thank the Farnham Common Village Hall for organising Carols Not on the Green, which by all accounts was a fantastic community event which the Parish council was more than happy to support. The Parish Council also paid to install the 'Lest We Forget' flags to commemorate the end of World War One and expanded the Christmas light display creating a wonderful feel in both Farnham Common and Farnham Royal.

Unfortunately, the villages were visited by travellers on a few occasions but a co-ordinated approach between the Police, SBDC, BCC and the Parish Council (with the assistance of our newly appointed enforcement company) led to their timely removal.

In the coming year the Parish Council would like to engage with young people to obtain their views on shaping village life and would welcome any suggests on how this might be best achieved. Finally, next year sees the 75th anniversary of V-E day and it would be wonderful for the community to come together to celebrate this so please forward any suggestions for how this can be commemorated to the Clerk.

Paul Rowley, Chairman of the Parish Council

3. South Bucks District Council's Report

South Bucks District Council have continued to pursue an active agenda with prefabricated homes for homeless families and new homes on the former police station site. In addition, the closed golf academy in Stoke Poges is set to become a country park, which will provide a new local amenity but will also protect green belt land. There are also plans to extend the Station Road car park in Gerrards Cross.

The Council has agreed to issue the Joint Local Plan for consultation, which has been several years in the making and controversially removed land from the green belt. There will be a reduction of 2.6% over the plan period. Some felt that the District Council should wait until the new unitary authority is established but it was decided that this would leave the area vulnerable to developers. There is no reduction in green belt proposed for the Farnhams but Slough Borough Council may have big plans for the southern border.

The current aim of South Bucks District Council is to pass on an efficient and well-functioning district to the new unitary authority.

District Councillor David Anthony

4. Buckinghamshire County Council's Report

Councillor Dhillon explained that he had been a councillor for 27 years and has been elected to the Shadow Executive of the new unitary authority. On the basis that the Council's grant was to be reduced to nothing from next year it was necessary to make savings and as a result in 2016 a case was put to the Secretary of State for a unitary authority. It is believed that by ceasing to have the county council and five district councils a saving of £18million will be achieved. The number of councillors will also reduce from 148 to 97. The decision makers are learning from parishioners, other counties and other authorities who have already adopted a unitary approach.

Workshops, seminars and fairs will be held to obtain views on how to structure the new authority. Councillor Dhillon expressed his wish to hear more views from the public as he wants lots of public input. It was confirmed that Parish Councils would have the option to take on more devolved services and assets from SBDC and BCC. There will be community boards and hubs and the Farnhams could join with either Burnham or Stoke Poges in this regard. There is so much to do with less than 300 days to set things up.

It was also confirmed that all projects started or contracts signed by the existing councils will go over to the new unitary authority and the first terms of the councillors of the new authority will be five years.

District Councillor Dev Dhillon

5. Guest Speech - 'Steering towards the Farnhams' Neighbourhood Plan'

Some may know the story so far but neighbourhood plans arose from the Localism Act 2011 and the Farnhams achieved neighbourhood plan designation in 2016. In May 2018 the Parish Council took the decision to proceed with the production of a neighbourhood plan. The steering group was subsequently appointed and the first meeting was held in November 2018. It should be noted that when approved, the neighbourhood plan becomes part of the Development Plan and has the same status as the Local Plan devised by the district council.

The steering group is made up of volunteers from the community with limited planning experience. The original members were:

Phil Rudd – current chairman

David Banks

Jerry Houdret
Philip Norvill
Alison Simms
Steven Stagg

This group had recently been joined by Johnny Ball and Karl Tipping. The group is assisted by Paul Rowley, Chair of the Parish Council and Judith Hall, Clerk of the Parish Council and the group works to terms of reference set by the Parish Council.

Neighbourhood plans cannot promote less development than that identified as the need in the Local Plan and must be in general conformity with it, this includes housing allocations but neighbourhood plans can define how development can be designed, orientated and located and can set out our aspiration for the village.

The scope and complexity of the neighbourhood plan will depend on

- What is covered in the Local Plan (which we are waiting for)
- The nature of the area
- What the community wants (within the rules on Local Plan conformity)

The Group has no defined agenda and the content will depend on the public.

If the Local Plan is strong in relevant areas and subjects the content of the neighbourhood plan may be simpler and more limited.

The draft Local Plan was expected to be published in June 2018 but it is now expected in June 2019. The group has therefore been awaiting the draft Local Plan but has been getting on with preparatory work in the meantime. There are three main stages of neighbourhood plan preparation.

1. Getting established
2. Preparing the plan
3. Bringing the plan into force.

The main tasks associated with getting established are achieving the designation of Neighbourhood Area which has been done, building an evidence base to support policies which is ongoing and the publicity and engagement which we have started setting up and will include a Facebook page, Hotmail account, webpage and contact boxes in public locations.

We will start the more extensive public consultation once we have established and reviewed the content of the draft Local Plan. We will build on the evidence collected for the Parish Plan. We will start to build a generalised statistical picture of the Parish as part of the evidence base. We will work with the Planning Authority to define local housing and the development allocations in the context of the Local Plan. We will consult other stakeholders in the area.

In summary, its early days. We will seek to define the neighbourhood plan policies based on public consultation (in the context of the Local Plan). Finally, whilst there is as yet no timetable, 18 to 24 months is typical for a neighbourhood plan.

Phil Rudd, Chair of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

6. Written Reports

Buckinghamshire County Council

I'd like to start by reporting on roads: my plan has been to restore roads with the highest traffic flows, repairing the worst first. That's either a full resurface or plane and patch which removes what are known as 'pothole farms' with smooth, new tarmac. I have also prioritised neglected residential/estate roads – where the repair is either cutting out defects and filling conventionally

or by using the jet patcher which has the benefit of rectifying defects smaller than the usual intervention criteria.

Last year, my priority was Templewood Lane, which I'm sure you will agree has been resurfaced to a very high standard. This year, working with Ms Hazell to coordinate our priorities, we will be having Blackpond Lane resurfaced. Fortunately, the majority of the residential roads and cul-de-sacs in Farnham Royal are in pretty decent condition.

The majority of the Council's spending is on adults and children's services. In children's, last year's World Cup led to significant increase in looked after children arising from domestic violence. Currently there are 507 children in care. It costs between £25k and £100k per child per year, depending on their needs. Revising the families early intervention service, so that vulnerable parents get the support they need, will be achieved by having fewer but better-resourced family centres with more outreach.

In adults, social workers are being retrained to support capability and strengths to reduce the risk of dependency and medicalisation of older people. Social care and health are converging with the aim of providing much more care in the community – GP practices are forming into larger clusters to support the range of specialists (e.g. diabetes, physiotherapy, minor injuries) currently delivered by hospitals.

Secretary of State's decision on unitary was announced last autumn. Elections are in just under a year's time. There will be three members for Stoke Poges and Wexham. Work is proceeding to bring the five councils together to ensure that existing services continue to be delivered seamlessly from April next year. It's fairly clear to me that there won't be major structural changes before then – we will see the same people, in the same locations doing the same work, with the exception of chief executives and finance directors, where there is obvious duplication.

Ralph Bagge, Councillor

Farnham Common Village Schools

We have implemented many exciting initiatives for our pupils at our Infant and Junior Schools since we formed the FCVS Federation in September 2016. Last year's report outlined the vision for the school under its single leadership team with Mrs Alison Fischer as our Head Teacher.

Last May the Junior School had its first OFSTED inspection within the Federation. Schools are inspected by OFSTED, and although this is not our sole raison d'être, it did provide an opportunity to discuss the improvements and changes that have taken place in both schools.

We received a very positive and encouraging Inspection which was an affirmation of the Federation of the two schools, recognising the changes implemented and the positive results that this has had for the children. Our Senior Leadership Team is "strong and effective", pragmatic with a common sense approach, and we were delighted that the inspector recognised all that has been done and is being done, especially in maths which had been an area of specific focus in the schools improvement plan and which has 'changed beyond recognition'. The Inspector confirmed that we 'are very ambitious for our school and this is shared and valued by our staff' and that 'we make good use of the staff's skills and expertise in both schools'.

We continue to build an excellent staff for teaching and support areas within the Federation, and with increased movement and sharing of best practice across both schools, the benefits of federating are now being truly realised. We also continue with our collaborations with half a dozen schools in the area. As an inclusive school, we are now working with the National Association for Able Children in Education to enrich our provision for Higher Attaining Pupils, which will benefit all pupils and the whole school curriculum, whilst continuing to have a strong team supporting Special Educational Needs and Disabilities in the schools.

As we have seen within many of the reports from the Farnhams' Community, FCVS is also facing increasing pressures on funding. This is not unique to us, and is true for most schools. An increasing proportion of the SLT and Governing Body's time is spent prioritising spending, and discussing and identifying alternative funding options for core initiatives within the school development plan. Governors and staff regularly lobby for additional funding and support. The recent fence-painting at the Infant School, in conjunction with Burnham Beeches Rotary Farnhams' Volunteers, was a true reflection of the community spirit and volunteer services that allow us to make our budgets go even further. We have been supported by many local businesses over the last 12 months and received grants to enhance our educational provision, for which we are very grateful.

Our Friends of Farnham Common Village Schools (FFCVS) have worked tirelessly again this year; their efforts are allowing us to achieve this year's key goal to develop the outdoor spaces at both the Infant and Junior School. Next term will see the replacement of play equipment and the introduction of a fitness trail for the benefit of all our pupils. Learning Outside the Classroom remains an important focus for FCVS, utilising our excellent facilities and grounds and the local amenities such as Burnham Beeches, to further enhance the curriculum and build on the success of the Infant's Forest School.

A key goal is to integrate more closely with local community members, to extend this beyond the relationship we have with parents & carers and to enhance our teaching and learning environment. We welcome members of the community to: present at assemblies; work with children in classes and clubs on a wide variety of projects and topics; as well as helping with the governance at the school. In the Governing Body Andrew Parry, previously Chair, is now Vice Chair and I have taken up the Chair role. We sometimes have members moving away and stepping down. As vacancies do arise on the Board, we are also always keen for community members to join us and if you are interested in joining the schools' extended community, can offer to talk about an area of expertise, or to provide services, we would love to hear from you.

We are always happy to open our doors to prospective parents, and spaces do arise throughout the year for various reasons, so please enquire if you are interested in a place at the school, or to be put on the waiting list.

For any enquiries relating to spaces, offering services and volunteering, working with the Governing Body, please just contact the school office or look on the Website for further details.

Diana Blakemore, Chair of Governors

St Mary's Farnham Royal Church of England Primary School

We aspire to grow as a community through FAITH as a FAMILY. Thriving for all our FUTURES enabling us to FLOURISH

For I know the plans I have for you, plans to prosper you and not harm you, plans to give you hope and future - Jeremiah 29:11

New Website

www.stmarysfarnhamroyal.org has undergone a makeover recently. We feel that our website strongly reflects the family we have at St Mary's and it is vital to not only keep members of our school family up-to-date with all that goes on at school but it is our public image and it has been great to see how warmly our refreshed site has been welcomed. We hope it will give all a real



sense of what makes our school such a special place.

SMFR Sports

The opportunity to participate and sample a variety of sports and sporting activities continue to play an important role in the curriculum we provide at St Mary's. The early morning gymnastics club continues to attract children throughout the school.

Year 6 children have thoroughly enjoyed taking part in Lacrosse sessions and have begun developing the skills needed for Parkour or Free-running. Wycombe Wanderers Football Club have continued coaching sessions after school for KS2 pupils.

Our Year 3 children have completed their swimming course annually and thoroughly enjoy learning this important life skill.

Finance

As for all schools nationally, we face pressures of funding. We continue to manage the essentials but our 'wish list' is growing & increasingly we must turn to the community for support. We work more and more with other schools, including schools in Oxfordshire. Class sizes remain at 25 children per class.

Vania Eaglen, Headteacher

Farnham Common Community Library

We've been operating as an independent community library for over 7 years and have established a reliable library service with the help of a loyal group of unpaid volunteers and trustees. We receive some funding from Bucks County Council, who own the building and provide us with some books and services, but we cover other costs with funds from our 'Friends' and with income from events and other activities.

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. We continue to add more shelving and increase book stock much of which we finance ourselves.

Children's activities continue to attract great interest the weekly storytelling session for pre-school children, holiday arts and crafts sessions all of which help with increasing book issues to children. We also run the Annual Summer Reading Challenge, World Book Day and have Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme volunteers.

Visits, Excursions and Social Events - during the last year we arranged trips to the Mary Rose Museum at Portsmouth, Arundel Castle Tulip Festival, William Morris, Epping Forest and Lee Valley Cruise and an Andre Rieu Concert at Waterside Theatre. A notable trip was to the Poppy Factory at Richmond-on-Thames. Towards the end of the year we visited Brick Lane Music Hall, Thursford Christmas Spectacular and hosted our annual Christmas Supper in the Village Hall. This is so popular that tickets are often sold out by end September. Earlier in 2019 there was a visit to Wycombe Swan for the Nutcracker and Royal Albert Hall to see 'Let's Face the Music'. After much consideration we decided to discontinue the regular lunch group that had been running for over 8 years. However, if a volunteer comes forward this can quickly be resurrected! On a brighter note we held several coffee mornings, for other charities including Parkinson's, Thames Valley Adventure Playground, Hearing Dogs for the Deaf and Crohn's & Colitis Association. The Farnhams Open Gardens event will be held on 23rd June, organised by Pat Marshall, to raise funds for the library.

Services & Communication – we provide free Wi-Fi access, use of our computers, photocopying and printing facilities. We provide free IT clinics for those seeking to improve their IT skills or to resolve simple problems. Our newsletter is published 4 times a year and we post information on our Facebook page, website and the Farnhams FB page.

Our finances - since 2012 we have had two 'tenants' in the library building providing us with a modest income. Thames Valley Police left us last year and the Children's Centre, run by Bucks CC Children's Services will be relocated to Burnham at the end of August. We propose to convert the space freed up into larger room that will be available rent to as an office with access to our other services. This will be available from September.

Friends of FCCL - Finally, I must give credit to the small army of unpaid volunteers and supporters who contribute their time, energy and enthusiasm to ensure the smooth operation of the Community library.

We look forward to another year providing you with a thriving community library and on behalf of the management committee I would like to thank you for your support without which we could not continue.

Michael Mills, Chairman

The Farnhams Magazine

During the year Paula Morris and Jenny Harper-Jones, the two main editors have continued to produce the magazine to a high quality of which we think the village and the PC should be rightly proud. Jessica Houdret remains as editorial advisor where they have needed it.

The advertisers seem happy with the result, and have even accepted a small rate hike for adverts. This has been successfully implemented by our new advertising manager, Dan Harrison.

Luckily for us, Dan was "volunteered" to do this job by Paula Morris when she became engaged to Dan, and Paula is now Mrs Harrison. We wish them well in the future.

Thanks to Dan working with Barrie Luscombe our treasurer, the advertising rate increases have kept pace with increased costs and the increase in number of magazines we need during the 2018/2019/2020 years.

Also, the reading public, who already had expressed their pleasure with the changes over the last three years, continue to show appreciation and interest. The magazine continues on line via the Parish Council website.

With increased numbers of dwellings in the area, and new people coming in who do not know the village, our Farnhams Magazine is the only method for promulgating information about what goes on in the villages to previous and new residents, with telephone numbers to contact and Church and Parish Council information. This makes our Magazine the only Parish Magazine of its type around the Farnhams.

Barrie Luscombe, the treasurer, has looked at the 2018 accounts, and reviewed the extra printing and delivery costs that we predicted. I shared this with Councillor Paul Rowley, who has explained the Parish Council support position for 2019/2020.

The magazine finances rely on PC involvement, and we are grateful that in the last three years the Parish Council have allowed the Magazine Committee to build a small surplus to meet extra costs, which will also meet a reduction in support for this year ahead.

We understand the change that will be implemented for the year April 2019 to March 2020.

The PC are thanked for their continuing support.

We believe we must not forget that our "free" magazine, in 2019, will be going absolutely FREE to 4,400 homes and businesses in our villages, 4 times a year. We believe this level of contact with Parishioners is vital to the wellbeing and future of our Parish and hope you will continue to think so as well.

The Civil Parish is actually around 2,600 homes whereas the Ecclesiastical Parish is larger and has 3,800 homes, plus shops and businesses.

Jerry Houdret, Chairman of Management Committee.

Farnham Common Village Hall

We have had a really successful year and have been able to re-roof the large area of flat roof at the hall which was a large project for us to complete.

The highlight of our year has been the opening of the Village Cinema, each month we have run at least two sessions one on the second Thursday of the month for the showing of an oldies movie, tea/coffee and cake and the last Sunday afternoon of the month a family movie.

On the 22nd March we showed Bohemian Rhapsody with more than 100 residents of the village attending and on the 17th May we are showing A Star is Born. We have one more showing on Thursday the 13th June when we will be showing Notting Hill and will then be taking a break for the summer period. We are extremely grateful to our sponsors Foreman King for assisting in making the Village Cinema possible.

If you have any ideas with regards the Village Cinema please let us know we are keen for the facility to be well used by the community and a meeting point for all.

We are continuing to improve the facilities of the Village Hall and are currently preparing a project plan for the various stages of the project upgrading toilets, kitchen and entrance hallway. The Trustees are extremely pleased that the hall is so well used by the community which will assist with making the next projects possible.

We are always looking for volunteers to assist with all aspects of running the hall, projectionists, assisting with our cinema events and someone to assist with cover when our valued caretaker is on holiday with some set-up and cleaning. If you are able to assist please call Marilyn on 07736 890877.

Marilyn Rolfe

Farnham Royal Village Hall

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

To achieve this, we continually maintain and upgrade the fabric and facilities at the Hall. In the last year we have invested almost £11k installing new LED lighting, replacing windows, resurfacing the main hall floor, upgrading the fire safety and security systems and general repairs.

Our booking secretary/caretaker team, Marie and Vincent Edwards, continue to ensure the hall is kept in good order for each hirer.

New member of the Hall Management Committee. We have been pleased to welcome Rita Putt who has recently joined the Committee.

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.

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

Roger Home, Chairman of Hall Management Committee.

City of London - Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common

1. Awards

In 2018 Burnham Beeches received its 15th successive Green Flag Award and its 14th successive Green Heritage award. The awards recognise the high standard of management of the Nature Reserve.

2. Finance

2018/19 was a particularly challenging year for the Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common charity with the ending of grant schemes that help to fund the work at the two reserves and an unavoidable gap before new funding under any replacement scheme could kick in for 2019/20. As ever the charity relies on these grants and the non-taxpayer funded, City of London funding, for delivery of core services and works. Thankfully the Beeches attracted additional filming activity last year that, along with donations and other sources of income, helped to bridge the majority of funding gaps. However, some projects had to be put on hold and City funding is subject to ongoing reviews. As a result, budgets remain under pressure and the Beeches team will continue to look at ways to reduce running costs and raise income to care for these two unique nature reserves.

2018/19 achievements/projects

3. Countryside Stewardship Grant Scheme - With support of Natural England officers, the Beeches team worked through the very complex application process for new, 10-year, Countryside Stewardship Scheme grant funding at Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common. This was a difficult exercise as the Beeches was one of the first wood pastures in the UK to go through this process. The final result was that our application for funding to look after the important wildlife habitats at both nature reserves was agreed in January 2019 and the new scheme started at that time.

4. Stoke Common

2018 saw a new management plan consulted on and produced by the team and signed off by Natural England. This plan sets out the priorities for looking after this important, largest remaining, bit of heathland in Buckinghamshire for the next 10 years. We would like to thank all those people who took part in the consultation process and helped to produce the plan. The plan focuses on final elements of habitat restoration in the first 1 – 2 years and then the ongoing care and maintenance of the common for the next 8/9 years. Key to this is the continuation of the successful grazing programme via a third-party grazier at the common and fantastic efforts of the Friends of Stoke Common and other volunteers. Wildlife surveys in the last year have confirmed the presence of many different types of wildlife that indicate a thriving heathland.

5. Site Protection

It is easy to take the Beeches and Stoke Common for granted when they are on our doorstep and visited very regularly. These nationally and internationally important nature reserves are small islands in an ever changing, increasingly developed, landscape and also a haven of escape and fresh air for visitors from the local area and all over the UK and beyond. This year, yet again, new and rare species of wildlife have been discovered living in the amazing habitats at the Beeches. The range and diversity of species found in such a very small site in Buckinghamshire is incredible. However, the site is increasingly under pressure from development and the impact of our modern world and is in danger of being loved to death as one of the most heavily visited sites of high nature conservation value in UK. Just under half a million visits were made to the Beeches in the last year and these will inevitably have some negative impacts of wear and tear and disturbance as well as the wonderful positive for visitors of exploring and appreciating the special nature of the Beeches. The challenge of protecting the unique nature of the Beeches and supporting public access doesn't get any easier and will always involve difficult decisions and compromise.

In 2018 the team continued to comment on planning applications that have the potential to have a negative impact on the Beeches. Notable ones in the last year have been the Waste recycling facility at Bishops House and the land fill at Burnham Beeches golf course. Potential negative

impacts from East Burnham quarry continue to be monitored via dust levels & ground water (hydrology) monitoring. The Conservation Officer has continued to work with South Bucks District Council (SBDC) and Natural England on the local plan. This has made good progress and the plan is currently scheduled for public consultation from 7 June to 19 July before going to the Secretary of State. I would urge people to have a look at it and comment on it. Our main aim with this is to ensure that the Habitat Regulations Assessments have been completed which are necessary because the Beeches is a Special Area of Conservation. SBDC have taken this legal obligation very seriously and it is anticipated that there will be a policy in relation to Burnham Beeches. This will require more input from us in the next few months.

6. Young & Old pollards

In January over 100 young beech tree pollards were cut again on rotation. These trees are the future replacements for the unique, ancient pollard trees found at the Beeches and this cutting work is essential if the special features of the old trees are to be found at the site in future. The old trees themselves were all re-surveyed in 2018 and a new 10-year work plan produced. 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 particular 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.

7. Livestock grazing at Burnham Beeches

The use of invisible fencing continued in 2018 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. For the first time in several years the pigs returned to the Beeches in the autumn of 2018 – the two Berkshire pigs did a fantastic job of hoovering up the acorns and were as popular with visitors as ever.

8. Travellers

The Beeches was again visited by a group of travellers in January 2019 following 2 encampments in the previous 12 months. 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 each occasion. Visits like this result in costs to secure the removal and subsequent clear up and damage repair costs. As a result, the Beeches team are looking to see what else can be done to deter such visits yet ensure this lovely nature reserve still remains as accessible as possible to our legitimate visitors.

9. 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 - 34 events - enjoyed by over 3000 people.

The Beeches also hosted and supported 84 local community events, from photo workshops to orienteering & cycle events and group walks. These included visits by over 2600 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 increase 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.

10. Volunteers

Input from volunteers has as always been vital for the running of the reserves with over 6000 hours of assistance being provided in the last 12 months. The Work has included, a range of habitat works & path repairs 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 helped lead walks and events, provided admin cover, and have carried out significant amounts of scientific monitoring through a weekly Tuesday group – the latter included a 4-month international placement looking at our ground-breaking young pollard creation works. 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.

11. Forthcoming projects

Hillforts project 'Beacons of the Past'. The team at the Beeches supported an application to the Heritage lottery fund (HLF) by the Chiltern Conservation board some years ago to develop a project to look at ancient Hillforts across the area. This project secured HLF support and one of the Hillforts being particularly looked at is the iron age hillfort at the Beeches called Seven Ways Plain. This project involved a LiDAR survey of the whole of the Beeches (and Stoke Common) and will over the next 2 years result in an in-depth investigation of the hillfort linked in with a variety of public engagement events to increase our understanding and awareness of this ancient monument.

The Beeches Grazing project will continue to use invisible fences in 2019 and look at future expansion towards the long-term vision of grazing as much of the Beeches as is practical this will include sections of the main common. A new grazing agreement will be developed for Stoke Common this year with the ending of the current 10-year agreement in October 2019.

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.

And finally, a new management plan for Burnham Beeches will be prepared and consulted on during 2019.

Martin Hartup, Head Ranger

Rotary Club of Burnham Beeches

Rotary is an international organisation of 1.2 million members in 200 countries worldwide, made up of clubs just like ours. Rotary is ranked as one of the World's Top 10 Humanitarian Charities. Through Rotary we are also able to connect worldwide and support people in need across the globe. The Rotary Foundation, to which all clubs contribute, brings together a global network of volunteers who tackle the world's most pressing humanitarian challenges. It focusses on disease prevention and treatment, particularly in the areas of clean water, sanitation, maternal and child health. Rotary has also been at the forefront of eliminating Polio throughout the world for more than 30 years, and to commemorate this achievement, we have again this year planted thousands of purple crocuses around the Farnhams and Burnham which also help to brighten up some of our verges and grass areas. We meet regularly to have fun, socialise and use our time and skills to raise money and support our community.

At a local level The Rotary Club of Burnham Beeches continues to flourish; we have welcomed some excellent new members to our club this year and have additionally launched a satellite club (The Farnham Volunteers), which in time we hope will grow to become its own independent Rotary Club. We now consist of 37 active members who live in the local area covering Burnham, Dorney, Taplow and the Farnhams. We meet weekly to raise funds, assist the community, organise events and make charitable donations. Our current beneficiaries include Marie Curie Cancer Care, Thames Hospice, Alexander Devine Children's Hospice, Riding for the Disabled, Children in Need, the Thames Valley Adventure Playground and Padstones to name but a few. In total this year we are on course to raise and distribute a target of £40,000.

We also organise and contribute towards community events: our ever popular Donkey Derby; the Caldicott Music Evening; the Burnham Beeches Run; Burnham Christmas Fayre and of course we supported this year's first ever 'Carols not on the Green'. We view these events with equal importance to fundraising as a part of the rich tapestry of our local communities.

Our close links with local schools is very important to us. We organise an annual inter-school football competition at Dropmore Infant School plus we arrange a Carol Concert for local schools at St Peter's Church, Burnham, which was standing room only again this year. We support our local schools by providing Dictionaries for Life for Year 4 pupils and offer interview and CV mentoring and provide student achievement awards. We also sponsor young people on the Rotary Youth Leader Awards project (a character and skills-building Outward Bound style week away). Our satellite club have already continued our commitment to a local school, with their first event being an incredibly successful day painting the fences at Farnham Common Infant School.

Internationally we are continuing to support Porridge and Rice, providing meals and support to schools in Africa so that children may learn without hunger, Africa Vision Malawi, supporting a project for schools in desperate need of help and we continue our long-term support to Shelterbox who provide disaster relief across the world.

The Rotary Club of Burnham Beeches loves to welcome new people to our meetings, so if you are interested or know someone who might like to get involved with what we do, why not come along as our guest and see if you would like to join us? We are a diverse club of all ages and backgrounds and welcome new members who bring new ideas and help us to continue our story of success as we look forward to our 35th year next year. If you would like to find out more, please visit www.rcbb.co.uk; or check out our Facebook page. Of course, this year we have also launched our satellite club, so we have different options of membership to suit your time and lifestyle.

Gareth Vest, Chairman

The Royal British Legion, Farnham Common Branch - encompassing The Farnhams, East Burnham, Hedgerley, Stoke Poges and Wexham.

The Royal British Legion is best known to most people for the annual Poppy Appeal each October and November

The Farnham Common Branch of the RBL has always supported this annual appeal and this last year, achieved a new record amount of £ 36,000 which is a splendid result from the areas we cover - The Farnhams, East Burnham, Hedgerley, Stoke Poges and Wexham.

Our Branch of now has just 66 members, but for the annual Poppy Appeal we are helped by many other Villagers, and we are especially grateful for their help in achieving this excellent result.

We would also thank the Management of the Beaconsfield Service Area which continues to be an excellent location for poppy selling.

We must, however, recognise that we continue to lose members, due mainly to advancing years, and - sadly - the younger generation are not joiners for our Royal British Legion, great though the debt is, owed by the younger generation to the servicemen men and women of the past.

We continue to enjoy a highly successful Sausage Supper each October, when members and friends enjoy a convivial evening.

We would appeal to Villagers of all ages to consider becoming a member of the Royal British Legion, ensuring that the increasing costs of supporting servicemen and women and their families can continue to be met.

Naomi C Arnold, Chairman

Farnham Royal Charities

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.

No applications for grants have been received so far in 2019/20 and only one application was received in the financial year 2018/19. This was subsequently withdrawn following a change in the personal circumstances of the applicant.

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.

Farnham Common Sports Club

2019 has been a busy year for the Sports Club. We installed a new online membership system which now manages the 100 different types of subscriptions we offer across 4 sports categories. Launched a new website which better showcases what the club offers the community.

We resurfaced two Tennis Courts and refurbished our two squash Courts and changing rooms. The cost of these projects was nearly £50,000, paid for from our cash reserves, members donations and grants from; The Mobbs Memorial Trust, The Shanley Foundation and the Heart of Bucks Community Foundation. We are very grateful for the financial help we received from these organisations and from the Parish Council.

During the Summer, the club became the social hub of the community. During the Football World cup over 200 people watched England's matches in the bar. The Royal Wedding saw families using the club facilities for picnics and games. It really was a memorable summer with the Bar takings breaking all records!

Our Rugby, Tennis, Squash and Cricket sections together with our fitness room and Bar continue provide sport and recreation for over 800 local people on a regular basis.

I would like to thank the Parish Council for its support over the last 12 months.

Richard Thomas, Chairman

Farnham Common Short Mat Bowls Club

Farnham Common Short Mat Bowls Club runs on Wednesday afternoons, enjoying the good facilities of the Village Hall. Although this is a gentle sport, it requires a keen eye and the ability to “read the head” of bowls clustered around the jack in order to aim that killer shot to win. As a club, we chose not to join a short mat bowls league as, although we are keen players, we did not want the continuous competitive pressure. However, we like to play occasional friendly matches against local clubs. In April we hosted a match against Stoke Poges Bowls Club, winning by 5 points to 2, with both clubs scoring 32 shots to complete a great afternoon’s bowling. Visiting teams are treated to nibbles and cake, adding to the social side of the sport. We also play occasional away matches, including at Gerrards Cross, Chalfont St Peter, Iver and Wraysbury. This challenges us to quickly adapt to the different speed of other clubs’ mats and the evenness (or otherwise) of their hall floor - sometimes with hilarious results! The social side of our club is very important to us so we always have a short break for tea and chat, as well as going out for occasional lunches and theatre visits.

Rosemary Followell, Chairman

This concludes the minutes