

Annual Parish Meeting – 27 April 2021

Written Reports

The City of London - Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common

1. Coronavirus

No report on activity for 2020/21 can be completed without mention of the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic. At Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common this resulted in a complete closure of car parks for around seven weeks in April 2020, suspension of volunteering and events at the charity throughout large parts of 2020/21; a reduction in staff at times; and a complete re-organisation of working spaces and work programmes to cope with reduced staff resources.

At Burnham Beeches visitor levels were, at periods during the year, between 2 and 4 times higher than 'normal' resulting in unfortunate negative impacts of increased wear, widening of paths, trampling (particularly in the winter of 20/21) and litter and other associated unsocial behaviour.

These higher numbers were not just people travelling to visit us but also many local people having more opportunity, for a whole variety of reasons, to visit more often. The impacts of these extra visits is very clear to see with a lot of new cut through paths, widening paths and trampled edges and in the winter months paths that would normally be 1.5 – 2 m wide had turned into 5m wide muddy morasses.

As a result, and to protect important Special Area of Conservation (SAC) features, the Beeches carpark capacity was reduced in February 2021, some heavily worn areas temporarily shut off and visitors encouraged to use only surfaced paths. Some cut throughs and desire lines were blocked with brash or temporary fencing. The team worked with the Buckinghamshire Council to support the introduction of a temporary parking suspension on roads around the Beeches to help dissuade some anti-social parking from the high visitor levels using surrounding roads. A problem not unique to the Beeches but suffered by many sites across the country and of particular importance given the SAC status of the Beeches

Going forward these actions - of temporary path/ carpark/ area closures, along with targeted path improvements, will be a necessary and ongoing part of protecting the important features of Burnham Beeches. We ask local visitors in particular, many of whom visit nearly every day come rain or shine, to help by keeping to made up paths as much as possible and not creating new paths and cut throughs. 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

2. Finance

2020/21 was another challenging year for the Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common charity. As ever the charity relies on grants and the non-taxpayer funded, City of London funding, for delivery of core services and works. The Beeches received little filming income last year and costs for various services were up due to the pandemic.

The introduction of 7 days a week carpark charges in December, combined with very high visitor levels throughout the year helped bridge some of the gaps this year when car parks reopened. However, some projects had to be put on hold and City funding is subject to an ongoing review with a reduction of at least 12% in 2021/22. The introduction of 7 days a week car park charges at the Beeches and other site across The City's Open Spaces Department was necessary to try and maintain service levels going forward following this permanent funding change.

As a result, budgets remain under considerable 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 whilst ensuring the features that make them special remain protected. Further local funding challenges are anticipated as The City continues to review the costs of its activities.

3. Stoke Common

2020/21 saw the final part of the large-scale heathland restoration completed at Stoke Common SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest). This work was 100% grant funded. The work was all carried out as per the current (2018-2028) management plan. The plan focuses on final elements of habitat restoration in the first 1 – 2 years (now completed) and then the ongoing care and maintenance of the common for the next 8/9 years. We are now in that ongoing maintenance phase and key to this is the continuation of the successful grazing programme at the common and fantastic efforts of the Friends of Stoke Common and other volunteers.

Wildlife surveys continue to guide and support practical management on the ground. In the last year the analysis of a survey on beetles also demonstrates the importance of Stoke Common as a wildlife refuge.

- 700 species of beetle were found (this is a high number for a relatively small SSSI)
- 9.8% of which were rare or scarce, including 9 Red Data Book species (those that are the most threatened),
- Including 2 species new to British list!
- & 4 species for which Stoke Common is the only British site in recent years!

4. Phenomenal Nature Reserves

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 – the value as place to escape to has been brought home even more so in the last year.

As with the beetles above at Stoke Common, 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. This winter a survey of the lichens was commissioned by Plantlife with funding from their HLF funded 'Back from the Brink' project. The top lichenologist working with lichens on old trees in the UK did the survey.

He found 4 Red listed species (those that are the most threatened), one of which was previously thought to be extinct in the UK. He considered that the community of lichens on the old beech trees was the best outside the New Forest (which is some 80 times larger than the Beeches) and both this community and that on dead wood on standing oak trees (the so called pin-head lichen community) were sufficient for the Beeches to be designated a nature reserve just for the lichens alone. This is quite remarkable for a relatively small area so close to London. These species are all likely to have been present in the Beeches for a very long time and it is unlikely that they have colonised recently. In addition to lichens a species of fungi new to science was discovered on the mire by the Bucks Fungus group.

5. Site protection

All local planning authorities have to examine the impact of their local plan on places designated as Special Areas of Conservation, like Burnham Beeches. During the plan production we worked closely with Council planning policy officers and Natural England (the Government adviser on nature conservation) to ensure all the appropriate processes were fulfilled. This included examining the impact of the plan in terms of water courses and hydrology, air quality and the impact of recreation pressure caused by additional housing in the area.

While the first two topics were relatively easily dealt with and have been resolved several years ago, the recreation pressure issue was a lot more complex. Following detailed studies of the protected habitats (beech woodland) and that of our visitors (where they come from, how frequently they come and how they travel for example), coupled with procedures used by other Local Authorities the following mitigation strategy has been adopted.

No additional new dwellings can be erected within 500m of the boundary of Burnham Beeches. Between 500m and 5.6km developers must pay a contribution which will fund projects to mitigate the

impact of visitors, this includes specialist interpretation and an additional ranger to work with local communities and visitors to help protect the site. In the process of moving to a unitary authority the South Bucks District Council Local Plan was withdrawn but the council has taken this forward as a supplementary planning document. This has now completed the full consultation period and is being implemented.

The last year has shown that additional numbers of visitors is detrimental to the Beeches, while the mitigation strategy will not completely prevent this, at least we have some funding to help raise awareness of the issues and effect some long lasting protection.

We continue (with NE) to work with Slough Borough Council regarding planning applications for several large housing developments. While we have secured some funding directly for the Beeches from one of them, it looks likely that a different route will be taken by the Borough Council, that of providing sustainable alternative green space (SANG) through upgrading one of the big parks in the borough. This option was not the chosen option in Bucks due to the relatively small number of houses in the plan coupled with the lack of a suitable site.

The upgrade at the power station on the Slough trading estate will be funding some air quality work as part of a section 106 agreement. Options for how to use this are being drawn up with a view to the work starting in this financial year.

6. Young & Old pollards

In the last year 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.

85 of the ancient pollard trees were worked on, or around, in 2020/21. 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 time to develop some of the habitat features found on the old trees before the older ones finally die. This is expensive work and grant funding only pays for a small part of it – if you want to help look after these remarkable trees you can donate directly toward their care by following the link - www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/donateBBtrees

7. Other works

Wood pasture restoration work was undertaken in 20/21 at two locations. The aim of this partially grant funded work is to join up isolated patches of old wood pasture and ensure this important habitat is as robust and connected across the SAC as possible by the end of the current management plan.

Investigation works were also undertaken at Middle pond to assess action required to deal with a leak in the embankment. Findings from this work will be used to draw up a plan of remedial action to deal with the leak ensure stability of the embankment and identify likely costs of such work. We will, of course, then need to raise the funds to deliver repairs and the planned associated pond habitat improvement works.

8. Livestock grazing at Burnham Beeches

The use of invisible fencing continued in 2020/21 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 ungrazed area as is practical will also be grazed in future.

9. Events and volunteers

The Beeches is normally a hub for local community, school and site lead events walks and activities. This has not been the case this year with just a handful of small-scale events taking place, as per Government guidelines, during a short window in late summer/early autumn.

Normally volunteers provide over 6000 hours of support each year at Burnham Beeches and Stoke common. This year volunteers haven't clocked up quite so many hours but have still provided invaluable support. A number of covid safe habitat management tasks were run in Sept/Oct and

throughout the year individuals have continued to help with vital tasks such as daily livestock checks, when animals are on and off the nature reserves, survey work, site maintenance and of course have been a massive help in dealing with the never ending litter issues this year.

The support of all our volunteers is greatly appreciated and helps make the nature reserves the lovely places they are for everyone to enjoy.

10. Forthcoming projects

Hillforts project 'Beacons of the Past'. As mentioned in the 2018/19 report 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. In 2020/21 we were due to have a repeat of the September 2019 archaeological investigation of features around the hillfort and an iron age themed event day. These were however, inevitably cancelled. The Beacons of the Past project has been extended and we hope to welcome back the team to run another 2-week archaeological dig and event in 2021/22 – covid allowing!

The Beeches Grazing project will continue to use invisible fences in 2021 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.

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.

Martin Hartup
Head Ranger

Farnham Common Community Library

10 years of service to the community

Up until the end of February 2020, we had been operating almost normally but after that the Covid-19 pandemic had a major impact on all of our activities.

We were totally closed from the end of March although library users did have access to online facilities. We were finally able to re-open but with restricted times and appropriate Covid precautions in July and August. We were able to gradually add more opening hours and by December we were almost back to pre-Covid levels. However, the next lockdown meant we had to close again, and the library only reopened two weeks ago. Eager to get back to normal we've been helped by the enthusiasm of our faithful band of volunteers and some welcome newcomers, so that we are now open for longer than most Council run libraries.

Visits, excursions, and social events – after a full programme up to the end of February 2020 we had to cancel everything including theatre visits, the Farnhams Open Gardens, and our popular Christmas Supper. The reading group has not been meeting and we have not been able to hold our well attended coffee mornings in support of other charities. We don't expect to be able to plan any more external activities for some time and while this is disappointing, and reduces our income, the health of our supporters has to be our prime consideration. We are now planning some interesting outings for the autumn and have a date in the diary for our popular Christmas supper.

Children's activities - are an important part of our offering, providing children time to explore their creative abilities and they also help to increase book issues. We've not been able to hold the popular arts and craft sessions or any outdoor activities. However, the children's garden, put on hold during the pandemic, has just been completed by volunteers from Burnham Beeches Rotary with donations of materials from several local businesses. We are looking forward to children being able to plant vegetables and flowers and tend them throughout the seasons.

We also hope to be able to run the Annual Summer Reading Challenge, World Book Day and will be re-starting working with Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme volunteers.

Books – we've used the closure to take a critical look at our stock and refreshed it by buying a large selection of new issues and also installed some additional shelving.

Rental Facilities - as previously mentioned the two rooms at the back of the library had been rented to Thames Valley Police and Children's Services but both had left by end August 2019. We took the opportunity to combine and refurbish the room and it is now being rented to The Farnhams & Hedgerley Community Church replacing some of the lost income.

Membership – we currently have over 350 Friends of FCCL supporting us with an annual subscription. This is greatly appreciated, especially at this time when our regular income is reduced.

We've been operating as an independent community library since October 2011 and have established a reliable library service with the help of a loyal group of unpaid volunteers and trustees. Although several have recently left us for health reasons, several new helpers joined us during the year. We receive some funding from Bucks 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.

While the last year has been 'unusual' we are now open with a very full complement of books, a band of enthusiastic helpers all helping to provide a thriving community library.

Michael Mills
Chairman

Farnham Royal Cricket Club

Based at the Rectory ground in Church Lane, FRCC run 4 adult cricket teams, a First and Second XI who play in the Marrant Thames Valley league, a Sunday team and a Friday evening Social team. In addition, we run training and teams throughout all the youth age groups.

During the winter, our attention turns to Darts and Cribbage where we run 5 darts teams and 2 crib teams from the Club.

We also have a thriving Social side with a welcoming clubhouse offering a well-stocked bar and kitchen, which is open throughout the year.

When I sat in my first AGM as Secretary at Farnham Royal Cricket Club on 13th March 2020 I remember thinking what a great season we had in front of us. The teams were raring to go, we had a new coach in place and loads of events planned through the coming season. Our darts teams had done well and our Royal Roamers Crib team had won the Division Two title, the Tony Redhead Cup and were runners up in the Champion of Champions. Little did we realise that our doors would close within a couple of weeks and we would have such a turbulent 15 months ahead of us.

We did manage to get a short season of league cricket during the summer with our First XI finishing 3rd in Division 3b and the Second XI finishing 10th in Division 7b. Due to COVID there were no relegations or promotions but it was just nice to get some competitive cricket in, albeit with additional COVID rules and regulations in place. Our Social, Sunday and Youth teams also managed a few games culminating in a Festival of Cricket with some interclub games over the August Bank Holiday.

Unfortunately, the pandemic also caused the cancellation of virtually all our events during the year, from our regular quiz and food nights to Family Fun Day and Fireworks night. The latter two are big events not only for the club but also for our local community and we were devastated not to be able to hold either of them.

Having weathered the storm of the first lockdown, we thought that the Club had done well to maintain its cash reserves however the lack of events and the subsequent lockdowns hit us hard and with essential maintenance required on both the pitch and buildings our only option was to look at a massive fundraising campaign.

Our initial target was £20,000 over a 5 week period via Crowdfunding. We were overwhelmed with the response and we met that target well within our timeframe. Our final total stands at £23,945. I would like to say a massive thank you to all our members, supporters, sponsors and local businesses and individuals who helped us achieve our target and secure FRCC for future generations. Also, the Volunteers who have given up their time not only to manage the Crowdfunding campaign but also to work on and around the club painting, repairing and getting everything ready for our 're-openings'.

We now look forward to a full season of cricket across all age ranges and levels with our first league games starting on the 8th May. We are also looking to launch a Women and Girls section later this year. Full details, fixtures and results will shortly be available via our new website at <https://www.frcc.info>.

Ruth Wildman
FRCC Secretary

Burnham Beeches Rotary Club

The COVID-19 pandemic has been a significant challenge for the Club but one that we have embraced. We last met face-to-face in March 2020. Since then, we have been using videoconferencing, with over 75% attendance levels at our regular meetings. President Mark Thomas has officiated throughout the year and Keith Greenough will be taking over on 1st July.

The lockdown has afforded an opportunity to have a long hard look at how we operate, and we've undertaken a major strategic review. We have simplified procedures and cut costs, with a view to becoming more attractive to prospective members. Our new approach appears to be working as we have recruited 6 new members in the last 4 months. Our membership now stands at 40.

We have also refocused our efforts to prioritise helping the local community and supporting young people. During the year we have pushed ahead with over 20 projects. These have included:

- Providing continuing hands-on support for Burnham Youth Club
- Donating a cleaner and DVD player to Padstones in Burnham
- Distributing 'Dictionaries for Life' to local schools
- Working with Bucks CC to promote distribution of OK OUR KIDS books and games
- Donating £1000 to Farnham Common Guides for purchase of camping equipment
- Hosting the Rotary Young Writer competition
- Raising nearly £4000 for Children in Need working with local schools
- Providing hands-on assistance and financial support for Burnham Care & Share Food Distribution Project
- Donating £700 to One Can Foodbank in Farnham Common
- Sourcing, packaging and delivering over 130 Xmas shopping bags to needy families working with Burnham Care & Share, Farnham Common Junior/Infants and St Mary's Schools
- Supporting Thames Valley Adventure Playground with a direct donation of £1500 and with a successful application for a Beeches Community Board 'Crisis' Grant of £2000
- Donating £1000 to South Bucks Riding for the Disabled
- Supporting the Marlow Rotary Santa Run
- Remodeling the garden at Farnham Common Library

Much of the funding for these projects came from the Burnham Beeches Rotary Virtual Charity Run, which attracted around 350 participants. These included families, dogs, children and many representatives from Farnham Common Joggers and Wheelers (JAWS) and the Chiltern Nordic Walkers.

We are actively engaged in developing new project ideas. In particular, we are planning an 'Orchard Day' in the Farnham Common Orchard in late September and have teams looking at how we can get more involved with assisting with Youth Unemployment and with Supporting the Environment.

We have also radically upgraded our Social Media presence and are currently achieving some 8000 hits per month on our key Facebook platform. We have also worked with the Farnhams magazine to keep the local community informed about our activities.

We are looking forward to opening up again for face-to-face meetings from July onwards, but this of course is dependent on Government guidelines.

Mark Thomas
Club President

The Farnhams Magazine

During the year 2020 to 2021, Paula Harrison, as lead editor, has managed, in spite of Covid Lockdowns and associated issues, to produce four excellent magazines. It continues as a reliable source of Advertising within the Farnham's for businesses and those not operating from shops in the area. These stalwarts businesses in our community, rely heavily on our magazine sitting by the phones of readers and leading to enquiries particularly with so many Covid issues. Our magazine is considered of high quality, and we think the Village and the Parish Council should be rightly proud of it as a reliable source to disseminate information about all that is happening around us.

Thanks to Dan Harrison, our adverts manager, he has managed to ensure most advertisers have continued with us and additionally he has found new advertisers to fill empty slots. The advertising bookings have kept pace with increased costs. Though it is hugely appreciated that the Parish Council continues to support the magazine finances, since without that support the magazine would have to close down.

We note 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 will continue online via the Parish Council website as well.

With increased numbers of dwellings in the area, and new people coming in who do not know the village, our Magazine is the only method for spreading news about what goes on in the villages to previous and new residents. Although there is the Facebook Community Page, not every householder is a member, and the information is transitory of course, though immediate. Our delivery means are now through the Post Office delivery system, and after a few glitches it seems that all households do receive their copy. Some of our shops kindly take a few for collection, and the Library will have some when it reopens.

We have a new treasurer Sasha Randall who took over from Barrie Luscombe at the end of 2019, and since then she has restructured our costs to ensure no waste. Sadly, Barrie passed away early in 2020.

We believe we must not forget that our "free" magazine, in 2021, will be going absolutely FREE to all homes and businesses in our villages, 4 times a year. We believe this level of contact with Parishioners is vital to the future of our Parish and hope you will continue to think so as well.

Jerry Houdret
Acting Chairman of Management Committee.

St Mary's Farnham Royal CE Primary

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 - Jerimiah 29:11

Life Under Lockdown at St Mary's – March 2021

For all of us, the past few months have been a real challenge. Our thoughts are with those who have been personally effected by the virus but in some respects it has given us all the chance to show what we are truly made of and it has been inspiring to see what has been achieved by all members of our school community, from teachers and staff to parents and children. Thank you all for being so truly amazing!

Remote learning is going very well. Communication between home and school has meant that children are still making progress thanks to the hard work of their teachers. School has still been open for some children too.

EYFS children have created a display linked to learning about people in the local community who, particularly at this time, are helping us all to stay safe.

Harvest Help - October 2020

Harvest is a time when we think about those in our community who may not be as fortunate as ourselves. We have been running our own food-sharing project at school for a year now and so many of the donations made to school and the church have been allocated to supporting key families directly in our school community.

The generosity was so overwhelming again that we were also able to send a substantial amount to the Slough Food Bank, whose ongoing work and support during these tricky times has proved invaluable to the community. The Food Bank provides clients with three days of nutritionally balanced, non-perishable food. Food is donated and stored in a warehouse, where volunteers pre-pack food parcels that are then taken to 4 distribution centres in the Slough area.

During the pandemic the foodbank played an even more vital role:

Total number of food parcels: **3120, a 41% increase**

Number of adults supported: **2018, a 46% increase**

Number of children supported: **1102, a 32% increase**

The Slough Foodbank have also recently been able to open a new distribution centre for families that have been allocated a voucher at the Britwell Community Centre, Long Furlong Drive Britwell, open each Saturday Morning from 10am to 12pm.

Mindfulness and Meditation - October 2020

One way in which we are supporting the children's return to school after lock down has been to encourage mindfulness and develop strategies that help children be aware of their own mental well-being. To mark World Mental Health Day in October our Year 5 and 6 pupils investigated worries and how they could help themselves and others that may be dealing with a level of worry that effects their well-being. With all that is going on around us this will undoubtedly prove to be a very useful and appropriate skill for us all.

Virtual Open Days

Due to the Pandemic we are unable to show prospective parents and children physically around our school at the moment. You can find key information including our prospectus on our website: stmarysfarnhamroyal.org Take a look and see what makes us so special.

Pastoral Support Fund

For some time now SMFR has had a dedicated Pastoral Support Leader who supports the families within the school community. Due to the current pandemic we have seen a huge increase in the need to support families and therefore, SMFR has set up Pastoral Support Fund. The fund is in association



with and supported by The United Benefice of Farnham Royal With Hedgerley. The fund is set up to support vulnerable children and families within the SMFR school community with needs such as:

- New school uniform
- Transport to hospital appointments
- Essential items for the home

All donations are warmly welcomed <https://www.gofundme.com/f/pastoral-support-fund-smfr>

Finance

As with all schools nationally, we face pressures of funding. However, at SMFR we have the additional financial challenge that class sizes are 25 children per class. This means we receive funding for 25 children where as other schools receive funding for 30 children per class. This is a significant difference for each class and across the school. Increasingly we must turn to the community for support. The children are desperate to replace our climbing frame & the school council is raising money for this. Their latest venture is a sunflower growing competition. We also need to replace out interactive whiteboards and of course continuously maintain the building and premises

Mrs V Eaglen
Head Teacher

Farnham Common Sports Club

After a very difficult 12 months where very little sporting activity could take place, the Sports Club has sprung back to life now that government restrictions have started to be eased. Although we have been hit financially by the pandemic our members have been incredibly generous by keeping their subscriptions going during the crisis. This has meant that we can get back to providing sport and recreation for the community.

For some time, we have been looking for another winter sport that can complement our Rugby, Tennis, Squash and Cricket sections, we are delighted to announce that Lacrosse is coming to the sports club. Farnham Common Lacrosse Club will play on Saturdays during the winter. It's an exciting sport played by men and women.

Rugby

- Senior Rugby has been severely hit by the lockdowns and the Leagues were cancelled at the end of last year. Training has restarted and we have had nearly 50 players coming down on Thursday nights.
- Adult Touch Rugby is on Wednesday nights. Contact Chris for details chrisdaps@hotmail.co.uk.
- Mini and Junior Rugby has restarted, and we are really busy the numbers of kids returning has been huge. We are extending the season until the end of May and midweek training for some age groups will carry on through the summer.

Cricket

- The 2020 season was effectively cut in half but thanks to the Weather a lot of Cricket was played. We are hoping for an uninterrupted season in 2021.

Squash

- Sadly, the full return of Squash is delayed but family members can play each other, and Junior coaching is underway, we hope for a full return soon.

Tennis

- Tennis was the least affected of our sports and is going from strength to strength, lots of new members and the Courts are busy.

Bar

- After being closed for much of the last 12 months the Bar reopened on the 12th April for outside drinking only, in groups of 6. We have a 5-acre beer garden so there is plenty of room!
- We have bought and erected a marquee and invested in more outside furniture. We have an outside TV showing BT Sport and Sky Sports channels.

Financially we suffered badly from the loss of bar revenue and although many members kept their subscriptions going our renewals were well down. We took advantage of various grants and cut as many costs as we could. However, we have declared a loss of £10,000 in our latest accounts. We are confident that if we can get back to something like normal during the summer, we will remain solvent.

Many thanks for the Parish Council's continued support.

Richard Thomas
Chairman

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

This has of course been a very difficult year. The 2020 Poppy Appeal in our area raised £8,000, considerably short of our usual amounts but creditable in light of the rules around social distancing and shielding, as well as the lockdown which happened before Remembrance Day and thus cut short the collecting period. Our thanks go to the manager of the M40 Services who was very accommodating and to local businesses, schools and other organisations which arranged collections.

As described in the 2019 report, our branch membership has been falling, but we can count on the support of volunteers for the poppy collection. Several of our committee members have retired recently and we are in the process of recruiting new branch officers in order to re-group. Confirmation of these positive changes will come in early summer so that we can look forward to a revived branch and an enthusiastic 2021 Poppy Appeal.

Andy Crow
Treasurer

Farnham Common Short Mat Bowls Club



Members of Farnham Common Short Mat Bowls Club have missed their bowling over the last year and cannot wait to return. This photo is of our last match against Iver. In 2020 we met the stringent requirements of both the Government and the English Short Mat Bowls Association and were successful in achieving "Safe Bowls Status" at the end of September 2020. We had to implement a rigorous regime of sanitising, social distancing, using a booking system for all sessions and, of course wearing

masks. Our thanks also go to Marilyn Rolfe, at Farnham Common Village Hall, for her excellent co-operation so that we met their requirements as well. Safe Bowls Status only allowed us to play with a very reduced number each week. However, just as we were poised to restart the second lockdown came into force.

Now it is "onward and upward" with some sort of "normal" clearly in our sights. Following the roadmap for Covid, we are ready to restart after 17 May. We cannot wait to get going. We will all have had our second jabs by then! Again we will be operating with restricted numbers but, hopefully,

this will only be for 5 weeks and then we can get back to the social and sporting afternoons we have all enjoyed over the last 14 years. Due to a recent change in the structure of Buckinghamshire Short Mat Bowls Association, we will potentially have a wider group of clubs to invite to play friendly matches against us and, of course, we will do our best to organise social events to add that extra feeling of being back with friends.

Rosemary Followell
Chair

Farnham Royal Village Hall

The Village Hall has managed to survive the Covid Lockdowns thanks largely to the Government backed support packages, our two main tenants, and our small team of volunteers and workforce. The main tenants are the Social Club and Wise Owls Nursery School, and where possible within the Covid rules they have brilliantly kept going.

Also, thanks to secretary caretaker Marie Edwards and her contacts, we have been able to do considerable decorations and many small repairs while not having general hirers.

Since we know that we provide a good quality venue, with good parking facilities, at a reasonable cost for the benefit of the local community and beyond, with the easing of Lockdown, Marie is already receiving requests for details of our reopening from regular users, and to be open for small party groups and meetings.

As soon as a full Risk Assessment has been carried out, expect to see us announce our opening on our Facebook page, and in the FB Community Pages, and the Farnham's Magazine. Marie will continue to ensure the hall is kept in good order for each hirer and effectively cleaned within Covid recommendations before and after each hire.

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 new members. Wise Owls Nursery, as a provider of much needed facilities for essential workers children, has kept going throughout, and has spaces for new pupils.

New member of the Management Committee. We have been pleased to welcome Bob Thorpe this year, as he has recently joined the Committee.

But we really need new members of the management team to help us make wise judgements on the challenges ahead.

These challenges include a new kitchen upgrade, extra Fire Safety arrangements, and keeping our outside fence security up to date near the excellent Wise Owls Nursery School.

If you feel able to join us, please contact us.

Jerry Houdret
Trustee and Acting Chair

Farnham Common Village Hall

The majority of the last year has been taken up with Covid-19 which has meant that other than a few weeks here and there we have been closed and not able to open the hall. We have taken the opportunity to carry out some much needed work at the hall with flooring being replaced lots of painting and some repairs to the structure where it was needed. We still have a new front door and set of fire doors to install which hopefully will be completed during May.

We are eagerly waiting for polling day - May 6th - to enable the hall to be used for the community which is one of the roles the hall is happiest in fulfilling. Gradually over the next few months we are hopeful our regular hirers will return as and when Covid-19 rules allow and we are hoping to be able

to start up our cinema events again in September when the Covid-19 rules are more relaxed and we hope you will all come and enjoy a film either matinee or evening as soon as you can.

We look forward to playing a pivotal role in bringing the community together again after this difficult time.

Marilyn Rolfe

Thames Valley Neighbourhood Police's Report

Crime statistics cover Burnham/Farnhams/Taplow and the rolling 12-month figures from April 2020 – 2021 show an increase of 3% in all crimes for our area. However, this is a decrease of 13% compared to the previous year.

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 in reported incidents from 28 to 50, however this figure now includes domestic shed and garage breaks.

Burglary remains TVP's top priority and as in previous years we will be teaming up with our Neighbouring forces including the Met Pol, Hampshire and Surrey. These operations are targeted, intelligence led high visibility proactive patrols to detect and deter those responsible

Theft of/from Vehicles

There's been a decrease from 175 to 97 in theft from motor and theft of motor vehicle offences, this equates to a 45% decrease. These figures are higher than previously reported due to incidents that would not normally be included, such as a vehicle interference and criminal damage. These stats also include a rise in keyless thefts which were previously recorded in the Burglary figures. As a response to any potential rise in these types of crimes the NHPT hope to continue with their joint awareness campaign called "Clear car" and working alongside SBDC. Also, crime awareness signage being placed in locations being targeted by offenders.

As the country starts to return to some form of normality and restrictions are lifted the NHPT are preparing to take part in a number of Police led operations designed at tackling the core issues such as Burglaries, Vehicle crime as well as speeding and anti-social behaviour. These operations will continue to run throughout the rest of this year and into 2022.

Unauthorised Encampments

This is a regular issue in this area and as the pandemic restrictions are set to ease even further we will no doubt see the number of unauthorised encampments increase. The NH teams will be making contact with local landowners to ensure they are making their land as secure as possible. 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.

A distribution e-mail list has been set up by Bucks county council to monitor and share any information in relation to unauthorised encampments that occur within Bucks. This information is shared with TVP, Councillors and other key agencies.

We are clearly bound by the law in what we can do, and unauthorised encampments need to meet certain criteria's 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.

As an added note from PCSO Caroline Sampson Speed Watch is now allowed to start back up. We have an admin team to carry out the necessary office base checks. We need to look at getting road side volunteers. I know we can't at the moment conduct meetings but am happy to do this via Teams if we can put out something on the Farnhams' Face book page this might muster up some interest.

PC 5099 WALKER