

# **Annual Parish Meeting**

## **23 May 2022**

### **Written Reports**

**Farnham Royal Parish Council  
1<sup>st</sup> Floor, Sherriff House  
The Broadway  
Farnham Common  
SL2 3QH**

**Telephone: 01753 648497  
Email: [clerk@farnhamroyal-pc.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@farnhamroyal-pc.gov.uk)**

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## **Farnham Common Village Schools**

Life at Farnham Common Village Schools has continued to be full, varied and exciting. A number of year groups have enjoyed a variety of visits to enrich their curriculum, from Reception making visits to the local library to Year 5 visiting The River and Rowing Museum in Henley, linked to their creative curriculum work on Rivers. Pupils in the Infant School have continued to take part in Forest Schools, including comparing man-made and natural materials and learning about leaves from different trees. Year 1 visited the community orchard to identify different fruit trees and to look for signs of Spring. Year 4's understanding of the power of our planet was enriched by fantastic online sessions with staff from the Natural History Museum. They learnt to be experts on volcanoes and earthquakes, and used their scientific thinking skills to save 'Volcano Town' from a deadly eruption. Meanwhile, Years 5 and 6 benefitted from a visiting Planetarium, learning about day and night, galaxies and making a virtual visit to the moon.

Throughout the school, pupils have continued to pursue their love of reading and drama. We celebrated World Book Day by dressing up as favourite book characters and taking part on various book related activities, including an online session with the poet, Michael Rosen. The Infant School has had a visit from Freshwater Theatre, linked to their work on continents and oceans, and Year 3 ventured to the Waterside Theatre in Aylesbury to watch a performance of Billionaire Boy. In our English lessons, we have been enjoying studying a range of great books, including Pugs of the Frozen North and Shackleton's Journey.

At the end of March, the Junior School Choir went to The Royal Albert Hall (on its 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary) to take part in the Echoes9 Concert. They performed songs from Matilda brilliantly, along with school choirs from all over Buckinghamshire, even mastering singing in four parts. It was a full and fantastic day of rehearsing and performing, but we did also find time to have an enjoyable visit to The Princess Diana Memorial Playground to let off a bit of steam!

Residential visits are a highlight of life at Farnham Common Village Schools. Year 5 had a super trip to PGL Liddington, taking part in activities such as buggy building and climbing. Children in Year 4 are now looking forward to their trip to Oakwood Activity Centre, while Year 6 are eagerly anticipating their week in Devon at River Dart Country Park.

As a whole school community, we have been thinking about our plans for the future, including our plan for the next five years. This term, we have welcomed several new families to the school, including children from Ukraine and we are enjoying having them as part of our school community. The Summer term will continue to be busy, with plans in place for a variety of sports events, as well as for celebrating the Jubilee.

**David Masters**  
**Headteacher**



## 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

It has been another busy year for all of us at St Mary's Farnham Royal but a year that has seen things gradually return to normal following on from the relaxation of covid restrictions as the year has progressed.

### **Thank you, Thank you, Fabulous Farnhams!**

A hugely important aspect of our school is the role that our Pastoral Support Team plays in helping all families within the school community. Due to the pandemic and the cost of living crisis, we have seen a huge increase in the need to support families and therefore, SMFR has set up a Pastoral Support Fund. The fund was created in association with and supported by The United Benefice of Farnham Royal with Hedgerley and with other members of our school community. The fund is set up to support vulnerable children and families within the SMFR school community with needs such as new school uniform, help with transport to hospital appointments, essential items for the home and in helping in those unexpected circumstances that can weigh heavy and impact families greatly. The Burnham Rotary Club have always supported our school with goody-bags at Christmas but this year they have gone even further to help those families in our local community. Having invited SMFR to talk at one of their meetings, they have already donated very generously to the fund and are looking at how they can support us further, not just financially but by also giving their time and expertise in a variety of ways. We would like to thank all those wonderful members of our community for supporting our fund so very generously. Your donations have really had such a positive impact on those families that really need our support. All donations are warmly welcomed <https://www.gofundme.com/ff/pastoral-support-fund-smfr>



### **Open outdoors provides a sporting focus!**

While schools had been open during lock downs to some pupils it was not until Spring 2021 that all pupils were able to return..... And what a return it was! It was just brilliant to have our school full of children again (maintaining bubbles and distancing, and under continuing restrictions of course). Making the most of the weather and to help nurture the children's wellbeing and enjoyment of our outside space alongside helping develop a love of sport and activity again, our PE leader helped to create some exciting sessions for children of all ages during the weeks of return. Being able to be outside, to mix in

structured and safe bubbles with friends and enjoying activity really was important in addressing the issues children may have had in returning to school again. The wellbeing of all is a vital part of what makes SMFR so special and this sporting focus has been so successful in supporting the return for many children. Children across the school have experienced a range of sports including basketball, cricket and golf. We have been lucky enough to draw on the experience of some visiting professionals who have taught not only key skill but have helped the children to see how important developing a love of sport can be and how it helps with their mental wellbeing.



It has been just brilliant to be returning to normal after the restrictions from the ongoing pandemic have begun to be lifted in schools. Being able to mix with friends and siblings at break times, having assemblies back in the school hall and being able to welcome families back into school has reminded us all of what makes our school so special.

### **Brain Tumour Breakfast Walk**

There was a lovely atmosphere and a lot of enthusiasm from children, parents and staff as the school took part in the third Annual Breakfast Walk in September. It was wonderful to see families back in school again! The event is held before school each year to raise money for the Brain Tumour charity, in remembrance of one of our pupils. Raj died from a brain tumour in 2018. He



is fondly remembered amongst the children, staff and throughout the school community and not only is his memory celebrated with the walk in aid of his charity but through 'Raj's bench' in our school learning garden. Parents and children enjoyed some tasty breakfast goodies as they walked. We were also joined by Raj's family who raise money in his name throughout the year. The fantastic figure of £340 was raised on the morning.



### **Sports Silver Award**

St Mary's have been awarded The Bucks and Milton Keynes School Games Mark Silver award for the quality of our sport/PE provision. SMFR offers a variety of differentiated sports opportunities, the daily mile initiative, interschool competitions and ensures every child is active for at least 30 minutes a day.

We were also awarded an additional silver cup for being the school whose children put in the most effort in physical activities during lockdown. Amazing. Well done everybody!

### **Archery Excitement**

Wednesday 22nd September was National Fitness Day and all of our children were encouraged to wear sports clothing to school. Years 4, 5 and 6 were lucky enough to participate in an archery session where they were given the chance to shoot arrows at a distance and at a target. While this was a tricky skill at first many of the children realised they had a real talent for something new and All children had a lovely time and learnt new skills.



### **PCSOs visit EYFS and KS1**

It has been wonderful as school has slowly begun to return to how things were before the pandemic. One of the most exciting parts has been that people have again been able to visit school again.... and it was brilliant to welcome two of our Police Community Support Officers who came to introduce themselves and share a story with all the children in Early Years and Key Stage 1 in July.

PCSOs Mahmood and Sampson shared the story of 'PC Ben' to allow the children to understand how police officers and PCSOs are in the community to help and are approachable and people to be trusted. The children thought it was very exciting to have PCSOs in school and many mentioned they would always say hello when they saw them again. The PCSOs play a vital role in our community and we thank them for all they do and for coming to see us at St Mary's.



### **Christmas Tree Festival – Carols on the dell**

In December SMFR was invited to help share in the Farnhams Christmas Tree Festival and so took members of the school choir along to share in the excitement. This year marked the first of what is hoped to be many annual



Christmas Tree Festivals and was organised by the United Benefice, in partnership with the Parish Council and Burnham Beeches Rotary Club. It was wonderful to see so many people turn out to support the event. The choirs from Farnham Common Junior and St Mary's Farnham Royal sang some Christmas favourites and all joined in with the singing of carols. So many families came along to support their children and many indulged in a mince pie and a glass of mulled wine or two! Father Christmas also helped lead the singing. It really was a wonderful way to start the Christmas season and huge thanks must go to all that organised, took part or just came and supported the event. We all look forward to doing it again this Christmas.

## Reading Challenge 2021

Pupils at SMFR really love a challenge, and in order to help raise much needed funds to provide new reading material across the school, a sponsored reading challenge was held for all pupils to take part. 'Ready, Steady, Read', supported by one of our lovely Governors, Mrs Anna San-Jose, who also happens to be our local Usborne Book's representative required the children to challenge themselves and others around them to read for a certain number of minutes each day, over the period of a week. And what a success it was! As a school we raised over £3,000 that has been spent by Miss Bailey and Mrs Birch on books to support reading across the school. Thank you to all those family members that gave so generously and all those children that did so much reading.



## Easter Education

To help the local community celebrate Easter, school were invited by Rev. Chloe to investigate the 'Seven Stations of the Cross' that depict key scenes from the Easter story. Each year group looked at a different part of the story and then created a variety of work based on this, from creating Easter gardens and art work to writing letters and making models. The work the children produced stayed on display in St Mary's Church throughout the Easter period so it could be enjoyed by all visitors and members of the congregation.



## Sharing Science

Bob Miles, a Science teacher from Burnham Grammar School, visited SMFR to conduct an experiment with the children in Year 5. The experiment was called 'Biscuit Bust Up' where Mr Miles had five different 'biscuit samples' that were tested in order to find the 'real' biscuit! Mr Miles and the children undertook different tests to discover the ingredients of each sample. In some tests they added heat to the sample; for other tests they added liquid to the sample. The children especially loved to see how the heat (from the Bunsen burner) changed the colour of some of the samples. This was a wonderful experience for the children that gave them an insight into what science will be like in secondary school!



## SMFR Sports

Pupils across the school have again been experiencing a great range of sports and activities. Year 4 children have had the opportunity to master basic movements including running, jumping, throwing and catching from the professional coaches at Farnham Royal Cricket Club. They have learned and developed their leadership skills, as well as worked as part of a team. Some pupils were even awarded medals for showing respect towards others. Year 6 children have been involved in the national 'Chance to Shine' cricket programme whose vision is to give all young people the opportunity to play and learn through cricket. Year 5 pupils have been lucky enough to receive professional basketball coaching from Coach Jenner who is chair of Bucks Basketball. The 4 weeks coaching culminated in an inter year basketball festival involving over 40 children.



## Fire Brigade Visit Year 1

Year 1 children have been looking at the Great Fire of London and have compared the fire brigade of today to that of 1066. We were lucky enough to be visited by firefighters from Beaconsfield Fire Station who taught the children what being a firefighter was all about and shared some of their firefighting equipment. The children were even allowed to have a go at squirting the hose! What a fun experience that will never be forgotten. Thank you to all concerned.



## 200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of our school

2022 is a landmark year in the history of our school. It marks the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Farnham Royal School. What a historic landmark to be reached and this will be celebrated by the school and the children linked to our celebrations of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee later this month.

The original school in Farnham Royal was located on the main road through the village, almost opposite the Duke's Head and was built in 1821. This served as the school for the children of the village up until 1875 when the building of the present school in Church Road was completed. Diaries written by previous teachers and head teachers still remain in the school office and it is fascinating to read about the incidents that affected the school over the past few centuries. The records show that the Rector attended school very regularly to teach scriptures to the children. Scripture was a dominant subject. The Attendance Officer also visited together with the Schools Inspector and the school governors. Lessons taught were recorded and songs and poems learned were also of great importance. The social and economic problems of the time are also reflected in the records; the Shoe Club to help the poor, payment of fees to attend school, the gathering in of the harvest, the acute food shortage in 1917 and national pride in such events at Empire Day and the end of the First and Second World Wars. The records show how the children were entertained originally consisting of a 'Treat' or tea party at one of the large houses in the village, extending to trips to Burnham Beeches, day trips to London and even trips to the continent in the 1960's. Here are some notable entries:

*20<sup>th</sup> April 1835: Children dismissed at 11 o'clock to allow them to meet the hounds in a nearby field."*

*11<sup>th</sup> May 1863: Boy punished for bad behaviour in church. Boy's father complained that he had not been getting enough stick in school compared to that at home and he wanted this to improve."*

*8<sup>th</sup> June 1863: Leave given to 11 boys to work in the fields."*

*15<sup>th</sup> February 1865: Both classes very stupid and idle over their arithmetic. If I could only get them to take an interest in these lessons and work hard I should have better hopes of them in other branches of learning."*

*25<sup>th</sup> May 1867: Rev Marshall called to say that the children can have a treat next week in honour of the re-opening of our church.*

*11<sup>th</sup> January 1875: Took charge of the new school buildings. Schools were opened by the Rev Marshall by prayer. I find the children very backward indeed in their work, especially Numeration and Notation. Their singing is very loud and they drawl their songs. There is much to be done.*

*19<sup>th</sup> June 1877: Had to punish 4 boys for getting over the wall in to the girl's playground.*

*17<sup>th</sup> June 1887: Mr Charsley of Slough called and practised the National Anthem as the children will be singing it at the Queen's Reception on Wednesday. School closed for a week for Jubilee Holidays.*

*22<sup>nd</sup> December 1897: Measles still spreading throughout the school. School closed by order of the Medical Officer of Health for another fortnight.*

*24<sup>th</sup> January 1898: School re-opened after a month. 2 infant pupils died of measles during the holidays.*

*4<sup>th</sup> February 1901: No school this afternoon on account of the Queen's burial at Windsor.*

*11<sup>th</sup> November 1918: At 12 o'clock Mr Hargreaves visited and informed the school that the Armistice had been signed. There was great excitement. We changed the lessons to singing, assembled by the flag and sang the national anthem. I gave the children extra play.*

*18<sup>th</sup> September 1939: Opening of school was postponed until today due to the war. Bucks children will attend from 9.00am -12.30pm and Government evacuees from 1.00pm – 4.30pm. St Peter's School Hammersmith are sharing the school with us*

*8<sup>th</sup> & 9<sup>th</sup> May 1945: Two-day holiday to mark Victory in Europe.*

*20<sup>th</sup> November 1947: School on holiday to celebrate the wedding of Princess Elizabeth and Prince Phillip.*

*18<sup>th</sup> April 1951: School visited the Granada cinema in Slough to see the film 'Great Expectations'.*

*30<sup>th</sup> April 1966: A party of boys accompanied by the Headmaster visited Wembley Stadium for the International match between England and Germany.*

*17<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> June 1972: a party of pupils, parents and staff visited Belgium.*



A separate punishment book records all canings between 1932 and 1981 when these sorts of practises thankfully ended. It details the reasons for punishment, the number of strokes and to what part of the body these were administered! Out of the 396 cases recorded between 1932 and 1981 only 3 girls ever received this sort of punishment.

We look forward to another 200 years of history at our amazing school. To help this happen we need to grow our numbers. If you know of any families looking for spaces for children, then please do ask them to make contact:

## 1<sup>st</sup> Farnham Common Guides

1st Farnham Common Guides has grown over the last two years we are now fully subscribed and looking to the future to open a 2nd unit and Rangers for 14-18yr olds.

Rainbows and Brownies continue to be popular and have waiting lists already, so we will be focussing on raising our volunteer numbers so that we can open new units in the area to support our community.

Rainbows have a new leader as Lucy Peters has moved on to Stoke Poges to reopen the unit there following its closure during the pandemic.

Sadly, we have had to move from our hall in the sports field, but we are making new community links and enjoying being at Brian Jubb Hall.

1st Farnham Common Guides secured funding from BB Rotary for new camping equipment which we will finally be able to make use of this summer when we go away to camp. We were also lucky to have support from the Parish Council in funding and sourcing a storage shed for our new meeting place. We are thankful for the support the community has shown us.

In the past two terms the Guides have:

- Raised over £160 for FoodBank
- Had a self-defense class
- taken part in two community-run activities
- been to PACCAR scout camp for adventurous activities including rifle shooting
- Been to Slough Ice Arena and faced our fears whilst climbing
- completed over 40 badges between us
- completed 2 litter picks
- one night time selfie challenge through the village
- and lots of other exciting activities and games!

**Pippa Reid**  
Guide Leader





## Farnham Common Community Library

After almost two years of full or partial closure and various restrictions the library is now operating normally. Over the last two years our visitor numbers and hence book issues have been understandably lower, but we don't appear to have been as badly affected as some of the other libraries in Bucks. We have lost a few volunteers and it's been difficult at times to ensure that the library is kept open, but we've been fortunate in recruiting some new enthusiastic helpers.

**Books** – we've added more shelving, taken out some of the underutilised sections and bought new books using our own funds to augment the Bucks Library Service offering.

**Children's activities** – this is an important part of our service; these regular events not only bring in adults and children, but they also add to the number of library members and help book issues. We've reinstated our popular arts and craft sessions and outdoor activities. The children's garden in the raised beds by the front entrance is used to encourage children to plant vegetables and flowers and tend them throughout the seasons. A recent addition, a weekly Lego club, has proved extremely popular.

Events - have been a key feature over the last 10+ years and Helen Williams' decision to take a well- earned rest together with the Covid restrictions meant that we've been unable to run these for some time. However, we now have a new team in place who are creating a programme to bring back many of the old favourites:

- A coffee morning was held in April - raising nearly £1100 for the Ukraine Appeal
- A quiz is booked for November
- The popular Christmas Supper will be back
- Several outings are being planned for the second half of 2022

### Other activities include:-

- The Farnhams Open Gardens organised by Pat Marshall will be held at the end of June and funds raised will be shared between the library and Thames Hospice
- The Annual Summer Reading Challenge and World Book Day
- Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme volunteers
- The Farnhams & Hedgerley Community Church is based at the library
- The Chiltern and South Bucks health visiting team hold weekly clinics for children
- Working with Burnham Beeches Rotary we are providing 'Dictionaries 4 Life' (D4L) to pupils in Farnham Common JS, St Mary's, Farnham Royal and Stoke Poges School
- We provide a regular Newsletter and contribute to the Farnhams magazine and local press

We have over 350 Friends of FCCL supporting us with an annual subscription and a group of 40+ unpaid volunteers who help us to provide a free service to the community. We are always looking for additional people to help either on the counter, in a support role or on the Committee. Anyone willing to devote even a small amount of time will be welcomed into our friendly group. Not only would you be helping us to provide a library service, but you would gain a new circle of friends!

**Michael Mills**  
Chairman



Farnham Common  
Community Library

Registered Charity No. 1189181

## **The Farnhams Magazine ... report for 2021-2022**

Paula Harrison, as lead editor, has continued to produce our excellent magazines assisted by additions to the team. It continues as a reliable source of Advertising within the Farnham's for shops and businesses and those wanting to market their operations in the area.

These businesses rely heavily on our magazine sitting by the phones of readers or lying around the house and leading to enquiries.

In spite of the best efforts of Dan Harrison, our adverts manager, with Covid issues and other things disrupting advertisers, our advertising revenue is down. Since September 2021, this has impacted on our financial results, meaning we just covered all the 2021 costs. However, advertising sales for the year till September 2022 and a small rise in costs, mean that we will have to draw on reserves for the September 2022 issue.

Usually, the Parish Council has supported the magazine finances in the past, but this year decided not to provide the £1000 we sought, because of other budgeting issues. We hope they will review that decision this year for 2023.

Without that support the magazine would have to use reserves or change its format, maybe cutting the number of pages to reduce its weight for Post Office delivery.

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, and news about our three churches. The magazine now goes to 3,300 households and is Free of Charge to them.

Sasha Randall, our treasurer, has restructured our costs to ensure no waste, and provides the resulting accounts to the Church treasurer, Roderick Watson, in a way he approves.

During the year Liz Glover and family have written pieces for the magazine, and Dan's father Peter has amused us about moving to the Farnhams, and will write for us again. Liz Glover has joined the management committee.

My special thanks to all the volunteers who run the magazine.

Sadly, at our last meeting, Dan and Paula Harrison decided to give two years notice of their intention to stand down. We must all now seek to find willing volunteers to learn the way it works and take their roles in March 2024.

**Jerry Houdret**

**Acting Chairman of Management Committee**

## **Farnham Common Village Hall Annual Report 2022**

We are pleased to report that we are gradually getting back to normal, we have held a significant number of children's parties which is great to see as the children do look forward to them. Adult events are gradually picking up and our first afternoon cinema session was this month showing the film Belfast which was well attended. We now have a cinema programme for the monthly afternoon events and are wanting to hear from residents whether in the autumn an evening film showing would be welcome and suggestions of films.

There is still an issue with residents parking at the hall and on the pavement which restricts our parking availability and is a great concern to us as we pride ourselves on offering the best of facilities for our hirers and this is preventing us from doing so. A big thank you to our caretaker Peter Pratt for ensuring that we are keeping the hall well maintained and greeting our hirers.

We are planning on a re-fit of the kitchen area and to make the small hall a little more independent as soon as we can but we have concerns on trying to maintain our rates to hirers as it is confirmed that the cost of utilities will be increasing 4-fold and a daily standing charge which will be hard if not impossible to cover with our current rates. This is still work in progress as we are committed to ensuring that the hall is affordable to all but the funding, we have is only from hire charges which provides the Trustees with a big challenge.

It is brilliant to see the hall so well used and the numbers that pass through the Village Hall every week it demonstrates that the venue is fulfilling its purpose thank you to all for using our venue.

**Marilyn Rolfe**  
**Manager**

## **Farnham Royal Village Hall**

Following the awful pandemic, we suffered like many local organisations. We grasped and implemented the Government's regulations and guidelines and communicated to all our Hall users the requirements for using the Hall. Our visitors have been extremely helpful and complied with the ever changing requirements and instructions.

Despite cancellations and non usage of the Hall's excellent facilities over the last two years we were able to cope, especially with the considerable assistance from Govt. and Council grants. During the lockdown periods we took the opportunity to completely redecorate the Hall, install a new Kitchen, redesign our web site (which is ongoing) and upgrade our electrical systems.

Our Caretaker and her team have done a marvellous job in making the Hall such a great place to visit. The size of the Hall, facilities, and substantial free car parking makes this a super venue to hire.

We have supported our regular, long term residents - The Wise Owl Preschool and The Farnham Royal Social Club as much as we could and are very pleased to see they are both up and running now that we and they are back to normality.

The activity at the Hall continues to include Yoga, Pilates, Baby Sensory, Gymnastics, and Karate. There are the very popular Friday evening Jive dancing and Classes and Junior Ballet on Saturdays. Meetings include Church matters, Charity Raising events, Anglers Associations, Parish Council meetings and even usage as a Polling Station.

Importantly the wider Community enjoys the Hall for Pre Wedding events, Children's parties, Family gatherings, Baby showers and Bereavement gatherings.

We are open to all and are only too pleased to continue to service our Community.

### **The Management Team**

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Farnham-Royal-Village-Hall-852740968144383>

Website: [www.farnhamroyalvillagehall.co.uk](http://www.farnhamroyalvillagehall.co.uk)

## **Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common**

### **1. Coronavirus**

Inevitably, as for all society, the impact of the pandemic was still felt at Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common in the last year. Visitor numbers were still at very high levels at times. However, volunteering and events at the charity restarted with some restrictions initially.

The impacts of these extra visits over the last 2 years is still clear to see in some places with newly formed paths, widening of paths and trampled edges. The team & volunteers have repaired some particularly damaged paths, improving path surfaces and bringing them back to more normal widths.

Seasonal path and area closures 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 desire lines. The challenge of protecting the unique nature of the Beeches and supporting public access will always involve difficult decisions and compromise

### **2. Finance**

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 some welcome filming income last year as the industry re-started operations.

City funding was 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 sites across The City's Open Spaces Department) helped to maintain service levels following this permanent change in funding.

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. The City has also restructured its operations and is undertaking a charity review to look at how best to support the Beeches and Stoke Common in the future

## **2020/21 achievements/projects**

### **3. Stoke Common**

With completion of the final part of the large-scale heathland restoration at Stoke Common SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest), in 2021/22 we moved to the ongoing maintenance and habitat development phase of the management plan. Key to this is the continuation of the successful grazing programme at the Common and the fantastic efforts of the Friends of Stoke Common and other volunteers.

The need for an annual and rotational focus on maintaining fire breaks was reemphasized with a small fire on the West Common in February 2022 thankfully quickly brought under control by the fire service.

Wildlife surveys continue to guide and support practical management on the ground. In addition to regular monitoring of birds, reptiles and vegetation this year the Friends took on regular bat transects for national bat monitoring programmes.

Surveys were also undertaken for various insects including the Bog Bush Cricket, a scarce animal and Stoke Common is the only site in Buckinghamshire where it can be found. The survey showed its population and distribution across the Common had increased since it was last surveyed in 2009, really good news reflecting the ongoing improvement of the heathland habitat.

### **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 for visitors from the local area, all over the UK and beyond – the value as place to escape to has been brought home even more so in the last two years.

As well as the bog bush cricket, this year, yet again, new and rare species have been discovered/rediscovered at the Beeches.

Ctenophora spp. a large, spectacular, black and yellow crane fly, two species of which were found in the Beeches this year; several pairs of Lesser spotted woodpeckers and Noble chafer, a very rare beetle normally found in orchards - frass (poo) found in a tree blown over by Storm Eunice confirming presence as only previously known from one unexpectedly coming to a 'lure' in our office garden

The charity, Plantlife recently visited to check the very rare lichens they transplanted two years ago, from a tree that was dying/dead to suitable host trees nearby. Most were still in place and still alive, though have not yet moved off the transplanted bark. The bottom of Mendelssohn's slope seems to be a hot spot for lichens with several rare ones present.

Survey work coming up includes:

Supporting a crab apple project, funded by City of London central grants programme, to help clarify the differences between true crab apples and domesticated apples (those from discarded apple cores for example) using morphological and genetic characters with volunteers to do this.

Air quality monitoring funded by a grant from Slough Power Station. Which we to use it for ammonia and NO2 monitoring and looking at the area where the lichens are found to see if this is perhaps particularly 'clean' area?

And we are also working with Thames Water to look at the impact of sewage pollution on the Nile stream, looking at the potential impact on invertebrates, mosses & liverworts.

## **5. Site protection**

As reported previously, the local planning authority is required to protect Burnham Beeches SAC from harmful impacts of development locally via a range of methods. One includes collecting payments from developers adding new dwellings between 500m and 5.6km from the Beeches to be used for mitigation against the detrimental impacts of extra visitors. This money is now being collected by Bucks Council and has started to be used for agreed projects. The first of this is to look at visitor impacts in the Beeches to see if there are any trigger levels in terms of numbers of visitors and their impact on soils, trees, other vegetation, birds etc. We will also be recruiting an additional Ranger funded by developer contributions who will be out and about talking to visitors and trying to help them to minimise any negative impacts of their visits

We continue to work with Slough BC and Natural England to find a suitable long term solution to mitigating the impact of development within 5.6km of the Beeches that falls within the Slough BC boundary. We are poised to receive developer contributions from Slough Borough Council, one funding the air quality work (mentioned above) the other for a 5 year ranger post, which we hope to appoint soon.

## **6. Young & Old pollards and wood pasture**

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 to create ancient trees for the future. New pollards were also created as part of wood pasture restoration works.

67 of the ancient pollard trees were worked on, or around, in 2021/22. 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 the younger pollards, created in the last 25 years, have time to develop the valuable habitat 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](http://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/donateBBtrees)

Ongoing wood pasture restoration work continued in two locations around the Main Common and just north of Lord Mayors Drive. The aim of this partially grant funded work is to join up isolated patches of existing wood pasture ensuring this important habitat is as robust as possible and is better connected across the SAC.

## **7. Ponds**

We have been monitoring a leak in the dam wall of Middle Pond for some time. Last year investigation works were undertaken to assess the leak and the overall condition of the pond embankment. In addition to

the leak, there was a large lump of concrete, several tonnes in weight on the downstream side of the dam, completely undercut by the stream and in danger of falling off.

In February and March this year these significant problems were addressed. The leak was repaired, and the outflow replaced with a purpose-made structure designed to reduce erosion. It is inevitable that such works look a little stark at first and, due to the special nature of the Beeches, we are unable to plant and re-seed so the areas will be allowed to recover naturally.

We were fortunate that the Burnham Beeches charity secured funding for this work from a separate fund within the City of London, so it was carried out at no cost to visitors of the site.

#### **8. Livestock grazing at Burnham Beeches**

The use of invisible fencing continued in 2021/22 with over 75% of the Beeches grazed by cows and ponies. The agreed vision for the site, as expressed in the management plan, continues to be that as much of the remaining un-grazed area as is practical will also be grazed in future.

#### **9. Events and volunteers**

Events and volunteers restarted during this year and good to see local community, school and Ranger led events walks and activities happening again.

Volunteers provided over 4500 hours of support each year at Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common. This included practical support of habitat and site management work, livestock lookering, litter picking as well as helping at events – we have a never-ending list of jobs!

The Eco-volunteers have quantified the amount of deadwood we have (standing dead trees and fallen), looked at the amount of browsing pressure on trees and woody plants, quantified the paths in different habitats in the Beeches as well as helping with annual monitoring, particularly of plants.

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. Celebrating History**

The Hillforts project 'Beacons of the Past' returned to the Beeches this year, after a covid enforced absence, to continue investigations and celebration of the Iron Age Hillfort at the Beeches called Seven Ways Plain. In October 2021 a two-week dig discovered what we hope will be the first datable remains to give us a date of final occupation for the Hillfort – we await that result! A public dig was also held in April 2022 along with an Iron Age themed event day. Both of these were public events and well attended. The project is due to finish this year and final projects will involve improved interpretation of the Hillfort for visitors.

#### **11. Forthcoming projects**

With the repair of the Middle Pond embankment it is now possible to look at further pond restoration as identified in the current management plan and how this can be achieved. We hope to carry out some dredging to remove silt and excess vegetation and to aid this process a silt survey was undertaken at both Middle and Top ponds in April. The information this provides, along with other information and advice, will be used to guide works over, we hope, the next few years.

The Beeches Grazing project will continue to use invisible fences in 2022 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. 2022 will hopefully see the impact of the mitigation strategy on site with delivery of various mitigation projects and employment of two additional mitigation rangers.

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

## **Burnham Beeches Rotary**

The COVID-19 pandemic has continued to be a challenge during last year. However, we have worked through it and have had an active and successful year. We recommenced face to face meetings at Burnham Park Hall in August 2021, where we meet at 8.00 pm on the second and fourth Wednesday of the month. President Keith Greenough has officiated throughout the year and Michael Adigun, a resident of Farnham Common, will be taking over on 1st July. Come and join us!

We have made great strides in making our Club more accessible and attractive for prospective new members. Our new approach appears to be working as our membership is up to 43 from 40 last year.

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 and Burnham Grammar Interact Club
- Distributing 'Dictionaries for Life' to local schools, with support from Farnham Common Library
- Hosting the Rotary Young Writer and Young Photographer competitions
- Raising over £12,500 for Children in Need working with local schools
- Providing hands-on assistance and financial support for Burnham Care & Share Food Distribution Project
- With financial support from the Helping Hand team at Buckinghamshire Council, sourcing, packaging, and delivering over 170 Xmas food parcels to needy families. We worked with Burnham Care & Share, Farnham Common Junior/Infants and St Mary's Schools
- Donating £1000 to South Bucks Riding for the Disabled
- Constructing an Outdoor Learning Space at Farnham Common Junior School
- Working with local schools to promote the avoidance of single use plastics
- Working with local schools and community groups to stage litter picking events
- Helping Burnham Health Promotion Trust run their 'Marathon Challenge' event in September
- Staging our annual Burnham Beeches Virtual Charity Run which encourages families, including the dog, to participate together in healthy exercise
- Organising and helping at Xmas events including the very successful Carols on the Dell event at the Farnham Common Orchard

We have been able to stage several community events. A particular success was the Farnham Common Orchard Day which we organised working with Farnham Common Parish Council. This was a well-attended event with lots of fun and entertainment, including Morris dancers. Burnham Beeches Rotary were instrumental in creating the community Orchard 10 years ago. We also staged 'Almost the Donkey Derby' at the Burnham Village Fete in July 2021 and are busy planning our Donkey Derby event in Burnham Park which takes place on 28th May this year.

We also recently donated £1500 to the Shelterbox Ukraine Crisis Appeal. Shelterbox have close links with Rotary and work with Rotarians in Ukraine to distribute the aid.

We have an active Social Media presence and have worked with the Farnhams magazine to keep the local community informed about our activities.

**Keith Greenough**  
**President**





## **Royal British Legion Farnham Branch**

From its inception in 1923/4, this branch has steadily grown and the effect of World War II gave a real impetus to its activities. As the successive decades rolled by, the style of the branch underwent a series of changes: the ex-servicemen hitherto the backbone of the RBL retired and were replaced by non-military volunteers; the crippling injuries were mercifully reduced; the camaraderie of those involved in conflicts lost its importance and the arrival of electronic communications meant that face-to-face activities became harder to organize.

In spite of these challenges, this branch became preeminent in the '80s and '90s winning cups and certificates for its fund-raising activities being cited at the best branch without a club in the Eastern region of the RBL over 20 times.

In the last few years, more changes occurred. The catchment of the Branch expanded and now embraces: Hedgeley; Stoke Poges; Wexham; Farnham Common; Farnham Royal and East Burnham. The organisation of the RBL became [in common with many other national bodies] more centralized with the links between those helping and those in need becoming increasingly tenuous.

Buckinghamshire has 36 RBL branches; some flourishing, some in dire straits and their future is in doubt. In 2018, this was the situation Farnham Branch was in; with the loss of some key committee members and others disillusioned by the changes imposed, there was a proposal to disband the branch. Only the good performance in the year's Poppy Appeal along with some resolute members' determination to save the branch gave some hope.

As of last April, we now have a new Chair, new Secretary and a better coordinated committee. The Poppy Appeal in 2021 raised about £23,000 and we are actively recruiting new members to restore some of the community spirit that suffered over the pandemic. One intention is to spread our Organisation activities around the parishes we embrace – using better contacts and a higher profile of both what we do and how we help those in need, whilst maintaining the necessary confidentiality for recipients.

We are committed to restoring some of the tarnished memorials in the area, as a visible sign of our role in supporting former military personnel in our area. Often, what we do is fronted by other charities but the RBL has a unique standing in the country as the foremost group dedicated to 'Remembering the Fallen' as well as supporting those in hard times. Lost limbs are fewer; shattered minds and ailments of old age have become increasingly the focus for us and our communications will need to be enhanced to use some of the Social Media techniques to being of best use without compromising our integrity.

Through all our efforts, the National Arboretum is maintained as another focus of remembrance and we look to work more closely with our local authorities – not just in November but throughout the year – as restoring the flag poles illustrates.

**Peter Henry**  
**Hon Secretary**



## **The Farnhams & Hedgerley Community Church**

As we've emerged from the various lockdowns of the past couple of years, lots has changed for us at the Community Church!

Before the pandemic, all of our activities took place in person. Now, each week sees a mixture of in person, Zoom or hybrid meetings and activities happen within the life of the church and across the local community.

One of the main changes that has taken place is that our Sunday church services have moved location from Farnham Common Infant School to Farnham Common Village Hall. We now meet in the main hall at the village hall most Sundays from 10:45am (with refreshments from 10:15am) through to around, or just after, midday. Anyone is welcome to join us on Sundays, regardless of what they currently believe about God or what their past church experience might be. So, whether you are searching and asking questions, new to the area and looking for a church or just passing through, we would love to meet you!

Our desire as a church is to encounter the living God so that we can better serve and engage with the local community around us, playing our part in helping to rebuild lives, restore hope and renew all things. To this end, perhaps the most significant development that has taken place in the life of the church over the last year has been the launch of the Family Hub, back in September 2021. This runs as a weekly drop-in café style session every Friday during school term time from 10:30am till 12:30pm at the village hall in Farnham Common. Each session not only provides space for parents to connect and toddlers to play (with a focused singing time just for them), it also provides an opportunity for a wider cross-section of people from the community, of different backgrounds and generations to drop in for coffee, cake and a chat.

In addition, each session serves as another point in the village – albeit only once a week – where contributions for the local foodbanks (organised by Pam Naish from Farnham Common Community Library) can be dropped off. Every 6 weeks or so, there is also an opportunity to swap wooden or plastic toys or children's books as a way of encouraging people to be more eco-friendly. This aspect of the sessions came about following a successful Eco-Friendly Fair that we held as a church at the Brian Jubb Hall back at the start of September, promoting environmentally friendly goods and practices ... all part of what we see as our responsibility as Christians to care for God's earth.

Over its 8-to-9-month lifespan, the Family Hub has really taken off, with close to 40 adults and 30 children now attending most weeks. This includes a regular core of 10 to 15 older people, with many of those who come along enjoying the cross-generational feel of each morning. Hospitality and hope are very much at the centre of this initiative, and we have seen this play out in how the Hub has helped to address loneliness and social isolation for young and old alike, especially after all of the lockdowns of 2020 and the first half of 2021.

Although we don't have our own building as a church, during the pandemic we moved into a room at the library and Colin our pastor can be contacted there, or, of course, over the phone on 07736 063502 or via email at [colingault@fhcc.org.uk](mailto:colingault@fhcc.org.uk).

**Colin Gault**  
**Pastor**

## **Farnham Common Sports Club**

Following the ending of Covid restrictions the Club has had a good year, our membership has grown to over 700 playing and social members plus over 300 parents who are given social membership due to their child's sporting activities. The Sports Club continues to be an important resource in the community.

### **Rugby**

Senior Rugby has suffered from the pandemic, all junior Rugby clubs have found that playing numbers have dropped. The Drifters were entered into a competitive league that proved too strong, so the sensible decision was made to withdraw and play friendlies for the second half of the 2021/22 season. Adult Touch Rugby is on Wednesday nights. Contact Chris for details [chrisdaps@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:chrisdaps@hotmail.co.uk). Mini and Junior Rugby continues to thrive with nearly 200 boys and girls attending training.

### **Cricket**

We remain hopeful that cricket membership will remain at a good level this year following a successful season in 2021. Junior membership has increased dramatically, and we will be running the same number of junior age groups this season.

Our Colts Manager Scott Wilcox was recognised for his efforts being named Junior Coordinator of the Year by Bucks Cricket Board and we now have several U14-U16s coming through into the adult sides. We have resolved the outstanding issue of a third XI pitch for the coming season having reached an agreement with Frieth CC, but we continue to seek a more local alternative for coming years.

In the past 12 months, we have added a new square roller, new covers and a new roll-on cage net, thanks in part to grant funding, all of which add value to our offer to members. We have also received funding to replace the ball stop netting at the One Pin end of the ground which was badly damaged during Storm Eunice.

For the coming season our first XI will play in Level 4 of the Thames Valley League for the first time in 10 years with the second XI in Level 6 and third XI in Level 9. The Commoners Sunday team also mean that provide a full range of adult cricket to suit a range of abilities and accommodate young players trying to learn the game.

Following the runners-up prizes for our U15s, U13s and U11s last year, we will enter six teams in the Bucks Junior Leagues this season, with a further two in the 'long-format' matches (35 overs) during the summer holidays.

### **Squash**

Another interesting year for the squash section with the changing COVID situation. Overall, we have got through it and membership levels have stayed consistent. The aim for the coming year is to try to rebuild the leagues and get more social activities.

### Juniors

The squash junior section is still on a rebuild post covid. Introducing new juniors to the sport has been the aim. Starting a new group for 4-5 year olds has been a hit. Numbers for all the juniors attending coaching has maintained at around 50 players.

We ran our annual Club Champs in January with most if not all juniors taking part.

Winners were U13 - Oscar Munt. U16 - Amrit Samara. U19 - Will Fricker

We have had many represent the club this season at the Bucks events as well as representing the county at various age categories.

All in all, we are looking confident moving forwards that the junior section will keep on growing!

### Senior Team

The men's team had a fantastic season! 11 wins out of 16 matches, and a 3rd place finish. From memory, the highest the club has finished in recent history. A great team effort.

Some outstanding performances throughout the season from everyone, notably Will Fricker. 5 matches, 4 wins and very convincing at that. The match he lost was the longest match anyone has played this season!

Matt Hibbert had a fantastic season too, taking a win percentage of almost 80%. Consistency was his key week in week out! Oli Varco also stepped up, winning 3 out of 3 matches at number 1 seed.

### **Farnham Common Tennis Club**

We have at last had an uninterrupted season of tennis. The courts have been busier than ever before, and club nights have been flourishing even in the cold winter months. We introduced singles ladders which proved very popular and will be run again together with doubles ladders this season.

We fielded three men's teams and one lady's team and two medley teams. Alas, our men's results were very disappointing and on occasions it was difficult to get a team out. My thanks go to Paul Morgan who gallantly managed the first two men's teams but with little success. The third team managed a solitary win. The result is that we will only field two men's teams in the forthcoming season which will be captained by Andy Davidson. The lady's team fared a little better. The team had a slow start losing their first three matches but then came back strongly to win their last three matches. The Medley teams also struggled in their matches winning only one match. We had one of the largest entries for our club championships for many years. For the first time we also held plate competitions. We had a splendid finals day, warm and sunny, witnessed by a large number of spectators who enjoyed not just the tennis but also the tea and cakes and some the beer! The men's singles was a good tussle with Simon White defeating Paul Passey in two closely contested sets, which had to be settled by a Championship tie break. Victoria Spooner won both the Ladies singles defeating Maggie Southerden in the singles and the Ladies doubles, in which Maggie and Victoria defeated Gill Wilson and Gill Prout. The mixed title was subsequently won by Ffibi and Luke who defeated the Coulls in another second set tie break.

Farnham Common Tennis Club's junior coaching and adult coaching programmes are thriving despite the Covid 19 situation. A lot of work went into ensuring the continuity of a structured coaching programme at the club which falls in line with the ever-changing LTA and Government guidelines. During the winter of 2021/22 we welcomed Dan Sullivan to our coaching Team. In particular, Dan ran a very successful coaching session for the ladies on Tuesday evenings during January and February.

### **Lacrosse Report**

Mixed training is continuing Mondays from 6.30 to 8/8.30;

We are slowly growing numbers with several new men coming each week, in addition to several new women. We have held a friendly game/mini tournament at the club already and will hold another very shortly and are working for more friendlies in the next couple of months.

We will be entering a mixed team into the league structure this season and hope that men's and ladies' teams will follow in due course.

Our uniforms have been ordered and are being printed. They should be on the way to us shortly and look amazing. . .can't wait to show them off at some point!

### **Quiz Team annual report**

The most successful team in the history of the club returned to its triumphant ways by winning the Chiltern Quiz League and The Chiltern League Cup.

Our squad was strengthened by the addition of a new player Anne Hegarty who added strength to our squad of Eric Harris, Alan Morgan, Nicola Morgan and Keith Nickless who captained the team.

Richard Cowan was a magisterial question master and enjoys the reputation as being one of the best in the league.

We hosted the end of season presentation evening when 40 people spent an enjoyable evening at the club with a great meal supplied by Jackie.

We are always looking for new additions for the team or even a second team and would welcome any enquiries from club members who are welcome to contact Keith Nickless on 07745 299726

**Richard Thomas**  
**Chairman**

## **Farnham Common Open Gardens**

Farnham Common Open Gardens is on Sunday 26th June from 1-5pm.

We have 8 gardens opening this year. Most of the gardens are in walking distance of each other giving visitors plenty of time to see them all.

Tickets are £6 for entry to all gardens and are on sale now. Tickets must be purchased in advanced from the library or from me.

We raised over £2000 last year for the Farnham Common Community Library. This year's proceeds will be split between two charities, Farnham Common Community Library and Thames Hospice.

Tea and refreshments as well as a plant sale and raffle will be available in some of the gardens this year.

I shall have a plant sale in my front garden about two weeks before the event.

More information will be available on the library website, Facebook page and Farnham Common Open Gardens Facebook page.

For further information contact me on [marshallpat@hotmail.com](mailto:marshallpat@hotmail.com).

**Pat Marshall**  
**Organiser**