

# Fenny Compton Parish Council

## Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting Of Fenny Compton Parish Council Held at Fenny Compton Village Hall, Fenny Compton on Monday 15<sup>th</sup> April 2024 At 7.00pm

**PRESENT:** Parish Councillors: Jon Dutton in the Chair, Emma Briscoe, Samantha Parkes, Martin Birch, Roly Whear and David Johnson

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Parish Clerk Lydia Cox, District Councillors Natalie Gist and Nigel Rock and three parishioners

### **2024\_04\_PM\_01: Apologies**

Apologies were received from and Councillor Chris Kettle (County Council) and were **accepted**

### **2023\_04\_PM\_02: Acceptance of Minutes of Previous Meeting**

The Minutes of the Parish meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2023 were approved at the Ordinary meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> May 2023

### **2024\_04\_PM\_03: Parish Council Chairman's Report**

The Parish Council spends about £25,000 a year; most of this goes on maintaining the facilities in the village, including cutting the grass and repairing streetlights.

A key area of focus for us this year has been getting on top of the state of our village facilities including the sports pavilion, play equipment and bowls club. The village hall is maintained by a separate group of trustees who you will hear from later. Our facilities have been here a long time, and were approaching end of life, so we have been talking to the users of those facilities and developing options to put them on a sustainable footing for the future. The result of this work has been decisions to replace the sports pavilion and play equipment, and investing a moderate amount in the existing bowls club house to address the outstanding issues and bring it up to standard.

We were already due to receive a moderate amount of funding from the Compton Locks development, and we have been fortunate to have secured significant additional funding from the [Stratford District Council Community Infrastructure Levy]. Together these will give us enough to replace the facilities at the sports field. The sports pavilion was condemned as unsafe and has already been demolished. We will continue to engage with the existing users to make sure that what we provide will be appropriate for their immediate requirements. We will do our best to futureproof the new facilities working within the budget that we have.

We have responded to a similar number of planning applications to last year, at about 20. The most significant of these was the application for 12 self-build houses on land adjacent to Thompsons Field. The finalised Neighbourhood Development Plan was the key reason that we were able to successfully get this application rejected, against the recommendation of the district council planning team, who wanted to approve it. The application has gone to appeal, however, so we will have to wait and see whether that is successful.

Flooding remains a worry for many but we are grateful for the work of Aqueous in pushing forward the latest project to improve flood defence measures in the village, more on that shortly.

Traffic and speeding are also a concern. We have tried and tried to get a Speedwatch group up and running but this hasn't happened due to a lack of interest by the relevant people in the police. We understand that as part of the Compton Locks development the footpath will be widened and the speed limit will be reviewed downwards on the road between the village and the A423 but it remains unclear when this will actually happen.

Construction is well underway at the development and we understand that approximately 25 houses are now occupied, with a high proportion of those being people from the village. We are aware of the issues with water on the road next to the site, this is being investigated by the county council and we understand that work to resolve the situation should be delivered soon.

I want to end by saying a sincere thank you to all the councillors who fit in a lot of work between meetings, balancing this with work and home life and everything else, for which I am very grateful. And final thanks have to go to our Clerk

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Lydia who does a sterling job in keeping us organised and compliant with our ever-increasing list of obligations.

Question from parishioner:

What are the parish council providing for young teenagers in the village? Within the new play area there will be a seating area/ shelter. It was also commented that we have a very active scout group within the village. It was asked whether there could be a youth club in the village hall – this would be for volunteers to come forward to run.

### **2024\_04\_PM\_04: Annual Accounts of Fenny Compton Parish Council for 2023/24**

For the year 2023/24, the Parish Council received income of £30.4k. £25k precept, £3.8k VAT Reclaim, with the remainder being bank interest, cemetery income and wayleave payments

Expenditure for the year was £27k. This is significantly lower than prior year as we had one-off costs last year due to upgrading the streetlighting stock to LED. The significant items of spend being £2.6k street lighting (which is a significant reduction from prior year), £8.5k grass cutting and general village maintenance, £6k Clerks salary and £1k on defibrillator upgrades

The Parish Council made two donations to village groups in the year. £200 to support the Coronation party and £500 to The Colts

Year End Reserves were £33k

The Parish Council was able to reduce the precept requested for the following financial year due to the expected lower cost of street lighting going forwards. Budget has been set aside for further work at the bowling club, sports pavilion and play area upgrade

### **2024\_04\_PM\_05: To receive reports from Local Organisations**

(i) Aqueous:

The following report was given by Alan Payne:

There have been two objectives of the group, firstly to secure investment to reduce the risk of flooding to properties and to improve maintenance of the existing infrastructure.

For many years Aqueous has been putting forward the case for greater investment to improve flood protection for the village. It was successful in 2022 in securing £800k Environment Agency under management of WCC. The most cost beneficial scheme was for individual property protection. Installation has been slow but we are now nearing completion for those householders who took up the offer.

Of 50 properties originally identified as at risk and had additional survey work carried to determine options. As a consequence, a number dropped out and in Jan 2023 27 properties were taken forward to the design stage when householders were required to sign legal agreements prior to installation. At this point a further 8 dropped out leaving 19 properties.

12 of these have been completed and at final sign-off stage. This includes the Doctors Surgery.

There have been some delays with the remaining properties, all of which are listed buildings, mostly due to design issues timber doors and listed building requirements. However, the most recent pre-app liaison from the Conservation Officer at Stratford District Council and the door manufacturer has shown a route forwards for the majority of these properties. Once details finalised, WCC will be submitting listed building consent applications and can then progress with procurement/manufacture once granted.

On maintenance work there has been some progress in Memorial Road. It has long been suspected that there are historic problems with the surface water drainage system and after further investigation WCC have confirmed a series

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of problems which will be rectified in the current financial year.

The Ridgeway - there is a proposal being drawn up by WCC which should progress also this year as required by the original planning consent. Unfortunately, it can't be combined with removing the pumping station due to differences in levels.

Station Road/Compton Locks - As this situation has deteriorated in the last 12 months it is now on the urgent list for resolution. Any works need to be done before the footpath upgrade.

General maintenance of the watercourses has been undertaken by a team of volunteers. This has greatly improved the rate at which the storm water can flow through the village to reduce the flooding risk. There is clear evidence of the benefits this has brought during the very wet start to 2024 where there has been no flooding on the usual highway locations. This is essential work and anyone interested in helping please speak to us afterwards.

### (ii) Bowls Club:

The following report was given by Alan Payne:

The 2023 season proved to be another successful year for the club. Membership has maintained steady at around 25.

The finished third in the Kineton District League where we compete with 14 other clubs around South Warks & North Gloucestershire. This is very creditable finish for one of the smallest clubs in the league. We operate an inclusive policy whereby every member who wants to play league matches will be selected.

We also had success in external competitions; Aiden Maries winning the u25 SWBA, KDL pairs - Rob M & Andy Prickett Cotton Cup, singles champions of champions cup won by Derek Maries. The club was also runners up in the Joe Edkins Cup where they lost narrowly to Welford in a very entertaining match.

We held our usual internal competitions the season and hosted an open day event on Big Bowls weekend in May which is a co-ordinated countrywide event organised by Bowls England to gain new members and promote the sport.

The club runs on tight budget and members do a majority of the maintenance work ourselves. Last year this included repainting the club house, relaying the ditch on one side of the green and rebuilding the path which had become uneven and a hazard.

The club house itself is over 70 years old and in need of some urgent maintenance. The building is owned by the PC and we will be working together this year to develop plan for improvements in 2025 to access and cladding.

We are always looking for new members so if you are interested in having a go, please speak to me afterwards or just call into one of Friday night social bowls which will commence when the season starts at the end of April

### (iii) Village Hall Committee:

The following report was sent by Susanne Brand:

- Village Hall bookings are still slightly down compared to the pre-covid period and we had to implement some changes in regard to some booking fees. However, our finances are still solid at the moment, and this allowed us to finally get the hall and the entrance area freshly decorated. We also still use a cleaner (who comes when it is deemed necessary) and have asked Mick Jones to look after the outside area of the Village Hall, including cleaning the gutters and doing other odd jobs (like painting the wooden fence) when needed while other odd jobs are done by Keith Hicks
- However, there is a bit of a problem with the cinema. Attendance numbers vary and we sometimes do not have enough customers to break even. We have been looking into ways to increase the numbers even giving away free entry vouchers to new residents in the Compton Locks development and to other new residents but this has not yet paid off

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Chair May 2024

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- Another problem is the number of residents participating in the Village Hall Lottery. Some have died, others have moved away, and recruiting new members turned out to be difficult. We therefore decided to change the scheme to make it easier to recruit people to join
- The big news, however, was to learn about the role the Village Hall played in the Horizon scandal. This led to people driving past the hall to take pictures, national and international TV teams showing up to film the hall and asking for interviews and – by the time this meeting is taking place – BBC Breakfast will have used the venue for a live broadcast. Whether this will generate more income is doubtful but it will certainly put the village and the village hall into the spotlight, albeit for a short period

### (iv) Allotments:

The following report was given by Parish Councillor Roly Whear:

The association continues to prosper with most of the plots currently being let. The main challenge has been the weather with a very variable season last year and wet start to this meaning many people have not been able to get started. Hopefully some drier weather is on the way and drainage may well be the next project

### (v) Footpath Group:

The following report was read on behalf of Brian Peers:

We have had another busy and successful year.

Amalgamation with Avon Dassett - We amalgamated with the informal Avon Dassett group which will give them the benefits of being associated to WCC and also ensures that any work done in Avon Dassett is logged on the WCC problem reporting system. By joining with Avon Dassett, we have increased our workload but we have also gained several new volunteers

Condition of Footpaths and Bridleways - The state of the paths in Fenny Compton and Avon Dassett is generally very good. None are obstructed and there are very few repair jobs that need immediate attention

Funding - WCC is now only capable of reimbursing us for essential spending, their materials budget for last year was zero. However, new sources of funding are now available such as a Section 106 payment from new housing development in Fenny Compton and from charitable donations from The Yew Tree pub in Avon Dassett and also The Merrie Lion. I don't expect to be asking Fenny Compton PC for funding this year

Volunteers - We now have 13 regular and enthusiastic volunteers; membership has steadily increased over the years. One of our volunteers is on Avon Dassett PC and he keeps them informed of our activities

Landowners - We continue to enjoy a good working relationship with the landowners

Years 2024-25 - Our work is ongoing and we will continue to operate as we do now

### (vi) The WI

The following report was read on behalf of Jenny Keeley:

The WI has been in Fenny Compton for over 100 years. Our Centenary garden was planted to celebrate this Owing to the very wet weather we have all endured over recent months we have not been able to maintain it as we would have liked, but some progress has been made recently which we plan to continue

Over the years, members have enjoyed each other's company sharing what WI had to offer- friendship, fun and laughter. During Covid we became even stronger and now have a deeper bond with each other that we would like to share

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We meet on the 2nd Wednesday of each month at 7.30 in the Village Hall and this year we have enjoyed some excellent talks, the latest one being about the Millennium Way. Not only does it offer 100-mile trek, starting on the middle of England(Meriden) but over 80 shorter, circular walks each starting / ending at a pub!

We have also had hands on meetings e.g. flower arranging, more recreational meetings when we have been challenged by quizzes , games or simply watching a film together, wine and nibbles included!

Every week we gather for a Craft meeting at a members house , nattering whilst we knit hats, gloves and scarves for the homeless or tiny garments and blankets for premature babies

We also spend time with other WI groups - Bishops Itchington, Kineton and Boddington enjoying a meal together, a talk or some fun

If an advertised talk appeals to any of our neighbours ( men as well as women) you are most welcome to join us for a small sum to help cover our costs

(vii) Fenny Compton Colts and Fenny Compton Scout Group did not send reports

### **2024\_04\_PM\_06: Report from Trustees of Charities**

The following report was read on behalf of Keith Distin:

Fenny Compton Relief in Need - Reverend Nicki Chatterton left the parishes in May leaving me as the only trustee. Mrs Lesley Bosman was persuaded to join as a trustee in June. The Parish Council may appoint two trustees if they so wish, and would therefore like to ask if anyone would be prepared to become a trustee

There were no applications for support and therefore no payments made during the last year. The charity holds 67 investment units with the CCLA's COIF Charities investment fund. These were valued at £1329.62 at 31st December 2023. The realised dividends have been paid into the charity's bank. The account balance at 31st December 2023 was £731.44

### **2024\_04\_PM\_07: District Councillor and County Councillor Reports**

The following report was given by District Councillor Nigel Rock:

It has been a year since we were elected as your District Councillors. It has been a very busy first year for us, and here are some of the highlights:

- May 2023
  - Local elections on 4 May 2023
  - Administration formally handed over on 24 May 2023
- June 2023
  - Stratford on Avon District Council opens the process for applications for Infrastructure Projects through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) and Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) and invites eligible local organisations to submit expressions of interest for the second round of funding allocation
- July 2023
  - Tom Heap, BBC Countryfile presenter, attends Napton's Ecofair along with Nigel and Susan Juned
  - Cabinet agrees to re-introduce a Concessionary Parking Permit for state pension aged District residents
- August 2023
  - Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Spending Round for Stratford-on-Avon District is now open for applications for funding towards infrastructure projects and improvements
- September 2023
  - Cabinet agrees to support the designation of Lench Meadows as a Local Nature Reserve and be

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Chair May 2024

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managed for wildlife for the long-term future

- October 2023
  - Planning Advisory Service Review takes place with the aim of improving the Council's planning service
  - Concessionary parking permit scheme for residents of state pension age goes live
  - Cabinet agrees the final list of projects to be funded by the Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) and the Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF). 37 community projects across the District are granted funding
- November 2023
  - Cabinet approves setting up a Community Climate Change Fund. An opportunity for parish councils, as well as properly constituted community and charity groups to apply for grant funding for green initiatives in their local community
  - Podback recycling scheme is launched
- December 2023
  - Full Council adopts a new Council Plan for 2023 – 2027. We aim to be recognised as a leader for supporting the health and wellbeing of our residents, protecting our environment, delivering sustainability, and innovation. The Council Plan may be found on the District Council's website by putting 'Council Plan' into the search box
- January 2024
  - The new administration's budget proposals come out for public consultation
  - Cabinet approves new medical and community facilities in Upper Lighthorne
  - Community Climate Change Fund goes live
  - Cabinet agrees to allocate Community Infrastructure Levy funds to five projects across the District. Fenny Compton Sports Pavilion and Playground project in our ward is one of the successful bids
- February 2024
  - The Council's budget is set with no cuts to services. This includes funds for the Rural Crime Advisers and funds to support the UBUS service. Funds have also been set aside for the District Council to investigate the use of waste vegetable oil in their refuse truck fleet, which can cut carbon emissions by up to ninety per cent
  - Stratford on Avon District Council's Rural Crime Advisers win a Neighbourhood Policing Award from Warwickshire Police
  - Stratford-on-Avon District Council expands online access to its meetings. All public meetings can be viewed as Council Meeting Webcasts on the District Council's website or as recordings on the YouTube channel
- March 2024
  - Corporate Peer Challenge takes place with the aim of improving the Council's work
  - Residents in Stratford-on-Avon District are still some of the best recyclers in England, as the District Council reaches 5th in the top ten Councils for reuse, recycling and composting

Please remember that we are here as your District Councillors. If there is anything that you think we might be able to help with, please do get in touch.

### **2024\_04\_PM\_08: Other Matters Raised by an Elector of the Parish**

Resident asked whether there was any chance that the trees next to the playing field can be trimmed back. Chair responded that we have a Tree Policy in place (on the website) and that the council's obligation is predominately safety – the tree survey hasn't suggested any further work needed on the trees at the play area

**The meeting closed at 19:45**