

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING OF FOWLMERE PARISH COUNCIL
HELD AT ST MARY'S CHURCH DOROTHY PLUCK ROOM ON TUESDAY 7TH MAY 2013, AT 7:30 PM**

PRESENT: Cllr D Roberts – Chairman, Cllr T Bearpark, Cllr J Bottrill, Cllr P Flynn, Cllr E O'Regan, Cllr J Peacock, Cllr M Sunderland, Cllr N Webb, Cllr L Wragg
Mrs J Wright – Parish Council Clerk

IN ATTENDANCE Councillor T Stone – Cambridge County Council, Mrs H Mepham – Headteacher, Fowlmere School, Mr M Bates, Chair of the Fowlmere Village Hall Management Committee, Cllr Peter Topping, Mr R Pile, Mr P Barker, Ms M Barker, Mrs L Allen, Mrs S Tokley, Ms S Gilpin, Mr P Rowley, Mr T Neal, Mr R Dring, Mrs C Crawshaw, Mrs R Scrimshaw, Mr J Scrimshaw

1. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies necessary

2. MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING OF 1ST MAY 2012

The minutes were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chairman. Cllr Flynn proposed and Cllr Bottrill seconded and all agreed they are a true and accurate record.

3. REPORT OF THE CHAIRMAN OF THE PARISH COUNCIL – Cllr Roberts

All meetings of Fowlmere Parish Council are open to the public, minutes are taken and displayed on both the village notice board and on its web page I will therefore try to keep this report short as hopefully our residents are already well versed in the councils activities during the year.

The parish council undertakes its business not only through the monthly meeting but also by way of planning, finance and burial board meetings.

Although the later two are generally at prescribed and dated times the planning comm. (because of time frames that must be adhered to) meets on a very much as and when required basis.

The PC have for many years been at the forefront of best practise by always having an open session for residents participation. In the case where planning applications are being considered interested parties are invited to express their views. Ultimately we make our recommendations to SCDC planners by way of a majority vote after taking into account any representations made, planning considerations, effect on neighbouring properties, conservation area consideration where they apply and the agreed policies of SCDC under the Local Development Framework for the village.

Village Hall

This year the PC has not contributed directly on any particular project but is pleased to see the continuing commitment of residents to the facility and thanks the Village Hall Comm. for the regular updates they supply.

We remain open to any further representations that might be made regarding improvement or refurbishment that might be required for this important village facility.

Postal service

Likewise the PC having played an active roll in the attempts to once again get its postal service reinstated are pleased to hear that this is getting nearer to being a reality thanks to the generous attitude of St Mary's Church who have been beavering away over many months to get this into place..

The PC is very open to helping the PCC should further assistance be required

The Village Pubs

Fowlmere PC have over the last year continued to press Green King Breweries as to its intentions regarding the Queens Head.

We had previously supported the planning applications for improvement and refurbishment.

Inspite of continued claims by the owners that they were committed to reopening, we find that the business has been put up for sale on the open market. At his stage there is nothing further that the PC can do.

Unfortunately here in Fowlmere we are not as fortunate as our close neighbouring village of Thriplow where villagers have taken the bull by the horns and resolved its pub problem by purchasing it themselves as was also the case with its village shop.

We have also seen the demise of the Chequers where inspite of its once excellent reputation and over the years much local and wider support there has been a falling off of trade which has resulted in closure.

Hopefully as it is now for sale we will see it purchased and once again returned to its past glory.

The one good story in the public house saga is of course the re-opening of the Swan .

Having been visited by all the members of Fowlmere PC in recent days we are pleased to say that we intend to shortly hold our somewhat delayed annual dining event on the premises. We wish the new owners well in their endeavours.

Cemetery work grass cutting and jobs in the village.

Our well maintained and attractive cemetery continues to be used and loved by both our own villagers as well as at times being the chosen resting place of others from a wider area .

The grave charges continue to be kept affordable for that local need as well as more expensive for those not living in the catchment area of the parish.

Thanks go to our local maintenance firm of Hardys who provide an excellent service in both the cemetery and all the grassed areas of the village.

Thanks also to Chris Wall and David Salmons who we call upon to do many of the repair jobs required over the year and who provide a truly professional service often at short notice .

There has been some minor damage to the chapel roof which has been noted and is in hand for repair.

Daffodils planted a few years ago by members of the parish council are now thriving and have looked particularly colourful if a little late this spring.

Where more recent graves have been noted as needing soil removed to make them more attractive and in keeping with others the PC contacted the undertakers concerned and the problem has been duly resolved by them.

The Butts

We are pleased to see it used and enjoyed by so many villagers especially the children of Fowlmere Primary School for whom it is their play area.

We have this year provided extra funding to the school towards the cost of maintenance.

An insurgence by members of the travelling community made a need to further limit easy vehicle access .

This has been done by way of extra fencing and a new access gate.

The PC as well as the school retain keys to the gate so there should be no problems regarding controlled and arranged access .

Indeed the Butts is already booked for a number of events which will once again provide pleasurable activities for one and all .

The year also saw the formal planting of a tree on the Butts by former PC chairman Mr Michael Bates in appreciation of his hard work in various guises in Fowlmere over many years.

Seniorlink

Senior Link continues to be funded by the parish council who are very aware of the importance that villagers give in regard to it supporting the service.

Anyone living in the parish wishing to know more about Senior link has only to contact our clerk who will be able to explain what it entails and how they can join the scheme.

Fowlmere Friendship Club.

The Christmas lunch has once again been paid for from PC funds and we know this is much enjoyed and appreciated by all who attend the event.

It is very good to see that the club has made strenuous efforts to make membership available to a wider number of residents , we wish it continued growth and success.

Royal British Legion

The PC contributes and supports the poppy appeal by way of the purchase of the annual wreath as well as by attending the wreath laying and service of remembrance .

The floral displays provided by local residents over the year on the war memorial are I'm sure appreciated by many in the village.

The First World War grave in our cemetery is regularly checked as to its condition and any needs reported to the War Graves Commission for rectification.

Bus Services.

We are grateful for all the work undertaken by Cllr Tim Stone regarding concerns as to the future of the bus service to the village .

Tim has kept the PC very up to date with his efforts regarding what is rightly seen as a worrying time for local services such as this presently subsidised by higher tier of local government and we hope that a solution can be found to provide those without private transport access to travel

Protected Verges.

Many will I'm sure know and appreciate the two lengths of wild flower verges that we have here in the parish .

These are from Appleacre going out to the A505 and the Mill Road from the cemetery to the RSPB reserve.

Having now taken on board the care and cost of maintaining these verges so as to help them continue to thrive the PC looks forward to seeing them once again in bloom as the summer progresses.

Trees

The PC also recently had a major job of work done cutting back a large area of overgrowing trees and hedges in Ryecroft Lane . It was good to get positive feed back from residents who were pleased to see this work had been undertaken.

Village trees under the care of the PC have also recently been surveyed and work will continue to be undertaken when required on these

The Thriplow Triangle Project

At long last it appears that work on the affordable housing scheme is about to commence.

Since the parish council first started 6 or more years back to try to find a suitable site close to the village envelope that could be developed under the SCDC exception site policy and criteria the aim has always been to provide homes for our own residents and their families.

The new houses should made that wish a reality.

Although the scheme has now been changed somewhat by SCDC housing dept and the housing association concerned and will now contain a larger percentage of part buy properties than was originally planned the PC is very hopeful that all the houses will be filled with those in need from within the parish itself .

We would again urge residents who are interested in these properties and who fulfil the required criteria to make absolutely sure that they are on SCDC housing list in order to be considered.

The Queens Jubilee

Although we may not have had the amount of festivities that used to be conducted to celebrate such events it was still heartening to see houses decorated in full bunting and with much flair.

Who can forget the waving Queen or the tea parties and bunting decorated front gardens where residents went to town to enter into the celebrations .

Perhaps when we next have something to celebrate the village can get together early on to organise a good old fashioned and somewhat missed knees up !

Future plans

The PC has recently done a village walkabout looking to find what needs mending, improving or could be brought forward as new ideas

We have come up with a list which includes looking to have more public areas in the village planted in such a way as to add colour and interest throughout the year .

Hanging baskets though very attractive are considered to be somewhat difficult to keep watered and maintained but new beds planted at the right time might be an attractive alternative and a way of brightening up areas.

We would also encourage residents to if at all possible to add to the gaiety of the village by good maintenance of front gardens and where ever possible colourful baskets or containers .

Good tips on such are always available in the village magazine from Fowlmere's own professional gardener and resident Lamorna Thomas who is a fountain of knowledge as to what to plant and grow in our chalky soil conditions.

I would now like to thank my PC colleagues for all their dedication and help throughout the year .

This willing band of village volunteers give much time and consideration to their task of protecting , enhancing and maintaining the village environment and I hope that residents join with me in appreciating their commitment to the village which is year long.

My special thanks go to the Fowlmere Parish Clerk Mrs Jackie Wright.

Without Jackie the PC simply could not function .

Always helpful cheerful and importantly absolutely on top of the job Jackie is utterly professional at all times whilst remaining calm in all weathers whatever is thrown at her , not I'm sure always an easy task.

Thank you so much Jackie for all the help and support you have given me as chairman I am very grateful for all you do which makes the job of chairman so much easier to do.

PS After Tim Stone has spoken I will thank him for all his work over the years and present him with his gift and card from the PC on behalf of the village.

4. COUNTY COUNCIL REPORT – Cllr T Stone

Cllr Roberts expressed her thanks and gratitude to Cllr Stone for all his effort throughout his time as County Councillor. He will be sorely missed. She also welcomed the incoming County Councillor, Mr Peter Topping.

The Budget

Last year I reported how the cut in government funding has affected the County's ability to spend money on anything but essentials. A further £32 million has to be pared from the County's budget this year, so things are not going to get any easier.

It's worth remembering that most people gain no direct benefit from the areas where the County spends most money. Of a total non-schools budget of £490 million, £195 million goes on adult social care, which is mostly devoted to looking after people who can't look after themselves. £125 million goes on Children and Young People who need to be looked after for whatever reason. In contrast to that only £26 million of revenue is spent on looking after our roads, cycleways and pavements. That's one of the reasons there are no scheduled roadworks for Fowlmere in the first six months of this financial year. You can see details of the county's budget in the booklet which the District Council has delivered to all houses.

Superfast Broadband

Cambridgeshire has now given a contract to BT to introduce superfast broadband to 90% of premises across Cambridgeshire by 2015. Part of the process was for people to register an interest in superfast broadband. Thank you to all those who did, either unprompted or because we knocked on their doors. At present BT is working on how best to deliver fibre cable within Cambridgeshire. The Connecting Cambridgeshire people appreciate that people want to know when their neighbourhood is likely to see some results. BT should present their report shortly so that decisions can be taken and everyone told. Hertfordshire is not so far advanced as Cambridgeshire, so Royston exchange may not be improved as quickly as, for example, Sawston. But the whole of Cambridgeshire is due for faster speeds by the end of 2015, so Fowlmere hasn't been forgotten.

Streetlighting

This is being replaced in the County, with many teething problems but these are being ironed out. PC's will get about 8 weeks notice for any work but with only 25 days to respond which is not helpful to PC's as they only meet once per month.

Achievements

We have had a few modest achievements in the past year, not least sorting out what could have been a rather difficult stand-off about the stiles on a footpath. There have been goings and comings about the footway from the Thriplow Triangle development but that seems to have been sorted for now.

Mike Cooper still delivers excellent service re roads within the County.

Still to do

There is still much to do. It seems to be taking an inordinate amount of time to have the eyesore tip removed at Dottrell Hall. It seems to me that the law is an ass, when common sense says that an offence had been committed on day 1, we still have a month or so before prosecution.

The 31 bus is still scheduled to lose its subsidy at some stage. The county has behaved very badly in not keeping people informed. I have sent a parting email to the Chief Executive complaining that there is a lack of proper co-operation between officers and councillors. As far as I'm concerned, councillors serve the public just as much as officers and there should be better co-ordination of messages. I keep having to catch up with lapses.

Finally the county is planning to spend an undisclosed amount of council taxpayers' money on up-grading the A14 – a road which is the responsibility of the Highways Agency. At the last full council it passed a resolution

to that effect. There are two issues here: first, because a road run by the national government benefits Cambridgeshire should it be part funded by Cambridgeshire? Is this not a precedent for council taxpayers' money being called upon for Addenbrookes? Second, there is an insidious trend creeping in whereby the county borrows money on "nice to have" projects with little or no consideration of how the money is ever to be repaid. Every man, woman and child in the county is already paying nearly £30 a year on the county council's borrowing.

As you will appreciate, now that I have stood down I can revert to being a grumpy old man rather than just a grumpy old councillor.

Cllr Roberts then made a small presentation of thanks on behalf of the village.

5 LOCAL POLICE REPORT – Lindsay Gardiner PCSO

No one was able to attend from the local Police and no report was sent despite one being requested. Cllr Roberts added that three people have been arrested in connection with the recent robberies in Foxton.

6 DISTRICT COUNCIL REPORT – Cllr D Roberts

Cllr Roberts attends many meetings at SCDC and receives a lot of correspondence via e-mail. Cllr Roberts is still on the Planning Committee, which is a good committee which works well, without political influence. The Scrutiny Committee has changed its way of operation, somewhat negatively. The budget is still tight but good news is that Council houses are being built again, as well as Housing Association houses. We keep moving forward and I will try to do my best on your behalf.

7. PARISH COUNCIL PLANNING COMMITTEE – Cllr D Roberts

All details go onto the notice-board and can have as many as 2 meetings a month. The meetings are open, as are all PC meetings. The Cllr's don't necessarily agree with views given but they will always listen. The Cllr's pay heed to Planning Policy, there are few contentious issues within the village - most can usually be recommended for approval. We will try to maintain the quality of living through planning policy.

8. PARISH COUNCIL FINANCE REPORT – Cllr E O'Regan

Good Evening everyone, Once again I am pleased to announce that we achieved our budget goals for the last financial year.

Our largest outgoings as ever includes Grass Cutting, Tree Pruning, General Maintenance and Clerk's salary, and along with the usual village running cost that occur each year, the total cost was more than £17,000.

For this year's precept, we have kept the figure to the same as last year so not to add any extra strain to households within the village, We have not carried out any extra work within the village but have spent our time on ensuring that the normal day to day upkeep of the village has been managed astringently. We are continuing to provide Senior Link personal alarms for the vulnerable residents free of charge.

For 2013 we will be happy to take villagers ideas for any future expenditure towards projects within the village that will enhance even further!, a few ideas from the council members for the next 12 to 18 months is a lit Christmas tree for the centre of the village, also possibly looking at some adult outdoor gym equipment and maybe a skate park area, but we always welcome other ideas from the villagers too.

Fowlmere Parish Council will continue to work hard to ensure that Fowlmere is kept in a good state of repair making it a pleasant place in which to live.

Fowlmere Parish Council Precept Planning:

Fowlmere Parish Council	Actual 2011-2012	Actual 2012-2013	Proposed 2013-2014
Salary	£6,912.00	£7,119.36	£7,333.00
PC Comms	£309.00	£318.27	£328.00
Grass Cutting (Village)	£7,622.00	£7,850.66	£8,086.00
Seniorlink	£1,030.00	£1,060.90	£1,200.00
Street Lighting	£1,648.00	£1,697.44	£1,748.00

Public Areas (CW)	£3,000.00	£3,090.00	£3,183.00
School Grass	£400.00	£412.00	£424.00
Protected verges	£1,100.00	£1,133.00	£1,167.00
Play Equipment	£900.00	£927.00	£500.00
Cemetery Bills	£400.00	£412.00	£424.00
Hire of Halls	£360.00	£370.80	£382.00
Stationery / Postage	£200.00	£206.00	£212.00
Training	£300.00	£309.00	£150.00
Chairs Allowance	£150.00	£154.50	£150.00
Audit / Bank fees	£400.00	£412.00	£424.00
Legal Fees	£500.00	£515.00	£500.00
Insurance	£1,200.00	£1,236.00	£1,273.00
CPALC	£352.00	£362.56	£370.00
P'ground Inspection	£185.00	£190.55	£196.00
Bus Shelter	£500.00	£515.00	£500.00
Donations	£430.00	£442.90	£450.00
PC Laptop	£0.00	£500.00	£100.00
Misc	£1,300.00	£1,190.06	£2,900.00
Village Hall/fund allocn	£2,500.00	£2,575.00	£1,000.00
Total	£31,698.00	£33,000.00	£33,000.00

9. FOWLMERE SCHOOL - Mrs H Mepham, Headteacher

I will start with our continued mission:

'We exist to inspire children to love learning and achieve excellence in all they do within our caring village school'. And our school motto, 'love learning, achieve excellence'.

We continue to serve the Parishes of Fowlmere, Great Chishill, Chrishall Grange and Heydon. Those living out of catchment are from Foxton, Melbourn and Shepreth. The current roll is 108, a slight decrease on last year. The intake for the Reception class in September 2013 is expected to be 12, which will decrease our roll to 103. The demographer predicts a continuous growth with a regular intake of 17, but this is not the reality.

Statutory Assessments are made for all children at the end of Key Stage 1 (children aged 7) and at the end of Key Stage 2 (children aged 11). The results for the academic year 2011/12 showed a slight decrease on the previous year at KS1. Attainment remains close to the National averages in reading, writing and mathematics. It is our continued aim to increase our performance against the national figures.

At KS2, results improved on the previous year in English, but overall were again in line with National averages. Again, our aim is to improve our standards further.

All of the children in Foundation Stage reached the expected level of attainment which looks promising for our mission to drive standards higher.

Over the last year we have substantially raised the standard of IT. We focused funding (both school and fundraising) on providing up to date technology for both staff and pupils. We audited our provision, bought new computers where necessary and set up a rolling programme to ensure a continuous renewal of hardware. Consequently we now have Wifi throughout school. The PTFA helped us to purchase a class set of laptop computers and cameras. The laptops are stored on a trolley and can be moved from class to class as needed. We also purchased an electronic library management system which enables all children to 'swipe' their book loans using a barcode reader. The system enables us to know which books children are reading, which books are most popular, as well as providing the children with search engines, author video clips and much more. Two parents have taken on the management of the system and enable it to run smoothly.

We also developed a new website, which we are very pleased with. There is a site for public view and login areas for pupils, parents and governors. Pupils can interact with their classmates and teacher for homework and school-related matters.

The 2012 Olympic Games played a dominant role in our curriculum last summer. The children researched the history of the Games, the sports and sportsmen and women, both able bodied and paralympians. The values of the Games were close to our own school values, and we were able to use these to exemplify and embed the ethos and behaviours that we hold dear. Our learning culminated in a bumper Sports Day on the Butts, coinciding with National Sports week. The events were inclusive and the children put on dance and singing displays in their opening and closing ceremonies. The events were structured on a carousel system with the children participating in House groups. This enabled parents to follow and watch their children competing. The older children based their annual end of term performance on an Olympic theme, which was enjoyed by many parents, relatives and friends.

Christmas was celebrated and enjoyed through a range of activities. The younger children performed their version of the Nativity, whilst the older children performed musical and spoken items in a concert at the United Reformed Church.

The School Council chose a number of charities to support: Tom's Trust, Save the Children, Children in Need, and Red Nose Day.

One of the successes introduced this year is a transformation to the lunch time system. Previously, children eating school lunch would queue up with a moulded air-line tray to receive their meal in a canteen-style system. In January, after months of planning, we introduced a family service system where the children sit at tables and Year 6 pupils serve the meal to the children at each table. As a result, we have observed better table manners and social behaviour, and children are eating and drinking more with less wastage of food. The Year 6 table leaders and mid-day supervisors and kitchen staff have worked hard to make this such a success. Parents were introduced to the system when mums were invited to share Mothers' Day lunch, and Governors have also monitored the system.

Trips were taken to St Mary's Church, the United Reformed Church, village walks, Burwell House, Linton Zoo, Colne Valley, Sawston Village College and Melbourn Village College for a number of events. The children have taken part in numerous inter-school competitions organised by the School Sports Partnership, and Gifted and Talented teams took part in maths and science events. We have welcomed a range of visitors to school to bring their stories, talents and skills to share with the children. For example, members of the Heydon community came to share their views with the older children about Wind Farms; a builder demonstrated to the younger children about building houses.

Our House system has strengthened with regular House events, both sporting and non-sporting; buddy days and creative days. Each House entered the Bury Lane Farm inter-school scarecrow-making competition. The Eagles House scarecrow won the competition and was duly exhibited in the shop. The children were treated to a strawberry picking session, which were shared with the whole school at the Queen's Jubilee tea party.

We have a whole school reward structure for good behaviour. School Council identify and select three treats each term, which the children can 'vote' for by putting any tokens they collect into the appropriate pot. Behaviour foci such as courtesy, care or respect will be discussed in assemblies and the children are rewarded for demonstrating them. This year the children have enjoyed a dress-up day, a Christmas cooking day, and at the end of last term, a wheels day.

We are working towards achieving the Eco-schools national award, and have set up an eco-team who lead on helping us to protect the environment. The children designed and made eco-mascots, and we chose one to represent Fowlmere school.

We are currently developing garden plots for the four Houses so that they can grow vegetables, fruit and flowers. We are also developing the school garden as a sensory garden for all the children to enjoy. We have benefited from tremendous volunteer help from the Barker family.

The Reception teachers are exploring the concept of Forest Schools, which is run in many Scandinavian countries and is growing in popularity in the UK. The idea is that young children develop awareness of the natural world through regular visits and work in wooded areas and copses. Land art and woodcraft skills are part of the learning. At the moment the nearest we have to this is at the top end of the Butts. We are on the lookout for a small safe wooded area within walking distance of the school which could be visited on a weekly basis.

We are one of few primary schools that still provides voluntarily-run after-school clubs. The clubs are organised by the teachers, parents and community members, and sporting governor bodies. We offer tag rugby, contact rugby, football, netball, fencing and cricket. Non-sport activities include cross-stitch, art & crafts,

games, nature, French, gardening, and choir. Mr Peter Hall provides a termly stamp club. The children take part in inter-school and inter-house competitions. We also benefit from classroom support from parents, grandparents, and members of the community.

Cambridgeshire Music provides piano, flute and violin tuition to a growing number of children.

Our focus for school improvement is on raising attainment in English, Mathematics and Science. In September 2012, a new EYFS curriculum was published and is being used with our Reception aged children. We look forward to receiving the final version of the new National Curriculum for children aged 5-11 years. This is due to be published in Autumn 2013 so that we can plan for its statutory use in September 2014. This will of course be the focus of our work in the next academic year.

We have supported Cambridge University and the University of Bedfordshire by taking on trainee teachers. We currently have two trainees working in school.

We are, however extremely fortunate to benefit from the fund-raising efforts of the PTFA and particularly the hardworking committee. They raise an extraordinary amount to support the children at Fowlmere School. Our next event is the annual Art Exhibition weekend which is this coming weekend. Lois Nolasco is leading her 15th exhibition for Fowlmere school, and we are most grateful to her and her team for the monies they have raised over the years.

The school summer fayre will be on Sunday June 30th on the Butts.

We strive to do our very best for all the children at the school, and it is a privilege for me to be leading Fowlmere school .

Cllr Roberts expressed how grateful we are for such a wonderful school, with committed teachers, who have produced fantastic children. It is the heart and soul of the village.

10. VILLAGE HALL REPORT – by Mr M Bates, Chair of the Fowlmere Village Hall and Recreation Ground Committee

Since the last Annual Parish Meeting in 2012 changes have taken place to the Village Hall Management Committee at the AGM held in October with in particular long serving Jeannie Grisoni standing down from the committee due to increased work commitments. Thanks are extended to Jeannie for her long service and strong support to the committee.

The Hall is used for a series of community activities run by volunteers and for all age groups ranging from Mothers and Toddlers, Brownies for girls, and through to Senior Citizens for the over 65's. In addition there are a number of leisure activity groups ranging from Aerobics to Badminton, to Bowls, to Dance, to Mini Tennis, to Music for Fun, to Rosemary Conley Fitness etc. Groups such as the Women's Section of the Royal British Legion and the Fowlmere and Thriplow Gardening Club hold their regular meetings and there are organised play activities known as Kreepie Krawlies for pre-school children. There are two football clubs based at the hall and using the facilities, Fowlmere Football Club (two teams – first and reserves) and Fowlmere Metals Football Club and it is pleasing to record that cricket is continuing to be played at Fowlmere with a team from Thriplow Cricket Club involving younger players. Zumba has also been introduced on a Friday too! The hall user groups are either community groups or groups run on a more commercial basis. Part of the premises are used by Fowlmere Sports and Social Club which operates seven days weekly.

The Village Hall issues a periodic newsletter distributed to all households giving up to date information about current and forthcoming activities to keep our community aware of what happens.

The hall is run by a Management Committee made up of representatives of user groups and local people elected because of their interest in local community life and keeping the hall and its facilities available for local people. The Committee meets on the first Wednesday of each month to deal with the on-going business with the necessary organisational activities in the meantime carried out by the Elected Officers – Michael Bates – Chair, Vice – Chair currently vacant, Secretary Sylvia Bates, Book-keeper Jane Cryer, with support in the production of the accounts from Chris Neild. Bookings Clerk duties have been handled by the Chair for the present although it is hoped that these will be taken over by another volunteer shortly. Thanks go to the Officers and the Management Committee for their work.

The Committee has a development plan and is working to improve the hall which opened in 1982 and is slowly being modernised. Such work is expensive and requires the financial means to that end, in helping to achieve progress to date grateful thanks go to the Fund Raising Group – Chair, Mandy Thornton, Rachel Collins, Christine Lawrence, Carol Sims, Jane Cryer, Pat Flynn, Liz Williams, Jeannie Grisoni, Kate Stevens and Lamorna Thomas (and their respective partners where involved). Without their sterling work organising the range of interesting and stimulating community activities, such as Farmers' Markets, Jazz Evenings, Ceilidhs, Quiz Nights, Outdoor Theatre Performances, Photographic Exhibitions, Table Top sale and more the hall

would not be in the healthy position it is today. The finances are dealt with on behalf of the Committee by Book-keeper Jane Cryer and Financial adviser Chris Neild who report to the regular meetings. In addition a Jumble Sale was held during the year and thanks go to Maureen and Leslie Thurley and their team of behind the scenes helpers for organising this.

Pursuing the upgrading programme, the hall has been further improved in recent months making the building more attractive, comfortable, environmentally friendly and economical to run. The most recent work was the re-painting of the main hall which looks considerably better. Following the completion of the first phase of replacement of the doors and windows programme, which saw the replacement of doors and windows in the main hall, the utility area, the kitchen and the meeting room together with the main entrance door, further work is necessary to bring the hall more up to date. To that end, the Committee has made a further application to the Big Lottery Fund Awards for All programme seeking the funds to carry out the remaining work. A decision about that application is expected shortly. Should the application be successful, the balance of costs will come from the Hall funds, which is possible due to the general management of the finances by the Committee and in particular our Book-keeper Jane Cryer and the hard work of the Fundraising group. Grateful thanks are extended to all involved in bringing that position about.

The work thus far has eradicated the draughts previously experienced and is reducing the burden of increased utility charges, which was a primary reason for the improvements.

The hall can only continue to function meeting the needs of the local community if it is used by we the local people and there is space available to accommodate more community activities. Existing user groups would welcome newcomers to their activity and anyone wishing to set up a new activity should approach the Chair and temporary Bookings Clerk Michael Bates 01763 208397 to make the booking.

Please Support your Village Hall

Cllr Roberts thanked Mr Bates for the sterling efforts that have turned the Village Hall around and shows what good-minded people can do in the village - it is a great success and an example of the community working together.

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Cllr Flynn reported that a lorry has hit the war memorial and a kerb-stone will need repairing.

Cllr Roberts reiterated that Fowlmere is a good village to live in and thanked all the residents for attending and hoped they will continue to support further meetings.

Everyone was thanked for attending and the meeting closed at 8:40pm.

Clerk to the Parish Council: Mrs J Wright
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