

FINDERN PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk: Mrs Kate Sharpe

Findern Parish Rooms, Lower Green, Findern, Derbyshire DE65 6AS

Tel: 07444 085807

Minutes of the Annual Meeting for the Parish of Findern held on Thursday 22 April 2021 at 7pm via Zoom

Present: Councillors T Brown, G Cooke, M Ratcliffe, R Rose, C Smith and M Woodhouse.

Also present: Mrs K Sharpe (Clerk to the Parish Council) and 9 members of the public.

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were **NOTED** from Councillor B Dosanjh.

2 Approval of Minutes of the previous meeting

The Minutes of the previous Annual Parish Meeting held on 15 April 2019 were approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman of the Parish Council.

3 Chairman's Report on behalf of the Parish Council

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and gave the following report for the year ending 31 March 2021.

Good evening and welcome everyone. The last Parish meeting took place in April 2019 in Findern Village Hall. Sadly, due the Coronavirus pandemic it was cancelled last year. In April 2020 our Chairman and long serving councillor Mary Goodall retired, but also since the last Annual Parish Meeting, Councillors Suzi and Richard Brook, James and Amanda Hibbert and the Clerk Heather Bevan resigned. This is when I became Chairman and Councillor Ratcliffe became Vice- Chairman. Kate Sharpe joined us as Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer and Councillors Dosanjh and Cooke joined us in September. This present Council has returned unopposed for a further four years. We have three vacancies for Councillors which will be co-opted in the next few months.

Even though this year has been much quieter than normal with us having to cancel the VE/VJ Day celebrations, the Easter Egg hunt, the Summer Play Scheme, the Remembrance Day commemorations and the Christmas events, we have still achieved a lot.

- Firstly, I'd like to thank all the villagers who have supported their friends and neighbours during the last twelve months, also the volunteers led by Penny Adcock who freely gave their time to do shopping, prescription collections and many other things. We showed what a wonderful Village Findern is and new friendships have been made.

- We have supported the Food Bank at the village shop and would like to thank Raj for all of his help and ongoing support at this difficult time.

- We also funded two replacement LED lights at All Saints Church and contributed financially with keeping the lights on over Winter.

- Woodgrow Horticulture Ltd. very generously donated a magnificent Christmas tree for our Village Green. Though we couldn't do our normal event, I think you will agree it looked amazing.
- We also replaced the planter at the Derby bus stop on Doles Lane, also the kerb has been raised and road markings put in place by Highways at Derbyshire County Council.
- The King George V Pump track was completed in June. This was made possible because we were awarded £10,000 from the South Derbyshire Community Grant and £10,000 from a Derbyshire County Council Action Grant. This has been a huge success being used by locals and visitors alike. We have also planted whips in the gaps in the hedges and installed temporary fences. We were also successful in getting the agency responsible involved in refurbishing the steps leading to Baxter's Way and we also installed caution signs at the top and bottom of the steps. At the beginning of May, we shall see the start of phase two, the installation of the adult outdoor gym equipment.
- As a village we were successful in getting planning permission refused on the Common Piece Lane land.
- Resurfacing work was completed by the canal on Footpath 12 between Nadee and Mercia Marina.
- Donations were given to the Air Ambulance and the South Derbyshire CVS Winter Giving campaign.
- James Maguire of Easy Growing Landscapes donated and fitted a bench at Airport Way on Porters Lane. Also, he is refreshing the village planters twice a year and watering them through the summer. He also takes care of the Cemetery Garden of Remembrance. The Council would like to thank him and look forward to continuing to work with him in the coming year.
- Also, Acuba Landscapes do a wonderful job of maintaining our open green spaces, so many thanks to them for keeping our historic village green looking so marvellous.
- We have installed dog waste bins at Highfields and continue to look forward to working with the Green Belt (who are responsible for the maintenance of the green space on the development) in the future to improve their services.
- A grit bin has been situated on Hillside at the top of Porters Lane footpath.
- Our Lengthsman, Dave Tidy, deserves a mention, he keeps our village litter free and is our eagle-eyed reporter, letting us know when grit bins need filling, park equipment needs mending and when fly tipping has occurred and anything else that catches his eye.
- I'd like to take this opportunity to thank Councillors Martyn Ford and Andrew Macpherson for their support over the last year as well as thanking my fellow Parish Councillors for all of their hard work and dedication.
- Lastly, on behalf of Findern Parish Council I would like to thank our wonderful Clerk, Kate Sharpe. She keeps us all in line, making sure we do everything by the book. I don't know what we would do without her. It has been a pleasure to have her support and long may it continue.

4 Reports from Local Groups / Organisations in the Community

To receive reports on the activities of Local Groups / Organisations for the Year Ending 31 March 2021. This gave an opportunity for groups and organisations active in the village to give an update to residents on their activities over the previous year.

District Council & County Councillors

There were no District or County Councillors present, and there had been no report submitted to the meeting. (It should be noted that this meeting took place during the 6 week 'Purdah' period before the 6 May 2021 County and PCC elections.)

All Saints Church

The report was read out by the Chairman of the Parish Council, Councillor Tammy Brown on behalf of Peter Maddock, of the Parochial Church Council of All Saints Church.

For a lengthy part of last year, we were closed due to covid guideline restrictions and then again from 17th January like many other Churches in the Diocese.

Thankfully, we were able to reopen on the 4th April for our normal Sunday Services.

We are open each Sunday from 10am with the exception of a 5-week month where we alternate with St Michael's Church Willington. You are most welcome to attend any of our Services.

Sadly, our Messy Church has closed, we hope it will be able to reopen in the future.

We look forward to the road map lifting restrictions as the year progresses, enabling weddings, baptisms and funerals to take place again albeit in smaller numbers.

We have some really good news to share.

After years of fundraising and other means, we are at last looking forward to the long-awaited installation of a Disabled Toilet and Kitchenette to take place commencing sometime in May.

We thank all those who have helped in any way to make this come to fruition and hope this much needed facility will lead into the Community being able to use the building in other ways.

Findern Footpaths and Conservation Group

Joan Tidy, secretary to the Findern Footpaths and Conservation Group read the report on behalf of the group.

1) COTES CLOSE

THE CIRCLE

A couple of years ago, I asked the village if they had any self-set trees they would like to give to the group. We received about 25 small whips some sycamore and some oak. We grew them on and last autumn planted them out in the circle some 21 in total. The circle is slowly being encroached by Blackthorn and Bramble and it is planned to remedy this during the Autumn/Winter 2021/2022.

THE NEW PLANTATION

In the Autumn of 2020, we cleared an area of Bramble on the opposite side of the path to the bird hide area and planted it up with silver birch. These whips were self-sets that one of our members rescued before the farmers field was cultivated. He rescued about 20 whips and we added to these 4 Hazel and 4 Alder Buckthorn given to us by Rosliston Forestry Centre. There are also 3 plum trees that again were rescued and gifted to the group some 3 years ago. It is hoped to plant some Holly whips in the Autumn to complete the plantation so this will be a total of 40 whips. The ongoing task with this plantation will be the removal of the existing Bramble roots as they appear. The human problem we have with any whip planted area is owners throwing sticks between the whips for their dogs and knocking over the protective spirals.

THE BIRD HIDE AREA

Four years ago, this coming Autumn, Rosliston Forestry Centre gave the group 10 flowering Cherry whips. A few were planted around Cotes Close, but the majority were planted in the area to the left of the path at the second entrance to Cotes Close which is now designated to the bird hide. As these grow 4 Rowan trees were added 2 years ago, these having been donated by a resident (one from each grandchild) and they were present at the planting. At this time the bird hide was constructed by the payback team. At first it was just 2 sides with viewing slots but over the last 2 years these slots have been modified to allow for wheelchair users and children to see through, also a seat has been added and the base slabbed. The area to either side of the bird hide has had a false hedge constructed to allow concealed access. This hide is now used not only by group members but also people outside the group and the village to spend quiet time observing the wildlife. More whips have been planted this year in this area namely Holly, Hazel, Spruce, Crab apple also 50 Hawthorn whips have been planted in front of the false hedge to eventually form a permanent screen. Bird feeding stations have been built in front of the bird hide to encourage a wider variety of our feathered friends and make observation a better experience. It is planned along with the Daffodils planted 3 years ago (donated by a resident) to plant Cotoneaster and Pyracantha and various wildflowers including Foxglove and to sow seed plants suitable for wildlife to help extend and promote the food chain. Also, as part of the food chain we need to encourage more bugs and beetles and as insect hotels may get vandalised, we aim to place wooden tiles around Cotes Close to encourage them. Further down the path towards the underpass on the left hand side we have planted a small Sweet Chestnut tree (donated) to compensate for the large oak damaged in last year's high winds.

FOOTPATH

Over the last 3 years an area of footpath has had limestone chatter laid to help with safer access during wet conditions. It is hoped to continue this until we have completed all that is required.

Future Work: -

- A roof for the bird hide and a water butt to provide drinking water for wildlife
- Plant flowers and shrubs to extend the length of time pollen is available and provide winter berries
- Manage the encroaching Blackthorn and Brambles which are choking young trees and invading open areas
- Continue to put stone on the footpath
- Dig out Bramble roots in the new plantation and plant Holly and Crab Apple whips in the

Autumn to complete the site

- *The Hawthorn hedge on the boundary with Crow Park Way is ready to be laid in a few places and Ash trees growing through the fence need to be removed*
- *Install 20 bird boxes delayed this year due to lockdown*
- *Mow the paths as required.*

2) CROW PARK WAY BANKS

I joined the group in June 2017 so any reference to previous work only goes back to this date. The banks had had very little attention, they were strimmed once a year in early Autumn by the payback team who also raked off the fallen leaves, these arisings were taken to the Ash plantation in Cotes Close to encourage the establishment of a forest floor to provide food and shelter for over wintering mammals namely mice and hedgehogs. Since we lost the help of the pay back team this has had to stop as it is labour intensive, and labour is what we are short of. In the Autumn of 2020, 600 Crocus bulbs were planted (donated by the children of a deceased member) 200 daffodil bulbs, 200 bluebells and 200 snowdrops. At the second entrance to Cotes Close we planted 50 wood Anemones. Also planted at this time were 8 Holly whips, 2 Hazel and 1 Alder Buckthorn. Clearing the top of each bank was started to get more light to the Hawthorn hedge and some of the trees crowns lifted to enable safer access. We now mow the banks with an Allen scythe purchased by the group or ask a local farmer to flail them if we are short of time or labour.

On-going work on Crow Park Way: -

- *Erect a sign at each end of Crow park way telling the public it is a wildlife area and to respect it as such*
- *It is hoped to sow seeds, plant plugs to increase the availability of pollen and plant shrubs to provide berries for winter feed*
- *Once we can meet onsite, we will formulate a plan for further enhancement of area from the locked gate to the underpass.*

Problems

- *Encroaching Blackthorn*
- *The banks being used for sledging; mountain biking and the odd horse is ridden up the banks*
- *The small gate being propped open allowing access to the village from any escaping farm animal. A sign asking for the gate to be kept closed is required.*

3) WILDLIFE SANCTURY

The idea of a wildlife sanctuary evolved from 2 separate observations. I noticed from June onwards the surrounding fields are bare, cut for hay or later corn crops are harvested leaving the only cover for wildlife in the hedge rows and secondly, I have a friend who is a vet in Mickleover looking for a safe area to re-introduce once sick or injured animals and birds back into the wild. The land to the left of the bottom path in Cardales (on the East side of the meadow) as you walk towards the underpass is ideal as it has no path running through it, a pond is being constructed and there is lots of cover in the form of Brambles, Blackthorn and lots of grass clumps. To develop this area, we need to landscape around the pond which is mostly shallow but deepened at one end to provide a fall-back area for pond life in case of drought. Warning signs are in place at the front and rear of the pond. A second bird hide is to be constructed and Hedgehog boxes located in concealed locations. The area will be planted with

wildflowers and shrubs which attract birds, bees and other wildlife. Frogs are using the pond for their frog spawn. A few Alder Buckthorn whips have been planted at the rear of the pond. A memorial Crab Apple tree was planted about 18 months ago at the front left-hand side as you approach this area, this was donated by Murray's and is used to hang biodegradable messages on during their memory walks. A bench is to be placed next to it in memory of a past member. We need a footpath to enable access to the bird hide this will be discreetly placed to ensure that the area is kept quiet, and wildlife are safe to wander.

On-going works: -

- Landscape pond and surrounding area
- Cut a path
- Install Hedgehog boxes
- Build Bird Hide
- Source a beekeeper to site hives.

Problems

- Dog owners allowing the pond to be used as a dogs swimming pool.

4) CARDALES WILDFLOWER MEADOW

The whips to the left-hand side of the lower path are a mixture of Rowan, Sweet Chestnut and Holly; all but the Holly was donated to the group. The Butterfly bank was constructed using soil given by Mercia Marina at the time of their car park extension. The bank once shaped was covered in limestone chippings and planted up with Birds Foot Trefoil, Wild Strawberry and Scabious. To complete and complement the bank a limestone skirt is being laid around its base. To one end of the bank Alder Buckthorn whips are planted and at the other end Buddleia whips. Down the right-hand side of the meadow the Blackthorn has encroached, this is now being cut back and the roots removed, an 18-inch-wide strip of hedge will be left and this will be cut and laid in the autumn to form a wildlife corridor. Once completed the reclaimed land will be sown with wildflowers and winter feed for the birds. The meadow itself has seen a reduction in its flower population over the years and we are trying to correct this by mowing later to allow the existing flowers to reseed, also we are trying some areas of direct reseeding. A lady has given the group the use of her greenhouse to grow plugs to be planted out in the autumn.

On-going work: -

- Increase the wildflower count
- Mow paths as required
- Complete the Butterfly bank
- Cut and lay the Blackthorn hedge.

Problems: -

- The meadow is being treated by the public as a park and it's not it's a wildflower meadow

Our main thought when selecting a new project for the wildlife area is to provide food for as long as possible, always have access to water and provide a safe environment.

5) FOOTPATHS

During the COVID lockdown members were able to adhere to the restrictions and regularly walk the footpaths and keep stiles and gateways clear of overgrown foliage as part of their daily exercise. Landowner Mr Hicklin replaced a broken board over a wet area on FP10 Rushy Meadow Way and a stile was fixed on FP7 The Gostilles. A broken finger post was repaired at the Willington Road end of FP8 Potlocks Path, and a marker post was replaced halfway up the second field of FP1 Priory Way. Another finger post has been repaired on FP4. Members noted a stretch of barbed wired fence was laying amongst long grass on FP5 Airport Way, photographs were taken and emailed to the footpaths officer at DCC who will look into the matter. A broken stile next to the Tower House on FP3 Little Derby Way has also been reported to the footpaths officer. FP12 is the section of canal towpath between the Nadee and Potlocks Bridge and this has been resurfaced and has proved very popular during the lockdown as indeed have all the footpaths within the village

TRENT AND MERSEY CANAL TOWPATH

The group have adopted the stretch of towpath from Bridge 20 (Hicklin's Bridge) to the Nadee and members regularly walk it and any problems that we can't deal with are reported to the Canal and River Trust. Unfortunately, COVID restrictions have meant we have been unable to carry out our usual tasks such as litter picking, however, as Philip and Julia are from the same household, they have worked tirelessly in keeping the marked path through Jubilee Wood, which runs adjacent to the towpath, clear for walkers. They have noted that an extension is needed to the boardwalk over a very wet area so as soon as restrictions are lifted a site meeting will be arranged with the Canal and River Trust to get this in place as soon as possible. On the opposite side of the canal, Bridleway 11 runs from Hicklin's Bridge to round the back of the Severn Trent Treatment Works. The stretch between Hicklin's Bridge and under the railway bridge has at times become impassable due to flooding. This has been reported to DCC who have inspected it after a dry spell and found it passable. Photographs have been taken and sent to DCC showing the seriousness of the situation after prolonged periods of heavy rain as people have apparently been seen crossing the railway line as the flood water is too deep to walk through.

Findern Historical Society

A member of Findern Historical Society, Lynette Nash read the report on behalf of the group.

We have been unable to meet for the past year but are anxious to get back to the monthly meetings. In the past we have met on the 3rd Monday of the month in the Methodist chapel at 7.30pm. There has been a varied programme of speakers and usually a summer outing to a place of historical interest. As soon as restrictions are lifted on venues and people being able to meet together in big groups the Historical Society will be back in action.

Findern and Friends Women's Institute

President of the Findern and Friends Women's Institute, Sue Miller read the report on behalf of the group.

Findern and Friends WI meet at 7.30 pm in the Village Hall on the third Tuesday of each month. Sadly, after last year's February meeting, the Covid 19 outbreak prevented us from gathering there.

Our committee very much wanted to keep in touch with members, so, in May, we utilised the services of Zoom to continue the monthly meetings. Fortunately, most of the speakers booked were willing to give their talks via Zoom and, more importantly, most of the members were happy to support the activities we arranged. Titles included 'From Farm to Fiction': 'Patchwork and Pilfering' and 'The Tale of Two Crosses'. Quizzes and craft activities have also been organised.

Whilst not being able to hold our monthly meetings in the Village Hall, we have tried to keep all members informed and supported. Committee members were allocated a small group who were contacted individually by phone or by a group Zoom chat. A monthly Book Club also continues via Zoom.

We are fortunate that most of our members can access the internet, enabling details of events and news from the Federation and from WI headquarters to be sent by email to members. We now also have a Facebook page that gives updates of our activities to a wider audience.

Pre Covid, we were a very sociable group with meals, afternoon teas, theatre trips and other outings being arranged for members. The restrictions necessitated by the pandemic meant that we only managed a socially distanced picnic in August and a Village Treasure Hunt and cream tea in September. To compensate in a small way, at Christmas and Easter, members received treat-filled 'Goody Bags'.

Unfortunately, our community activities in the Village have also been curtailed but we are hoping to take part in the Great British Spring Clean next month.

We are very much hoping that the approaching summer months will allow us to resume some of our social activities and that we will be able to return to the Village Hall before the end of the year.

Although our membership is open to ladies, gentlemen can attend our meetings as guests and our annual fundraising concerts are open to all. WI Zoom meetings are advertised on our Facebook page and all local residents are welcome to join.

If interested contact: Sue Miller (President) – Email: suemiller.wi@hotmail.co.uk Tel: 07940 587771 or Jan Ashford (Secretary) – Email: janashford@tiscali.co.uk Tel: 07847 911125.

Findern Methodist Chapel

Lynette Nash read the report on behalf of the group.

In common with many other places open to the public the Chapel has been little used over the past 12 months. All the usual activities have been "on hold" as the building could only be used for a short time last summer for services on a Sunday. This involved adhering to a huge number of Covid restrictions, carrying out a stringent risk assessment and operating a booking system because of the limited numbers. We had a small celebration at Easter this year but we were in lockdown for Easter 2020 and Christmas.

However, we have kept in touch with chapel users by telephone, zoom, or cards and newsletters, especially with those unable to come on a Sunday, or fearful of mixing. Our lunch club members received a gift box at Christmas, an afternoon tea in a bag, and an Easter message, but all are desperate to start the monthly meals again. It is useful to have means of keeping in touch but we are praying for a time when we can open our doors to everyone and enjoy unsociable distancing!

John Allsop Foundation

The Chairman of the Parish Council, Councillor Tammy Brown read the report on behalf of the foundation.

The John Allsop Foundation is a registered charity that gives grants and awards to young people under the age of 25 and to educational organisations such as schools, pre-schools, youth clubs, guides, etc.

To apply for a grant, you must be a resident of Findern, Willington, or Stenson and Twyford villages or be involved in the running of an organisation in these villages.

Currently we have a GCSE award that benefits students gaining four or more C Grade or equivalent qualifications. This is set at £100. Our Book and Equipment grant is aimed at students at university or college, but does not fund A level study. We can help with the relevant books and equipment for your courses. We have a music grant that can assist with the purchase of musical instruments.

Organisations can apply in writing explaining how they would spend a grant and list the cost of the items needed. All grants and awards are at the discretion of the Trustees, and are dependent upon the income of the Foundation.

For further information and application forms, please contact: Helen Lakin, 13 Chevin Avenue, Mickleover, Derby, DE3 9GW or email: helenlakin@hotmail.com

Grants and awards are not means tested so if you think you could apply, please do so without fear of disclosing personal information.

We want to support young people and are keen for more people to know about our wonderful charity.

Village Hall

Rosemary Rose, Chairman of the Village Hall Trustees read the report on behalf of the Village Hall Trustees.

Findern Village Hall is a CIO (charity run by unpaid volunteer trustees)

Since February last year due to the Coronavirus pandemic, the hall has not operated as normal, and all classes have been cancelled by Government order since then.

During the first lockdown only Findern Foodbank used the hall for food storage and organisation by two volunteers using the premises on strict guidelines.

Findern preschool returned to the hall when restrictions were lifted in September and have been the only group allowed to use the hall since then.

There have been no village Fete or other fundraising activities, so this has meant that the finances of the hall have taken a massive reduction in revenue.

The hall was chosen to receive a Lottery grant last April for the refurbishment of the kitchen, which was completed in August.

Unfortunately, the heating system had to be replaced, the front wall repaired and the shed roof

removed and replaced, therefore expenditure has been high on required maintenance.

Bookings have been on hold until the Government guidance relaxed lockdown restrictions and groups are expected to begin to slowly return over the next few months.

Health & Safety guidance and adherence has been strict and each group returning has to produce an individual risk assessment before they can return to the hall.

We look forward to the hall once more being used daily with a variety of things of interest for our local community.

Going forward we hope to expand the range of activities available and are actively looking for more things of interest for people to participate in.

The hall is also hoping that more people will become involved in the running of the hall and the Fete committee and welcomes anyone interested to get in touch for details or a chat.

5 Matters raised by electors

There were no matters raised by electors.

Meeting closed at 8.10pm