

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 at Findern Methodist Church, Lower Green, Findern on Thursday 25 April 2024 at 6.30pm

Present: Councillors T Brown, H Hettmann, Y Hughes, M Ratcliffe and C Smith.

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

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were **NOTED** from Councillors S Holmes for Parish Council and Councillor M Ford for District and County Councils.

2 APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the previous Annual Parish Meeting held on 11 May 2023 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 of the Parish Council welcomed everyone to the meeting and gave the following report for the year ending 31 March 2024.

Good evening and welcome to the 2024 Annual meeting of the parish of Findern.

There have been some changes to the format of the Parish Council with Adam Pratt resigning in October 2023. As a result of this we were joined by Councillor Yasmin Hughes.

Before I begin to list all that we have achieved this year, I have some people to thank.

Thank you to Vice Chair Mike Ratcliffe for once again personally supporting me in my role this year, and of course we would both like to thank all our fellow Councillors for all their hard work and efforts during the last twelve months.

I cannot stress hard enough our thanks to the Clerk, Kate Sharpe. What we do would not be achievable without her hard work in the background and her wealth of knowledge but more importantly her professionalism.

As a whole Council our thanks go to Dave Tidy, the Findern Lengthsman and Richard Yates, the Highfields Warden. They both do the necessary job of litter picking but very often they are the first to see issues or problems that may have arisen and then can report them to our Clerk to be dealt with by the appropriate authorities.

Our thanks go to the District and County Councillors for the Findern and Willington Wards, Martyn Ford and Ian Hudson for their ongoing support and prompt response to dealing with local issues.

Huge thanks go to the Findern Footpaths group for all their hard work in the past year in Cotes Close, Cardales Meadow, Stanhope Wood, Stanhope Hole and all the other green spaces they look after. They should be immensely proud of all they have achieved, and the Parish Council is pleased to be a small part of this.

Now I will move on to what we have achieved from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024: -

We held a remarkably successful Easter Egg hunt and Easter Bonnet competition at Highfields.

A 'Get together for the King' was held on the Village Green.

A selection of books related to the Kings Coronation were gifted to Findern Primary School and Highfields Spencer Academy for their libraries. Also, each child was presented with a bookmark to commemorate the Kings Coronation.

A litter bin was sited at the Rykneld Road bus stop.

We held our 'Party in the Park' at Hillside Playing fields, which despite the weather was a roaring success.

Four South Derbyshire District Council led summer activity sessions were held, two at Hillside Playing Fields and two at Highfields.

Two posts were installed in preparation, and two existing lamp posts used for the positioning of the Vehicle Activated signage, this was sited initially on Heath Lane and then moved to Burton Road. Another unit has been purchased so each unit can be moved over two sites at each end of the Village.

We participated in the Harvest Festival Celebrations by decorating a window with provisions.

The Village Green was once again decorated for Remembrance Sunday, special thanks go to Councillor Woodhouse for erecting the silhouettes. In addition, we thank Ian and Caroline from the Common Piece Lane stables for their kind donation of a purple poppy, a symbol to remember all the animals that lost their lives in wars. We were pleased to participate in a service held by both churches which took place in All Saints Church due to poor weather.

A larger litter bin was installed at the bend on Common Piece Lane; our thanks go to Heather Hall for making this more visible to traffic with reflective tape.

With a donation from Greenbelt Group Ltd., we provided a Christmas tree for Highfields; this was situated on the green space off Tutbury Avenue. The Christmas lights switch on was very well attended and this continued with a Christmas Fayre organized by the school with refreshments provided by the Parish Council.

We have supported All Saints Church regarding the Church's exterior lighting.

We held the Findern Village Christmas lights switch on at The Green, followed by refreshments, children's entertainment and Santas grotto in the Village Hall. We would once again like to thank Councillor Martin Woodhouse for his generous donation of a tree and erecting it for us.

We were pleased to be involved in and support, the Festive Findern Event again this year we contributed £675 towards entertainment, first aid and the room hire of the Village Hall and thanks to the Village Hall Trustees for allowing us use of the hall at short notice.

We began our Neighbourhood Plan process with a series of drop-in sessions. This has progressed to a core Steering Group who along with Helen Metcalfe, our planning consultant, are working towards completing this document.

We have also supported several charities this year;

- *South Derbyshire Winter Giving Campaign- £500*
- *Derbys., Leicester, and Rutland Air Ambulance- £500*
- *Royal British Legion- £300*
- *All Saints Church Harvest Festival- £100 of food for the Padley Centre*
- *Findern Warm Welcome-£500*

That is the end of my report, but I would like to take this opportunity to thank the members of our community, of which there are too many to mention by name, for all you do on a day-to-day basis for our parish. All of us at Findern Parish Council look forward to what the next year may bring.

REPORTS FROM LOCAL GROUPS / ORGANISATIONS IN THE COMMUNITY

To receive reports on the activities of Local Groups / Organisations for the Year Ending 31 March 2024. 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

District and County Councillor, Ian Hudson was not present at the meeting; however, he had submitted the following report, which was read by the Chairman of the Parish Council, Councillor T Brown: -

There had been a few changes at SDDC over the last year, Rob Pearson is now the SDDC Council leader, Justin Ives arrived as Chief Executive and Tracy Bingham as the new S151 Officer (Finance).

A new Council Plan was approved by Full Council in February 2024. This plan sets the Council priorities and goals, everybody can see on the SDDC website, it will last until 2028.

Work continues on the emerging Local Plan; Councillor Hudson assured the parish that he will keep Findern updated on this important document.

He looked forward to working with the Council and the residents of Findern in the year ahead.

District and County Councillor, Martyn Ford was not present at the meeting; however, he had submitted the following report, which was read by the Chairman of the Parish Council, Councillor T Brown: -

South Derbyshire District Council.

Please thank all the local groups for their work in the community and to remind them I do have a pot of money that can allocated to local community groups dependant on certain conditions.

Budget challenges remain across the County Council, especially in Adult Care and Children's Services because of escalating cost pressures. Much work is taking place to bring these costs under control. Pot hole repairs are a constant problem, the persistent poor weather isn't helping get on top of the highway network. Remember that we have elections this May for the new Mayor of the East Midlands Combined County Authority, a new role which will bring more devolved powers to the region and millions of pounds of Government money to spend on transport, housing, economic regeneration, plus skills and training as a starter for 10! We also have to opportunity to elect the Police & Crime Commissioner, an important role that sets out policing strategy across the county.

Findern Historical Society

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

The Historical Society's year runs from September to September and this year we've had many new members and visitors so the average attendance is about 25. There has been a good variety of speakers who talk for about 1 hour and afterwards, during tea and coffee time, people are able to share information with the speaker or just chat with friends.

Last December we invited Stephen Flinders who came with a box of weird and wonderful things. He passed them round for groups to try and identify. Not many suggestions were correct but caused a lot of laughter.

In February the present owner of one half of Willow Farm on Doles Lane talked about all the people (not all farmers) who had lived there. He had done hours of research and illustrated his talk with photographs and newspaper cuttings, and explained the story of the ghost that some have seen, or felt, there.

The talk in March was far from local, Captain Scott and the Race to the South Pole. Again, Rodney Paul had done a huge amount of research into many different aspects of the expedition, brought to life with photographs and pictures from the time. We even had a biscuit that the men survived on, baked by the speaker, to the original recipe, and it made us realise how they suffered to survive with poor food and appalling conditions.

Our final meeting this year in July will be a guided tour of Elvaston Castle in the morning, seeing parts not usually open to the public. In the afternoon there will be an opportunity to see inside Elvaston church where there will be things of interest explained to us.

Next year's programme promises a good mix of local interest and more general historical topics. We still meet here in chapel on the third Monday of each month at 7.30pm, and whether you are a member or a visitor it should be an enjoyable evening.

Findern Village Hall

The report was read out by the Chairman of the Parish Council, Councillor Tammy Brown on behalf of Melanie Eckersley, Chair of the Trustees of Findern Village Hall.

The Village Hall currently has a group of Trustees, Chairperson and Treasurer, with secretarial roles being shared between the Trustees. With the employment of two paid staff, caretaker and cleaner, the treasurer role has increased with the need to use the Government payroll system.

The Village Hall website (findernvillagehall.org) has developed over the last year and now provides a wealth of information about the hall and allows visitors to contact us via the website. All events and regular groups are shown on the site and an additional Community Page has been included to signpost visitors to local community groups.

The Warm Space has continued to be a success. The well attended event has become a regular meeting each week. The Warm Space offers refreshments to the community as well as a social environment. We expect the Warm Space to continue for the foreseeable future.

Weekly bookings have continued to increase, and steps have been taken to closely manage weekend and evening bookings.

The glass fusion workshop evenings have proved a success, with great attendance and repeated events. Being able to offer a variety of low cost, community events which can also be educational is part of our constitution and something we try very hard to achieve.

The local community health team have a regular daytime booking for the Jamie Taylor room for health therapies, and are now extending to the main hall for similar services.

Royal British Legion regularly use the small meeting room for office work.

A local prayer group meet regularly at the hall at the weekend.

We have been able to assemble a good Fete Planning Committee for the 2024 Village Fete. Planning is fully underway, and a huge amount has already gone into the planning.

Car park signage has been improved to politely discourage car parking at the hall unless using the facilities as this is a frequent problem.

Findern Hall offers very good facilities at reasonable rates, and people who use it often remark what a lovely hall it is and that they didn't realise how nice it was inside or they had never really noticed it. We want that to change and are all trying our best to encourage greater involvement and use of the hall for the local community, many of whom raised funds for many years to get this wonderful hall.

Findern Footpaths Group

Steve Tiso, as a representative of the group said a few words about Joan Tidy, a leading member of the group who had recently passed away; she would be greatly missed by all.

Sue Anderson from the Findern Footpaths and Conservation Group read the report on behalf of the group.

The group presents its annual report of activities undertaken in the year to March 2024:

Footpaths Maintenance

The group continues to maintain the network of public footpaths around the village, strimming, mowing and carrying out minor repairs to styles and fences. We continue to earn £385 per annum for this work.

New Members

We have welcomed new members during the year who have brought their skills, enthusiasm and extra hands to our work parties. We have been able to continue links with South Derbyshire CVS who supplied teams of corporate volunteers aiding our efforts - Price Waterhouse accountants and Alstom Engineering.

Projects undertaken in a busy year:

As well as a full programme of sowing wildflower seeds and plants, we have also:

- Stanhope Hole

With the help of a fully funded grant from East Midlands Airport, and donations of plants, soils, and other resources our long-held ambition of having an Education Centre within our conservation areas is underway. In conjunction with the Forge Nursery, we have planned an Eco Garden around the central hub of an external classroom – former shipping container – and are creating a safe area for children to learn about their environment, the Norfolk 4 Course Rotation System, growing crops to eat, and local wildlife. We hope to open in early summer 2024.

- Cardales Meadow and Wildlife Sanctuary

A French drain was put in the lowest part of the meadow to reduce flooding, and with volunteers making bee hotels and donations of boxes for baby hedgehogs the wildlife cared for. A dead hedge of cleared blackthorn surrounds our upgraded butterfly bank, and we look forward to seeing a greater diversity of species as the weather warms. Three benches have been sited in the meadow, and chippings laid on the bottom path. We are unable to interest local farmers in cutting the meadow and taking the hay. We may need to pay to have it baled, and will donate the hay to Linjoy Wildlife Sanctuary and Rescue.

- Cote Close

We were successful in obtaining a grant from the Derbyshire Environmental Trust to enable us to buy power tools that were not dependent on fossil fuels. We have worked in Cote Close to bring the brambles and blackthorn under control, clearing swathes around the birch plantation, and bird feeding area. Muddy paths have had layers of new chippings laid, and the older well-rotted chippings have been added as mulch for the new hedgerows planted last year.

- Stanhope Wood and Wetlands

Under guidance from the Forestry Commission, and with a grant from the Parish Council, the site had 60 trees thinned out so enabling under planting of different species to provide food sources for our wildlife. Water butts have been placed to aid watering of our thirsty new hedgerow.

Part of the Community

We put up a gazebo on Crow Park Way on The Big Help Out Day as part of the Coronation weekend. The weather was not kind to us, but we were able to talk to the hardy dog walkers and explain our work and ambitions. We also had a stall outside the Village Hall at the Summer Fayre with exhibitions of our projects and raised some funds on plant sales.

The group wishes to thank all those who have donated time and money to our projects: FPC for ongoing support, East Midlands Airport, the Derbyshire Environment Trust, Tim Atkinson Tree Services – for the big piles of chippings, the Nadee – for donation of a ride-on mower, Willington Cubs and Scouts, South Derbyshire CVS, Stuart Reeves, and all the lovely and caring individuals.

Findern and Friends Women's Institute

Councillor Chris Smith read out the report on behalf of the President of the Findern and Friends Women's Institute, Mary Bucknell.

Findern and Friends WI have enjoyed another busy year of events, meeting regularly in the Village Hall and enjoying its facilities on the second Tuesday of each month. Our membership has remained at around 34 people and we are delighted that several newcomers to Findern have joined the WI here.

Every year the membership decides on a special charity for which we work to provide funds through our monthly sales table, raffles coffee mornings and additional activities. Last year our chosen charity was Revive - a charity helping struggling households at crisis point in Oakwood, Spondon and Chaddesden. In February we presented the charity with a cheque for £300.00 and additionally we collected assorted Chocolate Eggs for distribution to youngsters at Easter.

Our chosen charity this year is the Tremor Association - for research into this debilitating condition and to help current sufferers - and our fund-raising continues!

During our monthly meetings we have enjoyed a broad spectrum of activities and talks and in February this year we celebrated our 20th anniversary of the re-formation of Findern and Friends WI with cake and fizz.

We are proud winners of the DFWI Royal Scavenger Hunt Competition which had members both challenged and creative in their fulfilment of the tasks set. We have enjoyed cookery demonstrations, tried our hands at flower arranging and craft, participated in drama fitness, stretch and chair exercises, listened to a Christmas Choir and enjoyed in- house Christmas and St Patrick's Day celebrations amongst many other events in our programme, always trying to cater for all interests, capabilities and ages.

We enjoyed our involvement in developing the planters on the Green in recognition of Royal events and we thank the Parish Council for inviting us to take part in this initiative.

We were disappointed that our tree, planted in Cardales Meadow, did not flourish and we look forward to raising a glass and hoping for its replacement to be more successful now. Our membership was delighted to share in the cost with Findern Footpaths Group of a bench in the meadow and we anticipate that this will be well used by members and others who can enjoy the natural environment provided in this delightful place.

We were pleased to be able to gather and arrange harvest goods for the service at All Saints and we look forward to having a presence at the Findern Fete in July.

As always, we are grateful for the use of the Village Hall for our meetings, but we also get out and about - trying new and varied places for our Lunch Club, continuing our Book Club in members' homes and organising trips. We recently enjoyed a day out to Thriplow Daffodil Weekend and hope to enjoy similar trips to places of interest during the summer.

We like to think that we are a friendly and inclusive group as our name suggests and we are always happy to encourage and welcome new people to our meetings in the village hall. We would like to thank those who maintain the hall, allowing us to hire the building so that we feel very much part of the Findern Community.

For more information on joining the WI contact the President of Findern and Friends WI, Mary Bucknell by telephone: 01332518490 or by email: bucknell_mary@yahoo.co.uk

Findern Warm Hub / Warm Welcome Club

The report was read out by the Chairman of the Parish Council, Councillor Tammy Brown who is also a Trustee of the Village Hall.

I will start with a brief overview of Findern's Warm Welcome Club.

Initially Warm Welcome's began in 2022 because of the cost-of-living crisis. We were awarded grants from Findern Parish Council and South Derbyshire CVS to get us started. I give a monthly report to both groups.

The initial core group ran for the specified time of January to the end of March, this was led by Jean Hallam who had many years of experience in the catering business. At this time all volunteers completed their Level 2 Food Hygiene qualification.

Jean passed the reigns to me and Deborah Arnold in March of 2023, and as Trustees of the Village Hall we have been running it in partnership with them every Tuesday between 12-2.30pm in the main Hall. This is a free event which is available to everyone no matter their circumstances; donations are always welcome, though not necessary. The aim of the group is to be a welcoming, warm environment, where you can get a warm meal and plenty of company. There is also a book and jigsaw swap. We have a wonderful group of volunteers who work on a rota basis, and I'd like to take this moment to recognise and thank them all. They are;

Megan Arnold, Jan Ashford, Diane Collier, Lesley Fearn, Alan Fearn, Anne Gwynn, Jan Howell, Heather Hall, Sally Jones, Roy Milward, Pat Maddock, Lynette Nash, Rosemary Noblet, Peter Priestly, Eileen Priestly, Doreen Roach, Joan Tidy, Jenny Wrathall, Martin Wrathall, Mick Williams, Irene Williams and, Gwen Johnson for keeping our financial records.

We regularly have around 35-40 people each week, these are mainly returners, but new people are always welcome. We serve either soup and a roll, jacket potatoes with fillings, or quiche with salad and new potatoes, there is always cake and tea and coffee.

We have had visits from Live Life Better Derbyshire who came to do free blood pressure tests, Sight Support Derbyshire who were giving advice around sight loss, Mercia Safer Neighbourhood Police who came to discuss residents' concerns around crime and to give advice on where to get help when it is needed; and Net and Natter, a new group to Findern Village Hall who run a walking netball team along with a coffee and a chat.

We have received further funding from Findern Village Hall and South Derbyshire CVS and along with donations we are hoping to keep the doors open for the foreseeable future.

The event runs every Tuesday afternoon from 12-2.30pm.

John Allsop Foundation

The Vice-Chairman of the Parish Council, Councillor Mike Ratcliffe 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 parish (includes Highfields), 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.

We have a new award for people gaining 3 or more 'A' level passes, and this award becomes effective when results are announced in August this year.

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.

Findern Bereavement Group

A representative from Murrays Funeral Directors After Bereavement Care read a report on behalf of the group.

All Saints Church

The report was given by Pat Maddock, of the Parochial Church Council of All Saints Church.

After continuing being in vacancy for 9 months of last year, it was with great joy that the Licensing of the Reverend Alicia Dring as Priest-in-Charge of Findern (also of St Peter's Littleover and Blagreaves) and also the Licensing and commissioning of Reverend Jason Kennedy as Assistant Curate (to be known as Associate Minister) in the Benefices of Littleover and Blagreaves and of Findern took place on 14 September 2023.

In the very near future, following ordination as priest, Emma will also be available to us as Curate along with local Readers.

Regular services took place each week up to Christmas Day. The process of seeking permission for new heating was given after some rectifications, which led to closure for 13 weeks due to the installation not being able to be met as quickly as expected leaving the church too cold for worship. The Methodist Chapel made us very welcome for this period of time. The new heating consists of Chandeliers with up and down lighting and infra-red bars between the lights giving instantaneous heat.

The church was open on Findern Fete Day 4 June for refreshments.

Our shared Harvest Festival with the Methodist congregation involved the Local Community once again, the Parish Council and Local Businesses and organisations decorating the Church Window Ledges with donations of food and hygiene items and monetary gifts to the Padley Centre.

The church was open for Gift Day held on 4 Nov where we also had material from Findern Historical Society as well as church registers and refreshments, which proved a real draw for visitors and a good response to the Gift Day.

The Shared Remembrance Service scheduled to take place on The Green took place in All Saints due to heavy rain with the Guiding movement taking part and being led by our new Priest in Charge and Roy Milward.

Our Christmas Fayre held in the Village Hall each year, run by the 'Friends of all Saints' was well attended with lots of Raffle Prizes donated by the Community.

There was shared Carol Singing at the local Residential home, Sheltered Housing scheme and on the Green with the local community culminating with refreshments in all Saints'.

Our Carol Service was well attended, far more than in the past. Our most well attended Service was the Christingle held on Christmas Eve.

The Warm Space created at the Village Hall by Trustees each Tuesday has proved to be very successful with help with the rota from the local community and members of All Saints and the Methodists. A

special lunch at the Warm Space was held for Harvest and Christmas; run by both Churches and a light lunch for Easter with donations given to charities. All Saints' and members from the Primary School donated food for the foodbanks.

We continue to support the Children's Society through collections from the Christingle Service and annual collection boxes.

Unfortunately, a lot of pointing has to take place as soon as possible which has affected the new plaster and redecoration.

We have been granted a faculty for a glazed screen with wooden framing above the new kitchen to help with heat loss which is to be installed in September.

The Village seemed very appreciative of the outside spotlights being lit from Oct-Mar, All Saints would like to thank the Parish Council for the funding of this.

We look forward to being led by our new team and pray for growth in our mission.

Findern Methodist Chapel

Lynette Nash read the report on behalf of the Methodist Chapel group.

Another year has gone by when many chapel members have had big birthdays and because there are no younger members to balance the numbers the average age gets higher! That said there's still a lot of activity within chapel, and the building is a popular venue for organisations and groups.

The defibrillator, paid for by the parish council, was installed last June but so far has not been used in an emergency. A training session for its use was organised in chapel, open to everyone, just one of the events with community involvement.

Harvest Festival in September was another community event preceded by a lunch in the village hall. The money donated at the meal plus the food items given at the Sunday service were sent to the Padley Group.

During October people from the village supported our Shoebox appeal with money, children's presents or household items, and 30 boxes were sent to Romania and Eastern Europe.

Remembrance Sunday service in November was led by Roy Milward and planned to be on the Green, which was beautifully decorated by the parish council. Because of bad weather the service was held in All Saints. Both church and chapel were involved and a good number of people joined in the act of remembrance and thanksgiving.

December is a busy time for everybody and the first planned event for the 2 churches was the special Christmas lunch. Even with free tickets to try and limit numbers for catering more came than were expected! The highlight was the visit of children from Findern school, who walked through a downpour to sing a variety of songs and carols with obvious enjoyment (and then walk back to school in more rain!) Donations from this meal went to the Red Cross. The Christmas carol singing and other events organised by the churches were included in the village activities with opportunities to donate to food banks, and to give cash to 2 charities collected in chapel in Christmas stockings.

From January to Easter the congregation from All Saints joined us at chapel as their heating had not been installed. We had some wonderful services, friendships were deepened between us all, and a commitment to share regularly more services and events in future. The weather has been so unpredictable that on Good Friday we had a time of meditation indoors and the planned meeting together on the Green on Easter Sunday after our services were over did not go ahead.

Chapel has recently had solar panels installed which are cutting the electricity costs considerably. The building is well used and known to be a warm, cosy place for meetings, but it is also a sacred space where God's love can be found and shared.

4 Matters raised by electors

There were no matters raised by electors.

Meeting closed at 7.40pm