**APM record 2023 - Chairman’s notes of presentations and related discussions**

**(see also all 22 written reports submitted, in separate file)**

The Annual Parish Meeting 2023 for Fovant was held on Wednesday 19 April, at 6.30pm, in Fovant Village Hall.

20 electors attended including 5 Parish Councillors, and the Parish Clerk Mr Tim Culver-James and the Ward Councillor for Fovant and the Chalke Valley, Mr Nabil Najjar. The Parish Council Chair Dr Tony Phillips chaired. Twenty two reports were offered; ten representatives spoke to these reports and took questions; key points emerging are summarised below. Five contributors had apologised that they could not attend: Jeremy Hinks (Fovant Network), Derryn Hinks (Fovant Village Website and Q70), Diana Rae (Fovant Community Support Group and Q70), David Horne (Open Door and Saturday Breakfast), Police Sgt Matthew Roberts, Community Police Team Warminster.

*Ward Councillor. Mr Nabil Najjar*. The group of 14 parishes in this Ward continue to be concerned about road safety and speeding in their 20 and 30 mph limits, and Mr Najjar thanked Fovant PC for their energy on that issue. On licensing applications, even though a parish council is not a statutory consultee, it seems equally difficult for a County Councillor to gain access to an ongoing licensing dialogue. It was agreed that the safety net for licensing is always that the police will take a negative view on a licence if there is evidence of disturbance. There is no link between the policies of Wiltshire Council to encourage tourism, and any planning permissions such as for camping or entertainment venues.

*Fovant Parish Council. Dr Tony Phillips, PC Chair*. A description of the main Projects in Progress appears on the Parish Council part of the Village Website. In the list of projects the heading ‘Defibrillator’ has been broadened to Health & Wellbeing, and a folder with that title has been opened in the Resources section of the main Website.

The dedication of Mrs Derryn Hinks as initiator and Webmaster of the Fovant Village Website was especially mentioned; sustainability will need to be looked at. Following the commitment by Mrs Pauline Story in producing the monthly 3 Towers magazine for over 20 years, the problem was now the printing cost of hard copy. Any contribution by the Council towards printing costs would have to be proportionate to the distribution of tax payer funds to other projects in the village. 2 page ‘flyers’ of village news are now being left in the Village Hall and the Waterside – the information is of course also on the Website. The Council would welcome help in determining options for delivering the flyer to households not able to collect their own copy or access the Website.

Engagement about speeding with Police officers of the Warminster Community Police Team was progressing, based on data from our 3 SID devices. Requests to improve County efforts to address the persistent blockages and flooding of road drains have paid off so far. A working group of the Council has stated to engage with Christine Brown of Wiltshire Council Estate and Development Team, on options for the redevelopment of the Clays Orchard site required by the County.

*Spring Orchard Surgery. Dr Lindsay Kinlin.* Total patient list is 1515, the profile is stable apart from a 50% rise in over the 90s. Highlights: include that the continuity of GP care has been maintained, with staff rather than locums; but cancer conversion rates (% positives on referral ) are much higher than national target; the old arrangement of drop in clinics has been re-started on Fridays, but the hybrid system the rest of the week is effective and will be kept. The new monthly clinical topic open forums have steadily increased in attendance, the most recent two being about the village defibrillator and dementia.

*Dinton CE VC Primary School. Andrew Howar*d, Head teacher. Another action packed year. 82 pupils on roll with small classes of between 13 and 26, and a quarter of the children come from Fovant. A specialist music teacher, residential trips, the bikeability scheme, a school parliament, and an active Friends Association including fund raising to improve the (outside) Forest School facilities – now including a log cabin. In the autumn the school will leave the LEA and join a multi academy trust associated with the Diocese. This is the Acorn Education Trust in Warminster. With a mix of primary and secondary schools, Mr Howard agreed that this could provide new opportunities to prepare the progression of children to the secondary stage. A question recalled discussions between Fovant Parish Council and the School Governors some years ago about funding of the school swimming pool. Mr Howard replied that the pool had since been closed on health and safety grounds, and children now swim at Five Rivers.

*Fovant Youth Club. Clive Roberts*. *Chair.* The major events were an open day in July and the Christmas Fair, organised by Julie Wallis and committee members. Both were well attended. Investment in the building continued, with a replaced flat roof and a redesigned heating system; a large National Lottery Grant provided a new tarmac outside surface as a better play area for children. S4S are missed - they had moved on from their weekly hiring and occasional care of the grounds, logically moving nearer to the centre of their client base in Mere. However, new session for Toddlers and Juniors were very successful, and there are plans to open a Juniors Plus session. A seniors night was tried again, but as in the past it failed to gain support and it was stopped. The next AGM is on Monday 5 June at 7pm. A comment said that the opportunities now offered to young children and their parents, had allowed community interactions that had never been envisaged in the past, an excellent resource for the growing number of young families in the parish. The village should note that the sheer effort and skill put into refurbishing the premises in recent years, by Mr Les Brantingham and then others, had created this transition to a pleasant and wholly usable village resource.

*Fovant Village Hall. Celia Haselgrove. Chair*. Many improvements in the hall including a new speaker system, hearing loop and automatic projector screen, new water heater and dehumidifier for the kitchen. The installation of WiFi is a great leap forward. Many regular activities continue, but two have been lost – Pilates, and the Valley Choir which never seemed to recover after the Covid pandemic. The Hall gave cream teas for the late Queen’s Jubilee weekend, and hosted an exhibition about historic Fovant. It was opened as a warm space during the winter months, providing hot drinks and soup; but this had a limited take up, and was stopped in April 2023. After a long stint as Treasurer, Mile Carey needs to step down, so a replacement is needed! In discussion, it was explained that the Hall Committee would be considering making grant applications for additional heating in the back room or work on the floor. The Chair recalled the standing offer by the Ward Councillor to advise on possible grant applications to the Area Board.

*Fovant Satellite Food Bank. Julie Wallis*. Following discussions with Salisbury Foodbank and visits to other villages who have set up similar projects, two residents formally became Salisbury food bank volunteers and set up the food bank within the Chapel on the High Street, opening at the end of November. The food boxes are supplied by Salisbury Foodbank. The Fovant team can also provide fruit and vegetable deliveries direct to homes as well as food parcels (courtesy of Central fruits). The team also stock personal care toiletries, cleaning products, nappies, and cat and dog food. There is a rail of warm coats donated by local residents. Hot water bottles and blankets and the additional heating costs were largely funded by a grant from the Area Board. Mrs Wallis outlined the care taken to minimise any concerns by clients, to provide an hospitable space, and to suggest other providers who could be approached regarding housing, fuel costs, loneliness. The team takes the initiative to provide food in order to deal with a pressing need even when there is no voucher. Sime visitors come only for a chat. As predicted from experience of other sites, it has taken time for word to spread but the number of clients is increasing. The Chair commented that the amount of effort by this small group of volunteers – largely two couples so far - in identifying the required protocols and establishing such a sensitive and caring system in Fovant, all within a few months, is truly daunting. And we can guess that the need is going to continue.

*Fovant History Group. Mary Kirman*. Chair. The changes in active roles in the group were outlined; this includes running the website. Following the death of the founding member Mike Harden, Liz Harden remains actively involved, and is always willing to arrange for anyone to view her collection of documents and artefacts. Cataloguing the collection of the late Margaret McKenzie is underway, but the problem is to find a home for this in the village, to be accessible in line with Margaret’s wishes. Pauline Story has donated her editor’s collection of every past edition of Three Towers magazine. The exhibition held in the Village Hall on Saturday 4th June 2022 as part of the village’s celebrations for the late Queen’s Platinum Jubilee was a great success. Items displayed included the tablecloth embroidered with the names of the then members of the Parish Council made for Queen Elizabeth II’s coronation, files of newspaper cuttings about people and events in the village, and some of the late Roy Nuttall’s collection of WWI artefacts and pictures which were formerly displayed in The Pembroke Arms pub. Finding buildings for semi-permanent displays of the group’s material remains a major problem. One new development is that Dr Kinlin has agreed to a board being displayed in the waiting room of the Spring Orchard Surgery when it is refurbished. One suggestion raised was that the museum of the Royal Signals at Blandford could be approached about a home for a display – their badge was cut on the Fovant Down in the early 1950s, and they thus have on ongoing link with Fovant, managed by the Fovant Badges Society.

*Fovant Parochial Church Council. Rev Graham Southgate, Rector.* This is St George’s Parish Church. A common misconception is that the government takes financial responsibility for the upkeep of a church building; in fact, the vast majority of funding must be raised locally by the Parochial Church Council PCC. A Parish Council is allowed to contribute to contribute to upkeep of a cemetery, and this year Fovant’s Parish Council contributed £400 towards the upkeep in Fovant, which is ably looked after the churchyard gang and Simon Martin. Having a substantial net excess of expenditure over income does not deflect the PCC from contributing to local causes, this year including the late Queen’ Jubilee celebrations, the Royal British Legion, and the warm space initiatives in the village. Plans are in hand for complete overhaul of the organ. Fund raising for that has stalled; some grants are promised on completion, but there will still be a £6000 shortfall. A question was raised about the role of the War Graves Commission in maintaining the military graves.

*Fovant Relief in Need Charity. Rev Graham Southgate, ex officio Chairman of the Trust.* The purpose of the Charity is to make “dispensations of monies to residents of Fovant who are in need of financial assistance, this can be children, elderly, or anyone in need”. The Charity was revived in 2020, and following general appeals in the 3 Towers magazine and the village website, several donations were received. One grant was made during the last year. However, the scope for grants is limited as the current funds amount to only about £700. A suggestion was made that a plea to the FRIN for help could perhaps be turned into a vehicle to trigger a grant top up from some other source.

*Thursday Coffee Mornings. Beryl Paton*. This is a well established village asset, very popular and often with animated and joyful conversations. A rota of volunteers serve tea and biscuits. Newcomers are always welcome and are made to feel "at home" when they come through the door.

*Fovant Fete*. Notice read out by Tony Phillips, on behalf of ‘Fete Maker’ William Holmes, tel 07939 411179. It will take place in the afternoon of August 19th, at East Farm, by kind permission of the Williams family.