



ANNUAL MEETING OF THE PARISH 2023

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held at 7pm on Tuesday 9th April 2024 in Dinton Village Hall

Present & Officiating: Cllr Dick O’Driscoll (Chairman of the Parish Council)
Mr K Gray, JP (Clerk to the Parish Council)

Parish Councillors: Terry Heath, Nick Cottman, Jim White

Buckinghamshire Councillors: Cllr Ashley Waite

Residents of the Parish: 18

The Chairman of the Parish Council welcomed everyone to the meeting.

1. Apologies for Absence

Parish Councillors R Lamkin, Honor Vane and Viv Robinson

2. Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 11th April 2023.

The minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 12th April 2023 were received, agreed and signed as a correct record.

3. Council’s Annual Report from the Chairman of the Parish Council – Cllr D O’Driscoll

I would like to begin my report by thanking all the councillors who have been such a help throughout the past year. Martin Usherwood resigned due to ill health in July last year, and I want to again record the Council’s appreciation for his eleven years of service to this parish, most of them as Chairman. We were delighted to be able to co-opt Viv Robinson to bring us back up to full complement, with parish representation in Ford with Jim White, Upton with Richard Lamkin, Westlington with Terry Heath and Dinton being represented by Nick Cottman (Vice Chairman), Honor Vane and Viv Robinson. These councillors have been a great help in supporting me in the last year chairing the Council. I also want to thank Honor Vane and Nick Cottman, for their considerable help in running the Village Hall, which is now a Parish Council responsibility.

As ever, sincere thanks to Keith for his sage advice and support as our Parish Clerk, keeping us on the straight and narrow.

Alan Floy has settled well into his role as Tree Warden and reports regularly on the state of the trees in the parish. As part of our responsibility for the management of the Spinney we have approached firms of Tree Specialists and will be asking one of these firms to survey the trees and make recommendations as to any necessary work that may be required. We intend that this work will be carried out this year. We also are hoping to plant some wildflowers and maintain a wildflower meadow along the hedgerow near the newly planted orchard. The orchard is thriving, and Terry Heath has recently planted another 6 pear trees among the 25 apple trees. We will also be asking for

volunteers to plant bulbs this autumn, at the entrance to the parish field and along Chestnut Avenue. This is all part of our biodiversity policy, being overseen by Viv Robinson.

There are three areas of concern which I'd like to mention:

- Parking around the church remains unsatisfactory with considerable damage to the grass verges. The Council has asked Steve Webb, who does such a good job for us under the Devolved Services Agreement, to come up with a cost for providing a geotextile membrane which will reinforce the grass verges and hopefully provide a solution to this perennial problem.
- Dog fouling and owners not picking up is a constant irritation, despite notices and dog bins, and it is difficult, if not impossible to enforce owners to comply.
- The extended playground which seems to be well used, is due for its annual inspection in May and it is likely that we will need to spend some money to refurbish some of the older equipment.

During the last year we held a series of meetings and issued a questionnaire regarding the future of the village hall. Based on the survey results, the Parish Council accepted the recommendation of the Village Hall Management Committee to upgrade and/or extend the existing village hall. To this end a number of volunteers have come forward and we envisage them taking forward the process of fundraising and refurbishment, all under the aegis of the Parish Council. Again, much thanks to Nick and Honor, for all their unstinting help on this issue.

I will hand over now to the various village organisations to update us on their news. These organisations are the lifeblood of our villages and make this such a lovely Parish to live in.

CHAIRMAN OF COUNCIL

Dinton with Ford & Upton Parish Council

4. Report from Buckinghamshire Unitary Council Members & Community Groups

- **Cllr Ashley Waite (Ward Member for Buckinghamshire Council)**

An update was given by Cllr Waite on Buckinghamshire Council matters and asked anyone if they had any questions. A resident considered that Bucks Councils should be attending parish council meetings and she expressed her disappointment that regular attendance did not occur and some BC Ward Cllrs have not attended at all throughout the year. Resident raised concerns about the constant litter build up on main roads. The Chairman of the Parish Council raised concerns with Cllr Waite about the BC proposed changes to Street Traders Licensing and raised the matter of lack of real engagement and consultation with parish councils, which this policy change will affect – a number of points were raised. Cllr Waite also expressed his concern about the proposed changes and gave examples of how it would affect Waddesdon Parish Council in their community event management plans. He said he had raised the matter with the Cabinet Member for Communities and would be raising this matter again with licensing officers.

- **St Peter's & St Paul's Church, Dinton – Phil Groves**

Associate Rector in the Wychert Vale Benefice

In the book of Romans in the Bible it says that a central purpose of a church is to 'rejoice with those who rejoice and mourn with those who mourn'. The church community at St Peter and St Paul aims to fulfil that purpose. For example, we rejoice at the opportunity to celebrate through baptisms and marriages and we are honoured to serve families who have lost a loved one. We hope we are always here for you.

Our regular Anglican worshipping community is small, but we have seen new members over the past year. We meet, as we have done for years, twice a month on Sunday mornings, but now we

have sung Evensong every month. You are all welcome. We welcome so many of you for Remembrance Day and for Christmas and we are committed to maintaining mid-morning services for the major festivals. In addition, the church school worships with us twice a term. The school community are asked to park on the Upton Road to the North of the church and to walk through the churchyard to collect children so they do not cause inconvenience to the residents around the triangle – these pleas are not heard by all.

The church is also used for regular worship by a community of the Romanian Orthodox Church. They have been with us now for a couple of years. They gather for prayer and worship on a regular basis. They have installed a sound system in church and this year they have renewed the out buildings in the churchyard from derelict sheds to restored buildings. This year they are working with us to restore the path between the West Door and the South Door – the path everyone has to walk on as they pass through our churchyard.

Once a month we welcome the Bucks Arts Society and we have had gigs put on by Mike Trotman. We would like to thank all those who work hard to maintain our churchyard. We try to maintain the churchyard so it is simple to mow. We have also seen an increase in dog mess in the churchyard and we ask all villagers to challenge anyone not clearing up their dogs' mess.

Please do join us for worship – the parish news and our posters carry the latest news of our services.

Community Event Team (CET) – Mr Steve Merry

Community Events Team (CET) – Report of activities April 2023 – April 2024 and future events
Our team of more than 20 volunteers, established pre-pandemic, meets on a regular basis at The Seven Stars. Year-on-year we define a calendar of events for the enjoyment and participation of our parishioners. The Calendar is published in the Bigg Issue newsletter together with a list of contact numbers.

Our events are largely self-funding through small event charges, and during 2023/24 we have had generous donations from Haddenham Beer Festival (Fireworks in November) and several parishioners who wish to remain anonymous. Additionally, many of our team have selflessly absorbed costs themselves such as:

event materials, poster printing and laminations, other advertising, Christmas Tree decorations, quiz prizes, and use of vehicles for transporting event props etc and other event materials. Specifically, to help fund the Firework Display we sold raffle tickets over a period of several months for a single prize special edition bottle of GIN donated by Will Hughes (EX Marine Commando and Falkland War veteran) commemorating the Commando Regiment and its historical achievements in the defence of the nation. This raised £750 approx. We are doing the same this year (special edition Whisky) to offset some of the anticipated £2500 costs.

To further minimise costs, we strive to use facilities within the Parish to stage events including the Marquee erected at Dinton Cricket Club, DCC club house, Dinton Village Hall, The Seven Stars pub and the church.

The availability of the Cricket Club Bar and other facilities (toilets etc) has significantly helped to avoid large expenditures we might otherwise have incurred. We sincerely thank the Cricket Club for their continued contribution in making our events so successful and much easier to organize.

We also have many items accumulated over the years from the times of the Village Fete which we store in 2 sheds located behind Dinton Village Hall and use to help stage events. However much of this stuff is now beyond usefulness and will be scrapped.

The much publicised limitations of Dinton Village Hall do restrict the type of event we hold there and numbers attending, but with the help of the Cricket Club and the Seven Stars we are able to host a variety of events across multiple locations that we believe appeal to most of our diverse Parish population.

The Seven Stars and the cooperation from Steph and her team is a significant factor in the success of events with the provisioning of BBQ's, use of the pub for the Quizzes, CET meetings and sponsoring the Parish Cribbage Team and of course the end of year Christmas Spectacular in the pub garden. Steph knows we all love her.

Since April 2023 and 2024 year-to-date the CET have organized and run the following events:

1. 6 Monthly Quizzes and although we are seeking an alternate venue to The Seven Stars (probably DCC) our 'Bumper' Christmas Quiz in aid of Florence Nightingale Hospice, will continue to be run at The Seven Stars. Contributions to our flagship charity over the years now exceeds £10,000.
2. In May we celebrated the coronation of King Charles III and to mark the occasion the CET ran a hugely successful Coronation Treasure Hunt exploring historical landmarks across the parish dating from the time of King Charles I to current times. More than 100 parishioners, including many children, took part on a glorious late spring day. The Treasure Hunt finished in The Seven Stars Garden where a magnificent BBQ and drinks for all awaited. The feedback was fantastic prompting us to think about other similar events for the future.
3. On Saturday 24th June we ran the Summer Ball in the Marquee on a splendid summer's evening. The sensational live band Sledgehammer provided a stunning performance as the parish danced into the early hours. Sledgehammer have been booked for a repeat at the 2024 Summer Ball. This Black Tie, Ball Gown event, is a guaranteed sell-out.
4. July and August are typically holiday months and activity of CET low key as we focus towards the big end of year events. At the request of the Parish Council the CET was asked to perform an event in aid of Village Hall support costs. On September 21st, following the presentations on the future of Dinton Village Hall and the 100 Club Draw, we ran a BINGO night together with a Meat Draw and raised £500 for the village hall.
5. The annual Conkers Night took place at the Cricket Club in October with an accompanying BBQ attracting families from across the Parish and once again demonstrated that this timeless seasonal pastime is as popular as ever.
6. In November we again staged the Firework Display on the parish field and used the cricket club facilities for food and drinks. Again, a sell-out, the event was acclaimed as the best display in memory and returns in 2024 by popular request. We have been requested to open the event to higher numbers but that is unlikely given the H & S concerns, parking restrictions and the penalizing costs of insurance for the event.
7. Our final significant event of the year, and very popular with everyone across the Parish, was the Christmas Tree 'Lights On' celebration at the beginning of December in the Seven Stars Garden. For the first time in many year's, we had to purchase a tree using CET funds as our previous donator, Paul Roads, is no longer permitted to fell trees on his land. Hartwell nurseries supplied the tree, and we are working with them for a preferential deal going forward. The Tree Lighting ceremony was performed by Viv Robinson in recognition of the TRIFFIC work her husband Chris had put in over many years delivering similar events for the parish. We celebrated with Carol Singing around the tree, mulled wine, roast chestnuts, mince pies and other Christmas goodies. The event was followed later that evening with the Bumper Christmas Quiz in the pub with takings donated to Florence Nightingale
8. On Christmas Eve the CET led a march of Carol Singers around the parish, again raising funds for Florence Nightingale and culminating in much celebration at The Seven Stars.
9. In October we began our second season representing The Seven Stars in the Chinnor and District Royal British Legion Cribbage League. We have 10 people from across the Parish registered to play and always on the look-out for new members. The season ended in March 2024 with the Seven Stars Peggys again being awarded a Trophy for being the most welcoming and sporting team in the league and definitely the best food as supplied once again by Steph. We also collected 4 other trophies as a result of our successes in the league and cup competitions. The season starts again next October.
10. In late 2023 we concluded the merger of the old Marquee Team into the CET. As a result, a single bank account under the control of the CET has been set up and transfers from the Marquee Accounts made. The marquee itself is now under the control/ownership of Dinton Cricket Club who are responsible for the maintenance, security, storing etc. The marquee remains available for use by the CET for any events we may wish to stage within. To commemorate the fantastic work and events staged by the Marquee Team over a quarter of a century, the CET are holding a ceremony in the Seven Stars Garden late pm Saturday 13th April when a stone and plaque will be placed over the spot where the annual Christmas

Tree stands as a lasting tribute to the Marquee Team. Later that same evening the CET is holding a Wine and Cheese event in the village hall again to raise funds for the hall. We expect 80+ attendees.
 11. The full calendar of events for 2024 has been published in the Bigg Issue and is as follows:

CET CALENDAR OF EVENTS 2024

13th April	Cheese & Wine Evening in Dinton Village Hall
5th May	The PIVOT Games— Parish Inter Village Olympic Tournament at Dinton Cricket Club & Parish Field
29th June	Midsummer Ball in the Marquee, Dinton Cricket Club Black Tie & Ball Gowns featuring the return of the psychedelic maelstrom that is SLEDGEHAMMER
7th July	Parish Cricket Match at Dinton Cricket Club — teams to be arranged
TBC Aug	Mad Hatters Tea Party / Treasure Hunt at the Seven Stars Pub
TBA Sept	CEILIDH at Dinton Village Hall
12th Oct	Annual Conker Championships at Dinton Cricket Club
26th Oct	BINGO at Dinton Village Hall
2nd Nov	Firework Display in the Parish Field & Dinton Cricket Club
1st Dec	‘Lights On’ as we celebrate and sing carols around the Christmas tree In the Seven Stars Pub Garden with local celebrity to ‘Switch On’
1st Dec	Christmas Quiz at the Seven Stars Bar in aid of Florence Nightingale Hospice
24th Dec	Christmas Carols around the streets of the parish followed by mince pies and mulled wine at the Seven Stars Pub

• **Dinton Beer Festival – Mr Dennis Dunn**

This is an annual event held in August in the grounds of the Seven Stars. Planning for the event starts weeks in advance by a small group led by Dick O’Driscoll and myself. The group solicit sponsors for the beer, cider, Pimms tent, souvenir glasses, entertainment, printing, etc.

As well as sponsoring a barrel, Steph at the Stars puts on a barbeque and the Stars remains open to sell alternative drinks or food. Her team help with setting up and taking down the small gazebos and moving garden furniture. The car park is blocked off to extend the garden and create safe space for families and children. The ticket sales, beer tent and Pimms tent are manned by volunteers from the community who give their time generously to make the day go smoothly.

Money raised by the Dinton Beer Festival has been distributed to various projects to benefit the community, either as complete funding or contribution towards costs. Every year the Dinton Beer Festival accounts are prepared and made available to Sponsors, Volunteers and to the Parish Council.

Main benefactors have been:

<u>Dinton Village Hall</u>	£2820
<u>Dinton Church</u>	£2682
<u>Parish Field Playground</u>	£4430
<u>Access and Footpath Gates</u>	£1692
<u>Florence Nightingale Hospice</u>	£300
<u>Village Defibrillator at Seven Stars</u>	£700

Smaller donations have been made to:

Bishopstone Beer Festival, Ford Marquee Insurance, Christmas Tree Lights, Dinton Golf Society, contribution to glasses at Jubilee Party, etc.

We are always looking for sponsors and help on the day. We would welcome any ideas for projects and good causes in the Parish to consider for funding.

The next Dinton Beer Festival is planned for 17th August 2024. There will be a good variety of beers to satisfy the connoisseurs, and entertainment for all. Everyone is welcome.

A huge thank you to all those sponsors who have donated a barrel over the years, or have made other types of donations to make this festival possible.

- **Parish Council Tree Warden's Summary/Report – Alan Floy**

Set out below is a brief summary of the Work in Progress (WIP)

Monitoring.

Frequent monitoring (observation reports) of the areas which the parish is responsible for relating to trees and hedgerows.

Recording.

A systematic recording of the locations types and quantities. With reference to the spinney, the trees are being numbered and mapped for the purpose of location, recognition and maintenance. This also includes the orchard and the newly planted pear trees.

Planned Maintenance.

This has been and will continue the control of the ivy which has out grown some of the trees. However, it is far more productive to concentrate on the smaller trees before it takes over. It is also planned via the chairman to have a survey and a good tidy up of certain areas. Our thanks to the mystery helper who has been assisting in cutting the ivy.

New Growth.

It is noticeable that a number of self-set trees are growing which is encouraging for the biodiversity plan.

The Future.

The biodiversity plan, in its infancy stage will be helped enormously if the community become involved with ideas help and support.

- **Ford Village Society (FVS) - Sarah Ellis, Treasurer.**

Like last year, I would like to start by paying a tribute. This year, for the contributions to the Parish, of Monica Dunton, who died on 8th September 2023. As I mentioned, last year she retired as the secretary of the FVS in January 2023, after 19 years in the role. However, Monica was also a regular attendee of Parish Council Meetings. She attended to keep track of events in the Parish, on behalf of Ford Villagers and to speak up for us, when she felt that was needed. We are grateful for her long and diligent service to us and she is greatly missed.

The FVS is run by committee, led by our chairman, Terry Sadler. Lisa Cook is our secretary and I am the treasurer. We have six other members, having recently co-opted Marilyn Pipe and Sue Williams to the committee, in addition to Barbara Paterson, Nina Sadler, Joyce Shaw and Kim Parker. The funds that the FVS received in the form of an ex-gratia grant from the Parish Council in 2022 is still providing us with a big benefit, in everything we do. It assists in funding our events, our insurance and our newsletters as well as our administration costs.

Our events have carried on, as ever and lockdown is beginning to be a distant memory. We held a celebration for the Coronation of His Majesty King Charles III at the beginning of the financial year, in May 2023. It was the first opportunity for us to use the new village tablecloths, which the council's grant helped fund. We also used our new card payment machine for the first time, making it easier to collect payments, as the use of cash and cheques diminishes. The annual Remembrance Day service was held at the cross roads, as usual, in November.

We are grateful to the Parish Clerk, for his assistance with ascertaining that we had the requisite permission to close the main road through Ford, briefly, for that event. It made the event safer and more cohesive than it has been in recent years.

Our Christmas carol service is a time for the village to come together during the Festive season and we were so pleased to welcome back Nigel Featherstone to lead the service for us once again, after his absence last year. Our collection raised £230.86, which was split between Rennie Grove Peace Hospice and Florence Nightingale Hospice. We hold coffee mornings or afternoon teas, to raise funds for FVS and to bring members of the village together on a regular basis. Members of the FVS committee are generous with their time and their homes as venues, for which I would like to thank them. We have decided to add a soup and bread roll lunch to our regular events. Our first one will be in a couple of

weeks' time on a Saturday lunchtime, to encourage families to join us. The village book club, financially supported by FVS, the history society, book exchange at the notice board and Ford's Foodbank, are all flourishing. More recently, the villagers gathered to carry out our annual litter pick. We collected less than usual, in no small part due to the ongoing diligence of villagers, Phil Nuckley and Steve & Kathryn Chapman, who collect litter every time they go for a walk. We are indebted to them. However, I must say we were deeply saddened and angered by an incidence of fly tipping in the village at the end of last week.

On a brighter note, the Easter Bunny made a visit to Ford two weeks ago, to deliver Easter Treats for the children of the village. Looking forward, we are planning a village cook book to raise funds for the FVS and we are currently seeking our residents' favourite recipes and our summer picnic in August is also in the planning stage. Everything is only possible, if we have public liability insurance, which is always our highest cost and our fund raising and the grant from the council mean that we have funds in place for this, this year. Once again, my final thoughts are almost identical to those I voiced last year. This is to thank those of our residents who manage our Vehicle Activated Speed signs and monitor the ever increasing traffic through the village, at speeds often in excess of the 30mph limit and on occasions approaching speeds closer to 70mph. I have previously reported that we would all welcome more action to calm the traffic through our community and we have been heartened to see the Police on duty in the village, on occasions in recent months.

I hope this brief report gives a picture of the activities we carry out as a community in Ford during the year, in order to foster a sense of spirit in the village.

- **Dinton Village Hall Management Committee – Nick Cottman**

The village hall is well managed by the parish council through the village hall management committee as well as supported by the community, which we all greatly appreciate. The 100 Club continues to do well and we thank you for your continued support and would welcome new members.

The current finances of the Village Hall:

We have two accounts:

- the main one currently has a balance of £14,400
- the 100 Club currently has a balance of £5,300

So we have a total of just under £20,000 in the two accounts.

The 100 Club is entering its 2nd year and we are hoping for renewals from April this year. So far approximately 40 of the 102 members have renewed their membership, so I have a bit of chasing to do in order to get the 100 members!

- **Cuddington & Dinton Church of England School - Mrs Nicola Wilde**

Nicola Wilde took on the Headship of Cuddington and Dinton Church of England School in September 2024, following the retirement of Kim Price, Headteacher of ten years.

The school has 177 pupils on roll, with waiting lists for the majority of classes. In excess of 80 applications were received for the 26 Reception places starting in September 2024. It is anticipated this pressure will continue to increase over the next few years, particularly with the current level of new housing in Haddenham.

It is anticipated the proportion of 'in catchment' children for the September intake to be between 70% and 80% (in line with previous years) and highlighting there is therefore some capacity to cater for an increase in the number of children in the villages should it arise. Policy on the size of the school roll is regularly reviewed by the Governing body.

Maintaining the Victorian buildings remains an ongoing challenge - in excess of £40,000 was spent last year. We are grateful for the support received from the Oxford Diocese, Friends 4 CADS (School PTA) and both Dinton and Cuddington School House Trusts.

The school provides a staff led Breakfast clubs on both sites open from 8am. Exposure Sport are an external provider who run the After School club at the Junior site, currently finishing daily at 17:45. Infant pupils are transported on a minibus over to the Junior site in Dinton, organised by Exposure

Sport. As well as providing wrap around childcare for working parents, the staggered drop off and collection should help reduce traffic congestion.

For children in catchment there are two school buses, provided by Buckinghamshire School Transport, transporting to Cuddington, Dinton, Chearlsey, Nether Winchendon, Ford and (occasionally) Haddenham. Both infant and junior children have taken part in interesting, varied and exciting activities, with educational visits to Science Oxford, The British Museum, Bekonscot Model Village and a Faith Tour of Bedford; with planned summer visits to Warwick Castle and a week-long residential in Derbyshire for the older pupils.

This September children leaving year 6 will be moving onto: Waddesdon, Princes Risborough, Lord Williams's and the Aylesbury Grammar schools amongst others. The last Ofsted inspection was January 2023, report available here. Both the teaching staff and Governors continue working towards moving the school on from Good to 'Outstanding'. Since September we have received letters from local residents of the Junior site, Dinton and the Parish Council. Issues raised were concerning parent car parking and the idling engine of the school bus. School reminds parents of the duty to park considerately but has no powers to enforce.

We recommend parents park on Upton Road and walk down to school through the Churchyard. It is recommended that residents report poor and dangerous parking to Buckinghamshire Council here. The concerns about the school bus have been reported to Bucks Transport and the bus company. This will continue to be monitored. My aim is to forge a strong working relationship with the local community, with our school being an asset for the community to be proud of. I endeavour for our school to be good neighbours and work in partnership with the Parish Council.

- **Roman Orthodox Church Congregation - Father Julien**

That you for inviting me to the Annual Meeting of the Parish. Our congregation is doing well and we are grateful to be part of this community. We enjoy being able to worship in St Peter's & St Paul's Church, Dinton. Our events have been well attended especially being able to use the parish field for children's events such as our annual camp. We are aware of the problems with the parking on the grass verges, and we have mentioned this to those who attend the church.

5. Public Questions and Proposals

There were no questions or proposals from residents of the parish.

There being no further business to deal with, and no further questions or proposals made, the Chairman closed the meeting at 7.50 pm

Signed: _____ Date: _____