



**Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Parish held on Thursday 4th April 2024 at 8pm
Fairford Leys Community Centre, Hampden Square, Fairford Leys**

- Present & Officiating:** Cllr Andrew Cole (Chairman of the Parish Council)
Mr K Gray, JP (Clerk to the Parish Council)
- Parish Councillors:** S Walland, C Baughan, N Wyld, N Blandford, A Hritcan,
S Wadlow, T Andrew,
- Residents of the Parish:** No residents and no members of the public in attendance.

1. Welcome

Cllr Cole welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies received from parish councillors S James, C Harvey and A Poland-Goodyer

3. Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 6th April 2023

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 6th April 2023 be agreed and signed as a true record.

4. Annual Report of the Parish Council

Chairman to present the Annual Report of the Parish Council.

Cllr Andrew Cole gave the following report:

As always it has been a busy year for the Parish Council, and we continue to put on our community events which are always well supported. In July we hosted our Fair in the Square and although it started off a bit soggy, the sun soon appeared and we were blessed with good weather again and as always, it was well supported. In September Music in the Square was the busiest I have ever seen it, with three amazing local bands it was a fabulous evening, and plans are in full swing for this year's events.

In May we celebrated the Kings Coronation with a bring your own picnic at the community centre and again it was a wonderful event with plenty of residents joining together to mark the occasion. Many of us have never witnessed a coronation so it was a new experience and one that will not be forgotten in a hurry.

In November we held our remembrance service and wreath laying ceremony on Amnesty Sunday and of course in December we welcomed Father Christmas to the square with carols and the Aylesbury Concert Band. The lights again with the Christmas tree make the square look wonderful and my thanks as always go to our Maintenance Team who really work so hard to make it magical.

Because of the Parishes' close working relationship with the Town Council, we always support the Mayor wherever possible. This year has been a little bit special as the Mayor of Aylesbury is Steve Lambert who many of you know was the Chairman of the Parish for many years and lives on Fairford Leys. So, it has been a delight to represent the Parish Council and residents at the Aylesbury Town Mayor's events, including the Mayor making ceremony in May and the Civic Remembrance and Christmas services held at St Mary's Church.

The Council continues to work on matters that directly affect our community. We continue to meet monthly with HS2 and their contractors, discussing and questioning whenever possible their works and impacts on us and the surrounding areas. The Council has also been successful in bidding for funding from the Aylesbury Community Board, as well as reviewing our playparks with a view to updating some of them and creating more green spaces.

We continue to use our Facebook Page to keep residents informed and encourage them to respond to consultations that affect the village and make sure their voices are heard. You may have noticed that the yellow lines have been refreshed and some more added around the village, this was partly influenced by the consultation that residents replied to.

We are in the final process of having the riverine land transferred to the Parish Council and we continue to manage the land areas around Fairford Leys. A lot of work goes into the management of the land and we have to make certain decisions on tree management, that might not always be understood by residents – especially when we are felling trees. We cannot let the land grow totally wild but we must manage it as professionally as we can which includes tree surveys, riverine water clearance where possible and lost of grass cutting. We also work closely with Aylesbury Town Council under the Buckinghamshire Council Devolved Services Agreement. We continue to work closely with the Ernest Cook Trust where needed and we manage the Ernest Cook Trust Covenant on all properties in Fairford Leys relating to planning applications – this is to ensure that Fairford Leys remains as close to the original Master Plan as possible and keeps Fairford Leys the best it can possibly be. Our close working with local businesses where able helps keep the village centre vibrant and it's good for our community to have the services we have, all within walking distance.

The Parish Council continues to meet every first Thursday at 8pm in the Community Centre to deal with monthly business such as Planning Applications, Riverine Corridor Adoption, and questions from the residents.

All this work could not happen without the support of the Clerk, fellow Councillors, Maintenance team and our Centre Staff and I must say a massive thank you to them all for the hard work that they put in behind the scenes to make this such a wonderful place to live.

It is with pleasure that I submit this report on behalf of the Parish Council.

Andrew Cole
Cllr Andrew Cole
Chairman of the Council

5. Councillors / Community Groups

To receive any reports from Bucks Council Members. To receive any reports from Community Groups / Stakeholders if present. To receive any questions or proposals from residents:

The following report was presented by Cllr Adam Poland-Goodyer on behalf of the Coldharbour Ward Councillor Members of Buckinghamshire Council:

Annual Report to Coldharbour Parish Council – April 2024

As per last year, I feel that it is best to put our notes alongside what we are requested to say by Buckinghamshire Council so that we get some local context on their comments.

As your local Unitary Team we have been incredibly busy across all of Aylesbury West (of which Fairford Leys is but 1 part). We are continuing to work closely with residents in Prebendal Farm on a number of events and initiatives. We note that the flood defences in the Willows were only needed to be deployed once this winter with no damage caused to local properties there, although we are aware of some potential flooding issues caused potentially by HS2 works. Although that needs further investigating and determining of the cause.

We continue to work alongside St Marys School and Bearbrook school on a new innovative approach to school pick up and drop off involving video calls at 6am with Sydney City Council.

We continue to work and support our local community of Fairford Leys by being fully involved in all of the community events and funding works within the parish of Coldharbour utilising joint and sole community board funding for such projects as the Community BBQ, and Webbs Meadow new community garden.

Cllr Adam Poland-Goodyer sits on the Aylesbury Garden Town board as the representatives of the Southern Parishes and has attended 2 meetings (all that there have been since his appointment). This is appearing to be a disappointing quango and acts as a conduit for endless consultations and re-consultations on plans that were formed years ago. There is no set funding line for this group and I struggle to understand its purpose and nature. Bucks Council would be better devolving responsibility to the elected Aylesbury Town Council as opposed to this ‘appointed’ body.

The extract in italics is from Buckinghamshire council. We will provide additional commentary below;

“Thank you for the opportunity to give a short update on some the past year’s activities for Buckinghamshire Council. “

“As Councils within Buckinghamshire, we have a common purpose to improve the economic, environmental, health and social wellbeing of the county, its residents, businesses and visitors. We understand that as independent democratically elected bodies you work within your own financial constraints and represent communities at a truly local level and we recognise that parish and town councils are a key connection between the unitary council and their

community who can help us improve services and foster greater community empowerment. We remain committed to working together with all local councils in Buckinghamshire.”

This would be a promising statement if actually true. Unfortunately, Buckinghamshire council continues to treat local parishes poorly and their behaviour in some BMALC meetings has been quite disrespectful at times.

“It's important to firstly note some of the current challenges that our sector as a whole is facing. This year's budget was the toughest on record to set for us, with escalating costs and demand, particularly in four key areas – Children's and Adults Social Care, supporting children with additional needs to get to and from school, and providing accommodation for an increasing number of homeless people. We are pleased, with our record of prudent financial management, not to be in the position of a growing number of councils who are in serious financial trouble and we are pleased to have produced a balanced budget for the next 3 years, taking us to 2027. However, this isn't without making some really difficult choices and we are having to find significant savings during that period – it's an incredibly tough context in which to operate.”

By using the word savings they are meaning job cuts and cuts to services (which they are trying to devolve to parishes and get them to foot the bill). Although, not in serious financial trouble, to achieve their balanced budget the council is having to borrow from its own reserves and offload a substantial part of its property portfolio. In regards to homelessness, the amount on the list has increased and housing stock is falling well behind supply and is continuing to fall.

“It's also been a very wet winter indeed, one of the wettest on record, and this is having a continued severely detrimental impact on our road network. We are all aware of the damage the weather has caused in terms of potholes and flooding and our teams have been working round the clock to address these issues. This is a situation impacting all parts of the country, with national media coverage of a recent Asphalt Industry Alliance report citing potholes being at an 8 year high, and that in total, councils are expecting to fix around two million potholes this year across England and Wales.”

The leader did cast doubt on the validity of climate change in a meeting recently and they continue to blame the weather for the appalling state of our roads. It is worth noting that an extra £100 million has been spent on roads and potholes (from reserves) to little actual improvement. The state of the roads is more of a reflection of the long term underinvestment from this council. I also question value for money when it is costing £147 million to create 1 mile of dual carriageway in Aylesbury. The council need to get a grip on what they intend to do and acknowledge their part in the failings of the current system we have. Go to other counties and they are nowhere near as bad as Buckinghamshire.

“With ever decreasing resources we are doing everything we can to improve things here in Buckinghamshire, including having 29 gangs out responding to emergency call outs and repairing defects. After last winter's bad weather we repaired 30,000 potholes and we anticipate that number will be even higher this year. We welcome news that nationally, over £8 billion of funds saved from the

cancelled section of HS2 is now being re-directed to road repairs, but we also know this is long term and we won't see the impact of this investment in the immediate future."

With reference to HS2 it is interesting to note that the councils 'HS2 marshals) continue to send weekly reports on their actions (which seem focused on Tory areas) and not one mention is made of the A418.

We are incredibly lucky that we have our monthly 'CHAT' meetings involving Cllr Andrew Cole, Cllr Richard Lloyd (ATC), Cllr Adam Poland-Goodyer and Cllr Sarah James that have mitigated many damaging actions to our community despite little to no support from the local council. It will be interesting to note that come a national election our local sitting MP will spout about what they are doing to help residents in regard to HS2. We have had NO contact with our local MP about HS2.

"We all hope that better weather is on its way, to allow us to fully embark on our programme of longer-term maintenance and improvements. We have released an extra £5million from our reserves to spend on the roads which will allow us to add to our programme of 'plane and patch' – we are currently prioritising where these works will be, based on input from local councillors and technicians."

We have had no consultation yet to provide our input. Again, note that money for this is from 'reserves'.

As a parish council we need to be careful that Buckinghamshire Council does not 'devolve' more services than we actually want. This only shifts the council tax burden to the Parish Council and overall bills will not improve. We are incredibly lucky within this parish to have such a highly qualified clerk with devolved powers that allow us to share resources with other parishes to secure savings and ensure our parish maintains its look and feel. These will be challenging times and we need to be aware of 'cost saving' measures coming through from the council as new policies (the new street trader policy being an obvious example of potential serious consequences to parish and community events in order to make money).

It is difficult to make positive change in this council when we know (and have been told) that any motion or amendment we make will be voted down by the main party, despite there being obvious reasons for them (such as 20mph zones outside schools). There is only one direction of travel at Buckinghamshire Council and that is at the 'leaders' whim which makes true local representation very difficult to achieve.

No other reports given and no questions asked.

No requests, proposals from residents.

6. The Chairman to close the meeting

Resolved: The Chairman closed the meeting at 8.12pm

Signed: _____ Date: _____