

Felsham Parish Meeting

Minutes of the Felsham Parish Meeting held on Tuesday 21st May 2019 at 7.30pm in the Village Hall

15 members of public, Cllr Garrod – Chairman, Paula Gladwell – Clerk, County Cllr Penny Otton.

Apologies – Trisha Wilson

1. The minutes of previous meeting of 15th May 2018 were approved and signed.
2. District and County Cllr Penny Otton gave her report which is attached to these minutes.
3. The Chairman of the Parish Council, Cllr Simon Garrod gave a report, which is attached to these minutes.
4. St Peters Church report was deferred.
5. Jo Tavernor gave a report from the Village News which is attached.
6. Chairman, Philip Cockell gave a report from the Felsham & Gedding Playingfield which is attached to these minutes.
7. Felsham & Gedding WI report was given by Alison Shaw and is attached.
8. The Village Hall report was deferred.
9. David Williams gave a report for the Felsham Charity which is attached to these minutes.
10. Mr Norman Plumpton gave a report from the Royal British Legion which is attached.
11. James Morgan and Ria Crosbie gave a report from the Community Shop & PO. James gave a brief synopsis of the route taken by the Steering Group to establish the current success of the shop, starting with the village meeting, the set up of a group of dedicated volunteers and the decision to set up a Community Benefit Society and a management committee all with help from the Plunket Association. The Benefit Society ensures that any profits made are put directly back into the society and does not pay out to share holders. The shop officially opened at the end of January and is solely staffed and run by volunteers with Ria at the helm. There are currently approx 30 volunteers with the scope to welcome more as all help offered is gratefully received and without these residents willing to offer their time and expertise the project would not have been possible.
Ria confirmed that trade is currently ahead of projections and has exceeded expectations which is solely down to the support of residents and visitors who are using the shop and PO, it really makes a difference. If this stopped and the shop ultimately failed Ria confirmed that any funds left available would be returned to the community and not to investors, probably via other village organisations.
Anyone who has not purchased their shares are encouraged to do so, each shareholder no matter the number of shares owned has one vote.
The question was raised regarding whether teenagers could volunteer to work in the shop? It was confirmed that they would certainly be welcomed, once the legalities of this were checked out.
Thanks were extended to Ria and James and the rest of the management committee and all the volunteers for their commitment and fantastic effort to this project.

12. David Williams gave an brief report from the church in Rev Potters absence. It was confirmed that two regular services are held each month, a family service which is very well attended by adults and children with breakfast supplied, a very welcoming service. A 6-7 service which is non denominational and discusses various aspects of church life. Other services are run from St Peters including Communion together with Christmas and Easter specific services. The Christmas Tree festival has always been popular as part of the Annual Xmas Fayre however regrettably it seems this event will not take place in 2019. Various improvement projects are taking place or are planned for the future including the installation of a new sound system and refurbishments to the Lych Gate. Major projects include the removal of the pews in order to maximise the use of the space available within the church and of course the refurbishment of the bells which are currently unsafe to ring as they apparently "swing the wrong way" causing the tower to move... Fundraising for these projects will be through available grants. Churchyard maintenance is always an ongoing concern, it is difficult to keep gutters clean and hedges cut back. Volunteers are sought to help with a planned work party to tackle some of these outside jobs.
13. Chairman, Andrew Conquest gave a report from Felsham & Gedding Village Hall which is attached to these minutes.
14. Brian Francis gave a brief report regarding the current position with the charity Allotments. There are 20 plots in all some full plots and some halves. There are currently 5 half plots vacant and 1 full plot. All plots can be taken on ready prepared and fit to plant as all are rotovated and weed cleared by current tenants, anyone interested can contact Brian for more information, current annual rents are £15 for a full plot and £7.50 for a half. There is a strong community of allotment holders and the proposal is to encourage the formation of an Allotment Association to promote self help with ongoing debates on whether all allotments should be organic etc resolved through inclusive participation in the governance of the site.
15. There were no other matters raised and the chairman thanked everyone for attending and for their hard work within the community before closing the meeting at 8.15pm