

Fovant Annual Parish meeting 19th March 2025

Venue: Fovant Village Hall

Present: sixteen villagers of those six Parish Councillors and one County Councillor for Fovant and Chalke Valley. The clerk to Fovant Parish Council as minute taker.

Apologies: Representatives from the History group and the FIL group.

Reports: 9 written reports submitted and 5 verbal reports. 9 written reports spoken to by submitter. Two written reports not spoken to.

This report includes all the written reports with the question-and-answer session after each of the minute takers notes.

Preamble

Tony Phillips (TP), current Chair of Fovant Parish Council, was accepted as Chair of the meeting. The Report of the Annual Parish Meeting of 15 May 2024, as published on the Village Website, was accepted.

Report from Chair of the Parish Council Tony Phillips (TP)

The detailed list of current projects and plans has been updated in the Parish Council section of the Village Website. There is far too much to read out here, but I will try to outline some of the main aspects. I'll use the eleven headings in the web report, to illustrate the breadth of the work of your Parish Council.

Administration. This has been a very productive year. In July 2024 Mrs Julie Wallis joined the Council as the Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer. This was a welcome opportunity for a major reset of Council procedures including new best practice policies, installing Scribe software, Councillor training and additional training to enhance the role of the Clerk. Cllr Andy Havard resigned, and he should be remembered for energetic service spanning two decades. Two further Councillors were co-opted in July, Paula Page and Jackson Ellis. The 2023/24 FPC AGAR was reviewed by an Internal Auditor and accepted by the External Auditor. Plans are well in hand for this year's reports. Although we had been able to keep the Precept in Fovant almost unchanged over the last three financial years, Parish reserves have become seriously depleted and must now be brought back to a safe level with a small increase – an annual Council Tax addition of £22.65 on a band D rating.

Grants made to village organisations:

£1000 to Fovant Badges

£500 to the PCC

Highlights - Continuing progress on safety

- The village now has four Speed Indicator Devices SIDs to deter speeding, three at fixed locations and one being regularly moved between the A30 and the far end of Dinton Road.
- Three public access AEDs (Automated External Defibrillators) at well separated locations, in addition to the AED in the Surgery.
- The Waterside Youth Club building converted into an Emergency Hub.
- Two additional waste bins installed at the north end of the village.

Highlights - Plans for 2025/2026 Financial year

- Supportive funding to the voluntary group of gardeners to provide tools for their work at St. Georges Church.
- Supportive funding to 'Fovant Relief in Need', to support local residents who are struggling financially to cope with one off issues.
- Earmarking reserves for the 'Fovant Green' project, to rewild an area of green space in the centre of the village for use by all Fovant residents.
- Joint funding with the Southwest Wiltshire Area Board for new youth initiatives for teenagers who live in Fovant, while enabling them to access facilities in Fovant Youth Club as usual.
- Continuing pressure on County Highways engineers for projects that make our roads safer for everyone.

Website and community news. Ideas to replace the Three Towers Magazine with a printed booklet have finally failed for two reasons. First, the high printing costs would need a commitment to regular subscriptions by readers. Secondly, the one page printed monthly summaries being displayed by Martin Wallis in the Village Hall and Surgery revealed diminishing interest. Sad for those who miss having hard copy, but it is fortunate that the Village Website fills the news vacuum so successfully, and with a thoughtful Webmaster prepared to transfer news to the other digital vehicles. The website also provides an essential vehicle for the statutory publication of Parish Council notices. The death of Mrs Pauline Story seems a time to recall her valiant efforts in producing the Three Towers Magazine for so many years.

Health and Wellbeing. The Council has now purchased three public access defibrillators (AEDs) for the village, spaced to cover the long distances for some residents. In addition to the AED on the Village Hall building, there is now one at the bus stop outside Clays Orchard and in High Street on the side of the Greater Good pub. Cllr Andrew Cousley organised a public awareness raising session on 18 September 2024, provided at low cost by Paul Cosh, a professional trainer from Southwestern Ambulance Service. Money has been allocated in the 2025/26 budget for a repeat session.

Interaction with County for road safety and footpath grants. Each Area Board has a Local Highways and Footways Improvement Group LHFIFG which promotes dialogues between

parishes and county Highways Engineers - leading to 75% grant requests for specific safety improvements to local roads and footpaths. Our Council has been an energetic participant since the Group was started. Unfortunately, with the number of project applications from the 38 parishes of our Area Board increasing the annual grant budget has proved inadequate. The result is a long queue of projects often taking 2 years or more for action. The latest sticking plaster idea is to pressure a parish to pay entirely for footpath improvement themselves. (Fovant has 16 footpaths and several bridleways).

Highways achievements. 30mph Gateway signage and rumble strips have been installed on the A30 approach from Shaftesbury, and the overgrown verge was cut back to improve visibility of the 30mph sign. Rumble strips have been installed on the approach from Dinton into our 20mph limit. Increasing delays over the simplest tasks are maddening and reveal that the County has little control over their main contractor. For example, installing standard *Pedestrians in the Road* signs at the four entrance roads to our 20 mph limits is still waiting from November 2022. More white lining sections have been agreed but have been repeatedly delayed. After a four-year delay, the LHFIFG has supported Fovant in a major 'Substantive Bid' for an expensive project, a pavement buildout on the curve into High Street from the A30 - this intended to increase safety for pedestrians to and from Brook St. This would involve a change in the traffic flows. To be doubly sure about the acceptability of the proposals from the Highways Engineer, the Council convened a Working Group to take the views of a dozen residents near the junction with the A30. The great majority were positive. The results of the grant bid are expected soon.

Speeding and SIDs. Attempts to persuade police officers to visit the village to carry out speeding enforcements have continued for years but with limited success. The Police and Crime Commissioner had appointed three civilian Community Speed Enforcement Officers during his first tenure, but it has proved difficult to attract them to Fovant. They have once come to Brook St – we don't know why that choice – and had a session on the A30 with some results. But they have avoided our requests to come to the 20mph through-routes of the Tisbury Road and Dinton Road - where metrocount (tube) data from 2016 and 2021 and the data from our three fixed location SIDs show 50% of vehicles exceeding the legally enforceable speed of 24mph. Their most recent excuse is that our metro count speed measurements are more than a year old and will need to be repeated.

The attitude of the Community Police Team stationed in Warminster couldn't be more different, but they are a small team covering a huge area and have a high staff turnover. They are sympathetic about our speeding and their PCSOs have come to chat in the village several times including at the 2023 fete.

In 2024 we fully funded a fourth SID, which will be moved periodically between two locations in the 30mph section on the A30 and a third location near the Dinton Road entrance to the village.

Road drains and Foul water drains. Several years of FPC requests for Fovant road drains to be cleaned at locations prone to blockage continue to pay off, for the first time with thorough cleaning of the entire drains network. Essential in arranging gulley tanker visits is the quick reaction by the Parish Steward Simon Simms, which is down to close contact by

our Councillors starting several years ago. But for formal requests the Parish Council must use the My Wilts system like anyone else. My Wilts does not always work well but sometimes cancels a request without notification to the requester.

Despite the clearing of the drains, the Village Hall became surrounded by water during Storm Henck in early 2024, but ingress was prevented by sandbags provided by Cllrs Cousley and Wallis. The Council has a store of sandbags which can be provided to householders on request.

Determined lobbying of Wessex Water about the evidence that mains water enters parts of the foul water system stimulated a major corrective programme. A camera survey of the entire network was followed by targeted repairs of the mains water pipes and sleeve insertions to damaged parts of the drains.

Working Group among the Ward parishes on road speeds. Although there was no immediate benefit to Fovant, we understand that this helped dialogues among the villages along the Valley Road about their speed limits and the transitions from 60mph sections. This is another sign of improving mechanisms for transmitting local opinion to the powers in the County.

Emergency equipment and planning. With generous funding by SSEN for a large diesel generator we have completed the preparation of the Waterside building as a Community Emergency Hub for use by residents during severe weather or other emergencies. The Hub has power for heating and lighting, TV and cooking facilities. The village emergency plan was drawn up in conjunction with County advisers, with Cllrs Wallis and Cousley as focus points. This achievement is regarded as a Model.

Proposed Land Swap with the County. Your Council held a public meeting on 24 August 2024 to discuss the Land Swap idea. The County intends to update the Clays Orchard sheltered housing complex. The idea is that to facilitate the building work the Parish Council would transfer the playing field next to Clays Orchard back to the County, and in return the County would purchase for the Council a paddock up for sale in the centre of the village, part of the former Millbrook Trout Farm. This paddock has had an H17 open space designation for many years, and it would seem ideal as a village amenity for public use. The Council is looking at grant possibilities for the re-wilding of this land.

Increasing concerns over Wiltshire Council's planning process

Some recent planning consents and the way they are implemented by Wiltshire Council have caused concerns. The Parish Council has passed a list of questions to Ward Cllr Nabil Najjar, who has asked the Cabinet Member for Planning to arrange for a written response from the Planning department. Points covered include preventing building contractors' vehicles blocking through-roads for prolonged periods, and what seems to be an inconsistent application of Environment agency rules about potential harm to Fovant Brook.

Dr Tony Phillips, Chair, Fovant Parish Council.

Question and Answers

Q) A member of the audience asked about the potential for speed watch in the village.

A) TP answered that this was adopted in other villages but not ours due to safety concerns and lack of pavements for haven for speed watchers. TP also raised concerns about the attitude of traffic officers as they will not put resources into 20 miles per hour speed areas.

Q) Will the Parish council be addressing the ploughing of footpath 13.

A) This is on the agenda for the next parish council meeting and will be addressed there.

Verbal Report from County Councillor Nabil Najjar (NN)

Councillor Najjar gave the following updates.

- Wiltshire Council annual budget was 513 million allowing more spend into children's social care and roadways.
- This year then had achieved a balanced budget with no borrowing, selling off assets or use of its reserve.
- The rural authorities grant of 6.4 million has been removed which has led to an increase in council tax of 4.5%.
- Councillor Najjar then discussed some of the good works achieved for Fovant during the year under his administration.
 1. Support to the village for 3 new speed indicator devices.
 2. Supportive funding into the Youth club and the Village Hall.
 3. Support to the warm space's initiative.
 4. Support with the footpaths.
 5. Support with the new Fovant badges sign on the A30.
 6. Support with the Fovant Food bank.

Councillor Najjar then discussed Clays Orchard stating the present building was not Disability compliant; some studies had been completed, and proposals are being considered, he stated he did not want any residents put into temporary accommodation. He stated he is fully supportive of the Village green initiative and was optimistic this would happen.

Q) TP thanked NN for his work during the year but voiced frustration about the speeding issues and potential waste of funding, NN suggested a walking tour of the village and asking the police to come and see what the problems are, this was widely accepted.

TP also thanked NN for his help in getting answers to the long list of questions from the Parish Council about apparent inconsistencies in the treatment of planning applications. NN replied that one complication was that the portfolio holder for planning in the Wiltshire cabinet had changed twice.

There was further discussion about speeding initiatives in other villages.

Councillor Najjar then went on to thank the Parish councillors for their hard work during the year.

Report From Dr. Kinlin General Practitioner, Fovant Village.

The most striking finding when reviewing the data on patient list size, age profile and diagnostic groups is how stable it has been since last year.

Notable changes since last year –

Smoking rates down by 15%

Conversion ratio on 2WW referrals is 10% (nearer, but not yet reaching 3% ideal) with 17 new cases of cancer.

4 new cases of diabetes.

23% of patients with high blood pressure are still not treated to target.

Prescriptions of opiates and sleeping tablets reducing steadily.

Care pathways for asthma and diabetes have transformed in the last 12 months – improvements in outcomes for patients will take some time to show, but patient feedback already very encouraging. This work has been driven by recruitment of specialist respiratory and diabetic practice nurses.

Coding of carers has improved – probably because of the work of Christina Smith who now does the annual dementia review. Extended care team expanding and working well.

Telephone consultation rates reduced from last year (1402 compared with 2163 in 2023)

Monthly GP talk extended to cover Dinton in addition to Fovant. Topics covered in 2024 include interpreting blood test results, the GI tract (3 sessions), medications and how a dispensary works, the heart (2 sessions), sepsis, diabetes, asthma and COPD, infections.

The waiting room has been repainted and Fovant medical library is developing with an increasing range of books on medically related issues for patients to borrow.

COVID 5 years on

In many ways COVID has been incorporated into 'business as usual'.

Infections continue to come in waves which are non-seasonal, but in general patients are not seriously ill with COVID infection.

The ongoing immunisation programme is settling into a rhythm of twice-yearly boosters with the eligible patients varying slightly with each campaign.

A few patients remain vulnerable to the complications of COVID infection, usually due to medications which impact on the immune system. These patients are notified in advance, so

that if they have a confirmed COVID infection they can contact the surgery to arrange for referral to the specialist clinic.

A couple of patients were diagnosed with long-COVID but their symptoms have resolved or become more manageable with the support of the long-COVID clinic.

Q) A resident commented on the planting of the trees in the grounds of the surgery.

A) Dr. Kinlin confirmed they were all apple trees, befitting the name of the surgery.

Q) (TP) asked about the rise in number of sepsis locally and about delays with Salisbury Hospital

A) Dr. Kinlin responded that the increase in reporting is in line with more formal approaches in diagnosing sepsis, she went to agree there are issues with Salisbury hospital with delays in appointments however the level of 'did not attend' episodes was not helping.

Report from Mr. Howard Head teacher Dinton School.

As village Primary School has been really busy. We have 67 pupils on roll with small classes of between 20 and 25. Sixteen children who attend the school reside in Fovant. We currently have a small number of places in all year groups. Wiltshire Council provides a free bus service for pupils from Fovant to Dinton. As usual, life at the school has been very busy.

The School has been part of Acorn Academy Trust for just over a year. This has provided the school with additional challenge and support from an established trust which looks after 22 other schools. The Trust has funded additional staffing and training opportunities for staff as well as additional opportunities for pupils to participate in exciting visits experiences. The school has commissioned two pieces of artwork to display in the school. One is a 7-metre-long history timeline, which has been purchased with support from Dinton Historical Society. The second is a map with embedded photographs of the local area, including Fovant badges.

The school maintained its status as a national 'Music Mark School' and the PE 'gold standard for games.' These awards recognise the significant endeavours of staff, pupils and parents. Last academic year, pupils got to participate in 12 different sports with the school finishing in the top 3 Salisbury Schools for football, netball, tennis, cricket, swimming, hockey and orienteering.

Our eldest pupils have just returned from a residential trip to London. They got to meet their MP at parliament, walk inside Tower Bridge and see the West End production of Matilda. This summer we are performing the Jungle Book to local residents at Dinton Village Hall.

Academically the school continues to achieve very high standards with the results well above national averages.

This summer, we sadly say goodbye to two teachers who have been the bedrock of Dinton for many years. Sharon Harvey and Jan Andrews have both taught at Dinton for just over 20

years. We look forward to giving them a positive send off as they move into retirement. Impressively, there is a very strong set of applicants for the posts.

Andrew Howard – Head teacher

Q) A resident asked about the afterschool club recently started.

A) Mr. Howard gave an overview of its current usage and the activities offered.

Q) TP asked about Academy status and its impact on the school.

A) Mr. Howard stated it had given the school more autonomy financially, giving the school some flexibility with its spend.

Q) A member of the audience asked about children taking the 11+ exam

A) Mr. Howard reported that four children had sat the exam this year, he also reported that entrance to the school was increasing with nine starting into reception this year with a capacity of fifteen.

Report From Josie Green, Chair Fovant Badges Society.

Yet again this last year has flown by. The Trustees seem to be constantly in touch with each other as there is always some decision that needs prompt action. Whether it's about the investments or a query from the public it shows that not only are the Badges fondly thought of but, very importantly, show that the funds we hold ensure that the maintenance and long term appearance of the badges remain on a sound footing for many years ahead.

The trustees though are not complacent. With global climate change it will always be a challenge to conquer the elements and the impact it makes on the carvings. The volume of rainfall over the last few months have had an effect on their appearance but come the Spring I'm sure you will see the chalk come to its gleaming self once again.

The Fovant Badges always attract a lot of interest and last year was no exception. We get a lot of enquiries through our website and by direct contact. Whether it's for a talk to history groups or to school children, we really are very focused to get someone to be able to fill this role. Please let us know if there is someone willing and able to do this.

Helen Roberts our very valued trustee of several years has decided to stand down. Her role was publications and media so again if there is anyone willing to take up this role please contact me.

The television and radio programmes such as Antiques Road Trip and R4's Open Country were both aired in the last year and involved the story of how the badges came about. This is all valued publicity and ensures they will never be forgotten.

The Drumhead Service continues to be the highlight of the year, this year the date is JULY 6th as it's always held on the closest Sunday to the first day of the Battle of the Somme. But there is a change that I must emphasise and that is due to the storm damage the usual barn suffered from, the service this year will be held at WEST BARN LODGE. FOVANT. The important thing to remember is that the badges can be viewed from this location and West

Barn is within Fovant., Next year we hope to return to the barn at EAST FARM where traditionally it has been held since 1961. The rural location makes the service there unique. Our sincere thanks to both families for allowing us these venues.

I'm sure you have noticed the lovely new Information Board at the viewing layby on the A30. Not only does it give a lot of information but the content is quite varied and I'm sure you will find it appropriate . You will also read the names of the generous donations we received from individuals and organisations. We have distributed the tri-fold leaflet FBS printed last year to Salisbury and Shaftesbury Museums, the Tourist Board and Wilton House. It's available at the coin drop at the viewing lay-by and proves to be very popular.

Finally on behalf of the trustees I must thank Hoopers for their continued commitment in maintaining the unique and iconic military badges and all that they represent, without the upkeep required they would soon fade which is something we must never allow. Thank you.

José Green, Chair of The Fovant Badges Society.

Q) From TP are there any re-chalking plans this year?

A) Mrs. Green stated there was a planned programme of re chalking with maintenance starting soon, there were concerns about the Poppy however this will be addressed as part of the programme.

Q) TP stated concerns about the emblems at Sutton Mandeville because they are fading.

A) Mrs. Green stated this had been discussed however any transfer of Badges Society funds to support work on these emblems would have a significant impact on the Society's future.

Q) Mrs Green reminded Tony Phillips that she had asked him to repeat one of his lectures on the history of the badges.

A) TP said he would be pleased to do so.

Verbal Report on the Parochial Church Council from Reverend Elaine Brightwell.

Reverend Brightwell informed the meeting that:

- The current repairs to the church organ had been ongoing since June of 2024 and they continue.
- The Benefice are currently reorganising and would go from fourteen to two groups of seven.
- There have been three funerals in the past six months.
- Generally, the festivals were well attended.

She went on to thank the garden group and those who clean the church for their support and hard work.

Reverend Elaine Brightwell

Q) TP asked about her planned status in the reorganised benefice.

A) Reverend Brightwell stated she would become the Rector of Fovant.

Written Report from FIL group - Not spoken to

In April this year the FILGroup will celebrate its 10th birthday. Formed in 2015 as a modern sequel to the WI with less legislation & costs but offering the ladies of Fovant a social group, the FILGroup has gone from strength to strength with a membership averaging around 20.

Starting in 2017 the FILGroup has chosen a yearly charity and in the last 8 years has raised a massive £1750 with proceeds going to 'The Stars Appeal', the RNLI, The Douglas Arter Centre, The Trussell Trust, The Wiltshire Air Ambulance to name just a few. The FILGroup has had an active programme in the last year with talks, workshops & social events all being included. In January the Button Lady - Catherine Potter - inspired us all with her business ideas using buttons from her grandmother's inherited button collection. The FILGroup made some exciting purchases including bags, aprons, belts & many, many more unusual button items. A welcome return was made by the Wiltshire beekeeper Fred Swift who gave us all a fascinating insight into the problems of maintaining a bee population ranging from too much rain or too cold for the bees to forage, to problems associated with the Asian hornet invasion. The RNLI who the FILGroup sponsored for this year's charity told us amongst many other fascinating facts, how much it cost to provide the offshore rescue service - who knew that a Shannon lifeboat cost £2.7 million pounds all raised solely from donations? On a dismal winter afternoon local garden designer & Chelsea gold medal winner Alex Graham told the group all about the National Garden Scheme & the 3300 gardens which were expected to be part of the scheme in 2024. Ele Milwright founder and CEO of the charity Warrior Equine gave the group a fascinating talk in September on the amazing healing power of horses particularly with patients suffering PTSD from the effects of war. This was followed in October with a return visit from clinical psychologist Professor Nigel North who once again gave up his time to talk to the group, entitled '5 a day keeps the shrink away' - nothing to do with fruit & veg but the benefits of relaxation exercises for all patients suffering different forms of mental health. 'Annie's Just Jane' visited us on a very snowy night in January but it was anything but chilly in the hall as Annie's daughter Carys entertained us with all thing's lingerie. In February the FILGroup moved its meeting to Wilton House Garden Centre for a talk by one of the head gardeners preceded by coffee and cakes. Hands on workshops were also popular with lots of active hands making delightful bonnets for Easter wearing them at the Mad March Tea party later in the afternoon. A reusable style of wreath was made for autumn or Christmas at the November meeting. The summer of 2024 saw 12 ladies take part in the yearly outing - this time to The Vyne in Hampshire and an enjoyable trip was had by all to the house and grounds followed by a very sociable light lunch. Even the weather was kind allowing all the attendees to fully explore the grounds before the rain arrived for the drive home. In July the FILGroup welcomed members and friends to gather in the sunny garden of Gervase House for the annual garden party. Canapés and snacks were provided by the committee accompanied by a glass or two of summery rose wine. The FILGroup annual Christmas Party was held in the village hall in early December. Members, partners & friends enjoyed welcome Prosecco & canapés followed by a hot & cold buffet and choice of desserts Dinner was followed by entertainment from the 'Fovant Ladies Aloud'. A very successful evening enjoyed by all.

Our future programme should prove to be equally as varied including a summer outing to Athelhampton House near Dorchester, the annual garden party in July, a talk by the Guide Dogs for the Blind, an art workshop and many, many more.

The FILGroup is always looking for additional members & with the annual subscription still £25 for 11 meetings we think it is excellent value. It is also possible to attend any meeting by paying £5 on the door. The entrance includes tea, coffee & biscuits & often a glass of wine or Prosecco. The FILGroup now meets mainly in the village hall on a Wednesday at 6.30pm but some of the events require necessary changes so please check the calendar or adverts around the village for details of each event.

Linda Bailey

Not present to take questions

Report from Fovant Village Hall from Celia Haselgrove.

The main concern for the village hall this year has been the increase in rainfall and the worry of flooding in the hall. We had a flood survey carried out and on this evidence, we decided to install barriers at the doors. This has not been straightforward because all of our doors open outwards to allow quick evacuation in the event of a fire and barriers are designed to be fitted to the outside. After much discussion it was decided that the barriers would be put on the outside and installed if extreme weather was forecast.

You may remember that last year I spoke about the ingrained dirt on the hall floor. Again we asked for advice and as you can see the floor has been sanded and revarnished. As long as we use the recommended floor cleaner the varnish should prevent this happening again.

Our other concern is the drop in hirings. There are not enough bookings to cover the running costs of the village hall and if it were not for the committee putting on events, the maintenance of the hall and the costs for equipment would soon become a problem.

This week is Village Halls Week and the committee have arranged a Music Night on Friday followed by an Open Day on Saturday between 2.00 and 5.00 pm. This event has been well advertised with a leaflet drop to every house explaining why we are doing this and the committee hope for a good response.

Having two venues for events in the village, the Village Hall and The Waterside, is bound to cause problems with funding for both but although we have tried, we cannot work out how to run a joint event especially with a dangerous junction between the two buildings.

Events arranged by the committee this year have been the very successful Quiz night in October with a most delicious Thai Curry made by Moon, the Christmas Ploughman's lunch in December and a Cheese and Wine Tasting at the end of January which was over-subscribed. The Pound Arts event at the beginning of December had to be cancelled due to the weather and also lack of bookings. The hall is used every week for Pilates, tap and Yoga as well as for the regular Thursday morning coffee, Cheryl's Open Door on a Tuesday morning and Breakfast on Saturdays. The Coffee morning and Open Door are open for anyone to drop in for coffee and a chat. Numbers have dropped which is strange for such

welcoming events. Coffee morning is at 10.00 am for an hour and only 50p for coffee or tea and biscuits and all ages are welcome. Open Door is from 10.00 til 12.00am and mostly for people who would like more company and the chance for laughter, but everyone is more than welcome. There's also the chance to browse the library for something to your liking.

I would like to thank the committee for all their support this year and to thank Linda Bailey, who is no longer on our committee, but has been a staunch supporter of the hall and who has done such a lot to make the hall the warm and inviting place it is today along with her husband Ray who has willingly done many small maintenance jobs.

Celia Haselgrove

Q) A resident asked about car parking.

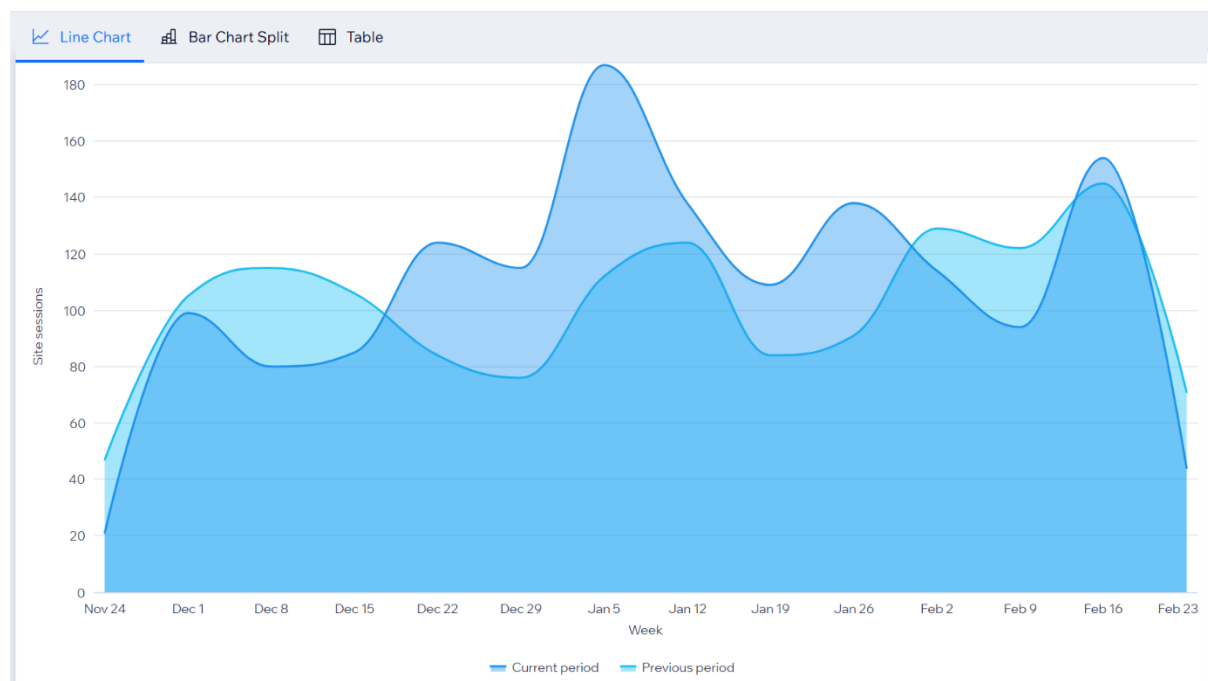
A) Mrs Haselgrove stated this was not an issue.

Report on the Fovant Village Website from Derryn Hinks

The Fovant village website has been in existence for 4 years now, providing relevant, up to date and useful information on local events, groups, resources and facilities. It has an established audience and the usage figures, which were already very positive show a steady increase on last year.

From Feb 2024 – Feb 2025, the site has attracted 5,529 Unique Site Visits (compared to 2,829 in the period March to March of 2023 – 24 last year) which is impressive considering there are approximately 734 people in the total population of Fovant.

Chart below shows number of visitors to the website over the last 90 days & compares to last year.



The most visited page is the Homepage and the average time spent here is 5mins 32 secs. The homepage is popular because it contains details of upcoming events and the village calendar. The second most visited sections are The Parish Council Planning & Minutes pages, and Village Walks.

Over the past year there has been a shift in the balance of devices being used to access the site. Initially, when the site was set up 4 years ago, 45% of visitors used a Desktop pc to access the website; 43% used their mobile phone and 10% their tablet. Now this has moved to 44% Desktop, 50% mobile and 7% tablet. As a result, design features were added to the website to ensure the mobile view was clearer. Most of the traffic to the site continues to arrive via Google - 58%; with 38% from a Direct search and 4% via Facebook.

The annual running costs of the website should not increase this year compared to last. The website costs are met by the Fovant Parish Council.

All content, design, development and maintenance of the site is carried out voluntarily at the current point in time.

Of further note:-

External agencies and organisations continue to find our website and request to be linked to it. The Marketing & Advertising Managers of 'Experience Salisbury', Shaftesbury Arts Centre, 'The New Vic' in Tisbury & 'Village Buzz'.

A new section on 'Education' was added to the website this year, along with regulatory pages for the Fovant Parish Council.

Local groups send posters and requests to advertise their activities to the webmaster and any changes requested are made promptly. Organisers do not have to wait for publication & this means the website is responsive to local needs.

When new pages, news or events are published & flagged on Fovant Facebook this increases traffic to the site

The contact email address linked to the website is used daily by people for queries, bookings & questions which the webmaster responds to.

The existence of the website will continue to provide value and crucial evidence for grant applications for the village e.g. Area Board, Wiltshire Community Fund and National Lottery & others which arise throughout the year.

Derryn Hinks – Webmaster of www.fovantvillage.com

Q) A resident asked if the website could have a 'push' facility to the site?

A) Mrs Hinks stated no, it was not a magazine website but was there to give information to residents who accessed it. Mrs Hinks went on to say she spends considerable time working on the content all on a voluntary basis and she is looking to reduce her input into the site, she confirmed she will continue to support the Parish Clerk to learn to navigate the site for the parish council side.

Report From the History group – Not spoken to

Background to the report Fovant History Interest Group was established more than 20 years ago with the following purposes:

- To do further research on the history of Fovant from external sources as well as from local residents and ex-residents.
- To index the historical records and images of Fovant and make them available via a website and publications.
- To interest the residents of Fovant in the history of their village by organising or being involved in events.

Membership has always been open to anyone in any location wishing to learn more about any aspect of the village's history or to provide any information about the same.

Membership Mary Kirman remains in the role of Chairperson that she took over in 2021. Nicola Matthews remains in the role of Treasurer that she took over in 2021. Rupert Williamson remains in charge of the website www.fovanthistory.org, which he also took over in 2021, and receives any emails sent to the group via the website, dealing with them as needed. Sue Kent has had to step back from active involvement in the group owing to family commitments and so Mary Kirman has taken over the changing of the themed "Fovant Then" display boards. Liz Harden remains actively involved in the group and we regularly draw on her extensive knowledge and large collection of documents and photographs as a consultant. Activity in the past year Activity of the group in the past year has included:

- The themed "Fovant Then" display boards in their new lightweight snapframes have been rotated as follows: June to October 2024 Fovant Village Stores – 'Shops' Spring Orchard Surgery – 'Employment' 1 Spring Orchard Surgery – 'Watercress Beds' October 2024 to January 2025 Fovant Village Stores – 'Opportunity Knocks' January 2025 to date Fovant Village Stores – 'Public Services' Spring Orchard Surgery – 'Education' June 2024 to date The Greater Good – 'General Pictures' (unable to be changed owing to the pub's closure)
- As the group's Chairperson, Mary Kirman attended the newcomers' coffee morning held at the Village Hall on 22nd June 2024, and sold some of the "Fovant – Pages from our History" books to people who had recently moved into the village.
- On Sunday 21st July 2024 the group held an Open Garden event at 1 Mill Orchard Cottages, Mary Barter Lane, Fovant, the home of Rupert Williamson, with entry by donations to the Fovant History Interest Group. The event included a new display on St. George's Church for visitors to see, which contained information and pictures about the history of the church building itself, about its stained-glass windows, about the bells and about the six Rectors who held the living in turn from 1836 to 1958. Unfortunately, despite publicising the event on posters around the village, online on NextDoor and on the Fovant Village website, the numbers attending were less than hoped for – 25 in total. However, the event was blessed with good weather and those who did visit were very positive in their comments, having admired the beautiful terraced garden which was in full bloom, enjoyed

the refreshments that were available and found the historical information that was on show extremely interesting.

- Carrying out the research into the Rectors of Fovant for this new display has led to a very useful contact with the granddaughter of Reverend Robert Usher, who was Rector here from 1919 to 1942. He lived in The Rectory on Church Lane with his wife Alice and her older sister Mary – all buried in the churchyard - and their twelve children, two of whom are commemorated on Fovant's war memorial.
- Coincidentally, in January 2025 the group was contacted by Andrew Amos who has converted the logbook / diary of Reverend Alfred Earle, when he was travelling around North America in the early 1870's, into a book. Reverend Earle was also one of the Rectors researched for the display on St. George's Church, as he was curate here from 1873 to 1890, and then Rector from 1890 to 1898. Copies of the book have been purchased, and the display will be updated with the new information it contains about the life of Reverend Earle.
- The group has also been contacted by Robert Chalke, who lived in Wilton but was a member of Fovant Band in its heyday in the 1950's when it was led by Reginald Dicker who had been a musician in the Household Cavalry and had performed at the pantomimes put on at Buckingham Palace by the then Princesses Elizabeth and Margaret. He has offered to provide additional information about Fovant Band for the group's records.
- A link to the Fovant History Interest Group's website www.fovanthistory.org has now been placed prominently on the Fovant Village website which has increased traffic.
- The layout of the Fovant History Interest Group's website has been updated and improved to make it more visually appealing and easier to navigate.
- Mary Kirman has completed the research into the current whereabouts of all the 89 individual lots of the Fovant Estate, sold off by the Earl of Pembroke in the auction held at The White Hart in Salisbury on 27th August 1919. This involved matching the numbered lots on the map of the village in the Village Hall to the descriptions of each lot in the original auction catalogue, and then noting which buildings remain where they were on that date and which newer buildings now stand on what were then mainly fields and orchards. Future plans
- The group plan to hold another Open Garden event on Sunday 6th July 2025 at 1 Mill Orchard Cottages from 12.00 until 5.00 pm, with entry by donations again. There will be displays about the history of the village to view and refreshments will again be available. It is hoped to increase attendance by putting flyers through the doors of all the houses in the village.
- The new lessee of The Greater Good has expressed strong interest in making a feature of the history of the village in part of the pub, and so the group is hoping that some of the interesting artefacts from World War 1 which form part of Margaret McKenzie's collection, currently in storage, can be returned for display there. These artefacts were removed approximately 18 years ago as the landlord at the time did not want them.

Contact details: info@fovanthistory.org Mary Kirman – Chairperson maryk@the-people-element.com 01722 714930 Liz Harden – For any individuals with queries or wanting to view items in her collection lizjoh87@gmail.com 01722 714253

Not present to take questions

Report From Fovant Youth Club from Clive Roberts Chair of Fovant Youth Club

Another busy year for the Youth Club and this report looks at three areas:

- Events
- Clubs
- Looking Forward

Events

The two major events of the last 12 months for us were the nerf gun event at East Farm and the Children's Christmas crafts. The Nerf Gun event was arranged primarily to maintain awareness of the Youth Club and to see if something delivered by a third party would be of interest – and it was. My thanks here to the SWWAB, who help fund this. The Christmas crafts was on a slightly smaller scale than some previous Christmas events, however it proved popular with the younger age range that we cater for.

Clubs

Turning to the clubs that we run ourselves, the Toddlers Club has been suspended as the babies and toddlers became eligible for more formal day care and moved on to nurseries. For whatever reason, there has been a lull in new people wishing to take the opportunity to use the toddlers club. The Juniors is now also suspended as we do not have the volunteers to run it and the numbers attending had also taken a downturn.

Looking forward

Returning to the *nerf* gun event that we ran in the autumn, Wilts Council, through the SWWAB initiated with the FPC, and the parish councils of Broad Chalke and Bishopstone, funding for some events across the villages, not unlike the nerf gun event. Dates and events are still to be finalised, although they will take place between now and the autumn. The proviso with the SWWAB funding is that it must predominantly be for those in the 13-18 age range. There's likely to be 3 Fovant based events, so we are considering two of the events which we can open up to some u13s. At this stage, please watch this space.

Finally, I thank all the Committee members and our volunteers who have helped over the past year, but as always, we are always looking for more people to help.

No Questions

Verbal Report on the Chapel and the Food Bank

David Horne reported that works were planned for this year to the Chapel and comprised of a new toilet, upgrades in heating and further damp proofing.

David went on to say that the original Food bank cited in the Chapel had now moved to Wilton Community Centre, it continues to work well and is continuing to see usage from all the surrounding villages.

David Horne

No questions.

Verbal report on Fovant Relief in Need (FRIN) verbal from Tony Phillips

Tony Phillips gave a brief overview as to the back ground of FRIN and spoke about how it was being revitalized. He stated he had written an overview of the charity for the Village Buzz, he encouraged villagers to make donations to the charity which is there to help villagers who find themselves in need of support.

Tony Phillips.

No questions.

Emergency hub verbal report Martin Wallis

Martin Wallis gave an overview of the HUB which is sited in the Fovant Youth Club and will be opened when and if there is need in the village such as flooding, loss of electricity etc. The Hub will provide a warm space for potentially displaced residents to access power to charge phones, be updated on the situation in hand, access ping dinners and obtain warm drinks.

Martin Wallis.

Q) From a resident will the Hub be open to individuals in need?

A) Yes

Fete – No activity. TP said he understood that it is now too late to organize a fete for summer 2025, and if a fete is to be held in 2026 an organising committee will need to be established in order to access held over funds.

Fovant community – No activity

Fovant network – No activity