

Annual Parish Meeting Reports 13th May 2019

FONTMELL MAGNA & DISTRICT SOCIETY

We have had another interesting season of talks, including two from village residents Jethro Lyne and Margaret Marande. We finished with a remarkable lady who spent her whole life following a career as a dressmaker and was dressmaker to the queen for over 30 years. In common with some other groups in the village we are finding difficulty in attracting new members especially to serve on the committee so if you would like to join us please contact our secretary Fiona Thomas.

FONTMELL MAGNA PUBLIC AMENITY SITE TRUST

The main activity has been maintenance of the site to enable it to be enjoyed by the community and any visitors. We are lucky to have the help of Gary Payne to do this, he keeps the grass near to the car park cut so that people can use the picnic table and bench. The picnic table has been repaired with new wooden slats for the benches. With the increased traffic in Mill Street during work on the C13 the bank by the roadside is being steadily eroded by vehicles squeezing past each other at this point. We hope that the situation will return to normal when the work finishes at the end of the month.

VILLAGE HALL – ANNUAL UPDATE MAY 2019

The Village Hall has had a number of Trustee changes this year with the retirement of Chris Bellers and Carl Johnson and the election of a new Chairman, myself (Rosie-Anne Yates), Lisa Le Druillenec as Secretary, Kim Masters as Playground Rep, Pippa Bealing as Booking Manager and with continued support from Dick Stainer as our Treasurer and Leo Williams as our President. I am also very grateful to the user group representatives for giving their time to support such an important village facility.

This year we have been focussing on raising funds, primarily for the updating of the playground and set up the Playground Appeal in October 2018 in order to replace the equipment and surface.

Our first fundraising event was the Christmas Fayre which was really well supported, with good trade reported by the stall holders (who all wish to return this year), a queue of children visiting Santa's Grotto, a very successful hamper raffle and brisk business with food and drink. We raised through income and donations just over £2000.00 bolstered by our registration for Gift Aid. We aim to build on this and announce that the second Christmas Fayre will be on **Saturday 30 November 2019**

Other fundraising efforts are taking place through grant applications to Hall & Woodhouse, Tesco and Waitrose to name a few. We have also received a very generous donation from Maureen Knies who nominated our appeal for donations in memory of her late husband Don.

With the help of a very generous donation from the Parish council and the Appeal Fund money, work has begun on the playground. The money has been spent on repairing rotten wooden posts on the main climbing frame, replacing the edging board, removing the old dirty wood chip and purchasing a new blue rubber chip surface that will last 15 years. This would not have been possible without the hard work from a team lead by Dick Stainer and Gary Payne, assisted by Chris Bellers, Tim Le Druillenec, Annie Newbury, Robin East and Geoff Gendall. Thank you.

Improvements to the hall have started with the purchase of a hearing loop and we hope to have this installed shortly. Training courses on how the loop works will be provided to all users and any other interested party. The on going maintenance has also kept us busy. All

this is paid for by the income generated from the regular users for which we are very grateful for their continuing support.

We are in the process of creating our own website which will allow us to link to all social media platforms promoting the village hall, the regular events, as well as a venue for wedding receptions and birthday parties. The one off events provide very valuable income that contributes to the modernising and maintenance of the hall. Any referrals are greatly received!

Finally, I would like to extend an invitation to the whole village. We will be hosting a Garden Party on **Saturday 31st August 2019**. This will give us an opportunity to show case our appeal and thank the village for their continued support. We hope to see as many of you as possible on the day.

ST ANDREW'S CHURCH

We continue to have services in Fontmell Magna each Sunday and while there has been a very slight decline in Sunday attendance, the attendances for Christmas, Easter and Harvest have by contrast increased.

The value of the presence of the church in village life is shown by the large number of weddings and funerals over the past year.

Each year the School continues to hold its regular 5 services in the church and we again provided the 'Christmas Experience' event for the Junior School which was greatly appreciated.

Sunday breakfast has become well established and everyone is welcome to come along whether they attend church or not.

Our Friday coffee mornings continue and we thank Jennie Jones for managing the coffee arrangements for so many years.

Good Friday again saw us carrying a cross to hold a short service by the Gossip Tree.

Without doubt our biggest social event of last year was the Auction of Promises to raise money for our boiler which had reached the end of its life. This was very successful and naturally we are grateful for all who contributed so willingly.

This year saw the 100 year anniversary of the end of the First World War and many in the village got out their knitting needles and created enough poppies to make an impressive display of knitted poppies in the church, while on the main road 'silent soldiers' appeared.

The community carol singing grows every year, this is much enjoyed by those who come to sing around the village and hopefully by those who open their doors to listen.

As in previous years we continue in our belief that it is our mission to assist those in need and this year the main recipients of donations were The Leprosy Mission for their work in Nepal, the Trussell Trust (the local food bank charity) and Tearfund (for the crisis in Mozambique), all of which were match-funded by the UK Government.

Thanks as always go to all those who maintain the church and keep things going, to those who faithfully maintain the churchyard, to those who clean, the tea-makers, flower-arranger, grass cutters and bell-ringers – you are all very much appreciated and we could not do without you.

GARDEN CLUB

At our AGM last November we had 4 officers from the committee stand down and being still 2 short on said committee it gave us quite a challenging start to the year. I am pleased to

report however our meetings have gone extremely well with some excellent speakers, a new photo competition each month and a very supportive membership which has now grown to about 64.

We have an outing planned in June to visit the wonderful Subtropical Gardens at Abbotsbury and plans are well under way for the Garden Show on the 10th August.

We have also forged a relationship with the school and I pleased to say our first joint venture will take place tomorrow with 36 children visiting 4 gardens in the village as part of their 'Gardner's World' project. We are also encouraging the school to partake in some of the categories at the Garden Show.

I finish this report with a plea to the village - like so many organizations in communities such as ours we are reliant on volunteers to step forward. Like the beautiful countryside all around us, it is managed, cared for and it flourishes and is enjoyed by us all, surely that is what we need for our councils, clubs and our neighbours.

MOVIOLA

Another good year for Moviola although audience numbers have dropped some 5% on the previous year. Our most popular film was 'The Bookshop' starring Bill Nighy. We think the cold Winter did not help to encourage people to leave home and we are also mindful that different films will appeal to different people, we try to select a variety in the hope that there will be something for everyone. The bar continues to be a popular feature of the evening!

As always thanks must go to our audience for their continued support, the committee, Perry's for their help with the posters and Rick & Jan for kindly acting as our "Box Office". We will receive the new Autumn film menu in June and full details of the future programme will be published in the Gossip Tree once the titles have been confirmed.

FONTMELL MAGNA VILLAGE ARCHIVE SOCIETY

Like many other village clubs/societies, the Archive Society is in great need of new members. In the words of our Chairman, Roger Hillman, "our group of active members is ageing and diminishing". Two of our members, Geoffrey Tapper and Helena Rigby, sadly died recently.

Despite that, work goes on, with regular articles in The Gossip Tree and updates to our database. We also field queries that come in from anyone researching their family history. This year, we were involved in a visit by the family of evacuees to the Rectory during WW2 and we were able to give them more information about the locality as well as liaise with the owner of Fontmell House to allow them access to where they used to live. We were also able to assist a gentleman researching his ancestors and managed to not only find where they lived in Kit Hill but also to identify relatives he did not know about. We don't always uncover the ideal family – as he said: "When people call me a bastard, at least I'll know it's in my blood."

In the long-term, we are working on a project 'Houses through History', which is an attempt to list and annotate all the properties in the Parish, but more researchers are needed! This was intended to be the subject of our next Exhibition in July but, as progress has been slow, the Exhibition will instead feature a number of diverse subjects. These include:

- A history of the Cross Tree/Gossip Tree
- Emigration
- Fontmell Magna and the Workhouse
- Fontmell Bridges (we have identified over 40 in the Parish, though not all will be featured)
- The Ramblers – Fontmell's very own rock band
- Wills of Fontmell Yeoman
- The 1939 Register
- A history of the turnpike between Shaftesbury and Blandford

- The Big Freeze of 1978
- Springhead Tree-Planting

In addition, we hope to have a stand by the Weymouth & Portland Metal Detecting Club exhibiting finds in Fontmell, and also some information by the White Hart Link with the latest on the Blandford to Shaftesbury trail.

The Exhibition, entry to which is free, runs from Thursday 17th July to Sunday 21st July, 10.00am to 4.00pm.

The Gossip Tree May 2019

The February 2019 edition of The Gossip Tree was the 300th edition and marked its 25th anniversary - the first issue edited by Peter Hood, was published on 20th March 1994. We were delighted to be able to celebrate this milestone by linking with St Andrews School students who offered us their thoughts on 'Being part of Fontmell Magna'. They produced delightful pieces and it was a pleasure to be able to focus specifically on these young members of the community. In recognition of their thoughtful work the school was presented with two colourful and hopefully, enjoyable books for the library.

Gossip tree finances are satisfactory this year and have been consistent with expenditure over previous years. We have sufficient funds to cover costs until 2020 thanks to donations and sponsorship. Emma at the Iwerne Valley Benefice Church Office prints the paper copies which cost 10p each with a print run of 291. In addition, 95 households receive the Gossip Tree by email which certainly saves on some expenditure.

The Gossip Tree depends entirely on volunteers – the generous individual sponsors; Sue, who collects the printed copies from Iwerne each month and distributes them to the hardworking band of 15 people who deliver throughout most of the parish in all sorts of weather; the regular contributors who write on weather patterns, gardening, club reports and local history; the people who put together special editions and Gay who compiles the Directory. Amelia, GT treasurer and I are very lucky to work with Chris who is such a fair, conscientious and careful volunteer editor. Thank you so much to everyone involved.

We hope that the community finds the Gossip Tree useful and interesting. Each issue is headed 'News and Views from the Parish of Fontmell Magna' and news seems to make up the major proportion of the content. Fresh ideas, constructive comments and additional contributions are welcomed as would be some additional sponsorship. Currently sponsorship is £30 per issue except for the Chimes edition which is in colour and therefore a bit more expensive to produce.

Finally, we would like to hear from anyone who can deliver to Fontmell Hill, the western part of Hartgrove or Kit Hill as people living in these parts of the parish are not receiving paper copies currently. This is a once a month commitment.

To get in touch about any of these matters or to receive an electronic copy (saving paper and costs) please see the editor's contact details published in every issue with deadline dates.

Barbara Humphreys, Chair, The Gossip Tree