

**THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING
HELD ON FRIDAY 16th MAY 2025
IN THE VILLAGE HALL, SOUTHROP AT 6.30PM**

ANNUAL REPORT

This is NOT a Council meeting; it is a meeting of the residents of Southrop Village. The format of the meeting provides the opportunity for local organisations to report directly to the people of Southrop. Residents will have the chance to ask questions, in an open forum. Refreshments will be available.

Apologies for absence.

Apologies received from County Cllr Morris

Cllr Guest welcomed all those that were in attendance. He reminded everyone that this was not a parish council meeting but an informal meeting allowing village organisations to report directly to the village. A chance to ask questions after each report. Refreshments were also available.

Reports received from the following:-

SOUTHROP PARISH COUNCIL

SPC MEETINGS - 6 this year, as usual, covering issues affecting the village.

SPC FINANCES

Opening balance at 1/4/2024 £22,100

Closing balance at 1/4/2025 £19,433 (£32,047 after receipt of main tranche of Precept in April)

Significant items of expenditure in the year:

-£8,000 of the £12,000 grant for VH improvements approved last year fell just into this year

-£1,400 p.a. Grass cutting contract with Willow Gardening

-£1,000 grant to PTA towards purchase of school bus

-£720 second speed camera and related items

-£560 planning advice

-£420 repair kit for village marquee

PRECEPT

Up from £14,500 to £16,000. Increase of just under £5/year (4.6%) for average Band D property

HIGHWAYS

Little to report. The state of the Oxfordshire road to Filkins is a real issue. It seems the SPC will need to escalate once more to get them to maintain their road.

PLANNING

Not too much to report here.

The Council look at every planning application and comment on some. Objections in the past year have been minimal. Probably the most important one, considered by the PC just before this meeting, is the recent application to remove the sewage treatment plant in Wadham Close and replace it in a slightly different approved location. SPC does, of course, support this.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

No further developments since those reported at our 27/3/2025 SPC meeting (item 117)

SPEEDING AND CAMERAS

As most of you will know, Peter Brickley and Russ Giles have been hugely involved in the new camera system and the pursuit of speeders. I would like to thank them both on behalf of the village and ask them for an update. The oldest camera pointing east near the village hall has almost reached its 1st anniversary.

We used to get 50+ speeders there per day and that has dropped to about 10 a day - suggesting 97% of traffic now does less than 25mph. Speeders get Police letters and van companies are written to or rung by the SPC.

The second camera has now been up for a few months, pointing west beside the school. This is catching 60-70 speeders a day, and the higher speeds are in the 30s mph, some 40. It appears the speeds are slowly dropping, probably for the same reasons as the first camera, giving hope that it will also calm the traffic. It is, however, clear that this road is as dangerous as we first thought. There is one company who has sped 16 times now and ignores our requests to slow down. Their customer is Thyme, and we thank Thyme for asking that company to act more responsibly and slow down. There are still a few hardcore speeders, typically SUVs, commuting through the village and it must be worth asking the Police to consider an actual speed trap to start getting points on their licenses. Villagers are very law abiding!

For only the SPC only - An aside - At some stage the SPC needs to discuss how this workload is shared, because currently it has fallen on 2 of us. I have probably verified/deleted about 20000 speeders and have been doing it daily -

whether at work, in hospital, on holiday or weekend. Not sure this arrangement is tenable for another year....

ANNUAL LITTER PICK

This was held on 5/6 April weekend with over 30 volunteers from the village. A wide area was covered linking into other local litter picks such as Eastleach. Many thanks to all who participated, especially Colin Medley who, as previously, made a massive contribution kindly involving the use of his lorry to round up dozens of bags of litter and other items.

COMMUNITY EMERGENCY PLAN (CEP)

Cllr Brickley also reported on the CEP – (Community Emergency Plan).

All parish councils are encouraged to draw up an outline plan of action to cover any emergency that may arise. These could be, for example, the effects of extreme weather or loss of power or water for protracted length of time. This plan is not a public document and not binding in any way. It is lodged with CDC for information only and contains contact details of parish councillors and locations of public buildings within the village which could be used as a place of safety if needed. We are grateful to local institutions, businesses and farmers who have informed us of any help they would be able to offer should it be necessary.

FLOOD WARDEN REPORT

Cllr Cathy Brickley kindly volunteered to be our Flood Warden. Cathy reported as follows:

The Parish Council has been trying to find solutions to the Eastleach Rd flooding for about two years now. Ditches and drains have been cleared by Glos Highways and are working well. Due to increased heavy rainfall the system is no longer adequate, and it has been suggested that the only course would be to slow down the run - off from the surrounding fields. We are considering if it is feasible to progress this as an idea, given the potentially high cost and the question of gaining the necessary co-operation of the parties involved.

Following multiple approaches made to the council, the potential for the road to flood near the bridge at the eastern end of the village has been reduced by work completed to the watercourse and banks. A notice letter was eventually sent by CDC to the landowner with riparian responsibility for this stretch.

FETE

This year the Parish Council have taken on the responsibility for managing the Fete which will be held on June 7th 2025.

Publicity is underway and all the main attractions are booked, including Morris dancers, magician, kids inflatable, antique valuer, school country dancing etc. Several companies are taking "trade stalls" and donating for the pleasure. Each of the 4 village institutions are on the committee, and all very active. We have received strong donations and sponsorship. Villagers, our stalwarts, are pledging their help once more. We could do with more volunteers, "many hands make light work". The duck race is being reinstated.

If any one would like to discuss the fete please contact Peter
peterjohnbrickley@gmail.com

DISTRICT COUNCIL REPORT

1. The next step on devolution

We now have a newly elected shadow County Council which will be operating for the next two years delivering adult social care, roads and infrastructure maintenance, education and health provision whilst at the same time working with the 6 District Councils to shape the Council/s structure for the future.

The Country has a huge budget of £650m to deliver these services. You were recently bombarded by election material from all the political parties. Some picking up on national themes such as immigration, the cost of living and the NHS and some or rather one saying the recent election was all about the shape of our County and democratic representation going forward.

With a County Council now run by 26 Lib Dems and the Greens 10 / Reform 9, it will be interesting and challenging to see how this plays out.

As your District Councillor, my main focus is serving our community and in the Council Chamber to act as an effective member of the official opposition. Whilst as Conservatives, we might wish to be part of the ruling administration on the District and County Councils, that is not the will of the electorate to whom we are accountable to.

2. What has happened on CDC over the last 12 months

CDC have continued to provide planning, waste collection, social housing and leisure services on a budget of £15m. My role is to liaise with the PC, attend PC meetings and to be the link in the democratic chain between the PC, CDC and GCC. It has been a challenging year financially with the restructuring of the waste service and the reintegration of staff from Publica back into CDC.

The upside is we now have more planning staff and a new head of planning. Costs have had to be reduced resulting in things such reducing the number of public loos, closing VICs and increased charges on planning and car parking have also been necessary.

CDC has also adopted the Govt's recommendation to double the council tax on second homes such that the average cost has increased from £2,680 to £5,541

3. The budget and plans for 2025/ 26 and beyond

CDC gets its income from council tax, central govt core funding, fees and charges and grants such as the New Homes Bonus. Because of a very poor Govt settlement the burden on funding the Council falls back on us. This has meant a 2.99% increase in CDC Council tax, the green bin service at £69.00 per year, car parking increases on longer stay car parks and less public loos which when combined will save £625k per annum.

The key challenges for next year are to finalise the local plan, integrate Publica and start to work with the County to finalise the shape of the new County Council going forward.

District Councillor David Fowles

e-mail:- david.fowles@cotswold.gov.uk or text me on 07747 012256

SOUTHROP PRIMARY SCHOOL

This year started with some significant changes. The first being that Julia McLellan, who was Co-Head teacher with me returned to her teaching role. We had worked collaboratively for 5 years and with her contribution we had move the school forward not just in learning styles and children's wellbeing and nurture but also physically. This was done by developing the site, significantly the lowering of the Swan classroom ceiling, adding LED lighting throughout the school and adding a new boiler, all contributing to reducing our Carbon footprint.

We had also a change in teaching in the Cygnets as my office commitment had increase. Shelley Davis joined the team. She specialises in EYFS with experience in small schools and mixed age teaching. To add to the changes, we had 5 new governors. These were taken from all parts of our school community and all bring talents which will help move the school forward. At this point Judith Giles, who was our chair, stood down. Judith has been a great support over the last academic year, ensuring she was a listening ear but also a critical friend. We therefore currently have a space for a Foundation Governor. This is a governor that is nominated from the church and agreed to by Gloucestershire Diocese.

With all these changes it is important to consider the vision and Christian values of the school. Reverend Andrew Cinnamond and I started this journey and with consultation from children, staff, parents and the community we have adapted the vision. We consider the swan a true representation of Southrop and the school so this has been kept however our focus is the wings. The children are encouraged to use and understand this biblical quote from Isaiah

Those who hope in The Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.

Isaiah 40:31

We have then adapted our strap line to Giving Wings to Fly.

We had a launch day and the children voted for and completed activities linked to our three Christian values, Friendship, Forgiveness and Courage.

We now have three new school houses Madella (Forgiveness) Long (Friendship) and Parks (Courage).

The school is moving forward and developing. With a marked improved curriculum and resources the children are flourishing. This is evident with our little wins within the community as well as in the data! This year we have won the Lechlade Library Poetry Competition. The Gloucestershire Photography competition, both at primary level and as a school, and are through to the next round of the Gloucestershire Wildlife quiz. In the Gloucestershire Mock Trial we also would two prizes.

I also want to recognise the dedication and determination of our PTA, parents and children who came out in force when we need to buy our mini bus. Our mini bus is so important to the day to day running of the school and the enrichment to our curriculum, it is a necessity for our children to get to swimming and to forest school. The PTA set about getting sponsorship while our parents and children started fundraising in the 2025 challenge, raise £20.25 in January.

I think it is apparent that the school is thriving and has a strong community supporting it. This has encouraged a number of new families to join the school. We started this academic year with 36 children on role, we are now at 42. Next academic year we have 5 children joining us in reception. Most schools are seeing a decline in numbers, due to a lower birth rate, and although not at our maximum of 8, 5 is above half and more than we have had in the last couple of years.

That then brings me to the last bit of my report. Southrop School has hit a massive mile stone of 175 years. Although the original trust deeds are lost to history, we know there has been a school on our site for 175 years. We will be marking this on the 27th June. The children will be research different periods of history through 175 years and will then be part of a church service, with Bishop Robert attending. After church we will be returning to our spiritual garden where Bishop Robert will bless a piece of art work the children will have created during the week. Please look out for information after half term 2nd June onwards.

Megan Davies & Dale Hall
Head Teachers & Chair of Governors

JUBILEE CLOSE COMMITTEE AND SELECTION OF NEW COMMITTEE

Activities on the field (apart from general exercise and dog walking)
Clanfield FC girls and boys football teams and children from the School have used the field regularly, residents have held (predominantly children's) social events and Dog Agility (a dog-training/grading organisation) rented the field for five days in August/September 2024.

General maintenance

Debris – drink cans/cartons, plastic bags, and the like – has been found littering the field occasionally, which one or more residents have thoughtfully collected and disposed of. Clanfield have undertaken to ensure a tidy field after a game but point out that other field users also leave some such items. They subsequently removed their dugouts and undertook to mow and roll the pitch themselves.

For good neighbourly, hygiene and socially responsible reasons, residents are requested to take their litter home after using the field, especially putting all dog excrement/bags in one of the bins designated for such at the various locations in the Village, and certainly not to leave any such in the hedgerow.

The purchase of a strimmer to help keep down unwanted vegetation, e.g., sloes, is no longer being considered - a rental agreement for such a tool is thought to be a better option.

The Pavilion

The Pavilion sustained a couple of leaks, one on the main stopcock* entering the building, and the other, a faulty refill valve on one of the toilets. Both were fixed, but some damage to the plasterwork needs attention. *(If needed in the future, the stopcock where the feed splits from the mains is on the right-hand side of the national speed limit sign as one leaves the Village, direction Fairford.)

Clanfield re-covered the pool table (the Charity provided new felt). Following a request by the School, the table was fitted with casters (with help from Marc Holland) so that it could be moved for lessons/layout requirements. Clanfield also provided a new dartboard, and asked permission to wall-mount a smart TV (to be completed). Other *ad hoc* work was also undertaken.

Again, all residents are requested to take their litter home after using this facility.

Finance & Insurance

Outgoing expenses. The Charity met all its financial obligations throughout the year. These included £570 for insurance (down from £650 the previous year by moving to a new provider), £1,020 for mowing (for 2025-2026, down from £1275 with the previous contractor), along with monthly costs of £20 for cleaning, £30 for water, and £80 for electricity.

Income. Clanfield, £100 per month*; the School, £650 p.a; Dog Agility, £400; the Fete, £1,750; the Shoot, £1,500 and; £30 from Ed and Clare Morris for their soakaway**.

* Clanfield is uncertain as to whether it wishes to continue using the field after the current season: if it does not, this will lead to a significant loss of income. ** This fee is to be reviewed.

Investment opportunities for JC funds sitting 'idle' were explored but not considered a viable option.

The Charity's funds currently amount to some £10,400.

The Jubilee Close Committee (JCC)

The terms of reference for the Jubilee Close Committee (designated the Committee of Management in the 1939 Conveyance document) are for there to be three elected Members, re/appointed at the Annual Parish Meeting, with one Member standing down each year, a Chairman, and one Trustee. Trustee Andy Howarth also acts as the Treasurer, Secretary and *de facto* general factotum for the JCC. Current Committee Members are Ray Kolzack, Ben Platts and Chairman Jerry Hibbert. Due to the lack of other volunteers, and if they agree, it is proposed that Ray and Ben remain as Members - this will also enable a quorum. Other volunteers, male or female, are warmly encouraged to apply to join the Committee today, or later in the year. One JCC meeting was held, in August 2024.

Trustees

Charity Commission Trustees. Andy Howarth, Jerry Hibbert, and Leonard Brookes.

Land Registry Trustees. From 2007, Graham Boydell (GB) and Leonard Brookes (LB) were appointed by the then Parish Council to be the Charity's Trustees for Land Registration (LR) purposes. However, in 2023, the Parish Council directed that the Charity *per se* become the sole Trustee. This has led to complications, resulting in no LR Trustees being in place at the time of writing. Alison Fielden & Co., (AF&Co) Solicitors, Cirencester, are working to resolve the matter for the Council. Thus far, it seems that new Trustees (persons) will now need to be appointed by employing a Deed of Variation, thereby reverting to the earlier situation where GB and LB were so engaged (through to the start of 2025).

Title

In 2007, it was discovered that, because of the seeming lack of a definitive LR title for Jubilee Close, there was a possibility that others, including the State, could lay claim to the land. An application was therefore made to LR to address this situation, which led to a Possessory Title for the property being awarded. Following the passage of the subsequent 12 years under which this title had to be maintained, a second application, to upgrade the title to Absolute, was made, and achieved this year. Unfortunately, due to an LR error in transcription of the Charity's name, we do not yet have a correct version of the formal document. AF&Co are again working to resolve the matter on our behalf.

Future Activities

A rolling 5-year plan for rejuvenating the playing field and Pavilion is to be undertaken.

Misc.

a. The Annual Return for 2023-2024 was submitted to and approved by the Charity Commission.

b. JCC has participated in discussions to identify storage space for some bulky items belonging to the various communal institutions in the Village. One idea is for a screened-off storage unit/shipping container to be situated on the field for this purpose. To be considered further.

c. The Committee is to establish a plan for tackling the rabbits/burrows, especially on the embankment, where one could fall foul of the holes created, with the obvious consequences.

The meeting agreed that Ray Kolzack and Ben Platts should remain as members of the JCC".

In closing, JCC would like to thank everyone who contributed to tidying up the field and Pavilion during the year, and for any other, unseen, complementary activities undertaken in the interest of the Charity.

ST. PETERS CHURCH (2024)

In 2024 St Peter's continued its tradition of holding services every Sunday. We held 65 services including school services, weddings etc. But while high days and holidays are still well supported, our default congregation has dwindled, and a few services had no congregation at all, other than those officiating. That has led to, as from April 2025, the PCC

deciding that we should hold 2 services a month rather than 4 or even 5. The hope is that the services we do hold will be better supported.

We have continued to maintain the building and the graveyard by pollarding the trees, mowing the grass, and trimming the bushes. We had our quinquennial inspection, which gave us a pretty good report; we had our electrical system inspected and the organ serviced.

The immediate maintenance issue is the bells. The wooden headstocks and their metal spindles that are mounted into the turret stonework had deteriorated to the point where they were in danger of coming crashing down. We have had to remove them – and currently they are being remade at the bellhangers, and the bells themselves (from 1774 & 1830) refurbished. We hope that they will be up again to ring out the opening of the fete.

A project for the future is our oil-fired heating system. It will have to be upgraded before it fails.

While it is vital that people keep coming to the church, whether it's for marriages, christenings or funerals or just the default services, the biggest issue is funding it all. What we have to pay for falls into two categories: the first is the Parish Share (an amount of money that we have to pay to the Diocese who then provide a vicar, a curate and general back up services) and the second is maintenance of the building and churchyard as a village asset.

Roughly the Parish Share is £16,000. Maintenance varies but for 2024 was £10,000. The combined figure of £26,000 is increasingly hard to find each year.

At this point on behalf of the PCC, I would like to thank all those who work so hard to fund raise for the church (and other village assets). Without these efforts and the support of the village residents for them, the church would be much reduced. I would also like to thank some individuals for their VERY generous personal donations - especially for the bells.

The church accounts are available for anyone who wishes to see them. Total income for the year was £29,191. Donations to charities of £700 were made to support the Cirencester Foodbank, the Royal British Legion, and the Anglican Animals Charity. As always, the largest item of expenditure in 2024 of £16,004 was the Parish Share. Most general expenditure costs have been covered this year by some improvements in income, so the

excess of receipts over payments of £4,588 is a satisfactory result. However, it is important to note that during 2024 there was no major project expenditure, so that £4,588 is a vital addition to reserves required to finance the bells in 2025.

NB: You will note that the church has two funds: a general one that covers anything the PCC deems necessary including the religious functioning of the church, and the other (the Friends' Fund) holds donations made specifically for the maintenance of the fabric of the building and grounds.

SOUTHROP VILLAGE HALL

Annual Trustees Report Southrop Village Hall Introduction: We are pleased to present the Annual Trustees Report for 2024/25 for Southrop Village Hall. This report provides an overview of the activities and achievements of the trustees and volunteers who have worked tirelessly to maintain and improve the facilities and services of the village hall.

Activities and Achievements: During the past year, the village hall has trialled opening the Snug on alternate Saturdays. This has proved very popular and has been a regular source of income. It has provided a friendly, inclusive environment and it has been particularly satisfying to see the number of families that have made use of the facility. The hall has purchased a TV license and recently screened a number of Six Nations matches. These events were well attended, and similar screenings are planned in the coming months. The hall has also been used to host a variety of events and activities, including community meetings, social gatherings, children's parties, and fitness classes. In addition to funds raised from village hall events the hall has received a share of funds from Southrop Open Gardens, Southrop Village Fête, and Southrop Clay Shoot. The trustees are most grateful to the volunteers

who organise those events for their continued support. The village shop and Post Office continue to provide a vital service to the local community. Challenges: In addition to capital projects the trustees are aware of their responsibilities regarding the ongoing maintenance of the building and grounds. To that end the pathways have been cleaned and the paving slabs to the front of the hall have been re-laid. Gutters and downpipes have been cleared out and reattached where necessary. The focus of attention is now on the loo area which is in need of 'modernisation'. The playground is a particular area of concern and various options are being considered for repair or replacement. Health and Safety The trustees continue to review all health and safety policies, procedures, risk assessments and records to ensure the continued safety of village hall users. An inspection of the fixed electrical system (required every five years) has been completed in addition to annual Portable Appliance Testing (PAT). Future Plans: Looking ahead, the trustees are committed to continue to improve the facilities and services at the village hall, and to maintain its position as a valued community asset. This will involve ongoing maintenance and repair work, as well as initiatives to encourage greater community participation and engagement. The trustees invite and welcome ideas from the Southrop community on how they would like to see the hall develop.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, the past year has been a successful one for Southrop Village Hall. We would like to thank all the trustees, volunteers, and users of the hall for their continued support and commitment, and we look forward to building on this success in the future.

POLICE

May 2024 – April 2025

Your Fairford Neighbourhood Policing Team



Garrett Gloyn
Police Sergeant



Harry Macpherson
Police Constable



Zee Bulbul
PCSO

Recorded crime

Crime Comparison Statistics For Parish Council
Period : 01MAY2024 - 30APR2025 Compared With 01MAY2023 - 30APR2024
Parish : 298

Parish=Southrop

HO Band	HO Category	Crime 01MAY24 30APR25	Crime 01MAY23 30APR24	+/-	% Crime Diff	Detect 01MAY24 30APR25	Detect 01MAY23 30APR24	+/-	% Detect Diff
Violence	Threats to Kill	2	0	2	0.00%	0	0	0	0.00%
Violence	Harassment	0	2	-2	0.00%	0	0	0	0.00%
Violence	Assault with injury	1	2	-1	(50.00%)	0	1	-1	0.00%
Violence	Public Fear, Alarm or Distress	0	1	-1	0.00%	0	0	0	0.00%
Violence	Assault w/o Injury	3	1	2	200.0%	0	0	0	0.00%
Sexual offences	Rape of female 16+	0	1	-1	0.00%	0	0	0	0.00%
Theft	Theft from vehicle	0	1	-1	0.00%	0	0	0	0.00%
Theft	Theft/unauth taking m/veh	0	1	-1	0.00%	0	0	0	0.00%
Criminal damage	Arson not Endangering Life	1	0	1	0.00%	0	0	0	0.00%
Criminal damage	Criminal damage -other	0	2	-2	0.00%	0	0	0	0.00%
Drugs	Possession of Drugs(Excluding Cannabis)	1	0	1	0.00%	0	0	0	0.00%
Other notifiable	Blackmail	0	2	-2	0.00%	0	0	0	0.00%
Other notifiable	Obscene Publications etc	0	1	-1	0.00%	0	0	0	0.00%
Other notifiable	Other notifiable offences	1	0	1	0.00%	0	0	0	0.00%
=		9	14	-5	(35.71%)	0	1	-1	0.00%

As you can see, there has been a reduction in reported crime within the parish in the last performance year. The Home Office crime band is made up of a number of different crime types including threats, assaults, harassment, stalking and possession of weapons. Further examination of the violence offences recorded shows that the rise is due to an increased number of low-level assaults (Common assaults and ABH) being recorded but that there is no specific 'hot spot' for offences.

Arson was related to 150 bales of hay on fire, no suspect identified. A small amount of drugs found on a person linked to a mental health episode, which officers attended. Two of the assaults without injury occurred on Salt Way, Lechlade and not Southrop.

The team now has a new on-line presence with a Cotswold Neighbourhood Policing team page on Facebook. [\(10\) Facebook](#)

Having received reports from organisations in the Parish Council. Open session followed.

Open Session followed

The meeting closed at.....

Vanessa Lawrence
Clerk to Southrop Parish Council

16th May 2025

Report from Jubilee Close Committee and selection of new Committee.

Progress

Boundary of JC with contiguous properties

The boundary with Apple Tree Cottage has been established and fenced. All boundaries contiguous with JC have now been formally established.

Use of the field *per se*:-

Clanfield girls and boys football teams, and children from the School have used the field regularly.

New tree planting :- As far as possible, weeds and other overgrowth choking the trees surviving from the initial planting were cleared/cut back in April with replacements* for dead or moribund specimens - provided courtesy of the Council) - planted around the periphery, and at the entrance to the ground. The purchase of a strimmer (which could be shared with the Church and Village Hall) to help keep unwanted vegetation down is being considered. * (90 or so: Sweet Chestnut, Elm, Birch, Beech and Oak).

Tidying and clean-up of the Pavilion:- Residual items/debris that had either arrived anew, or remained since the previous clean-up were removed from/around the pavilion and taken to recycling. The guttering also had to be cleaned out. A considerable amount of other *ad hoc* work was undertaken during the year.

Finance & Insurance :- Its current resources enabled the Jubilee Close Committee to meet the charity's financial responsibilities throughout the year, including the previously precept-paid insurance. Our main financial outgoing continues to be the mowing (a new contract for the 2024-2025 season has been awarded), and there are regular monthly costs for cleaning, water and electricity (which latter required further servicing expenditure during the year). Clanfield fc

pay us £100 per month, and the School contributes £900 annually. Some investment opportunities for JC funds sitting 'idle' were considered but no action was taken up to this time.

The Jubilee Close Committee:- The arrangement for the Jubilee Close Committee (designated the Committee of Management in the [1939] Conveyance) is for there to be three elected Members, re/appointed at the Annual Parish Meeting, with (nominally) one Member standing down each year; a Chairman; and one Trustee. Andy Howarth is the Treasurer, Secretary and *de facto* general factotum of the Committee. Current Members: Ray Kolzack and Ben Platts; Chairman: Jerry Hibbert. Three Members left during the year, *ergo*, one more needs to be elected.

Trustees:- Charity Commission.

Andy Howarth, Jerry Hibbert, and Leonard Brookes.

Land Registry

Graham Boydell and Leonard Brookes (LB).

As per the rules new Trustees to be agreed by the Parish Council. These are Andy Howarth, Jerry Hibbert and Leonard Brookes. This was agreed by the Parish Council.

Title:- An application, made *via* Alison Fielden & Co, Solicitors (AF&C), Cirencester, was to have been made to Land Registry in 2023 to upgrade the title of Jubilee Close from Possessory to Absolute, and, at the request of the Parish Council to have the charity *per se* designated as the sole Trustee. We expected such arrangements to have been formalised by now, but it transpires that our principal contact at AF&C had left the company in late 2023, having failed to send the Application to Land Registry before doing so. Having been advised that such an application could take weeks/months, even, to be addressed, we had not been unduly concerned at 'no news'. Unfortunately, no one else at AF&C had been instructed to continue with our case or advise us of the departure of their employee. Our application is now being progressed, however, and LB will ride herd on the new conveyancer at AF&C until the matter is concluded.

Future Activities:- Programmed but uncompleted work cited in the JCC 2023 Annual report – particularly, the drafting of a rolling 5-year plan for rejuvenating the playing field and pavilion - is to be undertaken. JCC would like to thank everyone who participated in the field clearing, planting, and other general tidying-up work during the year.

L G Brookes

Fete 2023

Please find below the annual report on behalf of the Southrop fete.

Despite a wet start to 2023 and our concerns about our exposure to overheads I'm pleased to report the weather came good. In fact, on the day, it was too hot and this impacted in several ways.

A last-minute scramble to find enough working gazebos to provide shade for the stalls.

Ensuring we had enough bottled water to keep everybody hydrated.

A reduction in the number of people attending with dogs.

At the last minute the flypast was brought forward to avoid the forecasted thunderstorms, and the ensuing activity to update all the social media pages to inform people who wanted to attend.

Despite doubling the previous years quantities of beer, cider and Pimms we still sold out of everything by 3pm.

The Hurricane flypast and the Falcons parachute display team pushed the overall attendance numbers up and the revised admission prices helped contribute to another successful year.

Total sum raised circa £12,000.

Less costs of circa £4,000.

Distributed just under £2,000 to each of the 4 beneficiaries.

Looking forward to 2024, this year fete will be on Sat June 8th and as always, we welcome volunteers to man the stalls, help with the marquee, collect and set out the bales, chairs etc and the tidying away afterwards. It is also to be my last as I shall be standing down after this year's cycle.

Lastly and not specifically related to the fete but can I suggest the SPC / owner of the village marquee may want to undertake an audit of it. A number of the fabric panels probably need replacing and I'd suggest a review of the structural integrity of some of the cross sections which over time have become worn.

Report from St. Peters Church

Maintenance: Since the APM last year we have finished the Garden of Remembrance (a place where ashes may be buried), we have cleared the gutters, had the sound system checked (and improved), had the church registers checked (and approved), the alternate lime trees pollarded (as we do every year), the bushes pruned back, the windows professionally cleaned (as we do every year), and had the quinquennial inspection - the results of which are not yet revealed to us, but we aren't expecting any horrors.

Maintenance in progress: During the King's Coronation one of the bell ropes snapped, which led to a full inspection. This revealed that the entire bell mechanism in the belfry had deteriorated to the point where the bells were dangerous to ring as they might fall. The mechanism will need to be brought down, rebuilt and put back up, and the bells re-furbished while we're doing it. The quote for the repair is £8257 (inc. VAT) which will take 8 weeks. I have yet to get a quote for the scaffolding, and we await clarification on whether it should be erected and taken down twice or can be left standing during the repairs.

A further project is the clearing of the graveyard at the south end which will be carried out by the churchwarden and volunteers. However, this will expose a mismatch between the existing old south wall and the new wall which unfortunately isn't in the style of any other wall in the graveyard.

A new heating system is on hold - but will be required at some point soon.

The PCC: The PCC has been weakened by Margaret Davey's leaving the village. Margaret was a stalwart volunteer, regular congregant and sometime churchwarden. Our Treasurer, Charles Llewellyn, has also resigned and will end his duties when he leaves the village - he estimates pre-Christmas. We have not found a replacement and are actively looking.

Attendance: In the calendar year 2023 there were 70 services. High days and holidays are generally well attended, but at the default Sunday services otherwise, the congregation is in a slow decline: the average tends to go down by 1 or 2 each year and currently stands at about 10. But this includes the vicar (and sometimes a spouse), the organist (and sometimes a spouse), the

churchwarden plus Margaret Davey and Martin Bacon, and the two readers. Services where no-one else turns up are on the increase. This must eventually lead to the questions of whether we can afford to have a service every Sunday, whether we should alternate with another church (Eastleach for example), or just concentrate on high days and holidays.

Finances (at a glance):

Income from collections & regular giving: 13,310

Parochial fees: 1,803

Friends Fund & other donations 2,928

Investments & legacies: 5,617

Fund raising events: 4,816

A one-off donation: 2,000

Grant: 1,821

Total £32,295

Against total expenditure: £38,811 (including Parish share of £14,957 & G of R cost of £14,777)

The end result being that the Net Assets declined by £6,152 and now stand at £38,855.

(The complete accounts are attached.)

Although the Garden of Remembrance is now complete, this year we have the bells to repair, and the oil-fired heating is waiting in the wings for replacement in the not-too-distant future. So 'major expenses' have not disappeared. The good news is that the Southrop Shoot, which historically was a very good fund raiser but was lost over the Covid years, is due to happen again in 2024. Also encouraging is the growth of the Friends Fund, which is now attracting regular donations and one-off contributions to projects that involve the church as a historic building and asset to the village but are not necessarily directly religious.

The PCC would like to thank all those who have worked so hard over the year to keep the church open and functioning, and all those who have generously contributed to the cost of doing so. We would also like to thank Margaret Davey and Charles Llewellyn in particular for their unswerving dedication.

Jerry Hibbert – Church Warden

Southrop Village Hall -Annual Trustees Report

Introduction: We are pleased to present the Annual Trustees Report for 2023/24 for Southrop Village Hall. This report provides an overview of the activities and achievements of the trustees and volunteers who have worked tirelessly to maintain and improve the facilities and services of the village hall. Activities and Achievements: During the past year, the village hall has undertaken a major project involving the conversion of the old committee room into a Community Hub. The work was funded, in part, by a generous donation from the Parish Council. A further grant from Cotswold District Council has been secured to replace nine old metal windows at the rear of the hall, this will greatly improve fuel efficiency and reduce our carbon footprint. The new hub is

a bright warm space with comfortable seating and a bar/service area. It will also be offered for use as a flexible workspace on some days. It has already proved very popular and is a major improvement to the hall. In addition, the hall has been used to host a variety of events and activities, including community meetings, social gatherings, children's parties, and fitness classes. A recent appeal for donations to the hall had a very positive response. The village shop and Post Office continue to provide a vital service to the local community. Challenges: In addition to capital projects the trustees are aware of their responsibilities regarding the ongoing maintenance of the building and grounds. The playground is in particular need of attention, and the trustees are exploring various options to help fund this work.

Health and Safety The trustees continue to review all health and safety policies, procedures, risk assessments and records to ensure the continued safety of village hall users. An inspection of the fixed electrical system (required every five years) has been completed.

Future Plans: Looking ahead, the trustees are committed to continue to improve the facilities and services at the village hall, and to maintain its position as a valued community asset. This will involve ongoing maintenance and repair work, as well as initiatives to encourage greater community participation and engagement. The trustees invite and welcome ideas from the Southrop community on how they would like to see the hall develop.

Conclusion: In conclusion, the past year has been a successful one for Southrop Village Hall. We would like to thank all the trustees, volunteers, and users of the hall for their continued support and commitment, and we look forward to building on this success in the future.

Philip Roberts

9. Other reports

District Council Report

In May 2023 I was delighted to be elected as your District Councillor and have been proud to serve you for the last 12 months. Please find my annual report.

PLANNING:- As part of the Levelling Up Act, Planning Fees are to be increased to assist Councils with respect to providing the Planning Service. This is to be welcomed and will assist in reducing the overall cost of delivering the planning service (planning fees only account for approximately 50% of the total cost of running the service).

The Fees for householder development will rise by 25% and all other application types will rise by 35%. The fees will be reviewed yearly and will be increased in line with inflation. Government has also removed the 'free go' provision for planning applications and has introduced a tighter planning guarantee which means that any applications over 16 weeks old with no extension of time agreed will be liable to a refund. Agents and applicants are now encouraged to use the preapplication service, which will ensure they get the valued advice they need to navigate the policies, but also the Council is compensated for the time and talent of officers for that advice.

Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and planning update. Planning Applications for new dwellings were being held up causing great problems for developers and builders. This was due to new legislation regarding Habitats Regulations, in particular at the Cotswold Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and North Meadow (and Clattinger Farm) Special Area of Conservation (SAC). This is a government safeguard, but there has been much frustration as applications could not be approved with mitigation schemes which were almost impossible to procure. This deadlock was resolved by the Council and its partners to be able to raise money (effectively an extra levy) from developers building new houses and holiday accommodation, to mitigate the impacts.

David Morren, the Interim Development Officer, did good work improving the function of the Planning Department. Sadly he has now left, but he has put some good processes in place which I hope will form the foundation for further improvements. He has been replaced by Adrian Harding.

The enforcement team continues to suffer from staff losses and non-recruitment. Unresolved breaches are an issue in so many of my parishes, it is a frustrating situation, please keep nudging me about them! They should not be allowed to be 'greyed out'.

From February to April last year, we had the the Planning Inspectorate inquiry into the application for major development in the Cotswold National Landscape (formerly AONB) for a HGV truck stop. This application was refused at Planning Committee in 2022 and the PINS decision, hoped for in mid-July, was eventually published in November marking the end of a long and hard fought campaign. I was hugely relieved when it was DISMISSED.

ROADS:- A417 MISSING LINK. In January 2023 the Secretary of State approved the funding of the A417 Missing Link after years of planning and consultation.

There has been much frustration with road closures and long diversion routes, especially at night, however generally the worst incidents are caused by accidents on the A417, or minor road closures such as for ash tree die back work, and the subsequent rat running through our little villages, often causing log-jams on narrow lanes.

Roads are a County Council remit and should be reported to them. Frustrations about repair of potholes and road repairs remain a constant issue with all Parishes.

FLY TIPPING:- Fly tipping continues to be an issue. Fortunately, CCTV cameras are being installed and are now providing evidence resulting in many more prosecutions.

The £200,000 CDC Clean & Green programme has now run its course. Its effectiveness could not be monitored but thankfully we still have legendary ERS officer Kev Lea, who already does the work of two people.

CDC has accepted the proposal from the Government to increase the upper limits for various fixed penalty notices (FPNs). This means that within Cotswold District:-

- The maximum fine for fly-tipping will increase from £400 to £1,000
- The maximum fine for litter or graffiti will increase from £150 to £500
- The maximum fine those who breach their household waste duty of care will increase from £400 to £600.

This is a step in the right direction, but why should taxpayers contribute at all? Culprits should pay the whole cost of collection.

PUBLICA:- Publica is a not-for-profit service delivery company incorporated in 2017, owned by four local councils (shareholders): Cheltenham Borough Council, Cotswold District Council, Forest of Dean District Council and West Oxfordshire District Council.

Politically, all four council administrations have changed since 2019 and they have collaborated to propose to move 95% of what Publica are currently providing, in-house. Only a few back office functions such as IT shall remain with Publica. The rationale is that services will be more agile.

The transition of services from Publica to Council will clearly have a material impact on the Council's resources and budget over the next two years. To fund the one-off costs of transition, it is recommended that £500,000 is set aside in the Corporate Priority: Publica Review reserve. Inevitably, there are likely to be workforce planning costs arising from the transfer of services. (from Feb 2024 Budget papers). See more about this below.

CDC LEISURE CENTRE:- The leisure centre continues to be a huge drain on Council resources. A new service provider was approved in 2023 to include three leisure centres and the Corinium Museum & Resource Centre.

SOLAR PANELS FITTED TO CDC OFFICES:- I am delighted that at long last photovoltaic solar panels are to be installed at the CDC Cirencester council offices. Former Councillor and Leader, Tony Berry has been driving this since I was first elected in 2019. The new solar panels will contribute to environmental sustainability, they are expected to reduce the Council's CO2 emissions by approximately 43 tonnes each year, which is equivalent to the emissions from driving the average petrol-powered car about 160,000 miles. The project is funded through the Cotswold Climate Investment, launched in 2022, which allowed residents and others to invest as little as £5 in local green initiatives.

COTSWOLD PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCY HAS BEEN SPLIT. THIS HAS NOW BEEN SPLIT INTO NORTH AND SOUTH COTSWOLDS

North Cotswold will be joined by wards in Stroud and Tewkesbury including Minchinhampton and Painswick, also included are Chipping Campden, Stow-on-the-Wold, Northleach. Sir Geoffrey Clifton-Brown has been adopted as the Conservative candidate for the new North Cotswolds constituency.

South Cotswold includes Cirencester, Lechlade and Fairford along with their surrounding villages and merging with northern parts of the Wiltshire constituency.

Coln Valley is in North Cotswolds

CDC FINANCES:-

BUDGET

CDC's Core Spending Power has once again increased this year by £639k or 5.4% from £11.8m to £12.4m. Core spending power measures the resources available to local authorities to fund service delivery and sets out the money that has been made available to local authorities through the local government finance settlement. It includes various revenue streams – including Council Tax, Government funding and grants and retained business rates.

Despite this increase in Core Spending Power, CDC faces external budget pressures that are impacting on its finances over the medium-term. There remains uncertainty around inflation and associated staff pay settlements, interest rates and energy costs.

A significant budget gap was noted in the budget outturn report last September which led the Leader of the Council having to raise concerns about the council going bankrupt if significant savings and cost increases were not achieved and a balanced budget delivered for 2024/25 financial year.

Cuts to visitor information centre funding, a reduction in the customer service phone answering times and the disbandment of the "Clean and Green" team are examples of the cuts delivered to attempt to deliver a balanced budget.

There has been significant increases in costs to residents from Council Tax and discretionary

fees:-

- Council Tax by the maximum permissible level and will increase Cotswold District Council's Band D rate by £5 from £148.93 to £153.93.
- Garden Waste licence annual fee up £7 - £64 from 31 March 2024 (2023 - £47 to £57). An increase of 12% - bringing the tally over the last 5 years to 113% and collections halved.
- Car Parking Charges from 1 April 2024 - 15% increase in car park fees and Free Sunday parking scrapped.

The Chief Financial Officer stated in the budget papers that there is no immediate risk of Cotswold District Council having to consider issuing a section 114 notice, however the budget gap forecast over the medium-term must be closed to maintain financial sustainability.

Uncertainty around Local Government funding from the Government in the later years of the medium-term is a significant risk within the MTFs estimates. The implementation of Local Government Finance reform (formerly known as the Fair Funding Review and changes to the Retained Business Rates system) has already been delayed from the original implementation date of April 2020 until at least April 2025 if not later should a

General Election take place in the latter half of 2024. The forecast impact on Shire District Councils is likely to be significant as resources are reallocated across Local Government recognising the Social Care cost and demand pressures.

FORECAST SPENDING – PUBLICA AND CAPITAL PROGRAMME

The decision to withdraw from Publica is a vast unknown. The estimated cost has already increased by 150% since November 2023 and the budget now includes a reserve for the Publica transition of £500k. This amounts to nearly 80% of the council's increase in Core Spending Power for this coming financial year. There are concerns that costs are likely to escalate further as costs for external consultants, HR and Legal advice etc. Furthermore, we await clarity regarding the impact of the Staff Pension scheme to the council following this transition.

There are potential benefits to returning service provision "in-house" such as staff recruitment and retention and operational agility, however, these benefits need to be weighed up against the financial costs of both the withdrawal process and the ongoing financial impact once the transition has been completed both of which are currently unknown.

Other than the £500k "green bond", CDC has historically been debt free. It is forecast that significant prudential borrowing of over £4m will be required in 2026/27 to deliver the planned capital programme.

COUNCIL SPENDING - CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2023/24 TO 2026/27

[https://meetings.cotswold.gov.uk/documents/s6823/2023-24 Budget and MTFS Report – Annex D.pdf](https://meetings.cotswold.gov.uk/documents/s6823/2023-24%20Budget%20and%20MTFS%20Report%20-%20Annex%20D.pdf)

Cllr David Fowles, Cotswold District Councillor
Coln Valley Ward

10. Open Session

New County Cllrs resulting from boundary changes:

North - Paul Hodgkinson

South - James Gray – Conservative

Roz Savage – Lib Dems.

District Council has 34 Councillors

Allocation of funds from Central Government

District Council - £15 million

County Council - £600 million

£206k allocated to adult social care

£181 million to children services

£101 million to roads

District Council responsible for : Planning; Waste; Licensing; Social housing; Leisure Services

Meeting closed 8.15pm

Signed..... Chairman of Southrop Parish Council

.....2025