**`FIFIELD PARISH NEWS**

March, April, May 2023

Dear Parishioners,

**The Annual Parish Meeting**  will take place on Wednesday 12th April, 2023 at 6.30p.m. in the Parish Hall. The Agenda will include the following items, but there may be additions by the time of the meeting, so keep an eye on the Notice Boards – the final agenda will be displayed by 3rd April. About the Minutes: draft Minutes are now circulated on email but amendments and corrections can only be made in the meeting because “recollections may vary”.

**Election of Chairman. 2, Election of Vice Chairman, 3. To approve the Minutes of the Meeting held on 2nd November 2022 4. Chairman’s Annual Report. 5. The Parish Meeting’s General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) compliance statement. 6. (a) To approve the draft Annual Accounts**  and **(b) Section 1 of the Annual Return for the year ending 31st March 2023.** *This is the Annual Governance Statement.*  **(c) to appoint an Internal Examiner for the year (2022/20230. 7. To receive the Annual Accounts of Parochial Charities. 8 (a) To receive the report from the Trustees of Fifield Memorial Recreation Ground Charity (b) to note the appointment of up to three trustees to the Fifield Memorial Recreation Ground Charity,** *each to serve for one year*. (c) **to consider allocating further funds to the Fifield Memorial Recreation Ground for maintenance. 9 (a) to receive the report from the Trustees of the Fifield Parish Hall (b) to elect the Representative Trustee to the Fifield Parish Hall Charity** *to serve for the ensuing year***. 10. To receive a report on the activities of the constitutionally formed group: Green Fifield. 11. Resilience: (a) To look at Winter Weather and Fifield’s resilience. (b) to look at Fifield’s preparedness in the event of any emergency directly affecting the parish. (c) To receive information relating to the Fifield Defibrillator. (d) to note that, in the absence of volunteers to take the lead roles, Fifield’s Good Neighbour Scheme and Fifield’s Neighbourhood Watch Scheme are both in abeyance. 12. Report on the Fifield Parish Website initiative. 13. Report from District Councillor including planning information.. 14. Report from County Councillor – including information on the 20mph speed limit. 15. Report from Thames Valley Police. 16. Correspondence received and not dealt with elsewhere. 17. Open Forum and Summing Up.**

**First Aid & AED Training.** According to the British Heart Foundation only 50% of the public know how to perform CPR if this is needed because of cardiac arrest – yet It is possible to learn the technique online - British Heart Foundation RevivR and takes about 15 minutes – not a great deal of time to save lives. However, it is always easier if someone is actually showing you on a dummy and with this in mind if there is sufficient interest, I will make arrangements with Chris Tancock of Pint of Life to come to Fifield and demonstrate life-saving techniques. Chris does not make a charge but hopes for donations to enable him to purchase more demonstration equipment. Please let Catherine Hitchens know if you would be interested.

**Fifield Website**. This is being developed by Valerio Sarasini and Chris Walton who hope it will be ready for its first public display by the time of the Annual Parish Meting on 12th April. Rest assured that if you do not use websites, all the information will always be available by other methods.

**Both the Fifield Good Neighbour Scheme and the Fifield Neighbourhood Watch Scheme** are in abeyance without any volunteers coming forward to be the organiser. If you would like to know about either or both initiatives, and could offer help, please let Catherine Hitchens know.

**Introducing the Oxford Health School Aged Immunisation Service** This is a team of friendly and experienced nurses and administrators who work to provide vaccinations to all school aged children across Oxfordshire. These vaccinations are mostly carried out to children at school with information given directly to schools to provide to parents. Look out for more information or go to [www.oxfordhealth.nhs.uk/imms/](http://www.oxfordhealth.nhs.uk/imms/)

**Community Emergency Plan** - Oxfordshire County Council expects every parish to produce an Emergency Plan – which means we have to produce one for Fifield - a suggested template is provided but while the template may be of use to larger villages and towns, one size does not fit all. Fifield does not have one, or even two, places suitable to house everyone in the parish in the event evacuation was required because of some major disaster. The Parish Hall is too small and has only limited facilities; the Church of St John the Baptist is larger but has even less facilities. Discussions with the County Council will continue.

**The Big Feastival** is returning to Alex James’s farm in Churchill from 25th to 27th August. Tickets are already on sale. There are no changes to the licence capacity this year, but for the first time a small opportunity is offered for camping on the Thursday evening when there will be a limited amount of entertainment, food and drink available for those camping on the Thursday. This addition of the Thursday night it is hoped will improve incoming Feastival traffic travelling through the nearby villages by staggering arrival times. A small number of concessionary tickets for the Friday are sent to adjoining parishes. Contact the Chairman of the Parish Meeting if you would like the chance of some of these but be aware that they do not arrive until a few days before the start. In previous years there have been, and it is expected there will be again, concessions for postcodes very close to the site.

**Oldre Drivers’ Forum** If you are now in the “you must re-new your driving licence every three years” age category, this Forum has a presence in Stow and Bourton Libraries, and holds excellent online seminars packed full of useful, helpful information to keep older drivers driving safely, for longer. Anyone interested in linking up please let Catherine Hitchens know.

**Thames Valley Police new Forensics Centre in Bicester**: this purpose-built centre is for use by the whole TVP Area and will become the main forensics hub for the force, with laboratories, new digital technologies and dedicated training facilities.  The Forensic Improvement Programme will see significant investment over the next three years to transform Thames Valley Police’s forensic services, improving investigations and the outcomes for victims.  More information is on the TVP website. (***More police on the streets and more help offered when householders are affected by crime would also help***)

**RAF Brize Norton** Detailed and very technical correspondence has been received from RAF Brize Norton concerning changes to flight patterns. It can be forwarded to anyone who would like to see it. Fortunately, a retired Air Marshall who lives in the area has looked at and translated the information and says:

***“As the documents set out,  this is a consultation exercise to see if any of their stakeholders have any concern. All local residents should be concerned because in this process there may - or not as the case develops- be more aircraft noise over Fifield! Basically, current ATC routes  concentrate noise and are wasteful in the use of aviation fuel.  In future, with better navigation aids, aircraft will join the Brize Norton Control Zone from all sorts of directions saving fuel and time - but spreading the noise out in the process. Fifield residents would be wise to appoint one of their residents to act as their eyes and ears in this process - preferably someone with a light blue background. Having said that, I doubt whether this area will see too much change, but you never know!”***

Does anyone feel like acting as “eyes and ears” for Fifield on this matter?

**Sweet Gum tree** Oxfordshire County Council decided to plant, on land they own, at least one tree in each parish in the county, as part of the Queen’s Green Canopy, but for local residents to maintain. A scant 48 hours’ notice offering the opportunity to suggest where the tree might be planted was given, with the added statement that a tree would planted somewhere in the parish even if no response was received. The County Council claims ownership to most of the verges in the parish, also the two area of grass beside the crossroads but none of the verges is of a width to be suitable for any additional tree planting. The grass on the left hand side at the junction the Stow Road with the Idbury & Bruern Roads when coming from the Merrymouth covers extensive installations of Thames Water Utilities, which left the choice of area for this planting in the grass on the right hand side of the Road and this area has been agreed with the proviso that the tree must be planted sufficiently far back not to impede the site lines. The Fifield tree, the Parish is now told, will be a Sweet Gum *(liquid amber*) and it will be planted before the end of March. There are instructions on maintenance (feeding and watering) and the use of “grey water” is stressed should there be a drought order.

**Parish Transport Representation**. The Parish Transport Representative Group was setup well over 20 years ago. It now meets by zoom but formerly met in County Hall on here occasions each year for information and comment to be passed between the County Council, the bus companies, the train operators, and the public using these facilities. This is a vital link between the providers and the users as the rural areas fight to keep the limited amount of public transport still available, while continuing to press for more services. The team at County Hall are very helpful, but they need a good case for what we want and need. Please pass any information or comments to Catherine Hitchens to be taken to this forum.

**Tree Planting in the Parish c**ourtesy of the Recreation Ground Trustees, on the Fifield Memorial Recreation Ground for The Queen’s Green Canopy took place onthe afternoon of Sunday 19th February (postponed from 11th December), and was a memorable occasion as native trees were added along the Green Lane boundary. One particular tree, an oak, was planted with a commemorative plaque; other trees are being planted in private gardens round the village. Well done to Sam Davies and all her helpersfor their Green Fifield work.

**Tree Planting:** Long before the Queen’s Green Canopy 2022 initiative the Woodland Trust’s slogan was “Woods on Your Doorstep”. One such planting, carried out in 2000 and 2001, to mark the new Millennium, was Diggers Wood, Shipton-under-Wychwood . This 6.25 acre site lies some 200 metres further down Dog Kennel Lane from the Shipton Wild Garden rear entrance. It was acquired in 1999 and planted by the Woodland Trust in 2000/2001 with a mix of oak, ash and field maple. It has a bench seat at the highest point giving stunning views. Planting was made with considerable financial and physical support from the local community and maintenance is undertaken by the Shipton Volunteers (assisting the Woodland Trust), the Wychwood Project and the Cotswold Wardens who are now undertaking a programme of pruning and thinning out. Diggers Wood makes an attractive extension to a walk around the Wild Garden and if you have a dog, it can roam freely in this area. I am proud of the fact that I have a certificate for trees planted in my family name in Diggers Wood, and although I don’t know which specific trees, they are there.

**Thinking of trees, Don’t forget our own Foxholes**- BBOWT manage this beautiful woodland haven which is famous for its spectacular spring bluebells, abundant bird life and, later in the year, fungi.

**Polluting our world.** We must look at everything we do. Single-use plastics are bad for the environment, yet there are more now than ever. Here are the 10 most used plastic items: cotton bud sticks, cutlery, plates, straws and stirrers, balloons and sticks for balloons, food containers, cups for beverages, beverage containers, cigarette butts, plastic bags, packets and wrappers, wet wipes and sanitary items. Recycling isn’t the real answer – Plastic recycling is linked with local environmental contamination. Untreated wastewater from recycling facilities is probably contaminated with toxic pollutants harmful to people and biodiversity. Every mile we drive, whatever the vehicle, causes pollution - while electric cars may not produce carbon, they cause just as much rubber and plastic from their tyres to be washed into the oceans. Lithium extraction (essential for batters to run so many things) carries an impact to the soil and the air. Have you ever thought about polyester and polycotton? **2 square meters of polyester fabric is equivalent to 6.4kg CO2e**, or 32.5km of driving. Polyester fabric can take 200 years to degrade. All of this and much more means our every action has consequences. We must form the habit of thinking about everything we ourselves can do in mitigation, not just for ourselves, but for all who come after us..

**Busy Times** Fifield been busy through the winter, with weekly Coffee & Cake mornings , Soup lunches in December, January and February, all the Christmas activities, including Carols by Candlelight, the Nativity Play, a Crib & Christingle Service, and a glorious service on Christmas morning when some 85 people came to St John the Baptist, Fifield. In the new year there was an enjoyable Card & Board Games with supper evening in the Parish Hall , organised by Rachel Chapel; Lynne Freeman’s Art Group meets on Fridays in the Parish Hall, Alex Kealey helps everyone to keep fit and mobile; there are talks in Milton Village Hall by the Wychwood Local History Society and church services in Fifield and Idbury. On Tuesday 21st February 16 people enjoyed Pancakes in the Hall. The Community Action Group Green Field has been organising talks to make us all think much more about our own actions on the environment. Rosie Darwall-Smith is organising Supper Parties again. The Merrymouth Inn has a varied programme of events. It is good to see people enjoying socialising, after Covid, , and 2023 looks set to be busier still with plenty of variety and something for everyone to attend and enjoy. Here are some of the already planned events:

**Warm Space mornings** in the Parish Hall every Thursday morning from 10.30 to 12.30 with coffee and cake without charge - a place to chat with friends. For more information contact Amy Schlee 831826

**Coffee, Cake & Company on Tuesday 7th March, in the Parish Hall** from 11a.m. to 2p.m. to be followed by **homemade soup & homemade bread. £3 a head.** Contact Catherine Hitchens for more information. Booking helpful, but come anyway.

**Wychwood Local History Society** talk in Milton Village Hall at 7.30p.m.s: 8th March, *Bells & Bell Foundry, Burford by* Chris Pickford*;*  12th April *(The English Civil War in the Cotswolds by SImon Randall);* 10th May *(The AGM and then The History of the Windrush Stone Quarries by Jonathan Maisey).*

**Card & Board Games evening** in the Parish Hall 6.30p.m. Thursday 16th March. These are the most enjoyable evenings ,a splendid initiative of Rachel Chapel, offering the chance to catch up with neighbours and friends, play some brain teasing games and enjoy a delicious supper (Bring your own bottle( all for £5 a head. Contact Rachel 832484 to book.

**Mothering Sunday** 19th March. 11a.m. at Fifield Church. A Family Service with flowers for the ladies and a Simnel Cake to share. Do come along.

**Sunday 26th March** Church Service 11a.m. at St John the Baptist, followed by **Lent Lunch** (homemade soup and homemade bread). Do come.

**Coffee & Cake (no charge) in the Parish Hall on Tuesday 21st March in the Parish Hall 11a.m. to 1p.m.** Come along for the company. More information from Catherine Hitchens.

**The Plight of Hedgehogs** The Community Action Group, Green Fifield, are holding their Annual General Meeting in the Parish Hall on Thursday 30th March at 6.30p.m. – everyone is welcome. Following the meeting there will be a talk by Lucy Bearman-Brown from Hartpury University on the plight of the Hedgehog. Contact Sam Davies 01993 252941 for more information.

**Homemade cakes & Produce Stall.**  On Saturday 1st April from 10.30a.m. to 12noon in the Fifield Churchyard. All contributions vey welcome. Proceeds for Fifield Church. Contact Catherine Hitchens for more information.

**Passover Supper Wednesday 5th 6.30 for 7p.m.** roast lamb in the Parish Hall. Everyone is welcome, a donation will be requested and for catering purposes please let Catherine know by 2nd April if you will be attending.

**Fifield Parish Hall Annual General Meeting 6.30p.m.** Thursday 6th April in the Parish Hall to hear a round-up of the year from the Chairman, Jane McWilliam. Come and make any suggestions about future events you think might be of interest, or which you would like to organise. Everyone welcome and no need to book.

**Good Friday Walk.** Friday 7th April. Choose your walk. From Milton Church to Fifield to arrive at the Parish Hall at 12noon for Hot Cross Buns & Coffee and a Bring Your Own Picnic Lunch. Walking on to Idbury for the Hour at the Cross Service at 2p.m.

**Easter Sunday** 9th April 11a.m. at Fifield Church a Family Service followed by an Easter Egg Hunt in the churchyard.

**Monday 17th April The Election of Churchwardens and the Deanery Synod Representative, followed by the Annual Parochial Church Meeting** in Fifield Church starting at 6.30p.m. All on the Voters’ Register may attend and vote in the first meeting, all on the Church Electoral Roll may attend and vote in the second meeting. Come and hear annual reports on the past year with and plans for the future.

**May** is going to be a splendid month, when we celebrate the **Coronation of our new King and Queen**. The Coronation itself is being televised on the day – Saturday 6th May and I imagine most people will be watching.

**On Sunday 7th May Fifield will celebrate in style.** First at 10a.m. there will be a short **Service-with-a-Difference** in Fifield Church  **to mark the occasion, and, the church will be wonderfully decorated with flowers thanks to the dedicated team of Flower Ladies.**

**Big Picnic Lunch F**ollowing the Service there will be time to go home and put the finishing touches to your picnic lunches ready for the **Big Bring-Your-Own-Picnic Lunch in the Recreation Ground** and we encourage everyone to link up with family, friends and neighbours for this**.** There will be with the Fifield Bunting, tables & chairs (and tents if necessary) on the former Bowling Green area. There will be **entertainment for the children, and a raffle and a commemorative plate to be finger-printed by everyone present** for installing in the Parish Hall as a **lasting memento.** If anyone would like to put some bunting round their own gate or front door, please let Catherine Hitchens know.

**Sunday 14th May 11a.m. Fifield Church.** Celebrating Rogation Sunday in a farming village.

**Walk on Workham Farm land** After last year’s very enjoyable walk, when we saw the well-established wild flower meadow and the extensive tree planting carried out over many years, Anthony and Roxana White have offered us a further walk this year. It will probably be in the second part of June when the orchids should be at their peak. More information nearer the time. Let Catherine Hitchens know if you are interested. In the meanwhile admire all the splendid newly planted hedges starting just outside Fifield’s boundary along the Bruern Road and alongside the A.424.

**Investigations to discover where those named on the Fifield War Memorial actually lived** continue, but slowly .These young men young men worked in our fields, lived in our houses and in 1914 and again in 1945 marched away never to return, this is the confirmed information so far:: **Henry Arthurs** of the Royal Artillery Service Field Number 110313. Royal Field Artillery 94th Bty. Died 30th September 1917 buried or commemorated at the Bedford House Cemetery Enclosure No 2.1.D.20 Belgium **Major Guy Horsman Bailey MC** Royal Horse Artillery Commanding “L” Bty, 15th Bde. Died 26 February 1917 aged 25. Buried at Guards’ Cemetery, Combles I.D.1 France. Son of Col Edward Horsman Bailey V.D., T.D., and Jane Bailey of Foxholes, Oxfordshire.

**The Idbury Chancel** (ecclesiastically part of the same parish as Fifield) needs repair but very fortunately, and thanks to John Yaxley’s persistence in 2013, this is covered by the Church Commissioners. We are very grateful to John and the Church Commissioners for accepting liability.

Again, my thanks to Chris Walton for all her help and support and to everyone else for all their help and kindness. I am very grateful.

With all good wishes

**Catherine Hitchens**

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