



Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting

Held on Monday 21st March 2023 in the Wilkins Centre, Compton. Commencing at 7:00 pm.

Members Present: Councillor Dave Aldis, Chair
Councillor Rebecca Pinfold, Vice-Chair
Councillor Jude Cunningham
Councillor Stephen Dearn
Councillor Linda Moss
Councillor Alison Strong
Councillor Sharon Tiller
Councillor Ian Tong

Members Absent: None

Officers Present: Sarah Marshman, Clerk/RFO

In Attendance: District Councillor Carolyne Culver
6 Members of the Public

Minutes

1 Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from the following organisations: The Downs School, Compton Primary School, Compton Preschool, Downlands Sports Centre, Flood Warden, Guides, Compton Players, Friends of The Downs School.

2 To approve the Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 24th May 2022

Those present agreed the minutes of the last meeting be accepted as a true record. The Chair signed the minutes.

3 Matters arising from the Minutes of the Meeting held on 24th May 2022

There were no matters arising.

A representative of The Downs School attended and gave a report regarding the issues with parking and vehicles at the top of Manor Crescent as a result of the school. A petition has been started by the school on the West Berkshire Council website in order to request a 'kiss and drop' area be created on the area of land near the school gates.

4 Report from The Downland Practice

Dr Cave gave a verbal report. This will be his last report to the Parish Council as he retired as a partner at the Practice, although he will still be working there as a GP.

There has been some change in the doctors at the practice over the past year. It is moving towards the receptionists becoming care coordinators. The Government is keen that people should see a range of care providers e.g. pharmacists etc. The Downland Practice is keen to retain face-to-face appointments and does try to see people the same day when requested. NHS England wants people to go online, enter details, and get a call back – but the practice believes the majority of patients need a face-to-face appointment.

The waiting time for routine appointment is currently up to 6 weeks. The practice is receiving extremely good feedback from patients at the moment.

The Practice is keen to ensure the pharmacy remains onsite although it does not make any money for the practice

The Downland Practice is part of the A34 primary care network, partnered with Strawberry House and Eastfield House in Newbury.

The Practice would urge us all to concentrate on how important rural general practice is.

The Compton Surgery hopefully undergo some improvements. It is crucial that it is used more by a range of doctors/services. For the practice to continue with personalised medicine, it needs everyone's support.

The council and the members of the public thanked Dr Cave and all at The Downland Practice.

5 Report from District Councillor Carolyne Culver

Carolyne gave a verbal report:

- It is over a year since NDP referendum.
- The Institute site has planning permission, but no one knows the timescales involved for the development.
- The planning application for the gym at The Downs School was called in to committee in January 2022. There is no news on when the committee will review the application and increasing costs are making it more difficult to go ahead with work.
- There is £5,000 available in match funding available each year from the Members' Bid process – over the last 4 years about £22k has been secured for community projects in the Ridgeway Ward including funds for Compton for the Sports Pavilion refurbishment, a garden at The Downs School and commemorative benches for the Recreation Ground.
- Carolyne has been trying to highlight the need for more affordable smaller homes – particularly 1 and 2 bed homes.
- Suggested amendments to the budget for West Berkshire Council were accepted for more tree planting, wild flower verges and the safer school street scheme.

6 Parish Council Reports:

6.1 Report from the Chair

The past year has, at last, seen the easing of all Covid 19 restrictions, meaning that the Council can return to normal activities. It was not ideal using Teams or Zoom to carry out meetings or other business. The past year has seen the Council as busy as ever. We have, at last completed Phase 1 of the Street lighting upgrade project. This experienced serious delays due to Covid and supply issues. The old orange, Sodium lamps are no longer available, so we had to install LED lighting, the supply of which was very slow. The new lamps have resulted in some areas, like the High street having darker patches than before. Phase 2, which is being assessed and worked on now, will try to address these areas.

CCTV is now installed in the Recreation Ground. This is aimed at tackling Antisocial Behaviour and to make the area safer. It is a matter of concern that the level of dog fouling in the

Recreation Ground remains constant. It is embarrassing for the Council, as the ground authority, to have referees stop football matches, whilst the material is removed. The Parish Council is considering options such as requiring dogs to be kept on leads or using the CCTV system to identify those dog owners at fault. Please be considerate to others who use the area.

Whilst on the subject of the Recreation Ground, I am pleased to report that new seating has been installed and a memorial garden is being situated close by. These are to celebrate the Platinum Jubilee and in memory of Queen Elizabeth the Second. Plans are also in hand to plant a new tree alongside.

The Burial Ground Project remains ongoing, having gone through some legal quagmires but hopefully progress can now be made in this important facility.

The Council is concerned at the vehicles driving across the grassed areas in Gordon Crescent, which is Council property. The Council also owns the lay by parking areas in the middle of the Crescent and therefore provides some parking for residents.

Some residents recently attended a Council meeting and a useful discussion took place. The Council met with Sovereign Housing subsequently and explained its position, that we provide some parking and therefore would look to Sovereign and/or West Berks to provide some suggestions for extra parking. We await the outcome of this but look forward to working with residents and Sovereign to solve the problem. We do not have funds to provide further parking ourselves, hence looking to others to assist. Ultimately, I personally believe any solution will result in loss of some grassed area.

The Planning Application for the old Institute site has finally been granted for 160 homes. It will, however, be some time before we see any building as decontamination will be the first task. Disappointingly, I am aware of some speculative reporting on the site, which resulted in a buyer of a property pulling out.

The Neighbourhood Development Plan was accepted with a good turnout and majority. This is now a reference document for any Planning Application in the Parish. As I write, Elections are due in May and I call upon anyone who wishes to join the Council to consider standing for election. Our work is unpaid and at times heavily criticised but Councillors work hard for the good of the Parish and the Community and long may that continue. Therefore, I thank all the current Councillors for the past year and, in some case years, for their efforts.

I would also like to thank Carlyne Culver for her work as District Councillor, who has worked hard for Compton and her other parishes this year. Finally, I would like to thank Sarah, our clerk, without whom we could not function at all!

6.2 Financial Report from the Clerk/Responsible Finance Officer

The Clerk presented her report which is in Appendix 1.

7 Presentation of local reports are invited from:

The Downs School – Appendix 2.

Compton Primary School – Appendix 3.

Compton Preschool – Appendix 4.

Compton Village Hall – No report received.

Compilations – The editor read her report. The council thanked the editor for all her hard work on Compilations. The report is in Appendix 5.

Downlands Sports Centre – Appendix 6.

Newbury Lane Allotments – no report received.

School Road Allotments – Appendix 7.

Flood Warden – Appendix 8.

Autumn Group – The Treasurer gave their report. The report is in Appendix 9.

Scouts – A verbal report was given. A summary is given in Appendix 10.

Guides – Appendix 11.

Compton Players – Appendix 12.

Friends of Compton Primary School – The Joint Chair gave a verbal report. A summary is given in Appendix 13.

Friends of The Downs – Appendix 14.

Compton PCC – A verbal report was given. A summary is given in Appendix 15.

Any other local organisations – There were no other local organisations in attendance.

8 Questions from members of the public

There were no questions from members of the public.

There being no further business, the meeting was closed at 8:40 pm.

Chairman: _____

Date: _____

Appendix 1: Financial Report from the Clerk/Responsible Finance Officer

Annual Finance Report 2022/23



The finance report for Compton Parish Council for the financial year 2022/23 is presented. Please note that these figures are provisional and subject to change as the financial year is not yet complete. The year-end documentation will be reviewed by the Internal Auditor and will be considered by the Council at either its May or June meeting.

Income

The total income received from all sources of funding was £73,456. Significant figures included in this total are:

- Precept £51,000.
- VAT refund £9,392.
- Compilations advertising fees £2,813.
- Community Infrastructure Levy £4,506.
- Allotment rent £733.
- Football pitch and Sports Pavilion hire £410.
- Interest £690.

Expenditure

The total expenditure for the year was £113,178. Some of the significant figures included in this total are:

- Grounds maintenance £6,934.
- Allotments expenses £528.
- Insurance £947.
- Compilations printing costs (offset by advertising income) £1,830.
- Streetlight electricity and maintenance £11,438.
- Streetlight replacement programme £23,199.
- VAT (reclaimable) £11,983.
- Professional advice £2,875.
- Tree maintenance £5983.
- Refuse disposal £561.
- Works towards the creation of a new burial ground £5,860.
- Sports Pavilion maintenance and running costs £2,483.
- CCTV installation in the Recreation Ground £5,679.
- A Jubilee commemoration and Queen Elizabeth II memorial garden area in the Recreation Ground £4,156.

Community

Every year, Compton Parish Council helps the community by making grants available for our local groups and organisations. This year, the council has provided grants to the following:

- 1st Compton Guides
- 1st Compton Scout Group
- Autumn Group
- Compton Parochial Church Council
- Compton Preschool
- Compton Village Hall 'tea and chat'
- Royal British Legion.

Every year, the council helps to fund the Christmas decorations and events, this year contributing £99 to provide the freebies for the event, the trophies for the winners of the best lights competition and the room hire for the Christmas Day lunch.

This year there was also the Platinum Jubilee event, for which the council provided funding of £571. The council has also already started purchasing some items for the Coronation event in May.

Looking Forward to 2023/24

The Council will increase the precept to £57,000. This is an increase of £6,000 or 11.8%. For a Band D household, the contribution for the year is £85.59, which equates to £1.65 per week.

It is expected that large items of expenditure will continue to include grounds maintenance, street lighting electricity, and employment costs. The Council will continue with the street lighting replacement programme. Refuse disposal costs are increasing as the contractors employed by West Berkshire Council have changed and costs have increased, whilst new bins installed have had to use an alternative contractor.

Appendix 2: The Downs School

It has been a busy and extremely successful year at The Downs School, which seems to have passed by in a flash. Our excellent reputation in the community has continued to attract students with every year group full or exceeded and once again oversubscribed in Year 7 next year. Our current school roll is 1361, with 315 students in the Sixth Form. We have welcomed 10 Ukrainian students into the Downs School community, and we have worked hard to make sure that we provide them with the best support possible, both pastorally and academically.

Since September it has felt like we are returning to some sort of 'normal' and relatively free from the shackles of Covid. The last 2 years have been very challenging and sometimes I have felt like a logistics manager rather than a headteacher of a school. However, reflecting on this time there have been some monumental achievements:

- Overnight we became a testing centre and carried out covid testing for 1300 students. It was so impressive how much courage staff showed to take on these roles and how quickly they adapted – it was such an amazing feat to be able to test the whole school not once but 3 times within a short space of time.
- As a school community we worked seamlessly with our new covid protection measures to ensure we were all safe and could continue to learn
- The next curve ball was the CAGS and then TAGS. Once again my staff and students rolled up their sleeves and got on with it and did it so professionally and really demonstrated their expertise.
- Throughout the Covid times we remained firmly fixed on our ambition of 'education as normal' – through our creative and robust remote learning programme and how we organised learning when we came out of lockdown, I really do feel we achieved this ambition. This is reflected in the excellent exam results this year:

At A Levels, we had the best results of any West Berkshire School and outperformed the Teacher Assessed Grades from last year in most headline measures. We are in the top 10% of schools nationally for achievement. Many of our top students achieved A*AA, particularly impressive with the demand of the more challenging A Levels and BTECs. Our collective results were a great springboard, enabling our students to go on and achieve great things in Higher Education and employment.

At GCSE we achieved really strong results again in all headline measures with a really positive progress score of 0.53 which means that our students achieved ½ grade higher in each qualification than other similar students nationally.

Throughout their school careers, the students in both Years 11 and 13 have always demonstrated our values and excelled in everything they have done. I am so pleased they achieved the exam results they deserve. My staff and I could not be more proud of them. They have all faced up to all the challenges of the pandemic with immense resilience, determination and courage.

Reflecting on key highlights of the Autumn term, our annual 10km sponsored walk raised an incredible £24,000. The school has undertaken this event for the last ten years. Last year we raised £21,000 which has been used to purchase the "Snack Shack", tarmac areas of the school site, develop the Therapeutic Garden, purchase a sprung floor for the Drama Studio and deep clean the Astroturf. The money raised this year will be used to support projects that will, once again, benefit and reward the pupils with focus on the Café 6 project, new LED lights for DT and new hall curtains.

Our careers team has been busy helping our students acquire the skills and knowledge to make the best choices for them. In November, we held our first careers fair in over 3 years to help inspire our students from years 9 to 13. Consisting of 34 different stallholders from a mixture of universities, further education providers, local and national businesses, the evening certainly gave our students an idea of what their future could look like.

Other highlights have included many trips and events starting with Greenfest at Hampstead Norreys, Geography trips to Bristol with Year 10 and Year 12, Rushall Farm with Year 11 and Greenham Common with our sixth form students, Our historians travelled to Berlin during October half term, drama students from years 10-13 went to see Othello at the Oxford Playhouse and our 6th form law students attended the Bar Mock Trials at Reading Crown Court. Our sporting events continue to be as busy as ever, competing in numerous Hockey and Rugby fixtures across the county, and house Cross Country. We also have cohorts preparing for Bronze, Silver and Gold Duke of Edinburgh Awards.

We continued to support many charities, from Blue and Pink Day in 6th form highlighting cancer awareness, Purple Sock Day for International Disabled people, and Swings and Smiles (a local charity based in Thatcham), received proceeds from our Christmas Jumper Day and Christmas raffle and silent auction.

We finished the year for our first Prizegiving in two years, inviting back our 2022 leavers and parents. It was wonderful to be able to hold it again and it was a huge privilege to be celebrating the successes of our talented and inspirational young people. Our guest speaker was Mrs Angela Ryan from Recovery in Mind, who gave an insightful address about her own personal struggles and how she became involved in Recovery in Mind, something that is close to many of our hearts.

January saw our Year 9 students look at course options ahead of starting their GCSEs in September, and our Year 11 students receiving mock exam results for the exam papers they took just before Christmas. January also marked the deadline date for our Year 13 students to apply for university places, and I am delighted to report that for the third year in a row we have a 100% success rate in that all students who applied for a university place have received at least one offer from their chosen establishment, the majority receiving multiple offers. We were also delighted that nine of our Year 13 students have been offered provisional places to study at Oxford or Cambridge, our most successful number of applications to date. Preparation for employment is an integral part of everything we do at The Downs School, and whether it is higher education, employment or apprenticeships, our careers team provides our students with the skills and knowledge to make the choices that are best for them.

In these times of uncertainty and a constantly changing educational landscape I take pride in the fact that we remain focused on providing the best experience possible for all our students and aspiring to achieve our new vision 'Educating today's students for the world of tomorrow'.

Key Issues

- Appointing key staff is still a key concern especially in Maths, English and Science.
- In spite of our fantastic science block and sixth form centre, our accommodation is still very poor for a school of our size; A cramped site means that we are always thinking creatively about how we can utilise the space that we have.
- PE and sports facilities are still probably the worst in West Berkshire and have been for some considerable time. We are in desperate need of a new Sports Hall to alleviate the pressure and bring PE facilities into the 21st Century.

- The changing political scene regarding curriculum and qualifications and concern about lead-in time for major changes; the relative status being accorded to different elements of the curriculum e.g what will replace the BTEC qualifications.
- Important decisions to consider around the direction that the school should take – Academy status? Increasing the Federation?
- Challenges of setting a balanced budget when there are no real term increases in funding.

Appendix 3: Compton Primary School

Our school remains at a healthy number with 188 pupils on roll. 19 pupils joined our Reception class in September, as there was a low birth rate in West Berkshire. These children have settled in very well and they are making very good progress with their learning, particularly in phonics lessons. Whenever we have visitors looking around they always comment of the positive atmosphere in our school and how friendly the staff and pupils are. The teachers are busy planning trips linked to the topics being taught in the Summer Term – Portsmouth Dockyard, Roman Baths and Winchester Science Museum/Planetarium. Year 5 have their three day residential trip booked, at an activity centre in Hampshire, at the end of March. Year 6 are looking forward to their residential trip, lasting six days in North Wales in April, with Brightwalton and Beedon Primary Schools.

Friends of Compton Primary School have supported us by purchasing an interactive board for the hall and fifteen new laptops plus set up costs. We have a new committee who are very determined to raise enough money for fifteen more laptops and refurbishment of the library.

Staff and pupils continue to work hard and strive to achieve the very best we can. We are particularly pleased with the pupils' progress in phonics from beginning of reception to the end of year 2 and our SATs results last Summer. We have developed a love of reading within school by improving our reading corners, buying and promoting new books, pupils recommending books to each other, an author/illustrator visit, celebrating World Book Day and appointing Year 6 reading ambassadors.

Our pupils enjoy opportunities to explore nature and the outdoors -our youngest pupils enjoy weekly outdoor learning and the older pupils enjoy using the embankment area and school grounds in their learning. Cultural experiences are also regularly planned: a whole school trip to the Winter Show at the Watermill theatre is always a highlight. This year our choir performed as part of the Young Voices Choir at the O2 for the first time. The atmosphere was amazing and it was a fantastic experience for pupils, staff and parents who joined us. Our PE Lead Teacher is very deicated, entering teams in a variety of sporting events which have included football, netball and cross country running. At Christmas the Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 pupils performed the nativity play. Year 3, 4 and 5 are busy practising for the Easter Concert. Year 6 will start planning their Summer production after the SATs tests. We offer a variety of clubs/after school activities for the pupils, which include judo, dance, gym, football and choir.

Links with the Church continue to be strong– we enjoy regular clergy visits to our collective worship in school and the whole school attends services in church at all the major festival times. Our pupil Worship Committee goes from strength to strength as they hold their own collective worship as well as taking major parts in our church services.

The federation with The Downs and Beedon continues to grow. Our Year 5 and 6 pupils have enjoyed science lessons at The Downs. Year 4 have participated in swimming lessons. The whole school joined in with The Downs sponsored walk, money raised was used to purchase outdoor play equipment. We held our sports day at The Downs School for the first time last Summer, with more space we could offer different activities and longer races.

Work has continued on aligning the curriculum in all three schools so that there is a more seamless academic transition between the primary and the secondary. Teachers meet termly to share good practice and look at progression in English, Maths and Science knowledge and skills between key stages. Primary colleagues from Beedon and Compton meet regularly for training sessions and support and challenge one another in the moderation of pupils' work for assessment. We are supporting three trainee teachers through their in school training year. We appreciate all the support and guidance given to them by their teacher mentors.

Our amazing children, dedicated staff and supportive parents make all this possible.

Appendix 4: Compton Preschool

Over the last year we have been fortunate to welcome a new member of staff.

For our last school cohort, we saw a smaller number of children go off to 2 local primary schools. There seems to be lower child numbers across West Berkshire. That being said, our numbers did increase in January 2023, so we have picked up on our occupancy. Since our numbers have increased, we now have children attending from Hermitage, Hampstead Norreys and East Illsley, so are accommodating children from the surrounding villages too.

We have had to take more of a focus on our financial situation over the last 12 months. This is due to a couple of factors, including lower child numbers, but mainly the impact that the West Berkshire deficit is having on us. West Berks overspent by nearly 1 million pounds across their Early Years sector and to claw this money back have placed all settings under a 5-year deficit recovery plan, whereby they gradually take more and more funding away year on year until the deficit is repaid. We have also been affected by the rising cost of living on top of this, seeing increases in costs of consumables as well as utilities. We also have legal obligations to meet the national minimum wage increases coming this April, all whilst receiving less funding. Our committee are actively looking for grants to help with our core funding and are still fundraising to help with our running costs.

We have recently had a child join who has Special Educational Needs. Since joining the pre-school in January, the child is making good progress and we are working closely with the parents and the Early Development and Inclusion Team at West Berkshire to ensure that our provision is meeting the child needs. I would like to take a minute to thank the Parish Council for their grant of £285 that is being put to good use in helping to support this child.

We continue to do our annual fundraising drives. This year our Santa Sleigh was our most successful year yet! We are always grateful to the team of volunteers each year and the local companies that also support us. We are about to hold our annual Easter Disco and are trying out our first ever sponsored Easter Bunny Run (look out for the 6ft inflatable Bunny running around the park!)

We have been working in partnership with the Primary school, attending a craft morning back in the Autumn as a good way to introduce our children to the school environment. The children love the opportunity to go and enjoy catching up with old friends that have already started school. We also attend the sports day annual as another event.

As you may have seen in the budget, there has been a focus on extending the 30 hours provision to all children over the age of 9 months. This has been seen as a huge win for the Early Years sector within the media, however the reality is that there is already a massive problem with underfunding across Early Years. I think the success of the new proposals will fall to the detailing as to how much extra funding will be put into Early Years. The hourly rate currently given from the Local Authority is not sustainable. We are running at a loss per hour per child as the rate is not enough to cover overheads, running costs and staff wages, particularly when minimum wage is due to increase by 9.7% this year. We will be watching closely to see what happens with this and seeing how any extra funding put forward will be subject to any deficit cuts from West Berkshire. I would hope we are able to offer more hours to more families from the community sustainably.

Appendix 5: Compilations

I am very pleased to report that even more people are showing an interest in publishing their clubs and activities. The villagers have sent more tit-bits and articles this past year than ever before. This really is good news as it makes the magazine more interesting and inclusive. There have been some lovely comments about Compilations, especially from people moving into the village. I was delighted to hear from at least half a dozen people that they like having the information on paper. So often news on Facebook disappears when you go back in to look for it. (I have to say that this is music to my ears as I am old fashioned enough to prefer pen and paper for a lot of things!!)

I am changing the deadline from noon on a Tuesday to a Monday night. This will stop me panicking at the last minute as I wait for reports that I know should arrive. It will also give me a full morning to arrange the articles and feel confident that the magazine will be ready to send to the printers on time. The printers are SO accommodating and helpful and often put us ahead in the queue to make sure that Compilations arrives to everyone in the village by the first of the month.

There have been a few issues at the printers this year with the installation of new machinery, teething troubles with that, a new manager, and changes of staff. Despite this our magazine has always been ready on time. The print room at West Berks is exceptional. It would be lovely if the Parish Council could send them a thank you.

Faye McGeehan organises the distribution of Compilations. She and her team of volunteers deserve special thanks for their efforts in all weathers.

I would like to thank the Parish Council for entrusting their Parish Magazine to me. I do enjoy the task of compiling it. (There are times when I could do nasty things to the computer. But I am a techie dinosaur, so my frustrations are self-inflicted !!)

Appendix 6: Downlands Sports Centre

Although the pandemic seems well behind us now as we get back into our 'normal' lives the leisure industry has not seen a full recovery of throughput to pre Covid levels as yet. In West Berkshire the recovery rate is currently running at about 80% of the pre-Covid levels.

In addition the leisure sector has been severely impacted by the rising energy costs with centres being closed in some areas. I am pleased to be able to advise that centres have all remained open in West Berkshire but there has been a slight reduction in opening hours at all sites to help reduce the impact of rising costs.

A third area to impact on the leisure sector is the cost of living – high inflation has meant that people are having to make stark choices around the things they would like to do and the things they must do with their money. This has seen a reduction in people having memberships and in many cases people have looked at alternative forms of keeping fit at low or zero cost e.g. more people are walking currently than before Covid.

West Berkshire Council has supported the current leisure operator to keep sites open as it is recognised that activity can have a positive impact on a person's health and well-being. Fees and Charges were held during re-opening periods after Covid lock downs and the 2023 fees and charges were pegged at inflation or below.

The current leisure management contract comes to an end this summer with a new contract commencing on July 1, 2023. A lengthy procurement process has been conducted and the successful bidder will be announced in early April.

In relation to the Downland Sports Centre this is a dual use facility located on The Downs School campus, Compton. In terms of community use the Centre is operated by Legacy Leisure on behalf of West Berkshire Council under a contract which is scheduled to run until June 30th 2023.

Current opening times for the centre are Term Time - Monday to Thursday 17.45pm - 22.00pm, at weekends the facility is available for private hire. The centre is also open during the school holidays where holiday programmes were organized for children.

The facility has a 12 station gym, a three court Sports Hall, male and female changing rooms with showers and toilets.

The centre Manager is from Legacy Leisure and covers the Centre along with the Lambourn Centre and Hungerford Leisure Centre. This allows some flexibility with staffing if the need should arise.

The annual throughput seen at the centre is as follows:

	2016/17	2017/18	2018/29	2019/20	2020/21*	2021/22**	2022/23***
Attendances	9,535	11,270	9,226	9,847	-	2,940	8,088

* Lockdown during Covid - Downland SC not open to public.

** Centre reopened in September 2021

*** 11 months only

The main users of the facility are local clubs with the Badminton and Bowls clubs being too good examples.

In terms of individual use the small gym is the main offer – in the 11 months to date the total attendances recorded by the management in the gym are 528. Tracking data through the West Berkshire Card indicates that these were generated by 28 people with 73 attendances at the site by a single person.

Club and block booking's account for almost 60% of use at the centre, and these are the mainstay of the programme with the clubs being responsible for new members, training, match play/competition and casual play within their sessions.

Appendix 7: School Road Allotments

Occupancy again is full with a waiting list of 2. We have had quite a bit of movement this year with new people on the site. I will hold a welcome tea and cake later in the year now that we can safely do this again.

The grounds team at Sovereign have cut the hedge to a height of 1.2mtrs. As the hedge was over 3mtrs high this came as quite a shock and concerns were raised regarding security and privacy from both sides.

The main gate remains an issue as the post really needs replacing. We have cut back the brambles from the gate to enable safer access, however they regrow rapidly. The plot adjacent to the gate has suffered trespass by members of the public picking berries. The plot holder reported damage to their raised beds and produce, and subsequently relinquished the plot. The PC are considering removal of the bramble bushes.

It has been a particularly cold winter making conditions hard on the ground. I expect a flurry of activity in the spring and our usual annual tidy up. The skip we have had the last couple of years has been a great help, hopefully we can have one again this year.

Over the winter we have had couple of woodchip deliveries which has really helped with some of the muddier areas.

Appendix 8: Flood Warden

Groundwater levels are currently very close to the historical average and are dropping.

While monthly rainfall totals for Sept 22 through to Jan 23 have been close to historical averages, Feb 23 has been very dry with only 12% of the historical average.

I am attending meetings of the Pang Valley Flood Forum and will pass on any relevant information to the Parish Council.

Residents may find the information on the Pang Valley Flood Forum website (<https://www.floodalleviation.uk/>) useful, especially definitions of flood warnings and alerts from the EA.

Could I remind those residents with riparian responsibilities to ensure the water courses through the village are kept clear.

Appendix 9: Autumn Group

Introduction

- The Autumn Group caters in the main for the over 45's from East & West Ilsley, Chilton, Wantage, Compton, Hermitage, Cold Ash, Aldworth plus the surrounding villages.
- We hold weekly meetings and activities in the Wilkins Centre, Compton on a Tuesday between 1pm and 4pm. Although some of our meetings involve trips/visits such as a barge trip on the local canal or to the Corn Exchange.
- The highlight of our year is the annual Christmas Day Lunch where we organise and run the event for anyone that is alone on that special day.
- As part of our monthly meetings members are encouraged to attend to demonstrate and learn new skills. This has given our members skills they could have only dreamt of. Recently we have taught ourselves or been taught, flower arranging, wreath making and bottle painting.
We also try to have speakers and other forms of entertainment.
Most sessions finish off with tea, cakes and a general chat.
- All this for £10 per year and a small admission fee.

History of the Group

- The Group was started in 2010 by Patricia Burnett and a couple of friends in the West Ilsley Village Hall and built up to 10 members.
- We moved to what is now known as the Wilkins Centre in 2011 when the Social Services gave up running the Day Care Unit.
- For the first years we were lucky to be sponsored by a company to the tune of £3,000 pa towards our rent.
- Over the next 8 years our membership built up to high 30's just before the pandemic.
- Obviously, our numbers dropped during the pandemic but are now rapidly building back up.
- Unfortunately, over the last few years we have lost a few members through natural causes.
- We still carried on during the pandemic. Members were supported with food parcels, competitions & regular information drops

- As you may guess the pandemic did not stop us with our Christmas Day Lunch as we ran a delivery service.
- Numbers attending the Christmas Day lunch had dropped slightly but now levelled off interestingly as family's became aware of their relations who came to the lunch because "they were on their own"

Where are we now

- We are financially self sufficient for our day to day running and extremely grateful to the support of Compton Parish Council, The Sheep Fair, East Ilsley Trust Fund **for capital projects**
- We have two wheel chairs we can let out hopefully attracting a small donation.
- Last year were given a quantity of free LFE kits for our members ONLY.
- We have now have a new member of our committee who is specifically tasked with arranging the future programme. So successful has she been that we now have a full dairy of very varied activities up to June.
- As you may have seen we try hard to promote ourselves with articles in local publications i.e. the excellent Compilations, Newsletters, Facebook etc.

Thank You

1. To you the Parish Council for your continued support
2. To the Village Hall Trustees for putting up with us as tenants
3. To our silent and hidden sponsors (they know who they are).
4. To our hard working committee
5. But above all to Patricia who's idea this was in the first place and in not very good English "works her socks off for the group". Without her it would not exist.

Appendix 10: Scouts

There are currently about 100 youth members. The group is having to support about 5% for subs and camps, however, identifying who needs that help is difficult. The new hut roof has improved how warm the hut is. The group is doing a lot of work in the grounds with a volunteering day this week. It is hoped that an outdoor classroom can be installed in the near future. A Squirrels group for 4-5 years olds will be starting soon, which means the group will be catering for people aged from 4 to 18 years old. The Scout Group is keen to help volunteering to carrying out cleaning and litter picking in the Recreation Ground again, whilst Cubs will soon be doing a litter pick.

Appendix 11: Guides

Rainbows

The Rainbows have worked hard on their Girl Guiding badges and external badges.

They have worked on their; Influence stage 1 badge, Reflect stage 2 badge and we are currently work on Innovate stage 1 badge.

The Rainbows have pretended to be robots and given each other instructions to get around obstacles in simple code.

They have got on an imaginary bus and explored the local area and the facilities we have in our community.

We have designed cards for the local doctors and learnt who can help us in different situations, dependant on where they are.

In addition to these badges we have complete a Strictly come dancing badge and learnt dances and designed headwear from different countries, and we have just completed a Winter wildlife badge.

In addition to unit meetings, Rainbows attended the Remembrance parade at Hamstead Norreys and along with the district we have just celebrated Thinking Day with district at Compton hut (and travelled around the World).

On Monday 13th Rainbows will be visiting the Ugly Duckling to do pottery painting, and to end last summer they visited Thirtover in Cold Ash to Grass Sledge.

Brownies

This term we have been working towards two separate badges, Be Well: Mindfulness and Know Myself: My Rights. So far for Be Well we have been up to the sports centre for a Badminton lesson, made some meditation jars (absolutely full of glitter) and learnt some games from around the world. For Know myself we have looked at women in engineering and had a go with the traditional spaghetti and marshmallows. Later this term / next term we will be fundraising for Great Ormond Street Hospital. We are sending our new mascot off for the Flight of the Giraffes (www.giraffesontour.co.uk) and we want to help raise money towards their chosen cause. We will also be thinking about people who help support our rights today as well as those that helped us gain them. This is on top of our traditional arts, crafts, hiking, and games we try to squeeze in wherever we can.

Guides

Have been working hard on Girl Guiding badges and recently completed their Guiding History badge, where they found recipes from the Second World war and cook in cardboard boxes.

There photograph badge, where they learnt about photography technical and created a storyboard of photos about themselves.

The completed Innovate Stage 4 badge where they had to design surgical tools that could remove items from a shoe box that only had small holes cut into it, mirroring keyhole surgery.

They have started work on their Mixology, which they will finish before Easter, designing mocktails and will bring friends to this event (in hope to increase numbers).

We are also currently working on our Navigator badge and the Guides have designed walks around local villages.

We have also partly completed part of our Be prepared badge, where they brought in a 72hour bag and used it for 3 days to see how they got on and what they had missed from packing!

We hope to finish the Mixology, Be prepared and hopefully the Navigator badge either before Easter or by Summer 2023 and will move onto our Saver badge.

In the last couple of weeks as part of the Feel Good stage 4 badge they unit has divided in two and cooked for each other, both groups choose a Mexican style theme, we are waiting for the lighter evening to complete this badge with an outdoor activity.

Some of the Guides attended district camp at Foxlease in the summer (New Forest), attended Remembrance parade at Hamstead Norreys and along with the district we have just celebrated Thinking Day with district at Compton hut (and travelled around the World).

On Monday 13th Guides will be visiting the Ugly Duckling to do pottery painting, and to end last summer they visited Thirtover in Cold Ash to participate in the Water activities.

Appendix 12: Compton Players

The Compton Players 2022/23

The Compton Players were delighted to get back on stage in 2021 following lockdown and since then we've been slowly getting back to normal.



In 2021 we performed a premiere of *Evil Will Come* written by one of our members, Helen Saxton. In June 2022, we entered it into the Oxfordshire Drama Network one-act play festival under its new name, *In Her Defence*, where it won the Original Playwriting Award for best new play. Helen then took the production to the Edinburgh Festival as a two-hander with fellow member Pete Watt, under her business *Dead Herring* where it was very well received and gained four-star reviews:

British Theatre Guide

"Dead Herring's In Her Defence, skilfully written by Helen Saxton, is the classic Agatha Christie murder mystery play with a wicked twist."

Edinburgh Guide

"Agatha Christie would certainly enjoy this ingenious puzzle of a plot to plan the perfect murder of 'quiet domestic interest.'"

Even though it was not performed under the name of The Compton Players, Helen would never have been able to get to Edinburgh without their amazing support in getting the original on stage in November 2021 and with their help in fundraising for the trip through a one-off preview performance in July 2022 performed in the village hall. We have entered the play in this year's Wallingford Drama Festival to be held in June.

Our latest production was our first full-length play for three years, and it wasn't all plain sailing. Covid struck some of the actors down during rehearsals, but we made it on stage in October 2022 with a re-run of another play written by a member, this time *Happy Acres* by H Connolly.

We'd first presented the premiere of *Happy Acres* back in October 1994, when it was produced by the author, H. Amazingly five of the original cast were still involved in this revival, one of them in the same part. This time round H took the part of Sam, and the play was produced by Eric Saxton who had played Sam in the original! We were also delighted to introduce two members, Lynne Buckland and Alan Johnson, making their first appearances on the Compton stage.

We had planned to premiere another of H's plays called *Mrs Wilson* in May 2023 and had got as far as casting it and booking in the dates. Unfortunately, one of the key actors had to drop out and we were unable to replace her at short notice, so we have had to cancel. We are hoping to recast it and perform it as our autumn production instead.

Membership is at a low at the moment, we'd love to welcome some new members and we particularly need younger actors. A plea – if anyone would like to become involved or knows anyone who may be interested, please get in touch!

Appendix 13: Friends of Compton Primary School

A new committee began running this in September. Last year a Circus event was held to fundraise, along with discos, and a silent auction. The focus for the coming year is to raise money for more laptops. If the target is exceeded, then the committee will aim to fundraise for the library with more books and a change of structure to improve accessibility. Fundraising ideas for the rest of the year include a rainbow raffle, something for the coronation – possibly tea towels, and parent events. The committee is looking to expand into the community with events such as a quiz and gin tasting. There will be a second hand book stall at the fete. People can also donate by signing up to Easyfundraising – where FoCPS get a percentage of everything purchased.

Appendix 14: Friends of The Downs

Sadly, the Friends of The Downs charity is folding and the Downs School Trust, a charity whose main activity is fundraising for the benefit of educational objectives has been running events and activities to fundraise for the school. We are so grateful to the FODs team for all of the hard work they have done for the school over the years and their dedication to fundraising for our school.

Since April 2022 school students, staff and the local community have enjoyed the following:

- Colour run in May 2022
- Summer Party in July 2022
- Sponsored Walk in Sept 2022
- Student Spooky disco in Oct 22
- Community forum launch in Dec 22
- Pottery Painting event Dec 22
- Launch of “Spirit of The Downs” in Nov 22

Parental volunteers have also sold drinks at the many evening events held at the school.

We have regular “bags2school” collections and recycle our printer cartridges for donations.

Sadly, our Pamper evening in March 23 had to cancel due to poor ticket sales and we fear that this maybe a sign of things to come due to the cost of living.

We look forward to events throughout 2023 including a Quiz in April 23 and our Downs School Open golf tournament. As always, we are eager to support any other local charities that are short of outdoor space that would like to run any events and use our field or site – they are more than welcome to get in touch, and we will work hard to facilitate and support.

Appendix 15: Compton Parochial Church Council

The boiler is currently not working so there is no heating. Due to the high cost to replace and run the system, they are looking at infra-red heating instead. This must be approved by the Diocese so may take some time to complete.

A wifi router is being installed. This will mean services can be broadcast live.

Café Joy takes place once a month – this is open to everybody in village.

The Church worked well with the Parish Council following death of the monarch, making a book of condolences available to the Parish.

There is a call for there to be ringers for the Coronation. There are only 2 or 3 able to do this in the village so they will try to do this for the Coronation but it will be limited.

The church is always open and welcomes everybody – including all faiths.