

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

**NOTICE OF THE ANNUAL PARISH
MEETING FOR FITZHEAD**

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT-

The Annual Parish Meeting for Fitzhead will be held in the Tithe Barn, on Wednesday 21 May 2025 at 6.45pm.

Local Government electors for the Parish will be entitled to vote at the Meeting which will be open to the public.

The business to be transacted at the Meeting will be as follows: -

1. Minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting – 22 May 2024
2. Report of the Chairman covering the activities of the Parish
3. Report by the Tithe Barn Management Committee
4. Any questions from Parishioners

Signature *Chris Summers*

Chair: Chris Summers

Date: 5 May 2025

Note: The annual meeting of the Parish Council will be held immediately after this Annual Parish Meeting.

FITZHEAD PARISH COUNCIL

Annual Parish Meeting held on 22 May 2024 in the Tithe Barn commencing at 7.15pm.

MINUTES

Attendees: 7 electors including 5 members of the Parish Council and a Councillor from Somerset Council.

In Attendance: Andrea Johnson (Clerk).

The meeting was chaired by Cllr Summers, Chairman of the Parish Council.

1. Minutes of previous meeting:

The minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 18 May 2023 were approved by the meeting and signed as a correct record by the Chairman.

2. Report of the Chairman covering the activities of the Parish

Cllr Summers reported on the activities of the Parish Council over the year.

Road Closures There are several road closure signs with limited diversion details due to Airband's service extension in the village. There are concerns about the number of new poles installed for this purpose.

Playground Maintenance

Regular checks and annual cleaning have been conducted in the playground. The presence of moles is the only noted issue. It was agreed a suitably qualified villager should be asked to advise.

Road Maintenance

Potholes and road edges are persistent problems. Parishioners are encouraged to report these issues on the website, but the Chairman of the Parish Council will carry out a personal check for any unreported issues.

Hedge Trimming

Hedges will require maintenance, but it is important that those carrying out the maintenance have the necessary insurance and Chapter 8 qualification.

Ditch Responsibility

Ditch maintenance is problematic as it is not always clear who is responsible for them. A meeting with Cllrs Dave Mansell and Gwynn Hughes of Somerset Council is awaited to address this.

Community Involvement

The Chairman has attended most Local Community Network (LCN) meetings and has volunteered for the Highways Committee.

Planning Applications

Responses have been submitted to all planning applications, with comments available on the planning portal.

Tithe Meadow Sign

The Tithe Meadow sign has been restored to its original location.

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Parish Precept

Unfortunately, after holding the precept level for several years, a significant increase had been required this year to keep pace with the cost of living. No adverse comments had been received from villagers, but the Council might need to consider incremental increases in the future.

3. Presentation to the Tithe Barn Management Committee

The chairman presented the Tithe Barn Management Committee with the official portrait of King Charles III.

4. Report by Tithe Barn Management Committee

Ian Coombes reported on behalf of the Tithe Barn Management Committee.

Improvements

The bar area has been refurbished which led to a long-standing water leak been discovered. This meant that most of the floor had to be replaced at the same time. The toilets have also been updated and a hot drinking water boiler installed in the kitchen making it easier and safe for larger groups to serve hot drinks as they no longer need the urn. New lighting is to be installed upstairs.

The kitchen will probably be the next big expense in the future, once funds are available.

Fundraising events

The Tithe Barn Management Committee has been trying to work with the PCC to organise events to raise funds for both the Church and the Tithe Barn and several ideas have been suggested.

The first breakfast for some time was held and others are planned. Other events being organised include an exhibition of wedding dresses and film nights.

Bookings

Bookings are similar to last year, but it is hoped that they will start to increase as the barn is promoted for events. The new bar area is starting to get used by smaller groups. Donations are also up mainly because of events held including music, Pub nights, sports match screenings and breakfast. The fete and duck race were profitable, Abi Wickham and Martin Irish were thanked for their support and hard work in organising these events. These events are a way forward to raise revenue and bring the community together for a good cause.

Heating

Issues with the electricity tariff have been resolved, but the remote timer for the heating is still not working correctly.

The meeting attendees thanked the Tithe Barn Management Committee for all their hard work.

5. Report by Fitzhead PCC

The Chairman read out the report from Fitzhead PCC.

Church fabric report

A Quinquennial report was provided in 2022 and maintenance items are being undertaken on a DIY basis as suggested in the report.

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Because of gutter leaks, a commercial firm will be undertaking work soon on thorough cleaning of the guttering, repairing leaks and longer-term arrangements are being considered. Electricians have been asked to carry out appliance testing. Concerns have been expressed about a crack which has developed in the church tower and advice on this is being sought.

Ongoing care

Flower arrangers are doing a great job and brass cleaning, both by rotas are very much appreciated. General cleaning continues to be carried out well by a commercial firm. There are continuing concerns about the cost of heating the church, and pew heaters are generally used for services and other use.

Churchyard

The wildflower meadow initiated by Janet Weeks in part of the churchyard, is doing well It is hoped that this can be a focus for further activity especially with children. It is hoped to initiate a work party to move a table tomb lid which was high-lighted in the quinquennial report.

Tower and bells

A report on the bells has identified major problems. A second report has been sought and it is understood that this covers all necessary work. Bell ringers would like the PCC to consider possible fund raising for this work.

Organ and choir

The choir of four is continuing to provide music for services. The organ had a problem at Christmas when the organ heater had been turned off but seems to be fine again now.

Questionnaire

A questionnaire was formulated and distributed to households in Fitzhead. There were 27 responses with a great deal of support expressed for the church's continued use, sound of bells etc. and offers of practical and financial help. The results are being analysed and a response will be made soon to all those submitting a completed survey. Some excellent ideas and closer co-ordination with the Tithe Barn Management Committee are already being pursued. A chart has been put together showing details of offers of help and is available for PCC members.

Safeguarding

All requirements have been met and no issues have arisen.

Church Services

Harvest Festival and Supper were celebrated and the Carol service at the start of December went well thanks to Colin Weeks in view of Covid affecting the organist. There was a Midnight Mass on Christmas Eve, fairly well attended. There was a service on Good Friday this year followed by hot cross buns and an egg hunt for children.

Fund raising & events

The Fete was very successful in 2023, thanks to the impressive efforts of Abi Wickham. Another fund-raising event was a Summer Tea.

The talk by Kate Nolan on her father Martin Skinner held in the Church was very successful and brought back memories to those who had known him when he lived in Fitzhead.

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6. Report by Fitzhead Cricket Club

The Chair read out a report from Fitzhead Cricket Club.

The Club was pleased to report that it ended the year with a small loss of just £326. The Club wished to thank Fitzhead Parish Council for their kind donation. This came as a pleasant surprise after the Club had been being forewarned that the donation might cease following the move to the Unitary Authority.

The Club made extra efforts to increase our income this year, particularly as it ended 2022 with a £1,790 loss. Members annual subscriptions were increased from £20 to £30; a Premises Licence was obtained to allow the Club to serve alcohol, BBQs were held after most home games and a rounders tournament was held.

The Club still has funds, but after spending £6-7k on a new pavilion roof in 2021 and £753 on new electrics in 2022, it is now faced with badly leaking garage and tractor shed roofs, which in turn have caused major issues with the grounds maintenance equipment. It has already been necessary to spend several hundreds of pounds on repairs and renewals.

In terms of cricket, the Club had a difficult season in 2023 and has been relegated to division 3 of the West Somerset League. Members range from 15 to 76 years old, so the club provides a valuable service for people of all ages. The Club will continue to try and raise funds and will be grateful for any support that it may receive.

7. Questions from Electors

There were no questions from electors.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.15pm.