FAIR OAK & HORTON HEATH PARISH COUNCIL
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Minutes of the Annual Parish Assembly held on Monday 14 April 2025 at 5.00pm, at the Parish Office, 2 Knowle Park Lane, Fair Oak

Present: Cllrs Couldrey, Douglas (Chair), Higby, Smith & Tennent

Apologies: Cllrs Anderson, Bird, Broomfield, Forfar, Meech & Scott

Absent: Cllrs Barrett, Chivuchi, Marsh & Stupple

Officers in attendance: Michelle Leadbitter-Allen, Deputy Executive Officer, Carly Giles, Communications & Events Officer & Joanna Cahill, Finance Officer

Also in attendance: The Vicar at St Thomas' Church, a volunteer from the Community Library and the President of Fair Oak Cricket Club. One member of the public was present to observe the meeting.

1. CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME

The Chair welcomed all those present to the meeting and explained that the Annual Parish Assembly was a statutory requirement, offering an opportunity to reflect on parish activities over the past year.

2. MINUTES (PAPER A)

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 17 April 2024 be signed as a correct record.

3. CHAIR'S REPORT

The Chair gave a report of the success of the year, as set out in Appendix 1 to these minutes. She reported that over the past year the Parish Council had made significant improvements to local community infrastructure, including play provision, and had been working on a broader strategy to ensure future provision was suited to the needs of the local community.

Several successful public events had been held during the year, including the Remembrance Service, Christmas Lantern Parade, Spring Nature Trail, and Volunteer Appreciation Day. Thanks were extended to volunteers and organisers who had contributed to the success of these events.

The Council had also hosted an exhibition at the Fountain Café and commemorated the service of Cpt Lydia Alford, one of the 'Flying Nightingales' recognising the historic contributions of women during the Second World War.

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The Chair further reported that the Parish had supported the installation of a second cricket wicket through developer contributions and continued to support Fair Oak Cricket Club, which had experienced considerable success. The Fountain Café had hosted cooking classes for young people, aimed at teaching practical skills and promoting economical cooking. Environmental initiatives had included the planting of a mini forest, an orchard, and the introduction of edible planters for community use.

The Community Pantry, based at the Fountain Café and supported by Hampshire County Council funding, had provided affordable food options to those in need. Sustainability measures had included the installation of solar panels and energy-efficient lighting across parish properties.

The Chair concluded the report by thanking the volunteers, Councillors, and Parish staff for their continued support and contributions to the parish community.

4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Community Lunch Update

The Vicar of St Thomas' Church, reported that the Community Lunch project had continued to grow over the past year. Attendances had peaked at 32 people, with participants spanning every decade of life. The lunch provided a valuable opportunity for social interaction, particularly for those who might otherwise experience isolation. It was noted that many of the attendees were not regular participants in other church activities, highlighting the wider community benefit of the project. Plans were in place to host a VE Day-themed lunch. Thanks were expressed to the Parish Council for the grant that had helped establish the programme.

Library Update

A representative of the Community Library reported that over 9,000 visitors had attended the Library during the past year. 319 craft sessions had been delivered, along with a programme of activities during school holidays. Fundraising efforts had included the launch of a 200 Club, with proceeds supporting Library operations. The Library had also received positive media coverage after being featured on BBC local news. The representative expressed thanks to the team of 20–25 volunteers who had enabled the Library to remain open without interruption.

Cricket Club Update

The President of Fair Oak Cricket Club, provided an update on the Club's activities. The Club had expanded to five senior teams, eight junior teams, and two ladies' teams. The first team had achieved promotion to Division One of the Hampshire Cricket League.

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Members of the community were invited to attend matches and support the Club during the summer season.

5. CLOSING REMARKS

The Chair paid tribute to the unseen work of Parish Officers and the Grounds Team, and extended thanks for their efforts in maintaining the Parish to a high standard. Thanks were also given to the Councillors and community representatives present for their continued service to the community.

Signed: …… Chair

Dated: ……

Meeting closed at: 5:25pm

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