

FULMER NEWSLETTER



December 2023 - Issue 73

fulmervillage.org



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FROM THE EDITORS

Edition 73 is a good mix of updates on Fulmer's activities of the past 6 months and some pieces written by locals which we always welcome; anyone can contribute if they would like to for a future issue. As many of you know David Brackin, Fulmer Parish Council Chairman, sends out a weekly bulletin each Saturday with current information on all aspects of life and events in the village and do sign up at <http://eepurl.com/gm28Xb> to receive directly to your inbox. Wishing everyone a very Happy Christmas and New Year.

Susie & Ronnie Simkins

FULMER VILLAGE HALL

Fulmer Village Hall is situated at the heart of Fulmer Village, opposite the 17th Century redbrick church, only a stone's throw from the equally historic Black Horse public house and surrounded by picturesque cottages. A frequent winner of Buckinghamshire's Best Kept Village competition, the setting of the Village Hall offers a charming backdrop for any function or celebration. Fully licensed for the sale of alcohol, facilities include a modern kitchen, numerous tables and chairs, disabled access to the main hall, a stage, one smaller meeting room and, of course, parking and loos, including a disabled lavatory. The Hall can comfortably accommodate up to 120 people standing or 80 seated. It is a venue for wedding receptions, anniversary and birthday parties, both children's and adults', as well as seated dinners, catered from the kitchen. It is also available for regular weekly or monthly evening activities. The Hall is one of the best available locally, in the prettiest of settings, and offers excellent value for money. Please call Karen Nelmes (Lettings Secretary) on 07498 041253 for more details and to discuss your specific requirements. We look forward to welcoming you to Fulmer Village Hall!



Fulmer Parish Council & Duties 2023-24

David Brackin:	Chairman (chair@fulmervillage.uk ; 07970 793058) Finance Group Representing Fulmer in Bucks (Community Board, Police)
Susie Simkins:	Deputy Chairman; Councillor (susiemsimkins@gmail.com) Liaison with Pinewood Studios, Teikyo, RDA and Fulmer School; Fulmer Newsletter & Publisher
Ian Bocock:	Councillor, Best Kept Village; Speedwatch
Francesca Hall-Drinkwater:	Councillor (francescaatrushworths@gmail.com) St James Church Liaison, Churchwarden, Parish Website Manager
Parm Khanghura:	Councillor (parm@connectglobalconsulting.com) Planning - inc Enforcement & Neighbourhood Plan
Lorette Du Toit:	Councillor (lorettedutoit@hotmail.com) Allotments liaison, Chair & FPC member, FSCA
Kathryn O'Reilly:	Councillor, Neighbourhood Watch & Police Liaison Enforcements (kathryn@westmeathcapital.com)
Pauline Vahey:	Clerk (clerk@fulmervillage.uk) Proper Officer – Council administration & governance Responsible Finance Officer – Finance Group FPC member & Secretary, FSCA Liaison with Bucks Unitary Authority & other county- wide partners
Others	
Barbara Zoltowoska:	Fulmer Village Hall Chairman- bzoltowska@hotmail.co.uk
Karen Nelmes:	Village Hall Lettings Secretary 07498 041253
Santokh Chhokar:	Unitary Councillor (Santokh.Chhokar@buckinghamshire.gov.uk)

I was asked recently what the number one priority was for the residents of Fulmer. The mission of the Parish Council is to Keep Fulmer Special which covers a large area – from community events to planning. However, the answer I gave was about road safety. It is probably the topic that I hear most about – the crashes, the speeding, the HGVs, the consequences of being a pedestrian where there are no footpaths. The threat to our equestrians and cyclists from thoughtless drivers. The problem is complicated, and as Bucks Council owns the roads and TVP police them, very little is in our direct control: it is a dance of money, priorities and diplomacy to advance our cause. We tango and waltz as best we can, and we have had some significant results for the village. But there are some things that are in our individual control for each and every one of us. Some things that we can do to make our roads safer. The first is to be thoughtful about our own driving. Do we bring our speed down in villages – even when we are in a rush? Are we as careful as we would expect others to be – cautious in slippery Winter conditions and aware that what meets us when we go round a bend might not be the same as yesterday and the day before? No matter how good we are, we can all do a little better. The second area I'd like you to consider getting involved in is Speedwatch. You'll have read about schemes in the Sunday Times and on the BBC last month. After some online training, volunteers gather for an hour or so to record speeds. Drivers over the limit get a letter from the Police (but no points) and repeat or serious offenders get a visit from Roads Policing Officers. Fulmer has a Speedwatch group and its first few sessions were incredible. Around 25% of drivers were recorded speeding. People from around South Bucks and even as far as Amersham had heard what great results we have had and got in touch with me. Speedwatch has a disproportionate effect. Just a few volunteers for an hour or two can signal how much we care. It encourages the Police to take notice – more even than the broken walls. It reminds drivers that enforcement might be in any village. The third session we organised was cancelled owing to a lack of volunteers. We were just one short. If you care about this issue give me an hour of your time: sign up and get involved. Go to www.communityspeedwatch.org and click "Register" and "Join Existing" to get started. Drop me a note if you need help.

November saw the Parish Council consider its finances. 5 years ago we had to increase council taxes for the first time in years to put the council on a professional footing and to allow a small reserve to be built up. This has been successful with just over 3 months of expenditure in reserves and enough financial strength to support the building of The Studio at no net cost to residents. We are all seeing the costs of things we buy going up. 10% is not uncommon this year, and the council is no different. However, because of our prudence, we have been able to say that we won't be adding to this problem for residents this year. We will hold our increase to just 3% this year although eventually the costs will come through in the future. If you have questions about how we raise and spend money for the village then I or the Clerk would be delighted to chat.



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PERSONALIA

Deaths

We send condolences to the families of

Ronnie Hunter Lamb who died on 10 June. A memorial service was held in Fulmer Church on 22 September.

Dr. Gerald Blanshard who died on 13 August. His funeral was held in Fulmer on 9 September.

Sheila Cousens who died on 14 August. Her funeral took place on 27 September.

Wendy Roper who died on 30 October. Her funeral will take place on 4 December.

Wedding

We offer congratulations to Sam John Turnock and Emma Jane Alexandra Smith (granddaughter of Vibeka & Paoul Sundsig-Hanson of South Row) on their wedding on 4 November.

The advertisement for Stoke Poges Memorial Gardens is split into two main sections. The left section is a light grey box containing text about the gardens' status and services. The right section is a photograph of a large, ornate stone urn on a pedestal in a garden setting.

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RONNIE LAMB

Eulogies from his son, Jamie, Edward Gould & Grant Gush



"Six deep breaths Jumby" That's what Daddy will be saying.

Ronald Hunter Lamb ...Ronnie, Daddy, Grandpa. Born 21 October 1942 in Edinburgh, he enjoyed his early years at Astley House in North Berwick, with Jane, Michael and cousins Gavin and Johnny, playing golf on the children's course, fishing off the harbour wall and racing around on bikes. He then went to Clifton Hall, where he was head boy and captain of rugby and cricket. It is not so well known though that he also won the dancing cup, due to being the only person not to step on the replica swords. I actually played rugby against Clifton Hall on a prep school rugby tour. I think he was secretly delighted that it was the only game we lost. He then went to Merchiston Castle School where he was again head boy and captain of rugby and cricket.

Family was always everything and my father travelled far and wide to see mine, my sisters' and his grandchildren's matches. He watched rugby, hockey, cricket, netball and swimming ... and all this after a hard week at work. I would always look out for him to see where he was on the touch line before the start of a rugby match. The one sport he wasn't keen on ...was skiing. Despite his vertigo though, he took us all skiing several times because WE loved it. One time we were very delayed ...so not happy! I actually overheard one ski rep say to another..."there's always one". He enjoyed the apres-ski though.

We are so lucky to have been on many family holidays together to Sotogrande, South Africa, Italy, Mallorca, Comino, Turkey, even the Isle of Lewis. Unfortunately, while sailing in Turkey we all went down with terrible food poisoning and could basically only eat boiled potatoes for two weeks. I had to tell Daddy my A level results when he was hooked up on a drip in his cabin. I don't think he appreciated my "I passed with Es (ease)" joke. Long summers in Gullane were amazing, spending days on the golf course and Muirfield beach with friends and family. No food poisoning there from a sausage on a stick in the fire. Burnt and sandy on the outside, raw in the middle.

My parents' hospitality is legendary. My father told me about one time at Ivy Cottage he had to leave a dinner party early to drive down south for work ...and when he returned the following Friday, the same six people were sitting round the dining room table. But it was Dunrobin that was the real party house. Birthdays, weddings, anniversaries, Fulmer Day after parties ...or just because... Christmases at Dunrobin were perfect. S stockings, church, the pub, smoked salmon, champagne, Gertrude the turkey, Christmas pudding, the twelve days of Christmas and then the jigsaw and games which included some very dubious answers and scoring from RHL in Bird, Beast, Fruit, Flower.

We celebrated his 80th Birthday in style at Greencraig with lots more fun and games. In fact, all family games were always tremendous fun, and on the surface, appeared sporting. But whether it was table tennis, tennis, putting, rounders, boules, knockout whist, even Donkey and Butterfingers ... everyone wanted to win! Great meals out at Muirfield, The Alphorn, The Black Horse, The Old Clubhouse, La Taverna, The Main Course, El Asado and El Gaucho to name a few. On our way back from La Taverna one time we were stopped by the police in Windsor for having too many people in the car.....to which my mother explained that Em and Wigs were Siamese twins and could not be separated. It was very fitting that Dad's last meal was at The Old Clubhouse.

So, Ronnie, Daddy, Grandpa. The greatest of them all
You taught us "Never up never in" on the golf course
And that "the bigger they are the harder they fall."
You'll be watching over us now from heaven,
Whistling with a whisky
While watching The Magnificent Seven
You read us Kipling's If, "you'll be a man my son",
And told us of the Bruce, Try Try again
Family always your number one,
We love you so, our perfect Ten
So Ronnie, Daddy, Grandpa.
You will always be our hero

And don't you worry, we won't forget
To "tell the truth and tackle low" RHL

Edward Gould – OXFORD UNIVERSITY AND RUGBY

How lovely to see so many people here today. It is a great tribute to Ronnie, his life's work, and his ability to relate to, and work with people. Being naturally rather shy, yet with a wry sense of humour and a twinkle in his eye, I am far from certain that he would enjoy this part of the service, but I would allow him to be a little grumpy if he was so minded. We were all saddened by the unexpected news of Ronnie's death in June despite his dementia which he bore courageously to a great extent through the wonderful support of his family. At a time like this we are all brought up short by the breakability of life: we are made to appreciate how fragile it is, how tenuous our grip on it is and how precious it is. For those of us here today, it is our chance to celebrate and be thankful for all that Ronnie brought into the world, for his life was in a manner of speaking treasure focussed on his family, the broader families centred around the game of rugby, the communities he served in business and those amongst whom he lived. He believed that you must get amongst people and share their concerns if you are to lead them on. And what a fine example he was in the area of rugby, in particular.

After his apprenticeship at school, he arrived at St Edmund Hall in Oxford in 1962, having been rejected by Cambridge. In view of the result of the Varsity Match in 1964 in which he gained his third rugby 'blue' and captained Oxford to a remarkable and surprising victory, this was a careless mistake made by certain cerebral folk in the Fens. The media had a field day after his victory in 1964 with headlines such as 'Lamb hero of Oxford's emphatic victory'. Following this, he captained the Combined Oxford and Cambridge Universities Tour to Argentina and Brazil having been on a similar tour to South Africa in 1963. These achievements brought out his strong leadership characteristics that were to be reflected elsewhere and widely in his life. He never allowed his ego to influence his judgement as illustrated by the time when he considered dropping himself from the team close to the 1964 match. The respect he had earned did not allow this to happen. He was courageous too because he never allowed any personal discomfort – and he was never short of injuries - to influence his decisions. Although as Captain he recognised that he was responsible for the coaching of his team, he was not afraid to seek further help as his decision to ask Norman Mair, a fellow Scot, to assist in the final run up to his Varsity match demonstrated. His quality of loyalty was shown to individuals in his team as well as to organisations. In due course he became Chairman of The Major Stanley's Trust, Chairman of OURFC, and was elected to the Council of the RFU. He played a significant role in strengthening the financial position of the Club and promoting the growth of women's rugby throughout the university. He was especially proud of this achievement. On an individual level and some years later, he and Rosie went to help a member of his team, Bill Hadman, who was very badly injured in a road traffic accident in France, all entirely because he retained an interest in those who played with him and under his leadership. A reflection of the respect he earned at OURFC was amply demonstrated by the occasion in

2021 when his family organised a sponsored charity '500 Minute Walk' in aid of the Alzheimer's Charity which started at Iffley Road and was so well attended. So that we bring some breadth to his Oxford experience, it should be appreciated that he ventured into other areas as well as gaining his academic qualifications: playing squash with the Principal of his College and others, golf whenever he could, rowing in the Rugby VIII in Summer Eights and becoming addicted to 'The Magnificent Seven' through the Scope Club at his College. After the completion of his final examinations, he was seen driving up the Woodstock Road sharing a bottle of champagne in an open top sports car with his close friend Peter Gush. While Rosie became familiar with the way to Oxford, he did his best to keep his sister away from Oxford.

Following his Twickenham victory, he was selected for a Scottish trial and was capped several times for the then Edinburgh District XV. He captained Edinburgh Wanderers F.C. over three seasons, including the Wanderers Centenary year in 1968, and the Wanderers Seven's team of 1969 that played in the Middlesex Sevens at Twickenham. He became a life member of Edinburgh Wanderers F.C. and subsequently Murrayfield Wanderers F.C. Throughout his life, he was always keen to turn out dressed correctly for the occasion and this was reflected in him bringing home the Wanderers kit after matches to be washed by his mother. One of Ronnie's proudest moments was when he captained the Scottish Districts XV to victory in the Borders against the South African Springboks who toured Scotland and Ireland in 1965 on a short tour. Yet there was a brighter and still prouder and happier moment throughout all this time which was his marriage to Rosie Carnegie in St Giles Cathedral in 1968.

Ronnie had a sort of luminous quality. He was aspirational in all his activities and for all those he led. He understood the notion of duty and responsibility at a young age, was competitive and a great leader. He gained universal respect and this luminous quality brought love, care, integrity and commitment to his personal family and the families of others. His immediate family was his first love with Rosie, his son, Jamie, and his daughters, Amelia, Juliet and Emily, and their families. He was a kind man, formidable and a true leader whose end came as a friend. The earthly vessel was broken yet this occasion enables us to acknowledge the treasure inside: that part that is eternal and, in many conversations, we will remember in all kinds of ways how he was and the part he played in our lives. He would have looked forward to and enjoyed the forthcoming celebration in the Marine Hotel in North Berwick. In so many ways he will be there.

Grant Gush - BUSINESS

By way of introduction my name is Grant Gush and Ronnie was my Godfather. It is my role today to give you an insight into Ronnie Lamb the businessman. Following on from Jamie and Ed.... After Oxford he joined the family glass and glazing company in Edinburgh, this was acquired shortly afterwards by the Pearson Group.

He stayed with Pearsons for twelve years, developing their glass interests into a dominant market player before becoming Managing Director of Doulton & Co. and a director on the Pearson Board. In 1980, a Pearson reorganization led to the sale in 1982 of the glass operations to Plate Glass and Shatterprufe Industries of South Africa, with the condition of the sale that he should move to run the glass operations and join their International Board. He developed Autoglass into the clear market leader for automotive replacement glass in the UK and took the successful formula to the continental market. PG restructured in the late '80's selling the building glass operations to the French group, Saint-Gobain. His leadership skills, again in demand, required him to move and run the business for the French. After four trying years with Saint Gobain, integrating the UK business into the Group, he left in June 1994.

Ronnie always kept his private life distinctly separate from business life, as a student in the UK around this time I got a brief insight into his sheer frustration in dealing with a vastly different French business culture, it was one of those rare moments when his carefully managed "chinese walls" were breached. It was also apparent that the tough economic conditions of the early 1990's had a marked impact on him as he no doubt would have had to let people go, not an easy task in the best of times. His leadership skills were manifest, up until 1994 he had fulfilled the roles of Chairman and/or Chief Executive of the UK operations for three different Parent Companies from different countries and with varying backgrounds, cultures and traditions. In 1995 he was involved in a couple of venture capital funds which led to an appointment as executive Chairman of Highway Glass Limited having assisted them in raising capital.

I remember travelling back with the family from Southwold to Dunrobin after a weekend visiting Emily and Juliette at Saint Felix. The weather had been superb, the UK had knocked it out of the park, a six many times over. We had left late and on Sunday evening had encountered one of the UK motoring idiosyncrasies a traffic jam on the M25 at 9.30pm. After an hour and only a couple of miles further on, the talk turned to the wonderful benign weather that we had experienced. At which point Ronnie (there was a twinkle in his eye) irritably mooted that he really, really didn't like good weather!!! After a well-managed pregnant pause he mused about how much he thoroughly enjoyed storms ... better yet tempests, even better the aforementioned with flying objects. My face must have displayed absolute astonishment looking at me he said, "Grant, these break glass and that is good for the glass industry" Ahhh! Highway was one of his greatest business challenges, taking a smaller glass company and competing with the big boys, ironically some of which he had a role in creating in the first place!

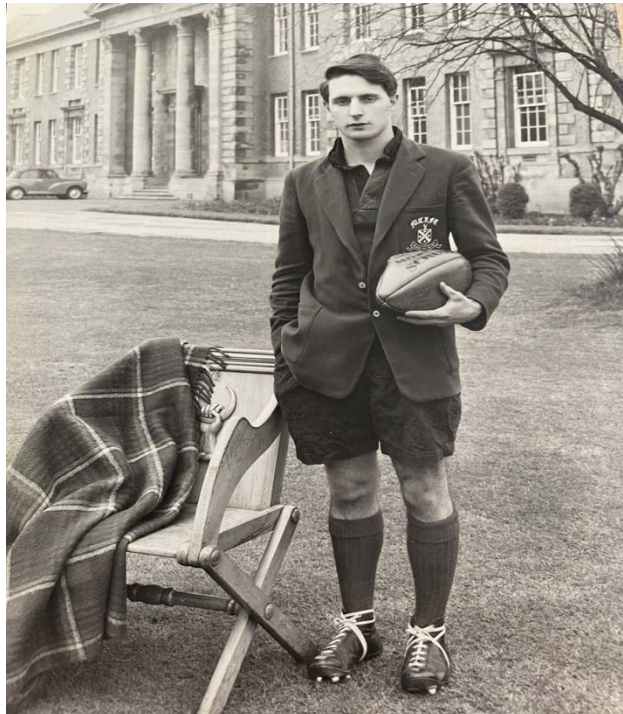
A huge part of Ronnie's ethos was to give back to his community amongst others. He was Chairman of a number of Group Pension Funds. However, being Chairman of his local Parish Council was vitally important to him. Attending a VE ceremony one year at the Fulmer church the community spirit was readily apparent along with respect shown

to Ronnie and Rosie. Notwithstanding Ronnie's business success, perhaps one can surmise that his later years when he chaired OURFC were his most satisfying. Bringing his leadership, managerial and organisational skills to bear on a game and club that he was truly passionate about. The results speak loudly, five wins in a row from a 7-year tenure as Chairman of The Oxford University Rugby Football Club. This created a tradition of sacrificing his body to a "Vindaloo" and many pints if Oxford prevailed over the light blues in the annual Darby at Twickenham. He was very conscious of balance in his life and worked extraordinarily hard to achieve this goal.

As his close friend, David Macammon, said, "he used to drive ridiculous distances from home to East Anglia" to his other commitments, especially as a father. Always smartly turned out in a jacket and tie whether in the boardroom, supporting OURFC or most importantly on the sidelines at school sports matches.

A quotation from Denny, my mother - "The life and passion of a person leaves an imprint of the ether of a place. Love does not remain in the heart, it flows out to build unknown secret, tabernacles, in the landscape of the earth and cosmos."

Ronnie was a wonderful human being, and he will be sorely missed as husband to Rosie, father to Jamie, Moppy, Juliette and Emily, Grandfather, Godfather, friend, business colleague



Ronnie was a Fulmer legend and he and Rosie are still much missed. Their generosity and kindness to the village will never be forgotten - Editors

CAROL ANNE GARNER

Carol was born at the Queen Mary Nursing home in Derby on 16th December 1938. She lived with her parents, Thomas and Gwen and brother Jeff at number 7 Albany Road, Derby until she began residential training to become a Registered Nurse. She enjoyed Nursing School and it was during this time that she met friends Breege and Carol and they remained close friends throughout their lives.

In 1960 Carol married Michael in the parish Church of St. Jude, Mapperley, Nottingham and they were married for 27 years. They had 3 sons, Mark, Neil and Jonathan. During their marriage they lived in various places, moving due to Michael's work. The family relocated briefly to Phoenix Arizona during the 70's, before settling in Gerrards Cross. Whilst the boys were young Carol devoted her time to being a full time Mother and homemaker. Later she returned to work as a carer for the Leonard Cheshire organisation, which she did until retirement.

Carol had many skills including sewing, in particular patchwork quilting. She was a member of a 'quilters' group' and made fabulous pieces, many of which were given as gifts and remain in the family. Carol also enjoyed cross-stitch and again would make gifts for friends and family. For a few years Carol had an allotment in Chalfont St Peter, growing her own fruit and vegetables.

Her eldest son Mark moved to Yorkshire following University. Carol enjoyed visiting him and her grandson James and spent many Christmases, Easters and during the summer holidays. Neil remained close to home and was the first to call if Carol needed jobs doing around the home. He was instrumental in setting up the care Carol needed as she developed Alzheimer's, visiting most days to check all was well. Her youngest son Jonathan moved to Japan and later Thailand, but they kept in close contact despite the distance.

Carol was a 'demon' Scrabble player, she always had a copy of the Official Scrabble words book to hand and enjoyed playing/beating family friends and neighbours. Despite never remarrying Carol had an active Social life. She was involved in many groups, including gardening club, quilters club, Bible study and prayer groups. She enjoyed going on lots of trips with these groups and the companionship she gained from being involved.

It's important to mention the wonderful relationship Carol had with her long standing neighbour Mary-Anne who was a true friend to Carol and was always at hand to offer help. The whole family are eternally grateful for her care and support.

GERALD PHOENIX BLANSHARD FRCP 6th February 1926 – 13th August 2023

MAY SIMPSON BLANSHARD (Bisset) FRCA 15th July 1921 – 8th March 2022

Gerald and May Blanshard moved to Alderbrook, Fulmer Lane with their family in 1962 and lived there until they passed away in 2023 and 2022. They loved the rural life of Fulmer, especially in the days before the M40 and M25 construction and enjoyed the gardens and space it offered and hobby farming until their latter years.

Gerald was born near Doncaster, his early schooling was locally in Adwick-le-street and he then went on to boarding school at Bridlington Grammar School, East Yorkshire. Having decided on a career in medicine he went up to St John's College, Cambridge and then on to the Middlesex Hospital in London qualifying in 1949. He started his medical career as a junior doctor at the Middlesex Hospital but unfortunately shortly after starting he contracted tuberculosis from a patient. Treatment at this time was limited but antibiotic therapy was being developed and probably saved his life after a year of convalescence. He subsequently became a Member of the Royal College of Physicians and was appointed Consultant Physician at Hillingdon hospital in 1964 where he developed the diabetic service and later became a Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians. He also became physician at the hospital of St John and Saint Elizabeth in St John's Wood, London in 1966

May was born in Aberdeen where she went to school and then attended Aberdeen University to study medicine with her brother David. She enjoyed climbing and was secretary to the Aberdeen University climbing club. She moved down to the Middlesex to escape the Scottish weather and continued her training as one of the few female doctors at the Middlesex and then went on to qualify as a Fellow of the Royal College of Anaesthetists. She was appointed Consultant Anaesthetist at Mount Vernon and Harefield hospital but also worked at the private hospital where she made some lifelong friends.

They married on the 3rd of April 1956 at King's College Chapel, Aberdeen and settled into married life initially living in Northwood. Research grants from Cambridge and the Middlesex Hospital permitted Gerald to join teams in Paris and later Harvard Medical School for a year in 1958 where they both lived with the first two of their children. They had two more sons and as the family expanded they moved to Alderbrook which became his love and joy. Life at Alderbrook was always busy with numerous jobs to be carried out on the farmland but a team of 4 boys proved useful at harvest time. He loved to do things himself and put his hand to growing cereal crops, tending some cattle and even growing potatoes. The woodland was his passion and he gradually planted up an arboretum in Furzeney woods surrounding Alderbrook; initially growing Christmas trees and latterly more specimen trees which are now flourishing. He was happy to run an oak tree trunk through his sawmill and use it for fencing and construction. He loved his farming: visits to the Slough cattle market and farm auctions were the highlight of his day. Always looking for a bargain though meant that repairing the machinery was a constant activity in the

workshop at Alderbrook. The legacy of this has been passed on to many of his children who continue to repair this same machinery. May loved a good party but looking after four boys and working as an anaesthetist kept her busy. She was fiercely defensive of her Scottish roots and her love of Scotland has been passed on to her children. All of this was fitted in whilst they were both working as Consultants in the NHS and running a private practice but on retirement they were able to spend more time enjoying life on a small farm. They had many local friends and enjoyed the Church and Black Horse as the focus of village life. Two of their sons, Jonathan and Gavin, were married in the Church.

May loved the warmth and sunshine so there was a regular escape to Salou near Barcelona at Easter and summer holidays were often near Chichester harbour in Emsworth or Walderton. It was here that they both learnt to sail and this was passed on to their children.

They are survived by four sons, two of whom are doctors, one in finance and one in IT business. They have had ten grandchildren of whom one is a doctor and three great grandchildren.

Jonathan Blanshard

THE GREATEST RESCUE PLAN EVER!

In the movie – The Martian – Matt Damon plays the part of Mark Watney an astronaut stranded on Mars after his crew mistake him for dead. Several years pass before his crew can stage their daring rescue plan. It would be no mean feat, involving dangerous complexity and impeccable timing. Somehow, in the time of waiting, Watney has faith in his colleagues, maintaining sporadic contact, keeping a web-cam diary and growing potatoes. He faces many challenges, even near death. He's pushed over the edge psychologically as crops wither and food and oxygen are running out. Don't worry, no spoilers for those who haven't yet seen the movie.

In Advent and Christmas in church, we hear of **the most** incredible rescue plan ever! It's a rescue plan that begins after Adam and Eve are banished from the Garden of Eden in the Book of Genesis and takes us on a journey towards the coming of the new heaven and the new earth in the Book of Revelation.

God appoints many characters, enabling his great rescue plan to come into fruition. In the Bible every detail is impeccably planned, timed to perfection and fulfilled through the unlikely of people. In the nativity scene the focus is on the main characters: Mary, Joseph, the angels, shepherds, wise men and the donkey but since Genesis there have been prophets, God's messengers, telling his people of God's great rescue plan, the coming of Jesus, the Messiah.

"Do we need to be rescued?" I think recognising that we need to be rescued helps us to understand that we need a rescuer, and that the rescuer is Jesus. He is the only one with the power to save us, to wipe the slate clean of everything we've ever done wrong, washed through his blood shed on the cross for us. Recognising the need for forgiveness means living in the light of Christ and that light will guide our feet into the path of peace in the knowledge that we have been rescued through God's Son. Jesus came to rescue us, to show his tender mercy towards us, to assure us that we are saved through the forgiveness of our sins when we turn to Him.

Some of us may be in a place of waiting right now, perhaps feeling hopeless and losing a sense of purpose and worth in the waiting. Various experiences can bring rise to these feelings: job loss, the death of a loved one, declining health, aging, broken relationships, unanswered prayer, unfulfilled dreams, failure, clinical depression, and the list goes on. These things might cause us to call out to God to come rescue us from our plight and God hears.

And, God has spoken through Jesus, the one who reveals the significance of the cross and resurrection in this grand rescue, and how a rescued people can live as those who will one day inherit and inhabit a rescued creation.

The story doesn't end at Jesus's birth. The plan goes on. Christians are awaiting Jesus's return bringing God's dramatic rescue operation to its climax and conclusion.

So, make room in your heart this Christmas for Jesus and come and join the celebration at St James Fulmer and hear the greatest rescue plan of all time. (See the enclosed Christmas flyer and also check out: the Saint James website: www.saintjames.org.uk).

Revd Jill Roth, Pastor – St James Fulmer

FROM OUR CHURCHWARDEN – Francesca Hall-Drinkwater

As with many I talk to, I'm wondering how we have reached November already?! After the Coronation celebrations in May, we continued through the Summer with our usual services and activities at St. James. Several people took their first longer holidays abroad since Covid and returned refreshed. During the Summer we began the hunt for our new organist. We had quite a level of interest seeing several applicants. We quickly realised we had found our person and after several interviews we were fortunate in having the role accepted by Stephanos Karageorgi. We also welcomed his wife, Alice. Joining in September, Stephanos has settled well both into playing for our services, funerals and special services. His immediate focus is to bring together a congregation Choir for our Christmas worship.

September saw the return of **Coffee & Chat** on Thursdays 8.45-10.00am for Fulmer Infant School Mums, Dads and carers and those from the Beehive but also this is open to all. Our key event this term will be our wreath making on December 7th. This was a particularly positive and fun gathering last year. The **Vision Dinners** for all the St James congregations were held at the Centre in September. Matt and the team spoke on our theme for the year, "Compelled by Love" 2 Cor c5 v11 to 6v2, building on last year's approach to bring others into the Christian family. We had a full table plus from Fulmer which was encouraging. The evenings were a great success and the food and companionship very enjoyable. Our **Harvest Festival** service followed on October 1st. This is an all-age service in a specially decorated Church and we were pleased to welcome the children from the Village and the school. Reverend Jill gave an entertaining talk with the children taking part. We marked **Remembrance Sunday**, November 12th for the fallen in all wars welcoming many, including our new Unitary Councillor, Santokh Chhokar. On 19th November we held our **Memorial or Bereavement Service** remembering and lighting candles for close relatives and friends lost recently or in times past. Many attended this special time appreciating the atmosphere. Afternoon tea was served and enjoyed! Reverend Jill and I would like to thank all those that serve in any way towards running various activities across the Church, especially the Sunday refreshment team! So, we move into Advent and our Christmas services. You'll be receiving a Christmas at St. James brochure with this magazine, outlining services across both Churches so I'll just outline our St James Fulmer services here.

Sun 10th Dec **Advent Carols** 11.15am – traditional service with carols and readings.

Fri 15th Dec **Carols at the Pub** 7:30pm The Black Horse. **Something different!** Families do come, invite friends for carol singing, a drink and mince pie. There'll be a short Christmas talk.

Sun 17th Dec **Advent Carols** 11.15am. A traditional service with carols and singing.

Sun 17th Dec **Carols by Candlelight** at 6pm. A beautifully candlelit evening with carols, readings and a Christmas message.

Sun 24th Dec **Christmas Eve Service** 11.15am.

Sun 24th Dec **Christingle Carols** at 4pm. A Christmas Eve for all ages with carols to sing, Christingle to make and a short talk.

Sun 24th Dec **Christmas Eve Communion Service** 9:30pm. A candlelit service with readings, reflections, carols and communion.

Mon 25th Dec **Christmas Day Celebration** 11.15am. A Christmas Day celebration for the whole family.

FROM OUR MP Joy Morrissey

It has been a busy, few months since my article in June. I have been working to deliver for Fulmer and the wider Beaconsfield constituency; on protecting the Greenbelt and ensuring residents have better healthcare access; I know these are residents' priorities. In Holtspur, I have been proud to champion the protection of our beautiful green spaces from a large development of 120 homes. I was also pleased that the Secretary of State rejected an application for one of the Data Centres in Iver. However, our mission for the Greenbelt in the constituency is still ongoing. In the Ivers, I have written to the Secretary of State advising that he rejects an application for a proposed motorway service area and the selling off of Greenbelt land. I will continue to work with residents to ensure their voices are heard.

On healthcare it is essential that residents can see their GPs with ease. These concerns have been raised with the local NHS Trusts and other local authorities. The Government has made it a key priority that every patient who needs an appointment should be able to see their GP within two weeks and that every patient with urgent needs should be able to see their GP on the same day. From next year, residents will be able to get care for seven common conditions at their local pharmacy, without the need to see a GP - releasing GP availability. I know that the Government is working day and night to deliver on this priority, and I will continue to work with my colleagues to help deliver for the people of Fulmer. It has been great to spend so much time in the constituency over the last few months. From Beaconsfield to Wooburn Green, attending many local community events; from celebrating the Girl Guide's Group in Beaconsfield to attending the Boodles Tennis at Stoke Park and speaking to residents at Parkfest in Wooburn Park.

In Parliament, my work continues in the Whips Office as Government Whip, Lord Commissioner of HM Treasury. I look forward to continuing to work to ensure we deliver on the priorities that the people of this country and the constituency want us to focus on. Thank you for reading this update on my work over the last few months. As your representative, I will always put your priorities first. From protecting the Green Belt to getting better access to local Health Care, I will work to champion these issues. If you require further assistance or have any inquiries, please do not hesitate to contact me at joy.morrissey.mp@parliament.uk or 01494 977505. Together, let's work to bring a bright future to Fulmer and the Beaconsfield Constituency.

Joy Morrissey

FROM OUR COUNTY COUNCILLORS - Buckinghamshire Council

Fulmer is part of the Denham, Fulmer and Gerrards Cross East Ward within Buckinghamshire Council. Residents will recall that Buckinghamshire Council is the Unitary Council which replaced Buckinghamshire County Council and South Bucks District Council. Fulmer residents have 3 Unitary Councillors to assist, support and represent you with matters relating to Buckinghamshire Council issues listed below:

- *Waste and Recycling*
- *Planning and Building Control*
- *Schools*
- *Council Tax*
- *Libraries*
- *Parking, Highways and Transport*
- *Housing*
- *Community and Safety*
- *Environmental Health, Ecology and Climate Change*
- *Care for Children and Families*
- *Health Wellbeing and Sports*
- *Births, deaths and marriages*

Your Unitary Councillors are :

Jaspal Chhokar : 07966 273506 Jaspal.Chhokar@buckinghamshire.gov.uk

Santokh Chhokar: 07973 166778 Santokh.Chhokar@buckinghamshire.gov.uk

Guy Hollis: 07810 753808 Guy.Hollis@buckinghamshire.gov.uk

Denham, Gerrards Cross and Chalfonts Community Board

Buckinghamshire Council has set up the Denham, Gerrards Cross & Chalfonts Community Board as a means for residents to participate in Buckinghamshire Council at a local level. Fulmer is one of seven Parishes within the Community Board and residents can be involved in the Community Board which works with the following items: Community Safety & Highways, Health & Wellbeing, Environment & Sustainability. The Board's priorities are promoted through Action Groups which look at local concerns, channel aspirations and highlight achievements. The Community Board supports local projects, helps launch local initiatives and provides funds to local good causes within its Area. Local Groups can apply for funding for projects and activities that will provide real benefits to the locality by *contacting our Community Board Manager - Liz Charter : liz.charter@buckinghamshire.gov.uk*

COMMUNITY SPEED WATCH

The lockdown during Covid 19 saw the suspension of Community Speed Watch on a National basis. However, following its reintroduction, we approached Thames Valley Police over a year ago with the intention of restarting these sessions in Fulmer. Post pandemic, the way these sessions are run has changed. Firstly, all participants must take a brief on-line test before being approved. This is because all volunteers are now covered by TVP's insurance policy. Once approved, they are then required to take a brief induction course on how to use the equipment. Neither of these elements are onerous but they ensure that everyone is aware of the correct modus operandi and that the data collected is correctly logged and obtained. Unlike the previous Speed Watch Group, we now have our own speed gun which is on loan from TVP. In 2019 we had to borrow this equipment from another region and return it after every session. This wasn't very conducive to carrying out many sessions, particularly when the equipment must be shared. The loan arrangement however lasts for six months, and the equipment must be returned if it is not used within that period.

Despite requests and pleas for volunteers in the Newsletter and Weekly Briefings no response was forthcoming. It was only when we received a request to return the equipment that two volunteers stepped forward to get the sessions off the ground. Two sessions have now been successfully held in October. The results have been promising. The number of vehicles caught exceeding the 30mph limit ranges from 22-25% based on an average of just over 200 vehicles an hour. These figures reflect drivers' speeds even after they have seen the Volunteers in their hi-viz jackets! We have also witnessed some scary manoeuvres where frustrated drivers have overtaken vehicles maintaining the speed limit, either entering or leaving the Village. At some point one driver is likely to misjudge the timing of this manoeuvre which may result in a head on collision. It is only a matter of time, sadly. We do need a core of 10 volunteers so that we can run regular speedwatch sessions at different times. We have approval for 3 sites in the Village to operate and have now requested approval for a further two outside of the Village centre. Ultimately, we will then be able to cover the three main "speeding" areas viz Fulmer Road, Windmill Road, and Fulmer Common Road. Sadly, the bad weather and availability of Volunteers at the beginning of November means that we have been unable to hold any this month. Hopefully, we will be able to resume once the heavy rains stop.

The first mention of speeding traffic in the Parish Council Minutes was on 13th June 1907. Due to the increase in motorised traffic driving through the Village it was

suggested that notice boards should be put up on each approach road warning motorists to drive slowly. Some 116 years later, we are still addressing the same issue! It is intended to erect speed watch signs along these roads early in the New Year and that we obtain approval to paint "tiger's teeth" on the road adjacent to the Village boundary gate in the Fulmer Road. Hopefully, this will help to raise awareness to drivers of the speed limit, particularly the 20 tonne tipper wagons that pass through and the drivers of electric cars that enjoy such effortless rapid acceleration. Thankfully, there are less potholes than at the beginning of 2023. In the meantime, drive safely.

Ian Bocock - Speed Watch Coordinator.

BEST KEPT VILLAGE

There are ten elements which the Judges take into consideration when they consider entries for this competition. These range from Places of Worship to Playing Fields, Community Facilities, Environmental Features, Shops & Pubs and War Memorials. Last, but not least, Community Engagement. In the past, Fulmer Conservation Volunteers have been actively involved. However, as many members have now reached an age where they have become less active and other more able members have moved away from the Village it has been difficult to attract volunteers to participate. Nevertheless, Fulmer Village achieved a very high score this year which resulted in full marks being obtained on 6 of the 10 categories. Consequently, we were awarded a Certificate of Merit, as Runners Up. It seemed our Achilles Heel was a dirty Bus Shelter and the old Phone Box. Perhaps an oversight in this modern world now that life is heavenly dependent upon our cars and mobile phones.

The accolade for our success must go to the members of the Village Hall and the Church for their well maintained and attractive floral displays which secured top marks. Thank you to all those involved who gave up their time and took pride in creating such an excellent display.

Overall, this was a great achievement secured by the few. What seemed to impress the Judges most was that Fulmer had taken on the Judges' comments from last year and implemented them. We were within a whisker of winning this year but securing a Certificate of Merit was unexpected and acknowledges the commitment and effort made by the respective Volunteers.

Ian Bocock Fulmer Conservation Volunteer

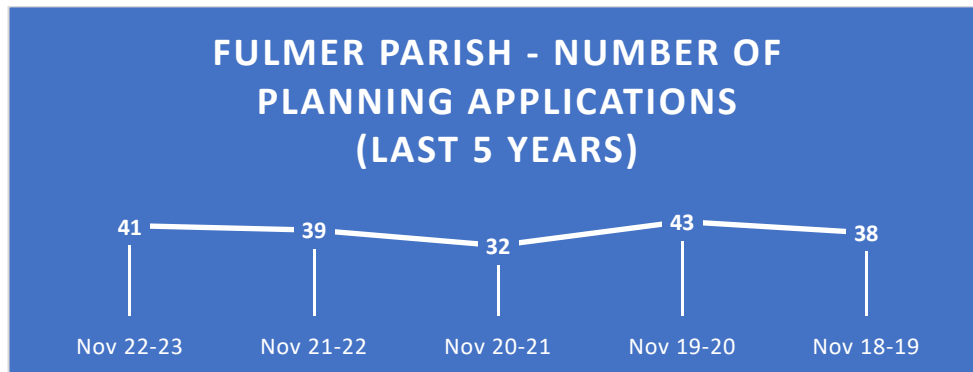
PLANNING IN FULMER PARISH

In the past 12 months, 41 planning applications for the Parish of Fulmer have been received and reviewed by the Parish Council – an average of 3.41 applications per month. 39 were received over the same period in the previous year (2021-2022). Gerrards Cross Town Council received 346 applications in the same period, or just over 28.83 applications per month a significant increase on the previous 12 months from 315 applications. Iwer Parish Council had a sharp decrease to 219, in comparison to 258 applications over the same period in the previous 12 months. Hedgerley Parish with 27 applications against 24 received previously. Fulmer Parish has seen an increase of 4.8% on the number of applications submitted 12 months previously. Our Parish neighbours have recorded an increase in application to last year, with only Iwer seeing less applications over the same period.

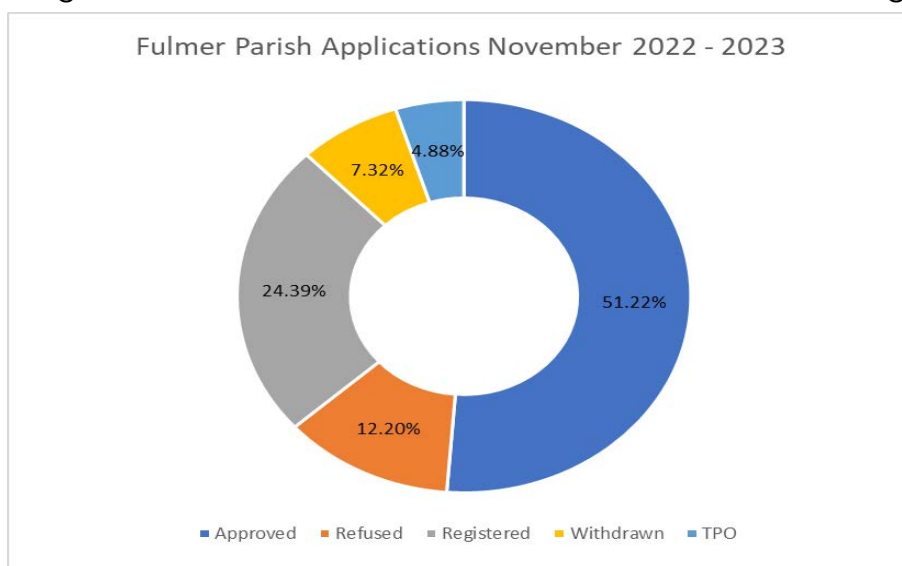
The applications received have ranged from TPO orders (mostly permission request to fell trees) to the construction of new stand-alone buildings, to single and double storey developments as well as several conversions and change of use requests. There remain contentious developments and whilst working with concerned residents we have seen more concerns raised at Parish Council Meetings in the last term. We will continue to work with residents when such concerns are raised. The process is that the Parish Council is given a few weeks to comment on any planning applications before the South Bucks and Chiltern District planning officers meet and decide finally on each case. We have seen improved turnaround by the planning teams on some very slow-moving cases. We have seen increased support working alongside our Local Council Representatives especially when pursuing Enforcement Issues.

Parish residents are welcome to attend the monthly Parish meetings to voice their thoughts and concerns on planning matters. We will continue to act as your conduit into the planning office to express your concerns and reflect your thoughts on planning matters in the Parish of Fulmer. The main priority of the Parish council in providing its views to the Planning Officers. We remain committed to the protection of village life and prevention from overdevelopment. Our aim is to promote development which helps the Parish to continue to function as a participative community, preferring buildings for permanently resident families, over huge 'structures' that can sometimes attract temporary residents. In the 12 months from November 7th, 2022, South Bucks Council have published decisions on 41 planning applications affecting the Parish of Fulmer.

Below are the number of applications received over the same period in the last 5 years.



In addition, the graphic below shows the split of the status of applications. 24.39% are still awaiting a decision – most coming as recent applications though some are slightly contentious and taking more time. Over the last 12 months over 68% of applications having had a decision reached with 7.32% being withdrawn (with the majority being re-submitted with refinements and adherence to Planning Policy).



The Fulmer Parish Council will continue to provide commentary on Parish views with regards to planning applications. We will continue to support and work with Fulmer residents actively supporting Buckinghamshire Council with Enforcement activities.

The Village continues to be very active with the increase of applications over the last 12 months, with the number of Planning requests healthy for such a small community. The Parish Council would very much like to hear from Residents of the Parish on how we could improve communication on Planning Matters.

Parm Khanghura – Parish Councillor

Fulmer Infant School



We have begun this academic year with a few changes to our staff. At the end of July the Co-headteachers, Mrs Hunt and Mrs Dowsing both retired. We also said goodbye to Mrs Mardell, the senior teacher and Mrs Walker the senior teaching assistant along with Miss Barakat and Mrs Aslam. We have welcomed to our team, Mrs Wragg as our Year 2 teacher, Miss Dickson our Early Years Practitioner, Mrs Akhtar our Midday supervisor and I have joined the school as the new Headteacher. I have been very grateful for the friendly and supportive welcome, I and the new members of the team, have received from the school and local community. I am also grateful for all the efforts the staff members who were leaving put in to making sure the handover was a smooth process.

Here are some of the highlights of autumn term.

Meet the Teacher – Once the children had settled into their new classes, we had 'Meet the Teacher' sessions after school. It was lovely to see the children showing their parents where they sat and explaining the classroom routines.

Harvest Festival – We were joined by parents, the Reverend Jill Roth and Francesca. The children sang the songs they had been practising with great enthusiasm and everyone had a lovely start to their day. Lots of food was donated and Francesca kindly collected this and sent it for local distribution.

Hidden Nature Challenge – At the beginning of October we took part in the National Education Nature Park and Climate Action Awards, Hidden Nature Challenge. The challenge was to look for the signs of nature around us. We found plants growing in unexpected places and spotted repeating patterns in nature, from leaf shapes to spiders' webs.

Reception parents' welcome coffee morning – This was hosted by our parent association and welcomed our new parents and families to the school. It was very well attended and has encouraged our new parents to get involved with our school community.

Chalfont St Peter Academy – Mrs Harrison and Mrs Alburg from Chalfont St Peter Academy came to speak to the parents of our Year 2 children. This was very helpful as parents had the opportunity to ask any questions they had about the school and the transition process.

Iver Environment Centre – In October our Year 1 and Year 2 children went on a visit to the centre. They had a fantastic day and enjoyed explaining what they had seen and learned while they were there.

Open mornings – We have hosted two open mornings for prospective parents. These were well attended and it was a pleasure to show everyone around our wonderful school. Our children played a big part in the open mornings and they sang to our visitors at the start of their visit.

Pumpkin Party – The Friends of Fulmer arranged a pumpkin party at the end of October. The children had a great time decorating pumpkins, eating party food and listening to music. The school hall was beautifully decorated and this added to the fun!

Children in Need – We supported BBC Children in Need by bringing a teddy bear to school and wearing our pyjamas for the day. Each classroom had a visit from our very own Pudsey Bear, who came and read with the children. It was a very exciting day!

Celebrating our learning – Every Friday we have a Golden Assembly where we share our wonderful work and give certificates, stickers and cups for the best listeners and the stars of the week. These are always joyful occasions, and we love sharing our work and celebrating our successes.

Mrs Julie Matton
Headteacher

We give a warm welcome to Julie Matton taking over as Headteacher and wish her much success at our lovely village school - Editors

KING GEORGE'S FIELD, FULMER

For those of you that do not know me, my name is Ian Finan and I took over the role of General Manager at the Fields in July of this year. Prior to this, I was a trustee for a number of years and over this period I have seen the diverse usage of the facility grow for the benefit of the community.

We had a very busy summer with the cricket club running 2 competitive teams this season both of which finished top of their leagues. It was great to see so many games taking place at weekends. The football club continues to go from strength to strength, with membership growing to 330 including a significant growth in girls' football, which was partly due to the success of England in the woman's football world cup. With the work to the rear car park now complete, the facility is much more able to cope with the number of cars visiting, which has reduced the pressure of cars parking on Fulmer Common Road during football matches at weekends.

The Studio continues to do well, with a very diverse range of activities from yoga to crystal bowl healing, to taekwondo. Classes remain popular within the community, and I thank everyone for their continued support.

ColourWheel painting classes continue to be popular in the Pavilion each Friday, with a new term due to start in January.

Thanks to donations from very generous members of the community, we were able to both resurface the all-weather football and tennis area with a new tennis net system, which has gone down very well. Once again, we have state of the art facilities for all to use.

November saw another fabulous annual fireworks event, where we hosted over 600 people for a night of entertainment with fire performers, a live band, children's entertainment and a good choice of food and drink. This event could only have happened as a result of village volunteers who stepped forward again to put on a great show.

As we come to the end of the year, the focus turns to 2024 where we will prioritise further general improvements, plus the development and relocation of the children's play area. Thanks again to all of you who have helped and given support and let's hope we have another great year ahead.

Ian Finan

FULMER CRICKET CLUB – End of season report

www.fulmercricketclub.com

In line with the continued development of Fulmer cricket, for the first time in Fulmer CC's long history we fielded two teams on a Saturday, both operating in the Chilterns League. Our membership encouragingly swelled to a record 47. As you will read below, both of our Saturday teams enjoyed remarkable success, however, the increasing popularity of Sunday League cricket somewhat impacted our ability to repeat that success in terms of results on the Sunday friendly front. Nonetheless that didn't stop the enjoyment! Another first for Fulmer was in staging a senior County fixture when Bucks over 60s played against Somerset. So, there are reasons to be cheerful and for our Village to be rightfully proud! Why not come along and support your local team in 2024?! There is a game on virtually every Saturday and most Sundays during the summer, the facilities are first rate, and the well-appointed Club house is always open for refreshments.

Playing performance in 2023 - Our First XI, skippered by Priyan, played 14 league matches, won 12 and drew 2 to be undefeated and winning league Division 1. This means we will be promoted to Premiership Division for 2024 season. This is a brilliant result. Our Second XI, skippered by Brijesh, were runners up in Division 2 with 10 wins, 1 draw and 3 losses and will be promoted to Division 1 for 2024 season. Another great result for the Club and we could not have wished for better results when we kicked off our introduction to league cricket in 2022. Congratulations to all the players who played league cricket. We also played Friendly cricket before and after the league games and on Sundays, but the results were not quite as good. Of the 25 matches played we won 9 and lost 15.

The annual **President's match**, on 23 July, saw a win for the President's XI. In the 28 years of these matches, the President's XI have won 15, Fulmer 11, 1 was a tie and a draw. The day started with the traditional lunch, a good part of which was supplied by Kiki and Peter Greig and served with the help of Sue Box and other helpers from FCC. The President's team won the toss and elected to bat and put together 251 for the loss of 7 wickets. A well-made 51 by opener Nick Box established a reasonable base for FCC but wickets kept tumbling at the other end. We were all out for 197. All thanks go to Kiki, Peter and members of the Guinness family and Sue and other members of the Fulmer CC for making it such an enjoyable day. See the President's match photo below. Sadly, this was the last President's match, played very much in the honour of Edward Guinness who was the prime mover in its establishment. The Guinness family have donated the lovely cup to the Club and the legacy of Edward will live on with the annual Edward Guinness match.



Off Field activities - We use Play Cricket, to record all the scores and our thanks go to Priyan and Brijesh who manage this. Grateful thanks to Ben Fisher who attends each home game and manages the bar while the match is in progress. He also does a great job with packing up at the end of the day and making sure the pavilion is properly secure before leaving. Tony King, our Hon Treasurer, does a vitally important job in keeping the finances under control, making sure that all players pay their dues, and Armando Borges works as an Hon Secretary. Our skippers Priyan, Brijesh, Peter Bradford, Arun, Sami, and Tony play a big role in getting out teams and managing our playing performances. Emma Randall is new to the Committee as our Safeguarding Officer, and we are very grateful for her diligence in getting us in a compliant state with the league. Finally, are our fantastic ground staff Paul and Derrick who put in countless hours at KGF to make sure we have playing facilities that are second to none in our league.

Awards for 2023 - The award winners are as follows:

Most runs – Arun Shankaralingam, 802

Highest innings - Mani Raza, 142

Best Batting average – Brijesh Lath, 39.6

Most wickets – Rajaram Bhuvanendran, 43

Most wickets in a match – Brijesh Lath, 6/16

Best bowling average – Brijesh Lath, 10.62

Duck Cup - Ramakrishna Kota

Manu Kapila Award for Best Young Player – Ramakrishna Kota

Most improved – First XI, Waleed Nawaz– Second XI, Rajaram Bhuvanendran

Most valuable player – First XI, Waqas Hashmi – Second XI, Brijesh Lath

Players' player – Namit Pandey

Best fielder – Namit Pandey

Outstanding contribution – Tony King

Chairman's award – Paul Colloff, Derrick Randall

New Players Welcome - We have excellent playing facilities and are a very friendly club. New players, of whatever standard, are always welcome. Please refer to our website for contact details www.fulmercrickeclub.com

Sponsorship Opportunities - The club is financed through membership subscriptions, match fees and a sprinkling of donations. There are opportunities to sponsor the Club through signage at the ground, on club kit, branding on our website etc. If you are interested, please provide your details via our contact facility on our website www.fulmercrickeclub.com

2024 Season - We look forward to our league season in Premiership and Division1 of Chilterns League which will be much tougher than this year.

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sbp@uwclub.netwww.southbucksphysio.co.uk

BLACK PARK NEWS

2023 has been a mixed year at Black Park, a rather underwhelming summer and the impact of the credit crunch has seen visitor numbers fall to pre-COVID levels. This has had both positive and negative implications, on the plus side fewer visitors so less disturbance to wildlife, but fewer visitors in the car park and café also means reduced income. On a positive note, the cool, wet summer helped trees recover from the drought and extreme heat of 2022. We are still dealing with a significant number of additional tree health related issues; over 100 large mature/semi mature trees have died and close to 1000 small trees. The country parks team has expanded after a service review with a project officer, filming support officer, three new rangers and a HS2 mitigation project officer for Denham Country Park being recruited. The ranger team is now split into two sub-teams with one focused on visitor services and the other focused on-site management, we also have a projects team to take improvement projects forward and re-invest some of the income we back into the country parks. The changes have already seen some positive successes with the visitor service team delivering a wide range of events and education visits in Black Park, including the introduction of Forest School sessions for children with special educational needs (SEND). The site management team are working on tree health including mulching around some of our older oaks in Black Park to help moisture retention, reduce compaction around roots and promote beneficial fungi to develop. A new virtual car park permit system was introduced in June, so visitors to manage their own permits and renewals online and changes without a charge. A new changing places toilet is being installed in Black Park to support visitors with complex needs to visit the park more freely, this will open in March 2024.

For 2024 we have several changes coming into place in Black Park - asking dog owners to keep their dogs under closer control on our heathland areas; visitors to stay on the main paths to help further reduce disturbance to wildlife, especially ground nesting birds which we have seen decline. With support from our visitors we may even see the return of the rare Nightjar and Dartford Warbler which have previously been resident on the heath but lost in recent years. Major lake erosion works will take place soon and we will need to fell some trees next to Black Park Lake. Undercutting of the lake bank, especially on the western side of the lake is significant so we need to fell the trees to help stabilise the bank and increase light levels as part of the erosion control measures will include the planting of marginal vegetation to help retain soils and reduce wave action on the bank. This will also have significant benefits for wildlife as currently the marginal vegetation around Black Park Lake is quite limited. Finally, we will be continuing to change how we mow some of our ride edges and open areas in Black Park. Leaving areas uncut until late summer has significant benefits to wildlife, we hope to increase the biodiversity of our ride edges and improve the structure of the vegetation with creation of some wider 'scallop' areas to allow the planting of shrub species such as Hawthorn and Blackthorn. Less mowing is better for wildlife and reduces our CO2 emissions from the mowing equipment.

Tim Williams - Country Parks Operations Manager

STOKE COMMON NEWS

Want to help look after your local nature reserve?

The world has less heathland than it has rainforest, and in the UK, lowland heathland supports some of the country's rarest species. Sadly, huge areas of heathland have been lost in the UK due to neglect, farming, development and road construction. Buckinghamshire alone has lost 80% of its heathland habitat; of the remaining fragments, the majority is at Stoke Common. In October 2007, ownership of Stoke Common was passed to the City of London. Before the change of ownership, some management work was being carried out, but a succession of fires and limited resources meant that, whilst a core of remnant heathland remained, the overall condition of the heathland habitat on the Common was poor.

Fortunately, the City of London's team at Burnham Beeches has the manpower, experience and resources required for restoring the heathland habitat and, in the first 10 years of the City's ownership, huge improvements were made. Much of this was achieved using agroforestry type machinery, enabling the team to make an instant impact on some of the areas of young, dense, scrubby birch growth that had sprung up following several fires on the Common. However, there were many good-sized areas of heathy vegetation across the Common that had to be retained but were under threat from creeping secondary woodland and scrub. Tackling these areas with heavy machinery risked damaging these remnant patches so the only way to tackle the problem was manual cutting using staff and, most importantly, volunteers. The re-establishment the Friends of Stoke Common Volunteer (FOSC) group was a key part of the management strategy for the heathland.

In 1978, an initiative by the Trustees of the Common led to the creation of the first FOSC group. They worked with a Manpower Services Commission (MSC) team controlling the invasive scrub and bracken, clearing fire damaged trees, and creating surfaced public rights of way. This work was instrumental in retaining the open areas, which provided a remnant nucleus from which to expand, and in preventing pine and birch from taking a hold. In 1993 when South Bucks District Council took ownership of the Common, FOSC was disbanded and the Stoke Poges Ecological Society was formed.

When the City's team at Burnham Beeches took on management of the common, a 3-year partnership agreement with the BTCV (now TCV) began. With the support from the BTCV, FOSC was reformed in 2008 and it quickly developed into a thriving group, equipped with their own tools and equipment. They have their own trained

task leaders and first aiders and run their own tasks throughout the year to help deliver the reserve's management plan. Over the years, several thousand hours have been volunteered by FOSC and the fantastic results are clear for all to see: the heathland habitat is thriving and supporting great numbers of heathland invertebrates, bird species and reptiles; and access is infinitely better with better surfaced paths which are no longer encroached by uninviting walls of gorse and birch scrub.

Whilst much of the large-scale clearance has been completed, the heathland habitat needs regular management, not just to retain the open areas but to allow them to continue to develop and improve in biodiversity. FOSC always need more volunteers to get involved and help achieve the management aims, so this is a great opportunity for people living in Fulmer and Stoke Poges to take part in looking after a really special place right on the doorstep. You don't need any experience or tools, just plenty of enthusiasm and a desire to play a part in looking after your local patch. FOSC will explain the work that is needed and provide as much tea, coffee and biscuits as you can consume! It's a great way to get some fresh air and exercise and meet likeminded people living locally. If you would like to find out more contact FOSC at: friendsofstokecommon@gmail.com or the Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common team at burnham.beeches@cityoflondon.gov.uk.



Chris Morris – Senior Ranger (chris.morris@cityoflondon.gov.uk)

RIDING FOR THE DISABLED – FULMER BRANCH

As the evenings draw in it is great to reflect on all the good things that have happened at South Bucks RDA. Frankie our Centre Manager has been with us for a year now, and she has made such great changes, gently organising us and the horses.

Our ponies now all have stables rather than stalls to shelter in when they in for work. This means that they can move around and lie down easily if they wish. The pony stables are really cosy with thick rubber matting under the wood chips to make it more comfortable for the ponies to stand on.

All the equines are looking fit and healthy; with all the rain we have had this year the grass has grown well, so some have to watch their weight, or rather we do! To enable this the fields have been strip grazed so that those equines that need only a little grass have access to fields after those who need longer lusher grass. IT is interesting that one of the major health issues in horses generally these days is being overweight, a bit like us humans.

We have had some new equines join the team, they are all in training so that we are confident that they are happy being RDA horses. All our equines have regular training and hacking out to keep them fit and happy.

In July several of our riders went to the National Championships at Hartpury and yet again they did the group proud coming away with rosettes and very happy smiles, despite the storm that hit the show. Since then some other riders have taken part in the virtual championships where we video their dressage or countryside challenge tests. This competition is great for those equines who are great at their job, but not good at travelling and for those participants who are just starting out on competition who would find the atmosphere at Hartpury too daunting, it is huge and very busy. Over the winter months some of our riders will also take part in virtual competitions with Dressage Anywhere.

We are always on the lookout for volunteers and have a special need for volunteers on a Wednesday afternoon, from 12:00 to 3pm. If we can get the help we would like to also start an after school session as we do not have enough spaces at the weekend for all those disabled children who cannot get out of school but would benefit from RDA. If you would like to volunteer please email us on: enquiries@southbucksrda.org. We would love to hear from you.

Theresa Drake Volunteer Coach and Trustee
South Bucks Riding for the Disabled – Fundraising

RDA – FUNDRAISING

A small team from South Bucks Riding for the Disabled will be attending Carols on the Green in Stoke Poges on Saturday 25th November, this will be our first event for some years in Stoke Poges, we'll be selling SBRDA Christmas Cards and branded pens, our team will include our centre manager, an instructor / trustee and our fundraising trustee, this will give us an opportunity to promote ourselves and hopefully attract some new volunteers. As we approach the end of the year our fundraising committee have been busy getting ready for 2024, we already have a pitch booked at Not Quite the Donkey Derby on 25th May in Burnham, this is an event organised by Burnham Beeches Rotary and has been a very good event for us in the past.

We also hope to be back at Fulmer Fun Day in May 2024; this is one of the highlights of the year for us, we will run a tombola, a couple of games and also have one of our ponies with us, Pip or Freddie, they both love a day out and love the attention they get. Anyone interested in volunteering or finding out more about South Bucks Riding for the Disabled, please contact our office on 01753 662796.

Alan Lawrence – Trustee Fund-raising RDA Fulmer

A HEDGEHOG AT FULMER DAY

The Fulmer Day attractions included a place to stroke a pet. I joined a queue of children asking if they had a hedgehog. Yes! We were lined up around the area, everyone holding their pet on their knee – except me holding a black towel with a hedgehog in it. "I'm afraid he's sleeping and has got hiccups". The young lad said. "No problem" I said and sat there.

After a while I got bored and poked the devil. He looked up and sank three large teeth in my thumb. Horror! So painful. What to do? Immediately I sucked out all the poison and pressed my thumb tightly. As I left the area I said to the person in charge, "Now this is going to be fun when I go to Wexham A&E and say I've been bitten by a hedgehog!"

I'm left with a question – why do hedgehogs have only three teeth? Or was it only mine? What do they eat? Maybe they are for crushing snails...

Sheena Barber

GET YOUR HOUSE IN ORDER

All of us of a certain age will no doubt be aware of our inevitable and fast approaching demise. Now is the time to 'get your house in order'. It can be hugely satisfying if accomplished long before we're unable. All those numerous possessions we've acquired along the way need to be collated and allocated to different places until your attics, drawers, shelves, cupboards, and suitcases are relieved of unwanted items.

Getting started is not easy. Having faced the challenge of my groaning attic several years ago I was determined to make a start. The pile of Christmas decorations which have multiplied over the years were swept to one side. As were the boxes of vinyl, my son's collection of 'Warhammer' and the baskets of dolls and teddies. They remain for the next generation to sort out. The most foreboding task of all were the thousands of colour slides and rolls of black and white movies still in their circular canisters which I'd inherited years ago. My father was a keen photographer and possibly one of the first to own a cine camera, and I'm happy to say that my brother took on the epic task of transferring all the movies onto DVDs before he too, sadly died. I can recall many an enjoyable evening spent, full of anticipation, as we all sat in a darkened room, dominated by a huge silver screen, when my father's projector flickered into action, and we were mesmerised by the footage which unfolded. This was inevitably interrupted by huge groans when the tape frequently snapped and there was an agonising hiatus whilst he spliced and sliced.

Same with the colour slides, as each was pondered over and discussed in great detail, as to which ancient building, statue or monument was displayed. Trafalgar Square with me and a pigeon on my head, my brother rowing a boat in Trearddur Bay or my mother throwing coins into the Trevi Fountain. All the family holidays were there. The sight of all this paraphernalia was truly overwhelming, and as I held up some random transparency to the light and couldn't fathom who or where it was, I decided to take action.

There was only one thing for it and that was to dump the lot. I justified this with the excuse that it would have taken months to look at every single one, and I didn't have the right equipment or will to do so. The same destiny fell to a huge folder of my artwork that I'd saved from a rather unsuccessful year at art school together with other random memorabilia. A couple of car loads later, and the job was done. Witnessing the menacing bulldozer crunching them up to later be deposited in landfill was unnerving. Perhaps some future archaeologists would retrieve and

marvel at them. Regrets? Just a few, but secure in the knowledge that I'd saved my children from such a daunting task was a great relief. Lord knows they'll be plenty more to cope with when the time comes.

Now on a roll I turned my attention to books. Having been an avid reader all my life, I'd kept every paperback I'd read and there were hundreds of them. They were all boxed up devoid of sentiment and carted away to a charity shop. I'm still vaguely saddened by this impulsive act and feel that they could have taken up the enormous chasm in the attic, but what's done is done.

Personal heirlooms like family portraits and clocks have been restored and repaired. For example, the magnificent grandfather clock outside my bedroom. The agonising lurch as it heaved a sigh before reluctantly striking the hours (and half hours), throughout the night had to be silenced. Not only for its own sake but also for mine. My sympathies went out to it - anything over 200 years old must find it difficult to perform. Heaps of damask tablecloths and hand embroidered linen has been gratefully received by my niece who still has formal dinner parties. Valuable items like silver and jewellery have also found a new home. The very precious ones have long ago been given to my daughter (thus saving a large chunk of inheritance tax!) Unwanted items have been sold either at auction or up at the Burlington Arcade. There's always that nagging doubt that you could possibly have got more for them with a little more effort- but so what? It's gone, and I've saved a fortune in polish and insurance!

We come to clothes. Your children certainly don't wish to wear them unless they are retro and super cool. Saving them for that fancy dress party that you hate anyway isn't an option. Charity shops and jumble sales welcome them, and the more interesting vintage items can be donated to a local amateur theatrical company. It is a delight to imagine some future 'Charlie's Aunt' dressed in my great grandmother's ostrich feather boa, lavishly embroidered silk stole and outrageous peacock feather fan. Or Miss Haversham floating round the stage in my ethereal wedding dress. (I'd told my daughter that I wished to be buried in it, but when I tried it on only to discover I could no longer do the zip up, decided that the awful thought of some grim mortician attempting to squeeze me into it was too macabre to *undertake*). Lady Bracknell would have adored the two grisly foxes, still with their heads, feet and ghastly claws draped around her neck- together with an outrageous hat and clutching a large Gladstone bag... "A handbag?!" I can remember my grandmother coming to Sunday lunch wearing these alarming vermin lying glassy

eyed on her shoulders, and feeling somewhat uneasy as I ate my roast beef. And as for Miss Marple she'd be spoilt for choice.

Which finally brings me to the 'big day' itself. Most of us will have already completed our wills and bequests. Some of us...not many... will have gone one step further and purchased our plot in our chosen resting place.

Mine is located in the churchyard of Fulmer Parish Church and it wasn't as straightforward a transaction as I'd imagined. Having heard several years ago that 'space was running out', I decided to make arrangements. This proved to be a rather long winded and complicated procedure that came with a financial hit and many forms that needed to be signed, countersigned and finally approved. The fee is apparently only valid for ten years, so I'd better get on with it before I must fork out a further hefty sum. I was delighted to know that I had been successful in my application to secure a final resting place and had it kindly pointed out to me. A small orange mushroom shaped marker had been secured in the ground, which reminded me of an old-fashioned wooden darning implement (which I have incidentally). It is adjacent to a lovely tree at the back row of the stalls, where sadly several of my friends and neighbours now reside. It offers solace to know that I will be in good company. Strangely the whole procedure has been immensely comforting and not in any way morbid, and I'm even tempted to stick a few bulbs in now!

Coming to the funeral itself, although we all have our favourite hymns, poems and passages etc that we wish to be included, it is important to remember that the wishes of the loved ones who you leave behind must be considered above your own. It must reflect what is best for them- not you. The suggestion to my family that a large bran tub filled with the remaining bits and pieces I still possess, (wooden mushroom included), be located in the church porch for the mourners to take a lucky dip upon leaving, was felt a little inappropriate. I thought it would make a rather jolly exit!

So- job done, and now to get on with living. Rest in peace, all my worldly goods.

SUSIE MATTHEWS

Brilliantly entertaining Susie – thank you! Editors

HOSPITALS

Hospitals are not much fun. But over the last year or so I've had some merry moments. In July last year a small lump appeared on my neck. The dermatologist called it an SCC (squamous cell carcinoma) and prescribed its removal. The procedure took place on 8 August and as the dermatologist was Chinese, I commented on what an auspicious day to meet a Chinese doctor – 8th of the 8th. The man looked blank. I said 'Isn't 8 the Chinese lucky number?' He still looked blank. 'Surely that's why Beijing chose 8 August 2008 for the opening of China's Olympics?'. 'Ah so, but I come from Mauritius'.

Over the following weeks a new lump appeared. Just scar tissue, said the dermatologist, nothing to worry about. Unfortunately, he was wrong and it required an operation by a cancer surgeon. I'd been due to go under the knife on 11 January and my wife told people accordingly. In the event I got bumped to the 18th so I was at home on the 13th when the phone rang. I picked it up and a slightly hesitant voice asked to speak to Mrs Barber. 'Of course, who should I say it is?' It was an old friend, so I expostulated that she hadn't recognised my voice. Well, she'd thought I was in hospital and was ringing to hear how my op had gone, so she was so glad it was me because when the phone was answered by a male voice she thought my wife must have acquired a new man in her life – and I'd only been out of the house for two days.

Surgeons have to scare you with all the things that might go wrong. They even get you to sign a form saying it's not their fault. In my case the threat was that he might have to cut the nerve that controlled my smile, in which case I would end up with a lop-sided smile like Geoff Boycott. He promised to do his best to avoid this but so be it if necessary. My last words to him before the anaesthetist got to work were to tell him my wife had only married me for my smile and he would cause a divorce if he cut my smile nerve. After the op I was relieved to find I still looked like me rather than Geoff Boycott.

I spent that night in the post-op critical care unit, largely sleepless as I listened to the ward's various whistles and hooters combined with cries of pain from my fellow patients. I was wired up with wires and tubes etc coming in and out of every orifice. I felt like the BBC's famous spaghetti tree. It took me some time to explain the reference to the lovely Philippino nurse looking after me but she felt more at home by the time she understood it was an April Fool joke.

The surgery stopped my beard growing on one side of my face. Applying shaving soap to the other side only left me looking like Harlequin. Surgery was followed by radiotherapy. More threats: you will lose your taste, your teeth may fall out, etc. I did indeed lose my taste to the point of feeling nauseous and unable to eat. So, I dropped out after two thirds of the planned sessions. I asked the radiologist (also Chinese) if this meant I'd received two thirds of the benefit, or perhaps almost all, or was the effect back-end loaded like antibiotics? He said he didn't know. What he did know was that my nauseous reaction had been much worse than usual: 'you are an outlier, Mr Barber'. I felt rather proud of this.

In April a new lump appeared. Just scar tissue, said the experts. After my previous experience of so-called scar tissue, I insisted on a scan including a biopsy. The result was 'inconclusive' and I was to have another biopsy 'with a bigger needle'. This don't work either, so I was sent to the MRI unit. MRI machines work by rotating magnets whizzing round at different frequencies and wave lengths, which means the magnets are extremely noisy as they clatter their way round the tube into which the patient has been inserted. Mine took nearly 30 minutes and I counted over two dozen phases with noises ranging from jack hammer to cicadas via road drill, dentist's drill and hornets. Not recommended, especially if you're inclined to claustrophobia. At least after a further two weeks I learned the scan had given me the all-clear – phew!

Sadly my relief was short-lived. When I saw the surgeon for a routine check-up the following week he decided the lump made him 'uneasy'. This was clearly worse than 'inconclusive'.

NICHOLAS BARBER

*We wish Nicholas well and thank you for sharing your medical event with humour –
Editors*



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