



Annual Report for the year ended 31st March 2023

Introduction to our Year

The year saw a welcome return of the village fete, themed as the Jubilee Summer Fete, on 9th July 2022. It was a great success, with an eclectic mix of stalls, games, refreshments and professional entertainment, enjoyed by locals and visitors alike on a beautiful, sunny afternoon, in the lovely setting of the Old Rectory Gardens. So many of you contributed both behind and in front of the scenes: *Thank you very much indeed!*

Going back to the start of the year, the Society had seven members stand down from the Committee at the AGM in April 2022, four of whom had several decades of service between them. This, in many ways, *could* have proved a cliff edge for the running of the Society but, happily, did not. The strong legacy of those standing down, the commitment and enthusiasm of those remaining - as well as two newly elected members at the last AGM and two co-opted members during the year - ensured we had a successful and action-packed year, made fully possible by the help of our many non-Committee volunteers. *Thank you everyone!*

Please read on to see our round-up of the year and some dates for your diaries.

Our Main Events

I have already mentioned the Jubilee Summer Fete in July but will now turn back to June, where we saw the return of our Quiz Night as our first event of the year. This was sold out (with one table [mine] having the dubious honour of winning the wooden spoon! Yes, that meant coming last....). A fun evening.

After the Quiz Night and Fete, we held our History Evening, also sold out, which began "In Conversation" with one of our members, Kevin Watson on his research into former local residents as part of Felpham's blue plaques project. The talk focused on Ernest Joyce, a lesser-known member of Shackleton's Trans-Antarctic Expedition who was awarded the Polar Medal for his actions. It was a very illuminating talk followed by a screening of two amateur, black and white, silent films of Felpham in the early 1950s. Although greatly changed in some ways, the heart of the village remained very recognisable to those who knew it in earlier times and to newer residents.

Our last big event of 2022 was the Christmas Tree lighting, something the Society does annually, with thanks to Butlins for the donation of a magnificent tree which was lit by our best-ever lights and blessed by Father John Challis. Singing from the St Mary's Church Choir and the Choirs of the Edward Bryant School and Felpham Community College made for a celebratory start to the Christmas season. There was even a rainbow in the sky.

Thank you to everyone who made these events possible!

Our Regular Activities

The backbone to what we did (and still do) were activities that focused on our environment and heritage:

- Monthly Beach Cleans where there was always litter (large and small) to pick up.
- Weekly Gardening in the Old Rectory Gardens where the volunteers worked under the Green Flag, awarded at the start of the year for a second time. We currently wait to see if it will be awarded again. (We are hopeful but not greedy; it's the doing that counts.)
- Weekly Gardening at the St Michael's Allotments where we held a plant sale and work parties to help maintain the site. Importantly, we also planted and grew on the hanging baskets for the village last summer.
- The year also saw the welcome resurgence of the History, Heritage & Archive group under the leadership of one of its established members. An early project for the group which met recently has been to start the creation of digital records of the paper research conducted by the Society into 18 of the Felpham men who lost their lives in the First World War. This work will be on our website as an important historical record and we will let you know when the first entries are available for you to read. The group is due to meet again to discuss other possible new projects relating to the village.

All of these activities provided opportunities for volunteers to engage in local matters which have helped to maintain, enhance and promote Felpham whilst also providing ways in which people can get together in a collaborative and friendly way. Our two Social Evenings also created an ever-popular opportunity for members and potential members to meet over a friendly drink or two at the Fox Inn. Both were fun and well attended evenings.

We also put up the hanging baskets in early summer; took them down in the autumn; put up the poppies for Remembrance Sunday; took them down again soon after; contributed to the initiation and cost of resurfacing part of a well-used footpath; and participated by running some children's games at Felpham Parish Council's Fun on the Prom last August.

Thank you to all our group leaders and volunteers who make these activities a reality.

Our Business Matters

Onto matters seemingly more mundane but equally important to the running of the Society. Behind the scenes, your Committee ran (and continue to run) a small hive of activity to ensure well-kept accounts, insurance cover, risk assessments, notes of meetings and key decisions, membership records, our website, member communications and journal articles. We met eight times for Committee Meetings, in line with the Constitution, and regularly consulted and communicated with each other outside of that.

If you think you would like to help with any of this administration, please let us know at:
mail@felphamvillageconservation.co.uk

We will report separately on the Society's finances but I would like to state here that we have ended the year in surplus and with a healthy bank balance of £10,831. The Fete itself raised almost £5,000 (net of costs) which contributed significantly to the Society's funds and provided the substantive contribution to the cost of the hanging baskets in the village last summer, including their watering.

Our Late Queen

If the Jubilee Summer Fete (and a round of questions at the Quiz Night) celebrated Her Late Majesty's 70 years on the throne, in a very short space of time we were marking the sudden death of Queen Elizabeth by attending, with other community groups, a special service at St Mary's Church to mourn her passing and give thanks for her long life of dedicated service.

Our New Events

In our calendar, we decided upon two new events although, strictly, each was/is scheduled for after the year-end of this report. Nevertheless, it seemed relevant to include mention of them as they were planned in 2022/23.

The first new event was an Easter egg hunt, Hunt the Golden Egg, on Easter Saturday. It was well received by families and had a positive and happy atmosphere. All egg hunters got an egg and the few remaining eggs were donated to a food bank.

Our second new event, referred to in my Spring Newsletter, is a Village Spring Clean. Since first deciding on this, we were asked if we would join with St Mary's Church who were also thinking along the same lines. This seemed a good way to work collaboratively for the benefit of the village and so the plan is to hold a Village Spring Clean on Monday 8th May 2023, the Coronation bank holiday and the day of The Big Help Out. The Big Help Out is being run across the UK in tribute to HM the King's public service and aims to encourage people to try volunteering and join in activities to support their local areas. St Mary's Church and the Society will provide more information anon.

Our Gratitude

I have set out various thanks in this report but would like to conclude by saying that I have tried, during my year as Chair, to remind myself and others that we are all volunteers contributing what we can when we can. Felpham has so many wonderful volunteers in the community and we salute them all. However, in so far as the Society is concerned, I should like to end this report by thanking: Glenn Powell and his "Heavy Gang" who make possible the logistics for all of our events; Murdo Mackenzie Morrison who has ensured we have professional sound for all of our events; Bob May as our Quiz Master - and Compere for the Fete; Felpham Parish Council for the grant they gave us at the start of the year towards the hanging baskets and for the benefit of the village; our many cake makers and other volunteers for the Fete; our gardeners, allotment helpers, litter pickers, and tea and coffee makers; our Committee members; and, last but definitely not least, *all of you*, our members for the help and support you give so freely to Felpham Village Conservation Society in what we do.

A very big Thank you indeed!

Your Questions

I am happy to take questions on the Annual Report and cordially request these are submitted in advance, where feasible, to mail@felphamvillageconservation.co.uk. Questions may also be raised at the AGM and we will endeavour to answer them all.

Yours,

Jane Summerville
Chair & Secretary, FVCS
April 2023

Addendum - Some Dates for your Diary in 2023

- Saturday 8th May 2023: **Village Spring Clean**, starting and ending at St Mary's Centre, Grassmere Close, times and details to be confirmed.
- Saturday 10th June 2023: **Quiz Night**, Felpham Memorial Village Hall, 7.00 pm to 9.30 pm.
- Saturday 8th July 2023: **CORONATION SUMMER FETE**, Old Rectory Gardens, 12.00 to 5.00 pm.
- A Friday in December 2023 – date tbc: **Christmas Tree Light-up and Carols**, Grassmere Parade, 3.30 to 5.00 pm.
- Plus, our regular monthly **Beach Cleans** on the 2nd Saturday each month (other than July when it will be on the 3rd Saturday); **Gardening** in the Old Rectory Gardens on the 4th Friday each month other than December; and **Gardening** at the St Michael's Allotments every Tuesday morning.
- **Other Events to watch out for** – dates tba: Autumn History Evening; Members Autumn & Spring Social Evenings.