

Farmborough Village Sports & Social – Annual report to Farmborough Parish Meeting
– 24th April 2025.

I should say that I normally take last year's report, cut & paste the bulk of the text and tweak the relevant detail/dates.

Other than the fireworks, that doesn't really work for this year.

So, I will start with the fireworks (cut & paste from last year)

November 3rd saw the annual Farmborough Fireworks and Bonfire Night and drew another big crowd with no rainstorm this year! This year the fireworks will take place on Sunday 2nd November.

Pavilion restoration restarted slowly in May 2024 with the removal of a number of internal walls, tidying up of the areas started by the previous builder and a new plan. The grant from the West of England Rural Fund meant that not only did we now have the money to install a new heating system, but we could also plan for a new hot water system which would be over twice the size of the previous and meant we also needed a plant room.

Bids went out to a number of sustainable energy suppliers with Gregor Renewables winning the work. They were not the cheapest, but they were by far the most comprehensive and clearly understood what we were trying to achieve. Gregor did not disappoint and suffice to say the system you see installed today surpasses all of our expectations. By the end of September Gregor had completed the bulk of their work with just commissioning left but again the building works was stalling with numerous targets missed.

Cricket had proven extremely difficult to manage throughout the summer and no firm plans with how or when rugby would start. It was clear that further resources were still required to restore the pavilion to a usable condition.

It was at this point the parish council were approached by Temple Cloud Cricket Club who had been served notice on their home ground and were looking for a new ground with a long-term lease option. The incumbent cricket team had nothing but a year-by-year agreement to play at Farmborough and given the recent issues I was not prepared to work with them for another year. Rugby had a lease agreement, and so discussions were started to negotiate a break point. These negotiations concluded by the beginning of November and Team Temple Cloud moved into the pavilion like a force of nature a week later. Crowd funding started by Temple Cloud plus all the proceeds from

November's fireworks meant the £15,000 target was hit a few weeks later triggering the match funding they had lifting that to £30,000 which soon then became £40,000. If it was at all possible, the works stepped up another gear. The transformation taking place in the corner of the rec could not be failed to be noticed by those using the field. By February the building was already looking completely different with new windows and a fresh coat of paint. A new patio had been laid with quintessential picket fence making its way from the car park to the MUGA. By this point the field was also starting to look different too with far more attention being paid to it.

A common theme was coming through all of this and that was how welcoming the village was to our new cricket team and this continued to build to the grand opening on 19th April when so many gathered to see the ribbon cut and see for themselves the unbelievable transformation inside.

The completed works surpass anything the parish council and Sports & Social could have achieved on their own. It is likely that Temple Cloud would not have survived if they had not been able to move to Farmborough. It has been a bit of a roller coaster of a journey but if there is ever proof that this new partnership is greater than the sum of its parts, then what we now is evidence of it.

It will no longer be a case of a single cricket match played at the rec every other Saturday for three months of the year. There will now be a wealth of activities for from young to not so young most days of the week from the spring to late summer. There will be constant pampering of the wicket and outfield by a team who will welcome a friendly chat and will provide a hot drink if you ask – or even if you don't.

Farmborough Sports & Social will continue to manage the facility on behalf of the parish council. The job list has shrunk significantly since last year but there will always be something needing attention – top of this list currently are toilet door locks which work.

Following the success and support at the grand opening there are likely to be more village events held at the rec. There is one very important date next year which will need to be in everyone's diary – the 50th Anniversary of the opening of the pavilion on 31st May 2026. Planning will start in a few weeks.

I am delighted to say that we now have a few more members on the Sports and Social committee, but more will always be welcome.