

Freckenham Annual Parish Meeting

Chairman' s Report 2008/09

Following last year' s meeting Councillor Hilary Gurner resigned from the Council. After her resignation, Jeff Gingell mentioned that he would be prepared to serve on the Council and was subsequently co-opted. We therefore still have a full contingent of 5 Councillors to represent you. They are there, as I mentioned last year to help and give any assistance to you the Parishioners.

Our District Councillor is currently Tim Huggan and Suffolk County Councillor Lisa Chambers continues to represent us, as Roger Pendleton is unfortunately still indisposed.

Your Parish Councillors are also on several bodies, to ensure they hear have and receive any information that may reflect on our village.

These are The Suffolk Association of Local Councils, Freckenham Shores Charity, Village Hall Committee, Mildenhall Community Partnership and The Re-generation Working Group of the District Council. We have a Village Recorder; Mrs Sandie Geddes who carries out this role and also Nial Murphy represents us on The Mildenhall and District Sick Poor Fund. Our thanks go to both of them.

The Councillors still consider planning applications for the village, before they go to the District Council for a final decision.

Police

With regard to our splendid police force that patrols our village, speeding traffic is unfortunately still an issue but our local Constabulary do carry out regular radar checks and prosecute where necessary. The speed indicator device SID when utilised, does help and they have been requested to have these on display more often.

Our Safer Neighbourhood teams patrol our village on a regular basis and although we still have some shed thefts and other crimes in the village, I am sure their presence has helped to keep this at a low level. PCSO Dawn Rowan is responsible for our village and we thank her and her colleagues for their hard work in trying to make our village safe. As mentioned before, keep your doors and windows locked to prevent the opportunist from entering your property. Central heating oil and metal thieving continues to be a problem. Also be aware of bogus callers.

Suffolk County Council

Roads

We carried out an inspection of our roads last year, also verges, pavements and white lining with the Highways Inspector of the County Council. Most problems are the same, potholes, cracking of the road surfaces and lack of width to some pavements, also the excessive growth of trees and vegetation that hang over the roads affecting visibility.

Unfortunately, last year because of budget considerations, we did not see too much repair work being done, but this year we are advised that finances will be made available for the rural roads and in due time work will commence. We continue to monitor the situation and are in regular contact with the County.

The duelling of the A11 from 5 ways roundabout Barton Mills to Thetford had been given the go ahead, but is now subject to a Public enquiry as it is felt the proposed scheme would still be a problem, with accessibility from and to Mildenhall, Brandon and Bury St Edmunds roads on the roundabout. It is felt by many people the roundabout, should be by- passed.

Bus shelters

Shelters have been requested for Pound Corner and Mildenhall Road. It is being considered, but there is a waiting list and there may be a charge, which we wait to hear of.

Boundary Committee for England

An update on the local council structure has still not been determined except it is most probable the District Councils will disappear. The Boundary Commission is now considering a single unitary authority for the whole of the County of Suffolk or possibly two, one for the Ipswich and Felixstowe areas and the other for the rural remainder of Suffolk. Despite their initial thoughts of Lowestoft coming under Norfolk, this has been revoked and Lowestoft will remain in Suffolk.

The Commission will make their final recommendation to the Secretary of State on the 15th June and the last date that they will accept opinion will be 14th May.

In our area Forest Heath District Council prefer an East/ West divide, which us and other local Parish Council's also preferred. Your councillors are still attending meetings regarding the changes and the latest was last night at District Council head quarters.

By means of our Parish Pump, we will continue to keep you up to date with progress. As I mentioned, the Boundary Commission will shortly prepare it's final report and the Secretary of State will then make her decision, as to whether there will be Unitary Councils which we are quite sure will happen. The idea is still to save money within 5 years and give better services to the communities. Time will tell.

Within our village,

Recreation Field

The children's playground equipment has again passed its annual ROSPA inspection and as usual some of the equipment requires attention. Maintenance work has been carried out where necessary and will continue on an ongoing basis.

Ron Cornell continues to cut the grass and does a splendid job in keeping the field looking nice and attractive. Christina Engelbrecht and her husband maintain the seats and also painted the interior of the bus shelter again.

Our thanks are also due to Councillor Lisa Chambers, who has kindly given us a grant of £1000.00 from her locality budget, which will contribute to replacing one bench seat in the play area and also the one on the street by the bridge. Of the replaced seats, one of those if possible will be refurbished and used to provide a seating area in East View.

Village sign

The sign still continues to look attractive and our thanks to Mr Terry Anderson for kindly agreeing to keep an eye on it and do any remedial work if necessary.

Website

The Parish Council site is up and running thanks to Rodney Gillington who finalised it this year. The number of hits has been considerable. To remind you the address is www.onesuffolk.co.uk/freckenhamPC should you wish to log on?

St. Andrews Church

A village open gardens event will be held again on Sunday June 14th and the profit will be passed to the Church. We anticipate having 14 gardens open and would appreciate some volunteers to help during the day.

The Church continues to put on some very nice events, which are mentioned in The Parish Pump and advertised locally. They are well supported, but again the attendance at the Sunday congregations is disappointing.

We have a new lay preacher the Reverend Sandie Barton who together with her husband has moved into the village, so we have an addition to the team.

Some of the events held during the year, were the shoebox appeal as well as the flower and harvest festivals.

Village Hall

The Village Hall again had a very successful year, with many different events held throughout. They celebrated on Saturday the 5th July 10 years from when the hall was built and this was very well attended.

There will be changes to The Committee this year with the Chairman, Treasurer and booking Clerk retiring from the positions. New members are required, so do put your names forward if you can give time, if not for the Committee but as a volunteer for when events take place. The Committee works very hard (and again they are all volunteers) to make a great success of everything that is put on. Many private parties still use our hall, wedding receptions are held and other organisations use the hall for meetings. You have a wonderful hall and it is well maintained. **And** of course, you have your local carpet bowls club as well as charity events, table top sales and keep fit classes.

This forthcoming year will probably be more difficult for theatrical events, as this awful credit crunch steps up. We have already seen a decline in the number of people attending and the committee are doing all possible to keep the prices as low as possible, so that people are able to manage the entry fees.

In respect of Local Housing Needs, The Good Neighbour Scheme and Emergency Planning.

Following the joint survey that was carried out last year, it showed there was a requirement between Worlington and us for five homes. Both Councils are proceeding with this and a site visit has taken place, to look at some of these homes and to look at the build quality.

Subject to forth coming Parish Council meetings, we will confirm a go ahead and then determine the site where they should be built.

The Good Neighbour Scheme has been put in abeyance for the time being.

The format for emergency planning is underway.

Public Rights of Way and circular walks

There have been two meetings following the interesting talk by Nick Wyatt from FHDC last year and this is being progressed. Time and availability of the volunteers to attend meetings and discuss what needs to be done, is not easy for all concerned but we will get there.

A Freckenham to Worlington footpath has been considered and this will be discussed again with our District and County Councillor.

Finally, I would again like to thank our Clerk Rodney Gillington, my fellow Councillors on the Parish Council for their attendance at Council meetings, as well as the many volunteers, who do sterling work throughout the year, whether it is for The Church, Village Hall or just keeping an eye on our village.

Let us look forward to working together again this coming year, for the benefit of all concerned. **Also**, we would be pleased to see you at the Parish Council meetings, which are held every two months.

For the future, we again look forward to renewing the equipment and also improving the facilities on the recreation ground and anything else, that can make Freckenham an even better village, for all concerned who live here.

If you, the villagers have any thoughts, then do let the Clerk or one of your Councillors know and it will be considered at forthcoming Parish Council meetings.

Thank you all for attending.
