

**Freckenham Annual Parish Meeting
21st May 2014**

**Freckenham Parish Council
Chairman's Report**

Year 2013/14

Thank you all once again for attending this evening and I would like firstly in my report to thank my fellow Councillors who have put so much of their free time towards the council which is to and for the benefit of us all. It has not always been easy at times with some of the matters we do have to contend with.

I would also like to mention and remind all of you here that Meetings of the Parish Council are normally held every other month unless we receive a planning application which has to be determined within a statutory period. We would certainly be pleased for any of you to attend subsequent meetings and listen to the reports we receive from our County and District Councillors also our local Police Community Support Officers who patrol our village.

The only time we appear to have an audience is where a contentious issue is placed within our Agenda's or a planning application that is not well received by neighbours.

Following on, I would like to extend our thanks to Cllr James Waters of the County Council who resides in our village, for all that has been done for us this year, with locality grants from his budget that enabled the Parish Council to cover various items that were needed including a contribution to the recreation project, as well as his officers who arranged for land to be put aside for a circular walk commencing at Elms Road and which was recently officially opened and has been well received. This path cannot be revoked as long as it is used.

Our thanks are also to Mr Mark Harrison of Elms Farm who has done some sterling work on the path surfaces and also to our Councillor Lawrence Barton who has pushed the project along to completion by working with the County Council officers. Some parts still need consolidating which is to be expected but it is a fine walk of 3.5 miles. A charity walk on behalf of McMillan arranged by Mrs Dawn Dixon was held a few weeks later and produced funds for the charity.

On outstanding issues we have with the county council and which have gone on for some years, has mainly been with the highways department and covers the flooding due to drainage problems that occurs on Mildenhall Road, Fordham Road and Church Lane. The deterioration of the road surfaces that we had on Elms Road have recently had re-patching work completed.

Measures were also put in place to remove some of the hazards at the Church Lane junction. New signage was put in place but unfortunately one of them was stolen on the day they were installed (metal thieves?) but has now been replaced with one more to be installed, white lining has also to be re-done.

The other disappointing issue this year was the decimation of the village bus services which was without consultation with us the Parish Council or with any of the villagers. We were just told! The Parish Council took this matter up as did Peter and Brenda Knowles from East View who have done a superb job by arranging a petition and following this up as we have with correspondence.

Much corresponding has taken place and there are still replies that are required, but we are not letting the matter rest.

The Coffee Caravan has commenced its annual visits to East View Freckenham. On their final visit last year a reminiscence cream tea was held this time in the village hall. There were several stands to do with community services and was very well attended. This year do give it

your support they visit every two months, the staff members provide a lot of information and help, on most matters to do with the public's wellbeing so impart your views or problems to them; and also have a cup of coffee/ tea and a piece of cake. A parish councillor plus our clerk Rodney Gillington and our PCSO normally put in an appearance.

The Parish Pump has been distributed on a quarterly basis but for this forthcoming year there will be just three issues. This continues to be a well-put together publication covering all news, views and issues within our village and is commended also by other councils. Any news items that you feel should be included in forthcoming issues then do contact our reporters Dawn Dixon/ Cecilia Gillington/ Rodney Gillington our clerk and Peter Taylor-Whiffen the editor. Next deadline for copy covering the summer edition is 5th June.

Broadband

Pleased to advise the latest news is that we are now advised that we shall receive super- fast broadband by end this year (WE HOPE) or very early next with speeds of 20micro bites per second so perhaps our continual nagging may have had some effect.

Oil Purchasing Scheme

I have mentioned before a domestic oil-purchasing scheme which county wide has proved successful. Your local co-ordinator for ordering is Mark Russell. A minimum order of 500 litres is required and you will find the discount pricing is very beneficial. Orders are now taken twice a month with deliveries shortly after. An annual membership fee of £20.00 is required.

If you are not yet on the scheme, do consider because you will find it of benefit as others in the village have done so.

Police

I would thank our PCSO Becky Simpson who has taken over from David Cowan and Tristan Agnew for her attendance and report this evening. Crime does occur in our village unfortunately but any crime no matter how small should be reported to the police. We have heard that some people are not doing so which can only help the criminal.

Speeding through the village is still a concern but our community speed watch scheme in partnership with Worlington Parish Council is still ongoing and our local police carry out speed checks from time to time.

We believe we are scheduled to receive a portable speed activated device which should be of help and a reminder of their speed to the speeding motorists.

Suffolk County Council

Roads - Your Councillors continue to monitor the road situations in the village and report to the County Council all aspects of road and pavement conditions that are noticed. We still meet once a year with the County Councillor and the Highways Department Manager walking the village, pointing out where we consider remedial work should be carried out.

By end of this year the final duelling of the A11 will be completed covering the stretch from Five Ways, Barton Mills, to Thetford.

Volunteers - I would also like to thank all those volunteers who assist the parish council and especially Geoff Dixon who maintains The Recreation Field keeping it nice and attractive, as

well as others who sweep the bus shelter out from time to time, also my wife who keeps the bed in good order between the bridge and the Golden Boar.

Rodney Gillington continues to update our village web site and this was a special this year as we were highly commended and awarded first price by the Suffolk Association of Local Councils for the best web sites in the smaller villages. Note again the website www.onesuffolk.co.uk/freckenhamPC

I would also like to thank all others who give their time towards St Andrew's Church and the Village Hall.

St. Andrews Church

The Church held several events during the year including the flower festival, shoebox appeal The Vicar of Dibley presentation which was very successful and The Remembrance Day service. The upkeep of churches is very important, needing money for day-to-day running including the fabric which comes in the main from congregation collections, as well as weddings and funerals. But, many churches have small attendances except at special events so keep this in your thoughts.

On Sunday 15th June they are putting on an event called The Opera Dudes which should be an excellent production.

Village Hall

The Village Hall holds its Annual General Meeting this coming Friday at 7.30pm. A special, this year, a drink on arrival so I feel they have done quite well financially this year. Do attend and give them your support and you will hear from them all that has gone on this year and I expect their future plans.

Their committee works hard arranging weekly events covering dance, and bowls clubs to theatrical events for the benefit of adults and children from Freckenham **and**, also members of the public who attend from outside the village to support the hall. A new event which started last Saturday was a food and plant swop which I believe went very well, two more will take place.

This year we will also enter the village of the year competition so wish us luck. We also have a pig club formed by some residents which is situated on Mortimer's Farm land kindly agreed by farmer David Neal.

Finally, I would like to say thanks again to my fellow councillors, our clerk Rodney Gillington for all the work they do on this Parish Council and also working with me in making this council and village what it is today. We are commended by other councils in this Forest Heath Area for what we do and looking ahead for the benefit of all.

If you, the villagers have any thoughts that concern the village, then do not forget to let the Clerk or one of your Councillors know and it will be considered at forthcoming Parish Council meetings.

I believe I have covered most items covering our village this last financial year. Thank you all for attending and before we pass on to Parish Council accounts,

D E Wheeler