

Freckenham Annual Parish Meeting

29th April 2015

Freckenham Parish Council

Chairman's Report

Year 2014/15

Thank you all for attending this evening and I would also thank my fellow Councillors and our Clerk for their support this last year.

I would also like to further mention and remind you all that meetings of the Parish Council are normally held every other month unless an extra ordinary meeting is called which normally covers a planning application that has to be discussed and determined within a statutory period. We would certainly be pleased if more of you would attend these 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 although we do mention relevant points in The Parish Pump.

However where there could be a contentious issue within our village, a planning application perhaps, that is not always well received by neighbours, then we do have an audience.

Following on, I would like to extend our thanks to Cllr James Waters of the County Council and District Councillor, Tim Huggan for contributing from their locality budgets towards the costs of the defibrillator. We also received last year a contribution towards the recreation field project from James Waters and this project will shortly commence as you heard earlier this evening. Grants were also received from FHDC, Awards for all and Suffolk foundation.

Our thanks are due to Mr Mark Harrison of Elms Farm who has continued to cut the hedges on the Elms Road circular walk. The walk surfaces needed further consolidation, which The County Council maintenance team have completed to improve the surfaces. It is a pleasant walk of 3.5 miles.

Issues that we still have with the County Council Highways department, covers the flooding due to drainage problems that occur on Mildenhall Road and Church Lane. Elms Road was re-surfaced during this last year and new warning signs installed to cover the dangerous S/Z bend at the corner with Church Lane.

Following on last year from the decimation of the village bus services we were successful following a meeting with County Council officials at the village hall, attended by many villagers expressing our discontent on this matter. We have since managed to obtain a twice a week direct service (No 17A) to Newmarket via Chippenham and Snailwell which commenced on the 12th January.

Unfortunately this is not used as much as we had hoped despite the requests for this service.

In January a short month there were 5 passengers over 6 trips.

February 7 passengers over 8 Trips

March 14 passengers over 9 trips and

to April 22nd 8 passengers over 5 trips, a slight improvement.

The bus company have advised me they are disappointed. We must try to have an improvement or we may lose the service.

What disappoints me, is that some villagers have said they will not use buses and would rather use their cars Well that is their prerogative, but it is a pity considering the number of people that were at the village hall complaining about lack of services. Do give it a thought. Suffolk Link and Dial a Ride also offer a service.

There is also a direct service from Freckenham to Bury St Edmunds, which allows a full day in the town of which not everyone may be aware.

The Coffee Caravan has commenced its annual visits to Freckenham. On their first visit this year it was held at the Village Hall with tea and cakes provided. A Mrs Gwen Brooker who was evacuated to our village during the Second World War gave a very good talk and a slide presentation on her experiences during her time here. It was very well attended.

This year again, please give the Coffee Caravan your support. They visit every month, 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 of course have a cup of coffee/ tea and a piece of cake and chat with your neighbours.

The Parish Pump was produced with three issues this year and delivered to every house. It continues to be a well-put together publication covering all news, views and issues within our village.

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 12th June.

Broadband

For those that use the web we are pleased to advise that we that we now have super- fast broadband in the village with speeds up to 78 micro bites per second. A really great improvement.

Oil Purchasing Scheme

I have mentioned before the domestic oil-purchasing scheme, which countywide has proved successful. Your local co-ordinator for ordering is now Jacqui Burke. Mark Russell having to give up as co-ordinator unfortunately due to ill health. As explained before, a minimum order of 500 litres is required and you will find the discount pricing very beneficial. 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

Crime does occur in our village unfortunately but any crime no matter how small should be reported to the police. We are still hearing that some people are not doing so, which can only help the criminal.

Speeding through the village is still a concern. Our local police are requested to carry out even more speed checks.

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 with the County Councillor and the Highways Department Manager walking the village, pointing out where we consider remedial work should be carried out.

The final duelling of the A11 was completed in December and on time Five Ways, Barton Mills, to Thetford.

Volunteers

I would also like to thank all those volunteers who assist the parish council, keeping the village nice and attractive and a special mention to Geoff Dixon who maintains The Recreation Field.

Rodney Gillington continues to update our village web site and this was a special this year as the Suffolk Association of Local Councils again awarded us first prize for the best web site in the smaller village's category. Two years running quite a performance. Note again the website www.freckenham.onesuffolk.net.

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 events during the year including the flower festival and the shoebox appeal. The Remembrance Day service covered 100 years since the commencement of World War one. A very poignant one-man play was also put on, covering our friends The Enemy. The upkeep of our church is very important, needing funds for day-to-day running so special events are needed to contribute towards the costs.

Village Hall

The Village Hall holds its Annual General Meeting this year on Friday 15th May.

Do attend and give them your support and you will hear all that has gone on this year and I expect their future plans.

Their committee works hard arranging weekly hire and events covering dancing lessons, yoga classes, 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 Farmers market has just started. Two so far and well attended.

This year we entered the village of the year competition and came second to Worlington in the regional judging.

Again if you, the villagers have any thoughts that concern the village, then let the Clerk or one of your Councillors know and it will be considered.

D E Wheeler