

Freckenham Annual Parish Meeting
27th April 2016
Freckenham Parish Council
Chairman's Report
Year 2015/16

Thank you once again for attending this evening to our guest speakers and also to my fellow Councillors for their support and our new Clerk Hilary Gurner who has taken on the reigns and is well settled in. I would also like to put on record our thanks, for the many years that Rodney Gillington was our Clerk but has now moved from the village to Devizes.

Rodney still looks after our website, so is very much in touch with all that goes on in Freckenham.

I would also like to further remind you all, that meetings of the Parish Council are 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 also listen to the reports we receive, from our County and District Councillors.

Following on, I would like to extend our thanks to Cllr James Waters of the County Council and District Councillor Brian Harvey for contributing from their locality budgets towards the costs of worthwhile additions to projects in our village. **Of note**, there was the defibrillator and the recreation field project. These projects were completed this financial year. There was a problem with the circular path on the field, but the surface which was not up to standard was finally rectified. The grants received from Forest Heath District Council, Awards for All part of the nation-wide lottery scheme and Suffolk Foundation covered the costs.

We are pleased to note that the new exercise equipment is being used as well as the circular path.

A hand rail will shortly be installed at the downward slope from The Street entrance, to help when conditions on the surface are slippery.

There has been some minor vandalism which hopefully will not continue and some tree branches which overhang the grass boundaries have been cut for us by Trevor Roots.

The grass cutting has been done on a regular basis by Geoff Dixon but as he will be leaving the village, he has now handed over to Sue Cornell's sons. We appreciate both Geoff and Trevor's contribution this last financial year.

There is still a problem with dog deposits and to try to alleviate the problem, new signage has been installed, which was kindly donated by the District Council and also an additional dog bin at The Chippenham Road entrance.

The Elms Road circular walk hedges continue to be maintained by Mr Mark Harrison. The County Council maintenance team also now do maintenance work 3 times a year rather than twice, so this gives an improvement to the walk. Hopefully with the better weather it will remain a pleasant walk.

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. Remedial work on the farm crossing just outside the village where also severe flooding

took place has helped but not completely solving the problem. Recent pot holes and deterioration of the road surfaces on Chippenham Road have been reported. All the roads are monitored on a regular basis and reports are made to The County Council.

We still hold on to a limited bus service for the village, but more people need to use the service. At times when I use them, there have only been myself and one other on the bus from Freckenham. There is a good service to Bury St Edmunds which gives several hours in the town before returning.

The Coffee Caravan has commenced its annual visits to Freckenham. On their first visit this month it was held at the Village Hall, with tea and cakes provided.

This year they will visit on the first Tuesday of every month until September. Their staff members provide information and help, on most matters to do with the public's wellbeing, so impart your views or problems to them. There is always a cup of coffee/ tea and a piece of cake and you can chat with your neighbours.

They will celebrate The Queen's 90th Birthday during their visit on Tuesday the 7th June with an event in The Village Hall.

The Parish Council in conjunction with our Church St Andrew's and The Village Hall will celebrate the official weekend on the 11th and 12th. You will have received a leaflet through your letter box. A meeting to discuss the event and also come up with additional ideas has been scheduled for this coming Sunday at 3.00pm in the Village Hall. All are welcome to attend and give us their thoughts.

The Parish Pump was produced again with three issues this year and delivered to every house.

Any news items that you wish to be included in forthcoming issues, then do contact in the first place our reporters Dawn Dixon and Marilyn Badger who took over from Cecilia Gillington after she left the village, also our clerk Hilary Gurner. The next deadline for editorial copy covering the summer edition is 10th June. We will unfortunately lose Dawn this year, as she will be leaving the village so any budding reporters please contact me direct.

Hilary's request for villagers "E" mail addresses and replies would be helpful, as from time to time worthwhile correspondence could be circulated quickly.

Broadband

Now up and running in the main. If you have any outstanding problems and you are not getting the right answers from your ISP's or BT then let us know and we will endeavour to help in resolving.

Oil Purchasing Scheme

I have mentioned before the domestic oil-purchasing scheme, which has been successful in the pricing structure that we receive. Unfortunately we lost our co-ordinator Mark Russell. His wife Jacqui Burke took over initially, for which we thank her, but she is now, no longer able to continue, so orders need to be placed direct with Community Action Suffolk. Contact Natalie Lomas. As mentioned before a minimum order of 500 litres is required. An annual membership fee is £20.00 is required.

Police

Speeding through the village is still a concern. Our local police are requested to carry out even more speed checks and we will shortly re-commence community speed watch and our co-ordinator will be Parish Councillor Sue Cornell.

Volunteers

I would also like to thank all those volunteers who assist the parish council, keeping the village nice and attractive.

Rodney Gillington as I mentioned earlier, continues to update our village web site and this again was a special this year, as the Suffolk Association of Local Councils awarded us second prize in the smaller village's category for the best web site in Suffolk. Over the past three years, we have achieved two firsts and a second. Note again the website www.freckenham.onesuffolk.net

I would also like to thank also, 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 which were very well received and attended, as also The Remembrance Day service. The upkeep of our church is very important but, many churches like ours, have small attendances so special events are needed to help towards the costs and they are quite successful in this.

Village Hall

The Village Hall will hold its Annual General Meeting this year on Thursday 26th May.

Do attend and give them your support. You will no doubt hear all that has gone on for this last year and also 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 outside the village. Their Farmers Market has been very successful, as also their film nights.

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

I believe that has covered most items covering our village this last financial year. Thank you and we now pass on to Parish Council accounts.

D E Wheeler