



FELSTED

PARISH COUNCIL

30th April 2014

Annual Report 2013-14

Chairman's Report by Cllr Graham Harvey (Parish Council Chairman)

2013 was an important year for the Parish Council. On 4th December we celebrated our 1000th meeting. The meeting was held at Felsted Primary School, the same venue as the first meeting on 4th December 1894. A reception was held to celebrate this milestone with many residents and past Councillors attending.

The Clerk and Assistant Clerk swapped roles last August with Diane Smith moving into the role of Clerk to the Parish Council. Peter Watson has reduced his hours and his main role is looking after local planning issues.

Councillor Corinne Walker has recently resigned leaving the Council with two vacant seats , however we have received interest from two applicants so we hope to be up to full strength at the next meeting in May.

The Council continues to carry out its regular work around the village such as grass cutting, the maintenance of street lights, reporting potholes to ECC and discussing and commenting on all local planning applications.

However this year the Council has also completed the following specific projects:

- Felsted Parish Plan – Following much hard work by the Working Group the Plan has been completed and adopted by both the Parish Council and UDC.
- Allotments - The water supply has been extended and 6 new water troughs installed. Grants of £1000 from Edible Essex (RCCE) and £3350 from UDC were obtained towards the cost of this work.



New water troughs at the Allotments



105 saplings were planted in the Playing Field

- The Allotment access track has been resurfaced.
- 2 redundant Telephone kiosks have been purchased from BT and are now operating very successfully as Book Boxes (these have attracted lots of media attention locally and even featured in travel programmes shown in the Czech Republic and Australia!!)
- The flag pole has been moved to a more prominent site opposite the Memorial Hall.
- Monthly Police surgeries have been re-instated, at the request of the PC, and are working well.
- 2 additional salt bins have been purchased
- Repairs have been carried out to play equipment and the playbark topped up in the main play area
- 105 free saplings from The Woodland Trust have been planted in the playing fields



Book Box at Willows Green



Repairs to Bury Chase car park

Other projects are ongoing, namely:

- Playing Field Car Park – The project has been delayed by the very wet winter weather but is due to start at the end of April. A grant of £15000 has been approved by the Community Initiatives Fund (ECC).
- Byelaws – These have finally been agreed and are awaiting signature by the Secretary of State
- Notice Boards – A new notice board has been ordered for Gransmore Green along with replacement notice boards for Willows Green and Bannister Green. The remaining 2 notice boards (outside Linsell's shop and at Watch House Green) are being refurbished.
- Village Centre toilets – The council are undertaking a further assessment of need and expect to make a final decision regarding this project in July.

I would finally like to take this opportunity to thank all my fellow Councillors for the sterling work that they do and the not inconsiderable time that they freely give to Council business. I must also thank the Clerk, Diane Smith and her assistant Peter Watson who work tirelessly in the background and without whom the Council could not function. And last, but not least, I would like to thank all the members of the public who regularly attend our meetings and take such an active interest in village life.

Felsted Playing Field Group Report – by Cllr Alan Thawley (Chairman)

A second Sustainability Grant arising from successful completion of the landscaping project was used to fund part of the Second Dog Show in September. Proceeds will go to local dog-oriented charities. The fine toilets are now providing a vital service to visitors to the Felsted Playing Field – it will be interesting to see if they reduce the demand for toilets in the centre of the main village.

Car parking on the Field is still needed and specifications and quotations were obtained and accepted by the Parish Council. The work is to be done this Spring, partly funded by a grant of £15,000 from ECC Community Initiatives Fund. The dip in the footpath just east of the pavilion will also be raised to reduce flooding.

Football pitch improvements were finally done, with labour from the football clubs enabling the Parish Council costs to be minimized.

The surface on the Playground has been replaced and surrounding edges upgraded. The Group gave a donation to the Parish Council to help with the cost.

A generous gift of trees was planted around the mound and on Willows Green Playing Field. Thanks to the Woodland Trust.

A second relatively quiet year has consolidated the previous very active several years.

Thank you everybody.

Felsted Memorial Hall Committee Report – by Mrs Hazel Fox (Committee Chairman)

It's been almost a year now since I took over the chairmanship of the Memorial Hall. I can't think where that time has gone. I remember feeling quite daunted last year, after all Liz is a hard act to follow!

The Memorial hall plays a vital part of the community. Over the years, its role has changed, but it remains a central point for the village to come together. Since coming on to the committee, I have learned so much about the community we serve. Organisations such as the W.I., the Friendship Club, the Brownies, Dance classes, Ninjitsu, the Horse Society, Farmers Market and many others. Not to mention Felsted Kindergarten School who use the hall every day of the school terms throughout the year.

There is a steady stream of hirers for birthdays, weddings and celebrations of all kinds-sadly some funerals too. But hirers feel that our hall is suitable for whatever event they have.

During the past year, some major maintenance work has been carried out. The wall panelling in the main hall has been updated/refurbished, new disabled parking bays marked out at the front, the wooden floor has been bought back to its former glory, the stage floor has been resurfaced, the guttering replaced in December, just in time for the heavy rains, and the car-park is about to be relined and signed. A major leak in the bar area caused damage to the wall after the heavy downpours. Thanks to members of the committee who had the knowledge and expertise to deal with it, the wall is now repaired and the bar is nice and dry again.

A lot of the everyday maintenance is down to the committee members as our caretaker moved to pastures new last July. After a lot of discussion, the committee saw fit to employ a cleaner instead, and we were very lucky to find Tracey. Angela cleans the class rooms and Tracey the hall and between them they keep the hall tip-top and I would like to thank them both for their hard work and their very high standards. I would like to thank the committee members for their tireless work and commitment to the Memorial Hall.

Tree Warden's Report – by Dr Andrew Hynd (Tree Warden)

A year of destruction and regeneration of our trees has been the parish lot this past year. Autumn storms, and further late winter squalls, have snapped and felled many of our roadside hedge and copse stands. However many of these storm victims were dead or diseased and needed removal anyway. Nature has therefore, in part, helped us. Regeneration had taken the form of the planting of a specimen small leaved lime near the play area of the sports field. This will complement the three red oaks already planted nearby earlier in the year. The Woodland Trust generously made available 105 native whip saplings for us in mid March 2014. These were planted by a small group of enthusiastic volunteers over two mornings recently. The sites of planting were at the southern corner of the sports field, near to Jollyboys Lane North. Additional plant groupings were also made in the Willows Green sports/play field. Both planting sites will, I am sure, over time enhance the habitat and appearance of these locations.

Footpath Warden's Report – by Malcolm Raggett and Nick Pollard

We have taken over as footpath wardens following the excellent work done by Bryan Grimshaw.

The main and long-running issues that continue with the involvement of Essex County Council (ECC) are:

- Footpath 80 at Causeway End is blocked by fencing and there is no clear route for walkers. ECC was set to restore the existing route however there has been an expression of interest by one property owner to re-route the path. As a result, ECC has delayed its restoration of the existing route but are still pursuing the case.
- Footpath 22 at Crix Green has been blocked by fencing. An alternative “desire” path exists on farm land but this is not a right of way. ECC has received an application to divert the path, which is currently awaiting consideration.
- Footpath 108 at Cock Green is obstructed by a tennis court.
- Footpath 84 near Cobbler's Green has a permissive diversion onto a field headland.
- Footpath 103 parallel to Bakers Lane at Causeway End no longer exists as a separate path.

Routine maintenance work by ECC and others has achieved the following:

- Resetting the footbridges on FP59 when they were washed out
- Clearing vegetation from footbridge on FP118
- Clearance of Milch Hill Lane and repair of telephone cables (by BT Openreach) after trees fell
- Replacement of footbridge on FP10
- Replacement of bridleway finger post on FP106
- Replacement of footbridge on FP83 (by volunteers from the Flich Way)
- Clearance of FP17 by the same volunteers and various waymarking along footpaths 82, 83, 84, 71 etc
- Installation of waymarkers on FP81
- Topping up road planings on FP64
- Replacement of bridge on FP15
- Replacing 3x bridges on FP24
- Installed flag on concrete finger post junction of FP13 and Stebbing Road
- Re-set the finger post on FP44. This path is actually obstructed - ECC aware.
- The line of FP86 has been correctly reinstated by the volunteers from the Flich Way.

The winter storms caused some footpath blockages and some waymarkers to fall over. A few farmers continue to cultivate and plant the route of paths across their fields to the detriment of both the walkers' enjoyment and the crop's yield since walkers tend to create multiple wandering paths through the crop. Over-enthusiastic fencing has resulted in at least one blockage that is now resolved.

A matter that we feel should be brought to the Council's attention is the level of dog-fouling on paths and the associated disposal of plastic-wrapped excrement in nearby hedgerows. One local resident has even gone to the trouble to erect signs at a hedgerow used as a frequent disposal point asking dog-walkers to desist from the practice! We feel that an article in the next parish newsletter encouraging responsible practice by dog-walkers would be a good idea.

Felsted United Charities Report – by Penny Gant

The Charities met twice during the year. They have made donations to Farleigh Hospice, Felsted Friendship Club, Essex & Herts Air Ambulance Service, Dunmow Stroke Club and Dunmow Blind Club

Grants have been made to 13 residents of the parish who made an application for assistance.

Botelers Educational Trust Report - by Cllr Graham Harvey (Trust Chairman)

The Trust has not met during the last 12 months due to the very small income generated by the invested funds. No donations have been made by the Trust within the last 12 months.

Crix Green Mission Hall Trust Report - by Cllr Graham Harvey (Council Representative)

The Trust has met twice during the last year. Whilst holding considerable funds we have only received 2 applications for assistance from the Mission Trust in the last 12 months.

The repair of the building and the attached cottage remain in good order and the garden is being well maintained by the tenant. We are looking into the possibility of a small extension to increase the size of the kitchen and toilets in the hope that this will make the building more attractive to hirers and increase its use by the community.

We are pleased to report that a wedding took place at the Mission Hall this year and a marquee was erected in the grounds for the Reception.

Felsted and Ford End District Nursing Association Report - by Penny Gant

At their annual meeting on Friday 22 November 2013 the Association decided to donate:-

- £350 to Farleigh Hospice
- £200 to Dunmow Blind and Housebound Club
- £100 to Uttlesford Crossroads and
- £150 to Dunmow and District Stroke Club

The remaining funds were re-invested for future use.

The date of the next annual meeting of the Association has not yet been arranged.

Finance Report – by Diane Smith (Clerk)

The Clerk explained that the Auditor was still verifying the accounts for the year ending 31 March 2014 but she gave a summary of the draft year-end figures and highlighted certain items.

The Council began the year with a bank balance of £124,529. The Council's expected income had been increased by the receipt of £6350 in grants this year plus £540 from the hire of the MUGA and a total of £2584 in allotment rents which included the collection of outstanding arrears.

In addition to its regular expenditure, the Council had spent the following amounts on specific items: £5500 on legal representation at the Enodis Enquiry, £2546 on the weekly Green Waste collection at Bannister Green (the UDC subsidy of this service having been drastically reduced), £1325 on re-lining the drains to the new public toilets in the playing field, £1130 repairing potholes in Bury Chase car park, £5195 installing an additional water supply to the allotments, £6990 on resurfacing the access track to the allotments, £3079 on topping up the playpark in the play area and £1377 on expenses for the 1000th meeting.

The Council's year-end bank balance of £130,334 was higher than expected because of the delay in completing and therefore paying for the playing field car park project, which was now due to commence on 28 April 2014.

Felsted Parish Council Draft Accounts for Year End 31 March 2014

	£	£
Opening Balance		124,529.35
 RECEIPTS		
Precept	55835.00	
UDC Grant for 2013/4	4165.00	
Allotments Rents	2584.00	
Playing field rent	2650.00	
Bank Interest Barclay	0.81	
Grants	6350.00	
Donation by Village Events Committee	0.00	
Donation by Playing Field Project Group	594.00	
Contribution by Felsted School to Heritage Trail	0.00	
Payment of claim for burglary	0.00	
Sundry other receipts	56.00	
MUGA Income (lettings)	540.00	
V A T refund	<u>7765.53</u>	
Total Receipts		<u>£80,540.34</u>
 PAYMENTS		
Salary and Expenses		
Salary - Clerk	7617.47	
- Assistant Clerk	2939.97	
Income Tax & National Insurance	21.36	
Payroll Administration	243.50	
Clerk/Asst Clerks Expenses	735.72	
Councillors' Expenses	<u>0.00</u>	
		<u>£11,558.02</u>
Street Lighting		
Public Lighting Maintenance	2703.00	
Public Lighting Electricity	<u>1660.68</u>	
		<u>£4,363.68</u>
Administration		
Rent URC Hall/Office	1500.00	
Rent – lockup storage	0.00	
Ravens Crescent Field Rent	102.00	
Memberships and Subscriptions	783.19	
Printing (Newsletter)	500.00	
Telephone/Fax/Broadband	497.30	
Professional Fees	5500.00	
Website/Planning System Support	345.00	
Stationery and Equipment	812.22	
Audit Fee	675.00	

Training	481.00	
Hire of halls	<u>247.25</u>	
	£11,442.96	
Maintenance, repairs and upkeep		
Hedgecutting	0.00	
Grass Cutting	4555.00	
Playing Field	792.16	
Civic Amenity Collections	0.00	
Green Waste collections	2546.46	
Allotments water supply	246.99	
Pavilion electricity	197.02	
MUGA electricity	240.75	
Investigation of Pavilion drain	1325.00	
Playing Field toilets	735.78	
Village Attendant	<u>5006.25</u>	
	£15,645.41	
Sundry		
Play equipment inspection & repair	759.00	
Planting	539.80	
Allotments maintenance	400.00	
Pavilion repairs	0.00	
Tree maintenance	0.00	
Village Car Park	1130.00	
Gritting	0.00	
Miscellaneous	<u>2261.00</u>	
	£5,089.80	
Projects		
Allotment Water Supply Installation	5195.69	
Parish Plan expenses (covered by grant)	1335.38	
Allotment track resurfacing	6990.00	
Playbark and matting	3079.00	
Playing Field Improvements/Car Park	0.00	
Playing Field Toilet	160.00	
Village toilets	0.00	
Bus shelter seat	295.00	
Footpath Map	1220.00	
New Street Lights	0.00	
Information Tables	20.00	
Notice boards	37.47	
Book Boxes	500.00	
1000th meeting expenses	1377.18	
HM Queen's Diamond Jubilee celebrations	<u>0.00</u>	
	£20,209.72	
Miscellaneous		
Council Property (bins, safety equipment, signs)	840.92	
Donations	765.00	
Bank charges	12.50	
Risk Assessment	1000.00	
Insurance	<u>2198.36</u>	
	£4,816.78	
VAT paid	482.70	
Total Payments	£74,734.88	
Closing Balance		£130,334.81
Includes Reserves carried forward:		
Capital Projects Reserve (Toilets, Playing Field Car Park)		50,000.00
Repairs & Maintenance Reserve		6,900.00
Risk Assessment Reserve		0.00
General Reserve		73,434.81

Felsted Parish Council – Your Councillors

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The Office is open every **Monday 10-12.30pm** and **Wednesday 4 -6.30pm** and visitors are welcome.

If you have a query outside these times please ring the office number **01371 823071** and the call will be diverted to the Clerk.

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