



FELSTED

PARISH COUNCIL

30th April 2015

Annual Report 2014-15

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

This will be the last Annual Parish Assembly of this session of the Parish Council, with an election looming in May, I have been advised that Fiona Hitchcock and Caroline Scott-Bowden will be standing down and I thank them for their time freely given to the village.

I am further advised that my Vice Chairman Alan Thawley will be moving to Scotland in the coming months, having spent 12 years as a District Councillor and 16 years as a Parish Councillor, Alan has been a great asset to both the local community and also Uttlesford. Alan was one of the main drivers with regards the Parish Plan and the enormous amount of work that has been undertaken on the Memorial Hall playing field over the last few years. Without Alan I do not think the village of Felsted would ever have heard of a "Multi Use Games Area", better known as the MUGA, they are just two of the projects Alan has been involved in. Alan, we send you our thanks and best wishes from the Parish of Felsted and wish you well for the future, however we look forward to your input whilst you still reside in Felsted.

The Parish Council will continue to evolve, and others will hopefully come forward to fill the seats left by the Councillors who are stepping down, so please if you feel you would like to give something back to the village of Felsted then please contact myself or the Parish Clerk for further details.

The Council once again had a busy year, the playing field car park was completed in July 2014 and a refurbishment of the cricket pavilion was also undertaken.

Replacement parish notice boards have been erected in the hamlets of Bannister Green and Willows Green with a new notice board being erected at Gransmore Green, the remaining notice boards have also been refurbished.

I reported at the annual meeting last year that the new Byelaws had finally been agreed and that we were awaiting a signature from the Secretary of State. After much waiting I can confirm the Byelaws are now operational.

Residents and visitors to the village lined the pavements on two occasions last year, Felsted was host to the Tour De France last summer and many thousands of pounds were raised by the village Events Committee. Well done to those many people who helped organise a successful day, also Felsted School had the honour to welcome Queen Elizabeth and many local residents gave a warm welcome to Her Majesty waving Union Jacks as she passed through the village.

As Chairman I always feel it is a great privilege to be able to lay the wreath, on behalf of the Parish Council, at the annual Remembrance Day Parade in November. 2014 being the 100th anniversary of the First World War, the Parish Council felt the war memorial needed some attention, it was professionally cleaned and slightly repositioned with new granite stone being laid, the cost of the work was just over £5,000. The work having been done to a very high standard, we feel it will be many years before the memorial needs further attention, therefore every penny spent being

worthwhile to remember those who gave their lives for both their Country and their Village. We will remember them.

The Clerk to the Parish Council keeps the wheels of the parish turning and us all informed of what is happening and also what needs to happen within the village. Diane organises the meetings and undertakes the many tasks that arise throughout the year, assisted by Peter and the village attendant, Barney. The three of them keep our village in order and I pass on my thanks for the work they do.

During the course of the year a Councillor not only attends the monthly meeting but may also be on one of the committees such as Finance, Planning or Highways. I once again point out that none of the councillors are paid for this work or take any expenses, the work being undertaken for the benefit of the village and all those who live and work within the parish, my thanks to you all for your time

I finish my report looking forward to 27th May when I will be attending a Buckingham Palace Garden Party, whilst being overjoyed at the prospect I feel I am attending on behalf the Parish Council and also of the village of Felsted, a big thank you for the nomination.

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

The Felsted Playing Field Project Group have had a quiet year but the Parish Council have carried out a number of projects relating to the Playing Field in the last 12 months.

They have upgraded the surface of a small stretch of Jollyboys Lane North and constructed a car park within the playing field this year. This provides much needed dedicated parking for those using the playing field and MUGA. A grant of £15,000 from ECC Community Initiatives Fund part funded this project.

The dip in the footpath just east of the pavilion was also raised to eliminate the flooding problem.

The pavilion has been extensively refurbished to bring it up to modern standards and a separate Fire Exit Door provided to meet regulations.

After a lengthy period of consultation, new Byelaws have been approved by the Secretary of State to regulate the use of not only the main playing field but also of Ravens Crescent and Willows Green Play areas and Bannister Green. Signs have recently been put up drawing the public's attention to the byelaws.

The Council are also in the process of taking over responsibility for the CCTV cameras from UDC.

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

I am now at the end of my second term as Chair serving the Memorial Hall Committee, and another eventful year it's been too.

In 2014 we saw the Royal visit, 450 celebrations at Felsted School, and of course the magnificent Tour De France. The Memorial Hall and Committee played a significant part in all of these events. As always, the hall is a central part of the community, and this is reflected in the steady stream of hirers who choose our hall for regular classes and bookings, or special celebration events.

General maintenance continues as you would expect, to keep the hall in good condition and working order. One of the major maintenance works was replacement of the lighting in the hall with energy saving LED lights and new wiring. Stage and hall curtains were cleaned and fire retardant certified. Toilets and passageway were repainted and new hand driers have been installed in the toilets, which are far more efficient than the old ones. Thanks to one of our committee members who researched, ordered and installed them.

The Parish Council redesigned the layout of the 91 year old War Memorial in time for Remembrance Sunday and it is generally agreed that it looks very smart and is certainly safer for those who like to step up and look at the names on the memorial. We have had one or two stumbles in the past.

Maintaining the hall is a task which committee members took on as a rota last year. We have now found a part time caretaker, who does small maintenance tasks for us as and when needed, this has proved to be a good arrangement.

Earlier in the year, we were approached by the probation service to provide some unpaid work for the community payback team. They did a sterling job of clearing overgrown shrubs and painting the fence in the car park. They were well supervised and worked very hard, the system does work!

Finally, I must thank our superb cleaning team, Angela and Tracey, who quietly come in and clean the hall and classrooms every evening. Also, I would like to thank our committee members for their tireless work and commitment throughout the year to the Memorial Hall, and their support to me as Chair during that time. Last but certainly not least, our hirers who use the hall on a regular basis, without you, the hall would not be able to function as a central part of the village.

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

The last year has been a quiet one as regards tree-related matters. Much work has been done by the ECC Highways Department this past 12 months. Hedge trimming and flailing has been extensive and effective, as has pruning of overhanging branches.

Plans and arrangements have been made to replace one of the Red Oaks near the Children's Play Area as one of the original trio had died the previous winter.

There have been no problems regarding TPO-listed trees during the last year.

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

The parish footpaths continue to be in generally good shape with few serious infringements to rights of way. Paths can become impassable due to weed growth, particularly nettles, in the summer months but this is easily resolved once reported to the wardens.

Last year I reported on the concern over dog faeces on some paths. It is a persistent problem so we need to continue the 'attitude and awareness' publicity in locally-distributed communications aimed at a minority of dog walkers who do not clear up after their pets (and this applies to the tarmacked paths by roads as well as the footpaths). There is an argument in favour of installing more red bins at problem points provided these can be emptied frequently. At least one attempt to install a bin at Causeway End has been thwarted by the land owner so we need to find a mechanism that prevents such a veto in favour of the common good.

I also reported on the blockage of FP80 at Causeway End. The Essex County Council continue to pursue the matter but one of the householders across whose land the footpath is routed is not cooperative. ECC will continue to pursue this infringement of a right of way.

The Tour de France provided a welcome fillip for the village as well as the improvement in surfacing of a byway between Bakers Lane and Potash Farm at Cobblers Green known as FP64. As a byway it would not be tarmacked but it should be open to all traffic as a right of way. FP64 was in a rutted, muddy state before the surface improvement, which made it attractive to the off-road fraternity but impassable to other vehicles; those on foot or horseback would commonly stray into the adjoining field to avoid the mud, without the land owner's permission. Although the improved surface was not ideal for some horse riders it did go some way towards restoring the byway to its rightful use. It was unfortunate that the parish council sanctioned the deposit of a considerable thickness of mud back onto the byway, an action no doubt welcomed by the 4x4 recreational drivers but against both the spirit and letter of the right of way, and had the potential for conflict between the parish and county councils. Mr Crawford, a local land owner, has very recently skimmed off the majority of this mud for deposit on his fields, for which I would like to express my thanks. I hope that a long-term and maintainable surface will be applied with cooperation between all parties.

Horse riding continues to be popular in the parish but there are several areas of potential conflict between horses and vehicles near the village centre, particularly since there is no linked series of bridleways that horses can use to avoid the often congested area outside the schools and near the Braintree Road/Chelmsford Road junction. A group of horse riders had a very positive meeting in July 2014 with the footpath wardens. This resulted in a preliminary proposal to upgrade several footpaths to bridleways thereby creating a horse-friendly, largely off-road ring around the village that would simultaneously improve horse and rider safety and help relieve congestion on the village centre. Below is a sketch of a possible route that was included in a report sent to the parish council at the time. Support from all parties will be needed, especially the owners of the land requiring changes to the rights of way. It is hoped to embed the proposal into the Felsted Neighbourhood Plan and that the land owners will cooperate for the benefit of the common good.

Felsted United Charities Report – by Richard Silcock

The Charities met once in the last 12 months. Donations were made to Farleigh Hospice, Felsted Friendship Club, Essex & Herts Air Ambulance Service and Dunmow Blind and Housebound Club.

Grants have been made to 12 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 1 application 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. I reported last year that the Trust were considering a small extension to the hall comprising of updated toilets and a new kitchen area, plans are currently being drawn up and it is hoped following discussion at the first of our annual meetings in April that we will move a step closer to starting the extension.

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

The Association has made no formal donations so far this year. Its funds remain 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)

Because of the forthcoming PC elections on 7 May the APA is being held early this year. We have not therefore reached the end of the financial year on 31 March so clearly all the figures you have in front of you are provisional.

I would like to draw your attention to some of the most significant figures:

The PC opening bank balance on 1 April 2014 was £130,334.

Income: The PC received a Precept of £70,000 plus regular income from allotment and playing field rents and hire of the MUGA. This year they also received grants totalling £24314. These included £15000 for the playing field car park / £4480 for the NP / £3500 for pavilion refurbishment / £550 for cleaning the War Memorial and £500 towards the cost of refurbishing the War Memorial from our District Councillors. The PC also received £296 in Tour de France camping fees which was donated to the Church Clock Fund.

Income totalled £112,330

Expenditure: In addition to all the regular expenditure the Council spent:

£1055 to set up a new website (www.felsted-pc.gov.uk)

£1937 on the popular Green Waste skips at Bannister Green

£5955 to refurbish the War Memorial (less grant monies received)

£746 on additional planting around the village - including bulbs under all the village signs

£9181 on refurbishment of the pavilion (less grant monies received)

£1020 on additional parking enforcement visits to improve traffic flow

£42789 on the construction of the playing field car park (less grant monies received) and
 £3959 on 3 new high quality notice boards

Expenditure totalled £127,490. This will leave a closing balance of £115,174 as planned. The council had carried forward a larger balance last year because of the delay in commencing the playing field car park project.

Felsted Parish Council

Draft Year End figures (as of 23 March 2015)

		1 April 2014 to 23 March 2015	
		£	£
Opening Balance			130,334.81
RECEIPTS			
Precept		66052.00	
UDC Grant for 2013/4		3948.00	
Allotments Rents		1729.00	
Playing field rent		2775.00	
Bank Interest Barclays		0.00	
Grants		24314.00	
Donation by Village Events Committee		0.00	
Donation by Playing Field Project Group		0.00	
Sundry other receipts		506.96	
MUGA Income (lettings)		105.00	
V A T refund		12,900.14	
Total Receipts		12,900.14	£112,330
PAYMENTS			
Salary and Expenses			
Salary - Clerk		7623.18	
- Assistant Clerk		2713.62	
Income Tax & National Insurance		275.66	
Payroll Administration		295.00	
Clerk/Asst Clerks Expenses		1038.99	
Councillors' Expenses		0.00	
		11,946.45	£11,946.45
Street Lighting			
Public Lighting Maintenance		2981.15	
Public Lighting Electricity		1663.49	
		4,644.64	£ 4,644.64
Administration			
Rent URC Hall/Office		1500.00	
Rent – lockup storage		600.00	
Ravens Crescent Field Rent		102.00	
Memberships and Subscriptions		805.19	
Printing (Newsletter)		366.00	
Telephone/Fax/Broadband		369.19	
Professional Fees		0.00	
Website/Planning System Support		1145.00	
Stationery and Equipment		684.02	
Audit Fee		612.50	

Training	234.00		
Hire of halls	12.00		
		£	6,429.90
Maintenance, repairs and upkeep			
Hedgecutting	620.00		
Grass Cutting	5025.00		
Playing Field	0.00		
Civic Amenity Collections	0.00		
Green Waste collections	1937.88		
Allotments water supply	149.39		
Pavilion electricity	259.71		
MUGA electricity	216.52		
Investigation of Pavilion drain	0.00		
Playing Field toilets	1047.87		
Village Attendant	5407.50		
War Memorial	5955.00		
		£	20,618.87
Sundry			
Play equipment inspection & repair	203.00		
Planting	746.58		
Allotments maintenance	250.00		
Pavilion repairs	9181.00		
Tree maintenance	795.00		
Village Car Park	0.00		
Parking enforcement	1020.00		
Gritting	0.00		
Miscellaneous	3639.65		
		£	15,835.23
Projects			
Allotment Water Supply Installation	210.59		
Parish Plan expenses (covered by grant)	0.00		
Allotment track resurfacing	0.00		
Playbark and matting	0.00		
Playing Field Improvements/Car Park	42789.20		
Playing Field Toilet	0.00		
Village toilets	0.00		
Bus shelter seat	0.00		
Footpath Map	0.00		
New Street Lights	0.00		
Information Tables	0.00		
Notice boards	3959.44		
Book Boxes	0.00		
Neighbourhood Plan	4480.00		
1000th meeting expenses	0.00		
		£	51,439.23
Miscellaneous			
Council Property (bins, safety equipment, signs)	502.90		
Donations	946.00		
Bank charges	0.00		
Risk Assessment	0.00		
Insurance	2226.92		
		£	3,675.82

VAT paid		12,900.14
Total Payments		£ 127,490.28
Closing Balance		£ 115,174.53
Includes Reserves carried forward:		
Capital Projects Reserve (Public Toilets, Playing Field car park, etc		£ 50,000.00
Repairs & Maintenance Reserve		£ 6,900.00
Risk Assessment Reserve		£ -
General Reserve		£ 58,274.53

Felsted Parish Council – Your Councillors

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Parish Council Contact Details

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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.

Alternatively you can e-mail the Clerk on clerk@felsted-pc.gov.uk

or visit the website www.felsted-pc.gov.uk

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