

Felsham

Annual Parish Meeting

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Tuesday 14th May 2024 7.00pm Felsham and Gedding Village Hall

Present: 6 parishioners; Cllr Garrod – Chairman; Suffolk County Cllr Penny Otton; Mid Suffolk District Cllr Wilshire; Miss Isabelle Reece Parish Clerk

Apologies: Canon Potter, Mr Phil Cockell, Cllr Kearney

- 1 Cllr Garrod welcomed everyone to the meeting
- 2 Apologies were received from: Canon Potter, Mr Phil Cockell, Cllr Kearney
- 3 The Minutes of last years meeting, held on 16th May 2023 were received, approved and signed by Cllr Garrod. A parishioner suggested that the full reports be sent to the F & G Village News for publication, but Cllr Garrod responded that it was perhaps too lengthy a document
- 4 Suffolk County Cllr Penny Otton was delayed and gave her report later in the meeting, and which appears below.
Mid Suffolk District Cllr Nicky Willshire gave her report, which appears below,
- 5 Reports were received from the following on behalf of Parish Organizations, and appear below:

Parish Council	Cllr Simon Garrod (Chairman)
St Peter's Church	Mrs Patricia Wilson
Royal British Legion	Mr Norman Plumpton introduced the new Branch Chairman, Karen Finn, who presented the Report
Felsham Village Hall	Mr Andrew Conquest
Felsham Charity Trustees	Mrs Patricia Wilson
Community Stores & Post Office	Mr James Morgan
Felsham Playing Field	Mr Mark Tavernor
Felsham Village News	Mrs Patricia Wilson
- 6 No further reports were received
- 7 Requests were made for reports to be forwarded to the Clerk; a parishioner also requested that the e-version of the Felsham Village News be reinstated on the Parish Website
- 8 There being no further business, the Chairman thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 20.48

Signed _____ (Chairman) Dated _____

THE REPORTS FOLLOW ON THE NEXT PAGE

Annual Parish Report – Felsham 2024

Councillor Nicky Willshere
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Rattlesden Ward

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Since the election in May 2023, I have been getting more familiar with the Rattlesden Ward parishes, attending parish council meetings with the local councillors and taking a keen interest in the activities and issues they face.

Mid Suffolk District Council had a change of administration in May and has been undergoing its own changes.

The Joint Local Plan has made progression now split into two parts, part one being adopted in November 2023, with part two being consulted on and on track to be adopted early next year.

We were hit with storms in October and November, with many parishes impacted by the resulting flooding. It was heartening to see so much of the community pull together to look at mitigation for the future.

The 'improvements' to A14 have had considerable impacts on Felsham and other local parishes, as many vehicles including HGVs have looked to avoid the roadworks and diverted through the country lanes.

Penny Otton and I have been raising the issues the impacts of the roadworks have generated, the destruction of the local roads, potholes unacceptable congestion. We have attended meetings with National Highways, written to Jo Churchill and continually pressed for action.

There has been an agreement from National Highways to financially compensate Suffolk for the additional destruction generated, although it is unclear when the capacity to address all of the problems with the roads will be implemented.

I attended District Planning Meetings to support the parish in respect of the impact on the Conservation Area of a local planning application.

I have received a request from the Village Hall for an award from my Locality Budget

Nicky Willshere

Flooding in Suffolk

From end of October 2023, Suffolk suffered a winter of repeated flooding, most notably Storm Babet, when the area around the Burford bridge, Rattlesden and parts of Lower road were particularly badly affected.

I attended a meeting of local parishes in Gt finborough and in Beyton to see what we could do jointly to make improvements to prevent this happening again. It was agreed that all the agencies need to work together. I managed to get the problem on lower road partly dealt with but SCC still needs to get the landowner to clear ditches.

Suffolk's total rainfall during October 2023 was 117.9mm (4.5in). The drainage systems in the county were unable to cope with the volume of water. Suffolk County Council have committed an extra £1m for flood investigations to try and prevent future incidents;

The government offered funding to household affected by flooding, with many also able to access further money for preventative works and I'm pleased many were successful in getting this money.

.PARKING AT THE ORCHARD. I asked the highways officer to look at the problems and she has sent her report for our discussion.

RAAC/Condition of School Buildings

In September the council held a scrutiny session on the condition of school buildings, which was very timely as the news has just begun reporting on the number of schools with RAAC. RAAC, which stands for Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete, is a lightweight building material, cheaper than concrete, which was used extensively in buildings between 1950 and 1990. Stowupland Highschool was one that had to close and will now be re-built. Thurston community college is due to be re-built anyway. Decision on the 6th form still not decided but will possibly move to Thurston in stages.

New Suffolk Fire and Rescue Control Centre

The Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) have recommended that the council leave the current control centre partnership with Peterborough and Cambridgeshire councils and open a new control centre in Suffolk by the end of 2024. A new temporary site for the control centre was needed from December 2023, and work will now begin to find a more permanent site in the centre of the county close to major roads.

New Highways Contract

From 1 October 2023, Suffolk County Council entered into a new Highways contract with Milestone, following the end of the previous contract with Kier. The new contract promises better communication with councillors and Suffolk residents, and contains incentives for the new contractor to work efficiently – for example, undertaking other works needed in the same geographical area when they are called out. The performance of the contract will be scrutinised after 12 months to assess Milestone's performance and is for an initial period of 10 years, with the option to increase it a further 10 years.

At the same time, a new contract for street lighting was entered into with McCann. This contract is due to last for seven years.

Budget Meeting: GLI Amendments Declined

In February 2024, the Council's budget for 2024/25 was voted in. The Conservative budget proposed an increase in council tax of the maximum 4.99%, which breaks down into a 2% rise for the Social Care Precept and a 2.99% increase in general tax.

Council services have faced another year of spiralling demand and additional cost pressures. The proposed budget included a 100% cut to arts and museums funding, with a temporary fund set up for 2024-25 using the remaining Covid funding from the government to allow some time for these organizations to adapt and find other sources of income.

It also proposed that all local archives and records be centralised to The Hold in Ipswich, a decision which has been vigorously opposed in both Lowestoft and Bury St Edmunds, where communities want to keep their record office buildings in the area.

My group acknowledged the difficulty of the council's financial position and proposed a minor amendment – that instead of using all of the leftover Covid funding for arts and museums, half should be allocated to supporting young people not in education, employment or training (NEET), a service the Conservatives were planning to cut.

We proposed that £250k of the 2024-25 funding for arts and museums be allocated from the council's core funding, as this is an important distinction for arts organizations when they are applying for other sources of income. This amendment was declined.

The Conservatives backed down on the 100% reduction in funding from April 2025 onwards, and shortly before the budget meeting announced a £500k funding pot which arts and heritage organisations can bid for in the 2025-26 financial year. This could mean the funding for arts and museums is spread more thinly, but means more organizations are likely to benefit. As budget decisions for 2025-25 will not be made until the February 2025 council meeting, this decision is not yet ratified.

Ofsted/CQC Inspection of Suffolk SEND (special education needs) Provision

Suffolk County Council and its NHS partners who provide SEND services (the 'Local Area Partnership') were inspected by Ofsted and CQC in November 2023, with the inspection report being published on 30 January 2024. The inspection found 'widespread and/or systematic failings' in the county's SEND provision and is the second poor inspection result since SEND inspections were introduced in 2016.

As a result of the inspection, the two Cabinet Members for children's services and education at the council stood down, and new Cabinet Members have been appointed to these roles. A new full time and permanent Director for Children's Services (DCS) has also recently been appointed, who will start at the council in July.

Suffolk Devolution Deal

After much talk of devolution in the last few years, it looks like this may now happen in Suffolk. Devolution is a process by which regions or cities in the UK can have greater control over decisions in their areas. The government agrees a deal with the area which gives them more freedom to make local decisions about how to spend government funding. This is due to happen in Suffolk from 2025 in areas such as transport and adult education. There will

also be a £16m annual investment fund for economic growth, a £5.8m lump sum to regenerate brownfield sites across the county, and a £3m one off investment in retrofitting homes to make them more energy-efficient.

The devolution deal also means the leader of Suffolk County Council would be directly elected by the people of Suffolk, so every four years residents will have two votes, one to elect their local county councillor and the leader of the county council. That leader CANNOT BE A COUNTY COUNCILLOR. The first election for the directly elected leader will be in May 2025, which is the next county council election. There could be problems with having an elected leader if they are from a different political group to most of the other councillors; the leader can choose a Cabinet and control the council's agenda, but without the votes in the council chamber they might find it difficult to get things done.

There is a consultation being held about the deal right now, and you can find out more about it and fill out the survey here: <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/devolution>

Libraries Consultation

On Tuesday 25 March, Cabinet reviewed the results of the recent consultation about the Suffolk library service, which is due to go out to procurement in the summer. Broadly, the members of the public who responded to the survey agreed with what libraries currently provided, including community and digital services, and the mobile library and home library services for people who were housebound.. It is also likely that mobile libraries will run from smaller vehicles in future. The successful bidder for the new libraries contract is likely to be announced in November, with the new contract starting from June 2025. The contract will be for six years with an option to renew for a further six years.

Motions to Council

My group passed one motion successfully during the year in May 2024, which was for the council to work with its partners to better signpost members of the public to benefits they may be entitled to. This motion was raised as a result of reports that over £15bn of means tested benefits are going unclaimed because people were not always aware of the support they could access to help them,.

Other motions the group had been unable to bring forward or were voted down by the Conservative administration included solar power 'Roofs before Rural', to ask the council to commit to prioritise solar panels on buildings and brownfield sites over solar farms on good quality agricultural land, and to lobby the government to reduce barriers to community energy projects. Community energy projects enable local people to produce electricity (for example, by solar panels on schools) to reduce bills, with any extra electricity sold to the grid, making a profit which can be reinvested locally.

In July my group proposed a motion to make it easier for communities to lower speed limits on rural roads where the safe speed for driving is clearly lower than the current National Speed Limit., thereby reducing accidents and making roads safer for all users. This motion was voted down by the Conservative administration.

We also tabled a motion on flooding in December, which among other things, proposed to increase the frequency of clearing drains and gullies around the county; however, the Conservatives proposed an amendment removing this recommendation and passed a weaker motion which did not include any changes to the usual schedule of drainage works.

Felsham Parish Council Cllr Simon Garrod – Chairman

The Chairman of the Parish Council thanked everyone for turning up to the meeting, though regretted that there was not more support from parishioners and thanked the Parish Clerk, mentioning the largely unseen work of the role.

Cllr Garrod expressed great sadness at the death of Cllr Paul Jell, who had only recently joined the parish council.

Since the last Annual Parish Meeting two new parishioners had been elected by co-option to the Council: Jason Stringer and Beverley Williams, who joined Cllrs Simon Garrod, Ken Sparkes, Paul Kearney and Mark Tavernor.

Cllr Garrod thanked Mr Conquest for once again undertaking the Parish Council's last Internal Audit; and for agreeing to do the next one.

One of the main tasks of the Parish Council is to set the Precept: for the year 2024-25, there had been a slight increase from £ 6795 to £7000 in order to make some allowance for inflation, though the Council's finances are healthy.

The Felsham Charity was thanked for its support with grass cutting costs.

The main Planning issue had once again been the Application to develop Land Behind the Six Bells. At the most recent Appeal hearing, for the previous refused application the parish had been represented by Cllr Garrod, as well as by Mr Nick Paniyi and Ward Cllr Nicky Willshire, who were thanked for their valuable contribution. Cllr Garrod suspected that the owners of the property were likely to continue to pursue their applications to develop that parcel of land in spite of all objection.

Cllr Garrod thanked Steve Grimes and Jamie Connery for looking after the Speed Indicator Devices (SIDs), which is an important contribution to road safety in the parish.

Finally, the Chairman indicated the remaining existing vacancy on the Parish Council and urged anyone interested in the position themselves or who wished to suggest someone else, to contact the Parish Council.

Thank you very much for the kind invitation to this evenings meeting.
Unfortunately I am away at the moment so cannot attend, however, Trish Wilson will be there to present our report on behalf of St Peter's.
I hope it goes well and I attach the report for your minutes.
with every blessing
Sharon

FELSHAM ST PETER, REPORT FOR 2023

St Peter's Church strives to be welcoming and inclusive in the village, and to our other church congregations in the benefice.

Mr Brian Deards has continued to be our faithful Churchwarden at Felsham Church and has diligently prepared for the regular services and occasional offices throughout the year. In August Felsham and Gedding were officially joined together as a United Parish and are now known as Felsham with Gedding Parish. The two churches maintain their parish church status. The two PCCs have been working together for some time and now the marriage has been made legal!

Sadly, our treasurer, Mr Mike Shallow, has had to resign from the PCC due to failing health, and so the search has been on for a new treasurer to take over. In the meantime, Susan Bradwell assisted us with the accounts to the end of 2023, and we are very grateful for both her work and for all that Mike has done for us over the years.

Services:

Throughout the year two services a month have been held in Felsham plus services at Christmas and Easter. The Family Service with various innovative themes has continued to be well attended over the last 12 months and sincere thanks is expressed to the members of the music group and to all those who come and help from other villages to make this service a success. Towards the end of the year it was decided that the title of 'family service' needed to change, as it is rare that any families attend and is now known as 'Praise God Together'.

The Six to Seven service moves from the church in the cold winter months to the comfort of the village Hall and continues to be popular with visitors from other denominations. Tea and topics initiated by the Rev Richard Stainer and Mr Malcolm Gifford and invited speakers help us all to view the way we are from a different perspective.

Service attendance has held up reasonably well even though not quite returning to pre-pandemic numbers. Our Christmas Carol service was a very good evening, where numbers were boosted by the display of oil lamps that came into church.

There was 1 baptism this year, and 3 funerals.

Collections, Planned Giving, Bequests and Fund raising:

There were no new initiatives on ways to increase church revenue this year.

Church Flowers:

The flower ladies admirably led by Sue Jell continue to decorate our church in evermore inventive ways to an exceptionally high standard. It is always a delight to be greeted by the colours of the countryside and garden and the smell of fresh flowers.

Repairs and Improvements:

The PCC decided to change the plan for re-ordering as it was felt that to remove the pews as well as tackle the flooring was too much to tackle. It was therefore decided that the floor is in urgent need of replacement and work is in hand to achieve this over 2024.

Messy Church has found other venues as well as Felsham, although it returned to Felsham Village Hall at the end of the year. Numbers have grown with the addition of children from Great Whelnetham Primary School.

We would like to extend our thanks to all those who help in any way in keeping our Church open, and especially to the Felsham Charity for it's very much needed financial contribution.

Rev Canon Sharon Potter
Rector
April 2024

FELSHAM P.C. REPORT 2024.

Mr Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you for inviting me to present this report on activities within the Felsham & Gedding Branch of the Royal British Legion.

Our year began with a successful Poppy Appeal, raising £1,236-42 from door to door Poppy sales, along with static boxes in various locations and a prize raffle in the Bells on Remembrance Sunday. This remarkable amount has been added to the County total of £778,129-99 which itself contributed to the National total of £59million to date.

We are most grateful to the communities of both villages that helped in this success, enabling our organisation to provide much needed assistance to our serving and ex serving Members of H.M. Armed Forces and their dependants.

Over the Poppy Appeal period we were very fortunate to have recruited a total of five new Members and we wish them all a long and satisfactory association with the Branch.

At the County Conference held in January, we were delighted to learn that we had, once again, been awarded the title of most progressive and efficient small Branch within the County, a title we have held continuously since our first success in 2017.

The Branch continues to support County and C Group activities, including the organisation of the C Group Festival of Remembrance, held at the APEX in November of each year and, the dedication of a new County Standard, the old one having suffered water damage whilst in attendance at the Coronation of King Charles III in London. We are also looking forward to attending the Felsham Street Fair in September, where we are looking to hold a tombola stand in aid of much needed Branch funds.

Regrettably, we are currently unable to parade our Branch Standard, owing to long term health issues affecting both of our previous Standard Bearers. If anybody would like to proudly represent the Branch by carrying the Branch Standard on our behalf, we would love to hear from you. Equally, we are always pleased to receive new Members, whether ex Armed Forces or not, to assist us in carrying on with our Branch activities, which we have proudly done since the inception of the Branch in 1946.

Thank you for listening.

Norman Plumpton Eng.Tech, MSOE: MIRTE.

Branch Secretary,

Felsham & Gedding Royal British Legion. (BR 0808)



Patron:

Felsham & Gedding Village Hall – Mr Andrew Conquest

The Village Hall Committee had also been joined by Beverley Williams; with no other changes to existing membership. Victoria, who lives next door, continues as Caretaker.

Carpet Bowls and table tennis remain on alternate Wednesdays; monthly Film Nights, are run by Brian and Sian, as well as a monthly Whist Drive, run by Pat. All these activities are organised as part of the Social Club, for which members now pay £20.00 *per annum*.

The rock band rehearses every Monday evening: in return they provide free entertainment in the Village Hall, notably on Twelfth Night. The Edmund Octet also continues to rehearse at the Hall.

This year hall use as a rehearsal space has been increased with BSEODS' (Bury St Edmunds Operatic & Dramatic Society) rehearsals for their production of *Made in Dagenham*; a musical, which starred Felsham's very own Philip Cockell as Harold Wilson, which is now running at the Theatre Royal.

The Churches and the Parish Council, the Playing Field Committee, the Village Friends and the Women's Group (alternative to the disbanded branch of the WI) all continue to hold their meetings at the Village Hall.

The Felsham & Gedding Village Hall is available for hire, for parties, weddings receptions, bar mitzvas and other events. Cycling clubs will return this summer to use the Hall as their half way comfort stop.

Fund raising efforts have once more been exceptional, with over £10,000 raised. The pantomime raised around £4,000, the Christmas Fair £1,500, the *Coronation Capers* comedy show £1,200. Also the Twelfth Night gig, the Quiz, an Eighties Disco, a Spring Fair etc.. The Felsham Fair, where last year The Playing Field, the Church and the Village Hall all combined their efforts. A new feature this year was the Festive Lights Turn-on, with a Christmas Tree with pretty lights in front of the Hall. Part-funding of the tree and lights by the Parish Council was gratefully received, and sale of refreshments allowed the event to more than cover its total cost. The initiative brought a great deal of good cheer to the Village over the Festive Period, which culminated in the Twelfth Night bands evening. Finally the Hall received a grant of £379.99 for a new freezer and a donation of £450 from The Gedding Meeting towards the Extension Project. As a result of a successful year's fund raising, reserves currently stand at £41,000, though running costs are £10,000 *per annum*.

Development Projects for the Hall have been delayed, deliberately: original costs were thought to be too high and so the designs for the extension were 'revisited' and modified. Costs for this were supplied by a grant of £5,000, obtained by Mr Conquest from the Community Ownership Fund. Following a drive to engender the appropriate community support via local 'shares', and a survey to assess the necessity for a shop, the main grant application submission is imminent. Also, a new Planning Application will have to be submitted for the modified designs.

A £10,000 grant from Mid Suffolk District Council had paid for the Hall's new flooring, which would be laid in the coming weeks. David Simpson had already removed skirting boards to facilitate removal of the existing floor the coming Sunday.

Thanks go to everyone involved, especially the Committee, particularly for all the fund-raising efforts over the last year.

The Felsham Charity (No.208013)

The Felsham Charity as it is now known is exclusively for the benefit of the residents and the church of St Peter in the parish of Felsham and the following grants are available:

- The funeral grant is currently £300 and is offered to bereaved families to help with funeral costs.
- The education grant £250 available annually to help with the cost of books, equipment etc. whilst serving an apprenticeship or at college/university.
- The fuel grant £75 offered annually to all residents over retirement age (restricted to one per household).
- Hardship grants are available on application for any purpose e.g. nursing costs or for specialist equipment.
- Interest free loans may be offered on application.

If you are, or you know someone who is, going through trying times perhaps due to redundancy or poor health The Felsham Charity may be able to help. Please don't be afraid to contact any of the Trustees, we are always discrete and never disclose personal information.

In addition to the help provided to individuals the charity also contributes to village groups for the benefit of the whole community. This year contributions will be made to the Parish Council for help with grass cutting around the village and to the church to help maintain the fabric of the building. Other groups who benefit from donations include Village Friends, the village hall, the playing field and the shop.

Through prudent investment our charity continues to be one of the wealthiest, of similar village charities, in Suffolk. The finances of the charity are very ably controlled by our treasurer, Mr Andrew Conquest and continue to be in good shape with total net assets as at the end of of £650K.

The charity derives its income from two residential properties in Stowmarket, freehold land in Felsham and investments in Aberdeen Standard Life. In the past year net income available for distribution amounted to £23K and grants paid were £22K.

There should be eight trustees responsible for the charity, three ex officio appointed by the church and five nominated by the Parish Council and they are:

Ex Officio

Rev. Sharon Potter, Churchwarden Brian Deards and Parochial Church Council member Patricia Wilson

Nominated

Andrew Conquest, Brian Francis, Haley Gilbrook and Ken Sparkes and we are at present looking for a new trustee as Mr Mike Shallow has recently stood down

The Charity Secretary is Eileen Conquest

Finally, please don't be reluctant to contact any of the Trustees, this charity was created for you the residents of Felsham and is here to offer a helping hand whenever it is needed

Tricia Wilson

Chairman of the Trustees

14th May 2024

A very warm welcome to all in attendance today. Let me start by thanking the committee and associated volunteers for their sterling efforts in organising and managing the two events we've held on the playing field in the last year – they being the Felsham Fair last June, and Bonfire night in December.

The fair proved to be a very successful event – combining the best of the street fair and fun-day respectively. It certainly seems to be a productive formula, and dishing out the responsibility of organising the various stalls to other groups in the village works well for a committee which is stretched at the best of times. Sharing the profits also allows the other village groups to benefit from using the playing field.

Bonfire night this year was admittedly a disappointment, and we made a loss of (...) but considering we held it a month late and in rather cold conditions, I don't think we did too badly! Most people liked the Christmas theme that we decided to add! As we're keen to stress every year, the event is never intended directly to be a profit-making exercise – it is done as a sort of gift to the village as thanks for their support, and if we make a profit that's always a bonus. A hearty well done is deserved again for those bucket shakers who cajoled folks out of their spare shrapnel at the gate!

One thing that the events did highlight this year was the need for a dedicated village storage facility that can be used to house the assets and equipment which are shared by several committees in the village, something which I have asked Mark to raise and for the Parish council to address. The option of a second container next to the playing field's own was suggested, but this will require further discussion.

Otherwise, the usual maintenance tasks continue. The condition of the play equipment has become a focus over the last year – the removal of the mound with its climbing frame and slide has left a gap which we hope to fill with a new piece of climbing equipment.

This year we have also tidied up and expanded the car-park at the entrance to the site. This will allow us more hard-standing space for events and keeps the parked vehicles away from users of the site. We have toyed with the idea of installing electric charging points in the park but again, it will require discussion and planning. Thanks to Mark Tavernor for organising the removal of the mound and car park clearing in one.

The only thing that remains is for me to notify the parish of recent legal action which has been taken by one of the residents against the playing field committee. The claim is regarding injury of an unsupervised child on the site.

It is rather disheartening, given all the effort that goes into the managing the site, that residents feel the need to take such action; stumping up for the insurance excess will probably affect our budget going forward, which may mean future events like bonfire night being cancelled. However, the committee is confident that the matter will be dealt with swiftly, and I'll take this opportunity to reassure all present that the site is safe and sound to use by all residents.

I shall close by thanking, as always, the committee members for their time and dedication to keeping this great asset going – it's important to recognise that these things don't organise themselves. Special thanks should go to Jo Tavernor who is stepping down as treasurer (trying to, anyway!) after coming back for another few years in the role.

Here's to the year ahead.

Phil Cockell (Chairman)

Felsham Community Stores and Post Office – Mr James Morgan

The last year has been a successful year, thanks to Mr Conquest: footfall & profit margin both increased, leaving some £65,000 in the bank account. The volunteers have all done a tremendous amount of work and we all owe them many thanks. An application for a sizeable grant is going in for the Shop and Village Hall, so that the shop premises can move, depending on Planning Applications. Thanks also for this to Andrew Conquest, who has the patience of a saint.

The Committee remains largely the same: some resignations towards the end of the year. Sadly, Ria, who it can be fairly said gave her life and soul to that shop. She was one of the main driving forces behind it, since the idea was first mooted, and it's a shame that for a number of reasons she has decided that she cannot carry on. Further volunteers have come forward, but more are always welcome, to do as much or as little as they wish. Also, any comments and suggestions from customers are always welcome.

Village Meeting May 2024

Village News Report

As we stated last year this will be our last report for the Village Meeting as Jo and I are both retiring from the Village News in September. Unfortunately no one has come forward to take over the editing and printing so September will be the last issue.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank: all our editors Serena, Libby Phil and Neil, who has also designed our front covers, and our twelve deliverers who have been an absolute vital part of the Village News team and never failed to get the magazine out to our 250+ addresses every month. Our advertisers without whom our village magazine would not have been free. Jo Tavernor for her stalwart work: finding advertisers, printing the magazine and uploading the digital copy.

We would also like to thank Felsham Parish Council & Gedding Parish Meeting for their staunch support over the last twenty years and the Village Hall for providing our printer/copier with a home.

Jo and I are the last of the original committee and both feel that although our existing system has worked well for over 20 years times have changed, we now get less copy and have fewer advertisers and people seem to be more digitally inclined. So it is time for a change

Our five-year lease agreement for the printer has now expired and we would like to donate it to the two villages so that it can continue to be used for printing flyers, posters etc. for groups within the villages.

We have always been a non-profit making organisation, all our funds have been used for the upkeep and purchasing of the equipment necessary for the production of the Village magazine. We have once again made a small loss this year but the funds we have previously collected for the purchase of a new printer/copier have covered this and mean that we will be able to donate funds to the village hall towards the upkeep of this machine.

Patricia Wilson
Village News Chairman
14th May 2024