

## **Fressingfield Parish Council Annual Report April 2025**

Once again 2024-25 has been a busy year.

Sadly we lost our long-time serving councillor and friend Garry Deeks. Even when he was clearly very ill he insisted on attending meetings and contributing words of wisdom. Sorely missed.

We said a heartfelt thank you to our Clerk Andy Parris only to be thrilled to have him return as our Responsible Financial Officer. It proved tricky appointing a replacement and after a short term appointment we have now got an excellent replacement in local resident Calvin Edwards.

Members of the council have continued to attend the Village Produce Market and found it very helpful to meet more informally with residents. During the winter months we have also been at the coffee morning held once a month on Tuesdays, at Sancroft Hall.

We were consulted on some 15 planning applications. We do not approve or deny planning permission. It is our role to comment on how the plans fit with our Neighbourhood Development Plan and what if any impact an application would have on the parish. ( see separate report on planning)

Our main projects are varied and derive from the village plan. This has been rebranded as the Parish Infrastructure Investment Plan ( PIIP) to ensure we are aligned with Mid Suffolk District Council. (MSDC).

We have been ably supported by our local ward councillor Lavinia Hadingham and our new county councillor Henry Lloyd. In particular both have found ways to fund projects in the parish which clubs have applied for.

Our projects have been :

1. We have continued to support clubs which have applied for funding and meet the criteria for financial assistance.
2. We recognise that the parish council website is in need of a revamp. Issues and items are not always easy to find and two councillors, Cindy Engel and Hilary Day are working with Calvin to improve the content, quality and accessibility of information.
3. We continue to monitor speeding in the village through the use of the speed indicator devices (SIDs) and to deter vehicles from speeding. A big thank you to former councillor Trevor Orchard, and Tom Lindsey for supporting this initiative, moving signs and collecting data.
4. We are now deep into the review of the Neighbourhood Development Plan. It is essential that we keep the plan up to date. This is particularly so in the light of the change of government and the new planning legislation. We have a group of nine residents, chaired by John Kelsall and supported by the very experienced Andrea Long, Planning Consultant. We have recently sent out a housing and environment survey to all residents on the electoral role. This will help the group gauge your views on housing development in the parish and environmental priorities. The group is carrying out much research into the expectations for any growth, the nature of housing options, the capacity of infrastructure and the consequences of development. Any amendments to the plan together with

supporting documentary evidence, will be brought to the parish in a six week consultation exercise later in the summer. Further amendments following that consultation can be incorporated into the plan before it goes to a second six week consultation organised by MSDC. It is then examined by the Planning Inspectorate and taken to a referendum.

5. We have carried out an initial consultation on the spending of the parish's £60K CIL monies. We are now in the process of refining this and will make a decision about the spend this year.

6. The council also worked with our County Councillor to persuade Highways to unblock the overflowing drains on Church Street. This has now been down.

7. The council supported the efforts of the parochial church council in lopping and removing dead trees from around the churchyard.

7. In addition we attended and supported Remembrance Day; attended a community liaison meeting at Fennings Farm.

You will have noticed that we have not increased the precept this year, nor has MSDC, although the County Council has.

We would like to encourage residents to attend meetings and make their points or raise concerns during the public forum. The parish council meetings are not public meetings so we will not necessarily answer you at the time. However, we may get back to you. No doubt some of the agenda items appear rather tedious but are necessary. You are welcome to join the meetings just for the forum or better still stay and listen to how we debate and discuss issues arriving at consensus so decisions can be made.

Because we have two casual vacancies on the council we now have the opportunity to welcome two new councillors. Some residents have called for an election for these. The notice for an election will be posted by MSDC Electoral Services on 28<sup>th</sup> April. So if you would like to stand please get your nominations in between 28<sup>th</sup> April and 8<sup>th</sup> May to MSDC Electoral Services. We look forward to lots of you wanting to join us.

I must take this opportunity to thank fellow councillors for the inordinate amount of voluntary work they put into the council. In addition we must all thank our clerk for his professionalism and immense hard work in keeping us properly briefed and ready for us to make well-informed decisions, and to our RFO who ensures our finances are scrupulously maintained with due diligence and scrutiny.

Di Warne