

FRISTON 2022

January, February, March

At the beginning of the year the village community was still being affected by the global pandemic caused by the Covid virus. Restrictions on residents meeting together had gradually lifted during the latter part of 2021 but any indoor meeting needed to ensure a good supply of fresh air with windows and doors to a community building remaining open. The village hall was being redecorated by contractors and therefore out of use for village events for the month of January. Church services were being held.

The concern for many village residents continued to be energy infrastructure projects of both National Grid and Scottish Power Renewables. These plans are in relation to a substation being sited in the village for receiving and re-routeing of the power gathered from the North Sea wind turbine fields. The community awaited the decision of the Secretary of State for the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy on whether the projects could proceed based on the outcome of a Planning Inspectorate Inquiry.

The village Book Club, numbering about 12 members, and started many years ago, met as usual every 4-6 weeks, in line with Covid restrictions. The Book Club, supplied by a local library, read and reviewed nine books through the year.

Friston allotments were well supported and productive. Any vacant plots were advertised through the village newsletter.

The village was given a 'Talking Bench' from East Suffolk Council Community Partnership Initiative, which supplied, free of charge, a bench made of recyclable materials. The idea being to promote friendliness, companionship and goodwill in an open natural environment within local communities. The bench was sited at one end of the village green.



In March the village pub, The Old Chequers, changed hands and the new Landlord introduced music and quiz events as well as continuing to offer meals. The community began to plan Summer village events for the first time for two years.

April, May, June



Friston Spring flower meadow

A village community meeting was held in the village hall on 7th April to consider the immediate implications, concerns and fears of residents following the release of the Planning Inspectorate Report on the proposed Energy Projects. Residents learnt that consent had been granted by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy. The campaign group, Substation Action Save East Suffolk (SASES), established by residents in the village in previous years, sought a Judicial Review of the decision on six grounds and this was subsequently granted for a Hearing date in November. In the meantime, compulsory purchase and acquisition orders affecting footpaths and individual properties were issued.

To mark the Queen's Platinum Jubilee East Suffolk Council presented every town and village with an English Oak tree. The tree presented to Friston was planted in the grounds of St Mary the Virgin Church and a plaque installed to commemorate the occasion.



A village Facebook page was established for residents to share news, information and pictures. The first of the outdoor events, a plant and cake sale, was held on the village green on 5th May.

In June village residents celebrated the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. On the 2nd adults and children gathered, with picnics, on the village green. During the evening there were readings, music and community singing culminating in the lighting of the Beacon.

The idea for a women's social group was mooted and anyone interested was invited to a meeting on the 9th June. The group idea was popular, and the Thursday Ladies Club (TLC) was formed. The Club then met monthly enjoying a programme of speakers and demonstrations.

On the 19th June the Friston Open Gardens event took place with 15 gardens open to the public as well as the Church, and refreshments were served in the village hall. The weather was warm and sunny.

July, August, September

On 3rd July, as part of the Suffolk Festival of Concerts, The Maurenzio Singers entertained an audience in the grounds of St Mary's Church.

The Friston Bowls Club held a fete on 9th July to raise funds for the Club.

On the 14th July Friston Classics on the Green returned after a two year break. The village green was full of classic vehicles and crowds came to the village to enjoy the event.



A feature, if not a village event, was the extraordinary hot weather experienced from the middle of July. The heat was unprecedented and national advice was given to stay indoors. Green grass and some vegetation wilted under the sun. Heathland fires broke out and one occurred on the border between Friston and a neighbouring village.



Smoke from the heathland fire seen from Friston

On 14th August a Summer Concert with The Kingfisher Ensemble was held in the grounds of St Mary's Church. The weather continued to be exceptionally hot. Another visitor to the Church was an author from the Netherlands, Richard van der Ven. He was researching the village for a novel about the earliest settlers in Friston from Northern Europe.

A Ride and Stride event took place on 10th September. The event has a long history of raising funds and this year was focussed on highlighting the possible loss of footpaths, in and around Friston, to the Energy projects.

Queen Elizabeth II had died on 8th September and the Proclamation of accession covering East Suffolk including Friston, of the new King Charles III, took place in the neighbouring town of Saxmundham on the 11th September.

October, November, December

Friston was chosen as one of six villages to be part of 'Reclaim the Rain' project which is a £6.4m project funded by Defra. Despite the exceptional dry summer period there are still areas at risk of flooding including parts of Friston. The aim of the project is to reduce flood risk and capture excess water to be put to good use for the community. The regional team organised an event in the village hall on 21st November to discuss ideas with the community to then be taken forward into a project plan.

The Member of Parliament for Suffolk Coastal, Rt Hon Dr Therese Coffey, organised a public meeting on 25th November in a neighbouring village, to discuss the energy infrastructure projects and the resultant impact on local communities such as Friston. Many Friston residents attended the meeting. During the following month Friston residents learnt that the Judicial Review found against SASES on all six grounds. SASES is now considering an Appeal. The major infrastructure projects will be a continuing cause of concern into 2023.

Elizabeth Ashton

Recorder for the village of **FRISTON**

30/01/2023