

FRISTON 2023

January, February, March

The weather for the first three months of the year was cold, windy, some rain and some sleet and snow in March. No extreme conditions although there was flooding in the usual places in the village.

The proposed energy infrastructure projects by National Grid and Scottish Power continued to be a focus for the Parish Council and village residents (see previous Recorder reports). The village campaign group (SASES) was represented at a Judicial Review of the grounds put forward by the group against the siting of the interconnector substation in Friston. All six grounds were rejected. Leave to appeal that decision was pursued. In February the local Member of Parliament, Dr Therese Coffey, wrote to all villagers urging everyone to sign a petition calling on the energy companies to review the plans for the Suffolk Coast including the infrastructure project for Friston. The BBC took an interest in the events and some broadcasting from Friston took place.

The 'Reclaim the Rain' project supported by DEFRA (see Recorder report for 2022) continued and a further drop-in session took place in the village hall to keep residents up to date with the project. The project team issued a survey asking residents what they wanted in the village to support the capture of rain. The project hosted an evening in the village to further pursue ideas.

The village hall committee began the process of setting up a stand-alone website including a photoshoot at the hall to market the venue as a resource for meetings and receptions. Village residents were asked what they would like to see in relation to classes or groups in the hall. Two groups did continue to meet and a new one started. In the first three months the Thursday Ladies Club hosted a demonstration by a local watercolour artist, a demonstration of the craft of 'hooking' and a presentation by volunteers from East Anglia Air Ambulance. The Book Club met every 4 to 6 weeks with a supply of books being chosen by the local library, and a new pilates class started meeting one evening per week with an experienced instructor.

Noncontroversial planning applications were put forward from village residents during these months which were approved. However, one application for a new build residential property was refused on the grounds of its impact on the privacy of neighbouring properties and its proximity to the Sandlings Walk footpath.

The Parish Council received permission to place 'Quiet Road' signs in the village to encourage drivers to give way to walkers, wheelchair users, cyclists and horse riders along two narrow country roads. The Parish Council also received 500 narcissus bulbs from East Suffolk in Bloom via the District Council. These will add to the annual cheerful display already starting to appear in February and March alongside the village green. An additional bus shelter was not pursued due to prohibitive costs. A producer of honey moved into the village and placed jars of honey for sale outside their property.

April, May and June

The new month of April started with a bitterly cold wind and rain. The village began to make plans for Coronation Day in May. Easter Services were held at St Mary's Church. The village hall continued to be used by the regular clubs. The Thursday Ladies Club had a talk by a local coin collector, a pastel artist demonstrated to the group in May and Suffolk Police Chief Constable was a surprise visitor for the evening in June. The book club met and pilates exercise group continued. A new village sign was erected, replacing the old one and this latter was donated to St Mary's Church where it now sits by the wall facing southwards.

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A celebration of Coronations was held in St Mary's Church on the evening of 2nd May. This was an evening of words and music reflecting Coronations of the past. On Coronation Day, 6th May, a live streaming of the Coronation was put on in the village hall with residents offered the opportunity to view the occasion together. Everyone who attended brought their own lunch and in the afternoon tea and cakes were served and a raffle raised £210 for the village hall fund and Alzheimer's Research UK charity. The Chequers public house provided entertainment over the weekend including the Bank Holiday Monday.

Local Elections were held on 4th May and the village hall used as the Polling Station. The Parish Council meeting held on the 8th May assigned new roles to the Councillors following the Local Elections although there was no requirement for a Parish Council election this time. The update on the proposed energy infrastructure projects was given. The Council agreed to replace old and damaged benches on the village green and once again the issue of speeding through the village was raised.

On 13th May the annual Friston Goes Green plant and produce sale was held on the village green and raised £1,200 which was donated to St Elizabeth's Hospice. On 18th June the annual Friston Open Gardens event was held with 11 residents opening their gardens and the village hall was the venue for lunches and refreshments. Monies raised in support of the St Mary's Church totalled £2,019.

July, August and September

In July a group of Morris Dancers visited the Friston Chequers pub and entertained in the car park. The annual Classics on the Green event took place on 13th July and once again the green was full of interesting 'old' vehicles for the public to view. The event raised funds for St Mary's Church totalling £3,613. The village hall was used in July by the Thursday Ladies Club who welcomed a local auctioneer to value items brought along by members. The book club met and pilates class continued to take place.

In August the Kingfisher Ensemble gave two concerts of classical and light music at St Mary's Church with donations being collected by appreciative village residents for St Elizabeth's Hospice. The campaigning group against the infrastructure projects, SASES, learnt that leave to appeal the earlier Judicial Review decision had been granted and a date for this set for December. The Thursday Ladies Club had a talk by a member on mental health and the experience of psychosis and the hall continued to be used by the book club and pilates class.

In September Friston experienced the excitement of Stage 5 of the Tour of Britain cycle race with over 100 cyclists flashing past the village. The village hall was used by The Thursday Ladies Club for their AGM followed by a presentation on Tropical Skincare range. The book club continued to meet as did the Pilates class.

The Parish Council addressed the issue of three separate infrastructure projects proposed for the area. The time needed to consider the implications of these projects for the village was extensive. The Council sought to work with the County and District Councils to seek one single process for consultations on the different projects. In the meantime, however, Scottish Power used the village hall to consult with residents on the first of the projects. A planning application before the Parish Council for short term lets at holiday cottages was not supported due to the potential use for housing the workforce needed should infrastructure projects go ahead. It was considered that a possible adverse impact would be had on the tourism industry to the detriment of the community.

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Another issue affecting the village was a road closure due to badgers tunnelling under the road making it unsafe for vehicles. It was necessary to obtain a permit from National England before the badgers could be moved. This took some time to process and the road remained closed for a number of weeks. The Historic Churches Bike and Stride event was supported by village residents and some of the monies raised were donated to St Mary's Church.

October, November and December

In October the Reclaim the Rain project team reported that planning for the North of the village was being put on hold pending the final decision on energy projects. However the focus would remain on the east of the village and the monitoring of rainfall and runoff would continue with villagers being asked for their continuing views on what was needed to alleviate the flooding after heavy rainfall. Two major named storms were experienced during the month further highlighting the vulnerability of the village to flooding from extreme weather conditions.

The consultation process by Scottish Power involving Friston village residents continued and the village hall was used for face to face meetings as well as being a place for the public to pick up information booklets on the project. The hall was used by Thursday Ladies Club for a demonstration by a local pastel artist, the book club and pilates class.

In November the Remembrance Day Service was held in the grounds of St Mary's Church by the War Memorial. Spring bulbs donated earlier in the year were planted by a group of residents. The issue of speeding along the straight through road of the village was addressed by the Parish Council following advice about what could and what could not be permitted. One solution or warning to drivers under consideration was white gate posts on the verges at both ends of the village with more markings on the road signifying the speed limit.

On 2nd December a public meeting was held in the village hall to update residents on the infrastructure projects, feeding back from the Appeal Court hearing and alerting everyone on what could be expected in the next year. Later in the month the Thursday Ladies Club held a Christmas party and a guest speaker gave a demonstration on floral displays for the winter months.

At the end of the year, it was learnt that the Four Parishes Magazine which had supplied village residents with information on what was happening in Friston and the neighbouring villages was no longer financially viable and the last edition was published in December. This year also saw the end of the Friston Bowls Club due to falling membership. The village Church of St Mary's had over 90 visitors this year who signed the Visitors' Book. They came from as far away as Canada and Italy, and several other counties in England.

**Elizabeth Ashton, Friston Village Recorder,
December 2023**

Overleaf

- (1) *Reclaim the Rain project notice*
- (2) *Old village sign placed at the Church of St Mary's*
- (3) *Coronation public viewing at the village hall*
- (4) *Classics on the Green*
- (5) *Tour of Britain Cycle Race*
- (6) *November floods*

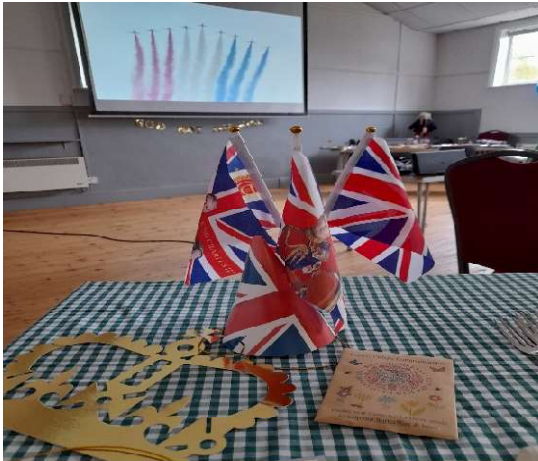
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January



April



May



July



September



November