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INITIAL REPORT for FRISTON - SEPTEMBER 2022

The village of Friston lies in East Suffolk approximately 4 miles from the east coast at Aldeburgh. The name of the village probably derives from the invasion of peoples from Northern Germany; the Angles, Saxons and Frisians, who settled in the area from the 5th Century.

The parish of Friston covers 12 km² mostly farmland but with a southern boundary against the river Alde. The central part of the village nestles into and is surrounded by the farmland. The parish, including the centre of the population is dissected by the B1121, a route for travelling from the town of Saxmundham to the north, to the main A1094, the route into Aldeburgh to the south east.

One of the most notable landmarks to be seen when travelling through the village is the church of St. Mary, some parts of which date back to the 11th Century. The church sits slightly raised above the village green and recreation area.



Another landmark is the 55ft Suffolk post mill dating from 1812, reputedly the tallest of its type and a working mill until 1972 but sadly now falling into disrepair (see photo next page)

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Central to the village is the Old Chequers public house (below) probably dating back to the early 1800s but much changed over the years.



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Travelling through the village, the types of properties can be seen as varied ranging from significant manor and farmhouses, thatched cottages, small Victorian terraces and newly built homes constructed during the 20th Century and in very recent years.

A curious feature in the village is the number of single storey dwellings known as 'bedroom houses' where apparently rooms were added at ground floor level when more accommodation was needed. The working farms in the area produce crops and raise livestock, pigs, sheep, beef and dairy herds.

The 2011 census records a population of 344 and the number of dwellings then as 216. There were 102 individuals between 60 and 74 years and 30 over 75 years of age. These population numbers will have inevitably changed since 2011 with the movements of residents in and out of the village.

East Suffolk Council's village profile dated 2019 records the number of households as 246 with 14 new homes between 2009 – 2019. 10 of these new homes have been built on a former industrial site. Of the 195 working age residents in the village profile, over 130 of them travelled out of the village to work and 39 were recorded as working from home. That leaves, therefore, a small number likely to be employed on the local farms where once in preceding centuries most families in the village would have been employed or servicing the local agriculture.

Now employment is available in the tourist trade, in manufacturing in the neighbouring towns and even further afield by train from Saxmundham or by driving two miles or so to join the main arterial A12 road running from London to the neighbouring county border with Norfolk. A number of properties are privately rented as holiday lets and some are not the primary residence of the owner/s.

There are no shops in the village now, although at one time there were several catering for the villagers' every need. The village school closed and the impressive school building and grounds is now a privately owned dwelling. The remaining facilities include a Baptist chapel as well as St. Mary's church, a bowling green, an area for allotments, a garage for motor repairs but no petrol supplies, a village hall recently redecorated and available for hire, and play equipment on the recreation area of the village green.

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The village is on a bus route and the library van visits regularly. Community spirit is strong with a dedicated village Facebook page and a recently formed women's group. Friston Open Gardens is also well supported with 12 to 16 residents opening their gardens for visitors to enjoy.



Events take place on the village green at various times during the year; in summer months a plant and cake sale and a classic cars and bikes show. There are concerts in the church, inside and outside dependent upon the weather. There are numerous footpaths for villagers to enjoy the surrounding fields and wildflower areas, and a short distance from the village is woodland.

Friston is a peaceful, tranquil haven with an abundance of history to discover. The only blot on the horizon is the potential future siting of a large interconnector electricity power substation on the north eastern boundary of the village to be used for receiving and re-routeing of power gathered from the North Sea wind turbine fields. If this project is given the go ahead, the routes into and out of Friston and the unspoilt views across the farmland around Friston will be significantly affected for many years to come.

Elizabeth Ashton
Village Recorder
September 2022