

# FREETHORPE PARISH MEETING

## ANNUAL REPORTS

2021

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## INTRODUCTION

This document contains reports provided by various organisations which operate in the parish of Freethorpe.

## 1. Norfolk County Council

Author: Councillor Brian Iles

Report for the Acle and Marshes Division of Norfolk County Council year ending April 2021

As prepared by Brian Iles NCC councillor for the Division

What can I say about 2021? It has been the most extraordinary year in my life time. The activities of the County reflect these times. I have not been into County hall for about a year. All our meetings are carried out remotely either on Teams, the Counties preferred system or by the more popular Zoom Sites on the internet.

All the officers have had to work from home though they have carried out site visits as required obeying distancing where possible.

I am very pleased to say that most departments have managed to carry on their business with remarkably few mix ups.

The budget has been agreed and at a one percent bellow the Government agreed maximum increase.

To balance the budget, savings had to be made by all departments . This is mainly because the Government Precept is reducing each year and we have to make up the deficit.

All departments made savings and even the Children's department, which always struggles to meet it Targets because of the numbers of Children in the County with special needs, managed to make all its budgeted savings.

Adult social services always needs extra funding because so many people move to retire in Norfolk and after they reach a certain age they become more dependant on our services.

Two percent of our budget increase is for Adult social services.

The one department that attracts more attention than others is Highways. We are all concerned about Pot holes in the roads, making new paths beside the roads for Pedestrians and particularly this year Serious Flooding problems.

I am pleased to say that the Highways department came up to the plate during the winters flooding and made thousands of visits answering the many complaints about blocked drains, grips, blocked roads and many other problems.

Our Local engineer has been remarkably helpful to me. This when you consider there have been times when I have been ringing him every day.

County Farms our largest asset with a currant Estate of over 17500 Acres, has had serious management problems. This has involved several senior members of staff leaving our employment.

We still have not replaced the most senior of our team and the existing staff are struggling to deal with day to day problems. We have set in concrete a rule that our Estate should not reduce to below 16000 acres. We have been trying to sell small parcels of land to local farmers to raise cash and selling off redundant Barns for building conversion. This is proving to be one of our worst problems because several contracts are taking far to long to complete and the lawyers are making a meal out of the transaction details.

I can only say to residents who have fallen foul of this problem. 'BE PATIENT'

Our capital programme has been moving ahead and the many road works promised are either completed or in progress. Even the notorious Acle Straight is now going through the initial engineering development process.

The Great Yarmouth third river crossing is now underway with funds made available by the County.

I would like to congratulate members of our staff for carrying on working and proving that working from home does not have to be inefficient. Thank you to them.

I am not standing at the May election. I have been a District Councillor and a County Councillor for about 23 years. This last year has proved to me that I should step down and pass on the responsibility of representing the County in our Division. To whoever takes on that role I offer you my best wishes.

I am personally proud of my many successes and I apologise for my failures. I have held many important roles at County over the years and have represented the County in Europe and Brussels, Many grants became available to us as a result of this appointment. I was a Director of Norwich airport for some time, overseeing our investment. I was a Cabinet member twice during two different administrations and a member of several varied committees.

I have enjoyed my time as a councillor and have made many friends. I will always make myself available to anyone in the Division who wants my help but of course curtesy demands that My successor should be kept in the picture.

My blessings to you all. Carry on your good work and best of luck for the future.

PS I am not retiring. I am the Father of my city livery company, I will travel abroad, mostly to the States, following my Military History hobby (I hope) and I will still be involving myself in my Company business.

## **2. Broadland District Council**

Author: Councillor Grant Nurden

### **ANNUAL REPORT FROM BROADLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL**

The transformation and joint working with South Norfolk District Council have proceeded apace and while each Council continues to retain its own autonomy they can proceed, project by project, as one if so desired.

#### **What impact has COVID-19 had on our underlying services to Broadland Residents?**

It is sensible to digress at this point in order to describe the immediate and most far reaching impact that COVID-19 has had on the working practices of staff serving both councils. At the time of the outbreak, staff were given the option to work from home while the accommodation available at both Thorpe Lodge and South Norfolk House was evaluated in terms of making it COVID proof. It rapidly became apparent that to provide accommodation for over 700 staff members which respected social distancing guidelines would be virtually impossible.

Fortuitously the popularity of working from home rapidly became apparent. All staff were consulted and as far as possible their wishes have now been accommodated. Staff work 2-3 days per week from home with the balance spent in attendance at their designated place of work. They have been provided, where necessary, with improved computer hardware and software and telephone systems have been enhanced so that staff are able to communicate from wherever they are located. This has inevitably led to delays at times when we need to locate or contact specific people or teams but Members are monitoring this carefully and it is correct to say our concerns are being recognised and addressed.

#### **What impact has the collaboration made to Broadland residents?**

While the response to this totally unexpected upheaval was being put into effect, the planned reorganisation of staff within the One Team was being implemented and what has evolved is that each functional unit is ostensibly located under the same roof – for example the Planning Team is based in South Norfolk House and Committee Services is based in Thorpe Lodge. This means that when council members or members of the public phone in they may have no idea to whom they are speaking or indeed where that person may be located (i.e. Thorpe Lodge, South Norfolk House or their home).

Councillors continue to work from home and all committees, panels and council meetings are currently held via Zoom. Some Appeals Panel meetings require essential site visits for which new protocols have been introduced.

A whole new IT infrastructure is emerging which will be most immediately noticeable to residents in terms of a new website from June 2021 and also revised email addresses which will be introduced by degrees.

## **Where is Broadland 'going it alone'?**

Very recently the Broadland Country Park has been officially opened. It is a very welcome area for exercise and relaxation, though to be fair to the residents of the Marshes Ward it is at the far end of the Broadland Northway / A1270.

The Council has sought to procure a new contract for the provision of the Waste Collection Service when the current contract expires at the end of March 2022.

Also from April 2021 a substantially improved Housing Allocation System is coming on stream with easier access and greater flexibility where the need is greatest.

## **What did Broadland do for the parishes within Marshes Ward last year?**

### **Beighton with Moulton St Mary**

- Serviced 12 planning applications:

DECIDED        9

ONGOING       3

### **Freethorpe with Wickhampton**

- Member's financial support for the Freethorpe Girl Guides.
- Serviced 13 planning applications:

DECIDED        11

WITHDRAWN    2

### **Halvergate with Tunstall**

- Serviced 18 planning applications:

DECIDED        13

ONGOING       5

### **Reedham**

- Serviced 9 planning applications:

DECIDED        9

Thank you

Cllr Grant Nurden

### 3. Broadland Tree Warden Network

Author: John Fleetwood



## Broadland Tree Warden Network

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#### Report for Freethorpe and Wickhampton Annual Parish Meeting – 17 May 2021

The Broadland Tree Warden Network is now in its third year as an independent Network, following the closure of the Broadland District Council scheme. We still enjoy an excellent relationship with the District Council who have supported us with an annual £5,000 tree planting budget. Our only other source of income comes from town and parish councils in response to our annual requests for donations. Not all councils make a donation but we are extremely grateful to those who do as it allows us to pay our annual subscription to The Tree Council and secure insurance cover.

Perhaps the most important change in the way this Network operates today compared with the way we operated under Broadland District Council is that we are no longer “Parish Tree Wardens”. We are not appointed by parish councils but instead by the Network. Hence, your Tree Wardens are now known as the “Broadland Tree Wardens for Freethorpe and Wickhampton”.

That change has allowed us to recruit more Tree Wardens and today I am pleased to report that this Network has 41 Tree Wardens covering 27 of Broadland’s 64 parishes. Of those 64 parishes, 5 have unfortunately stated that they have no interest in having a Tree Warden. Never before has Broadland had as many Tree Wardens.

The title “Tree Warden” is actually a registered Trade Mark of the Tree Council and can only be used by volunteers who are registered with a Tree Warden Network that subscribes to the Tree Council.

We have a couple of changes to report in Freethorpe and Wickhampton and are pleased to be joined

by our new recruit David Brown who is still in his early days as a Tree Warden but I am sure that he will soon be playing a very active role in our activities. Andrea Rowlands will be leaving her post at the school in the summer but still intends to be involved with our Junior Tree Warden scheme.

Our work has been greatly curtailed due to the COVID-19 pandemic and one of the most regretful casualties has been our Junior Tree Warden scheme in Freethorpe and Wickhampton. However, when lockdown rules and common-sense permit, we plan to re-start it with additional schemes in Thorpe St Andrew and Salhouse.

In addition to our roles within the parishes to which we have been appointed, we now also work as teams, enabling us to tackle larger, more ambitious projects. Projects such as the creation of a community orchard in Hellesdon, the management the nationally important Brundall Church Fen Local Nature Reserve and an expansion of our highly successful and unique Junior Tree Warden Scheme.

Each project commences with a detailed Project Proposal, submitted to the relevant parish/town council for comment. That is then followed by an even more detailed Management Plan, again agreed with the relevant council. The Network then submits annual reports to that council, detailing the work completed and that planned. Hopefully, that will then display the professional approach of the Broadland Tree Warden Network and avoid any "misunderstandings". We have a detailed knowledge of conservation matters and a professional approach to our work.

During the 2020-2021 planting season which ended at the end of March we planted 1,079 trees and just over 200m of native hedging, all supplied from our £5,000 tree planting budget from Broadland District Council. We all know that land on which to plant trees is difficult to find and Broadland District Council will only fund planting on publicly owned or publicly accessible land, making it even more difficult. Therefore I think that we have been very successful with our tree planting.

Indeed, I am delighted to report that following our successful planting season, Broadland District Council has agreed to increase our budget for 2021/2022 by £2,000 to £7,000.

Our Network has been selected to participate in the Sentinel Treescapes Project for Plant Biosecurity and Risk Management with the UK Centre for Ecology and Hydrology, Defra, The Tree Council and Norfolk County Council. A monitoring system will combine observations from sensors attached to individual trees in the landscape in and around Burlingham Woods (measuring the condition of the tree canopy, movement of water, tree growth and the motion of the trunk as an indicator of risk of tree fall) with visual observations of tree health made by Tree Wardens. Images obtained from cameras on drones and satellites will be used to expand the observations across a wider area and modelling methods will be used to combine the data from these different sources to estimate tree health and detect changes.

Nationally, tree nurseries are warning of severe shortages in the next couple of years because local authorities have committed to ambitious tree planting targets without actually considering where the plants will come from! Nobody warned the nurseries! This Network has taken steps to ensure a steady supply of native planting material by creating our own nursery, growing trees from locally collected seed thereby ensuring known provenance with strict adherence to plant biosecurity. Whilst much of our stock will need a couple of years before it is ready to plant out, some will be available for next season and we have been asked if we can supply trees to Norfolk County Council.

All of our Tree Wardens continue to be on the look-out for trees that warrant a Tree Preservation Order and make appropriate recommendations to Broadland District Council if and when necessary. Similarly, our Tree Wardens report any cases of unlawful works carried out on protected trees.

Town and parish councils are not formally notified of applications to carry out works on protected trees. However, our Tree Wardens are made aware of them in the Network's monthly newsletter, Broadsheet. He or she will then formally submit their views to Broadland District Council for consideration when making a decision.

In all of these matters relating to TPOs, and indeed all matters relating to trees, hedgerows and ecological matters, the Tree Warden will report the matter and actions taken to the his or her town or parish council.

I am enormously proud to be the Co-ordinator of The Broadland Tree Warden Network and of all that



we have achieved to date. I am also privileged to be the East of England representative on the Tree Council's National Advisory Group, where I represent all the Tree Warden Networks in Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex, Cambridgeshire and Hertfordshire. It is a great honour for this Network to have such an influential seat at the national table.

That seat at the table enabled this Network to propose a way in which the Tree Council could celebrate 30 years of Tree Wardening during 2020. When the Tree Warden scheme was set-up, the country was still recovering from the devastation of Dutch Elm Disease. Our Tree Warden for Reedham, Jo Parmenter, suggested that The Tree Council supplies thirty of the new disease resistant elm trees, *Ulmus* 'New Horizon' to selected Networks around the country. The suggestion was readily accepted and I recently had great pleasure in joining Jo in planting this Network's tree in Reedham playing field.

Having been a Tree Warden since the commencement of the Tree Council's wonderful scheme, I look forward to the next thirty years of Tree Wardening with great excitement and expectation ... although I accept that I won't be part of the 60 years' commemorations!

I wish to assure you that your Broadland Tree Wardens for Freethorpe and Wickhampton shall always endeavour to serve the parish to the best of our abilities and protect and enhance our local environments.

John Fleetwood

Network-Co-

ordinator.

The Broadland Tree Warden Network.

## **4. Freethorpe Parish Council**

Author: Andrew Moll / Nick Spencer

Freethorpe Parish Council began 2020-21 without a Parish Clerk. This caused numerous difficulties, not least the inability to complete annual returns. The Council acted decisively in bringing in Catherine Moore, a highly regarded and experienced Parish Clerk, on a short-term basis. She was highly successful in stabilising the administration of the Parish Council, generally putting things in order, completing the annual returns, recovering significant monies from recycling credits, VAT reclaim and section 106, setting up a good website for the Parish Council, and ensuring that the Parish Council has all the policies it should have in place and up to date. The fruit of her work is accessible via the web site.

Catherine Moore also ensured a fair and transparent process for the recruitment of a new Parish Clerk, which led to the appointment of Andrew Moll in September 2020.

During 2020-21 some of the highlights were:

- Establishing a monthly/quarterly/annual inspection regime for the play areas at Freethorpe and Wickhampton in line with the Insurer's recommendations; and keeping on top of corrective actions and risk mitigations highlighted by inspections.
- Monitoring speed measurement in Freethorpe and sharing data with the Police for targeted speed checking; bidding for a second SAM machine to be used in the village
- Signing up with a supplier to replace Wickhampton's broken village sign; bidding for village entry signs for Wickhampton
- Continuing to provide for grounds maintenance at Freethorpe Playing Field; support for Freethorpe Village Hall; and for grass cutting in the three churchyards/cemeteries in the parish
- Keeping an eye on and publicising needs and impacts of COVID-19 and lockdowns in the parish; making section 137 donations to a number of organisations providing support services in the community, with an additional donation to Acle Food Bank given this year's circumstances.
- Signing the Armed Forces Covenant in support of past and present members of the Armed Forces

As well as the standard precept (£14,000 for 2020-21), the Parish Council received more income than budgeted as a result of:

- Claiming back-dated recycling credits
- Claiming back-dated VAT refunds
- Claiming the Section 106 funding for Play Area Equipment (money already spent)

- Community Infrastructure Levy funding relating to the Palmers Lane development, which has to be earmarked for community infrastructure projects

	<i>Budget 2020/21</i>	<b>Actuals 2020-21</b>	<i>Variance</i>	<b>2019/20</b>
<b>Income</b>				
Precept	£14,000.00	£ 14,000.00	£0.00	£ 11,645.00
Grants		£ -	£0.00	£ -
Recycling		£ 928.37	-£928.37	£ 71.71
CIL		£ 10,070.45	-£10,070.45	£ -
Other		£ 10,831.24	-£10,831.24	£ -
Interest		£ 32.11	-£32.11	£ 61.04
VAT Reclaimed		£ 5,884.55	-£5,884.55	£ -
<b>Total</b>	<b>£ 14,000.00</b>	<b>£ 41,746.72</b>	<b>-£27,746.72</b>	<b>£ 11,777.75</b>

<b>Expenditure</b>				
Clerk Salary	£2,100.00	£ 2,312.22	-£212.22	£ 1,969.68
HMRC	£0.00	£ 528.40	-£528.40	£ -
Mileage	£0.00	£ -	£0.00	£ 120.00
Administration	£393.00	£ 253.65	£139.35	£ 291.00
Training	£150.00	£ 195.00	-£45.00	£ -
Subscriptions	£285.00	£ 229.45	£55.55	£ 194.96
Audit	£525.00	£ 875.00	-£350.00	£ -
Speed Management Services	£240.00	£ 144.00	£96.00	£ 144.00
Grounds Maintenance	£2,600.00	£ 1,738.12	£861.88	£ 1,655.36
Insurance	£600.00	£ 444.36	£155.64	£ 444.36
Church Grass Cutting (3)	£2,050.00	£ 2,055.00	-£5.00	£ 1,905.00
Recycling	£0.00	£ 39.00	-£39.00	£ 36.20
Play Equipment	£0.00	£ 4,267.24	-£4,267.24	£ 232.00
Village Hall Hire / Donation	£3,600.00	£ 3,600.00	£0.00	£ 3,450.00
S137	£815.00	£ 1,065.00	-£250.00	£ 545.00
Miscellaneous	£125.00	£ 391.78	-£266.78	£ 296.00
Audit writeback (cancelled & not replaced)		-£ 40.00	£40.00	£ -
VAT		£ 1,372.10	-£1,372.10	£ 384.72
<b>Total</b>	<b>£ 13,483.00</b>	<b>£ 19,470.32</b>	<b>-£5,987.32</b>	<b>£ 11,668.28</b>

The Parish Council plans for 2021-22 include:

- Successful internal and external audits of accounts and administration
- Significant maintenance work on the play areas and equipment
- Installation of a second SAM machine and reduction of speeding danger
- Unveiling of the Wickhampton Village Sign and entry signs
- Renewal of lease for Wickhampton Play Area
- Identification of CIL community infrastructure project/s

## **5. Freethorpe Village Hall**

Author: Janet Church

The Village Hall has been unable to open during the lockdown period.

It was opened as a Polling Station for the May elections and for the Annual Parish Meeting and first face-to-face Parish Council meeting on 17<sup>th</sup> May, with all necessary COVID19 restrictions in place.

A Village Hall Committee Meeting was held on 10<sup>th</sup> May 2021.

Plans are in place for events as the roadmap out of lockdown is followed, including

14th July bingo re-starts

31st July Car Boot Sale – stallholders £7 set up for 8am, open at 9am)

11th September – provisionally quiz night

The Village Hall will be seeking more volunteers to support these and further activities.

## **6. Friends of Wickhampton Village**

Author: David Brown

### **FRIENDS OF WICKHAMPTON VILLAGE**

#### **REPORT FOR FREETHORPE ANNUAL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING MAY 2021**

The Friends of Wickhampton, now known as the Friends of Wickhampton Village, (FOWV) was formed to ensure that residents have a voice about amenities in the Village and to act as a focus to pursue matters of interest or concern with the Parish Council and others.

At the outset we would like to register our thanks and appreciation to Freethorpe Parish Council for the help, time and support throughout the past year when a number of important issues for the Village have required consideration. A particular vote of thanks goes to the Clerk who has been key in moving matters forward.

#### **“Welcome to Wickhampton – Please Drive Carefully” Signs**

We wrote to the Parish Council about the lack of any signs to denote the Village, particularly since we could not identify any other village in Norfolk which did not have a name sign. This matter was also raised in the context of many residents' concerns about speeding traffic in the Village and it is hoped that these signs may help to partly address that.

The Parish Council subsequently agreed that such signs were appropriate and that one should be installed at each end of the Village. The bid for the signs form part of the Parish Partnership Programme bid for this financial year and it is hoped that these will be installed by the summer.

#### **Wickhampton Village Sign**

The Wickhampton Village sign is important as it marks the centre of our small village. Unfortunately, the existing wooden sign is some twenty years old and has fallen into disrepair. The FOWV have worked with the Parish Council to identify what might best replace the old sign, which is beyond repair.

The Parish Council have taken this matter forward and have awarded the contract to replace the sign with one made of resin. The design process will allow residents to comment on the proposed sign which will essentially try to replicate the old one with some small improvements. It is hoped that the new sign will be installed during the summer in conjunction with the refurbishment of the current post.

The FOWV is grateful to the Parish Council for allocating sufficient budget provision for the replacement sign.

#### **Telephone Kiosk**

The FOWV have adopted the old BT telephone kiosk in Wickhampton as it is an important part of the character of the Village. The plan is to refurbish the box which is currently in a poor state of repair. It will be converted into a “book exchange” for villagers and include local information about Village events. A small number of residents have raised a substantial amount of money for the project but insufficient to meet the full cost of renovation.

Following consideration of a request for funding to the Parish Council, it was agreed that the FOWV should apply to the District Council for a grant under the Ward Members Community Allowance and we await the outcome of the bid. If that application is successful, volunteers plan to carry out the necessary work to the kiosk during the summer.

### **Environmental Concerns**

The FOWV have raised with the Parish Council concerns about the timing of the cutting of roadside verges and supported the suggestion from Norfolk County Council that grass cutting be reduced where it is safe to do so to let flowers set seed to encourage their spread. We understand this matter is currently under consideration by the Parish Council and we hope that they will feel able to support it, subject of course to relevant safety issues.

We have also raised the issue of roadside verges themselves and the damage done to them by passing traffic. It is often said that damage to verges is unavoidable in a rural farming environment and that there is nothing that can be done. We disagree with that view and consider that most damage is done by larger traffic, including farm vehicles. However, we are aware that oil delivery drivers for example have specific instructions not to damage roadside verges when turning or manoeuvring and believe that the same “code of conduct” should apply to farming vehicles. Some vehicles are now so huge that they do not physically fit our narrow roads but this is the exception rather than the rule.

We have also raised the issue of the need to adopt a far more wildlife friendly policy towards the maintenance and planting of hedges and trees. It is the case that many of the roadside hedges in the Parish are of no value to wildlife and are cut back far too hard leaving worthless, ugly stumps. We believe that the planting of new roadside hedgerows, joining up existing hedgerows and ensuring these are of sufficient height and width is essential if we are to create havens for wildlife. Suitable roadside tree planting should also be encouraged.

We consider that addressing all these issues in the round is the way forward. We hope that the Parish Council will feel able to support these measures to improve the environment in the Parish for residents and wildlife alike.

## **Friends of Wickhampton Village**

**May 2021**

## **7. Wickhampton Playground Committee**

Author: David Brown

### **Wickhampton Playground Committee**

#### **Report for Freethorpe Annual Parish Council Meeting May 2021**

The Playground Committee is grateful to Freethorpe Parish Council for all the steps undertaken during the past year to regularise the position of the Wickhampton Playground.

The Committee is pleased to report that the Council has now assumed formal responsibility for ensuring regular inspections of the play equipment and facilities, as is the case at Freethorpe, and has recently awarded a contract for grounds maintenance as volunteers are no longer able to carry out this role.

The Committee and the Parish Council are currently discussing respective responsibilities for the future.

### **Wickhampton Playground Committee**

**May 2021**

## **8. All Saints' Church, Freethorpe**

Author: Graham Allcock

### **Church Wardens Report for All Saints Freethorpe 2020/2021**

The past year has been very challenging for everybody due to the coronavirus and its implications. We have followed Government guidance and instructions. We have all worked together through this difficult time. Zoom meetings have enabled us to be part of a service and keep in touch with one another. Services are now beginning to get back to a normal pattern once again. Caution is still the main priority but we can now see light at the end of the tunnel. With the four AWA's that we have at Freethorpe, we are able to hold a service of Morning Prayer every two weeks. This form of service seems to go down well with our parishioners and is supported by all who can attend.

During the pandemic, we have lost two of our regular congregation to the virus. Jenny Knights and Dorothy Grint. They are sadly missed and our condolences go to all their families.

After serving as Assistant Church Warden for the past five years, Jean Thompson has retired from the post. She has been a great asset to the running of the every day duties that keeps our church running smoothly. Jean will still be helping with things but only as a parishioner. She was presented with a plant and vouchers as a big thank you from the members of our church. Jean's son Andrew, designed and made a lovely Easter Candle Holder last year but the dedication did not take place until recently.

During the pandemic, members of our congregation were able to clear some bramble's back towards the back hedge which had encroached onto the burial places. It was a huge task to clear the area and my thanks must go to all who helped with the project. It just needed tidying up when Dorothy was laid to rest with her husband Denise.

John Cullingford, after many years of lovingly tending the church yard and cremation burial area in the church yard, has had to stop due to health reasons. John has been clearing, grass cutting and keeping the area looking smart for a great number of years and a big thank you comes from us all.

Changes have had to be made during this difficult year but I'm sure we will look back with satisfaction that we did the best we could under the circumstances. Thank you to one and all.

Graham Allcock

Church Warden

All Saints Church

Freethorpe



## **9. Freethorpe Flower Show**

Author: Corinne Hill

### Freethorpe Flower Show

Freethorpe Flower Show is being planned for Saturday 28th August at 2.30 p.m. in Freethorpe Village Hall.

This show is open to residents of Freethorpe and surrounding villages. Children's classes are open to all children attending Freethorpe School.

The show will be advertised in the Freethorpe Flyer in May.

Set knitting pattern for Class 33 will be available at Freethorpe Stores or from Corinne Hill, 107 The Common, Freethorpe.

Show schedules to be distributed from June.

All arrangements are subject to current coronavirus regulations.

## **10. Freethorpe Football Club**

Author: Stephen Smith

### Freethorpe FC Annual Report to Freethorpe Parish Council 2021

As the Football Club near the conclusion of the second disjointed season due to Covid 19, so much has happened it is very difficult to summarise.

Sadly, as many in the village are aware we lost "Mr Freethorpe FC" Benny Horsley to this wicked Covid disease recently. Benny served the Football club for nearly 60 years as player, manager, groundsman and Chairman and will never be forgotten. The FC intend to have a memorial cup in his name awarded to Clubman of the year on annual basis.

Freethorpe FC continue to be an FC Charter Standard Club and our mission statement continues to be "Football for all for life". We try to offer Football that is inclusive and affordable to all in a well organised, safe and happy environment.

This season 2020 /2021 saw the club have 6 teams, Adult men's Sat, Adults men's Sun, Ladies Sun, u8's, u9's, and under12's. Unfortunately, this season saw us lose our Sat Res men's team due to lack of players and a manager.

Many challenges have been thrown our way to make football possible throughout the pandemic but with a massive effort from all we managed to write the risk assessments and implement the requirements within to make football possible and safe again for us all to enjoy.

The FC are pleased to report we were successful in a grant application to secure over £2000 for pitch improvement from the Football Foundation this has been spent seeding, fertilising, weedkilling and aeration of the surface undertaken by Jason Brister the results are there for all to see and is for the good of all users of the playing field.

Financially it has been very difficult without our main fundraising Bingo sessions and loss of match fees. Season 2019 /2020 saw us receive financial support from Sport England and the Football Foundation to mitigate losses but this season we have had nothing.

The intention is to run 6 teams again next season if the pandemic does not raise its ugly head again but Grassroots adult Football is in a rapid decline nationwide so we cannot be complacent and must make succession planning of volunteers a priority to ensure the sustainability and longevity of our club.

Finally, I must report on the sad demise of our MUGA which became unusable and unsafe due to the slippery surface. All our teams bar the two younger ones who train on a Sat morning on the playing field now train at other venues. I hope to be able to compile a separate report on the MUGA prior to the Annual Parish Council meeting for all to peruse.

REPORT COMPILED BY STEPHEN SMITH FREETHORPE FC CLUB SECRETARY.

## **11. Freethorpe First Responders**

Author: Ruth Davies

The past year has been very challenging for us as a group due to the Covid situation. Freethorpe First Responders decided to stand down during the pandemic to protect themselves and their families. This was also the case with a lot of other local responder groups.

In the past year we have had two members Norma Roe from Freethorpe and David Breeze from Reedham who have both decided to retire from the group. They have given a lot of their own personal time over the years to help others. Their contribution and commitment will be greatly missed from our team but we fully understand their decision.

Both myself and my partner Billy were lucky enough to receive our first vaccination in January and decided to go back on call immediately and have been called out to eight times in the local villages. Since reporting the figures to yourselves in 2019 the group have been called out 20 times to your village and 98 call outs in total throughout the local communities.

The group have continued to train throughout the last year via the NHS online learning site. We are now able to use thermometers and blood pressure kits when called out to assist with early detection of sepsis and to increase the level of response from the ambulance crews.

The defibrillator at Freethorpe Village Hall failed on one of its checks during lockdown last year and currently has a temporary unit in the cabinet for the time being. The defib is checked monthly to make sure the battery and pads are in date and the unit is in good working order.

Hopefully this year we will see a return to normal and our team feeling they are safe enough to be able to volunteer again.

We are actively seeking new volunteers for the local villages so anyone interested please do contact me by email [free.resp@gmail.com](mailto:free.resp@gmail.com)

Thank you for all your support

Ruth

## **12. Royal British Legion**

Author: Jayne Smith, Area Co-ordinator

### **Royal British Legion**

Despite the restrictions in place due to Covid-19, The Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal 2020 has raised over £24 million to date.

Locally the newly extended Acle District which now includes Freethorpe, Reedham, Halvergate and Tunstall raised the final total of £5268.73

This year is the centenary of The Poppy Appeal. The first Remembrance Day took place on 11 November 1921.

With increased awareness and restrictions lifted, we hope to improve on the amounts raised in our collection later this year.

The Guides are affiliated to the The Royal British Legion and have already volunteered to help with door to door collections in Freethorpe in the Remembrance period. I know that the Scouts are also affiliated to RBL and if they wish to assist with the Poppy Appeal, we would be very grateful. Other areas such as Halvergate, without any shops or a post office have very limited coverage.

All of the Primary schools in the area receive a school pack which includes lots of items that may appeal to the younger generation, whilst still highlighting the Poppy Appeal

Many people may not be aware that The RBL is open to anyone, you do not need to be ex servicemen and women to join. There are monthly meetings held in Acle Social Club on the first Friday of every month at 1400hrs. The first of this year will be Friday 4 June.

In addition, there will be fund raising coffee mornings in Acle Church Hall on Thursday 22 July and Thursday 4 November both starting at 9am. The first is for branch funds, the latter is for The Poppy Appeal. All welcome

### **13. Freethorpe Methodist Church**

Author: Corinne Hill

Our Methodist Church has gone through a trying time during the Covid Pandemic. For several months we were unable to meet together but with the Zoom services held each Sunday morning we were able to keep in touch with other members in our Norfolk Broads Circuit.

Our usual services with the Parish Church did not go ahead in the usual format. However we were able to share a Village Carol Service via Zoom.

Our joint service for the Women's World Day of Prayer was cancelled.

We were able to hold a Remembrance Sunday in the Methodist Churchyard. Where we were joined by the Anglican church. Unfortunately the cubs were unable to attend.

We were however able to hold a Harvest Festival Service and goods were donated to the Great Yarmouth Food Bank.

Our church services are now taking place weekly.

Lockdown did make us aware of the loneliness of some of our members and where possible visits and phone calls were made to keep in touch.

It does seem that this time of lockdown has fostered our community spirit.

With the easing of lockdown we look forward to maybe getting back to normal.

## 14. Freethorpe Primary and Nursery School

Author: Mrs. Robbie Houghton



### Freethorpe Primary and Nursery School

office-freethorpe@togetherfederation.org.uk 01493 700215

#### Freethorpe Primary School Report for Parish Council AGM, May 2021

This year has been a highly unusual one with many new challenges faced by the whole school community. Covid-19 has impacted on every aspect of school life but the resilience and positivity with which everyone has adapted must be highly commended.

In September 2019, Mark Cresswell took on the role of Interim Executive Headteacher for The Together Federation. This federation was made up of three primary schools: Freethorpe, Cantley and Horning. Within this type of structure, each school has their own leaders based at their individual sites, and the Executive Headteacher has a strategic role working across all of the schools. Mark's role was always a temporary one, whilst a substantive head teacher was found.

Therefore, from April 2021, Simon Wakeman has taken over as Executive Headteacher of the Coastal and Together Federations. This means that six schools are now working together with one Executive Headteacher: Bacton Primary and Mundesley Infant & Junior Schools are now also working with Freethorpe Primary.

There has been lots of change within Freethorpe Primary recently but the current arrangements should offer stability and exciting opportunities for all involved. There are lots of advantages to working as a federation of schools and these include:

- working together efficiently and sustainably to raise standards
- improving services and increasing opportunities for pupils and staff
- sharing resources, expertise and facilities

We are all looking forward to the exciting opportunities ahead, particularly now that lockdown restrictions are continuing to be relaxed.

During the last 12 months we have had a significant amount of home learning taking place. The children who were not able to attend school, due to lockdown, accessed learning in a variety of ways including: Zoom, practical challenges and workbooks. The support they received from home was fantastic and the school appreciated how challenging it was for families to juggle working and home schooling.

As part of a government scheme, and also with local funding, we were able to provide families with laptops to use at home during the lockdown. These were very gratefully received and allowed pupils who were not previously able to, to access online learning and daily Zoom sessions.

As many people will have seen last summer, a lot of time was spent resurfacing the school playground and making much needed improvements to the drainage. The result is a much smoother and safer surface for the children to play on, as well as allowing rainwater to drain away more efficiently.



## Freethorpe Primary and Nursery School

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The school was due to take part in the Norfolk and Norwich Open Studios event last spring. However, due to Covid-19 restrictions, this was postponed. The school will now be open to parents and the wider community on Friday 1st October 2021 to showcase a wide range of artwork that the children have produced. We hope to encourage as many people as possible to take this opportunity to visit the exhibition of the children's work.

During lockdown, we held an Art Competition and we had an amazing array of work entered. Our winning entries showed incredible talent and such creative ideas —there are obviously lots of budding artists in all our classes!

In the Autumn term, Year 6 took part in the Coram Shakespeare Schools Festival. Although they were unable to perform on a stage, we produced an audio broadcast of Twelfth Night. The children were fantastic at performing and it was an opportunity for them to develop both confidence and enthusiasm for working with a Shakespeare text. Since then, the school has been awarded the Shakespeare Gold School Award. This is in recognition of our school's pledge to keep creativity high on the school agenda, and the fact that we have provided many of our pupils over the years with the opportunity to create and learn through the unique power of performing in the national Shakespeare School's Festival.



Friends of Freethorpe have been busy continuing to raise funds for the school and have held a number of events including: Bag2School, Easter and Halloween events, Grow your own sunflower and 100 Square fundraiser. A big thank you must go to the parents who give their time to voluntarily organise these, and many other events.

Throughout this year, we have continued to work on the school garden. There has been lots of bulb planting, development of the sensory area and building of new beds. The children thoroughly enjoy taking part in outdoor learning and have been very excited to see the improvements that they have made. Within other areas of learning, such as Design and Technology, pupils have made items for the garden, such as bug hotels, and they are currently in the process of making some outdoor artwork using recycled items.





## Freethorpe Primary and Nursery School

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John Fleetwood, our local tree warden, has continued to work with the school and his hard work has enabled us to see big improvements in lots of the areas of planting that we have around the school site. The Junior Tree Wardens group that he and Andrea Rowlands run, continues to regularly take place on the school grounds. This will be continuing into the new school year, and offers children an opportunity to work alongside their local tree wardens to maintain and develop the environment in which they live.

Within school, we continue to use the Empiribox Science Scheme. This has been a really exciting way for the children to learn about, and participate in, practical science. The children are continually asking questions and exploring new topics, ever eager to find out more! This academic year we have covered Electricity, Rocks and Living Things & Evolution. Here the children have created their own bugs based on inherited features and explored the concept of similarities and differences.



The Year 6 pupils were very pleased to receive their dictionaries from the Rotary Club earlier this year. This annual gift is always hugely valued and the children look forward to using them. I am sure they will continue to be of use as the children move on to high school in September.

We are hopeful that the upcoming year will be a little less unsettled and that the children can return to the structure and pattern of school life as it was pre-Covid. Both staff and the Governors are looking forward to the new challenges ahead, and are keen to work closely with the other schools in the Coastal Together Federation. We are sure that there will be lots of exciting opportunities for everybody within the school community and are keen that our pupils continue to thrive.



## **15. The Walpole Almshouse Charity**

Author: Cheryl Nicholls

### **THE WALPOLE ALMSHOUSE CHARITY**

Charity No. 208467

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15 May 2021

Brief overview of the past year.

Trustees have maintained regular contact with the residents and there have been no major issues reported. The grounds have been maintained over the year, the boilers were routinely serviced and the large oak tree had work done earlier this year to remove dead wood and crown tidy.

We have increased the weekly maintenance charge for residents. Having spoken to another similar Almshouse charity in Norfolk we still appear to be keeping our charges very low.

This keeps us in a good position to sustain and maintain the houses in good condition for the future.

The Almshouse Association is celebrating their 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year and the Walpole Almshouses will also be 150 years old this year, so it will be a double celebration and the trustees are considering a small celebration later in the summer.

Cheryl Nicholls

Clerk/Trustee

## **16. St.Andrew's Church, Wickhampton**

Authors: Peter Ledward, Church Warden; Elisabeth Kozmian-Ledward, Fabrics Officer

Written 14/04/21

2020 started with the completion of our composting toilet in a freestanding purpose designed building in keeping with the Grade I listed church, and acceptable to the Broads Authority.

We keep the toilet permanently open for public use as well as church goers, subject to complying with covid-19 restrictions. The toilet is cleaned daily. No problems have occurred to date.

The church has also been open daily from 10 am to 5.30pm as important place for private worship during these tough times. It had to be shut at times.

There were 2 burials following services, sadly.

There was an open air Carol service with hand bell ringers taking part, and recently a Rogation service mainly in the churchyard.

We sometimes refer to our church as a 'tourist church'. This is true in normal times with visitors from across the world coming to see the wall paintings and possibly taking a walk into Wickhampton Marshes. In 2020 we noticed a huge increase in of walkers, in addition to local visitors.

No fundraising has been possible in 2020, but we hope that the Teddy Bear Parachuting event can happen later this year. All being well there will be an art workshops inspired by the wall paintings, in July, led by artist and fabrics officer Elisabeth Kozmian-Ledward.

The churchyard has been particularly well used this year.

We are now in the process of seeking funds fir repair works to the gutters and roof, and to internal plasterwork.

THANK YOU for your contribution to costs grass cutting.