



FORDHAM PARISH COUNCIL
CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT 2022

Striving for Success without Hard Work is like trying to Harvest where you haven't Planted. (David Bly)

What an apt quote from David Bly. This has most definitely been a highly productive, rewarding, and successful year for Fordham. I would therefore at the very beginning of my report, like to thank all the Councillors and our Parish Clerk for all their 'hard work' during this reporting period. The commitment to our community and their support to the Council business is a testimony to our success and progress on many fronts – thank you all.

One of our many goals during the past year has been that of traffic calming and this was echoed by the concerns of all those community members who completed the '2021 Fordham Residents Survey'. We were rightfully ambitious, dogged, and unbending in our lobbying of those Departments/Authorities charged with Road Safety. I don't think there is any Essex / National Road Safety network that we have not engaged with or lobbied. The Parish Council have welcomed the assistance that we have received from, Cllr Lewis Barber Essex County Council, Cllr Darius Laws Colchester Borough Council, Jon Simmons Essex Highways, David Haynes, Micky Cook and Les Beard of the Fordham Speed Calming Group, the Fordham Speedwatch and the Cllrs and Officers of Wormingford and Aldham Parish Councils.

We have seen the placement of 30mph Gateway Signs at three village entrance roads, a recommendation and in principle support by Local Highways Panel for the installation of a School pedestrian crossing, implementation of 20mph zone with wig wags and refreshed road marking. Vehicle Activated Signage (VAS) funded by Cllr Barber and being shared with Wormingford and Aldham Parish Councils. The submission of a Local Highways Panel Application for three of our Roads to be designated as 'Quiet Lanes'. Indeed only last night Cllr Barber advised that both Fossets and Chappel had met the criteria but I haven't given up yet on Rams Farm Road! The establishment of joint working with Aldham and Wormingford on Road Safety/traffic calming. The establishment of a steering group with Wormingford PC for liaison/monitoring of local business usage on our Roads. Yes, we still have some way to go and yes, it's not one that we can ever take our eye off, but we are managing a situation which in the past managed us and had a severe impact on our lives, families, and leisure pursuits.

To gain an appreciation of what the community expects from their Parish Council, our Parish Clerk Kathryn Cameron developed the 'Fordham Residents Survey 2021' questionnaire. Tom Krause once wrote, *'Never ask questions you don't want to know the answer to'*. Well, I'm glad to say we wanted to start with a 'blank sheet of paper', we were hungry to get the

community's views and opinions which would enable us to take a fresh look at our business delivery. The questionnaire returns 'hit the target', we have now established PC surgeries, dedicated Cllrs to local areas, fitted a PC suggestion/letter box in the Bus Shelter, continue to maintain the swing-park fencing and cleared up the confusion between the roles of the Village Hall Committee and the Parish Council.

The feedback from this survey necessitated the Parish Council members to review our whole ethos, perception and outputs for/to the community. We therefore held a 'step up, step back' workshop which enabled us to drill into the comments and recommendations made in the completed returns. It was unanimously agreed by the Councillors that we needed to put in place and publish a 'mission statement', which would not only focus our minds but also will provide for our community, a statement outlining the Parish Council's purpose, goals and deliverables. This mission statement will be published on our website and fb accounts. In conclusion, the Parish Council would like to thank all those residents in our community who completed and returned the questionnaire.

Kathryn our learned Parish Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer, as ever ensured that all our undertakings were delivered within all Local Government regulatory and mandated requirements. With Kathryn's guidance and the Cllr's prudence we came in within budget and received a highly complementary report from both our internal external auditors, *'I would like to record my appreciation the Parish Clerk for the quality of the documentation presented in the audit file'*. The further good news is that whilst other Essex Local Government authorities are raising Council Tax, that for the fourth consecutive year Fordham Parish Council have not increased the Parish Precept. In addition, we have also within budget made a few Grants and a Donation to Local Community Organisations, and Charities who provide benefit to our community.

Our Christmas event on the Green was a great success and great credit for this must be given to Cllrs Dave Chapman, Cheryl Chapman, and Christine Alexander. There were many others who supported this event, and it was a pleasure to see the Parish Council, the Village Hall Committee, Fordham Speedwatch, and the All-Saints Church of England combining our resources to make it a true community event. Those in the background who made a major contribution to the event have been publicly mentioned and thanked. (Fordham Times January 2022).

Cllrs Dave and Cheryl are now once again at the forefront/lead for the Fordham Queens Platinum Jubilee event on Saturday 4th June 2022. This promises to be an event NOT to be missed and planning is well under way to pull it all together. There will be live music, streamed music, stalls, food, games, competitions and much more. A full list of timings and events will be published once these are confirmed and finalised. Any monies raised from the event will be distributed between Essex Air Ambulance, St Helena Hospice, Colne Endeavour Band, and the Royal British Legion. This, like the Christmas event will be multi-agency supported by the village groups however as you will appreciate an event of this size needs help and I appeal for volunteers to provide support both in planning and on the day.

During the next Parish Council year, we will be turning our attention to the Climate Change Emergency and how we as a Parish Council can contribute and play our part in one of the greatest dangers to our planet. The Inter Parliamentary Climate Commission (IPCC) (United Nations) advise we have until 2030 to take urgent action on climate change to keep the earth's rising temperature below 1.5 degree Celsius. This means the current global target to cut carbon emissions by 80% by 2050 is simply not enough to avoid a catastrophic change in our climate. So, what can a small rural village in Essex do? In April 2022, this Parish Council agreed a motion followed by an Action Plan as to how the Council and our community can help to reduce carbon emissions and options are available to support our endeavours. We have the benefit of combining with our adjoining Parishes to make an even greater impact on our strategic plan.

Your Council will also be commissioning repairs to our village War Memorial which has sustained considerable weather damage. The costs for these repairs are exceptionally high due to the memorial being a listed structure thereby prohibiting the use of many 'market' products thus limiting our pool of contractors willing to undertake the repairs To defray the costs, we have been successful in obtaining a 50% Grant from the War Memorial Trust and we continue to seek/secure funds elsewhere. We will also be formulating plans for a complete upgrade of the swing-park equipment and area which hopefully, finance dependant will be completed by 2024.

This is the first year that our Parish Council have officially recognised and commended an individual or a group for special recognition. At our Parish Council meeting in January 2022, it was unanimously agreed by the Councillors that we would award two Parish Council Commendations to the following.

Mr David Haynes and the Fordham Speedwatch Team

“In recognition of the stalwart service provided to the whole of the Fordham Village Community by ensuring that there is a reduction of the average speed on our Roads, and by so doing not only do you educate drivers but also and importantly the Fordham Speedwatch Team under your direction, reduce the casualties on our Village Roads in both numbers and severity and in consequence the Speedwatch Team improves the lives of the village community through Road Safety”.

Mr Sam Yagmour

“Fordham Parish Council commend you in recognition for your single handed community spirit and continuing labour to ensure that the overgrown cemetery paths and grave markers at the north eastern corner of Fordham All Saints Church cemetery are now accessible to the community and clear of invading vegetation”.

Additionally at our March Parish Council it was unanimously agreed that we would recognise the outstanding contribution that Essex County Councillor Lewis Barber has made to this community regarding Traffic Calming.

Councillor Lewis Barber

“Fordham Parish Council in recognition of his outstanding commitment and sustained determination thus ensuring that the village Traffic Calming concerns, have been taken forward and recognised within the appropriate Highways Departments as requiring attention. Your unrelenting efforts and your financial support have resulted in both the procurement of technical aides and substantial investment by the Essex Local Highways Panel”

You will have noticed that throughout this Annual Report, I have thanked all the unpaid volunteers in our community who give up their free time to make Fordham a better place to live. You will also have noticed throughout that I have sought for volunteers to help with up-and-coming events and to serve on our/your Parish Council, Village Speedwatch, etc. YOU can make an impact on this community please do not MISS the opportunity to do so. Details of how you can help can be provided by our Parish Clerk Clerk@fordham-pc.co.uk

**"Volunteering is the ultimate exercise in democracy.
You vote in elections once a year, but when you volunteer,
you vote every day about the kind of community you want to live in."**



Cllr George Branagh

Chairman, Fordham Parish Council