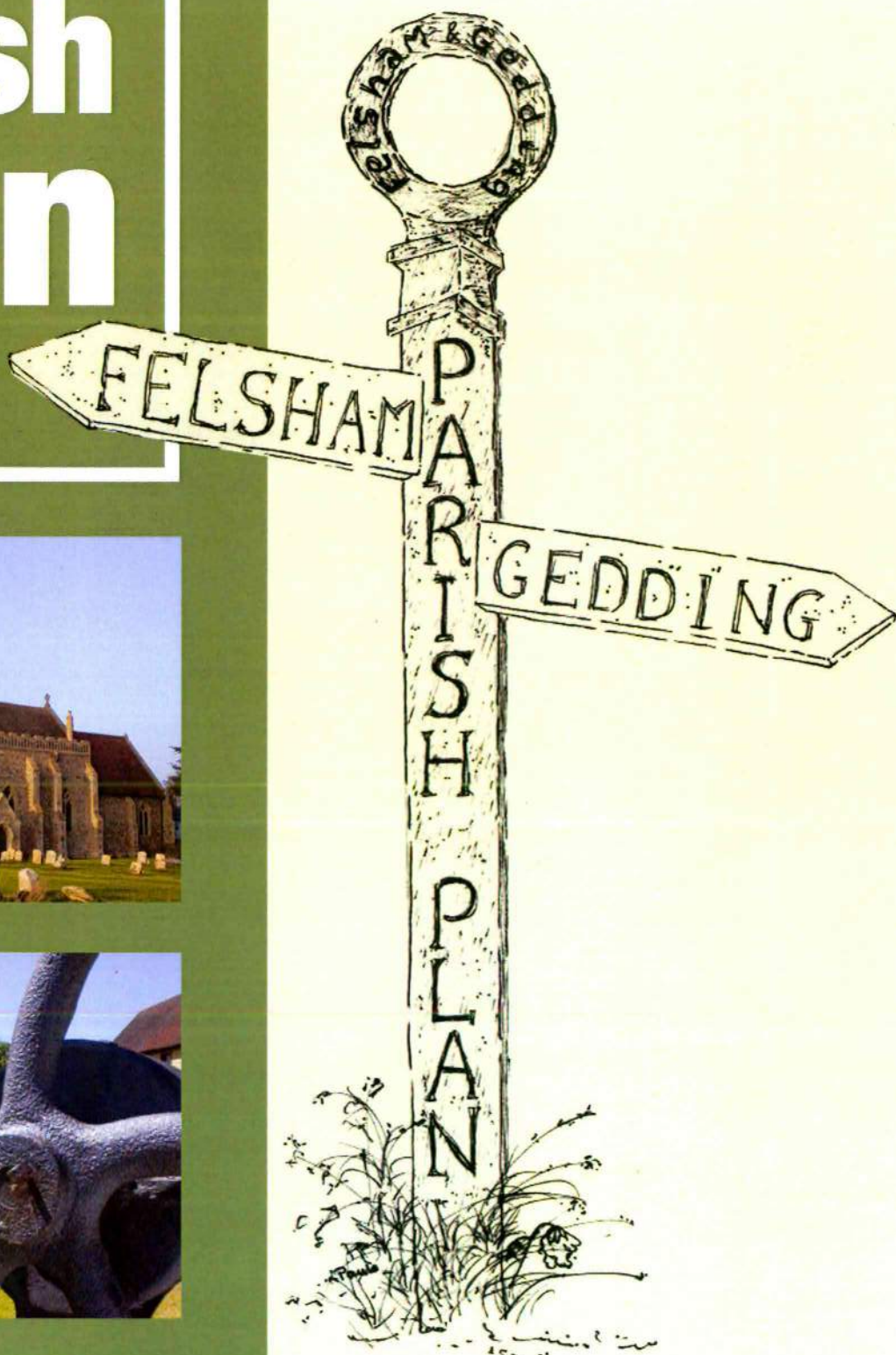


Felsham & Gedding

Parish Plan

2012



**...because the future
of the village
is our concern!**

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Our Parish Plan

Shaping the future for Felsham...

In March 2010 Felsham Parish Council began the process to establish a Parish Plan for Felsham. A steering committee was formed under the chairmanship of Judith Shallow and over the last two years the residents of our parish have been canvassed to establish their view of the future for our village.

At the outset there were of course clear guidelines as a Parish Plan is a statement of how our village should evolve over the coming years. It is essential that it reflects the views of all sections of the community, identifies which features and local characteristics people value most, highlights local problems and opportunities and considers solutions.

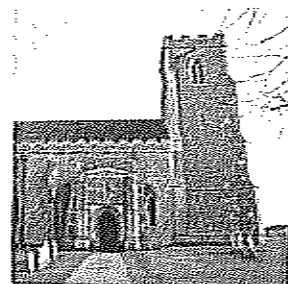
Whatever residents have suggested that is important to them has been included in this plan as a prioritised list of projects and objectives strictly in accordance with their wishes.

Felsham Parish Council would like to express their gratitude to all members of the Parish Plan committee for all their valuable work in preparing a blueprint for the future of Felsham.

David Williams

Felsham Parish Council Chairman

May 2003 to May 2012



...and for Gedding

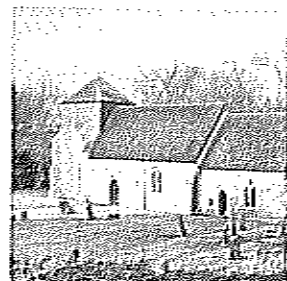
I welcome the publication of the Parish Plan report and warmly thank my colleagues on the Parish Plan Steering Group for all the work which has gone into its preparation.

The Steering Group has collated the answers that parishioners kindly provided to the questionnaires and has set out an Action Plan, based on your answers, for maintaining and improving our community.

We hope that you find it useful helpful and informative. Gedding Parish Meeting look forward to working with residents and Felsham Parish Council towards its implementation in our parishes.

Dr Henry Fell

Chairman, Gedding Parish Meeting



Introduction

"the major findings will allow us to concentrate on achieving some quite important things, many simply and cheaply"

Dear Fellow Villagers...

It gives me great pleasure to be writing this introduction signalling that the work that we have carried out over the last couple of years is coming to a close but, more excitingly, that another period of actually making some changes for the better can now begin.

The idea of a Parish Plan for Felsham arose out of a meeting called by Felsham Parish Council (FPC) in Spring 2010 at which a representative from Suffolk ACRE presented the pros and cons. There was great enthusiasm from those present. This was a chance for the villagers to present a clear mandate to their councillors – local, district and county – on how we saw our community developing over the next decade or so. We quickly realised that a Parish Plan for Felsham could not be complete without input from our close neighbours in Gedding with whom we share so many facilities. Thus we created a Steering Group comprising around ten members including two Felsham Parish Councillors, the Chairman of the Gedding Parish Meeting (GPM) and volunteers from both villages among them representative of a number of key organisations including the Village Hall, Playing Field and Village News committees.

We met approximately once a month to hammer out what we believed to be the main issues facing our communities. We had a consultation stall at the Felsham Fun Day which helped confirm our thoughts, and having met and spoken with many of the village groups and local landowners we finally elected to follow a method tried and tested in other communities and that was to circulate questionnaires to every household. We also wished to engage with the businesses within our community and young residents via their own questionnaires. We decided NOT to follow other villages lead in using the (undoubtedly helpful but expensive) methodology on offer from Suffolk ACRE. After researching other Parish Plans we appreciated that we were starting from a stronger starting point than some other communities who had undergone this process – we already had many of the things that their plans identified as necessary to build their communities so we designed our questions to try to build on, rather than rebuild, what we have.

By Summer 2011 we had the three questionnaires ready for distribution and our volunteers endeavoured to deliver and solicit a response from every household in the two villages. We are rich in generosity of time and spirit in Felsham and Gedding and we owe a great deal to the Steering Group members for their hard work – their names are listed later – and the fact we have achieved this Plan for a fraction of the amount spent by other communities.

The Plan's highlights were presented to both FPC and GPM in January last year and followed up with a power point presentation open to all parishioners in February. Unfortunately this coincided with the snow so not a great number turned out so for many of you this will be the first time you have been presented with the results. However, it is largely good news! There are no earth-shattering negative results, nor (to some surprise) is there a great difference of opinion between the two villages – we live in a strong community in a beautiful area of the countryside where people are mostly very happy with what they have, rather than fretting about what they don't. Most have made a conscious decision to come here or stay here and there is general agreement on which issues are important.

During the course of the development of this Plan there have been dramatic changes to our country and local government in terms of the economic downturn with cuts across the board. Even if we wanted the moon, there is realistically no prospect of us getting it – luckily the major findings will allow us to concentrate on achieving some quite important things, many simply and cheaply and, as changes come, allow our elected representatives to speak to outside bodies with the authority of the villagers behind them.

Thank you to everyone who has helped us get this far, who answered the questionnaires seriously and thoughtfully and to those who will now, we hope, step forward and help bring our Action Plan into being.

Judith Shallow

Chairman

Felsham & Gedding Parish Plan Steering Group

Where are we?

Background

Felsham is an attractive rural village about eight miles south-east of Bury St Edmunds. There is a church, a thriving shop and post office, a working garage and popular pub called The Six Bells. There is a lively community spirit and many village activities take place each month in the Village Hall, on the Playing Field or elsewhere. An elected Parish Council meets monthly. Many of the 200 or so homes are grouped around and between the two village greens - Lower Green and Upper Green. This central area is a designated Conservation Area, the only one in Suffolk that protects the historic core of the village area by withdrawing normal permitted development rights. The parish contains numerous well-signposted footpaths and many quiet by-ways which makes it popular with walkers and cyclists. Many of the footpaths lead to the National Nature Reserve of Bradfield Woods.

The neighbouring village of **Gedding** comprises around 50 houses including the magnificent Elizabethan Gedding Hall and a tiny church. Classed as a 'village in the countryside', currently no development is allowed. Gedding does not have a Parish Council but has a bi-annual Parish Meeting.

Felsham and Gedding share an extensive Playing Field and a Victorian Village Hall (the original school) and collaborate on a monthly village newsletter distributed to every household.

The Context

Out of approximately 230 questionnaires delivered, 154 were returned - this represents a 67% return rate. Responses represented the views of all age ranges (the 5-17 year olds had their own questionnaire) covering a total of 339 people across the 154 households. Age is weighted towards the 40+ age group (65%). Gender representation was almost equal. The average household size was 2.2 people.

There is a sizable proportion of residents who have lived in Felsham or Gedding for over 20 years (30%).

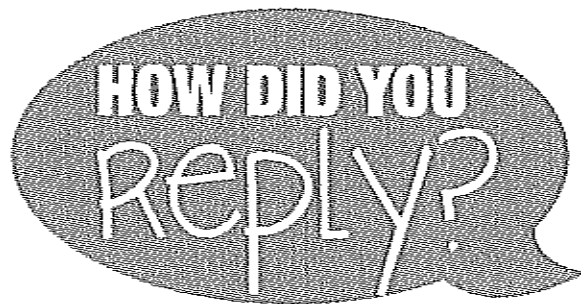
The majority of statistics given are an average drawn from both villages' responses. Where there were significant differences in opinion they are spelt out separately.

Gedding was found to have a slightly older population who had lived there longer, more couples and more home workers.

In the opinion of the Steering Group the response rate represents a mandate for the FPC and GPM to act. The number of responses from Felsham adults (216) equates to the number of people who voted in the last Felsham Parish Council election (220). There is a sizable minority who, for whatever reason, chose not to respond so inevitably we are unable to take their views into account. It is tempting to assume they are happy with things as they are - it is to be hoped they do not feel socially excluded from what appears to be a largely sociable, caring and cohesive community.



On Housing and Future Development



There was a strong message from the respondents, hopefully giving the Parish Councils plenty of ammunition to protect the community from inappropriate development.

Felsham and Gedding are clearly desirable places to live. Most people cited convenience to their work place (many actually working – or studying – from home) and many more professing to want a rural lifestyle. Most people indicated equally strongly that there was no desire for any significant new housing development in the villages (this was even more strongly endorsed by Gedding). 51% wished to ‘maintain the current mixed community’ and 32% wanted ‘no change’.

“Bungalows so older people can downsize without having to leave the village”

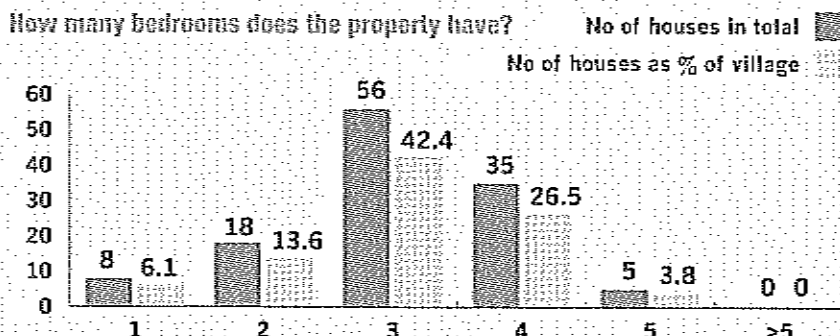
“All new housing should have chimneys”

In answer to the question of what type of development might be beneficial, the largest number of people opted for converting redundant buildings, followed by no development or small/ starter homes. Infill was considered appropriate. Concern was expressed about the lack of **affordable housing** to buy (genuine starter homes) for young people from the village or retirement homes to allow families to stay nearby. Most homes are currently

3 bedroom, very few 1 bedroom which should point the way to smaller housing development when appropriate. Only 5% saw the need for any more large homes (4+ bedrooms) to be built.

“Housing for younger people so they stay and keep our village a vibrant place to live”

A number of people expressed the hope that any new buildings should include **renewable technology** (solar, wind, heat exchangers, etc).

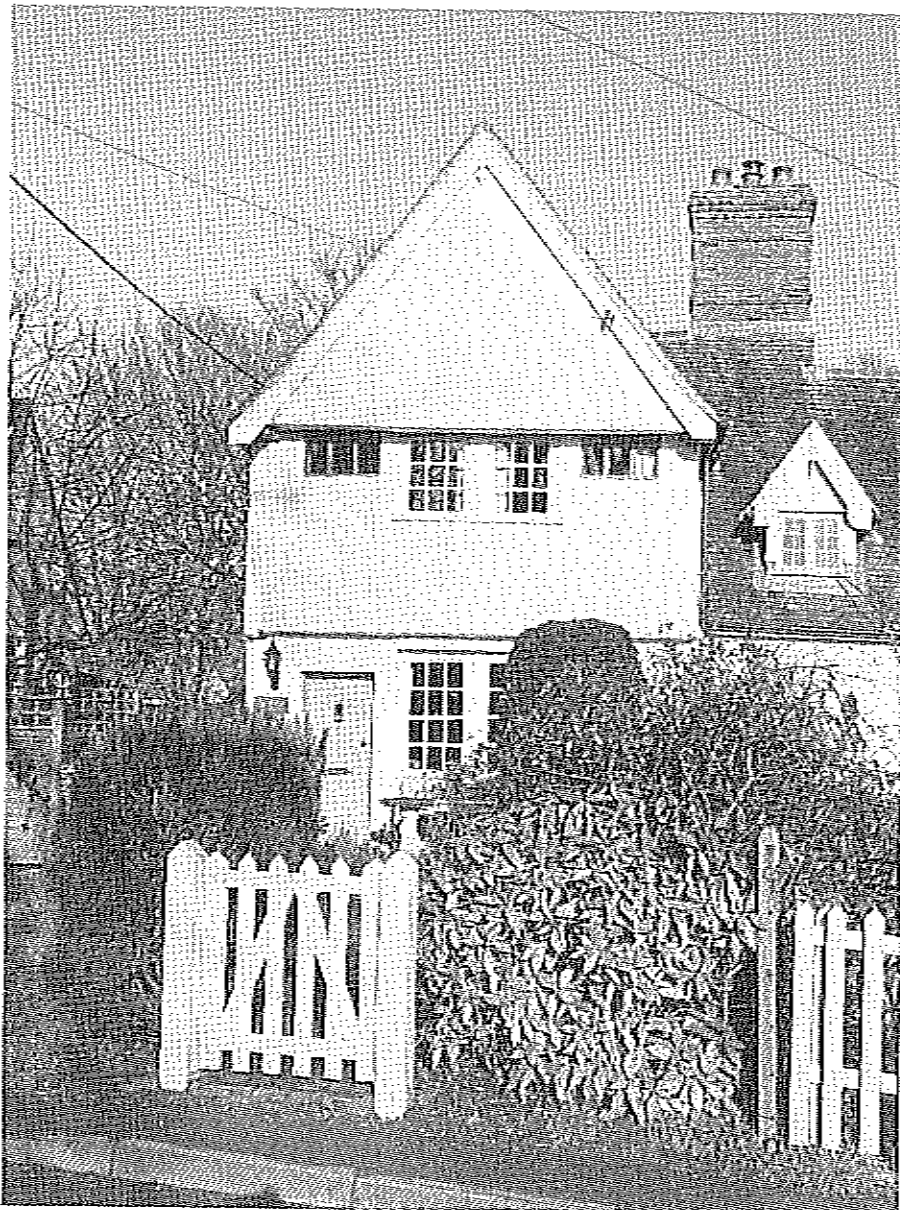


Felsham Conservation Area

There was some confusion among responders on this. The questionnaire did not specifically ask about the conservation area – it did ask about conservation areas in terms of stewardship of the **natural environment**. However some have taken 'conservation' to mean in relation to planning issues with quite a few references in various sections (why live in the village / planning issues) about the advantages of being a conservation village and some comments to say maybe it should be extended. Some

people expressed a negative view complaining that it restricts natural development, others stating if Felsham were to extend the current boundary it would conflict with the requirement for new houses or modern approaches to energy. In hindsight it was a mistake not to include it – something for a future update to consider – as we were also unaware that Mid Suffolk were concurrently conducting an appraisal of the Conservation Area to which we might have been able to contribute.

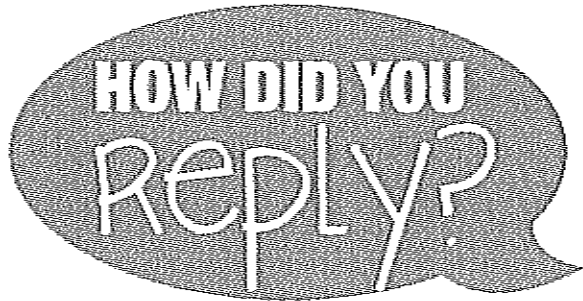
"Would like conservation status taken off – it means nothing (solar panels, renewing windows, etc) can be done without planning permission"



ACTION POINTS

- Steering Group to make these views known to the local councils so they can respond appropriately to developers/planning authorities.
- Ascertain whether there ARE any redundant buildings that could be converted.

On Village Amenities, Social and Recreation:



"A popular pub with decent food"

Around 40% (slightly fewer in Felsham than Gedding) consider it essential to have a local Garage operating. A great number of the responses regretted the lack of availability of petrol and a number expressed the wish that the garage area could be tidied up, considering it an eyesore in the village centre.



● Store owners, Pub Landlords and the Garage operators all to be congratulated on providing valuable services to the villages in difficult times - a great number of comments were made which will be passed on to the appropriate proprietors for information should they wish it.

Shopping and Services

Felsham is extremely fortunate in still having a working garage, pub, Post Office and general stores - many other villages in Suffolk have lost these facilities in recent years. 75% of the respondents support the PO/Shop on a weekly basis, 60% support the pub and 40% the garage. Many positive suggestions were made as to how these businesses could add to their perceived value which have been passed on to the individuals concerned.

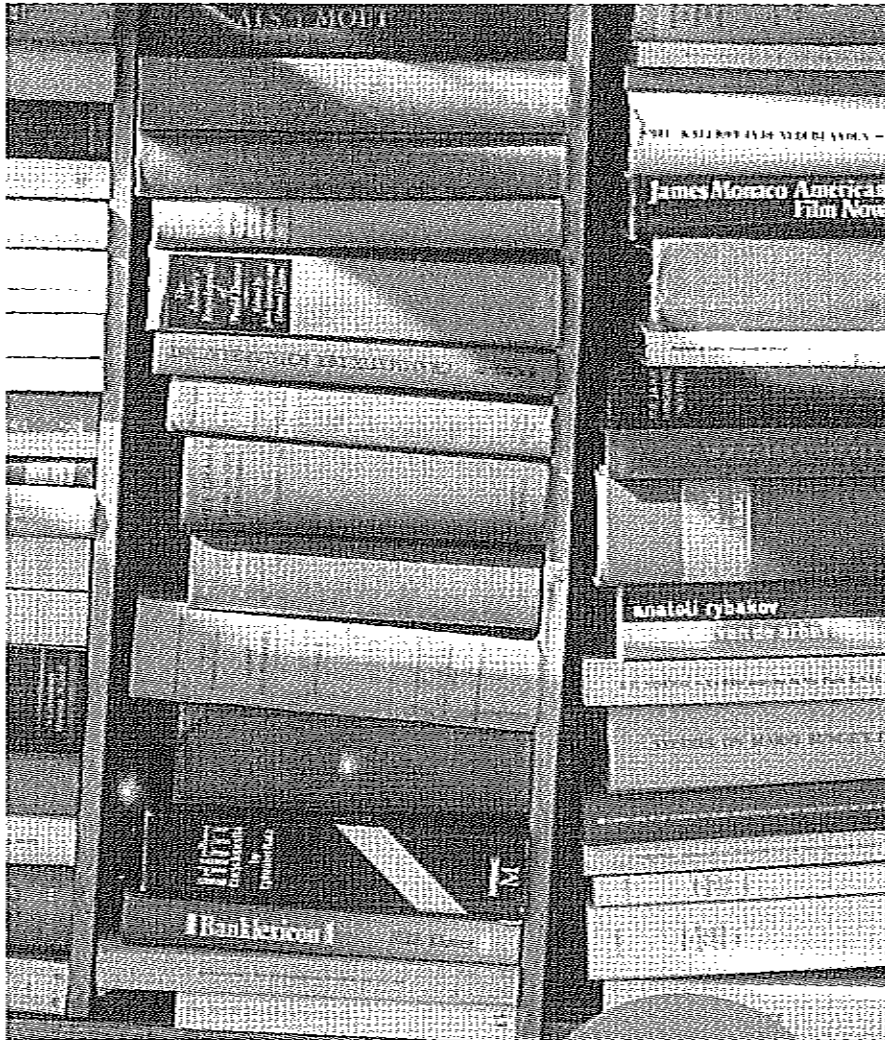
75% of respondents across both villages consider it essential to have a local Post Office with almost the same

percentage visiting the Post Office Stores weekly.

Daily usage (17%) was (unsurprisingly) slightly higher by Felsham residents. Only 2.5% claimed to 'never' use the facility.

"I use the shop about 3 times a week"

Almost 60% of Felsham and 55% of Gedding respondents wanted the Pub to offer a mix of food, drink, bar games, community events & quizzes. A considerable number of respondents commented on the fact the Pub had had a varied and unstable time over the past few years but hoped it could once again regain stability - several felt its sale and independence as a freehouse would help ensure that.



The questions about the County Council's Mobile Library Service, which at the time was facing an uncertain future, produced the biggest discrepancy of all: In answer to 'Do you use the mobile library service? 13% in Felsham and 24 % in Gedding said 'yes'. But in response to 'Would you support some kind of community action to preserve or enhance the library service if necessary?' 73% in Felsham and 64% in Gedding said they would!

"didn't know the mobile library existed"

Since then the County Council have announced the service will reduce from fortnightly to monthly. There is clearly a huge discrepancy between actual use and potential support. The revised service proposed would appear to reflect current use.

ACTION POINTS!

- Monitor situation and if service is threatened further then review how this could be mitigated by the local supportive community.

- Suggest County Council puts new timetable onto new Village Websites/ advertise in Village News.

The questionnaires detailed other suppliers visiting on a regular basis including the milkman, fruit and vegetable van, fish & chip van, etc.

"didn't know any of them existed - would use fruit and veg man"

Only around 30% of respondents claimed to use visiting suppliers including the milkman. In answer to 'What other services might you like to see visit/delivered to the village?' a considerable number listed fresh fish, bread and Indian take-away. Several made the point that the milkman comes too late to be of service and others commented they'd been unaware of the current visiting suppliers.

ACTION POINTS!

- Liaise with current suppliers and ensure they know they could:

- a) advertise in Village News,
- b) be listed in a local business directory being compiled as an outcome from the Business Questionnaire.

- Seek out and invite others to visit the villages e.g. Lavenham Indian Restaurant.

Cultural, Sporting and Recreational Facilities

The two village Churches are both used for regular worship, special festive services and christenings, weddings and funerals. Following recent improvements to facilities, Felsham Church is better placed to host after-service functions, cultural concerts and talks.

Over 50% considered the Village Churches important as a key feature or historic building and this was underlined by a similar percentage considering that the cost of maintaining the Church buildings and graveyards should be borne by all villagers as well as regular worshippers. This is just as well, as less than 8% in Felsham and 10% in Gedding claimed to be regular worshippers, although across both villages this figure rises to 40% of people who attend special services and ceremonies.

"A well used and loved church"

91% considered the Rector to have a wider role in the community visiting the elderly, housebound or sick although one person commented that this should be everyone's 'job', not just the Rector's. 92% felt both churches should remain open. Many comments were made on activities that could be carried on in the Churches to keep them relevant and vibrant community buildings.

An important contributor to the maintenance of the church in Felsham is The Felsham Charity. Almost a third of Felsham residents were unaware of the charity and the possibilities of their applying for grants or aid. The Charity also controls the allotments in Felsham and 14 people expressed the desire to apply for one, should the possibility arise.

Allotments in Gedding are in the gift of the Church PCC. Four people expressed a desire to apply for one should there be a vacancy.

The well-used Village Hall and Village Playing Field are tremendous community assets and run a large number of activities aimed at all age levels. Both of these are run by separately constituted charitable committees.

The Village Hall offers facilities for older people, teenagers and young children - the WI, Mother and Toddler, fitness classes are all regular features, there is a monthly film club. Responses indicated a great amount of appreciation and usage of these community facilities, but also indicated that not everyone is aware of how many things go on there already - many things that do currently happen were listed as desirable suggestions!



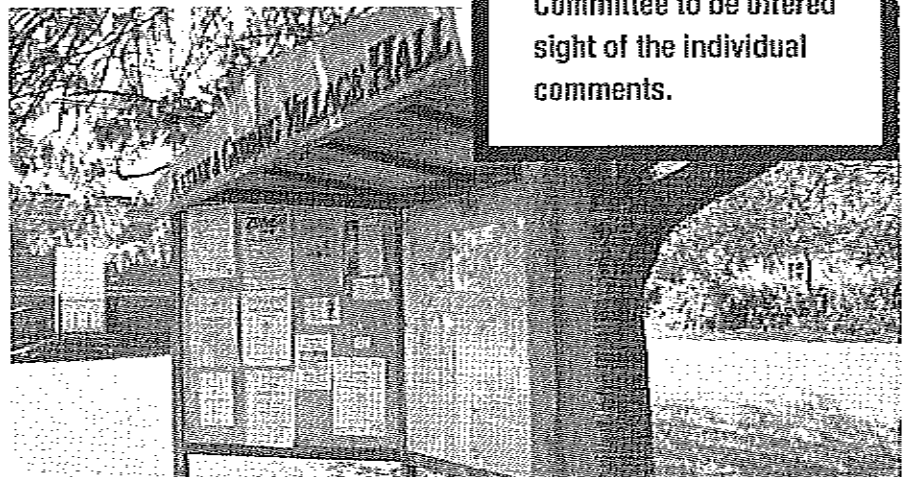
● **Charity needs to produce a leaflet to explain its role and remit to village residents. Grant recipients, particularly the young, might be persuaded to write up their experiences for Village News so others realise they can get help for expeditions, educational grants, etc.**



● **Both the Village Hall Committee and the Playing Field Committee to be offered sight of the individual comments.**



● **Comments will be passed on to the Parochial Church Councils and the new Rector for consideration and action.**



HOW DID YOU REPLY?

On Health, Wellbeing & Safety:

In terms of access to healthcare, members of the community use the services run by Woolpit Health Centre - 21 people regularly use the mini bus service and its value appears to be borne out by the fact that in response to the question 'Do you have any difficulty arranging transport to medical visits', only 8 people (all in Felsham) said yes. 49 people use the pharmacy delivery service. These services are appreciated and any disruption would cause difficulties for several families.

96.5% of respondents feel safe in the village while 10 did not. Twenty two people said street lighting would make them feel safer but it appeared that a number of these comments came from specific areas of the village, specifically some from the area of The Sheltered Housing - therefore maybe some carefully placed sensor lights might allay the problem rather than 'street lighting'. There were individual comments against any further street lighting in the village.

"do not believe street lighting is appropriate in a rural area"

Twenty four called for either more police presence or for a Neighbourhood Watch scheme (this was endorsed by the Business Questionnaires - see page 28) and, although in the national context, our crime figures would appear extremely low, there were 22 people who claimed to have been affected by crime in the past year.

"although I feel safe my home has been burgled 3 times"

Further investigation showed that there had been 13 crimes reported to the police, mostly theft, committed in Felsham in the past year which was almost twice the previous year. The numbers indicated were high because often more than one person was affected by the same crime, but also some were the same people affected by several crimes. Thirteen is clearly too many and, with 33% of the business respondents claiming to have been affected by crime over the past 5 years, there is a clear need to do something to prevent the figures rising still further.

Speeding traffic was also identified as a safety issue (see more under Traffic and Highways, page 14).

ACTION POINTS!

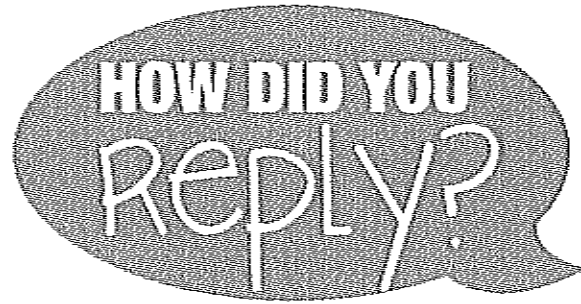
- Ask the Parish Council to arrange a meeting, involving our Safer Neighbourhood Team Officer, to discuss the way forward.

- Possibly introduce a Neighbourhood Watch Scheme?

- Investigate possibility of installing strategic lights to assist elderly near their homes.



On Communications:



Perhaps THE most significant finding of this Plan is the number of people who suffer with poor mobile phone signal and a poor level of Broadband.

Do you have any reception difficulties?

There was an unexpectedly high degree of problems identified but especially with mobile phones and internet/broadband. There were literally hundreds of comments complaining or suggesting improvements (although many were in layman's terms) but these were endorsed by the businesses within our community.

The top service provider is BT (53%) and second is Vodafone (14%).

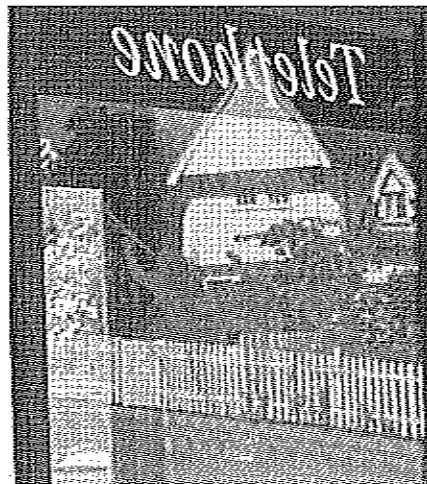
"We need a mobile phone mast"

"Broadband is terrible! Need upgraded broadband ASAP"

"Don't know what can be done, but it reduces capacity to work from home a great deal"

"fibre optic upgrade for broadband and more repeater stations for mobile phones"

"Mobile phone signal only reliable standing outside our back door!"



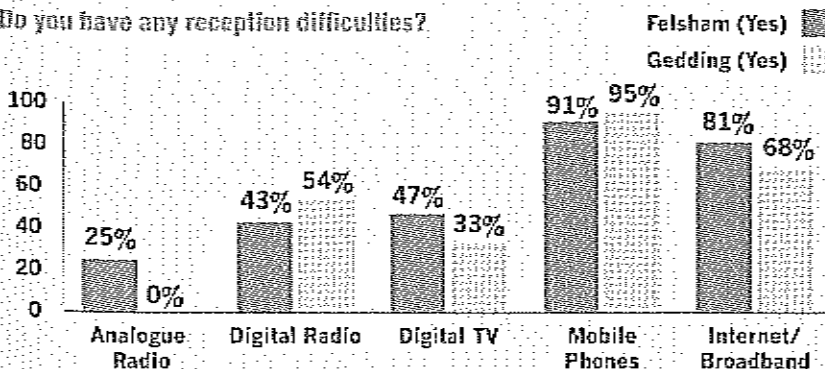
ACTION POINTS!

- There is a definite mandate here to do something about it. The Steering Group have been monitoring the Better Broadband for Suffolk campaign but as a matter of urgency we need to:

- Seek out experts within the community as some of the comments indicated a certain amount of expert technical knowledge.

- Set up a knowledgeable working group to look at scale of the problem and come up with possible solutions. Possibly linking with other local villages? Our District Councillor might be able to help link us up with other villages with similar problems.

Do you have any reception difficulties?



How do you receive local information?

Responses indicated that 77% receive local information either via the Village News, word of mouth, the village notice boards and posters. There was little indication that people read either the local paper or the district council newsletter.

Despite this apparently positive uptake, time and time again answers to other questions, or individual comments and suggestions, indicated that people were often not aware of things that we already have or do! It is felt that perhaps the production of a Welcome Pack, or similar, to the village that could be given to newcomers and include a whole raft of useful information. This

might in the first instance be given out to the whole village, and thereafter to newcomers. The new village websites that have come into being during the period of this plan being produced will also be a useful vehicle for carrying this type of information, the Village News will be available to download and we could make far more effective use of the Village E-vine if more people signed up. In terms of Emergency Planning and almost instant information about say flash foods, or suspect vehicles, the E-vine could play a far more instant and proactive role.

"Although our most useful source of local information, Village News is often delivered so late that we have missed half the events"



ACTION POINTS!

- Develop an easily updatable Welcome Pack.
- Notice boards and posters must be kept in good condition, kept up to date, have space and be accessible to all.
- Village News must be issued timely.
- Community events and community venues are important to promote word of mouth communication (21%).
- MSDC to be advised that newsletter is not effective.
- Consider how best to inform all residents of what is going on regularly: encourage far greater take up of the Felsham E-vine.
- Ditto use of new village websites as a source of reference.



On Environment:

The recycling facilities in the Village Hall Car Park, which generate an income for the Village Hall are clearly a huge success - 96% of Felsham respondents say they use them and 83% of Gedding. These were among the highest figures indicating them very well used and in the correct place. No negative comments and no indication that Gedding might want their own facility.

"A communal green waste site. We drive hedge cuttings to Stowmarket!"

In a similar way to the questions on 'Conservation' the responses on 'Footpaths' were confused and thus difficult to analyse. One man's 'footpath' is another man's 'pavement' as opposed to 'right of way'. Almost 50% walk regularly and another 40% use the footpaths occasionally. Generally there seemed to be consensus that the villages were well served with walks which were on the whole well maintained. Some were felt to 'go nowhere' and others commented that historical routes need not be kept

open just because they were historical - records could be kept and more practical, 'year-round' routes could be offered.

"don't like walking across farmers crops if there is an obvious way around that landowners would prefer walkers to use ...re-routing of paths around field perimeters should be made easier for landowners"

In terms of environmental improvements in the area, 81% (Felsham residents only) saw a Felsham Village Sign as a welcome improvement and there was considerable demand for more bins (dog, litter and grit), and village seating (76%). A suggestion was made that rather than bright yellow bins, a more attractive option may be to install old tractor tyres to contain the grit.

HOW DID YOU REPLY?

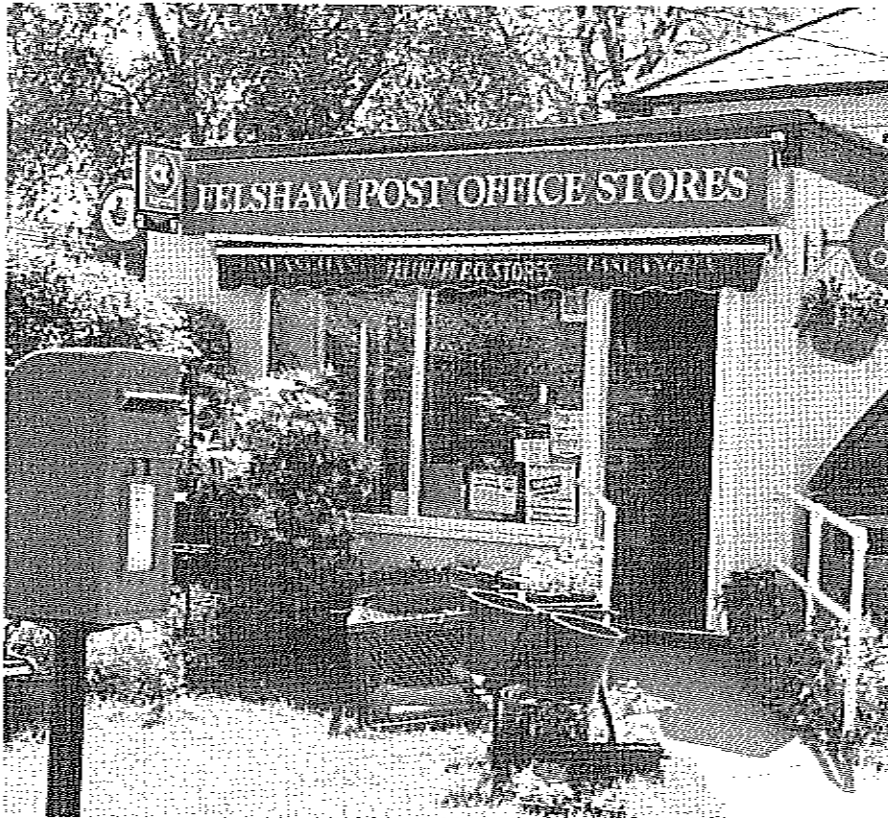
ACTION POINTS!

- Support Parish Council in research, costing and placing of Felsham Village Sign.
- Investigate green waste recycling possibilities, maybe on the allotments?
- Review if the local footpath network needs some modernising?
- Investigate placement of further dog and litter bins and grit 'bins'.



HOW DID YOU REPLY?

On Traffic and Highways:



Two hundred and twenty seven vehicles were listed on the Household Questionnaire potentially indicating at least 500 vehicle movements out/in to the villages daily without visiting, passing or business traffic.

There were 15 complaints on speeding traffic (many more if you take into account the comments on the Youth Questionnaires) and high risk areas were identified as the major entry points to the village: Cockfield Road, Bury Road and Rattlesden Road as well as through Gedding and around the Playing Field. There were conflicting views expressed on cars parked outside the Post Office (some think it is dangerous, others think it has a 'traffic calming effect').

Speeding traffic and safe access from Church Road, Felsham and Gedding Hill to the Playing Field were also highlighted as major factors threatening safety.

"clamp down on speeding motorists"

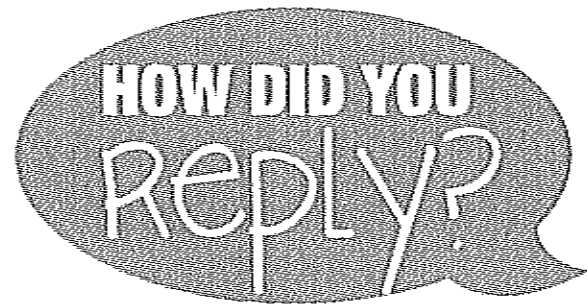
"Lower Green traffic calming to slow the traffic"

"would like the ability to walk between the two villages without risking life on the road"

ACTION POINTS!

- Keep issue of parking outside the Post Office under review if, as has been suggested, the School Bus Stop is to be moved to that part of the village.
- Seek any means of improving safety in accessing Playing Field by pedestrians/cyclists.
- Investigate possible new off-road pedestrian route between the two villages.
- Encourage people to volunteer to help with the Parish Council's Speedwatch scheme.
- Consider investing in flashing signs/ alternative forms of traffic calming to slow traffic at village entry points and Lower Green.

On Public Transport:



ACTION POINTS!

Investigate Health Centre mini bus scheme and see if Felsham and Gedding might replicate for specific dates/events.

Investigate Suffolk Link or similar as a means of getting people from Felsham/Gedding to Cockfield once or twice a week to use the regular bus service from there.

Investigate if a new Community Council might be able to procure and operate some kind of Community Mini Bus scheme (as in Cockfield).

By far the most comments on the Household Questionnaires as well as the Youth Questionnaires was on the lack of public transport – but although many people regretted the lack of buses, it was not clear how many people (other than the young or elderly) would use a service if reinstated since the majority have their own cars.

“The bus service is a terrible waste of money and fuel – hardly ever used. With a little bit of organising car journeys could be shared or offered to the elderly or those without cars”

Fifty people indicated they would be prepared to car share and a number of people volunteered to help set up a car share scheme.

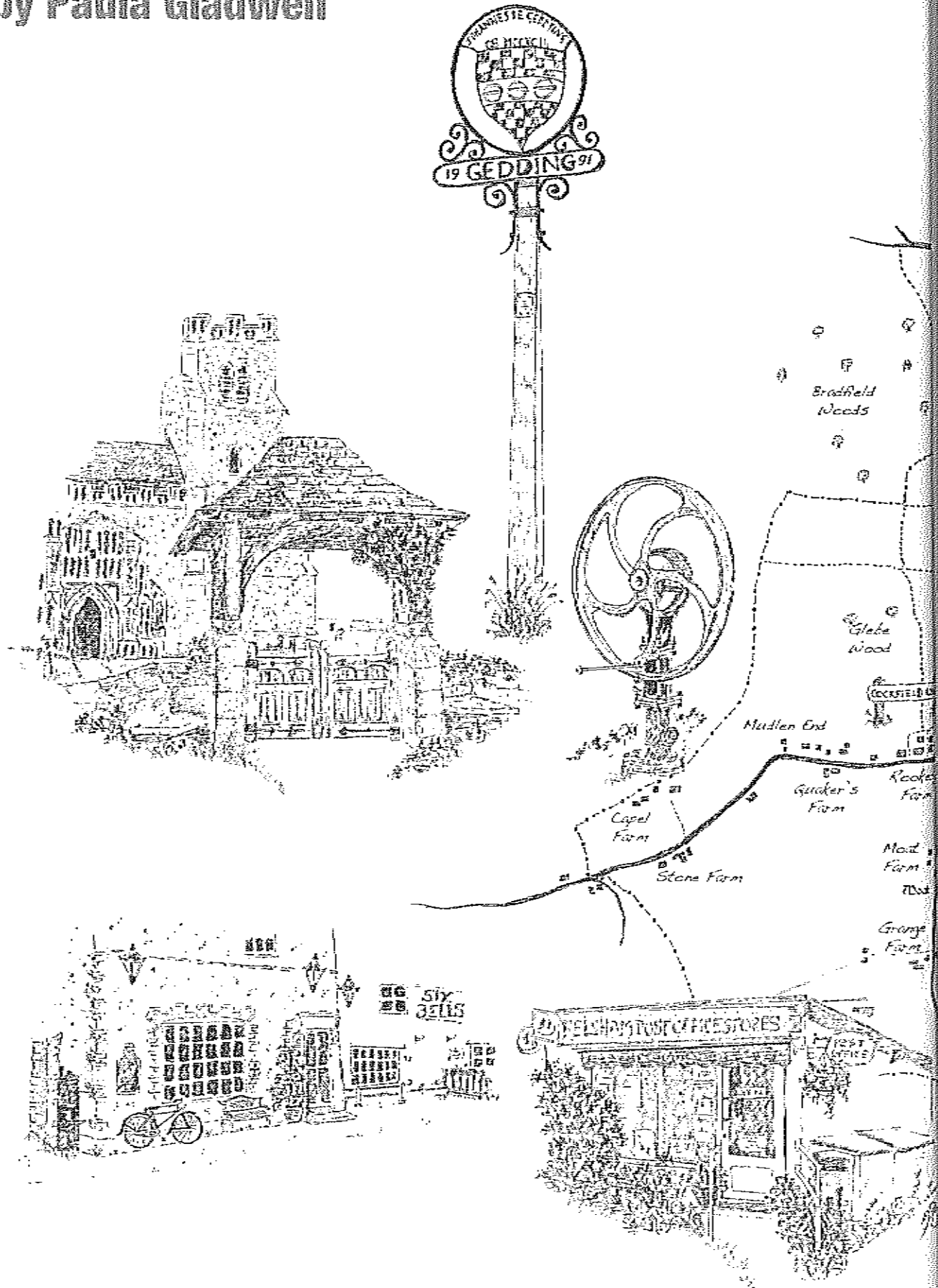
“Buses at least on market days and Saturdays, as anyone without a car, including the youngsters, can't ever get in or out of the village without a lift”

As mentioned above the Health Centre's mini bus scheme is used and valued and could provide a blueprint for our community to provide at least some kind of transport to those who need it for market days, “Friday nights out” for the teenagers, group outings etc.

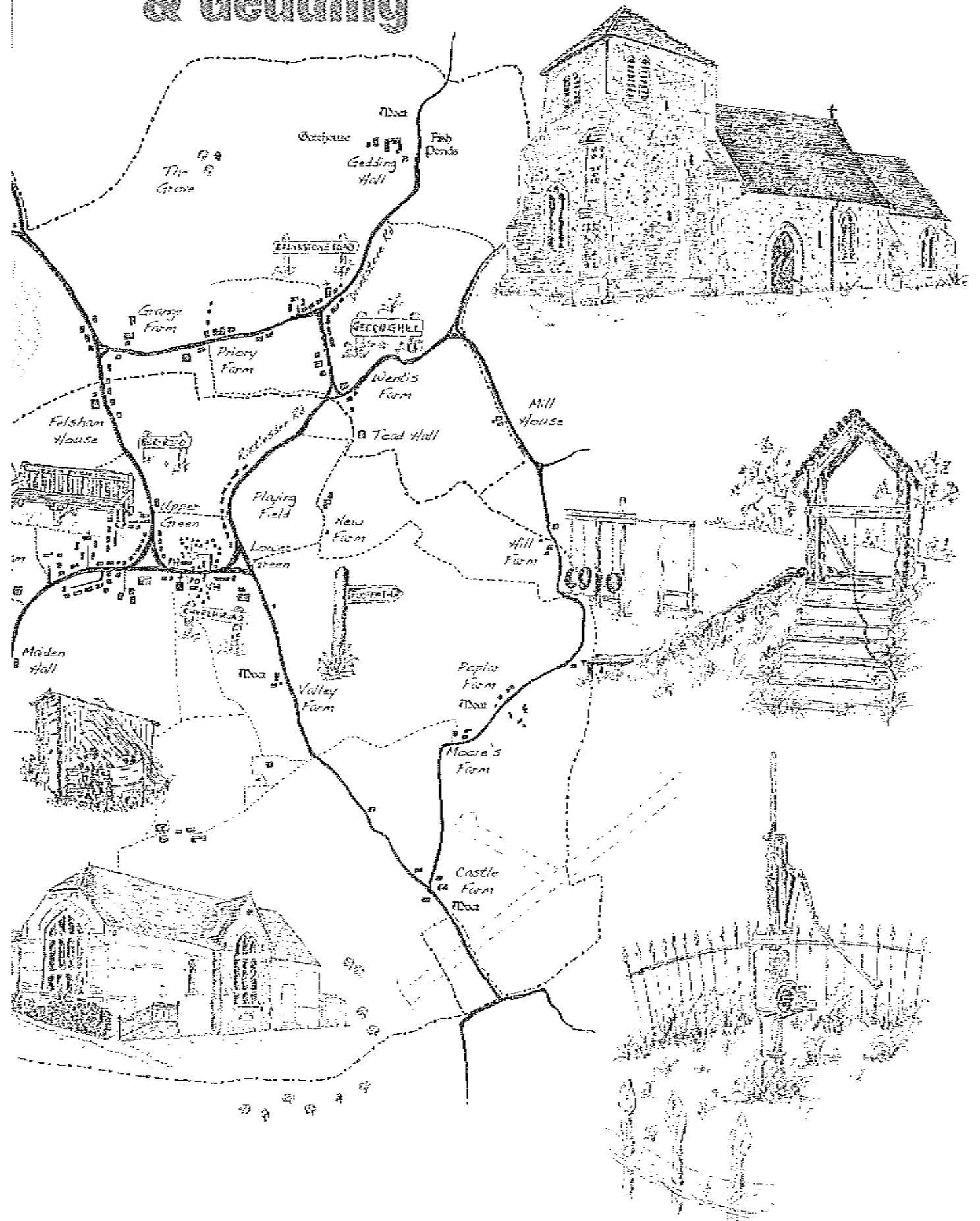
Currently there is a trial weekly bus service into Bury on Wednesdays allowing approx a 2 hour shopping trip.

Map of the Parishes of Felsham

by Paula Gladwell



& Gedding



HOW DID YOU
REPLY?

Young People said:



Thirty seven young people - aged between 5 and 17 - out of 46 identified by the Household Questionnaire responses, completed their own Youth Questionnaires. They were equally representative between girls and boys and even across the age groups but with a significant number of 16 years olds. 12 went to Primary School, 6 to Middle, 9 to Upper School and 9 to 6th Form or College.

There is generally a good degree of satisfaction among the young. Their favourite activities outside school appear to be watching TV or listening to music, 17% walk dogs and 13% cycle. Least favourite activities cited were playing football and basketball at 3% although the comments belied the statistics:

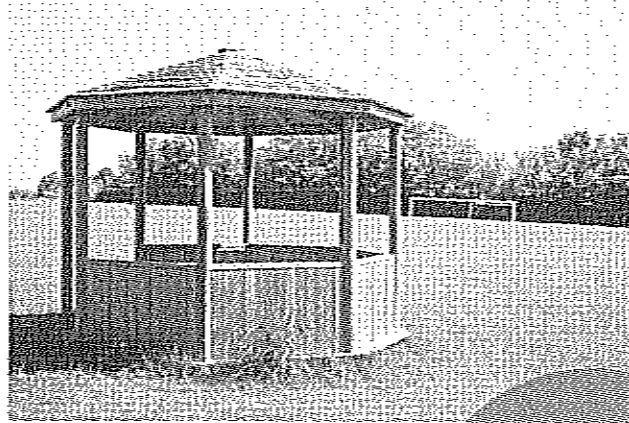
"better basketball court, because lots of people use it and the hoops are terrible"

Most felt safe in the villages, but those that didn't feel safe identified the lack of paths to the playing fields.

"impossible to ride bike to playing field, dangerous corner, cars too fast"

"traffic too fast, especially vans"

Over half were frustrated by the lack of public transport relying on their parents



ACTION POINTS!

● Seriously investigate traffic calming around the Playing Field.

● Safe access to Playing Field from both villages.

● Investigate some form of regular transport to convey the young to town.

● Invite the young to participate in Village planning meetings (Playing Field Committee, Village Hall Committee) to embrace their views and encourage greater participation.

● Working with the young village residents investigate improving facilities for teenagers (use of local tennis courts, indoor play sessions, internet café, etc).

to take them to town, clubs (swimming and dance), friends and even to part time jobs. 67% would use a mini bus if one was provided.

"there are no buses into and from town"
"isolation due to poor transport"

Although reading came quite high on the favourite activities (second in both villages) hardly any of the respondents used the mobile library and only a third use the library service in towns. The majority have mobile phones, nearly all have access to the internet, two thirds use email.

A long and diverse 'wish list' featured a tennis court as a strong favourite along

with a place to play indoor games. A third found the villages peaceful and enjoyed meeting friends and the friendly atmosphere. 6% could find 'nothing to complain about', cancelled out by the 6% who could find nothing to do!

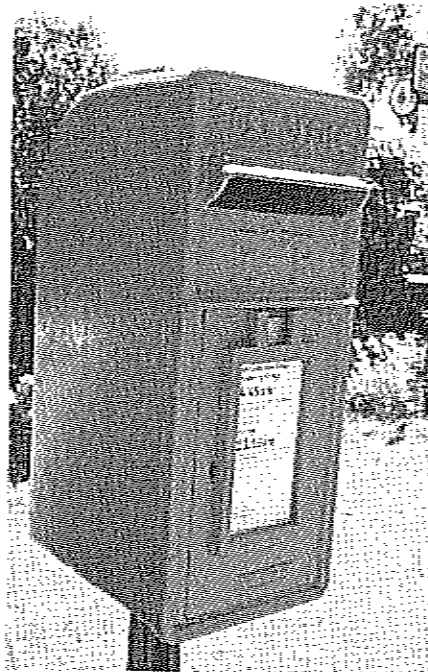
"Middle of nowhere so it is quiet"

"Quite a few young people that I know live here"

Three volunteered to represent their peers at Parish Council meetings or other forums.

HOW DID YOU REPLY?

On Business:



Thirty four Business Questionnaires were returned. In addition the Household Questionnaire indicated that 64 people work from home - thus one third of the working community (31%) are either working from home or running their own business from home.

"Nice quiet place to work with NOT many cold callers or interruptions"

It would appear that by far the biggest inhibitors to further business growth, new jobs or more people being able to work from home thus boosting the local economy are poor communications (mobile signal - affecting 87% of respondents and slow broadband speeds - affecting 65%). BT supply 71% of these businesses with their broadband.



As mentioned earlier crime has had a big impact on businesses in Felsham with 33% having suffered in the last 5 years - given the rural nature of Felsham and Gedding it can reasonably be assumed that at least some of these crimes are farm/metal/catalytic converter related type crimes. 27 businesses said they would take part in a Neighbourhood Watch type scheme.

Twenty three business respondents would support a campaign for a discreet mobile phone mast.

"by far the biggest problem with trying to work here is the very poor internet connection"

Sixteen businesses said they would give money to improve the village appearance and contribute towards Felsham Village Sign.

"Felsham appears tatty, verges poor, council houses a mess lack of flowers"

"Felsham and Gedding are smart, well maintained villages"

Twelve businesses requested entry to a Local Business Directory.



ACTION POINTS!

As with the results of the Household Questionnaire, there is a definite mandate here to 'do something about it'. The Steering Group have been monitoring the 'Better Broadband for Suffolk' campaign but as a matter of urgency we need to:

- Seek out experts within our working community as some of the comments indicated a certain amount of expert technical knowledge.
- Set up a knowledgeable working group to look at scale of the problem and come up with possible solutions. Possibly linking with other local villages? Our District Councillor might be able to help link us up with other villages with similar problems.
- Ask the Parish Council to arrange a meeting, involving our Safer Neighbourhood Team Officer, to discuss way forward.
- Introduce a Neighbourhood Watch Scheme involving the local businesses.
- Help promote local business to potential customers via a Local Business Directory (in the first instance as an Appendix to this Plan) subsequently in the Welcome Pack? In Village News?

Nine businesses claimed they might make use of a local light industrial park, for office space, storage or manufacture if one was available.

"Pretty rural villages which should not be blighted by industry - light or otherwise"



To join the campaign for better broadband for Suffolk visit:

www.suffolk.gov.uk/broadband

HOW DID YOU REPLY?

On Local Democracy:

There was a massive difference in response from the two villages in response to how well informed people feel about Parish Council matters, see Fig 1 below.

Why do Gedding residents feel better informed of local parish matters? Felsham parish councillors need higher profiles, residents should feel they know them and can approach them with any issues or questions and - despite our currently having the same person as our District and County Councillor - people are obviously unaware that she represents us on both councils. This was demonstrated by the responses to the question 'Do you know who your elected representatives are?' see Fig 2.

"prospective parish councillors should have held a meeting before the election to show us who they were and what they stood for"



ACTION POINTS!

- Inform Cllr Otton to see if she can improve content of her report in Village News.
- Review Village News layout to reinforce messages.
- Personal profiles of parish councillors on website/ Village News/Boards.
- District Councillor/ County Councillor/ MP details should be included on the VN contacts page.

Fig 1. Do you feel well informed on local democracy matters?

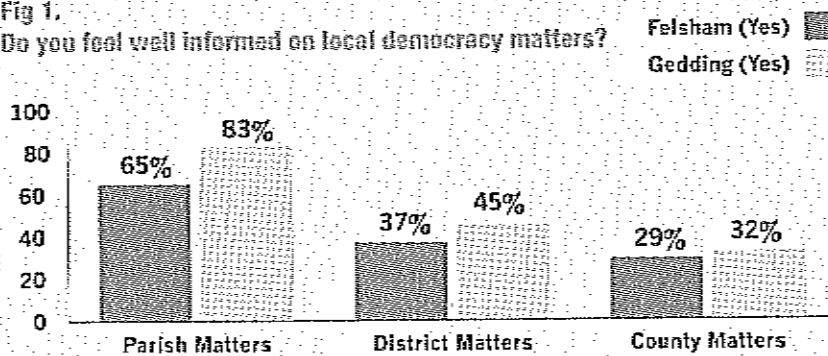
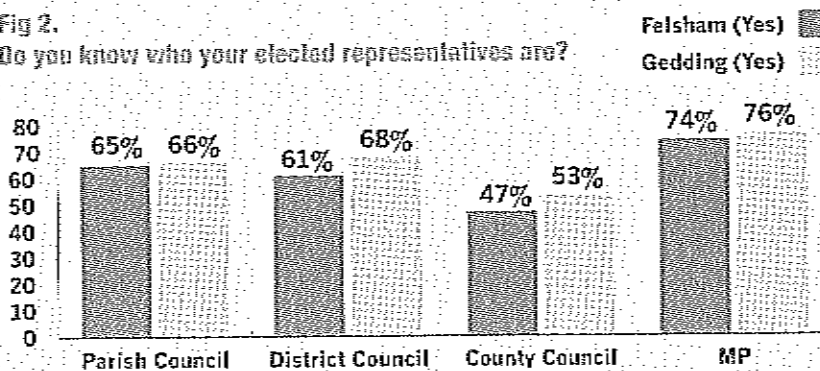


Fig 2. Do you know who your elected representatives are?



When asked 'Do you feel your elected representatives are aware of local concerns?' responses indicated that the remoter the tier of government the lower the satisfaction/level of awareness - see Fig 3, opposite.

This is as we would expect indicating local concerns are being easily addressed. Linked to the earlier question, it shows that people are contacting the appropriate body about their concerns, even if they don't know their individual representatives.

Risk Management/ Emergency Planning:

The main risks identified across the Parish Plan have already been mentioned and strategies suggested to mitigate them

- an increased risk of crime
- danger from speeding vehicles, especially in the vicinity of the Playing Field.

However accidents (both motor and personal) resulting from ice and snow came up and 'gritting' was a major issue with 43% raising it and the obvious health and safety risks to both the elderly and economic risks to businesses, as well as inconvenience caused to individual households, should be considered in connection with extreme weather conditions (recent flash flooding), strong winds with resulting power interruption, storms and falling trees etc.

A considerable number of respondents did offer to help in an emergency and a list has been compiled with their specialist qualifications/equipment available in an emergency. Copies of this list will be lodged with the Chairman of the FPC, Chairman of the GPM, at the Post Office and with Felsham Parish Clerk.

The Felsham E-vine and new village websites should be developed and integrated to help disseminate emergency information in the sort of situations described above.



ACTION POINTS

- To address the risks posed above, an Emergency Plan should be drawn up in consultation with Felsham Parish Council and Gedding Parish Meeting the local authorities and the Suffolk Joint Emergency Planning Unit.



Volunteers:

This is where people were unnecessarily modest! Only 18 people registered approximately 45 volunteer hours per week - this was an identifiable section so we know it is not representative of the amount of time actually given to the community. An additional 16 hours were registered as charity work outside the immediate community. Hours worked voluntarily in a community can be counted towards matched funding for specific projects so it may well be necessary to attempt to collate this information again at some point.

However 17 people volunteered to help with various church duties (churchyard work parties, cleaning etc); 3 to help with Village News; 5 to help with Youth projects; 11 people to help the elderly; 5 to help with a Neighbourhood Watch type scheme; 9 to set up a car share scheme; and 30, by far the largest number, volunteered to be involved with various environmental/conservation projects (e.g. litter picking).

Many of these volunteers could form the basis of working groups commissioned to deal with priority points on the Parish Plan Action Plan or join a new Community Council.

The next steps?

The Felsham & Gedding Parish Plan Steering Committee have drawn up this Document and the Action Plan that follows to the best of our ability and given the statistics presented to us. The relative priorities - High, Medium and Low - have been applied given the strength of feeling expressed in the responses but also given the relative possibility of achieving the actions.

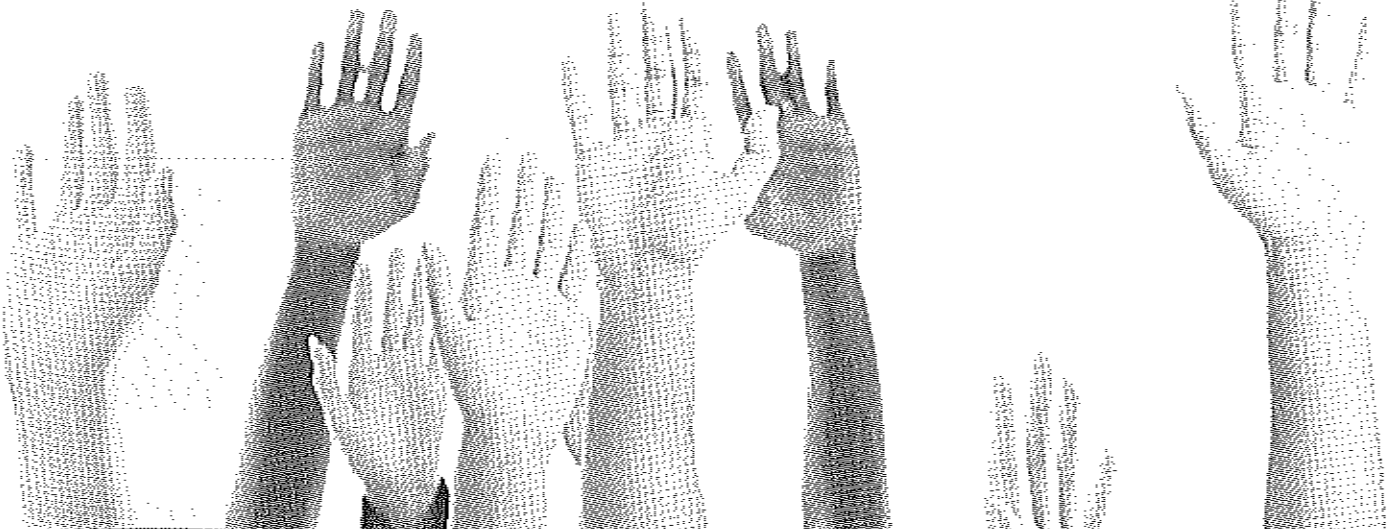
Since the meeting when we presented the highlights of the Plan many of the relatively 'easy fix' actions have been completed or commenced as indicated.

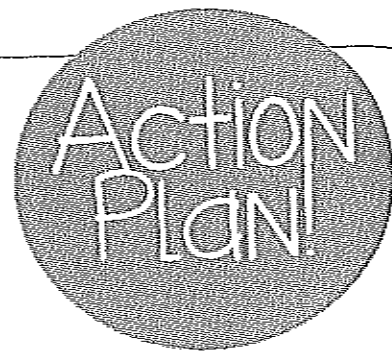
We are pleased to present this Plan to the villages and their respective Councils and respectfully request that the

Councils adopt the Action Plan. We also propose that the Steering Committee be retained for the time being, renamed 'Working Group' and as such we undertake to put into place the various Action Points or help create appropriate working groups to take specific projects forward as we have suggested. We also foresee a monitoring role ensuring the Councils take action on those points we have suggested are their responsibility.

All this is subject to agreement by Villagers at a further public meeting to be held following the publication of this Plan.

We hope to see you there!

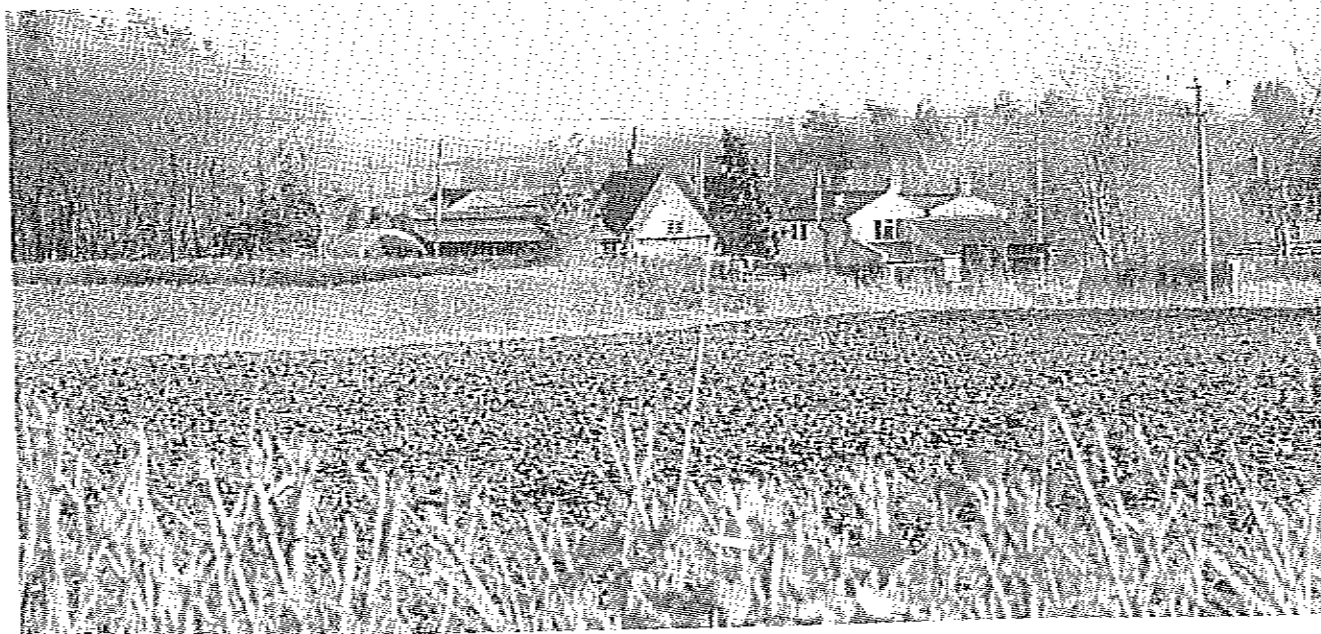




Felsham and Gedding Action Plan

Housing and Future Development

Issue	Action	Lead Organisation	Partners	Resources	Priority	Progress
Affordable Housing is needed in the two villages	Work with other agencies to ensure views of villagers are taken into consideration with new developments	Felsham Parish Council & Gedding Parish Meeting	Mid Suffolk District Council/ Housing Associations/ Suffolk ACRE/ Housing Developers	Parish Plan	Medium	Commenced
Renewable technology is favoured in the design of new houses	Work with other agencies to ensure views of villagers are taken into consideration with new developments	Felsham Parish Council & Gedding Parish Meeting	Mid Suffolk District Council/ Housing Associations/ Suffolk ACRE/ Housing Developers	Parish Plan	Medium	Commenced
Use of Redundant Buildings for Housing	Create a list of current redundant buildings that owners could consider for development	Parish Plan Working Group	Property Owners		Low	



Village Amenities, Social and Recreational Facilities

Issue	Action	Lead Organisation	Partners	Resources	Priority	Progress
Local shop, garage and pub well received and supported	Inform shop, garage and pub of findings of survey along with suggestions given for improvements	Parish Plan Working Group			High	Completed
	Monitor existing level of service	Parish Plan Working Group	Current Users of the Library Service		Medium	
Mobile Library Service is poorly used but well supported.	Advertise existing service better through Village Websites	Felsham Parish Council & Gedding Parish Meeting	Suffolk County Council	Link through to SCC's on-line library service	High	
	Advertise existing service better through Village News	Village News Committee	Current Users of the Library Service	Submit personal experiences as editorial for publication	High	Eleanor Shallow has been volunteered to do this!
	Advertise existing service better through Village Websites	Parish Plan Working Group	Felsham Parish Council & Gedding Parish Meeting		High	
Mobile Suppliers (Fruit and Veg Van, Fish and Chip Van, Milkman) are not known about.	Advertise existing service better through Village News	Parish Plan Working Group	Village News Committee	Create a "Local Services" page for regular inclusion	High	
	Advertise existing service through Local Business Directory	Parish Plan Working Group		Appendix to Parish Plan	Medium	Commenced
	Seek out other potential suppliers and invite them to advertise in the Village News/Business Directory	Parish Plan Working Group			Low	



Cultural, Sporting and Recreational Facilities

Issue	Action	Lead Organisation	Partners	Resources	Priority	Progress
Keep Felsham and Gedding Churches vibrant and relevant to the local populations	Comments received through Parish Plan Questionnaire will be passed on to the Parochial Church Councils and the new Rector for consideration and action.	Parish Plan Working Group	Parochial Church Councils		High	Completed
The Felsham Charity is not well known	Charity needs to produce a leaflet to explain its role and remit to village residents.	The Felsham Charity	Village News Committee/Grant Recipients	Submit personal experiences as editorial for publication in the Village News	High	

Health, Wellbeing and Safety

Issue	Action	Lead Organisation	Partners	Resources	Priority	Progress
Some residents and businesses have concerns regarding security.	Felsham Parish Council and Gedding Parish Meeting to arrange a meeting, involving Safer Neighbourhood Team Officer to discuss way forward	Felsham Parish Council & Gedding Parish Meeting	Suffolk Safer Neighbourhood Team		High	
	Investigate possibility of introducing a Neighbourhood Watch Scheme	Felsham Parish Council & Gedding Parish Meeting	Suffolk Safer Neighbourhood Team	Volunteer List	Medium	
	Investigate possibility of installing strategic lights to assist elderly into their homes	Felsham Parish Council & Gedding Parish Meeting	Suffolk County Council/Mid Suffolk District Council		Medium	



Communications

Issue	Action	Lead Organisation	Partners	Resources	Priority	Progress
Poor mobile phone signal and poor broadband connection	Set up a knowledgeable working group to look at scale of the problem and come up with possible solutions. Possibly linking with other local villages? Our County Councillor might be able to help link us up with other villages with similar problems.	Mobile Phone and Broadband Reception Working Group	Suffolk County Council	Volunteer List	High	
	Production of a Welcome Pack to new residents in the Villages	Felsham Parish Council & Gedding Parish Meeting	Parish Plan Working Group		High	
	Notice boards and posters must be kept in good condition, kept up to date, have space and be accessible to all.	Felsham Parish Council & Gedding Parish Meeting	Owners of the Notice boards		High	Commenced
Generally improve communication stream to all residents	Village News must be issued timely	Village News Committee			High	Commenced
	MSDC to be advised that newsletter is not effective	Felsham Parish Council & Gedding Parish Meeting			Medium	
	Encourage greater 'take up' of the E-vine	Parish Plan Working Group	Village News Committee and E-Vine	Welcome Pack	High	
	Encourage use of new Village Websites as a source of reference	Parish Plan Working Group	E-Vine and Webmasters	Welcome Pack, Websites and Village News	High	

Environment

Issue	Action	Lead Organisation	Partners	Resources	Priority	Progress
Request for local green waste recycling facility	Investigate green waste recycling possibilities, maybe on the Allotments?	Parish Plan Working Group	The Felsham Charity		Low	
Village Sign for Felsham	Support Felsham Parish Council in research, costing and placing of a Village Sign	Felsham Parish Council			Medium	
Local Footpath Network	Review if the local footpath network needs some modernising, especially with a view to better connections between the two villages	Felsham Parish Council & Gedding Parish Meeting	Local Landowners/Mid Suffolk District Council		High	
Provision of further bins	Investigate placement of further dog and litter bins and grit bins	Felsham Parish Council & Gedding Parish Meeting				



Traffic and Highways

Issue	Action	Lead Organisation	Partners	Resources	Priority	Progress
Speeding Traffic	Encourage people to volunteer to help with the Parish Council's speed watch scheme	Felsham Parish Council	Suffolk County Council		High	
	Consider investing in flashing signs/ alternative forms of traffic calming to slow traffic at village entry points and Lower Green	Felsham Parish Council & Gedding Parish Meeting	Suffolk County Council		High	
	Seek any means of improving safety in accessing Playing Field by pedestrians/cyclists	Felsham Parish Council & Gedding Parish Meeting	Local Landowners/ Suffolk County Council		High	
	Keep issue of parking outside the Post Office under review if, as has been suggested, the School Bus Stop is to be moved to that part of the village	Felsham Parish Council	Suffolk County Council		Medium	

Public Transport

Issue	Action	Lead Organisation	Partners	Resources	Priority	Progress
Lack of public transport at convenient times	Investigate Health Centre mini bus scheme and see if Felsham & Gedding might replicate for specific dates/events	Felsham Parish Council & Gedding Parish Meeting	Public Transport Working Group	Woolpit Health Centre/ Volunteer List	Medium	
	Investigate 'link' getting people from Felsham/Gedding to Cockfield once or twice a week to use the regular bus service from there	Felsham Parish Council & Gedding Parish Meeting	Public Transport Working Group	Volunteer List	Medium	
	Investigate if a new Community Council might be able to procure and operate some kind of Community Mini Bus scheme (as in Cockfield)	Felsham Parish Council & Gedding Parish Meeting	Public Transport Working Group	Volunteer List	Medium	

Youth

Issue	Action	Lead Organisation	Partners	Resources	Priority	Progress
Concern about safety of access to Playing Field from the two villages	Seriously investigate traffic calming around the Playing Field	Felsham Parish Council & Gedding Parish Meeting	Suffolk County Council		High	
Difficulties getting out of the villages	Investigate some form of regular transport to convey the young to town	Felsham Parish Council & Gedding Parish Meeting	Public Transport Working Group	Volunteer List	Medium	
	With the youth set up a working group of volunteers to investigate possible facilities for teenagers (use of local tennis courts, indoor play sessions, internet café, etc)	Felsham Parish Council & Gedding Parish Meeting	Youth Working Group	Volunteer List	Medium	
Requests for additional facilities	Invite the young to participate in Village planning meetings (Playing Field Committee, Village Hall Committee to embrace their views and encourage greater participation	Youth Working Group	The relevant committees	Volunteer List	Medium	

Business

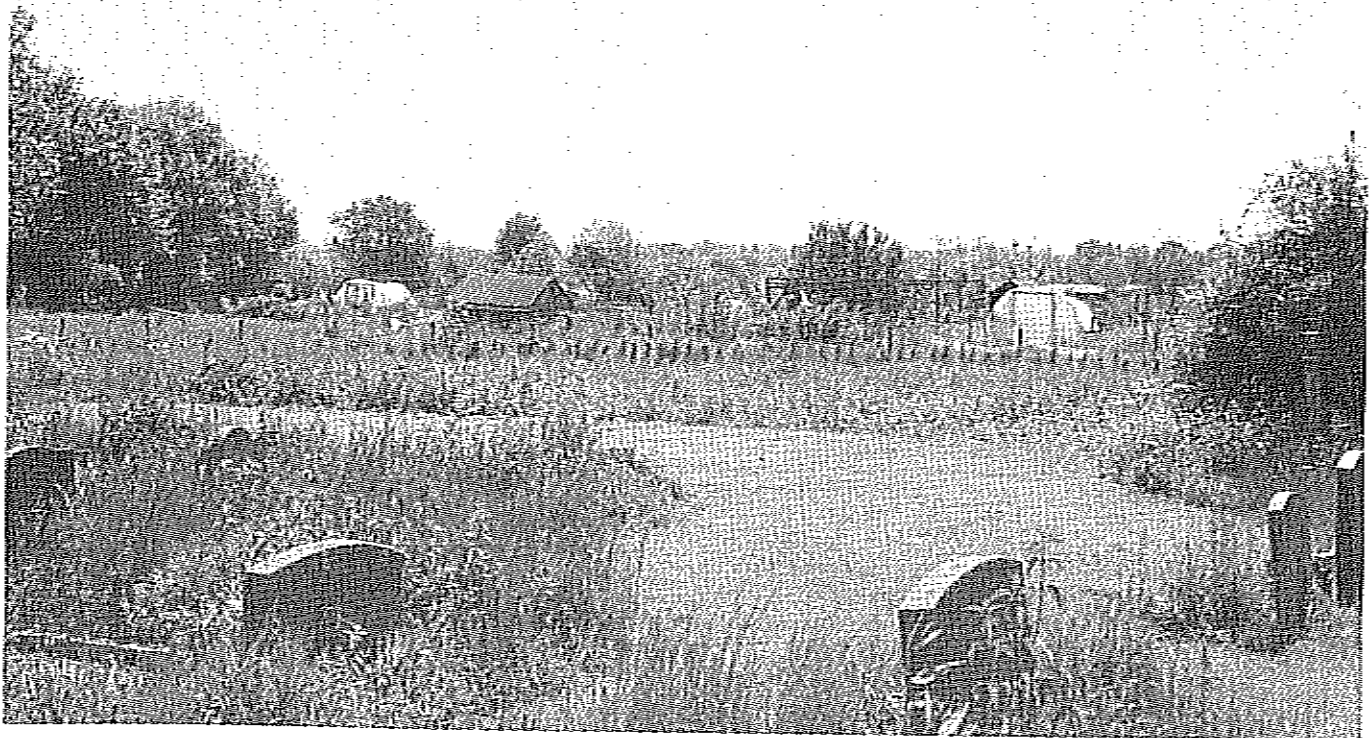
Issue	Action	Lead Organisation	Partners	Resources	Priority	Progress
Promotion of local businesses	Help promote local business to potential customers via a Local Business Directory	Parish Plan Working Group		Appendix to Parish Plan/Village Websites	High	Commenced

Local Democracy

Issue	Action	Lead Organisation	Partners	Resources	Priority	Progress
	Felsham to ask Gedding PM what they do to inform residents.	Felsham Parish Council	Gedding Parish Meeting		High	Completed
	Inform Cllr Otton to see if she can improve content of report in Village News	Felsham Parish Council	Village News Committee and E-Vine		High	
Dissemination of local information to residents	Review Village News layout to reinforce messages	Village News Committee			High	Completed
	Personal profiles of parish councillors on website/Village News/Boards	Village News Committee	Felsham Parish Council & Gedding Parish Meeting	Create template for "The Quick Interview" for all Councillors to complete	High	
	District Councillor/County Councillor/MP details should be included on the Village News contacts page.	Village News Committee			High	
Improve partnership working between the two villages	Steering Group to be set up of volunteers to clarify exactly what a Community Council would bring to the Villages that we currently do not have	Parish Plan Working Group	Playing Field Committee, Village Hall Committee and Village News Committee		Medium	

Risk Management/Emergency Planning

Issue	Action	Lead Organisation	Partners	Resources	Priority	Progress
An increased risk of crime/danger from speeding vehicles, especially in the vicinity of the Playing Field.	An Emergency Plan to be drawn up in consultation with Felsham Parish Council and Gedding Parish Meeting with first points of contact held at the Post Office and with the Parish Clerk.	Felsham Parish Council & Gedding Parish Meeting	The Emergency Services/ Mid Suffolk District Council (Emergency Planning Unit)	Volunteer List	High	
	The Felsham E-vine and new village websites should be developed and integrated to help disseminate emergency information.	Felsham Parish Council & Gedding Parish Meeting	The Emergency Services/ Mid Suffolk District Council (Emergency Planning Unit)	E-vine/ Websites/ Welcome Pack/ Emergency Plan	High	



Volunteers

Issue	Action	Lead Organisation	Partners	Resources	Priority	Progress
17 people volunteered to help with various church duties (churchyard work parties, cleaning etc)	Pass details of these volunteers to the Parochial Church Council	Parish Plan Working Group	Parochial Church Councils		High	Completed
3 people volunteered to help with Village News	Pass details of these volunteers to the Village News Committee	Parish Plan Working Group	Village News Committee		High	Completed
5 people volunteered to help with Youth projects	Contact these volunteers to see if they would set up a Youth Working Group	Felsham Parish Council & Gedding Parish Meeting			High	Completed
11 people volunteered to help the elderly	Pass details of these volunteers to the Village Friends Group	Parish Plan Working Group	Village Friends Group		High	
5 people volunteered to help with a Neighbourhood Watch type scheme	Pass details of these volunteers to Felsham Parish Council and Gedding Parish Meeting	Parish Plan Working Group	Felsham Parish Council & Gedding Parish Meeting		High	Completed
9 people volunteered to set up a car share scheme	Contact these people to see if they would form a Transport Working Group	Parish Plan Working Group			High	
30 people volunteered to be involved with various environmental/conservation projects (e.g. litter picking).	Pass details of these volunteers to Felsham Parish Council and Gedding Parish Meeting	Parish Plan Working Group	Felsham Parish Council & Gedding Parish Meeting		High	



Appendices

Local business directory

Acorn Air Conditioning & Refrigeration Ltd

t 01449 737906

m 07792 284 115

Commercial refrigeration service, breakdown, maintenance & installation

Apple Tree Cottage

t 01449 737793

www.appletrecottagefels.wix.com/appletrecottage

Suppliers of really tasty meat products

Bartrams Brewery

marc@bartramsbrewery.co.uk

Award winning micro brewery

Bay Tree VA,

Bay Tree Cottage,

Stone Farm, Felsham IP30 0HP

Contact Jane Cattermole

t 01284 828974

m 07790 721133

jane@baytreeva.co.uk

www.baytreeva.co.uk

Freelance PA/Secretarial Support for business owners and home based professionals.

Ron Came Fencing

t 01449 736959

Pat Clarke

Post Office Cottage

Felsham, IP30 0PJ

Complementary therapies - reflex

zone therapy, facial and Indian head

massage, counselling. Happy to do 15

minute sessions for fundraising

or parties.

Jan Cooper

The Haven, Upper Green

Felsham, IP30 0PL

t 01449 736779

jan.pilates@btinternet.com

Pilates instructor offering private lessons to clients for fitness and rehabilitation.

Also teaching clients skills required to aid health-promoting relaxation.

Jane Crick

www.janecrick.co.uk

t 01449 736913

Greetings cards, gift wrap, stationery, housewares and fine art prints.

Felsham Post Office Stores

t 01449 736260

Felsham Garage

t 01449 736477

NotNoTrouble Ltd

www.notnotrouble.co.uk

t 01449 737971

Web Design - Steve Wyman.

Event Management - Serena Wyman

Simon Ridley

m 0778 598 8532

Plumbing, heating, boiler services,

small building work

Six Bells Public House

Church Road, Felsham

t 01449 736268

Phil Truin

01284 828344

Free range poultry - chickens throughout the year, seasonal geese and turkeys

G.H. Whalley Fencing and Gates

1, Meadow Close

Felsham. IP30 0QS

t 01449 737115

m 07946412505

Gordon.whalley1951@btinternet.com

Installation of gates (bespoke) and fencing. Gates in conjunction with Suffolk Gate company

Peter Wragge Supplies Ltd

www.peterwraggesupplies.co.uk

t 01449 939192

Robert.plusroofing@tiscali.co.uk

Suppliers of steel/aluminium sheet roofing products, cladding, accessories etc

We appreciate this is an incomplete list of businesses operating within Felsham & Gedding, gleaned from the Business Questionnaire and other sources, but hope it might form the start of a more regular publication of local businesses and the start of a 'shop local' initiative within our community. Any local business not recorded here wanting to be part of a future Local Business Directory should email the Parish Plan chairman jud.th@felshamha1.com.

Useful contacts

Allotments

Felsham - Pat Clarke 736202
 Gedding - James Morgan 737445

Church Rector

Reverend Sharon Potter
 The Rectory
 Cockfield
 revsharon@btinternet.com
 01284 828599

Church Wardens

Felsham - Brian Deards 737364
 Gedding - James Morgan 737445

County and District councillor

Penny Otton
 Meadowside, High Street, Rattlesden
 Bury St Edmunds, IP30 0RA
 penny.otton@suffolk.gov.uk
 01449 737870

Felsham Charity

Chairman David Williams 737778

Felsham & Gedding Playing Field Committee

Chairman Adrian King 737495

Felsham Post Office Stores

t 01449 736260

Felsham & Gedding Village Hall

Chairman & bookings
 David Williams 737778

Felsham Parish Council

Chairman Simon Garrod 737728
 Clerk Paula Gladwell
 gladwellpp@aol.com 737942

Felsham Parish Councillors' names and contact details can be found on the Felsham Village website.

Gedding Parish Meeting

Chairman Or Henry Fell 736320

Mid Suffolk District Council

720711

MP - David Ruffley MP

House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA
 info@telldavidruffley.com
 0207 219 2880

Police

Safer Neighbourhood Team 01473 613500

Village website addresses

Felsham

<http://felsham.onesuffolk.net>

Gedding

<http://gedding.onesuffolk.net>

Felsham E-Vine

To subscribe simply send your email address to:
Faddb1011@btinternet.com

Glossary

ACRE

Action with Communities in Rural England

FPC

Felsham Parish Council

GPM

Gedding Parish Meeting

Acknowledgements

The Felsham & Gedding Parish Plan Steering Group would like to thank the following for their financial support in producing this Plan:

The Felsham Charity

Felsham Parish Council

Gedding Parish Meeting

Cllr Penny Otton & the Suffolk County Council

Mid Suffolk District Council

The Felsham & Gedding Village Hall Committee (for allowing us to use their premises)

Thanks also go to: the Hon. Editor Jill Carter, Jane Crick, Serena Wyman, Paula Gladwell, and Michael Shallow (without whose magic powers in the use of spreadsheets and macros, and the hours he spent collating the responses, we would have undoubtedly have come unstuck!). Also Sue Horrex, John Lee & Sue Theeman who were involved in the early planning stages.

Felsham & Gedding Parish Plan Steering Committee

Dr Henry Fell, Nigel Gambier, Cllr Simon Garrod, Paula Gladwell, Nichola King (Secretary) Toni Scates, Judith Shallow (Chairman), Cllr David Simpson, Jo Tavernor (Treasurer), Patricia Wilson, Serena Wyman.





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