



Annual Report for the year ending 31st March 2021

Summary

Welcome to the Society's Annual Report for the year ended 31st March 2021. In my letter to you of March last year, I said "*we will be back*". In fact, we have never been away. Through this Annual Report, I hope to give you a picture of what we have done over the past year for the Society and Felpham as well as to offer a glimpse of what lies ahead.

Our Main Activities in 2020/21

The Committee met seven times throughout the year, albeit virtually, and the following section of this report outlines the main activities we carried out on behalf of the Society.

Gardens and Gardening: As Friends of Old Rectory Gardens, we were able, for a brief period, to work with a small group of volunteers in **gardening at the Old Rectory Gardens**. We were required by Arun District Council to cease this activity in the autumn but were pleased, nevertheless, to learn that the gardens had retained the Green Flag Award won the previous year. The Gardens proved to be an important place where individuals could take their daily exercise, meet a friend at a distance, and otherwise enjoy the surroundings and fresh air. We are pleased to play a part in maintaining this wonderful green space at the heart of Felpham village.

We were able, too, to work in small, socially distanced numbers, on the **St Michael's Allotments** which have been transformed in recent years from a somewhat neglected site to a thriving community of allotmenters and volunteers. The Society has two plots, one of which is gardened by members who may then partake of the produce. The other plot is planted as an orchard which also provides an area that encourages bees and other wildlife. At the allotments, we grow-on the plants for the **Hanging Baskets** in the village and then plant the baskets themselves. Regrettably, we were unable to provide the hanging baskets in 2020 but the Committee took the decision to provide them for 2021 and they are already planted up! We have also been able to identify a person who will water the baskets twice weekly, once in place. These activities may be largely unseen but the results can be seen by all residents and visitors to the village.

Heart of Felpham Series: Courtesy of our History, Heritage and Archive Group, I have been able to write a number of articles about Felpham for the monthly *Felpham in Focus* magazine. Subjects have ranged from the Beach, the Felpham Sailing Club, and the Railway Carriages to Parks and Gardens. We hope you have enjoyed reading them. It has been a way in which we could stay connected with the community.

Keeping in Touch: We have also kept in touch with you through my **Newsletters** to members and, increasingly, via our **Felpham Village Conservation Society Facebook** page which now exceeds 800 members. Our online presence has developed significantly over the year and we love the postings of old photographs and postcards of Felpham and of people's memories and observations, all of which help us to preserve a social history of the village as remembered and recounted by former and current residents and visitors.

We also.... put up the **Remembrance Sunday Poppies** through the village in November, thanks to our volunteers, and met, greeted and did the “track and trace” for people at the Remembrance service; have been updating the **WWI Casualties Database**, thanks to the History, Heritage and Archive Group, with a view to uploading the information to the Archive section of the Society’s website; liaised with local authorities on “**shabby**” **areas** in the village (e.g. apparent fly-tipping) and on the maintenance of **local footpaths**; and encouraged **private beach cleans** on an ad hoc basis, donating litter pickers to members for this purpose; thank you to all of you who clean our beach: you are appreciated!

Event

We were determined not to see the end of 2020 without bringing a little festive cheer in the form of our Christmas Tree Light-Up Event. Although not our usual form of event with local school choirs, mulled wine and mince pies, we were nevertheless grateful to Butlins for their generous donation of a beautiful tree and to our volunteers who erected it, put up the lights, and compiled our playlist of piped Christmas songs and carols. The tree was blessed by Father John Challis of St Mary’s Church, in line with our tradition, and one of his daughters switched on our new set of lights.

Looking Forward to 2021/22

As our Treasurer stated in the Annual Accounts, we have ended the year with a surplus of £500 which is due to the grant we gratefully received from Felpham Parish Council. However, without that grant, we would still have “broken even” which puts the Society in a strong position going forward. Apart from the main activities of 2020/21 set out above, we have also used our lockdown time to plan for the year ahead. The following outlines some of these **plans and activities** for 2021/22:

We will be hosting a **virtual History Talk** for our members, given by Sarah Slater, Hampton Court Tour Guide and Guide Lecturer on her “Working with Ghosts at Hampton Court Palace”. This talk will be on Friday 7th May via Zoom, time to be confirmed.

We have booked Sylvia Endacott to re-give her **History Talk, as a live event**, on the history of Butlins in Bognor Regis. This talk returns by popular request and will be at the Felpham Memorial Village Hall, on Saturday 16th October, time to be confirmed.

We have recommenced **Gardening** with our small team of volunteers, under the rule of six, in the Old Rectory Gardens.

We will re-commence our monthly **Beach Cleans** on Saturday 22nd May, after the rule of six relaxes to permit larger, outside, socially distanced meetings. We have bought new litter pickers in anticipation of this (I am told, the kind of pickers our volunteers prefer!).

We will be holding a **Plant Sale** at the St Michael’s Allotments, on Sunday 23rd May, with refreshments available; times to be confirmed.

We have agreed to participate in the **St Mary’s Church Flower Festival and Open Gardens** on 3rd and 4th July by submitting a flower arrangement by the Society and also offering teas and coffees in the Old Rectory Gardens during the afternoons.

We will have our beautiful **Hanging Baskets** on lampposts in the village from May till November, through the planting and nurturing efforts of our Advisor and volunteers at the St Michael’s Allotments; followed by **Poppies** for Remembrance Sunday.

We will be starting a new activity, **Local Walks**, in small groups, where the small numbers will enable everyone to participate in what is being said or looked at as well as giving the

opportunity to join with other members in an informal activity. We will give more information on the walks anon.

Other activities potentially in the pipeline include: our doing more **environmental work**; re-starting our project on the area's distinctive **flint walls**; and, if permitted, hosting a **social event** for members in the Old Rectory Gardens later this year. We would welcome **your thoughts and ideas** on other activities or projects the Society could engage in with its members as we seek to evolve - and to protect what is good, improve things that fall short, and enhance our community wherever possible. Please do let us know at: mail@felphamvillageconservation.co.uk

My Thanks to the Committee, our Advisors, all our Volunteers, and the Felpham Village Post Office

Too many to name individually, I express my unreserved thanks to: the Society's Committee members who contribute to the organisation and functioning of the Society; our Advisors for their expertise and advice; our many Volunteers who have continued to give their services with good spirit in our different activities during the last year; and to the team at Felpham Village Post Office for their support in collecting members' communications to us.

My Thanks to You

Last, but certainly not least, I wanted to thank you, our all-important members. The Society exists for its members and would literally not exist without you. Thank you wholeheartedly for remaining with, or joining, the Society over the past, unprecedented year and as we collectively and carefully wend our way out of lockdown into glorious spring, summer, and the year ahead.

Questions

I am happy to take questions on the Annual Report and cordially request these are submitted in advance, where feasible, to mail@felphamvillageconservation.co.uk in order to facilitate the conduct of the AGM on Zoom.

Yours truly,

Joyce Pritchard
Chair, FVCS

April 2021