

ELSING PARISH COUNCIL - CHAIRMEN'S REPORT '24 - '25

The Council's website is brecklandparish.wixsite.com/elsingpc

1. Village Infrastructure.

Elsing Parish Council retains its full harmonious membership of seven, whose experience extends over several state and independent sectors.

Elsing's three pieces of land have been well used. The 100-yr Wood has been a base for the Woodlanders' club, the Allotments are all let and watered, and the Surveyor's Land on Heath Rd has developed into a "wild track" for young cyclists. This last has greatly exercised us as regards children's safety and the Council's liability, on which we are pursuing every avenue. A safety barrier is maintained and an annual survey of tree safety on all land completed. The eastern boundary of the Surveyor's Land has been marked and a map, more up-to-date than that of the Land Registry, is available from the Council.

The Council distributed a questionnaire concerning the possibility of reopening the Mermaid pub. The results were generally positive and there were some offers of support but as the pub is not for sale, the project has been put in abeyance.

The attempt to ascertain Elsing's resilience in the case of serious flooding continues, but is a slow process.

The two defibrillators required new pads but remained in working order. A litter pick took place in the spring.

2. Regulation.

The government is looking at the possibility of merging Norfolk and Suffolk county councils, without associated district councils such as Breckland. The implications for parish councils are unclear.

3. Planning.

Response times for comment to Breckland on planning cases is much reduced. The Council was not asked to comment on any private development requests, save for a variation on existing consent for the solar farm, whereby the revised siting of the two battery blocks did not put them any closer to residential properties.

We repeated our reservations about Breckland's consideration of a 5000-house development near North Elmham, (the guidelines have changed with the new Government), and we asked for 2-hour free parking in Dereham, though that plan too is suspended.

4. Allotment Committee.

The Committee has kept rents unchanged (though this cannot last forever) and has overseen the following.

A site for communal manure storage has been opened. Another is earmarked for a large shed to serve as a base for the Woodlanders' activities. The funds for the shed have been provided by the company installing the NOWZ cabling across the village, and Breckland Council is expected to approve it. Some orchard trees have been replaced thanks to a grant from Breckland. The usual produce show and apple pressing event were well attended, by children also. The tree nursery continued to provide saplings which were planted around the village by negotiation. Muntjac and Roedeer are increasingly entering the fenced area and we are exploring all methods of inhibiting them. A local beekeeper has installed two beehives (away from the plots), which should benefit both bees and fruit trees.

5. Social Events.

Five Pop-up Pub evenings were held in the Village Hall, one of them after the Wassailing rite in January. The Village Hall Committee organised several café mornings, and a first film evening.

6. Finance.

The Parish Council's financial year '24 - '25 ended with a reserve balance of £4,656, £200 more than we started with. Paper copies are available. The 'budget' and 'actual' columns show no serious discrepancies, though this can happen – hence the reserve. The precept (what we ask Breckland to collect for us at the same time as the Council Tax) was £4,588. The Allotment Committee keeps a small, separate bank account for the surplus from pop-up pubs, which has paid for posts, ties, chicken wire, manure deliveries, and materials for the Woodlanders. Its balance is £799. There are no debts.

BH & OL, May 25