

The Community Fund



A progress report from the Steering Group is to be the first contribution to the Villages' Newsletter

It may seem a long while ago since members of the Steering Group came round the villages with a questionnaire canvassing your opinions regards the best use of the money from the Solar Farm! Since that time, back in early September, the Steering Group have collated the results, and advised the Parish Council so that an 'Action Plan' can get underway.

The Steering Group (with representatives from both East and West Beckham) headed up by Julia Dovey, who is also on the Parish Council, has produced a very helpful summary of the results. After a meeting with the Parish Council in November, a communication of the action points is to be the basis of the first Village Newsletter. The following summary is in the same order as the Questionnaire, but not necessarily in order of priority or importance.

"I would like to start by thanking all those who took part in the survey. We had over 100 replies and have been impressed by the time you must have taken to complete them and the careful consideration you have put into your comments and suggestions. This is a summary of the results and an explanation of how we intend to start putting your ideas into reality." Julia Dovey (Chair)

The Church, War Memorial and Cemetery

There was insufficient support to go ahead with either of the suggestions regarding the future use of the church. As the building and ground did not belong to the village it was felt that this was not an appropriate use of the Community Fund. There was widespread support however for the restoration of the War Memorial and some improvements to the Cemetery. Some strong opinions were expressed regarding any support for the Bodham and Beckham Village Hall but there were sufficient votes for to allow for this to be considered in the future. Any donation would, however, be conditional on the original name being reinstated and used on all signage, posters, correspondence etc.



The Allotments

There is considerable support for improvements to the allotments together with some potential future allotment holders!



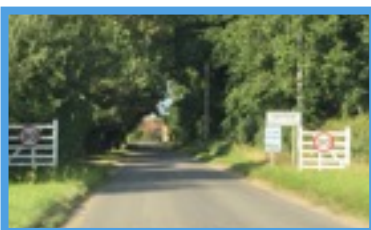
We looked at the allotments in both villages and decided that investment would be better if concentrated on one site to

begin with, due to the small number of allotment holders.



The allotment site in East Beckham is situated on a slight southward facing slope, is sheltered by hedgerows and has more fertile soil which should make allotments here more productive than the site at West Beckham. Possible improvements could include providing a water supply, upgrading the access track, possible provision of parking, a poly-tunnel, sleepers for raised beds etc. The allotment site in West Beckham could be managed for wildlife and brought back into use in the future should there be sufficient demand.

Street furniture, signage, & general village improvements



There was a great deal of support for village name signs with 'gates' at the entrances to both villages suggested together with paving, where needed, in front of post boxes and noticeboards.

Mains gas had equal votes for and against but this was considered to be out of the hands of the Parish Council to be able to provide.

CPR machines (defibrillators) were supported and one for each of the villages was suggested.

A village shop was also supported and we had some volunteers with offers of help although the viability of such a venture means that this idea would have to be carefully thought through before any decision was made.



Grit bins were requested for East Beckham as were new benches in selected sites in both villages. Safety mirrors are to be investigated for the Long Lane junction and Allotment lane exit.

The lack of a bus service was highlighted and, following improvements to the Lodge Hill junction on the A148, we could ask Sanders to consider re-instating the bus service through West Beckham as well as looking at any possibility of buses for those in East Beckham.



As there was not enough support for the re-building of the Reading Room or for replacing it for a shelter for walkers, demolition seems to be the only option and the residents of East Beckham could then decide on a suitable use for the site remaining.

More social events were also supported and the Steering Group would like to consider suggestions for these events and hear from any of those prepared to organise or help.

Children's Play Area, West Beckham

We have been requested to look at the play area with a view to providing more play equipment and more regular mowing to keep the grass at a suitable length.



Although a 'log cabin' was suggested for social events, it was thought that the area was too small to provide for that and a reasonable play area for children. The provision of a children's play area in East Beckham was not supported.

Village Information



Strong support was expressed for a quarterly newsletter, a household information sheet and a village web site.

The possibility of using the bus shelter as an information centre (as well as a place to wait for the occasional bus!) was also supported and this could become a site for one of the two parish maps requested for the villages.

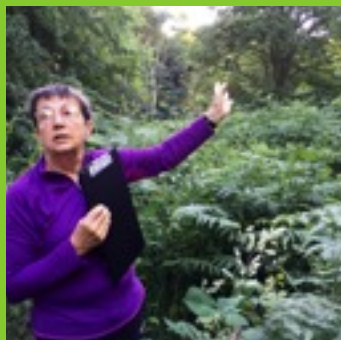
Getting started

There is a very long 'To Do' list and it would be impossible to do everything at once, but at the moment the members of the Steering Group are working on the following:

- ❖ seeking permission from the Church to restore the war memorial and for work at the cemetery
- ❖ getting quotes for the restoration of the war memorial to prepare a bid for grant funding
- ❖ developing a new web site and creating the newsletter
- ❖ investigating the possibility of joining a local oil buying group
- ❖ asking for expert advice to look at the safety of the trees where they overhang the paths on the West Beckham Green, East Beckham Common and the cemetery prior to improving these areas for public use and looking at ways to enhance them for wildlife
- ❖ two grit bins have already been ordered for East Beckham and we are waiting for NCC to approve the sites and get them filled up
- ❖ exploring suitable sites for defibrillators prior to purchase and installation

We already have a few names but we would welcome anybody who would be interested in volunteering for:

- ❖ a conservation group to help with clearing overgrown areas, putting up bird boxes etc
- ❖ helpers for a possible local shop
- ❖ expanding the local Oil Buying Group
- ❖ Social Event Coordinators
- ❖ The Allotment Group



Members of the Steering Group are meeting as regularly as possible but the next scheduled meeting is mid January, before the next Parish Council Meeting.

If you have any comments or questions please email or call Julia Dovey (bottom left) or Bob Lewis who is a member of the Steering Group and represents East Beckham on the Parish Council (top left).

If you would like more detailed information regarding the results of the survey, votes cast for individual projects etc please contact Julia Dovey.

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