

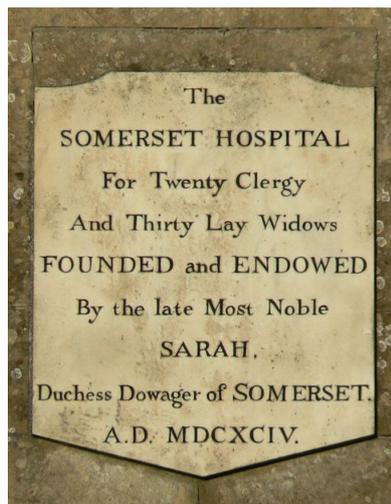
VILLAGE REPORT FOR FROXFIELD

Froxfield is the furthest village to the east of Wiltshire on the Wiltshire/Berkshire border with approximately 382 residents (as of last census in 2011). We are a village divided in two by the A4 which runs through the middle. The speed limit is 40mph but a great many drivers exceed this so please be aware of this when crossing the road. We are in the process of setting up a community speedwatch group in the hope of educating speeding drivers.

We have a public house; The Pelican (1) on the east side of the village, and Froxfield Memorial Hall (2) which stands at the head of our small village green and children's play area. This was built as a memorial after World War 2 and is now home to The Phoenix brass band where several villagers are current members. They have their own committee raising much needed funds for the upkeep of the hall and the maintenance of the grounds. Various events and classes take place in the village hall such as band practice, pilates classes, coffee mornings and later this year, a barn dance and supper.

All Saints church,(3) which is Grade 2 listed, is situated north west of the village. It was originally built in the 12th century, rebuilt in the 13th century and renovated in 19th century. Within the churchyard is the war memorial (4). The maintenance for the churchyard and graves is done by both the Working Links Community Payback team and local villagers who have several 'clear-up' days throughout the year.

Within the village is the imposing red brick Duchess of Somerset Hospital (5) (now known as 'The College') with it's beautiful bell tower. After the Civil War, Sarah, Duchess of Somerset (1631-1692) bought the land and had built on it this wonderful building for the creation of almshouses to help impoverished and troubled ladies of the lower classes. In the 1920's, Lord Long became a trustee and ordered many improvements including the installation of heating and bathrooms, although some of these were not implemented until after his death. Today, these 50 historic self-contained units, known as cottages, are fully modernised and maintained to a good standard. They are arranged in four terraces in the form of a quadrangle, with views into the pretty grounds, with the ancient chapel at the centre of the green. The residents, all female and over 55, are from a diverse mixture of backgrounds from all corners of the globe.

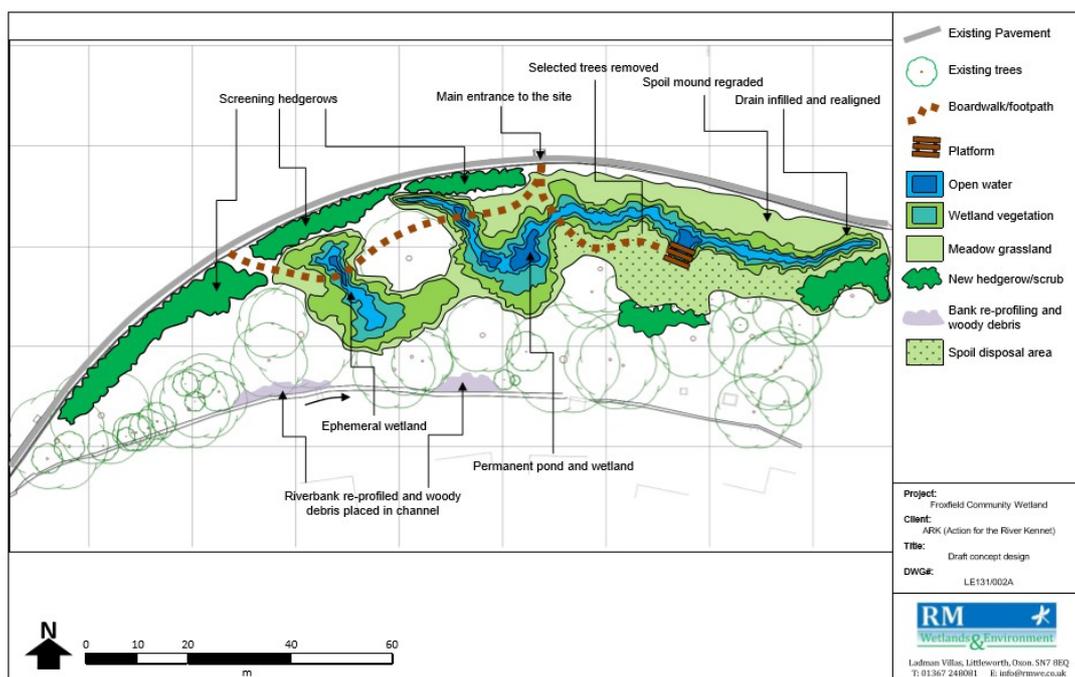


The village green and children's play area (6) hosts the church fete in September and the annual beer and music festival which is held in June each year. Local singers and musicians from all genres come to play, including The Phoenix Brass band who practice weekly in the village hall and Crash UK, a Froxfield based rock band. Both events are very popular in the community and villagers help with marques and equipment and the food and beer is sourced from local suppliers.

Opposite the village green (across the A4) is our exciting new project – The Water Meadow(7). This parcel of land was bequeathed to the village by Lord Rootes in the 1970's for use as a community space however had sadly fallen into a terrible state of neglect and was a real eyesore, choked with weeds and nettles. (see photo below).



2 years ago, the Parish Council put into motion plans to renovate this land and turn it into a nature reserve for the local community. We contacted ARK (Action for the River Kennet) who devised the scheme (see below) which include a dipping pond for children and a board walk to enable disabled and elderly residents from Brendon Care home (8) to also access and enjoy the land.



Unfortunately there have been various delays with Wiltshire County Council over planning issues but we believe these have now been resolved and hope to be given the go ahead on 30th April. We have been very fortunate to secure two separate funding grants for the work; one from the Pocket Parks scheme, and the other through the National Lottery.

In October 2018 we contacted Bristol, Gloucestershire, Somerset and Wiltshire Working Links Community Payback team who came and helped us to clear the nettles, brambles and weeds over 5 weekends in November and December.

In January 2019, tree works were completed to pollard and fell the dead and diseased trees on the water meadow. In February and March 2019, work was completed on the banks of the chalk stream (a tributary of the River Dun) which runs to the north of the land parallel to Manor Park. Anna Forbes from ARK (Action for the River Kennet) and her amazing team of volunteers and some residents from the village turned out on 4 damp, cold Saturdays in February and March to install wooden stakes and bundles of hazel known as faggotts along the banks of the stream. It was hard work, but everyone enjoyed the day, getting to know new people and learning about the stream and importance of the work.

The faggotts and stream banks were then planted up with marginal plants such as sedge, flag iris, marsh marigold and purple loosestrife and these are just beginning to appear through the hazel twigs. These will not only create lush, new banks of insect loving plants, but 'channel' the stream to improve flow and water quality. Small inlets have also been created for fish and invertebrates to spawn and lay eggs. ARK are also hosting a stream dipping afternoon on 18th May for the local children to learn more about what lives in the stream.

We hope that work will soon be able to start on the rest of the water meadow to install the boardwalk, dipping pond, hedges and other planting. We have been actively publicising the project on our new website – www.Froxfield.org and also with leaflet drops, posters and emails to local residents asking residents to get involved as we want this to be a community project.

On Sunday 5th May, we have a community clear-up day planned which will include litter picking, sign cleaning, weeding etc. Several large planters have been made by hand from old pallets by several of Froxfield's residents. They have been painted, planted up and placed around the village to introduce some much needed colour and give a sense of identity and pride to the village.

Problem areas

Green Farm Farmhouse – a Grade II listed property which has been vacant for over 2 years after the death of the previous occupant. The property was sold to new owners 18 months ago and they want to undertake various renovations and improvements but are coming up against many restrictions to the proposed works by English Heritage and planning officers. Therefore the house is sadly sitting empty until these issues can be resolved to everyone's satisfaction.

Sewage works – there is a sewage plant set back from the A4 to the East of the village near the Pelican public house. The tanks are in the process of being replaced with new ones so there are lorries and workmen currently at the plant. In front of the plant is a parcel of marsh land over which the Parish Council have no jurisdiction.