



## **Christmas and New Year Greetings to our Friends & Stakeholders – A Year End Update.**

The Coddenham Centre recently passed its second anniversary, following the transfer by the Coddenham Parish Council to the Charitable Incorporated Organisation, that was set up at their request in 2019.

While it has now achieved its first full financial year, it has been very much a voyage of discovery and continues to be so. It's one that has been set against a backdrop of considerable disruption and distortions, caused by COVID-19 and variants.

The inherited incomplete accounts which the Parish Council at the time worked hard to rationalise for a best possible transfer under the circumstances, has nonetheless meant difficulty in accurately forecasting, plus there have been several legacy issues that emerged, ranging from outstanding repairs to a major catastrophe in the loss of central heating, because of a history of poor maintenance. However, the Coddenham Centre CIO have tried not to look backwards and if it has done, it is only for some context to best address those challenges. At last, we are starting to build a picture, although life seems never devoid of surprises!

In less than two years the Centre has moved forward considerably despite these challenges and while we are not looking for accolades, the efforts of the founding and current trustees with the support of part-time employees, volunteers, our generous benefactors, sponsors and the community at large, has meant the Centre has thrived, rather than just survived.

While in the past it was effectively managed to 'stand still', it has now enjoyed despite extraordinary circumstances, significant (but fragile) growth in usage and overall public confidence. Only one in 26 community centres remained open during the pandemic. We are proud to be 'one of the one's'.

The Centre has simultaneously achieved an annual reduction in precept dependency of almost 15% and by 20/23 will have achieved its target of reducing that dependency by nearly 50% in real terms, a year earlier than voluntarily projected in 2019. In plain terms, half a dozen cups of coffee per resident, per year.

We have worked hard to maximise opportunities for external funding and government support where available and we are grateful to a range of benefactors who have recognized the Coddenham Centre's value and commitment to the community.

In parallel with this progress, it is also made significant advances in developing a contribution to the local and national climate emergency. It has turned disaster into opportunity with the installation of the air source heat pumps, the establishment of Coddenham 's first vehicle charging points, new planting of new trees, hedges and wildlife areas plus considerable investment in insulation for the building. It is participating in Suffolk 's Solar Together program with the view to offsetting the additional electrical costs, next year. This year we were short listed for an award in environmental excellence and were granted Suffolk Carbon Charter status.

Full details, including information on our finances, sponsors, supporters, can be found on this website, go to 'About'.

Above all, the Centre has continued to contribute to the health and well-being of the community at a particular critical time and is proud to have offered 20 activities for all ages, including the unwell.

Its capacity and configuration currently present constraints for any further expansion. However, we arrive at a New Year with robust reserves and an intention to address these constraints through re-configuration, starting to assess the re-purposing of 900 square metres of a life expired bowling green, further expanding activity, ensuring a sustainable facility for the community and hopefully, a continued reduction in dependency on precept support. In the meantime, we have asked that the progress be recognised by the Parish Council and the Coddenham Centre be fully supported in the future.

While facing more challenges afforded by another COVID strain, we will continue to work closely with all our suppliers, sponsors and customers across the east of England and the community of Coddenham, to ensure a safe and continued contribution for the benefit of all.

With our very best wishes to everyone for Christmas and the New Year.

Andrew MacPherson - Chair on behalf of Trustees and staff, the Coddensham Centre,  
Ray Collins, Debbie McDonnell, Gail Springett & Charmian Hall

