

FLITCHAM VILLAGE RENUMBERING PROPOSAL

Report for Flitcham Parish Council

At the Annual General Meeting of Flitcham Parish Council held on the 25th May 2021, it was agreed that an article would be included in the following Flitcham Newsletter which detailed the proposal to renumber all the houses in the village and to invite all residents to comment on the proposal.

Residents were asked to submit their comments, to me, by email and all comments received are included in this report. Copies of the emails and two comments sent by Facebook Messenger, will be available at the meeting.

AGAINST THE PROPOSAL

Colin Lukey: I've eventually got round to giving this issue some consideration and a response! I have had some involvement with raising this issue before which resulted in Roger putting together an excellent village plan which is posted in a couple of locations that are not obvious and so neutralised in usefulness. I have sent delivery drivers on a few occasions now to the community centre to use it. The reasons stated in the October newsletter for making the change seem more emotive than reasoned to me and the most emotive being the ambulance which is somewhat surprising as these vehicles have sat navs which can give house numbers. I have experienced a re-numbering going back some 5 years in the village in which we live in Spain when the local council arbitrarily came round and put new numbers on all the properties. We are number 815 or 72 depending on old or new. When an ambulance comes here it is just as likely to go to the old 72 as the new 72 which is at the other end of the village. If the numbers were changed in Flitcham what is the process for changing the information on sat navs and how long would it take? It is a farce here in Spain with letters being delivered incorrectly, delivery drivers not knowing where to go and the result is that people stick with the old numbers. The problem does not get solved by re-numbering. I have heard that someone in Flitcham is against the proposal due their printed notepaper, however, I doubt that affects many people as most will use computers with a template. Consideration also needs to be given to the amount of work that each resident would have to do informing others of their new address. The Christmas card list is over 100, as an example, all contacts that would need notifying at some time and while that may be a flippant point there are all the organisations such as utility companies, insurance companies, banks, credit cards, HMRC, DVLC etc etc that need to be informed. As our address is the registered address for some business's that I'm involved with there are other issues there. When it is all added up I would estimate that about another 100 organisations would need informing of the new address in my case. I can do without that work, without very good reason. Then of course you have credit companies that score your credit rating and issue you a score based on your address amongst other factors, for all sorts of things from mobile phone contracts to HP etc etc. I would not want to inherit the address of one or two people in the village that I can think of! I could go on about the problems of changing the numbers in the village but when emotion is taken out of the argument and common sense applied, to change the numbers will generate far more problems than we have at the moment.

I am against it to be clear.

On a positive note, Roger's village map works well when people can find it and I would suggest that a much bigger map (like can be seen in Business Villages) be prominently displayed in a couple of village locations. Something elegant in design and easily found. (**NB** – Colin's email was read out at the Annual General meeting but Colin agreed that I could also include his comments in this report.)

Colin Farrow: Please find attached some of my thoughts on the re-numbering proposal. Please be so kind as to pass them along to the Parish Council.

1. Alternative Suggestions

1a. Inform the Village Residents of their legal obligation to clearly display the house number/name. The majority of house names/numbers in the village aren't visible from the road so simply informing residents of this could lead to a vast improvement on signage.

1b. Have an internal village wide vote to canvas opinions if re-numbering is wanted. Base any action going forward on this vote rather than assuming and moving forward regardless.

2. Legislation

2a. I am more than a little concerned about the Borough Council voting process which keeps getting mentioned if any proposal were to go to the next stage. The not returning a vote would be classed as a yes vote is most disturbing. The West Norfolk Government website states that it "adopts the spirit of the act by Section 21 of the Public Health Acts Amendment Act 1907"

https://www.west-norfolk.gov.uk/info/20083/address_management/495/street_naming_and_numbering_explained

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/Edw7/7/53>

Section 21 of the 1907 Act states: "The local authority may, with the consent of two-thirds in number **F25**. . . of the ratepayers [**F26**and persons who are liable to pay an amount in respect of council tax] in any street, alter the name of such street or any part of such street. The local authority may cause the name of any street or of any part of any street to be painted or otherwise marked on a conspicuous part of any building or other erection."

This legislation doesn't have any mention of abstaining counting towards a yes vote. I would very much like to see the legal basis of the Borough Council implying this is a lawful way of conducting any potential vote on re-numbering.

2b. There is also no mention in the legislation of an entire place/village being re-numbered. The legislation clearly states 'street'. As such each street/road would need to be looked at on an individual basis.

3. Implications

3a. These are some of the many people/institutions which would need to be informed about any potential house number changes.

- family and friends
- people you do business with
- doctor surgery, medical services
- finance (Bank, Building Society, credit cards)
- insurance companies
- HM Land Registry
- utilities (gas, electricity, water)
- DVLA
- employer
- TV License
- passport
- telecommunications companies / mobile companies
- broadband services
- memberships

3b. There is a cost to changing all of the above. Mostly this is a great deal of time and effort but monetary costs are also involved. For instance, administration charges from insurance companies. Phone charges racked up from the many hours involved contacting all the relevant parties.

3c. Flitcham has deep and meaningful history to so many of us. I want to be able to show my Grandchildren number 44 Church Road where my Nan Dorothy and Grandad Bernard lived and where my Nans parents lived before them. Where I can vividly recall so many memories. I want to point out number 33 where my Great Grandfather Will sat me on his knee as a little boy and use to tell the two little dickie birds rhyme. Where my Grandmother Violet's kitchen always had the sweet smell of proper baking. Where will the history be when 44 and 33 are no more? This was my Grandparents which I always knew as 44 but now it's called 19 because people didn't display their house numbers clearly and the village use to have character and a soul.

3d. A person's address is a very big part of who they. It's an identity as strong as any passport. Who is going to explain to the elderly people in the village who have become with one with their address over 10/20/30/40/50+ years how to change everything which a change of numbers would bring forth? Who is going to be there to comfort them and alleviate the induced unnecessary stress?

Jayne and Paul Brennock: We are against the re numbering of the entire village and feel there must be a better solution which we will voice at the end of this email. It is without question a problem and what happened re: the emergency vehicle being unable to locate a property with someone in need was awful and potentially life threatening. We do not feel that re numbering the entire village would solve the problem as there are a significant number of houses that are named. Would they have to change their house name or would they remain the same and be prefixed with their number? (which we believe is a requirement to do so) At present it must be an absolute nightmare for delivery drivers etc . Not only have they to contend with trying to find a number they have the added stress of some addresses with names and numbers or just a name. A comment made on the village Facebook group asked if Sandringham Estate were aware of the problem and whether Sandringham would have the vote or tenants. We believe that residential status should not be relevant in this important issue and felt it had connotations of class division. Suggestions already put forward such as map/s seem a good suggestion. In addition we feel that each house could have signage facing the road displaying numbers /names (large enough to be see) and those that are not could have signage in the form of arrows that would direct those looking for them. The 'what3words' app is fantastic, however it needs to be appreciated that not everyone has or is able to use this technology.

Sasha Edmononds – LIV Architects: Further to receipt of the village newsletter and proposed re-numbering, we would like to comment as follows:

As business operating in the village, as opposed to a domestic resident, we would object to the addition of a number to our address. We don't currently have a number, but are simply The Old Rifle Range. As a business, the implications of a change to our address are too complex to consider, and would cost us as business in both time and money to rectify all our business interests accordingly, including Companies House, banks, insurances etc.

Our property is owned by the Sandringham Estate, and therefore we would of course expect them to be consulted as part of any ongoing discussion, and will be making the above point to them.

As we are not residential occupiers, we are not in a position to comment on the impact on the residential properties and would therefore leave that to others, but would ask that our property be removed from the map of number changes.

Joey Smithson: I maybe too late with my comments (hopefully not) but at the Parish meeting it was mentioned about having map/ address boards, one in Abbey Road at the top and one in Church Road by the Bell. To me with all the disagreements on the numbers being change or not this may be a good option. Even if this is just a trial to see if this option works.

Jane Sadler: I would be grateful if you could put forward my views against the proposed re-numbering of Flitcham.

Changing our address would negatively affect myself and my children for the following reasons:

1, the huge inconvenience of changing every bank account, bus pass, tenancy agreement, work, college and school identity, driving licenses, passports, tv, sky, water, BT, mobile phone contracts. Every single account we deal with would have to be changed for what I consider be of no benefit what so ever.

2, financial implications - DVLA, passport, insurance companies and many more charge an administrative fee for a change of details which I would be forced to make against my will.

3, credit - a credit rating is built on your history, including the addresses from which we are connected. Forcing an address change may not directly affect someone's credit immediately but it certainly would have an indirect impact.

4, I strongly oppose an idea which was mentioned in the village newsletter suggesting there be a map displayed with contact names and numbers. This I feel would be a huge identity and security risk and would not want my personal details publicly displayed.

I am aware that we have a unique numbering system that has developed over many years but surely it is up to the residents to make sure their properties are clearly accessible and clearly numbered? I purchased large numbers for my wheelie bins at a cost of 99p each for a simple yet effective way of showing my property number.

John Blyth: (By Facebook Messenger) Hi Noelyne in my opinion This has been handled so badly from the start. The whole village doesn't have a problem. However a handful does. Having more than one number in the same street would cause a problem but I see this as a problem for a few people and they should get together with the parish Council and come up with a solution. I am against the re numbering of the whole village

1 90% don't have a problem

2 Are people clearly numbering and naming there property for delivery and emergency services

3 I reject the council plan as it is badly thought out and moves the problem to another part of the village which as yet doesn't suffer the problem I will fight the change against my property re numbering.

Kind regards John Blyth

Noelyne Fuller: On a personal note, I would always like to add mine and Terry Elyard's opposition to the proposal to be recorded due to the logistical implications and the costs involved. My business is also registered to my home address so, again, there are implications from a business point of view as well as personal. I also think consideration should be given to the effect this could have on the elderly residents in the village who may have no access to the internet etc, they could find the whole process of having to change all necessary documentation totally overwhelming.

I have also received comments against the proposal, verbally, as follows:

Margaret Elyard: I have lived in my house for 50+ years and I do not want my number to be changed.

Eileen Jarvis: I see absolutely no advantage to the village in renumbering the houses. People should clearly display their own house number and I believe they are required to do this. Also, there would be considerable costs involved to change people addresses.

FOR THE PROPOSAL

Geraldine Farrow: (By Facebook Messenger) I have just received my copy of the newsletter, with attached report on the proposal to renumber houses. Unfortunately I couldn't attend the meeting as I had just had a hip replacement. Months ago I suggested adding contact details to the map with no response at all. I also provided a personal account for the benefit of the meeting of situations where emergency vehicles being unable to find my address twice, in spite of the house being clearly named and numbered. My concern is a reference in the proposal that 'one resident' has raised a number of concerns which have been included in the report against the renumbering, yet the argument 'for' the proposal doesn't appear to be reflected in said document for balance. Including my own experience I am aware of 6 separate occasions where an ambulance has been seriously delayed or begun to exit Abbey Road because they couldn't find a property. Due to the potential danger to life such a delay could cause, I feel arguments 'for' the proposal should have been included to give a more balanced perspective. Of course the less serious issue of misdelivered/lost mail is also something to consider.

Jan Smith: With reference to the village numbering system, I have thought a lot about writing this post bearing in mind how personal the discussion has become. However I don't think that all views were represented in the report. Despite having discussed this and also written some months ago mine certainly weren't. I moved to Flitcham 20 years ago. During a long career I have moved over thirty times, primarily within the U.K. but also living and working in Asia. Despite having moved so many times, (including living in a house that was renumbered), I've never had problems with credit ratings, utility connections and bills or post. Until that is I moved here. Since then the problems have been multiple and on going. They include the wrong delivery of post to my address, initially a minor inconvenience, (I can and do hand deliver them) except that after 20 years it is less so. Then there is my post. I don't know how much post has gone astray but I certainly know it has. Some eventually turns up. Some never does; this includes gifts for special occasions, items I have ordered, and medical equipment. I or the sender is then faced with trying to track the item and to decide whether to request a refund for non-delivery, attempt to arrange a new delivery or to give up. I can't count how many times I have stood in the road in the winter waving a torch because I'm expecting a delivery and know the driver will be unable to find the house. Neither can I count the number of times I've been stopped in the road by a frustrated delivery driver who is looking for another address, not necessarily mine, which they cannot find because of the numbering system. I was also involved with the ambulance debacle when my neighbour was extremely unwell. Driving out of the village I was stopped by villagers and asked to drive after a retreating ambulance unable to find the house and to bring them back to my neighbour, which fortunately I was able to do. If she had needed help at night, when there is unlikely to have been anyone around the consequences for her or anyone in her situation could have been appalling. Then just a few weeks ago I walked ahead of a transport ambulance because leading them to the house they needed was simpler than trying to direct them. Obviously people can choose to disbelieve or disregard my experiences. That is of course their prerogative, but I would at least ask that people recognise that there is another valid perspective.

Robert Seaman: Good evening, I been living here now for about 18 yrs. i like my house number it's abit like a friend and comforting but change comes one way or another and understand the reasons to change it on balance I think it has to be done for the reasons mentioned. So I believe it has to be done, I understand that it will cause early difficulties for the post and online issues kind regards Robert, at number 28a paston cottage.