

Address for Snape Parish Church Coronation Service - 7th May 2023

The Snape Community

Paul Richards - Chair Snape Parish Council

Thank you for asking me to say a few words about Community and in particular our community here in Snape.

As Chair of Snape Parish Council, I am delighted to be able to do that on this special occasion and it is a particular privilege to be speaking to you here in our wonderful Parish Church which has been at the heart of our community for eight hundred years. Here we are surrounded by memories of our neighbours and here the community has gathered to celebrate great occasions, as we did last night and to commemorate the people of Snape through time. Today this vital role of the Church and its importance to the whole community is being recognised by the Congregation here and by the Friends of Snape Church as well.

I am a newcomer to Snape, although my family's roots are in this part of Suffolk. The Suffolk joke, of course, is that it only takes five (or is it six) generations to become a local but that has not been our experience of living here over the last nine years. The community welcomes newcomers and it also recognises the importance and value of the families who have lived here for generations. That is why there is so much pride in the Village and it is how there is a thriving and engaging network to support the place and the people who live here.

Of course, this is a very special place, the river, the marsh, the woodland, the wildlife and biodiversity which surround us and Greensnape champions it and draws it in to the Village itself so that people can play an active part in enlivening and sustaining our environment. Our community is very much in tune with the priorities of our new King.

A *vital* element in the glue that keeps us together seems to be COFFEE. The monthly Village Hall Coffee morning is a very much valued opportunity for neighbours to meet, win raffle prizes and acquire extraordinary items they never knew they needed from the rapidly growing bric a brac shop. Volunteers and participants old and new getting together and raising money for the upkeep of the Village Hall which itself is one of Snape's vital community assets providing space for all sorts of public events, classes and parties throughout the year.

Coffee and the Golden Key, another Village asset provide the backdrop for Meet up Monday, a weekly meeting place for people to chat, share and reminisce. It has its regulars and occasional visitors and there is also the certainty that it will be there for anyone who is in need of advice, support or just a friendly shoulder to lean on.

All this is backed up by the Snape Good Neighbour Scheme which welcomes newcomers to the Village and provides a network linking volunteers with people who

need a bit of help. During the COVID crisis Good Neighbours collected medical prescriptions, shopping, supported the Village Larder, undertook a bit of light DIY and provided telephone back up for people who were unable to get out of the house. That continues with more than 500 different tasks carried out since the inception of the Scheme.

There is so much more that could be said about Grumpy Old Men, Ladies who lunch and Girls about Snape, about local charities, open gardens, carol singers and Speedwatchers, about sports and crafts and of course our Village School nurturing future generations in Snape and the neighbouring villages.

So, as we celebrate the Coronation and a new era in the life of this country we also celebrate our own community, The Village and all the people who live, work and visit here.

Conscious of our history, thinking about the needs of the present and looking to the future.