

APCM REPORT - May 2024

FOSS FOCUS REPORT FOR 2023

Foss Focus continued to serve the community of Saxilby and surrounding areas in 2023 and provided a valuable source of information on events, activities, and items of interest throughout the year, as well as being an invaluable means of outreach for St Botolph's. It also supported many local businesses by providing space for their advertising, which in turn generated income to help with the production costs.

As agreed at PCC in 2022, the price of the magazine went up by 10p to 60p in January 2023; people were also given the option of paying by BACS if they so wished and quite a few took advantage of this option. Together with the new advertising rates which came into effect in January 2023, this helped cover the increased printing costs, having absorbed three price rises during 2022. The advertisers were given the option of paying quarterly or half-yearly, as well as annually, to help them spread their cost – a few chose this option.

After further discussions with the printer at the beginning of the year, slightly thinner paper was used from February to make further savings (115gms paper instead of 130gms). Also, the number of magazines printed was reduced to 960 instead of the previous 1000 – just enough. This avoided wastage and made further savings. Where possible, the magazine was kept to 48 pages to make further savings, although sometimes the amount of news required 52 pages. In June, the number printed was further reduced to 940. With each copy then costing around £1.28p to produce and customers paying 60p, it was so important to maintain a healthy number of advertisers to cover the difference.

As normal, at the beginning of the year and in advance of issuing invoices, all advertisers were contacted, this time predominantly by email which saved a great deal of postage. Whilst there were numerous changes and updates and some cancellations as normal at the beginning the year, most advertisers remained for another year. The invoices were then sent out, again using the email rather than post. During the year 11 new advertisers came along, keeping the total well above 100.

The magazines continued to be printed by IMPRINT and delivered by them each month to 36 Church Road, where they were collected by our band of faithful volunteers who distributed them free of charge to our regular customers throughout the Saxilby area. Alan and Freda Lowe continued to do a sterling job in organising the distribution each month, often delivering magazines themselves when people were unavailable. In addition to home delivery, there were various other outlets with 130 copies going to the Saxilby COOP for general sale, together with 30 to M R Poole's shop and 25 copies each month to the Post Office at Newton-on-Trent. Other outlets included Duck Egg Blue in Saxilby (10 copies), Quay Gifts at Burton Waters (6 copies) and Kettlethorpe church (10 copies) – all on sale or return basis.

The magazine continued to benefit from regular reports and articles from numerous organisations in the village, including the four centre pages (occasionally five) from the Parish Council. Other regular contributors included the Cricket Club, Tennis Club, Bowls Club, u3a, WI, Saxilby Drama Circle, Saxilby Strollers, Brownies, Scouts, Cllr Jackie Brockway, History Group, Reading Group, and Skellingthorpe Camera Club, with several reports from Saxilby School. Also, a regular page on Kettlethorpe, Newton and Fenton.

The number of copies sold during 2023 remained stable and, following the cost saving measures taken earlier in the year, was about the right number to maintain a reasonable balance between printing costs and income, allowing for a small safety margin.

After 56 years and 672 editions later (December 2023), FOSS FOCUS is still going strong and remains the valuable village 'bible' for information and events, being well received and enjoyed by its many readers.

David Turner (editor)