

History of "The Feature":

In the Parish Plan 2004 the Parish Council asked the Belchford and Fulletby parish if they would like to recreate the Village Green in front of the Blue Bell Inn. 51% were in favour 37 % against.



Belchford Ahead developed this theme in February 2006 from an idea proposed by John Smith to create a "feature" or land mark in the village to enhance the appearance and provide a focal point for the community.

On the 1st March 2006 an open village meeting in the Village Hall invited residents for ideas of what form this "Feature" could take and where it could be developed. For people who couldn't make the meeting, a red letter box was put outside the village hall for residents to put their thoughts in writing into, 17 people put ideas in the box, 10 in favour of a feature being outside the Blue Bell Pub. At the meeting there was a turnout of 46 people and many suggestions of areas to develop were brought forward. A show of hands indicated that the 27 of residents present felt that

something should be developed to enhance the appearance of the village outside the Blue Bell.

The red box was used again to invite further written thoughts over the subsequent month till the next meeting on the 19th April 2006. Six positive answers were placed in the box suggesting a range of sites and structures, no negative responses were posted.

From this meeting the idea of a Village Trail was devised, a route around the village with a range of benches, info boards and decorative features positioned in strategic spots. Over the next year the "trail route" was developed at Belchford Ahead meetings providing the idea of a scenic walk for residents and visitors alike. It was felt that the trail should begin at the front of the Blue Bell Inn with a "Feature" to enhance this large expanse of tarmac.

To decide what form this "Feature" should take, everyone in the village was invited to design a "distinctive feature" this was advertised on the News Letter, also local schools, art colleges and craftsmen invited to put forward designs. This culminated with an open design meeting at the Village Hall on the 10th November 2007 with local craftsmen helping to formulate an idea. Designs were collected and developed into pictures, models and descriptions, before, during and after the meeting.

After extensive advertising with posters, the newsletter and word of mouth all the designs were displayed in the Village Hall on 12th of December 2007 for a village ballot. This ballot allowed residents to vote for their favourite 4 proposals and included the opportunity to vote for 'no feature'. This would decide which were the most popular design (if any) to go forward for a full village (delivered to each door) vote. 62 people took the opportunity to vote, 46 in favour of a feature of some sort 16 against anything. The 4 most popular designs were a roofed shelter on grass, a roofed seated plinth on cobbles, a tree surrounded by a bench on grass, an ornate signpost and bench. These 4 designs were illustrated in colour and displayed on a ballot paper and delivered to every Belchford household, in May 2008. 142 votes were received, with 51 in favour of a tree with bench surround on a grass triangle, 43 for a roofed shelter on grass, 24 for an ornate signpost and bench, 9 for a roofed seated plinth on cobbles.

Work began in March 2009 and will continue with the bench design, Under the tree a time capsule has been buried with artefacts from 2009.

Approximate Costings:

Finance applied for from The Wolds Sustainable Development Fund which granted 75% of the project cost. Witham Valley structural work £6000 + Vat £900 Crowders tree £225.00 + Vat £33.75 Turf £80

A total cost of £6305 + Vat 933.75 Grant funding £5238.75 With a total cost to Belchford Ahead of £2000.

