



LEARNING HOW TO CHANGE A LIGHTBULB - 2022

The sodium street lamps in Framlingham are nearing the end of their lives, and so the Town Council decided it is now time to change them with more efficient LED ones, meeting its commitment to reducing CO2 in the climate and biodiversity emergency declaration.

Over the past few years LED technology has rapidly developed and there are now LED options for street lighting which can use up to 75% less electricity.

Whilst most of the street lamps in Framlingham are either owned and maintained by the County Council (or on new estates by their management company) we own 81 of the street lights across the town. All of these are fitted with sodium lamps, which give off the familiar street lamp yellow light. Many of these lights are atop lamp columns which are 25 years old.

The Highways Committee began investigating how to change to LED lights - changing a light bulb seems such a simple task.....

Firstly we needed to conduct a full structural survey of all the columns to see which to replace and which lamps were in danger of failing over in the next few years.

At present the Town Council lamps are maintained and controlled by the County Council. So we sought their help and advice and soon learnt that the process would be a lot more involved.

For a start, as this task would be quite a big and costly undertaking, this meant it had to go out to formal tender, with a raft of health and safety regulations and contractual issues to iron out.

Then the colour of the light was questioned. Recent research has revealed that a blue coloured light can adversely affect insects who think the light is moonlight and get befuddled in the glow. The way to go is to install warm lights (for the technical: a light colour of between 3,000 and 3,500 Kelvin) which have the least impact on the bugs.

Quite surprisingly the tender attracted over 20 companies interested in bidding for the works. It soon became apparent that the range of options available meant comparing like for like was impossible. This meant the process had to be refined and new more detailed specifications drawn up.

At long last there were two companies in the frame, and after careful analysis of their bids the Council decided to appoint Provision Ltd to carry out the work, which has now begun.

By the end of August the town should be benefitting from a full replacement of the Town Council owned street lamps fit for another 20 years - the new lamps should look similar to the ones being replaced. The electricity savings should be significant, and the moths will not think they are moons!