

NOTES FROM THE LAKENHEATH ANNUAL ASSEMBLY 2024

Attendees: circa 45, including representatives from the Pavilion and Playing Field, Village Hall, Methodist Church, Heritage Group, Lakenheath in Bloom, Lakenheath Consolidated Charities, Sunset Barn Care Farm, The Library, Lakenheath Youth FC, Parish Council, St Marys Church, District and County Councils.

1. Apologies had been received from Cllrs Hugo, Cahill, Hastings and Overy.

2. The Notes from the 2023 Annual Assembly were agreed.

3. The Lakenheath Parish Council Chairman, Cllr Gerald Kelly, told the meeting that this has essentially been a year of difficult decisions. Contractors engaged in grass cutting, etc are providing a perfectly adequate service after the departure of the Village Keeper. There is a big difference in expenditure, the cottage is being let.

He announced, to applause from the gathering, that the Youth Football team had gained the position of best in Suffolk. (Mr R Horrex had not arrived at this point).

The influx of US Air Force personnel mean that rents are high in the village. US personnel don't pay Council Tax, hence the precept has gone up. This situation is being taken very seriously by West Suffolk Council. The District are paying for the conversion of streetlights to LEDs, part two of the decarbonisation initiative.

Cllr Kelly thanked his fellow parish Councillors, who are subjected to frequent abuse for no pay. The Parish Council now has a business-like approach in order to maximise resident benefit.

The next version of the Lakenheath Times will be produced in Lakenheath, the previous editor had been great, but she lived some way away.

The Neighbourhood Plan had stalled because the consultant was unwell, now back on track.

There are regular visits from parking enforcement officers. If you see bad parking, please report it on the website.

The Police have been standing alongside our Lakenheath Speedwatch team volunteers, thanks to the team who do so much.

4. PC Andy Green is the local Police officer, there has been a change, with the Police going back to community policing. He covers four parishes, Beck Row, Lakenheath, West Row and Brandon, attending parish council meetings and visiting schools. There is now much more visibility. In terms of reporting, he urged people to report on the website. Lakenheath is one of the safest places in the County. Suffolk itself is the second safest County in the UK. Parking remains a big issue.
5. County Councillor Colin Noble spoke of the County Councils £750m budget, over 80% of which is spent on things you don't see, e.g. care of elderly, child abuse. The bit the public see is the roads. County Council role is to make decisions on spend. Difficult to compare (e.g.) care of elderly with potholes. We are behind the curve with potholes. Lakenheath Village Plan will be interesting and helpful. Persimmon are building near to the Cut, some provision of affordable housing. Social housing is allocated according to a points system. There has always been noise from the base, which has increased. However, the Base does bring in a lot of money. Mr Putin's behaviour leads Cllr Noble to assume that US personnel will be with us for some time. The two biggest issues are parking and speeding, good to see that Lakenheath has an effective Speed Watch team. He often sees drivers parking on the zig zag lines when will they realise that these are not parking areas?
- Q: Road signage needs cleaning and is sometimes covered by trees etc.
A: Report on website, get a reference number
- Q: Update on Station Road development?
A: None at the moment. Cocksedges started to put the roads in but the company are no longer involved with the development. The school will be built before the houses.
- Q: Will the school be big enough?
A: Yes, will be able to cope. Academy Trust will take over to make decisions. The Academy only applies to early years, will discuss later,
- Q: There are all these new houses being built but only one doctors and few shops?
A: The Local Plan has no connection with the organisation that funds GPs. I think this should be a statutory requirement. Shops will come.

If you have any further questions, google me and I am at the end of the telephone.

6. Methodist Church representative, Linda Spencer - Planning a Youth Club 12-16 years starting September this year. We have group planning meetings every other week and doing training e.g. safeguarding. Looking forward to doing this! Not sure of the week day on which the Youth Club will be held, checking other local provisions. Funding for training and games has been provided by West Suffolk Council.
Chairman remarked that this is long overdue, many thanks to the team at the Methodist Church.
The Pavilion representative told the meeting that their youth club had closed, remaining equipment e.g., PS4s, could go to the new initiative.
7. Richard Horrex from the Youth Footpath Club had arrived late, and confirmed that there are approximately 208 children playing. Ranges from under 7s to under 15s. Encourages useful life skills. i.e., teamwork, friendship, competition, confidence, ways to cope with defeat. Club is run in a fun, safe and a cost-effective way, all are volunteers. Matches played under FA have to meet strict rules and `tick all the boxes`.

The Club has just won Club of the Year- not just the youth side but the men as well!

Chairman noted that there is a theme, about looking after our youth. Jo Chambers at the Library has worked wonders.

8. The Chairman of Lakenheath Playing Field/ Pavilion, Kevin Watts, , described the events that had been held- Party on the Park, May Day, Fete (always the first Monday in August), Halloween, New Years Eve, D Day celebration, Weddings, in addition to the regular hirers. This is a non profit making charity, however there are loans to pay back, which are going down. The cost of electricity is around £1k a month. Thanks to County Council and Lakenheath Parish Council for the Outdoor Gym. The parish had also funded the new fencing. The skate park needs maintenance, which will be done when funds allow. AGM in November, everyone welcome to attend. Trying to reach agreement with user

groups about hire charges/ terms. We want to be fair to everyone. We will achieve a resolution, initially the problem was a lack of communication.

9. Friendship Club started three years ago, meeting at the Peace memorial Hall, 45 people are on the register, charge is £2. Aim to do an activity/ have a speaker/ quiz. All money collected goes back into funds.
10. Scrabble Club is back at the Church
Charge is £2 with tea and cake provided. 10 people are members.
11. St Marys Church the Lay Minister told us that there is no permanent vicar at the moment. There are fourteen volunteer bellringers, and approximately 30 people in the choir, which has provided backing at high profile events. The Church run a Sunday School, Youth group and Band. Volunteers include cleaners and florists. Thanks to the Christian Enterprise – they have been wonderful, a great help.
12. The Chairman of Lakenheath Consolidated Charities, Robert Rolph, told the meeting that the Charity consolidated in 1967, own 15 and a half acres, which is where the money comes from. Aim is to support the poor of the parish. People can apply for funding. Over time, 250 applicants averaging £30 per person, 160 averaging £80 per person. £90 is given to those over 90 years old.

The Chairman commented that we are lucky to have such an active voluntary community. There was an over 65's party and the foodbank works well, as do other village charities

13. The Goward and Evans Charity focusses on education. The representative told us that they are in the lovely situation of having a lot of money in the pot!
14. The Heritage Group representative, David Jones, told the meeting that there is an observer post at the Warren, all details are available on the website, including the more notorious village residents. The Village Trail is thriving. David echoes the Chairman's comment about Jo at the

Library. Work is ongoing, e.g., helping to establish the history of Lakenheath school, the diaries of Revd. John Mindy, German/ Jewish refugees at Sedge Fen, Home Guard.

The group raised money to protect a large 1952 poster, which is now in the Cambridge University archives.

If anyone has any records of village organisations, etc., please get in touch with David.

15. The Good Neighbour Initiative has been going for eighteen years, much of the work is taking people place, e.g. hospital appointments. In the past 12 months, 640 jobs have been completed. The group meet 2/3 times a year with regular users for lunch. Thanks to the Christian Enterprise for their generous support.
16. The Sunset Barn Care Farm representative, Melanie Smith, supports youngsters not in education, who are struggling with mental health problems. There are 8 employees and volunteers. The Tuesday Care Café is open to everyone, from 10am to noon. This gives the user group a chance to do something worthwhile in the community.
17. The Lakenheath Speed Watch Team, represented by Mike Rowntree, has noted that speeds are now remarkably lower, The Speed Indicator Devices (SID) information shows when and where most speeding occurs. One of the SIDs has been vandalised. The group are actively seeking new volunteers.
18. Lakenheath In Bloom are trying to `pretty up` the village. This is a small team; major problem is watering and deadheading. A donation has been received from the Christian Enterprise Foundation. The bench outside the Co-op was damaged by a lorry reversing into the wall. Staff at the surgery water the planter at that site.
19. Neighbourhood Plan/ BT site: the Chairman has been negotiating with BT as all that was offered was a one-year term, thought not to be stable enough. The Woodland Trust has donated saplings which have been planted in various places.

20. PC Andy Green stressed the importance of communication, and cross linking all the different groups. Thanks to the parish Council for arranging an awesome event. Brandon town businesses sponsor the flower planters.

21. Lakenheath Times: New editor Cllr D Smith said that the transformation has been amazing. She is working with new businesses in High Street. The help from volunteer deliverers is great. Perhaps Richard could pen an article about the Youth Group?

22. An Emergency Plan / our reaction to a given situation is being drawn up by the Parish Council- e.g., floods: remember that some land is below sea level.

23. Copies of other Reports are attached

Lakenheath Cemetery
Community Speedwatch
Emergency Planning
Environmental report
Lakenheath FC
Lakenheath Library

24. The Summary of Lakenheath Parish Council Accounts to 31/03/2024 was Noted (Appendix A)

Meeting closed at 8.25pm

Cemetery Report Cllr Smith

My apologies for not being able to attend the meeting on Friday due to a prior engagement.

However I am happy to provide a short report on the following . If you could all check to see if this is ok or feel free to change or add anything. Nick has kindly agreed to read it out for us.

Cemetery

The Cemetery continues to run well and is supported by an enthusiastic volunteer group made up of Councillors and other volunteers.

This past year We have again been challenged with a number of pests some in the form of Shafer Grubs who have returned to cause us issues. The grubs burrow below the surface and then crows together with other birds peck and dig up the ground to find them This results in rough and churned up surfaces around the cemetery.

Please Be assured we have taken specialist advice and hope this will improve very soon. But do accept our sincere regret if you find your graves have been affected in this way.

Other pests have also disturbed the grounds as the moles visit us again but as before we are dealing with this on a daily basis. The Deer continue to chew the heads off fresh flowers and we cannot deter them. Although we do know they are not so keen on Silk flowers so this may be the way forward.

Looking ahead we hope to create a Memorial Garden in the centre of the cemetery where we will have a flower bed and bird bath with benches nearby. With new additional planting of flowers and shrubs we hope this will enhance a grassed area not currently used.

We are also later in the year looking to replace the flower beds at the main entrance gates as these are starting to erode and collapse.

But meanwhile we fully appreciate the importance the cemetery is for our village and us as residents as we all have families and friends there and we will continue to maintain and improve the cemetery to ensure it looks as best as possible.

Your community speed watch is now in its 8 year and our aim is to educate drivers that speeding is not acceptable in our community and we believe we are making a difference.

In the period 1 May 2023 to 30 April 2024 your CSW volunteers conducted a total of 27 sessions each with a minimum 1 hr roadside duration and manned by a minimum of three volunteers.

The total vehicle count reported to Suffolk Constabulary for the 12 month period is 260. These vehicles were all logged exceeding 35mph with a highest speed recorded of 56mph.

The team has seen that the number of vehicles typically recorded exceeding the 30mph speed limit at our sessions is markedly lower now than 12 to 18 months ago. So.....we believe our CSW efforts are working.

We have regularly had sessions on Eriswell road and Station road and a session on High fields at the request of the residents there.

There are 7 volunteers in the group and we would welcome more help which would enable us to be out more often. We are regularly told we should be here at such a such a time. We can't be everywhere as we have very limited resources time wise.

We can only set up at places designated by Suffolk constabulary and we try to be there when our speed reminder sign tells us that there is most speeding.

Your Parish council are in the process of purchasing a new sign to replace the one vandalised on Eriswell road. This will enable the team to target speeding hot spots there more efficiently.

We have recently re-established support from the Community Police Officer and the Police Community Support Officer with responsibility for our village.

We really could do with one or two more people in the team And would be pleased to hear from anyone who would like to joining us. If you're interested I'll be around after the meeting or you could contact the parish office.

I'm happy to answer any questions any one may have.

Emergency Plan

Emergency Planning

The village has an Emergency Plan which takes effect during an incident affecting the residents in the village, this can be a power failure, floods or fire or serious traffic incidents resulting in emergency road closures etc. The team are not a replacement for the Emergency Services but purely act as contact points and helpers during local incidents.

With this in mind the team of volunteers who consist of a number of Councillors and several village volunteers are on hand to help and advise where possible. In the event of a full size emergency all the Parish Councillors can be called upon with volunteers from all areas to help through the difficulties.

We are pleased to report that there have been few incidents over the last year that have needed the help of the Emergency Planning Team. These have been mainly Power failures due to storms, high winds and Utility accidents where cables have been cut and they in turn have affected our village.

Generally the power failures last only an hour or so as UK Power always try to divert power sources where possible and they usually only affect small sections of the village at a time.

However this does not make it any less traumatic if you are vulnerable or elderly, maybe living alone and are concerned or anxious by this. So please always check on your neighbours during these times.

Over the next few weeks we are reviewing the Emergency Plan to see how we can improve this to include as many volunteers as possible and identify those vulnerable or in need of help and advice during an incident.

In the Lakenheath Times we will be publishing a copy of our plan together with contact numbers covering various issues. We will be asking for more volunteers as well as compiling a list of anyone that would like to be contacted or visited during an incident.

Lets hope this year keeps us all safe and well and allows us to go about our everyday lives with little effect from incidents.

Jenny

Environmental Report May 2024

I am sorry I cannot be with you this evening.

It has been quite a busy year. More bulbs were planted at Village Sign. The end of Back Street, Hall Drive and Dumpling Bridge Road were planted with bulbs for the first time and thanks to the Cubs and Scouts for their help with this. Back Street, Hall Drive and Dumpling Bridge Road were also spread with wildflower seeds. The area all around the Car Park was tidied up and there are plans to plant some bulbs and honesty seeds in the area along the side where the wooden fence is (it will need to be dug a little bit first – tricky with the trees that are there!).

The bulbs planted at the Village Sign, end of Back Street, Hall Drive and Dumpling Bridge Road have now gone over so fingers crossed for a good display next year there will probably be small amount of supplementing to do. The poppies are just starting to come into bud and some of the wildflowers are already flowering! So hopefully all these sites will look good for most of the summer.

The BT site has not yet been started as there have been problems with the contract for it, but it is still being investigated, hopefully it will happen soon!

Mutford Green had a lovely show of snowdrops earlier in the year. There is still work to be done but without some help, I am sorry to say, there is too much for me to do on my own. The car that drives over the front to get to the road of does make keeping this area tidy quite hard. This is being looked into by the District Council to see what can be done to stop this.

On a more general note, if anyone ever has any plants, bulbs or seeds that they would like to donate to the Parish Council they would always be gratefully received. If you give me a call or drop me an email, I will pop round to collect them. Also, more volunteers are needed to help with all this work around the Village so we can keep it as nice as possible. Everyone is always welcome and if you do not feel comfortable digging or planting there is always the tea and coffee to make! If you can call me or email me if you are able to help, then I can get in touch with you when I need help. Thank you.

The litter picks have been going fairly well although numbers are dwindling rapidly! This means that the whole Village cannot be covered – only places that really need it. The next litter pick is on June 1st. Please help if you can equipment is provided.

I look forward to seeing you at anything that is being done in the next year.

Judy.

Lakenheath FC

Been a mixed season. Started very well & after 8 games we were top of league & unbeaten, then one of our joint managers left to join Haverhill FC & over the next few weeks poached 3 of our players, plus signed 2 more that were about to sign for us. Cant imagine why they would drop down level, I wonder what the inducement was ?? We then lost 2 of our best players to Bury town which is a great move for them to step 4 of football pyramid. Now we found replacements but alas not quite as the ones we lost, hence we have struggled a bit of late. However, we finished season 10th in the league & reached the semi-final of the league cup, the 2nd round of the FA Vase & won our first ever FA Cup game & to think we were mid table in Cambs league only 5 years ago its still a magnificent achievement. One stat for you, in season 2023-24 Lakenheath FC won more FA Cup games than Arsenal !! We are obviously recruiting now for next season & will hopefully push on again.

The newly formed U23 side struggled for most of season but, in fairness, were playing against teams from larger towns & catchment areas plus quite a few of our lads have only just come from u18's, but they still turned in some great performances & a couple of the lads have been knocking on first team door & hopefully will be more to come.

Away from the playing side, the Eastern counties league come & grade our ground every couple of years. This year, because we now play in FA Cup, the English FA inspected it & in their wisdom decided it was too short. Now we've been playing there for around 80 years with no problems yet suddenly our pitch is too short by 6 meters. So, we are & have been busy on the ground moving footpaths, barriers, goal etc etc. plus all the groundworks that go with it, to get ready for next season. Now this all come at an extra cost to us & although we can raise limited amounts, we could get nowhere near the amount needed, even with grants from football foundation etc. That's when I contacted Christian Enterprise & not for the first time, they have granted us the shortfall. I have to just add that this village maybe don't realise how lucky we are to have the likes of this charity, indeed without their help now & in the past we would not be playing at the standard we are. I & Lakenheath FC are forever grateful for your continued support, thankyou Christian Enterprise

So, because of all the work being done our preseason friendlies will be away, but once the league gets underway, around the beginning of August, hopefully a few more of you will come to support the lads, we have a bar, plus teas & coffees & food on matchdays so pop along.

Alan

Lakenheath Library

A pretty amazing year for the library.

A new manager, Jo Chambers, joined Lakenheath and got to know the village, and it's clients well.

The last 12 months saw a footfall increase within the library of , at times upto an amazing 150%

Many of you will recall the fundraising activity during last summer of Puparazzi visiting and placing his photographic journal on social media and diary in the window. When he wasn't out and about.

Many thanks are due to village businesses and, indeed, when he visited the pub and football club. He raised an incredible sum for both the library itself who were able to make a donation to Suffolk Libraries without whom we would not be here.

The activity of the library is now advertsed on social media and posted in village notice boards. There is an amazing range available for all ages, from Baby Bounce, Lego, Crafts and now an opportunity to learn sign language.

We also work with the Heritage group and have a display within the building.

A further expansion is for table games including chess for all ages and we have already offers of two volunteers to coach the youngsters and perhaps refresh the more mature in the village.

We are grateful to the District Council and the efforts of Cllr Kelly in obtaining some funding to help us on our way.

The last few weeks , however, have been the downer of the year. With the installation of the solar panels on the flat roof causing a partial roof collapse at the rear of the building resulting in the closure of the library. Also, the sad passing of one of our long term volunteers of Friends of

Lakenheath Library, Mary Dimond. Her work in the library will be greatly missed.

However, with an inspection this week completed we opened again on Wednesday and look forward to seeing old and new customers as village grows.

Some interesting stats to take home.

Our Facebook posts now have a reach of 14.1K which is up 61.3%
Content interactions (content and replies) 4.6K up 227.5%

The manager and I, as Chair of FOLK would like to thank everyone for their continued support in the village.
Let's remember Suffolk Libraries has 44 libraries, in size we are number 42.

With your help we are batting above our weight!

Let's keep it going !

Thank you.

APPENDIX A

LAKENHEATH PARISH COUNCIL	
	Year Ended
RECEIPTS	31/3/2024
PRECEPT	£177,800.00
BANK INTEREST	£5,994.21
CEMETERY FEES	£5,595.00
SUNDRY RECEIPTS	£5,937.23
VAT REPAYMENT	£17,435.65
	<u>£212,762.09</u>
PAYMENTS	
CEMETERY & VILLAGE KEEPING STAFF COSTS	£31,519.77
OTHER CEMTERY COSTS	£25,088.02
STREET LIGHTING	£48,181.33
ADMINISTRATION	£42,775.38
GRANTS	£6,541.00
CHILDRENS PLAY AREA	£11,527.34
CHURCHYARD WALL & TREES	£320.00
NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN	£1,732.26
PARISH NEWSLETTER	£11,092.00
PARISH OFFICE	£3,136.09
VILLAGE FACILITIES	£18,833.66
VAT ON PAYMENTS	£19,568.87
	<u>£220,315.72</u>
RECEIPTS & PAYMENT SUMMARY	
BALANCE AT 01/04/2023	£209,594.29
ADD TOTAL RECEIPTS	£212,762.09
DEDUCT TOTAL EXPENDITURE	£220,315.72
BALANCE AT 31/03/2022	<u>£202,040.66</u>
CUMMULATIVE FUNDS REPRESENTED BY	
(as at 31st March)	
CURRENT ACCOUNT	£8,627.42
DEPOSIT ACCOUNTS	
Lloyds Bank Plc	£25,169.77
Lloyds Bank Plc - Speedwatch	£647.62
Lloyds Bank Plc - Neighbourhood Plan	£0.00
Lloyds Bank Plc - Lakenheath Times	£2,415.01
Nationwide Building Society	£5,834.88
Unity Trust Bank	£78,632.18
Cambridge Building Society	£82,259.68
LESS UNPRESENTED PAYMENTS	£1,545.90
BALANCE CARRIED FORWARD	<u>£202,040.66</u>