

2019/2020 ANNUAL REPORT OF LAKENHEATH PARISH COUNCIL

The Annual Parish Meeting is an opportunity for the Parish Council to let parishioners know of all the good work they carry out. Sadly, due to the Coronavirus outbreak, the meeting could not take place in 2020 but this report will outline the work that has been carried out in the village this year. Reports have also been provided from various groups in the village.

PLANNING

Development of the village has been an ongoing issue now for a number of years.

Permission has been granted on a number of large planning applications. The Parish Council will continue in their endeavours to ensure development is sustainable and benefits are seen to the village. They continue to make representation, as a consultee, on all planning matters that affect the village. However, final decisions are made by West Suffolk Council or Suffolk County Council as in the case of the proposed new school.

RAF COMMANDER LAKENHEATH

Squadron Leader Jamie Turnbull is a regular attendee at monthly Parish Council meetings, fostering good relations between USAF Lakenheath and the village.

SUFFOLK CONSTABULARY

Issues including ASB and parking continue to be concerns in the village. After consulting with residents, the Parish Council are working with Suffolk Constabulary to discuss the possible funding a full time PCSO. Covid-19 has put a pause on proceedings but will be progressed once operations return to normal. In the meantime, the Constabulary encourage reporting dangerous parking and persistent offenders to our Safer Neighbourhood Team Brandon.snt@suffolk.pnn.police.uk.

WEST SUFFOLK COUNCIL

Councillors Stephen Frost and David Gathercole continue to represent the Parishioners on West Suffolk Council.

SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL

Councillor Colin Noble continues to represent the Parish on Suffolk County Council.

CEMETERY / KEEPER

This continues to be maintained by the Parish Keeper who performs sterling work keeping it neat and tidy.

DOG FOULING

Dog Fouling is an ongoing battle in the Village. The Parish Council continues to support the fight by replacing posters and publishing articles in the Lakenheath Times.

EMERGENCY VOLUNTEER GROUP

Supported by volunteers, Cllr Jenny Hastings continues to operate a working Emergency Volunteer Group. The team are on hand to support vulnerable residents.

ERISWELL ROAD PLAY AREA

This continues to be a very popular area for children of the village. Unfortunately Government guidelines for Coronavirus means that is currently closed but when permitted further improvements will be made.

LAKENHEATH PLAYING FIELDS

The Parish Council continues to support Lakenheath Playing Fields Association in a number of ways; an annual grant, funding insurance costs, maintenance of the toilet block and general tidying. The Play Area and Playingfields are protected by Public Space Protection Orders.

LAKENHEATH TIMES

Every household continues to receive a monthly copy of the Lakenheath Times. This can only be achieved with help and support from an army of deliverers. A huge thank you again to all the dedicated volunteers that make it happen. Some articles of interest and relating to the village would also be appreciated.

PARISH CLERK / PARISH OFFICE

Clare Shimon will be soon be leaving with Maggie Flint taking over the role of Parish Clerk. The Parish Office is an integral way of bringing the work of the Parish Council closer to the residents of the village. The office hours continue to be 9:00 am to 12 Noon, Monday to Friday.

PRECEPT

The precept for the year 2019/20 was set at £148,660 and has been set at £149,860 for the year 2020/21. Ongoing costs include the public toilets at both Wings Road and Eriswell Road, refuse collection, power, fuel, St Mary's closed churchyard, the cemetery and responsibility for replacing deteriorating concrete lighting columns, MBFU lanterns and G39 issues (where electricity wires pass very close to lanterns).

The Parish Council works hard to keep expenditure to a minimum and has again not made any increase to Council Tax bills.

S. 137 GRANTS

This money is granted by the Parish Council to organisations which are considered to directly benefit at least some of the inhabitants of the Parish. Generally to Community and Voluntary organisations, for which the Council has no specific authority. The beneficiaries this year were:

EACH - £475.00

Sharing Parenting - £100.00

Lakenheath Silver Band - £100.00

Lakenheath Scout Group - £250.00

Lakenheath Football Club - £550.00

Lakenheath PCC - £250.00

Headway Suffolk - £250.00

Suffolk Accident Rescue Service - £225.00

If your organisation or charity would like to apply for a grant, please put your request in writing, giving full details of your activities and the amount requested to Maggie, Clerk of the Council. You can also support your written request, face to face with the Council, by participating in monthly meetings, where a section is given to representations from the public.

TELEPHONE BOXES

Both of the historic red telephone boxes have been adopted by the Parish Council, protecting important landmarks in the village. The Scout Group have made a wonderful job of utilising the spaces.

REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY

The village held its annual act of remembrance with a great turn-out. For the first time there was a drum band from the USAF school beating out a rhythm and as always it was lovely to see the silver band at the war memorial providing music during the church service.

VE DAY 75th ANNIVERSARY

Plans to celebrate the anniversary of VE Day were well underway and lots of activities had been planned over the weekend of 8th - 10th May. In light of Coronavirus, it was with regret that the decision was taken to cancel. A permanent memorial has been erected on the playingfields and a bench will be added to commemorate.

WINGS ROAD CAR PARK TOILETS

These continue to be open and maintained.

Lakenheath continues to be a lively and vibrant village with a huge community spirit. This is only achieved with the support and dedication of so many volunteers. There is something available for all and everyone is welcomed to the various groups. Huge thanks to all those that make this happen. Here are reports from a just a few of the community groups:

LAKENHEATH COMMUNITY SPEEDWATCH

We are now in our 4th year of Speedwatch and continue to try and educate the public to drive in a considerate and safe way within the village. Together with SID (our Speed Indicator Devices) we have made an impact on the speeding in the village, although there will always be the exceptions, and from the reactions of most of the drivers our efforts are appreciated.

We operate with a team of 7 volunteers and until the recent lockdown restrictions, have been out and about at least once a week throughout last year and the beginning of 2020. We have designated sites throughout the village which have been approved by the Police and we record the registration, make, colour and speed of any vehicle exceeding the speed limit. This information is then passed on to a central data base and warning letters are sent to the driver. The number of speeding vehicles recorded in one session varies enormously; sometimes none at all, which is actually a very good thing as it means everyone is driving legally and safely. However, our current record is 15 speeding vehicles in 45 mins with the top speed being 55mph!!

The object of the scheme is to educate, not to catch people out and report them. We hope that our presence by the roadside helps to remind drivers of their responsibilities and ensure that Lakenheath is a safe place to walk, cycle and drive.

We shall be back as soon as restrictions are lifted, in the meantime stay safe, stay well and drive carefully.

Peta Gyte, CSW Coordinator.

LAKENHEATH FOOTBALL CLUB

The club has been very busy over the past 12 months both on and off the pitch, as outlined previously we had several priorities as a club to help with safety, sustainability and improvement.

Initially we purchased and installed new goalposts as per recommendations in our Pitch Inspection Report from Suffolk FA, these eventually came at a cost of £1800 but are excellent quality and will diminish the potential for any injury quite substantially as well as being aesthetically pleasing!

Our biggest project of the year has been our Kitchen, this has now been completed and we are in the process of applying for the appropriate approvals from the local authority to allow us to serve hot food next season, both to our players and to our supporters. This involved creating a new door as a fire escape, a new serving hatch, the purchase of a significant quantity of kitchen cooking equipment and having to purchase a bespoke extraction unit. Due to the talented volunteers we have at the club we have been able to keep the costs down significantly to limit them to the £4000 originally estimated. Having this facility operational gives the club another vital income stream, all helping to keep the club sustainable.

On the pitch, our newly created U18's have been a joy to work with. They had some rather unexpected success in the FA Youth Cup back in September beating an impressive Histon FC side before succumbing to the full time academy set of Dereham Town in the next round. Their league form wasn't very consistent, however great strides were made since the turn of the year and the group was in great form when the season was postponed. Even more pleasing is that 9 members of this group made senior debuts with the club for either the first team or Reserves showing the beginnings of the pathway we are looking to create. Indeed 3 talented members of this group have agreed to come back and train with the first team next season as we look to integrate them fully into the squad.

Our Reserves had a much improved season, placing 6th in their Cambridgeshire Senior B division, with all concerns about fielding teams now consigned to the past, they also had a very impressive run to the Semi Finals of the Suffolk Senior Res Cup, the competition is currently suspended with Suffolk FA aiming to complete it at some point when safe to do so.

Meanwhile our First team had an excellent campaign, they finished in second place having occupied one of the promotion places since September and looked well on course for promotion, it is of much regret that the FA have declared our league Null and Void rather than applying a sporting outcome to finalise places and denying us a chance at competing at the highest level the club would ever have competed at, however we must now simply aim to do better next year. We were able to enter the FA Vase and although our entry was a fleeting one it was a historic moment for the club, which marked our progress and standing amongst clubs in East Anglia. We also reached the Semi Final of our League Cup competition before being defeated in the last game played before football stopped due to the pandemic.

We have been lucky enough to add some additional volunteers to the club, we have appointed a UEFA B licence coach last month who will now take over the coaching side of the club and to help in the development of all our players. We have purchased a Camera system for £2100, this will allow us to record our games and training sessions and the software package behind the system will allow us to help show players where we can develop them as well as highlighting the positives, we are very excited about this technology and believe that it will make a significant difference to players. This purchase was supported by the Parish Council alongside additional monies to enable us to install a Tanoy system at the ground.

We have also appointed a new Commercial and Events officer, Steve Gough helped us organise our first ever Sportsmans Dinner with Micky Quinn and Ronnie Irani as guest speakers in late February, the evening was a terrific success and we aim to make this an annual event. Alongside this we will be running more events such as a Golf Day and Race Nights to boost the social side of the club and increase income streams.

The one area that was a disappointment was we have been unable to move forward with the purchase of a new tractor and equipment to date due to finance. Sadly, as a result we had several U18's games called off as our existing tractor is simply too heavy to drive on a wet pitch without sinking. This is now our major focus for the next 12 months and all fundraising is now focused on achieving this goal. The costs have sadly risen to £26280, as a result of a new emissions directive from the EU, however we are now in a position where we believe it will be possible to achieve the purchase of the equipment that will make a significant difference to us and ultimately allow a new team to play at the facility on a Sunday.

We submitted an application to the Football Foundation last month seeking £18396, which we have verbally been told we will get ahead of formal notification early next month, this means we have got to raise £7884 in match funding. The club has built up reserves of £3500 that we are putting towards this project and we have several applications for additional funding in to enable us to complete the purchase.

Due to Covid-19 we have unfortunately lost out on income worth around £8000 due to the postponement of home matches and planned fund raisers. However we have been successful in obtaining support from Sport England which covers our Direct Debits for Utilities and Insurances from March until July which we are very thankful for. The club wants to look forward to a time when society is back to something approaching normality and facilities like our club will be very important in overcoming mental and physical health issues that have built up during this time of crisis.

The club has come a very long way in a short period of time, our ground has been transformed along with the club and how efficiently it is run. We thank you for your support in this progression and allowing us to create new sides and opportunities to benefit the local youth community.

Ben Cowling, Lakenheath FC

LAKENHEATH GOOD NEIGHBOURS

Lakenheath Good Neighbours first formed around 14 years ago to help local people with shopping, hospital visits, collecting prescriptions or Drs./dental appointments.

Over the years our volunteer numbers have been quite steady, around 13, some leaving and others joining. It remains a very successful scheme and all our local residents are very grateful and appreciative of the service we give.

There is no charge for village trips although most people do give a small donation towards the cost of the phone. Outside the village we operate within a 20 mile radius and we ask for a contribution based on 40p per mile.

We have six phone holders who have the phone for a week at a time. When a request comes in the phone holder finds a volunteer able to do the job and then confirms the details and pick up time with the customer. Every call is registered in the log book. In 14 years we have only had to refuse a handful of jobs where no volunteer was available.

Our hours of work are 9:00 am – 5:00 pm Monday – Friday. If customers leave a message the calls are returned within a couple of hours.

We have very few overheads; the biggest being our annual insurance and phone contract. We also fund any DBS checks required for new volunteers. The Parish Council have, over the years, always granted us any top ups we have requested when funds have been low.

Four times a year we have an afternoon tea in a local hall. The volunteers provide food and our customers are picked up and given a lovely afternoon, and a chance to chat and socialise with others, which is much appreciated as many often don't see anyone regularly. The work we do is very rewarding all the more so when we are told: 'I don't know what I'd do without you.'

Since May last year we have done 503 jobs, the vast majority being hospital and doctor trips. Because of the pandemic our service has been very limited of late; all except three of our volunteers were in the 'at risk' group, but we have kept the phonenumber open and have done a little shopping and collecting prescriptions. Our three volunteers who were able to help also joined the Parish Council action group and helped out there.

We are very proud of the work done by our GN scheme and hope to continue to provide this service for many years to come.

Susan Taylor, Treasurer

ST MARY'S SCRABBLE & GAMES CLUB

It was whilst playing Scrabble online with a friend, she suggested a Scrabble club in the village would be a good idea. I mentioned it to my Rector and he thought it was an excellent idea and a good way to use the church for something other than worship.

Our small Parvis Room became the home every other Friday afternoon for the newly formed club. We started with 6 players. By week two we had ten. Now the Parvis room is very small but we all fitted nicely in although it was a squeeze. Fortunately (or unfortunately), word got around about all the fun and laughter we had and the numbers grew and we now have 17 members. Now this really is a squash but we make it work.

We play several games, besides Scrabble, the most popular being Rummikub. I charge just £1 to cover the heating and the tea and coffee and there is usually cake to be had too.

There are no prizes, no arguments, just a lot fun. Obviously during the pandemic the club has been closed but as soon as we are allowed to open it again, we will be there as keen as ever.

Susan Taylor, Verger and Lay Elder St. Mary's Church, Lakenheath

LAKENHEATH HERITAGE GROUP

At last summer's fete we shared a stand with The Suffolk Record Office, (now known as Suffolk Archives), where we displayed the proposed Village Heritage Trail and Suffolk Archives launched a new project, 'Suffolk Stories', which is to focus on relationships between the village and the base from before WW2. Members of our group, with others from the village are participating in this project. The stand provoked lots of interest and this very successful day marked the beginning of a very busy year.

The Heritage Trail

The trail, which starts at the car park, is ready for you to enjoy now. The two routes are shown on the panel placed on the back of the Car Park Parish Notice Board. The Trail Booklet, which is proving popular, accompanies the routes and sites on the walk, but is also designed to be enjoyed indoors for those who are less mobile. Booklets can normally be obtained from the Peace Memorial (Village) Hall, Parish Office, Lakenheath Library, St. Mary's Parish Church, Brandon Country Park and West Stowe Saxon Village. You can, if you wish, make a donation to the Trail Project in the collection boxes provided. Booklets are also available to download on the Parish website below: so, as present restrictions relax, we hope you will take a walk around the village using the trail. We hope you enjoy it.

www.lakenheath.onesuffolk.net/lakenheath-heritage/

The next stage of the Trail Project is the installation at various places around the village of 'interpretation panels' which will show an area of the village through time. The research and designing of the panels has been delayed by Covid 19 but we are trying to keep the project moving. I hope to report on progress in the Lakenheath Times from time to time.

In support of our work we have received charitable donations from the Miller Trust and the Christian Enterprise Foundation in addition to grants from our two District Councillors, David Gathercole and Stephen Frost, and County Councillor Colin Noble which will help to fund this stage. Not to be forgotten are private donations from trail booklet users and, of course, the ongoing support of the Parish Council. We thank you all for helping to keep our heritage alive and accessible.

At last we have been able to afford our own portable display boards which already have enabled us to show our work at an important meeting of the Suffolk Local History Council. Membership of the Council continues to be fruitful and offers good support to our work.

So apart from all that, this is what has taken up rest the year so far.

1. Contact has been made with the new owner of the old Royal Observer Corps (ROC) post on the Warren. Part of the trail takes you past it. If you walk regularly on the Warren you might have seen that it is being restored. We will be working with the owner in the future.
2. We received a request from Melbourne, Australia, for information about the story in Timeline 4, "The Lakenheath and Wangford Volunteers". This asked about Captain Robert Eagle who was its commanding officer and a major land owner in the village. At this time in the 18th and early 19th C there was great fear of invasion by Napoleon's Republican France. The volunteers of the time were in some ways similar to the 'Dad's Army' of WW2. Robert Eagle built a large house, called 'North Lawn Cottage', later known as 'The Retreat', and then in the 19th/20th C as 'Lakenheath Hall'. He was a major landowner in the locality. A 'miniature' portrait claiming to be that of him in military uniform had been purchased at auction. A photo from our website showing a button from the Volunteers uniform confirmed his identity and the purchaser has allowed us to publish a copy of the miniature portrait and this now appears in the story in Timeline 4. Our research has since been quoted on special interest websites.
3. A well-known archaeologist is helping to identify some prehistoric animal bones from Lakenheath Fen, collected by Jonah Rolph in the 19th C. These have been gifted to the group.

4. A medieval jeton, a counter from the 14th C found near the village around 1950 is another gift which has been already featured in time line 1.

The steady drip of incoming information makes additions and corrections to the Time Line a regular occupation and the much-admired Photo Archive is getting bigger and bigger and features largely in the trail booklet.

5. We are receiving more and more information from former villagers or their descendants. This is often in the form of old note books, newspaper articles and adverts. Very recently a poster advertising a League Of Nations Disarmament Meeting which was to be held in the village has been discovered. The date of the poster is illegible but it must be from around 1923-30. **Does anyone have any knowledge of this event? You can contact us at the email address at the end of this report.**

Stop Press.

We hope that recently received information may lead to a modern-day sequel to the Lakenheath and Wangford Volunteers story. **This research is just beginning and will investigate the WW2 existence of the Lakenheath Auxiliary Unit which was probably a secret part of the Lakenheath Home Guard.** These special guerrilla cells, to be activated in the event of the occupation of the country, were top secret and remained so until the 1980's/90's. Membership was kept secret, from both families and friends. IF YOU HAVE ANY INFORMATION OR KNOW OF SOMEONE WHO MIGHT HAVE, PLEASE LET US KNOW at:

lakenheathheritagegroup@outlook.com

To all who support our work. Thank you! If you'd like to get involved please contact us at the above email address. We'd like to hear from you.

David Jones, Chair, Lakenheath Heritage Group