

Lakenheath recorders Diary for 2024

1.1.1024

Speeding vehicles are a worry for a lot of people in the village. The speed reminder sign on Station Road produces a monthly report. Below is the December report showing the days and times and amount of spending vehicles.

Hour	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
0-1	10	6	8	5	11	32	33
2-2	6	6	7	3	5	4	12
2-3	2	4	0	4	4	4	7
3-4	7	5	1	5	5	3	5
4-5	16	7	8	15	15	5	13
5-6	37	46	41	38	54	17	9
6-7	95	87	89	103	95	44	21
7-8	87	90	98	96	115	60	23
8-9	90	68	77	88	98	73	45
9-10	77	61	66	91	91	101	87
10-11	59	75	61	60	91	100	100
11-12	62	81	74	78	88	115	117
12-13	71	68	70	91	107	113	117
13-14	84	98	110	84	99	130	147
14-15	97	90	77	91	134	146	136
15-16	78	73	108	102	120	139	156
16-17	58	81	73	76	104	84	70
17-18	70	58	60	51	100	107	96
18-19	44	73	53	47	88	88	67
19-20	55	59	60	43	70	82	79
20-21	34	41	38	50	80	74	56
21-22	39	23	29	29	50	64	50
22-23	16	20	25	43	47	59	40
23-24	11	13	16	16	30	44	16
Totals	1205	1233	1249	1309	1701	1688	1502

Exceeding Speed of 35MPH - December

3.1.2024

Our village church, **ST MARY THE VIRGIN LAKENHEATH**, informed the community that It is with regret that the church will be kept locked now apart from the time of regular services and other events. It is believed that somebody went into the church at midnight on Sunday while the bellringers were ringing in the new year and took the key which locks the belfry door. Result is Church cannot secure the belfry so had to take the decision to lock the whole building. They asked if anybody knows where the key might be, has come across it or knows who has it, please can it be returned. It is a big cast metal key with a blue tag on it. It can be pushed through the gate or taken to Pauline at Mark Skinner Funeral Services. No further action will be taken the Church just need their key. With the church locked it means the Parish Pantry is inaccessible to those who need it as well.

As a follow up the key was eventually found and returned to The Church.

7.1.2023

Today is Plough Sunday, a traditional celebration of the beginning of the agricultural year held at St Marys Church, Lakenheath. The observance of Plough Sunday on the First Sunday of Epiphany goes back to Victorian times, but there is a much older observance, associated with the first working day after the twelve days of Christmas, hence 'Plough Monday' in some places. In the Middle Ages ploughs were sometimes kept in the parish

church, and some churches kept a 'plough-light' – a candle that burned over the plough throughout the winter.

Today Pauline Wickham and St Marys Church organised a Christingle Service for Lakenheath Scouts.



8.1.2024

The RAF Lakenheath spokesman announced that the 48th Fighter wing will be conducting limited flying at night beginning from today until Friday and Monday January 15th to Friday January 19th this will create the potential for noise as a result of night flying over the next fortnight.

In short, the communities in East Anglia and the surrounding regions may see or hear US aircraft taking off, landing and transiting between RAF Lakenheath and training ranges over the North Sea between 7pm and 9pm. Such exercises provide aircrew and support personnel stationed at RAF Lakenheath the experience needed to maintain a force capable

of ensuring the collective Defense of the NATO alliance and mutual security agreements between the US and UK.

The exercise does not include plans for low-altitude flying in East Anglia or the surrounding regions.

10.1.2024

The monthly meeting for older chaps of the village to attend the Men's Shed breakfast was announced. This month's guest speaker is Suffolk's Police and Crime Commissioner Tim Passmore.

11.1.2024

Lakenheath Community Primary school confirm that there was another fantastic effort and performance from 3 of their star Year 6 runners today at the Suffolk Schools Cross Country.

They've trained hard over the weeks with Mr Bishop and Miss Cocks, and their efforts are remarkable- they should be so proud!

The race at this stage is tough competition, with many of the runners being part of clubs or already at county level. Lily finished 58th in her race, while Josh finished 57th and Toby 84th, all running improved and amazing times! Well done all, hold your heads high with how far you've come and cherish the experience with a massive smile

15.1.2024

Norfolk Constabulary are looking for volunteers to join a successful Community Speed Watch team in Lakenheath.

The group carry out sessions at sites of concern within the area. The aim is to reduce speeding by means of detection and sending out warning letters to the registered keepers of vehicles.

They ask if you have some spare time and you would like to get involved and help your community become a safer place to live please contact us at gytie@hotmail.co.uk. To obtain details of the scheme and information as to how you could help.

16.01.2024

It's official. Lakenheath was today pronounced the least used railway station in Suffolk. Between April 2022 and March 2023.

17.1.2024

LCPS announced that it was a pleasure and a teacher's dream to take a large group of Year 5 and 6's to an indoor athletics competition yesterday. It was so nice to see a group full of encouragement, determination, and passion, as well as showing pride for their school! They performed magnificently, with some spectacular performances as individuals and in teams! Results still to follow but regardless a massive well done to each one of you



18.1.2024

Announcement from the scouting group. Save the date - The village Easter Egg hunt will take place on Saturday 30th March. This will be a free event again this year, open to all children/families. Last year they gave out over 140 easter eggs and aim to top that this year!

Heating oil has reportedly been stolen from a tank in St Mary's Mews off the High Street, Lakenheath. Police appealed for witnesses following the incident sometime between 11pm on Monday, January 15 and 2am on Tuesday, January 16.

Today saw the arrival and causing chaos, 7.20 am, of heavy machinery to the Eriswell Road building site where 97 homes are to be built for sale and 42 as affordable homes by Persimmon Homes as you enter the village from Eriswell.



20.01.2024

Today saw the demolition of Rookery Farm (known locally as Kitchener's Cottage as it was his ancestral home) which has, in part, stood for almost 400 years. Through storms and floods. A piece of Lakenheath history vanished forever.



22.01.2024

Lakenheath Heritage group installed their next illustrative panel showing the history of an area near the old Royal Observer Corp site on the warren



An unknown person drove down Smeeth Drove on to the river bank where whilst driving managed to slip into the river. He managed to escape from his car, walk to CJs Cafe for breakfast before being taken by ambulance to hospital, soaking wet whilst his car was recovered.

23.1.2024

The Bury free press today reported that a nuclear weapons campaign group featured on a BBC documentary protesting against RAF Lakenheath's plans to possibly house some of the armaments said the Doomsday Clock remaining at 90 seconds to midnight for a second year in a row must be 'a wakeup call for the entire world'.

The Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND), who has held numerous protests at RAF Lakenheath believes plans are afoot for nuclear weapons to be stored there, said the clock reflected 'the continued state of unprecedented danger the world faces.'

The Doomsday Clock, maintained since 1947, is said to show the likelihood of a human-made global catastrophe in the opinion of the members of the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists.



Some of the CND protesters at RAF Lakenheath.

The clock featured on BBC Panorama's 'Nuclear Armageddon – how close are we?' documentary on BBC 2 on Thursday, alongside a piece about the CND protests at RAF Lakenheath.

Kate Hudson, CND general secretary, said: "Nuclear-armed states are increasing and modernising their arsenals, while their allies are rearming with newer and more lethal conventional technologies.

"The world is closer to nuclear war than it has ever been and the failure to end conflicts, from Ukraine to the Middle East, increases this risk by the day.

"We're fast approaching the point of no return. CND calls on all those who want peace to prevail to join us in doing everything we can to turn back the clock."

The Bulletin said the decision to keep the clock at the same time was due to concern over the continuation of the war in Ukraine, the conflict in Gaza and the crisis in nuclear arms control.

Though some progress had been made on tackling climate change, technologies such as AI also posed an area of concern which they said 'could magnify disinformation and corrupt the global information environment.'

29.1.2024

Mildenhall Police gave thanks to Lakenheath Cubs for allowing PC'S #864 and #680 visit them tonight. They covered all sorts of policing topics and policing kit. The Cubs were given the chance to play with the lights and sirens on the police cars.



The BBC advise that plans to deploy American nuclear weapons to an airbase in Suffolk have progressed, according to a US Department of Defence (DoD) notice. A contract to build shelters to protect troops that would defend storage facilities at RAF Lakenheath has been awarded. The document states the work was in preparation for the base's "upcoming nuclear mission"

In March 2023, a document from the US Office of the Under Secretary of Defense disclosed how \$50m (£39m) had been earmarked to build a facility known as a "Surety Dormitory" at RAF Lakenheath. Twenty-two blast resistant manoeuvrable cabins were being built with bulletproof metal flat sheets welded onto the frame to "to protect our high value assets" of RAF Lakenheath's defence force, the 48th Security Forces.

Squadron (48 SFS). The specification for the windows included glass which could withstand an impact from a .30 calibre rifle. The contractor appointed for the work was a United Arab Emirates based company, Specialist Solutions LLC. Thermonuclear bomb. This would be the first time in more than 15 years nuclear weapons have been deployed on British soil.

January rainfall 46 mm.

2.2.2024

At the building site on Eriswell Road a water main has been fractured



It was today that the village learned that the Post Office building was shown to be up for sale marked as the Former Post Office at a guide price of £99,000. It is marked up as a bungalow without a water provision but ideal as a potential commercial unit. Another facility for the village lost.



5.2.2024

Today a statement from Buckingham Palace read: "During the King's recent hospital procedure for benign prostate enlargement, a separate issue of concern was noted. Subsequent diagnostic tests have identified a form of cancer.

"His Majesty has today commenced a schedule of regular treatments, during which time he has been advised by doctors to postpone public-facing duties. Throughout this period, His Majesty will continue to undertake State business and official paperwork as usual.

"The King is grateful to his medical team for their swift intervention, which was made possible thanks to his recent hospital procedure. He remains wholly positive about his treatment and looks forward to returning to full public duty as soon as possible.

"His Majesty has chosen to share his diagnosis to prevent speculation and, in the hope, it may assist public understanding for all those around the world who are affected by cancer."

Charles, 75, was discharged from the London Clinic a week ago after undergoing treatment on an enlarged prostate.

7.2.2024

Today Lakenheath Community Primary School have been blown away by the number of cakes / biscuits entered in their book week baking competition.

They will be announcing the winner and selling the cakes at the end of the day on the KS2 playground so do not forget to bring some change and take home a tasty treat.

The school will also be selling books and stationery at the book fair in their new-look library. (They have a card reader for this so there is no excuse!).

Any money raised will be used for replacing old and broken books and building up the collection of reading material in school.

13.02.2024

Sally's floral tributes with their pop up shop at CJ's cafe with flower bunches for Valentine's Day available today and tomorrow with over 100 items to choose from starting from £5.00. 8.30am till 5.30pm



17.2.2024

We learn from the Sun newspaper that according to Pentagon documents, RAF Lakenheath will be used as a store for the latest nuclear bombs in case of conflict. It is the first time such weapons have been kept on British soil. The US plans also include for two squadrons of the latest F-35 fighters – which have the ability to carry nuclear weapons. These are already located at RAF Lakenheath. They also announced a boost to on-base protection from “forced entry and rifle fire”.

Just last year plans were revealed for a £40million new dormitory for US air force personnel at Lakenheath. The new plans have added to some locals fears that they would become targets. Some villagers are worried that their little community could find itself at the centre of a major international conflict, with tensions increasing due to Putin's war with Ukraine and Hamas' attack on Israel..One fumed “I fear we will become one of the first targets if this conflict escalates. “The enemy will want to neutralise any threat coming from the Americans and us and could well strike first. “ It doesn't bear thinking about. “This is a small happy village and we have got used to having the Americans here. “But there is always the risk that if they get involved in a war in the Middle East we will inevitably be drawn in – and military bases like Lakenheath will become a key target for any enemy.”

"It has always been comforting to see the jets flying low over the village – but we are terrified that they could soon stop practicing and get involved in a real war – it doesn't bear thinking about." Contracts for the new facility include a new nuclear weapon stores housing warheads - which are reported to be three times more powerful than Hiroshima and Nagasaki in Japan. The RAF stations are reportedly expecting a consignment of B61-12 gravity bombs which can deliver a blast of 50 kilotons. 'LIKE HIROSHIMA' Despite the potential powerful weapons, other locals are resigned to the threat. "In some ways it is good to have the Americans here because it gives us a sense of security – it's no good us worrying about what might happen."

School caretaker Kevin Barnes 53, said: "Personally I feel safer having the Americans here. There is a lot more going on in this situation than we know about or have been told." If nuclear bombs are kept in East Anglia, it will be the first time such weapons have been on UK soil since 2008. The US withdrew them from Europe because at the time Russia's threat to the world had diminished. Council officials claimed the little community is used to the US military presence. Local district councillor Gerald Kelly said: "In reality people here have been living with nuclear weapons on their doorsteps for a long time. In terms of day-to-day life locals have learned to live with them even though having weapons stored here is abhorrent for some of them".

"We have Americans here living among us but we all hate the idea of a nuclear war and it would be excellent if there never is one. But we need a deterrent and we have co-existed with the Americans for many years." MP for West Suffolk, Matt Hancock said he is in favour of an arsenal boost for the USAF locally. He said: "I welcome this potential expansion. "As the local MP, I know how special RAF Lakenheath is and recognise the importance of reinforcing our commitment to shared security and democratic values. "The people of West Suffolk have long been proud to welcome American service personnel, who live in our community. "We must continue to support our American friends and allies, especially in the face of menacing aggression around the world."

18.2.2024

Our 'Rock 'n' Roll' postmistress, Lisa Skinner, has bid an emotional farewell as she prepares to shut up The Post Office. She has run Lakenheath Post Office in Lakenheath High Street for the past 10 years, said she had tried her best to hand the service over. She said: "Lakenheath Post Office will be closed down at 12pm on Monday, February 26.

Lisa added, "I took over the running of the Post Office ten years ago and I'm sure some of you will remember the little cafe prior to that. "I had big plans for a community hub with activities for all ages of the village and it has been an absolute blast.

Finally saying "a massive thank you to all our lovely and loyal customers whom I also think of as my friends. "A mention for all the employees over the years and to all those who have helped out during refits etc, there were some real superstars over the years. A special thanks to Paul Skinner and Donna Hurst. "I tried my best to hand over to someone who would keep the Post Office but it just wasn't possible. "I'm sure, however, whatever is coming next will be a huge asset to the village and I wish whoever they may be all the best in their new venture.

"I still see most of the village nearly every day so no change there. But I will miss the Post Office and all the lifelong memories and friendships myself and my family have made there." Lisa said the Post office will remain open between 10am and 12pm Monday to Saturday until Monday, February 26.

22.2.2024

It was announced today that the warm room initiative held at the community centre will end next Thursday, 29th February 2024. This was where the community could meet for soup and bread or merely tea or coffee at no cost other than a donation if wanted.

27.02.2024

It was today reported by The Post Office Service:

Dear Customer

Branch Temporary Closure, Lakenheath Post Office 42 High Street, Lakenheath, Brandon, IP27 9DR

We are writing to inform you that, regrettably, following the resignation of the postmaster and the withdrawal of the premises for Post Office use, the above branch will be closing temporarily on Monday 26 February 2024 at 12:00. Please accept my apologies for the short notification on this occasion.

The provision of a Post Office service to our customers in the local community is important to us, and we will continue to work hard to restore services in the area.

I would like to assure you that we are working hard to keep any period of closure to a minimum and we are currently investigating the options available which will enable us to reinstate a Post Office service to the local community. In exploring this, it is important that any future service is sustainable for the person operating the service, and for Post Office Limited.

We would welcome any applications from potential retail partners interested in running a branch locally on our behalf. The vacancy will be advertised on our website www.runapostoffice.co.uk and applications will be carefully considered. If you are aware of any interested parties, please do share the link with them.

If you have any questions you would like to raise about this matter, please write to me via the National Consultation Team at the address shown at the end of the letter. Please note that your comments will not be kept confidential unless you expressly ask us to do so by clearly marking them "In Confidence". Any future changes to service provision would be handled in line with our Principles of Community Engagement. An extract relating to Notification is available at the end of this letter.

We will display posters in the branch to inform customers.

If you are a local representative, it would be helpful if you could share this information through your social media channels and with any local groups or organisations that you know within the community, for example on noticeboards, local charities and in GP surgeries, to help our customers and your constituents understand what is happening to the Post Office in the local community. If you would like a supply of posters, please let us know.

We would like to apologise for the inconvenience the temporary closure may cause. We hope that our customers will continue to use Post Office services and details of alternative Post Office branches in the area are shown at the end of this letter. The latest available branch information can be found on our website, www.postoffice.co.uk/branch-finder

If you are a local representative, we will write to you again once we have any news about our plans for future service provision.

Yours faithfully

Wendy Hamilton

Network Provision Lead

How to contact us: comments@postoffice.co.uk

postofficeviews.co.uk FREEPOST Your Comments

To get this information in a different format, for example, in larger print, audio or braille call 03452 66 01 15 or Textphone 03457 22 33 55. Alternative branches

Some branches may need to make changes to their opening hours. The latest available branch information can be found on our website. www.postoffice.co.uk/branch-finder.

28.2.2024

Today we learn that Lakenheath Youth Football Club have been recognised for another season as a FA 2 star accredited club 🌟 🌟. This is a great achievement and with their player pathway and closer working with Lakenheath FC this continues to build the provision of football for youth in our village.



February rainfall 165 mm

5.3.2024

We learn today that the Co-Op interim funds payments have been announced. Lakenheath Indoor Bowls club received £692.70 and Lakenheath Youth Football Club £760.85

16.3.2024

It was the best attendance yet for the Lakenheath Men's Shed Breakfast today. Those running the group suggest that others should attend the next group on Saturday 13th April.



Kyle Gadsby carried out his fundraiser today raising money for the dyslexia research trust. He raised an incredible £740.57. He donated £400 for new books to Lakenheath Community primary school library, some of which were dyslexia friendly, and £340.57 to the Dyslexia Research Trust.





19.3.2024

Today the community were advised of the following event:



Over 65's Annual Party
Lakenheath Peace Memorial Hall
Saturday 13th April 2024



Doors open 3-30pm Sit Down 4pm
Please bring own Knife Fork and Spoon

To book your places please contact Freda on 01842860648



21.3.2024

Lakenheath Community Foodbank at Abundant Life Church (ALC) – Lakenheath announced that they will be open on Sunday the 31st of March from 1pm till 2.30pm for those in need of support. Following on we will continue to open on the last Sunday of every month at the same times of 1pm till 2.30pm. (Please bring your own bag where possible).

They offered a delivery service for those that are physically not able to visit in person? Please contact Pastor Vince Williams on 07711996759 for more information.

Lakenheath Ladies FC today announced It's unfortunate that as of today they have folded as a team and will no longer be competing in competitive games in Cambridge Women's league football.

They gave thanks to everyone who was involved past & present, both UK & US participants..

24.3.2024

A big, big thank you was given to everyone who came to the Little Fishes (Lakenheath Nursery) Easter Egg Hunt yesterday. It was so lovely to see you all and we hope you had a good time. Well done to all our little fishes who made some really spectacular Easter Bonnets and to Mr Tingey who had the unbelievably hard task of choosing our 2 winners. A big thank you also, to the businesses of Lakenheath for their kind donations of prizes. To all the helpers, staff, committee, parents and grandparents who made yesterday possible, thank you.

Hopefully we will see you all again next year



25.03.2024

Lakenheath Parish Council gave a big thank you to the community speed watch volunteers who turned out early on a cold but bright Monday morning. They had been asked by residents to do a session on Highfields. Love where you live.

30.3.2024

The Easter Egg trail organised by the Scouts was a huge success, the sun was shining for them and they handed out over 150 eggs this year as well as 144 Cadbury Creme eggs / Carmel eggs to the adults.

The scouts ran a raffle and raised £150. £100 will be given to Headway Suffolk, BSE branch so they can have a fish & chip Supper and the remaining £50 will go towards equipment for the Lakenheath scout group.

Thank you all for supporting this event, have a good Easter



31.3.24

A 'friendly' village school is celebrating its good Ofsted grading – after previously being rated requires improvement.

Following an inspection in February, Lakenheath Community Primary School was rated good for overall effectiveness and in every area: quality of education, behaviour and attitudes, personal development, leadership and management, and early years provision.

The school was previously graded 'requires improvement' overall by Ofsted in 2020, although behaviour and attitudes and personal development were deemed good.



March rainfall 55 mm.

Plans have been submitted to build eight new homes on land off The High Street, Lakenheath. Formally Rookery Farm.

As part of the development there will be four semi-detached homes and four detached homes with a mixture of two, three and four-bedroom properties. According to the design and access statement submitted with the application, the proposed development will provide "much needed" residential accommodation and enhance an unused piece of land within an existing and well-established residential area. "External materials, colours and finishes will be sympathetic to, and in keeping with, those used widely within the neighbouring vicinity.

8.4.2024

A donkey stood its ground blocking Eriswell Road not allowing traffic to pass in either direction.



9.4.2024

A message from Lakenheath Parish Council: You are cordially invited to the LAKENHEATH ANNUAL ASSEMBLY to be held on Friday 17th May 2024 starts at 6pm at the Methodist Church Hall Back Street Refreshments provided.

This is **NOT** a parish council meeting: it is a chance for you to tell everyone what your organisation has been up to in the past year! It is open to all Lakenheath residents - come along and have your say!

Running order:

1. Welcome, introductions, and Chairman's report
2. 2022 Annual Meeting notes
3. Lakenheath parish council accounts
4. What is happening: Updates from Lakenheath groups/local organisations, grant recipients
5. General discussion- ideas going forward

* All are welcome, please feel free to attend

13.4.2024

Congratulations were given to the Lakenheath over 65s group on their 70th Anniversary. The group first met to celebrate Queen Elizabeth's coronation in 1953, and has met regularly since then. Today they threw a party to mark their 70th anniversary.

Freda Drake arranged the event with help from her team of volunteers: she has been involved with the group for 38 years, along with her mother before that.

Keepsake mugs were donated by Lakenheath Parish Council to mark this amazing occasion and one handed to each attendee. This is a great example of Lakenheath village life with true, lasting friendship at its core.



17.4.2024



It is that time of year again! More details to follow. LYFC invite the village to join them celebrating another great year of football. Given the number of teams this season, matches will be spread over two days.

19.4.2024

Lakenheath Playing Fields Association are pleased to announce that they are taking over the maintenance of the toilets on the playing fields after the Parish council had closed them a little while ago, they will soon reopen and be available for public use.

Lakenheath Parish Council today announced that they will be permanently closing the public toilet at the Cemetery with effect from 1st May, 2024. The nearest public facility will be at the Wings Road Car Park.

YOUR MOVE MORE OUTDOORS PROJECT has arrived in Lakenheath. Abbycraft Leisure announced that this is open for all Lakenheath Residents. This **FREE** community pilot programme is designed to help people become more active by breaking down the barrier of travel and fitness, allowing you to live a more active lifestyle.

Every Tuesday, starting 30th April, 17:30-18:30 at the Peace Memorial Hall in Lakenheath, we will be running Pilates. Pilates is a great exercise for overall wellbeing - it can help: Reduce pain, improve quality of life, Weight loss and increase balance.



21.04,2024

Family members, friends and onlookers cheered and supported the Bury St Edmunds Scout District parade as they made their way from the Abbey Gardens to St Mary's Church for a 3pm service yesterday.

All of the groups in the district, including Thurston, Mildenhall, Lakenheath and more, were represented. The Bury scout district is the biggest in Suffolk.

"The scouts only parade twice a year so this is not only very important for the community but it also shows and reminds people we are still very much about," he said.

Megan Powell took the Standard for Lakenheath beavers and did a brilliant job.



Lakenheath Community Primary school advised that next Sunday, it's their very first Junior Park Run. Mildenhall hub have already filled a roster for the school who have been promoting the event in school and are promising cake will be available for sale.

The poster is for a 'parkrun' event. At the top left, it says 'FREE!' in a red box. The 'parkrun' logo is in a stylized font. Below that, 'LCPS TAKEOVER' is written in white on a green background, and 'JUNIOR PARK RUN' is written in white on a purple background. The date 'SUNDAY 28TH APRIL 2024' and start time 'START AT 09:00 AM | MILDENHAL HUB' are listed. A note says 'Try to arrive early for the warm up and Instructions'. A section titled 'Cake sale after!' includes the text: 'Please let us know the week before if you're available to make and bring cakes to sell. All proceeds to go towards school.' Next to this is an illustration of a pink cake with sunglasses and a 'SALE' sign. At the bottom, it says 'Children can run/walk alone or parents are welcome to join them. Use the website below to sign up and don't forget to bring the barcode on the day.' A QR code and the URL 'HTTPS://WWW.PARKRUN.ORG.UK/REGISTER/' are provided. The bottom of the poster features silhouettes of four runners in red, purple, green, and orange.

24.4.2024

Lakenheath casuals AFC announced that unfortunately this evening will be their last home game at the Lakenheath Pavilion Playing Fields.

They say that they enjoyed playing their football here (Kershaw 3B League Champions) but due to circumstances outside of their hands they have to move to a new pitch next season.

The match this evening kicks off at 18:15 against local competitors Soham United. Bar open from 17:30 Please come down and show your support

26.4.2024

RSPB Reserve reported that last night (24-25 April) the overflow car park surface and sections of their main car park surface at the RSPB reserve were churned up beyond recognition after the area was used as a racetrack.

Volunteers have spent all morning today raking the area and will level it with a roller soon. Staff have now installed CTV cameras in the event of a repeat visit so they will have evidence of it happening.

The photo shows the area post-raking, so it is looking much better than it did.



29.4.2024

LAKENHEATH COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL JUNIOR PARKRUN TAKEOVER

The community school announced that it was a pleasure to be the Run Director on a very damp morning, but the weather did not stop proceedings. A massive number of 71 juniors completed the 2km course, the BIGGEST numbers to date, supported by a team of 21 volunteers, most of whom were from the Lakenheath Community Primary School!

There was an amazing 31 first timers to Parkrun, and a fantastic 10 new personal bests set.

A big Thank You to all the Hi-Vis Hero's. Rebecca BELL, Matthew BISHOP, Arianne COCKERILL, Frances COCKS, Zoe EATON, Debbie HALL, Sara HEAP, Gemma HORREX, Karen KNIGHT, Laura PALMER, Mandy RISER, Karen SKEATS, Ebbie SMITH, Victoria STOCKER, Michael TINGEY, Penni WEBB, Louisa WELLS, Sebastian WILCOX, Thorben WILCOX, Thorsten WILCOX.

Joshua was the first finisher setting a new personal best and Lily was the first female finisher. How amazing.

Big congratulations to Finley receiving his ultra marathon wrist band, completing 50 junior Parkrun's.

30.4.2024

The first cocoo was heard today

April rainfall 71 mm.

3.5.2024

An unnamed resident has hit on hard times, now homeless apparently, the result is she has been sleeping on the bench outside the Co-op or on the village green. Today the weather has been fowl. Rain all day. Late in the afternoon Social Services have been out and she has been taken to a hotel so she's warm, dry and safe. She is to be assessed for long term needs on Tuesday at the end of the bank holiday weekend.

4.5.24 and 5.5.2024

There has been double cause for celebration at Lakenheath Youth Football Club in recent weeks.

Over the May bank holiday weekend, an estimated 400 children took to the pitch during club's annual Challenge Cup event. The numbers involved once again highlighted the continued growth of the junior section over recent years, with a total of 13 Lakenheath teams ranging from under-7 to under-15's featuring at the Pitstop Auto Factors Arena – the home of the men's senior side.



Lakenheath Youth chairman Richard Horrex said: "We decided to run Challenge Cup over two days this year. There were a few reasons for that, but mainly it was down to numbers. We are growing each year and that's great. "Playing over the two days enhanced the social experience. Players were not being rushed on and off pitches and there was plenty of time to present medals and trophies.

"We had around 800 people over the two days, with about 400 of those playing. It's growing year on year and we've been able to generate a good amount of traction. "It has always been a great day for the kids and that's what it's all about for us."

Among those playing across the weekend were the under-12s girls' team, who made their Challenge Cup debut. Richard added: "It was fantastic to have a girls' team playing. We have always had girls playing for our teams alongside boys, but never an all-girls team.

“Setting a girls’ team up was a big target for us and we’d love to be able to set more up at different age groups.”

There are so many thanks to be given so please excuse me if I forget anyone. Thanks to all our amazing coaches for getting their teams and opponents sorted for the weekend. Some had league or cup games in addition to the challenge cup game so arranging two matches in a weekend is not an easy task.

- Zoe, Shane, James, and Tom for planning the weekend and sorting all trophies plus organising on the days.
 - Leanne for working on the raffle all day Saturday
 - Gemma and Sarah for working the raffle and organising the raffle prizes
 - Mark, Shane and Jimmy for marking out the pitches
 - All the referees who gave up their time
 - To everyone that attended and supported our club
- Finally, thanks to Lakenheath FC who were great hosts and provided the perfect venue for the weekend for us. Thanks to Steve for organising his team



Open training is on Wednesday evening 17:30 to 18:30 at Lakenheath Playing Fields.

OPEN TRAINING

**If your child is aged 5 to 7 and wants to get into Football
Please do not miss this opportunity**

- 4 week training programme
- Wednesday evenings 17:30 to 18:30
- Commencing 10th April
- @ Lakenheath Playing Fields
- Qualified coaches
- £ Free

FREE

ACCREDITED CLUB ★ ★
PART OF ENGLAND FOOTBALL

**Please do not hesitate to contact us for more information
on the above (and our other teams) and to reserve your place** 🙌

Lakenheathyouthfc@gmail.com

8.5.2024

6 x F-15Es arrived home to RAF Lakenheath today.

LN AF 96-0201 F15E 48th FW Wing Boss Bird – Hellcat
LN AF 96-0204 F15E – Clawing Kitty/RAWR
LNAF 91-0310 F15E – Strafe
LN AF 91-0324 F15E – EL Jefe
LN AF 00-3000 F15E – Bomb Truck
LN AF 91-0604 – El Diablo

The first six F-15E Strike Eagles of the 494th Fighter Squadron “Mighty Black Panthers” of the 48th Fighter Wing, have returned to RAF Lakenheath, UK, from their deployment to the CENTCOM area of operations. The aircraft, flying as TABOR 71-76, and supported by Blue21 (KC-135 #58-0103), Blue22 (KC-135 #58-0094) and Blue23 (KC-135 #62-3509), landed at their home base at around 13:00 local time..

The Strike Eagles had been deployed as part of the 494th Expeditionary Fighter Squadron, to bolster the U.S. posture in the area amid the Gaza crisis in October 2023.

The aircraft were based at Muwaffaq Salti/AI-Azraq Air Base in Jordan, one of the usual deployment locations for US aircraft in the area.

Along with Israeli and other U.S. and allied aircraft, from there, the F-15Es contributed to the air defence of Israel in the night between Apr. 13 and 14, 2024, when 170 one-way “kamikaze” drones, 120 Medium-Range Ballistic Missiles, and 30 Land-Attack Cruise Missiles were fired towards Israel during an unprecedented attack launched by Iran alongside Houthi terrorist group in Yemen as well as Iranian-backed proxies in Iraq.

During that night, the F-15E Strike Eagles from the 494th Fighter Squadron, and the 335th Fighter Squadron, from Seymour Johnson AFB, North Carolina (also deployed in the CENTCOM AOR), achieved a combined “kill score” of 70 Iranian drones.

President Biden praised the Strike Eagle aircrews “for their exceptional airmanship and skill in defending Israel from an unprecedented aerial attack by Iran. These brave servicemembers make us all proud”, he said.

As we explained back then, images of the F-15Es deployed to the CENTCOM area of operations usually showed the Strike Eagles carrying two AIM-120 AMRAAMs (Advanced Medium Range Air-to-Air Missiles) and two AIM-9X Sidewinder AAMs (Air-to-Air Missiles) along with a Sniper ATP (Advanced Targeting Pod) and various JDAMs (Joint Direct Attack Munitions). However, as happened with the F/A-18E/F Super Hornets aboard USS Eisenhower in the Red Sea, the anti-drone mission may have seen the aircraft launching with a different/specific loadout considering the need to counter a significant amount of incoming UAVs.

Today around 8am a Coop delivery lorry in leaving the car park area caught the edge of the wall with its tailgate pulling it down. the bricks fell on Lakenheath in Bloom's planter and bench, damaging both and all over the ground. The driver, obviously didn't realise what he had done and drove off regardless.

LAKENHEATH PARISH COUNCIL advised the community of the following event: ANNUAL MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL AND THE MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL (IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE APM) TO BE HELD ON MONDAY 13th May 2024 at 7pm in the Methodist Chapel, Back Street, Lakenheath.

MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC ARE WELCOME TO ATTEND

2024/01 Election of Chair and signing of Acceptance of Office

2024/02 Election of Vice Chair and signing of Acceptance of Office

2024/03 Apologies for Absence

2024/04 Minutes of the 2023 APCM (Paper A)

2024/05 Signing of Declarations of Acceptance of Office

2024/06 Confirmation that Registers of Members Interests remain the same

2024/07 Chairman's Report 2023-2024

2024/08 Election of LPC Cemetery Committee

The members of the 2023-2024 Cemetery Committee were: Cllr J Hastings, Cllr A Gyte, Cllr I Frost, Chairman

2024/09 Election of LPC Planning Sub-Committee

The members of the Planning Committee were: Cllr W Overy, Cllr A Gyte, Cllr N Smith, Cllr M Hugo, Chairman

2024/10 To confirm that General Power of Competence remains applicable

2024/11 Election of LPC Representative to Village Hall (Peace Memorial Hall) Management Committee (Cllr M Rowntree)

2024/12 Election of LPC Representative to Howard Evans Trust (Cllr P Gyte)

2024/13 Confirmation of LPC Representative School Link (Cllr W Overy)

2024/14 Confirmation of LPC Representatives on LPC Emergency Plan Committee (Cllrs J Hastings, Cllr P Gyte)

2024/15 Confirmation that LPC Policies and Procedures will be reviewed during the forthcoming year

10.5.2024

For the second week we are informed the library will be again closed next week. The necessary roof repairs are taking longer than anticipated.

The final 6 x 494th Fighter Squadron Mighty Black Panthers return to RAF Lakenheath after a stopover on the way home at Aviano for fuel. They were returning from a 7-month deployment during which they provided crucial support to operations in the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility. Nose art collection was as follows.

91-0334 "Red Tail Angel"

91-0313 "Mullet" with tail script of "Business in the Front, Party in the Back"

01-2002 "Warlord"

96-0202 no name but adult and young panther.

91-0335 "Dutchman"

91-0602 no name but swirly fire-type thing



Aurora Borealis is visible over Lakenheath tonight as clear skies and an intense solar storm set the perfect conditions for seeing the dancing lights.



12.5.2024

Lakenheath Youth Football Club gave a massive well done to the u13 hurricanes. They achieved a second place in the league in their first season. Well done to all the boys and all the parents for the massive effort this season.



There was a planned protest outside gate 1 to RAF Lakenheath today between 11 and 3. It was a quiet affair and did not affect the surrounding areas in any way.

13.5.2024

Lunchtime today another lorry hit the other side gate of the Coop driveway

F-15E Strike Eagles from the 492nd Fighter Squadron take off from RAF Lakenheath to head to Exercise #AstralKnight 2024. The F-15s are teaming up with their fellow F-35A Lightning IIs from the 495th Fighter Squadron, operating out of Powdiz Air Base in Poland. This exercise underscores their commitment to Agile Combat Employment (ACE) alongside their NATO Allies, adapting swiftly to dynamic security environments. This collaboration is a testament to our unified effort to uphold global freedom and stability. Together, we own the skies.

RAF Lakenheath welcomes back the first group of F-15E Strike Eagle maintainers and support personnel of the 494th Fighter Squadron and 48th Fighter Wing from their seven-month deployment to Southwest Asia. There was an unwavering dedication and exceptional performance supporting operations in the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility and strengthening U.S. Posture in the region proved they are "Always Ready to Own the Skies"

16.5.2024

The Liberty Wing welcomes back the final main group of F-15E Strike Eagle maintainers and supporting personnel of the 494th Fighter Generation Squadron and around the 48th Fighter Wing from a seven-month deployment to Southwest Asia

The USAF are grateful for their outstanding efforts which provided critical support during operations in the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility.

The winners of the Grassroots Football Awards 2024 in Suffolk have been announced. The Judging Panel read through a record-breaking 116 entries this year, easily surpassing the previous high of 87 submitted in 2020.

Lakenheath Youth FC, who won the Club of the Year category, received multiple nominations and were described as 'an amazing club' with excellent facilities providing a player pathway to adult football.

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 spectators will come to support the lads, we have a bar, plus teas, coffees and food on matchdays so pop along.

17.5.2024

Lakenheath Community Primary School gave a huge congratulations and big well done to all of the Year sixes for finishing their SATS this week. The School could not be any prouder. They faced some tricky challenges but they all did a fantastic job to remain focused and manage their emotions.

Teachers took them down to the pavilion this morning for some rounders and a play in the park to let off some steam.



Tonight was the time for the Annual Parish Meeting open to residents to participate. The main item of interest is the opportunity for all clubs, groups and organisations of the Parish to give an annual update of their activities.

NOTES FROM THE LAKENHEATH ANNUAL ASSEMBLY 17th MAY 2024 as provided by Lakenheath Parish council.

Attendees: circa 45, including representatives from the Pavilion and Playing Fields, 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 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

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.

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

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

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 PARISH COUNCIL

	Year Ended
	31/3/2024
RECEIPTS	
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>

The meeting closed at 8.25pm

19.5.2024

A great presentation afternoon/evening to finish off the season was had by members of Lakenheath Youth Football Club. Well done to everyone who attended and supported each team. Well done to all the coaches for their help and dedication. Thanks, were also specifically given to Sarah, Andy, Gemma, Emma, Shane and Richard for helping to set the day set up. Thanks, were also given to Derek Leader for photography throughout all of the presentations. Finally. thanks to Lakenheath FC for being the perfect host – Providing a bar, BBQ and space for the children to play.



20.05.2024

Lakenheath Youth FC posted that their Chairman, Richard Horrex just wanted to say a quick thanks to Rhys Mower for all he has done for the club and with their u13's team over the last 3 seasons. Over that time, he has helped myself with our team, trained and qualified as a referee and won the Suffolk FA young volunteer of the year cup. Picture above.

Rhys has taken a great opportunity to study for a degree and further his career with which we wish him all the best. With his attitude he will succeed, of that we are certain.

A true role model and all I can say is thank you Rhys on behalf of everyone with the U13's and the club.

23.5.2024

LAKENHEATH COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL DID IT.



You are looking at Suffolk County Orienteering champions. A massive congratulations to all 8 (and 1 off sick) children who ran their socks off around Haughley Park working together as a fantastic, supportive team to read their maps. Their dedication and willingness to work so hard, alongside having fun has paid off.

27.5.2024

The community were reminded that the 6th June is the 80th anniversary of D-Day – the landings in Normandy that began Operations Overlord the battle to liberate Northern France and eventually bring about the defeat of Nazi Germany.

Supported by naval and air forces, soldiers from the United Kingdom Canada, the United States and other allied nations landed on five Normandy beaches under heavy fire from the occupying German Army. Some 1,000 British men paid with their lives on D-Day alone.

As part of the national commemoration for remembering their ultimate sacrifice, the Lakenheath & District Branch of the Royal British Legion will be marking Thursday 6th June by laying two wreaths:

1. At 7.30 am at the village War Memorial as it was at this time 1st Battalion, Suffolk Regiment went ashore on Sword Beach
2. At 9.15 pm a second will be laid in the evening at the Village Beacon on the playing fields, just before it is lit.

Lakenheath & District Legion welcome anyone who wishes to attend either of these events.

Police are appealing for help to find a missing 15-year-old girl from the Lakenheath area., Delisha Mackenzie was last seen leaving Lakenheath on foot at about midnight yesterday. She is 5ft 5in, of slim build, has very long black hair and was wearing all black clothing with white trainers. Officers are extremely concerned for Delisha and are asking anyone who has seen her or who has any information on where she may be to contact Suffolk Police on 101.

Delisha was eventually found safe and well.

28.05.2024

The Bury Free Press reported that Plans for a 450-place school in a Suffolk village are set to be decided next week. The proposals, submitted by Suffolk County council in September, are set to be discussed by members of its development and regulation committee next Tuesday, June 4.

If approved, a new 420-place primary school and 30-place pre-school would be built on land off Station Road, in Lakenheath, to accommodate 164 possible new pupils arriving as a result of the 663 new homes planned for the area. The new school would open in September 2026, following the closure of the existing 315-place Lakenheath Community Primary School, in Mill Road. This is because although the demand for new places is too large to be met by the existing school, officers concluded it is not enough to justify a second school.

The plans also follow a previous approval for a new school on the same site in October 2018 which has expired due to a delay in housing development and an unsuccessful legal challenge. The new building would be two storeys high and be accompanied by two under 12s grass football pitches, a hard netball court, an outdoor classroom, a further outdoor learning area, and 10 pupil drop-off spaces. The proposals also include plans for the installation of enhanced sound insulation through triple-glazed windows, a heavyweight roof, and sound-attenuated mechanical ventilation. This is due to its proximity to RAF Lakenheath and flying jets.

A design statement by agent Concertus says: "The proposed new school aims to provide an inspiring and sustainable educational building, which meets the teaching requirements of today whilst also providing flexibility for the teaching needs of the future.

"It proposes to deliver accommodation and an environment which allows for high-quality education, allowing more children to attend a school in their local area."

There has been some opposition to the plans, however, with the parish council raising serious concerns despite welcoming and recognising the need for a new primary school.

A statement submitted by Cllr Gerald Kelly, chairman to Lakenheath Parish council, raised concerns over inaccurate traffic predictions, access, lack of lighting, and engagement with the community.

A second report in the paper advised that 8 new homes could be built on land at the back of 124 High Street. MB Homes Anglia Ltd has submitted proposals for four three-bedroom homes and four four-bedroom homes

A planning statement to West Suffolk Council said the 0.3 hectare site was mainly grass land. Permission was previously granted for three homes and the proposal seeks to extend the development area.

It said the contribution to the housing stock in Lakenheath should weigh in favour of the development.

A Club Announcement tonight came from what was Lakenheath Casuals FC. As previously announced, we will not be continuing our football in Lakenheath. A tough decision was made to fold all 3 teams affiliated with Lakenheath Casuals concluding the 23/24 season. The club would like to thank Christopher Hewitt for all the hard work he put in to help them throughout the last few years. We wish you all best.

As much as we would have loved to stay playing in Lakenheath, the decision was taken out of our hands due to financial circumstances. We have great memories of playing at The Pavilion and are sad to be leaving.

Fortunately, we have been offered an opportunity to keep our squad together and are pleased to announce that starting from the 24/25 season we will be playing under the name AFC Mildenhall. We will be playing our home games at the Riverside Stadium, home of Mildenhall Town Football Club.

We would like to thank Mildenhall Town and Danny Procter for helping us find a new home so swiftly. Keep an eye out for further updates including news about Pre-Season and also a few new kits provided by some brand-new sponsors

Today is the last day Lloyds mobile Bank will provide a service to Lakenheath. The mobile bank has visited the village fortnightly for two hours since the Mildenhall sub-Branch closed.



May rainfall 111mm.

4.6.2024

Edna Matthews 100 today with her boys, Philip, Alan and Bryan.



5.6.2024

Lakenheath Cricket Team were given a donation of £2,000 from a nearby housing developer, Persimmon Homes, which has just launched a show home at its Liberty Gate development in the village, near to where the team play.

The housebuilder made the donation through its Community Champions programme.

Rory Palmer, of Lakenheath Cricket Club, said: "We would like to thank Persimmon for this donation, that will help us ensure our nets are in good condition for those practicing throughout the season, and repair our screens to give players and visitors a better experience.

"The club brings people together from the village and we are looking forward to welcoming potential new members from Liberty Gate in coming years."

6.6.2024

At 9.15 pm a tribute and beacon lighting ceremony held at the Playing fields by the Royal British Legion. Matthew Edwards as their representative gave the following speech:

"80 years ago today, soldiers, sailors and airman from the UK, Canada, the USA and other allied nations took part in Operation OVERLORD – the invasion of Europe in order to liberate it and defeat Nazi Germany. D-Day, 6 Jun 44, was the beginning of what was described most eloquently by Gen (later President) Eisenhower as 'the Great Crusade'.

There are many things to remember about D-Day but is the courage and sacrifice of those involved, many very young, that we are here to commemorate today

On D-Day, of the 160,000 troops who crossed the channel on 6 Jun

- Approximately 10,000 became casualties
- 4,414 were killed
- Of **whom** 1,760 were British

We lay a wreath at this time because it was at 0830hrs BDST, 0730 now, that 1st Bn Suffolk Regiment landed on Sword Beach.

They were part of 8th Infantry Brigade – the lead formation charged with securing the beachhead.

The Suffolks' task was to seize the fortification nicknamed HILLMAN, a mile-and-a-half south of SWORD. In an action demonstrating courage and determination they secured it in the early hours of 7 Jun 44 – the beachhead was thus secure, and the road to Caen open.

They shall not grow old as we that are left grow old
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn
At the going down of the sun, and in the morning
We will remember them."

All: we will remember them

Laying of the wreath by RBL

Instead of the Kohima epitaph, I would like to read something more apposite to D-Day
Simplify me when I'm dead

Remember me when I am dead

and simplify me when I'm dead.

As the processes of earth
strip off the colour of the skin:
take the brown hair and blue eye

and leave me simpler than at birth,
when hairless I came howling in
as the moon entered the cold sky.

Of my skeleton perhaps,
so stripped, a learned man will say
"He was of such a type and intelligence," no more.

Thus when in a year collapse
particular memories, you may
deduce, from the long pain I bore

the opinions I held, who was my foe
and what I left, even my appearance
but incidents will be no guide.

Time's wrong-way telescope will show
a minute man ten years hence
and by distance simplified.

Through that lens see if I seem
substance or nothing: of the world
deserving mention or charitable oblivion,

not by momentary spleen
or love into decision hurled,
leisurely arrive at an opinion.

Remember me when I am dead
and simplify me when I'm dead.

Those words were written by Keith Douglas, who landed on GOLD Beach on 6 Jun 44 as a tank commander in the Nottinghamshire Yeomanry, and was killed three days later on 9 Jun 1944.

7.6.2024

The Bury Free Press advises that a decision on plans for a 450-place school in a Suffolk village has been deferred to allow for more engagement.

The proposals, submitted by the Suffolk County council in September last year, were due to be discussed during Tuesday's development and regulation committee meeting before a decision was deferred.

It is still unclear when the application will come back to councillors — the next committee meeting date is scheduled for July 16. If approved, a new 420-place primary school and 30-place pre-school would be built on land off Station Road, in Lakenheath, to accommodate a possible 164 new pupils arriving as a result of the 663 new homes planned for the area.

The new school would open in September 2026, following the closure of the existing 315-place Lakenheath Community Primary School, in Mill Road.

Approval for a school on the site had already been granted in October 2018 but expired due to a delay in housing development and an unsuccessful legal challenge.

Despite promises from the agent, Concertus, that the new school would deliver flexible and high-quality education, there has been some voiced opposition to the plans.

A statement submitted by Cllr Gerald Kelly, chairman at the parish council, raised concerns over inaccurate traffic predictions, access, lack of lighting, and engagement.

8.6.2024

The Bury Free press today informed the community that Jewellery and electronics were stolen after a village property was burgled. Several electrical items were stolen alongside the jewellery.

Thieves targeted the home in Caudle Avenue, Lakenheath, at some time between 10pm on Saturday and 4pm on Sunday.

10.6.2024

A man from Lakenheath described as a 'hero' by a neighbour has told of a split-second decision that led to him rushing in to rescue a trapped dog during a house fire.

Luke Rutterford, of Eriswell Road, was sitting in his home office at midday and about to enter a meeting, when he heard his wife shouting about a fire at the house next door.

Laura Taylor, who lives at the adjoining house with her fiancé and four children, had popped out to pick up her daughter from school and was shocked to see black smoke billowing from the kitchen upon her return.

Laura, 39 weeks' pregnant at the time, said her mind began racing for her dog, eight-month-old Uhtred, who was caged inside her home. She told Suffolk News she would be forever grateful to two rescuers, who she described as the 'real heroes of the day', for what happened next.

When Luke arrived outside, he found Laura in a state of panic. Fearing this could lead to panic-induced labour, he took a deep breath and entered the building to find Uhtred.

Luke said: "Inside it was eerily quiet. There was lots of black smoke but very few flames, with an orange glow of the fire coming from the oven.

"I could see the dog lying in the cage but he wasn't moving. I lifted the cage before dropping it before trying to shake him to check he was still alive.

"He then got up and roused himself while I tried to drag the cage out of the kitchen, but I ran out of breath."

Re-entering the home, Luke managed to open the cage, allowing Uhtred to escape. "He immediately ran upstairs and my heart sank," he said. "I got Laura to call her dog and he shot outside." Luke exited Laura's home to find workers from a nearby Persimmon building site had gathered outside.



11.6.2024

Lakenheath Community Music Project

Lakenheath Community Centre
Starting on Friday July 19th @7:00pm

Do you want to play an instrument?
Or already play but want to improve and jam with others.

Want to try vocals?
Do you need vocal backing tracks,
Drum tracks or Bass tracks?

Do you want to learn how to set up a sound system.
Would you like to professionally record your performance.

Don't have an instrument? Try ours.

We have guitars, Bass, Keyboards, Drums and Vocal equipment.

Come and see us on July 19th.
All ages and abilities welcome.

Call Bert on :07818056061 for more information.

17.6.2024

Thanks were given to the Parish Councillors and volunteers that yesterday morning gave the play park a good tidy up ready for the summer. The bin that the wildlife like to empty out, there are still 4 bins in and around the park, has been filled and is now an attractive planter.

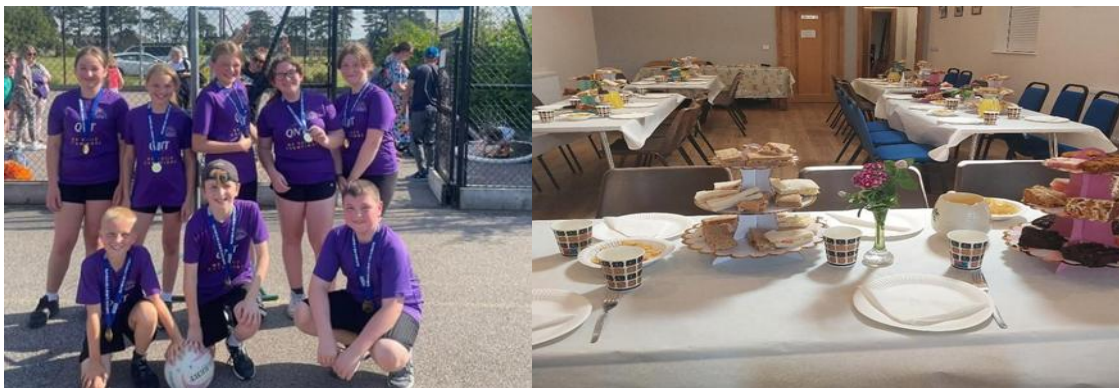


18.6.2024

Lakenheath community primary school today advised that they were going for GOLD

This afternoon they took part in a mini rescheduled Netball competition against 3 other local schools. They only had the opportunity to take 8 players, and this bunch played tremendously together as a team. Their performances showed, winning all 3 of their games to be crowned winners

We're very proud of the hard work that's been put in, with some lunch times sacrificed it's certainly paid off. A huge thank you to another 9 children who attended the club and were part of OUR team as they helped them prepare.



20.6.2024

The fortnightly meeting of the Members of the Lakenheath Friendship group enjoyed a high tea today

24.6.2024

Lakenheath Parish council announced that at the Lakenheath skate park they are in the process of repairing the ramps. There are exposed joints and it is not safe to use hence the tape. Parents were asked to explain this to children so that the park is not used until fully safe.



26.6.2024

Lloyds Bank remind the community that they will be available in the village Hall to deal with any banking queries. There will, however, be no facility for paying in money or withdrawals of any description.

A Community Banker will be here to help you on Tuesdays between 2:00pm and 4:00pm on:

11 June	15 October
25 June	29 October
9 July	12 November
23 July	26 November
6 August	10 December
20 August	24 December
3 September	7 January
17 September	
1 October	

Speak to your Community Banker



They'll be at Lakenheath Community Centre & Peace Memorial 98 High St, Lakenheath, Brandon IP27 9EW to help you fortnightly on Tuesdays between 2:00pm and 4:00pm

- We can help guide you through the ways you can bank with us
- We can also support you with account enquiries - both personal and business
- Please turn over for dates and times we'll be available

27.6.2024

Lakenheath Cricket Club advised the community that yesterday their bar stock delivery was stolen from outside the cricket club. The bar is one of their main sources of income that keeps them going throughout the year. They asked for any information relating to this theft or return of the proceeds.

Additionally, a hydraulic pecker, otherwise known as a hydraulic breaker, is a piece of equipment that helps to break out large areas of concrete or road surfaces. has been stolen from a machine on land near Undley Road in Lakenheath sometime between 3pm on June 25 and 8am on June 26.

LAKENHEATH INDOOR BOWLS CLUB

OPEN DAY

SATURDAY 13th OF JULY 10 AM TO 3 PM

EVERYONE WELCOME YOUNG OR OLD, IT'S A SPORT THAT ALL THE FAMILY CAN PLAY

IF YOU ENJOY FAMILY TIME AND LOOKING FOR A NEW CHALLENGE, WHY NOT TRY BOWLS- THE GAME FOR ALL AGES

IF YOU ARE INTERESTED AND WANT TO TRY SOMETHING DIFFERENT COME TO OUR OPEN DAY, YOU NEVER KNOW YOU MAY LIKE IT.

WHAT WE CAN OFFER

- COACHING
- SOCIAL BOWLING
- MENS & LADIES, MIXED & OPEN BOWLS LEAGUES
- CLUB COMPETITIONS
- COUNTY COMPETITIONS
- NATIONAL COMPETITIONS

ENJOY A HEALTHY ACTIVE SPORT AND MAKE FRIENDS

- SUPERB 3 RINK BOWLING GREEN
- ALL AGES AND ABILITIES WELCOME
- QUALIFIED COACHES
- FULLY LICENSED BAR
- JUNIOR SECTION

**FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE EMAIL lakenheathibc@gmail.com
LAKENHEATH I.B.C, THE NEST, BACK STREET, IP27-9HN.**

29.6.2024

Lakenheath Parish Council advice that the new inclusive roundabout is open for use today.



June rainfall 26 mm.

10.7.2024

There has been a bad accident on Eriswell Road at the junction with South Road - police have completely shut the road.

The community were advised that Saturday 13 July, activists from the Lakenheath Alliance for Peace (LAP) will begin a three-day walk/cycle from Norwich and establish an international peace camp at the US-controlled RAF Lakenheath in Suffolk, from Monday 15 July until Thursday 25 July.

Marchers will gather at the steps of Norwich City Hall at 10am on Saturday before setting off at 10:30am. On the morning of Monday 13 July, the group will arrive in the town of Brandon and set off towards RAF Lakenheath at 1pm. The peace camp will be set up later that afternoon and the base will be informed of LAP's intention to hand-deliver a letter to the base commander the following day.

LAP will maintain a continuous presence outside the base for the duration of the camp, with a series of vigils, protests, and workshops scheduled. See the full programme [here](#).

The village are informed that since April 2022, there has been growing evidence that the US intends to use RAF Lakenheath as a major part of NATO's nuclear weapons infrastructure in Europe. US budget documents show that the base's weapons storage silos are being upgraded to store the new B61-12 guided nuclear bomb, and new dormitory buildings are being built to house additional military personnel needed for any potential nuclear weapons mission.

Washington also intends to double the amount of nuclear-capable F-35 aircraft it has stationed at Lakenheath to 54, as part of efforts to increase its military presence in Europe. Last November, US Deputy Defense Secretary Kathleen Hicks visited the base to inspect these "infrastructure improvements."

LAP is a coalition of local, national, and international anti-nuclear campaigners dedicated to preventing US nuclear weapons from returning to RAF Lakenheath, after a successful grassroots campaign forced their initial removal in 2008. We call on the newly elected Labour government to publicly state that US nuclear weapons will not be welcomed in Britain and that it will work towards de-escalating nuclear tensions in Europe and beyond.

CND General Secretary Kate Hudson said:

"CND is a proud part of the Lakenheath Alliance for Peace and calls on everyone across Britain to get involved with this campaign. The return of US nuclear weapons to Lakenheath greatly increases the nuclear risk already faced by this country as it puts the whole of Britain on the nuclear front line! We call on the Labour government to explicitly refuse any US request to station their weapons of mass destruction here."

Norwich and District CND Chair Sue Wright said:

"In 2008 nuclear weapons were removed from British soil after tireless campaigning. Plans are now in place to bring B61-12 nuclear bombs to RAF Lakenheath, with the nuclear-capable F-35s already established at the base and already polluting our skies using 22 gallons of fuel per minute. We need to act to make the public aware of the dangers of nuclear weapons, not only to East Anglia, but to the whole world."

Alison Lochhead from CND Cymru said:

“43 years after the march to Greenham Common to stop US from bringing nuclear weapons to Britain, peace activists are yet again having to walk to a USAF base, this time to RAF Lakenheath in Suffolk. A peace camp will be set up outside the base with a 24/7 peace vigil to demand that no US nuclear weapons will be brought to Britain. CND Cymru joins Lakenheath Alliance for Peace to collectively raise awareness about what is happening and demand that all nuclear weapons are abolished.”

Yolanda Juarros-Barcenill, who will be travelling from Spain to attend the camp said:

“As part of the Women in Black Against the War-Madrid, I very much oppose any kind of war. Nuclear weapons are specifically directed against civilians and this makes them the first to be banned all over the world. Only dialogue brings peace and security.”

Colin Archer from the Movement for the Abolition of War said:

“We support the nationwide protests called by CND and others against US plans to site deadly B61-12 nuclear bombs in Britain. Not allowing the public to have a say on this fundamental issue goes against the grain of democratic discourse, transparency, and accountability. This deployment is likely to provoke further armament by Russia, and other states; thus, we risk finding ourselves in the same nuclear-escalation spiral last seen during the first Cold War.”

12.7.2024

We learn from the local paper that a contractor working at RAF Lakenheath who breached planning permissions could face court proceedings and an unlimited fine, a council has said.

Carvel Project Management, which has been working on the F-35A RAF Lakenheath construction programme, has been served a breach of condition notice by West Suffolk Council's planning enforcement. The business was given temporary permission in 2019 to use land off of the B1112/A1065 at Wangford for a compound with temporary buildings and supporting infrastructure.

That permission included a condition that they submit a plan for how it would clear the site and restore it to its previous condition as agricultural land by June 10 last year.

The site is still in use, with the only application to vary the conditions of the planning permission submitted 10 days after the deadline for the conditions had passed. Victor Lukaniuk, ward member for Brandon Town West which includes the area of land, supports the action. He said: “People have been complaining to me asking how it is that it has been turned into a storage for plant and HGVs when it is a stone curlew nesting area. “It’s not appropriate. It’s a rare Breckland scene, the permission was temporary. “It’s expired and it’s time for it to be put right.”

As it is a sensitive site, the decommissioning and restoration work is required to take place between October 1 this year and April 30, 2025 so as to fit outside the stone curlew nesting season. There is no right of appeal under the breach of condition notice.

Jim Thorndyke, cabinet member for planning at West Suffolk Council, added: “The permission given was temporary while the F-35A construction programme took place. RAF Lakenheath has confirmed that programme is now complete. “But the site is still in use a year after planning permission expired. This land is part of the current Breckland Special Protection Area, and quite simply enough is enough which is why this notice has now been served.”

13 July 2024

The Bury free Press advises that Activists will march through two counties before setting up a peace camp outside an airbase for 10 days.

Lakenheath Alliance For Peace will begin a three-day walk from Norwich to the US Air Force (USAF) base at RAF Lakenheath in Suffolk on Saturday.

From Monday 15th they will then camp here until 25 July to peacefully protest against nuclear weapons.

It comes after a document stated work was underway in preparation for the Lakenheath base's "upcoming nuclear mission", although the USAF has not commented on this.

Between 30 and 50 people will gather at the steps of Norwich City Hall at 10:00 BST on Saturday before setting off on the journey from 10:30.

On Monday morning they will arrive in Brandon and head to RAF Lakenheath at 13:00.

That afternoon the peace camp will be set up before the group intends to hand deliver a letter to the base commander on Tuesday.

Vigils, protests and workshops have been scheduled while the group is camped.

RAF Lakenheath is the largest US Air Force operated base in England

The Ministry of Defence said it would not confirm nor deny the presence of nuclear weapons at any given location, as per a long-standing UK and Nato policy.

A spokesperson added the government department respected the right to protest and would do nothing to prevent members of the public from exercising their right to peaceful protest.

A spokesperson for RAF Lakenheath said the base was aware of the planned event.

"We respect the right of all people to protest, and our hope is that should individuals invoke their right to demonstrate, they do so peacefully and safely," they said.

A spokesperson for Suffolk Police added: "Alongside partners, the constabulary has been planning for this event for some time to provide a proportionate, lawful and effective policing response to this planned protest.

"The constabulary will seek to facilitate peaceful protest, by supporting and protecting those engaging in peaceful protest in respect of their rights of freedom of expression, assembly, and association, whilst balancing the needs and rights of the military base, local communities, businesses, and the wider public."

16.7.2024

Today we learn from the local paper that Plans for a new 450-place school in Suffolk have been approved but safety concerns remain. Members of the county council's development and control committee met this morning to discuss and unanimously approve plans for a new school on land off Station Road in Lakenheath. It will have 420 primary and 30 preschool places and is forecasted to open in September 2026, at which point it will replace the current Lakenheath Community Primary School in Mill Road.

The new school is meant to accommodate a possible 164 new pupils arriving as a result of the 663 homes planned for the area and, although sufficient in size for the foreseeable future, can expand to 630 primary and 60 preschool places in the future.

Several concerns were raised, however, about the safety of the plans in terms of lighting and traffic speed. Mike Malina, chair of governors at the current school, called on the applicant to implement a 20mph warning at the beginning and end of the school day, something the parish council said it would be happy to pay for, as well as more attention to be paid to mitigating the impacts of moving the school on families.

He added: "We would like all these issues to be acknowledged and we make these points for the open public record.

"We fervently hope that the momentum to find solutions by all parties involved can be maintained as we progress to the opening of the new school."

Both Cllr Stuart Bird and Cllr Peter Bird also raised their concerns lighting wasn't sufficient several times — this was because lighting on certain parts of the site could impact the habitat of certain species, including stone curlews.

Ms Kelly Smith, who spoke on behalf of the county council said the applicant would accept conditions for a 20mph warning and lighting, but that these should be made under legal advice.

Ms Smith said: "Ultimately we have to be guided by legislation and we will be guided by our colleagues as to what we can legally put up."

This was because setting conditions for a 20mph warning before the school opened, for instance, could delay the delivery of the school should the warning not be secured in time or at all.

Cllr Stuart Bird said: "On the issue of the lighting, I think we've reached a sorry state of affairs if we're at the point where we won't put lights up for the safety on a path because of the effect it's going to have on bird species.

"Saying all of that, I don't wish to do anything which would jeopardize the scheme."

Councillors agreed to approve the application along with an advisory note highlighting their concerns, which could be dealt with aside from the planning process.

The new building will be two storeys high and accompanied by two under 12s grass football pitches, a hard netball court, an outdoor classroom, a further outdoor learning area, and 10 pupil drop-off spaces.

The plans also include the installation of enhanced sound insulation through triple-glazed windows, a heavyweight roof, and sound-attenuated mechanical ventilation, due to its proximity to RAF Lakenheath.

18.7.2024

The popular Undley Farm pumpkin patch announced today that they will open again this October after a two-year break.

In a social media post, the team at Undley Farm Events said: "We're excited to announce that with only three months until Halloween season we are back this October for our pumpkin picking and maize maze event."

The patch was closed in 2022 and 2023 but had previously been a busy spot for families from Suffolk, looking to get a photo amongst the pumpkins.

As well as pumpkin picking and exploring the maze, children will be able to have a go on giant inflatables

19.7.2024

CND Demonstration outside RAF Lakenheath



22.7.2024

Lakenheath Youth FC announced that there are a few changes on the various Team groups. in addition, following the AGM they will be changing their kit colours to that like Lakenheath FC and have updated our badge also. They gave thanks to Shane for the final design of the badge.



22.7.2024

Plans for eight homes in the village have been refused following concerns over 'significant adverse impacts on aviation safety'.

MB Homes Anglia Ltd submitted proposals for four three-bedroom semi-detached homes and four four-bedroom detached homes on land at the back of 124 High Street in Lakenheath.

A planning statement to West Suffolk Council said the 0.3-hectare site was mainly grass land. Concerns had been raised over the application including an objection from the Ministry of Defence - Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) as species identified in a proposed landscaping scheme had the potential to form an environment attractive to large or flocking birds hazardous to aviation safety.

"This impact would be exacerbated by the proximity of the application site to both RAF Lakenheath and Mildenhall, it said.

The parish council said the entrance / exit was not safe or suitable, the plans were overdevelopment of the site and was concerned about access by emergency vehicles.

Cllr Gerald Kelly objected due to issues over parking and said the plans represented over-development of the worst kind.

The conservation officer recommended the plan for refusal as it would fail to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the conservation area or preserve the setting of a listed building.

Highways submitted a holding objection raising several questions including what was being proposed to ensure a safe and suitable access.

Three representations of objections from residents in High Street were submitted with concerns about overlooking, site access safety, increase in traffic and surface water flooding.

West Suffolk Council refused the application and said it failed to preserve or enhance the conservation area as it would result in the partial erosion of the open space at the back of the High Street as well as the removal and concealment of an historic flint wall.

25.7.2024

A key route in a village will be shut for more than a month from today for works by Anglian Water.

A section of the B1112 Eriswell Road in Lakenheath is closed until August 30 for a water main renewal scheme.

A diversion is in place. A letter to Lakenheath Parish Council from Anglian Water said access to the car sales businesses will be maintained throughout the duration of the works.

30.07.2024

Lakenheath Parish Council advised that the County Council has (again) granted Planning Permission for the new school. The Parish Council objected because Highways had claimed that the Toucan crossing would automatically slow traffic on Station Road, so no further measures were necessary, and that there was no need for lighting on the proposed footpath/ cycle track from Maids Cross Way through the wood to Barr Drive. Neither of these made

sense and the County's Planning Committee agreed, so have requested a timed 20mph speed limit past the school with wildlife-friendly lighting for the footpath.

While there are still concerns about drop-off arrangements for the school, the site Developers for both the 81 (Hyde Housing) and 375 (now Persimmon) houses have agreed to work with the school to provide a solution. A much-improved situation!

July rainfall 120 mm

03.08.2024



Lakenheath Fete 2024 held today was sponsored by ShanRye Surveying & Architectural Services; Central Garage Lakenheath; Freedom Recycling; Lakenheath Opticians; DBL CASTLES; Lakenheath Fireworks; DJ Jay's Disco and Entertainment; Elveden Estate; and Sutton Services Ltd!

05.08.2024

Lakenheath Methodist Church announced that they are going to run a Youth Club for ages 12 - 16. An open invitation to the community to bring parents and come and see what will be on offer. Their taster session is on Sunday 15th September at 2pm with the first club night on Friday the 20th at 6.30- 8.30pm

06.08.2024

A squadron from US 3Wing are in town. 12 Alaskan Lockheed Martin F22s arriving into Lakenheath this evening



7.8.2024

A trespasser on the railway line between Thetford and Ely has caused disruptions to train services in the region. The incident happened at Lakenheath station between Norwich and Ely shortly before 5.30pm.

All lines from the station were blocked and both East Midlands Railway and Greater Anglia services have been affected. Greater Anglia reported delays of up to 45 minutes with potential cancellations on the East Midlands Railway route between Norwich, Nottingham and Liverpool Lime Street and the Greater Anglia line between Norwich, Cambridge and Stansted Airport.

The disruptions were expected to last until 7.30pm but at 5.52pm Greater Anglia issued a further update on X saying that the person was now clear of the line and trains had begun to run through the station again.

A 57-foot narrowboat has been stolen from the Little Ouse in Lakenheath sometime between Friday and Sunday. Suffolk Police is appealing for information



8.8.2024

So much fun at Lakenheath Library today- A magician, Corky, came and entertained the young (and not so young). Who says libraries are quiet places. Thanks were given to Corky who provided so much fun.

18.8.2024

Parish Councillors together with village volunteers cleared the area of the village sign. The wild flowers planted there have now set seed.



20.8.2024

The community have been warned that EXERCISE COBRA WARRIOR 24-2 takes place 16th September to 4th October 2024.

Heads up for some noise at Mildenhall this will entail probably 16 / 18 F-16Cs from the 31 FW 555 FS Aviano AFB being temporarily based and flying 2 missions a day AM and PM.

As part of the rising tensions in the Middle East, it was announced that the United States would be deploying a squadron of F-22s to the Middle Eastern Theatre to beef up US forces in the Middle East.

As part of this deployment, here we see United States Air Force Lockheed Martin F-22A 05-4090 entering the downwind and approaching at Lakenheath as TREND71 en route

This aircraft is assigned to 90th Fighter Squadron, 3rd Wing, at Joint Base Elmendorf.



24.08.2024

Next Saturday is Lakenheath Men's Shed Breakfast Club Saturday. a place where men can meet for a free breakfast and a chat with other older chaps from Lakenheath. This coming Saturday, our guest speaking will be talking about the retained Fire Service in Suffolk.

Members of the public and construction site companies and workers have been urged to remain vigilant after a spate of burglaries at the Eriswell Road building site.

Intruders gained entry to the site in Eriswell Road, Lakenheath, sometime between 12.30pm on August 24 and 6am on August 27. The office and containers were broken into and tools were stolen.

Officers ask if you witnessed any suspicious activity in these areas or can provide any information that may help with these investigations, to contact Suffolk Police.

26.8.2024

Lakenheath FC have announced the departure of their manager, Trevor Collins, by 'mutual consent' following their winless start to the 2024/25 season continuing with an early Isuzu FA Vase exit. Asked what problems he felt led to his departure, he said: "To be honest the job is getting so hard nowadays and people just don't realise how difficult it can be.

"A lot of players just don't show the level of commitment any more by training etc, but they expect to play every week when they are available.

"It doesn't matter how much work you put in as a manager to improve things on and off the pitch one thing is for sure, some players will always let you down.

“You act as a manager, coach, second father, friend and mental health worker nowadays but some players forget that and don’t give you a second thought when you need their support.

A lot of players say they just want honesty from a manager but they are usually the first ones to leave when you have been honest with them.”

“You never say never but I will be taking some time out, grab a holiday very soon and no doubt watch a few games locally,” he said.

A 2-0 defeat in the first qualifying round away to Eynesbury Rovers on Saturday, which stretched the Heath’s winless start to six games in all competitions, proved to be the former Walsham-le-Willows boss’ last game in charge.

The Thurlow Nunn League Premier Division club, who sit in the bottom three in the early table after two draws and two defeats from their opening four games, posted a statement on X which read: “After a conversation between the club and Trevor Collins, it has been mutually agreed that he leaves Lakenheath FC.” Holder steps up as interim manager

27.8.2024

It was today announced that The plough, Lakenheath is soon to be Il Salvatore, an Italian restaurant. The new owners added that as you all know these things take some time but we will keep you all updated going forward. We aim to open mid/end October 2024. Let the renovation commence. We look forward seeing you all very soon



29.8.2024

Three fire crews attended a hay bale fire inside a barn in Lakenheath.

Firefighters from Brandon, Mildenhall and Newmarket were called to a barn in Station Road, near the Wangford Road junction, in Lakenheath, at around 11.30am.

A spokesperson from Suffolk Fire and Rescue said hay bales inside the barn were on fire, however it is not believed to have caused any damage to the barn. The fire was soon under control though the firefighters remain at the scene while it damped down.

The community were informed that there is a planned demonstration outside RAF Lakenheath Gate 1 on Saturday, 31 August. The area should be avoided.

August rainfall 22 mm.

2.9.2024

The library today announced the start of a new club.

SUFFOLK LIBRARIES **WHERE I BELONG**

NEW CLUB!
GAMES GALORE club
For adults who enjoy Scrabble, Chess,
Bridge, Backgammon, Bagatelle, and
Rummikub.
Every Tuesday starting
Tuesday 10th September
10:00-2:00pm. FREE
The Community care cafe is open 10:00-
2:00pm too. Why not make a whole day
of it!

By donating to Suffolk Libraries you can help us fund crucial additional services that reduce social, digital and rural isolation in our communities. For details visit www.suffolklibraries.co.uk/Donate HMRC charity number: 3734476

5.9.2024

Lakenheath Football Club ranks have been bolstered by the arrival of three new signings. Two of the additions – Dean Grogan and Matt Hayden – are already well-known figures at the club, while Ben Curtis has joined on a month-long loan deal from higher-league Bury Town.

Centre-back Grogan left Lakenheath for Ely City in September 2023 after spending six years – over two spells – in the heart of the defence. Like Grogan, striker Hayden has also had a couple of previous stints with the club – the most recent of which ended in 2018. Prior to that, the centre-forward, who started the ongoing campaign with Histon, was part of the Lakenheath side that won the Suffolk Senior Cup during the club's days in the Cambridgeshire County League set-up.

As for young striker Curtis, he has signed for Lakenheath having made five appearances as a substitute for Bury this term.

Previously the forward helped Bury Town Under-18s to reach the first-round proper of the FA Youth Cup – where they were defeated by Charlton Athletic – and also the final of the Suffolk FA Under-18 Cup.

All three players could feature for Lakenheath away at Hadleigh United on Saturday (3pm), which will see Steve Holder remain in interim charge as the process continues to find a permanent successor to recently-departed manager Trevor Collins.

Lakenheath are bottom of the early Thurlow Nunn League Premier Division standings after picking up two points from their first four outings.

10.9.2024

The 48th Fighter Wing from RAF Lakenheath advised that they will conduct night flying starting tonight and continuing for up to two weeks.

RAF Lakenheath state that they must train like we fight to maintain a ready force capable of ensuring the collective defence of the NATO alliance, and night flying is a critical muscle we must continue to flex. We greatly appreciate your understanding and support as we work to protect our collective security.



Lakenheath Foodbank thanks Lakenheath Parish Council for generous Donation

We are delighted to announce that Lakenheath Foodbank has received a generous £1,000 donation from Lakenheath Parish Council. This incredible support will make a significant difference in our efforts to provide essential food and supplies to local individuals and families in need. Every donation helps us stock our shelves.

Thank you, Lakenheath Parish Council, for standing with us and helping to ensure that our community is cared for. Together, we are making a real difference.



11.9.2024

Today we learn that West Suffolk District Council is reviewing its waste and recycling services to meet nationwide Simpler Recycling requirements by March 31, 2026.

The proposal includes plans to increase the existing "dry" recycling collection service from April 2026 by including glass and cartons, and launch a new weekly food waste collection which will be introduced across Suffolk in the spring of 2026.

At present no decision has been made on the frequency or changes to the collection of general household waste that cannot be recycled.

12.9.2024

Images from McMillan coffee morning which raised £440 for MacMillan nurses





19.9.2024

A man has been jailed for almost three years after two police officers were seriously injured in a head-on collision in 2022.

The incident was on Sunday, September 25 2022 on the B1112 Eriswell Road in Lakenheath, at 1.10am involving a grey BMW X5 and a white Peugeot 308 marked police car.

Seth Ray, 29, of Harebell Road in Red Lodge, appeared at Ipswich Crown Court yesterday where he was sentenced to two years and eight months' imprisonment after pleading guilty at a previous hearing to two charges of causing serious injury by dangerous driving. The police car was responding to an emergency with blue lights activated when it crashed head-on with the BMW, being driven by Ray, which was travelling towards the marked car on the wrong side of the road.

The driver and passenger, two male police officers, were seriously injured and Ray, along with members of the public, helped pull the officers from the car and provided first aid. The officers were taken to Addenbrooke's Hospital, where their injuries were initially considered life-threatening.

However, though the test confirmed he had consumed alcohol prior to the collision, Ray was below the legal limit and a urine sample also concluded that his blood alcohol concentration was under the prescribed limit.

Detective Inspector Dave McCormack said: "The lives of the victims have been changed immeasurably as a result of this collision.

"One of the injured police officers returned to work in September 2023 but is expected to require knee ligament surgeries; the other is not yet well enough to return to work and is continuing with rehabilitation for his injuries.

20.9.2024

Accident on Wings Road



26.9.2024

Persimmon Homes have informed Lakenheath Parish Council of further delays likely on Eriswell Road.

The developers have begun roadworks today which are being undertaken for two weeks so traffic management will be implemented upon Eriswell Road for that period. This is works pertaining to the northern entrance to the development. In addition, it was mentioned work will be undertaken from the 28th of Oct for a week for connection into an Anglian water sewer also within Eriswell Road. This will also involve traffic management for the week.

September rainfall 88 mm.

2.10.24

Suffolk Libraries announced the return of its "Warm Welcome" campaign for 2024!

Building on the success of previous years, libraries will once again serve as warm spaces, with many offerings of free hot drinks and 'kindness racks' stocked with free, high-quality donated clothing.

Everyone is welcome to visit the library to stay warm, you do not need to participate in an activity - it is perfectly fine to simply come in and escape the cold and enjoy the company of others. So come on in and experience the warmth and hospitality of Suffolk Libraries this winter.

5.10.24

Lakenheath surgery had their first clinic to provide both covid and flu jabs. A well-run event. The entire experience - from walking into reception, to having the injection and to being back

out in the morning sunshine - took no more than a couple of minutes. In terms of seasonal job organisation, it has now got it sussed.

Undley Pumpkin patch started welcoming visitors today.



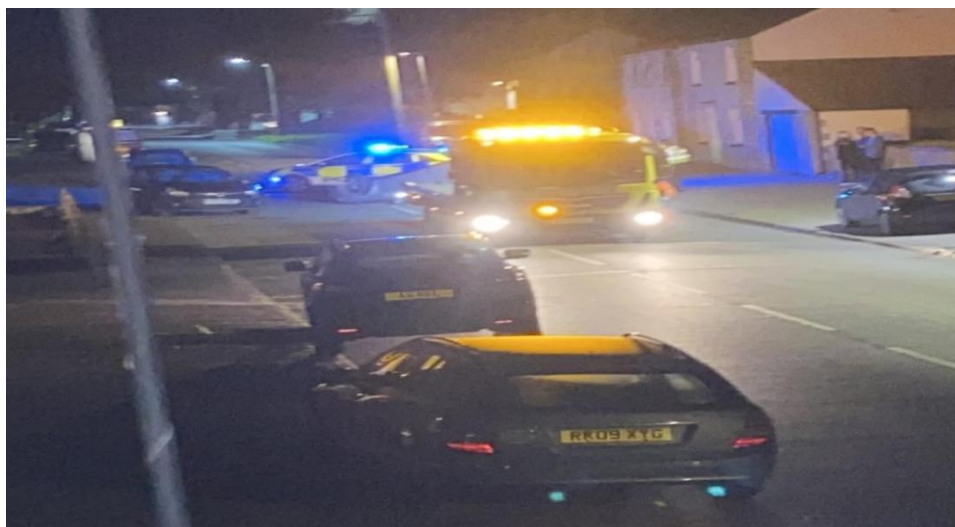
11.10.2024

The sky seen up Mill Road as a result of the aurora borealis (Northern Lights) being visible

18.10.2024

A van was stolen this afternoon from outside the Methodist church by a man in a grey hoodie and wearing a red baseball cap. It was a Silver Ford Transit sign written M J Chance Builders Ltd. Information was requested as to whether anyone was in that area or saw it being driven off around 15.00-15.10 pm.

An accident occurred this evening when a car hit a parked car and managed to flip himself onto his roof blocking the High Street. It was confirmed that the driver was not speeding or under the influence of drink or drugs.



19.10.2024

Today, Lakenheath Surgery carried out a clinic to provide the Flu and Covid jabs to eligible members of the community. Appointments could be pre booked but as several were left they operated a walk in facility.

Lakenheath Scouts had a cake sale today to raise funds for their group in the surgery car park. They gave thanks when the cakes were all sold to the community who supported them and to Lakenheath surgery for allowing them space to provide the stall. Despite the rain, they raised a huge £245.



20.10.2024

Following a significant renovation of the former Plough PH in Mill Road, Il Salvatore (Italian restaurant) has announced it will now open its doors to customers at midday on Friday, October 25. the new owners said: "We look forward to seeing you all then," and advised clients to book opening day tables in advance.

21.10.2024

The community learns from the local paper that the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) will return to the airbase on Saturday, November 2, for its next national demonstration against the return of US nuclear weapons to Britain, to be stored at RAF Lakenheath.

This is the fourth of the group's national mobilisations at RAF Lakenheath since 2022 and will take place from 12 noon to 3pm at the main gate in Brandon Road.

22.10.2024

RAF Mildenhall opened on October 16, 1934, and was officially dedicated by King George V three days later. Tens of thousands of people gathered to witness the dedication, as well as the start of the MacRoberson Air Race on October 20, 1934, which began in Mildenhall and ended in Melbourne.

Some 90 years later, the base - now home to the US servicemen and women of the 100th Air Refuelling Wing - remains a huge part of Suffolk life. It has provided employment for so

many locals. It has brought such diversity to our community with its service men and women and their families living in our towns and villages creating many new friendships and joining families together in so many marriages."

Cllr Shipp said the American community helps support local businesses and encourages visitors from all over the country who come to the town to spot aircraft at the base.

Over the years there has always been a special bond between the RAF Mildenhall and our local community and I am proud to have been a small part of that bond."

RAF Mildenhall received its first operational unit in November 1934 and has an extensive history of missions. In 1939, six hours after the official declaration of war on Germany, three Wellington Bombers from No. 149 Squadron took off from the base to bomb battleships in the Kiel Canal.

On March 22, 1944, Lancaster and Halifax bombers from the base took part in the last major raid marking the end of what was known as the "Battle of Berlin". Lancaster Bombers from No. 15 and No. 622 Squadrons were also involved in D-Day operations when they struck targets along Hitler's Atlantic Wall on June 6, 1944. RAF Mildenhall has been home to the United States Airforce since 1950.

Richard Alecock, who represents Mildenhall Great Heath on West Suffolk Council, said: "This milestone has been not only an opportunity for reflection but also a celebration of the strong bond between our community and the airbase.

"It has been truly wonderful to witness RAF Mildenhall's active engagement with a variety of community groups, which has significantly enhanced the relationship between the base and local residents.

"This collaboration has provided people in Mildenhall, Beck Row, West Row and the wider community with numerous opportunities to participate in meaningful activities that strengthen our community ties."

He continued: "Together, we honour our past while promoting community pride and engagement. It's been really encouraging to see so many locals involved in the ongoing celebrations, and together it has been a wonderful opportunity to appreciate our aviation heritage and the invaluable contributions of the USAF to Mildenhall. I applaud RAF Mildenhall and the local residents and community groups for all pulling together throughout this anniversary year."

Andy Neal, who represents Mildenhall Queensway on the council, said: "The base being located here has put Mildenhall on the global map. "The amount of revenue the American dollar puts into the local economy is unmeasurable and is what keeps our high street going." He said those living off-base integrate into the community, using local schools and are welcomed.

He continued: "70,000 people converged on Mildenhall to see the planes start the race to Australia. The King and Queen attended the race start which gave Mildenhall a place in aviation history.

"Mildenhall as a town has celebrated this 90th anniversary alongside local villages with events throughout the year. The USAF have supported this historic landmark and It's been a pleasure for the local groups to engage with them."

On June 30, 1978, the headquarters of the now-inactive 306 Strategic Wing relocated from Ramstein AB, Germany to RAF Mildenhall.

And in more recent history, the British Government gave permission for SR-71 "Blackbird" planes to be permanently housed at the base in 1982.

Last week a new station crest, the Tudor Crown, was unveiled at an event for RAF representatives and guests.

The crest will be placed on the tails of all 100th ARW KC-135 Stratotankers, with the event also marking the 90th anniversary of RAF Mildenhall.

24.10.2024

Following its success last year the 2nd Annual Halloween party is hosted by Lakenheath Pavilion and it is going to be just as big as last year. Details are: 26th October 2024 1800 hrs doors open with the music at 1900 hrs at Lakenheath Pavilion. Free Entry for all with Jamie Chapman of Apollo Sounds.

Fancy Faces will be available for those who want to add some extra glitter. There will be a Raffle once again for the children and another for the adults. Tickets available on the night Food available for you to buy on the night supplied by SPUDZ and the Bar will be open Arts and Crafts available all night for the children and finally Trick or Treat for the little ones

25.10.2024

Lakenheath Pavilion announced today that it is a charity run organisation. They work extremely hard to cover all their expenses. The community centre and youth football club are the same. They are excited to give the community their news.

They will be opening the Lancaster Room as a pub open to the public. It will be named The Lancaster.

The Pavilion committee hope residents will feel it to be 'R Bar', where you can enjoy a relaxing drink, game of pool and make new friends. The opening Date will be released soon

28.10.2024

Today the Lakenheath Heritage Group received the restored League of Nations Poster from Nicholas Burnett of Museum Conservation services. The bulk of the cost was met by an anonymous doner. The poster was in turn handed to Cambridge University Library (CUL) for storage and to make it available to researchers of the future. It was received by Suzanne Paul (Keeper of Early Books and Manuscripts) CUL and Jill Whitelock, Associate Director (Head of special collections), CUL

The full story behind this poster can be read on the Lakenheath Heritage Group website.

29.10.2024

Lakenheath Parish Council advised that they have received this from the RAF Lakenheath.

Please be advised RAF Lakenheath will start night flying next week, until the spring. RAF Lakenheath Public Affairs will be doing a press release and they will be pushing this out on social media.

Flying will typically finish around 2100Hrs but be aware there may be occasions where it could be later.

Airfield hours are Monday through Thursday 0600-2200 Friday 0600-1800 and overland flying will be limited as much as possible. A spokesman for the base said: "The 48th Fighter Wing must train like we fight in order to maintain operational readiness, and night flying is a critical muscle we must continue to flex.

There may be occasions due to mission requirements they will operate outside the published hours. The exercises do not include plans for low-altitude flying over Suffolk or surrounding areas.

October rainfall 88 mm.

1.11.2024

The post box in the High Street was given a new topper as a tribute to armistice day, 11.11.2024



The USAF Base Commander reminded the community that there was an expected demonstration by CND to take place tomorrow outside gate 1. It was suggested that this area should be avoided as a result.

8.11.2024

A new bar 'for the community' opened today. The Lancaster at Lakenheath Pavilion officially welcomed customers this evening at 6pm and will be opening three days a week moving forwards.

Resident Luke Rutterford originally introduced the idea several months ago for a bar at the pavilion, which is an independent charity run organisation.



After previously being used by the local football and cricket clubs, the pavilion has recently become less utilised, aside from it occasionally being hired out for various events.

Since Luke's suggestion, the Lancaster Room has now been transformed with the walls painted as well as new furniture, a pool table, and more, with old photos from the community still being added.

Tracy Whitehand, vice chair of Lakenheath Playing Field Association, said: "We are hugely excited and the committee is very pleased that this area is going to be used. "The added bar means we can rent it out on occasions and we are thrilled to be able to open The Lancaster for all the community to use.

"Pubs are closing down everywhere and we don't have them like we used to so it was great for Luke to step up like he did. "I want to say a big thank you to him and his family. They have bought things to go in the room, organised things, helped decorate, and just helped greatly overall."

The bar has been given a three-month trial period by the Lakenheath Playing Field Association, which owns the pavilion, to prove it will not lose profit.

Tracy, who lives in the village, said: "We are so thankful that the playing fields association and the cricket club have welcomed the opportunity of hosting a community space where we can have an alternative venue to catch up with friends and enjoy a drink.

Today in the premises of Mola café & Lounge in Lakenheath, Female Duo, Linda Spencer and Sue Crowe, also featuring bagpipes playing 'Skye Boat Song' was launched. "Christmas Hill' tells the story of a young couple who were torn apart by WW2 and their last meeting at the Lakenheath railway station before he goes off to war. He loses his life during the D Day Landings and word of his death never reaches her until many years later.

Inspiration for the song came to Sue as she drove over the railway crossing at Lakenheath, Suffolk and saw the sign for Christmas Hill Farm. In the three-mile journey to her home in Lakenheath village, Sue, one half of the Wing Song duo with Linda Spencer, had written the song. Remembering the story of how piper Bill Millin played on Sword Beach during the D Day landings,

A recording of the song can be found on the Lakenheath Heritage Group website.



10.11.2024



12.11.2024

The East Anglia Daily Times advises the community that a Lakenheath field can be used to house 15,000 pheasants as a proposal has been deemed lawful without the need for planning permission. An application for a lawful development certificate for the use of grazing of pheasants in a rotational period on land west of Sandy Drove in Lakenheath was submitted to West Suffolk Council in September. The applicant, Mr Joe Bussey, said the pheasants would be on the land on a "rotational basis".

The site would accommodate up to 15,000 grazing birds and no features would be added to the site, with pheasants roosting on the ground when in captivity. The 1.64 HA site is part of a wider agricultural site close to the perimeter of RAF Lakenheath. The wider agricultural field is currently used to store material, hay and machinery, along with livestock.

West Suffolk Council officers issued a Certificate of Proposed Lawful Use or Development for the plans. They found the proposal would have been lawful, as it did not qualify as a "development" and did not need planning permission.

Secondly, today the community has responded with delight following the opening of a new bar at Lakenheath pavilion.

Over the last few months, the Lancaster Room has undergone a transformation with newly painted walls, a pool table, new furniture, old pictures from people in the community, and more. Resident Luke Rutterford originally introduced the idea several months ago for a bar at the pavilion, which is an independent charity run organisation.

Tracy Whitehand, vice chair of Lakenheath Playing Field Association, said: "Saturday was busy but Friday was manic and so many people came and supported us. "We were thrilled with the response people gave over the weekend and many of them said 'this is just what the village needs'.

The bar has been given the green light to operate over a three-month period to show that it is able to operate making a profit.



In addition, today, thanks were given to everyone who contributed in various ways to providing shoe boxes - wrapping boxes; knitting hats, gloves and scarf sets; sewing bags and pencil cases; filling pencil cases; donating stationery, toiletries, toys and sweets; filling and checking boxes...

We were able to donate 178 filled boxes, which were collected yesterday, to go to recipients in Kosovo this year.



15.11.2024

The new restaurant in the village advised the community that a generous person, that wants to remain anonymous, from Lakenheath has donated 70 vouchers for the OAP's to be used throughout November & December at Il Salvatore

These vouchers can be found either at the Methodist church or at the library



20.11.2024

The Community Centre today announced that every Wednesday the warm rooms initiative will recommence in the community centre between 12 and 2 pm.

Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service were today called at 6.40am to a fire in Undley, Lakenheath. Engines from Mildenhall, Brandon, Newmarket and Bury St Edmunds were called to the bungalow.

Six firefighters wearing breathing apparatus used hose reel jets to extinguish the fire. No casualties were reported and crews left the scene around 8.20am.



22.11.2024

The East Anglian Daily Times informed the community that a plane, believed to be a NATO surveillance aircraft, was spotted circling over Suffolk.

The Boeing E-3A Airborne Warning and Control System aircraft was seen over parts of west Suffolk today circling from Ely to Stowmarket including Mildenhall and Lakenheath.

The jet, which has a huge radar drone, crossed the North Sea from its base in Geilenkirchen, Germany, before making its way back to base later in the afternoon. The NATO website states the aircraft carries out a wide range of missions for peacetime air policing, support to counter-terrorism, evacuation operations, initial entry and crisis response to the full spectrum of wartime missions.

22.11.2024

Three airbases in Norfolk and Suffolk have been buzzed by unidentified drones, the US military has confirmed. This refers to unlawful drone activity around the approach ends of both RAF Mildenhall and Lakenheath over the last few evenings/nights which has caused major disruption to activities and the diversion of a USAF KC46 that was destined for Mildenhall which subsequently ended up at Prestwick. For safety reasons this needs to be stamped out as soon as possible and for a spotting perspective it will potentially make things a lot more difficult for anyone wanting to enjoy the hobby. So people need to act if/when they spot or hear about anything suspicious.

A resident raised £500 for children in Need collecting outside the Co-Op



24.11.2024

The annual event of lighting the Christmas tree at The Pavilion took place today with the arrival of Santa with gifts for the children of the village

Lakenheath Pavilion CHRISTMAS TREE

EVENT

Sunday 24th
November

3-6

LIGHTS SWITCH

AT 5

CHILDREN NEED A TICKET TO SEE
SANTA. 100 AVAILABLE ON A FIRST
COME FIRST SERVE BASIS





25.11.2024

Team Liberty from the 48th Fighter Wing, reminded the community that they have experienced several small drone sightings across the tri-base area since 20 Nov. They are being actively monitored and have not impacted base residents or infrastructure. Residents were asked if they see anything suspicious, to include sUAS's or drone activity within the tri-base area, to contact either local police or Security Forces. The Liberty Wing is taking all appropriate measures to safeguard RAF Lakenheath, RAF Feltwell and residents.

"Drones are back at Lakenheath for another night. F-15s along with RAF are searching for operators."

From forces news 25.11.24 was this reported: A number of "small unmanned aerial systems" have been spotted over three US airbases in East Anglia, the United States Air Force (USAF) has confirmed.

The unidentified drones were seen over RAF Lakenheath and RAF Mildenhall, in Suffolk, and RAF Feltwell, in Norfolk, earlier this week.

USAF added that it was unclear whether the drones were considered hostile at this stage.

The USAF declined to comment on whether any defence mechanisms were used but said it retains "the right to protect" installations.

A spokesperson for US Air Forces in Europe said: "We can confirm that small unmanned aerial systems (UASs) were spotted in the vicinity of and over RAF Lakenheath, RAF Mildenhall and RAF Feltwell between Nov 20 and 22. The number of UASs fluctuated and they ranged in size/configuration.

"The UASs were actively monitored and installation leaders determined that none of the incursions impacted base residents or critical infrastructure.

"To protect operational security, we do not discuss our specific force protection measures but retain the right to protect the installation.

"We continue to monitor our airspace and are working with host-nation authorities and mission partners to ensure the safety of base personnel, facilities and assets."

Primarily, RAF Mildenhall is home to the USAF's 100th Air Refueling Wing, while RAF Lakenheath is home to USAF F-35A and F-15E fighter jets, and RAF Feltwell is mainly concerned with logistics as well as offering housing for military personnel.

A Ministry of Defence spokesperson said: "We take threats seriously and maintain robust measures at defence sites. This includes counter-drone security capabilities. We won't comment further on security procedures."

26.11.2024

The village learns that Steve Holder has revealed he will be staying on as interim manager at Lakenheath FC for 'the foreseeable future' and said he would be prepared to see out the season to help the club out.

It is now more than 13 weeks on – encompassing 17 matches – since the man who resigned as Hadleigh United boss at the end of the last season took control of the team while the club seeks a permanent successor to the man he came in to assist in the dugout, Trevor Collins.

But well-travelled striker Holder, whose name appeared on the team sheet as an unused substitute in the 2-1 home defeat to what appears to now be a relegation rival in Stowmarket Town a week ago Saturday, is not getting restless in the role.

With his side occupying the final spot in the drop zone, now four points adrift of Stow above them, he told Suffolk News' linked print title the Bury Free Press prior to two defeats last week – having then lost 5-2 at now second-placed Mulbarton Wanderers last Tuesday: "I will be staying on here for the foreseeable future. We have someone lined up but they can't commit fully just yet.

We're probably now looking at me going into the new year. I'm happy to stay as long as the club needs me, even if that's until the end of the season."

Holder has brought his former team-mate from Mildenhall Town, Bury Town and Newmarket Town, Craig Nurse, back to The Pit to help him out.

Around 60 British troops, including counter-drone specialists, have been deployed to help defend three air bases used by the US Air Force in the UK after a spate of "weird" drone sightings. The military personnel will also support efforts to find out who is operating the unmanned aerial vehicles amid fears the mysterious sorties might be part of some "coordinated" operation.

Civilian police, supported by Ministry of Defence police, have launched an investigation into the drone activity. "It seems awfully coordinated," a defence source said after a number of drones were again spotted overnight over RAF Lakenheath and RAF Mildenhall, in Suffolk, and RAF Feltwell in Norfolk.

The sightings came after similar drone movements over the same sites between Wednesday and Friday last week - a highly unusual occurrence.

A second defence source said about the drone activity: "It's odd. Very weird."

A spokesperson for the US Air Forces in Europe confirmed a number of drones had been spotted on Monday "during nighttime hours".

"The number fluctuated and varied between the bases over the night," the spokesperson said.

Asked whether the drones overnight and last week had been deemed hostile, the spokesperson said: "Since November 20 there has been no impact to residents or infrastructure and [they] have not been identified as hostile. "However, they are still continuously being monitored to ensure the safety and security of the installations."

A Ministry of Defence spokesperson said: "We take threats seriously and maintain robust measures at defence sites. We are supporting the US Air Force response."

This is understood to include the deployment of around 60 military personnel, including members of the RAF Regiment's Force Protection Wing, with specialist skills in countering drones to help protect the US bases and try to find out who is responsible for operating the unmanned aerial vehicles.

The RAF troops operate the ORCUS counter-uncrewed air system, which has the ability to "detect, track, identify and, if necessary, defeat hostile drones", according to the RAF website.

Lakenheath Library reopened following a refit. This included installing new heating and air conditioning. There are lots of Christmas books, plenty of tea, coffee, biscuits and a range of soups, hot chocolate, and cereal bars. Pop down and see us. We'll give you a warm welcome (certainly now we have heat!).



27.11.2024

Following the drone activity above the air bases at Lakenheath and Mildenhall M P Timothy West asked the Defence Minister, Maria Eagle, for an update, and raised it separately with John Healy, the Defence Secretary. Alongside the US military the Government is still investigating. I am assured I will be kept informed, and I will in turn keep you updated when I have more news.

In my speech this morning I also raised the security risks posed by the proximity of sunnica to the bases. The Director General of MI5 says we face "state-backed sabotage" and has told us to "expect to see continued [Russian] acts of aggression here at home", specifically mentioning "arson, sabotage and more."

I asked for a meeting with the minister and her officials to discuss this risk further, and she agreed.

28.11.2024

A criminal investigation has been launched after drones were spotted flying near at RAF base in Norfolk. Lord Vernon Coaker has warned that those responsible for the spate of recent illegal airborne incursions face up to 14 years in prison under national security laws.

Speaking in the House of Lords Lord Coaker said: "The Ministry of Defence is aware of these reports and working closely with the US visiting forces, Home Office police forces and other partners to respond to recent events.

"We will work with civil authorities to prosecute those responsible. We take any safety issue seriously and maintain robust measures at Ministry of Defence sites. This includes counter-drone capabilities. "This remains a live criminal investigation."

Former military chief Lord Stirrup, who led the armed forces between 2006 and 2010, said: "This is not just a question of defence sites but of much wider national resilience. We have seen the extensive use of drones in Ukraine against non-military targets.

"Can the minister reassure the House that the Government will look at this problem in that much wider context, because quite clearly we can't mount air defence systems around every single part of our critical national infrastructure.

"We have to ensure we have some other method of protecting them against this new threat. "In reply, Lord Coaker said there were other ways of protecting sites. The minister told Parliament: "It is illegal for drones to be flown or within the vicinity of these military sites and people should be aware of that."

It has since been confirmed that a criminal investigation into the flying of the unmanned aerial vehicles has been launched. The activity at the Suffolk airbases has caused some concern for residents living nearby.

However, a spokesman for the United States Air Force in Europe said the drones have not been identified as hostile.

November rainfall 52 mm.

3.12.2024

The Chair of Lakenheath Youth Football Club gave out this message: So, tonight was the night when we collected the Club of The Year award from Suffolk FA. This is a huge award for our club and a credit to our village community. Over the last 3 years we have doubled our player numbers, improved facilities, and kept it affordable for all involved.

The clubs' objectives are to offer football in a Fun, Safe and Friendly environment which is affordable for all. This takes a huge amount of effort from lots of people and we can never thank them enough for all that they do.

Richard Horrex collected the award on behalf of the club this evening and was extremely proud to see that all that it has achieved is rewarded.

In Richard's words "This award means a hell of a lot for everyone at the club. Often those that make football happen do so without the need for thanks and this award goes to everyone at our club for making it what it is, thanks to all of you"



4.12.2024

Received from RAF Lakenheath today:

Good afternoon,

Please see below courtesy notice from the 48 Fighter Wing for your awareness. This notice is in relation to today, 4 Dec:

RAF Lakenheath is conducting an Air Base Air Defence exercise. There will be increased base activity and use of the giant voice system on RAF Lakenheath for a limited time this evening. Our units, host nation authorities, and mission partners are working closely together to continue to sharpen our base response and force protection measures. As always, thank you for your partnership.

48th Fighter Wing Public Affairs

7.12.2024

A fire broke out at a derelict bungalow in Lakenheath yesterday afternoon.

Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service were called out to the blaze at a property in the High Street at approximately 4.44pm on Saturday.

Three fire crews from Brandon, Mildenhall and Newmarket attended the scene, using hose reels and jets to extinguish the blaze, while Suffolk Police temporarily closed the road.

The incident was dealt with just after 6pm.

The cause of the fire has not yet been disclosed

9.12.2024

Father Christmas did this round of half the village tonight



14.12.2024

Lakenheath Parish Council wished the community a Happy Christmas

17.12.2024

The community are advised that an investigation into a fleet of mysterious flying objects that buzzed three US airbases in Norfolk and Suffolk is understood to be winding down. The probe was launched after a squadron of what are believed to be drones were repeatedly spotted flying over sites in Feltwell in Norfolk and Mildenhall and Lakenheath in Suffolk.

The first 6 of 12 F15E Strike Eagles from the 492nd Fighter Squadron (Madhatters) arrived back to RAF Lakenheath this morning as TABOR51-56 after a short successful deployment to the Middle East. during which they provided crucial support to operations within the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility. Thanks was given by the U.S. Air Forces in Europe and Air Forces Africa U.S. European Command (EUCOM). All 6 F15Es were sporting Nose Art depicting Greek Gods.

LN AF 97-0222 F15E Hades
LN AF 91-0315 F15E Aphrodite
LN AF 97-0219 F15E Hermes
LN AF 91-0316 F15E Kratos
LN AF 96-0202 F15E Thanatos
LN AF 91-0302 F15E Hephaestus

Welcome back to RAF Lakenheath to the hardworking 492nd FS and additional support units from a successful deployment - during which they provided crucial support to operations within the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility. Thanks was given by the U.S. Air Forces in Europe and Air Forces Africa U.S. European Command (EUCOM).

18.12.2024

We are informed by the Bury Free press that an investigation into a fleet of mysterious flying objects that buzzed three US airbases in Norfolk and Suffolk including RAF Lakenheath is understood to be winding down. The probe was launched after a squadron of what are believed to be drones were repeatedly spotted flying over sites in Feltwell in Norfolk and Mildenhall and Lakenheath in Suffolk.

Following the incident last month, which led to 60 British troops being deployed to the Lakenheath area to help with the investigation with no further sightings in East Anglia and with no breakthrough in the investigation, it is understood to be winding down.

A US Air Force spokesman said: "There's been no recent activity. As always, we are working closely with our UK partners to ensure the safety and security of our installations."

Last week, the Department for Homeland Security said: "We have no more information as to where these drones are coming from, where they're launching from, where they're landing." Speculation is rife that the drones may have been flown over sensitive sites for reconnaissance missions by Russia, China, or perhaps Iran.

Commentators have also said it may have been part of a 'ferreting' exercise, performed to test airspace defence measures. Although it is also possible it may have been local drone enthusiasts. The mysterious nature of the flying objects has also led some to wonder if they could be extraterrestrial in nature.

24.12.2024

Wendy Clair Barnes from Sedge Fen again this year organised bags of gifts in return for a found marker set in various places around the village. Today she said what a wonderful village we have, 24 days of stockings hidden around the parish of Lakenheath all donated by local people and businesses.

The last one goes out tomorrow and I have enjoyed handing them out to young and old, I hope you have enjoyed receiving them.

Thanks go to the following people who donated items which went into the stockings throughout the month:

Pat Tippet
Linda Norman
Maureen Sambridge
Maureen Forbes

and to the following businesses showing the day of their donations:

1st - Bethany Abrahams - JRA Building
2nd - Mandy Cheshire - The Garden Room - Your treatment, Your time.
3rd - Melissa Wilderspin - Lakenheath Football club
4th - Sherry Butcher - Little Fishes
5th - Tracy Knott & Beccii Greenacre - Hello Sweetie, Suffolk
6th - Ingrid Wright - Eastern Counties Greyhound
7th - Jill Guiver - JJ's Homemades Bakes
8th - Linda Hadley
9th - Stacey Lucas Mork
10th - Sally SB
11th - Lookatme1st.com Maintenance Ltd
12th - Sara 'Slav' Laverick - Sav Scented Dreams
13th - Emma Spencer - Apollo Stables
14th - Stuart Sellers - SS Electrical Services East Anglia Ltd
15th - Ian Cheshire - Ian Cheshire Carpentry.
16th - Spa UPVC Group Ltd
17th - SPA UPVC Products Ltd
18th - Beverley Harrison - Vintage Treasure Chests & Fun with Fabrics-classes & tuition

19th - Paula Turner - RH Turner Motor Vehicles
20th - Sue Drake Foley - DBI Castles
21st - Lookatme1st.com Ltd
22nd - Laura Ellis - Melt with Laura - Independent Scentsy SuperStar Consultant
23rd - Sue Drake Foley - Lakenheath Fireworks
24th - Gail Boyle - Freedom Recycling
24th - Zoe Lock - Mazies doggie daycare and home boarding

25.12.2024

Lakenheath People face book team put out a post giving their communal thanks to all those that take part in the December days of Christmas gift bags, but particularly to Wendy Claire Barnes for organising this for the village. She invests lots of her own time and money to do this for everyone - thank you from the whole admin team.

December rainfall 69 mm.

Total rainfall for 2024 858 mm.

Annual report received from RSPB reserve

2024 was a year of many changes for us at Lakenheath Fen, most of them positive, thankfully. One of our wardens, Emma, left us for a job with the Environment Agency. Whilst we were sad to see her go, we were pleased to welcome her replacement Henry, who had been an Assistant Warden at another RSPB reserve not far from Cambridge- Fen Drayton. Henry has fitted in well with the team here and we are lucky to have his committed, professional, and knowledgeable presence with us. Spring is now just weeks away and we will be glad to have him on board during our busiest season- when there is so much wildlife survey work and monitoring to do! We also enjoyed a full year with Haydn, who is our Assistant Warden and on an 18-month contract funded by some of the grant money given to us by Morgan Sindall Construction Group, who enabled the purchase of the 'new' land (around 54 hectares) on Cowles Drove in early 2023. I wonder for how much longer we will call it the 'new' land? Haydn will be with us until July 2025, so we will enjoy having him around for another Spring on the reserve and the wildlife will certainly benefit from his hard work and dedication.

I can happily report that we enter 2025 with our staff and volunteer team more or less as fit and well as they were a year ago- and we've even gained a couple of new volunteers on our weekly work parties. It's lovely to have new faces around and we all benefit from the insight and experience newcomers bring with them.

In terms of reserve infrastructure, 2024 saw quite a bit of change. One of these changes is physically unmissable when you arrive at the reserve- a brand-new raised dipping pond for visitor use that was built in the autumn, by a staff and volunteer team led by our warden Henry. Our old Dipping Platform wasn't really fit for purpose and we weren't expecting to be able to have the funds for a brand new one, but the project BFER (Brecks, Fen and River Edge) was coming to an end and had some underspend money spare- so our Site Manager Dave quickly put together a proposal outlining the costs involved. It was very kindly approved by BFER... the only catch being that the funds had to be spent by the end of September- and we were in August! However, against the odds it got built, and is a testament to the commitment and perseverance of our work party and staff teams. We filled it using water from the pond at the Visitor Centre nearby, and it now awaits being planted up with transplanted aquatic plants from our old pond. We will keep the old one for dipping until the insect life has built up enough in the new one for use during events, and for the extra wildlife value of having a second pond. We do get Common newts and lots of diving beetles

and dragonfly larvae in it so keeping it is important to us- and we hope they will colonise the new pond too, which is only a few metres away.

During the entirety of 2024, work on the new land on Cowles Drove proceeded and diggers were around for much of the year to dig new channels and generally change the land so that it holds more water. Our Site Manager Dave and Warden Katherine were able to conduct the first breeding bird surveys there in Spring and in Summer, a routine visit in one of the reserve trucks led to the discovery of a Curlew fledgling! It was spotted on the track ahead of the vehicle, and its parents were close by. This was a wonderful surprise, especially given that Curlew are one of our fastest declining breeding birds in the UK- we have lost 50% of them since just 1995. We hope to report in 2025 that the work on Cowles Drove has supported more Curlew, as well as Redshank, Lapwing and Snipe- other threatened waders- to find safe refuge and raise families.

Until late in 2024, the possibility of having a mobility scooter for visitors to use seemed an impossibility. It was something other, busier RSPB sites with bigger budgets had. At the same time, RSPB Lakenheath Fen is just the sort of place where having one could really make a difference- the reserve is long and to get to some of the landmarks, such as Mere Hide or Joist Fen Viewpoint, requires a walk or at least a mile. Whilst this is easy going for most of our visitors, there is an unknown sector of the local community who just don't visit us because they can't. Even for those visitors with their own powered wheelchair, most models wouldn't cope with our sometimes rough and uneven paths. For those that have a manual wheelchair, walking sticks or other mobility aids, the reserve is at best just too big for them to explore most of it. However, in the Autumn of 2024 a supporter got in touch and expressed their wish to anonymously donate us the funds to purchase a state-of-the-art Trampler- an all-terrain mobility scooter made by a company called Beamer, who hand-build each one to order in Wiltshire. At the time of writing, on 14 February 2025, I am pleased to be able to say that we received delivery of it yesterday- and all staff and some of our volunteers attended a training session by a regional engineer who delivered the Trampler in the afternoon. It was a promising day and now we have a few weeks to get our heads around the hiring process before we start taking bookings. We are very hopeful that the Trampler will enable visitors with mobility difficulties to begin to enjoy the reserve as they might not have been able to before.

Wildlife News:

Our wildlife was as busy as we were and we started Spring with a very promising three pairs of Common cranes using the reserve. Until 2024 we had only ever had up to two pairs, with transient birds causing brief excitement as they passed through at the start of the season, but it was clear in early Spring that we were going to have three pairs attempt to breed with us. It is quite likely- but we will never be certain- that new 'Pair C2' were first-time breeders. This is because Cranes stay faithful to their nesting site year on year, unless a site suffers from too much disturbance, or they lose their partner- these are other reasons why a pair may choose a new site. We are happy to report that after many, many weeks of waiting, new Pair C2 raised one fledgling and one of our two more established pairs, Pair B2, raised two young to fledging stage. All three pairs with their young have been spotted over this past winter (2024/25) and most recently the adult pairs have been seen without their chicks- who begin to make their own way in life in February of the year following the year they hatched. Our annual Bittern nesting surveys revealed a record number of booming male Bitterns in Spring- on 3 April 2024 no less than 17 males were heard by the survey team. The weeks that followed provided visitors with lots of chances to hear them and see them pursuing each other through the reedbeds. We were pleased to welcome several pairs of nesting Marsh harriers too, and through survey work we believe we had roughly 12 nests which produced a minimum of 15 fledglings. It would seem we had at least 7 Bittern nests too.

2024 saw the first definite Great white egrets in summer plumage. These beautiful white birds are a little taller than Grey herons and only colonised the UK in the early 2000's. Lakenheath Fen saw it's first ever record on 25 January 2004, and then not again until 16 October 2009. Now, they are a daily sighting and Summer records in 2024 peaked at over 20 birds on the nearby Hockwold Washes. For most of the year these elegant birds are pure white, with a yellow bill and legs which distinguishes them from their smaller cousins the Little egret, whose legs and bill are black. However, when a Great white egret has reached breeding age, for a few short weeks the bill turns black, the 'lores' (patch of bare facial skin between the bill base and the eyes) turns lime green, and a train of incredibly beautiful white plumes gathers over the wings so when the birds creeps along they hang like a veil over the body. They really are a site to behold and we hope that having two birds in full breeding regalia is a sign that in years to come (maybe even 2025?) we will see the first nesting attempts here.

2024 also saw further records of singing male Nightingales- a wonderful sound that was not to be heard on the reserve until around three years ago. This can quite possibly be attributed to work done in the old poplar plantations on the reserve- these used to belong to Bryant & May, decades ago, and were used to grow hybrid poplars for matchstick making. However, the reserve team have been planting a wider variety of smaller, native shrubs and trees like Hawthorn, Elder and Blackthorn in the gaps left behind when some of these ageing poplars fall over in winter storms. Now that we have a bit more of an understorey of smaller trees, and plenty of deadwood lying around- this seems to suit the Nightingales and we hope that in future years we see more and more of them.

However, although we do our best for the wildlife here, we are not immune to feeling the effects of declining numbers of a variety of species which we used to record on the reserve. We went almost completely without any records of Lesser whitethroat- a greyer, slightly smaller relative of Common whitethroat, and no known records of Turtle doves in 2024. We also didn't see many Willow warblers- a lovely little bird which adores wet and wild places like Lakenheath Fen. It will be interesting to look back at the start of 2026 to report how many of these species we saw in 2025.

I hope this account has provided an interesting and accurate representation of what went on at RSPB Lakenheath Fen in 2024. If you have any questions about the reserve, we can be contacted on 01842 863400 or you can e-mail us at lakenheath@rspb.org.uk.

With best wishes,

Heidi Jones (Visitor Experience Officer).

The credits to their photographers are as follows:

The photo of the new sluice and digger on Cowles Drove was taken by our Site Manager Dave Rogers.

The Cuckoo photo belongs to one of our regular visitors, Robin Johnson.

The flying Bittern is Pauline Fowler's.

The Great white egret in breeding plumage is Nick Levene.

The photo of Haydn (left- our Assistant Warden) and Henry (right- our Warden) was taken by Dave Rogers.

The Lesser whitethroat belongs to Cat Serpant-Barratt, one of our volunteers.

The Crane family photo should be credited to the RSPB, as it was taken using our trail cameras- all photos we take on site by staff technically are the property of the RSPB.

Photos 16.2.2025





Hermione Brown
Recorder for the Parish of Lakenheath
During the year of 2024