

Lakenheath recorders Diary for 2025

5.1.2025

Today is Plough Sunday, a traditional celebration giving the blessing of a tractor and plough at 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.

Whilst today in the Methodist church they held their Covenant Service being the first Sunday of the year. This special service is an important part of Methodist worship and encourages people to renew their commitment to God and to working for justice and helping others. It celebrates the belief that God loves everyone unconditionally.

The Covenant Service comes from the teachings of John Wesley, the founder of Methodism. He believed that being a Christian is not just about starting a relationship with God, but also about growing in that relationship. He created the Covenant Service to give people a regular opportunity to reflect, listen to God, and recommit themselves.

The first Covenant Services were shaped by earlier Puritan traditions and were supported by preaching, guidance, and pastoral care to help people live out their commitment.

Today, the service still follows a similar structure, including prayers, Bible readings, hymns, Communion, and the Covenant prayer, which the congregation says together.

Everyone is welcome to attend – whether for the first time, after a long break, or simply to observe without taking part. The community are advised that Lakenheath youth club begins 2025 in January on the 19th at 2.30 - 4.30pm. Ages from 12 -16years

7.1.2025

Lakenheath Parish Council provide Information from Eriswell road and station road speed signs.

Hour	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
0-1	12	8	17	9	11	7	11
2-2	3	6	6	3	2	4	4
2-3	2	1	1	3	1	9	5
3-4	2	2	1	1	4	7	6
4-5	4	5	7	5	2	7	8
5-6	15	9	12	14	15	6	1
6-7	20	17	29	20	17	15	17
7-8	11	19	30	35	17	16	5
8-9	16	1	12	17	14	19	14
9-10	7	13	13	13	9	10	19
10-11	11	9	15	11	7	13	19
11-12	12	12	14	18	10	15	9
12-13	6	5	20	14	8	8	16
13-14	12	9	7	10	5	10	18
14-15	10	8	21	8	4	20	21
15-16	8	5	7	6	4	8	20
16-17	1	8	4	6	8	16	10
17-18	6	10	9	1	5	13	13
18-19	9	7	6	11	5	14	21
19-20	17	15	8	10	19	13	18
20-21	14	11	24	17	19	11	12
21-22	10	22	20	6	18	8	10
22-23	5	15	12	13	11	11	10
23-24	3	11	10	11	11	16	6
Totals	216	228	305	262	226	276	293

Exceeding Speed of 35MPH – November 2024

Hour	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
0-1	3	1	6	4	4	11	3
2-2	0	1	4	1	8	9	6
2-3	1	3	0	5	8	7	5
3-4	2	1	5	2	5	1	3
4-5	9	12	6	13	6	11	3
5-6	26	46	34	33	23	13	7
6-7	50	65	78	73	80	32	8
7-8	59	60	68	69	82	61	8
8-9	25	32	63	58	73	74	33
9-10	26	44	54	48	67	64	35
10-11	49	51	38	43	57	71	35
11-12	42	33	43	28	66	58	35
12-13	60	32	78	61	75	49	29
13-14	59	38	41	57	63	52	50
14-15	53	36	73	67	74	74	52
15-16	72	73	64	72	103	76	48
16-17	59	56	60	63	91	48	39
17-18	52	59	43	53	52	35	32
18-19	52	45	68	51	59	34	27
19-20	35	38	42	26	64	35	40
20-21	33	31	32	24	47	42	31
21-22	22	27	6	37	25	45	12
22-23	21	20	19	22	36	27	6
23-24	17	29	24	18	19	16	13
Totals	827	833	980	916	1207	927	560

Exceeding Speed of 35MPH – November 2024

The number of vehicles exceeding 35mph during each hourly time slot during the month of November 2024.

12.1.2025

Today St Marys Church Mildenhall arranged a Christingle service for the scout group. They all enjoyed it.



RSPB today confirmed that for the first time in days, temperatures have risen slightly above freezing- and the hoar frost is now melting. The reserve looked absolutely stunning first thing as the fog lifted.

Although we will lose these beautiful frosty panoramas in the next few hours, life will be a bit easier for our wildlife to find food, such as Barn owls and Roe deer.

📷 Photos by Heidi Jones RSPB



16.1.2025

ROYAL AIR FORCE LAKENHEATH: two F-15E Strike Eagle aircraft equipped with the Eagle Passive/Active Warning and Survivability System (EPAWSS) arrived at RAF Lakenheath today, marking the delivery of the first F-15E Strike Eagles integrated with one of the world's most advanced electronic warfare suites.

The upgraded F-15Es have been assigned to RAF Lakenheath's F-15E fighter squadrons, with one going to the 494th Fighter Squadron and the other to the 492nd FS ensuring both units benefit and train with the F-15 E's enhanced capabilities.

"Having EPAWSS operational at RAF Lakenheath significantly enhances our ability to detect and counter threats, ensuring the safety and effectiveness of our crews," said Lt. Col. Timothy Causey, 494th FS commander. "This advanced electronic warfare system, when combined with the F-35's, acts as a powerful force multiplier, transforming our operations and amplifying the 48th Fighter Wing's impact in the battlespace."

The Air Force has been working to modernize the F-15E fleet, ensuring the aircraft remain effective against evolving threats. The EPAWSS upgrade is designed to enhance the F-15E's radar warning, geolocation, situational awareness, and self-defence capabilities, enabling the fighters to survive and operate in highly contested environments.

The new system boosts pilot's situational awareness by autonomously detecting, identifying, and locating threat systems. The system can then take proactive measures to deny, degrade, and disrupt those threats.

The delivery of these upgraded F-15E Strike Eagles represents a major milestone in the Air Force's ongoing efforts to modernize its fourth-generation fleet. By equipping these aircraft with advanced electronic warfare capabilities, the 48th FW is ensuring their readiness for operations in austere environments and supporting NATO's missions across Europe and the Pacific.

20.1.2025

Accident on High Street and Broom Road crossing today. A car came down Broom Road failed to stop at the junction and went right across the High Street hitting a car side on.

21.1.2024

5 Royal Netherlands Air Force F-35As arrived at RAF Lakenheath this afternoon, visiting till Friday. The first 3 were from 313 Sqn and then a pair from 322 Sqn that arrived shortly after as POLLY.

28.1.2025

We learn from the Bury free Press that Donations have poured in for a Suffolk woman who is taking on her first skydive for charity in memory of her dad who died from cancer.

Katie Challis, 31, of Lakenheath, will be completing the challenge on March 8 and is raising funds for Blood Cancer UK to honour her dad Peter Challis, who died aged 64 in March last year, following a battle with acute myeloid leukaemia.

Rainfall for January 56 mm

1.2.2025

A successful litter pick round the village took place today.



12.2.2025

Firefighters were called to a vehicle fire following a road traffic collision on Wangford Road on the outskirts of Lakenheath earlier this evening.



Col. Jack R. Arthaud, Commander of the 48th Fighter Wing, today highlights how readiness, innovation, and strong NATO partnerships drive their mission in a rapidly evolving threat environment.

With dual-capable aircraft and agile combat tactics, the Liberty Wing stands at the forefront of USAFE's role in European defence—ensuring security, strength, and stability across the region.

13.2.2025g

Sallys floral flowers opened her pop up shop outside CJ's today selling flowers intended for Valentines Day. They will also be available tomorrow too.



The East Anglian Daily Times reports that new figures have revealed alarming speeding offences across Suffolk. Data obtained by the RAC through a Freedom of Information request shows that between January 2023 and August 2024, the highest speed recorded in a 30mph zone was 83mph, and 45mph in a 20mph zone.

In Station Road, Lakenheath, 627 vehicles were caught travelling over 50mph during November last year, including one driver at more than 80mph and seven at over 70mph. Councillor Gerald Kelly believes many offences happen overnight and says parking issues also contribute to the problem. In nearby Eriswell Road, 69 vehicles were recorded travelling above 50mph. Suffolk Constabulary has urged drivers to slow down, warning that speeding contributes to nearly 10% of serious or fatal collisions. The RAC also condemned the “vastly excessive speeds,” saying they put other road users at significant risk.

24.2.2025

A Suffolk MP is calling for transparency after drone activity over two Suffolk airbases was linked to Russia. After unidentified drone activity over RAF Mildenhall and RAF Lakenheath were reportedly linked to Russia. Nick Timothy, MP for West Suffolk, says he will “expect” a full investigation and will write to the Defence Secretary to ensure any results keep residents informed. Unusual drone activity was reported over RAF Lakenheath and RAF Mildenhall in Suffolk and RAF Feltwell in Norfolk during the course of November last year.

27.2.2025

The learns today that Lakenheath has been selected by Sport England as one of 53 areas across the country where low physical activity levels will be tackled. The initiative will work with local organisations and community leaders to improve opportunities for people to take part in sport and exercise.

Active Suffolk will help deliver the programme, aiming to boost physical activity, improve mental and physical health, and remove barriers that prevent people from getting active, particularly for children and young people.

West Suffolk councillor Ian Shipp described the scheme as a “fantastic opportunity” for residents to help shape local activities, build friendships and reduce isolation. Sport England says the programme will focus on ensuring everyone has equal access to an active lifestyle.

Ipswich has also been selected to take part in the scheme. 5.3.2025

The village discovers today that Lakenheath Post Office, which was based at 42 High Street, and closed in February 2024, will now Reopen in April.

February rainfall was 48 mm

8.3.2025

Lakenheath FC keep it in the family during a Thurlow Nunn League Premier Division win over Sheringham. Three members of the same family all scored a goal.

Accident tonight on the High Street, Lakenheath.



10.3.2025.



NEWS RELEASE

48th Fighter Wing Public Affairs
RAF Lakenheath
Brandon, Suffolk
IP27 9PN
01638 522151
Email: 48fw.pa@us.af.mil

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
48 FW/PA POC | Maj. Hope
Cronin
Release # | 220709
Date | March 3, 2025

Two-day period of early morning flying at RAF Lakenheath

ROYAL AIR FORCE LAKENHEATH, England – The 48th Fighter Wing will begin flying surges including limited early morning flying beginning March 12 and ending March 13.

During this period communities in East Anglia and the surrounding regions may see and hear U.S. aircraft taking off, landing, and transitioning from RAF Lakenheath between 6:45 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Operations like this provide both aircrew and support personnel stationed at RAF Lakenheath the experience needed to maintain a ready force capable of ensuring the collective defence of the NATO alliance.

“The 48th Fighter Wing must train like we fight in order to maintain operational readiness, and early morning flying is a critical muscle we must continue to flex,” said Maj. Hope Cronin, 48th Fighter Wing spokesperson. “We understand the disturbance this may cause to our local communities and appreciate the patience and understanding as we ensure our Airmen remain trained and ready to secure the sovereign skies anytime, day or night”

All training will be conducted in accordance with Ministry of Defense and U.K. airspace regulations.

Please contact the MOD at SWK-lowflying@mod.gov.uk with any aircraft-related flying concerns.

10.3.2025

RAF Lakenheath proudly welcomed The Right Honourable Maria Eagle, Minister for Defence Procurement and Industry, as they continue to strengthen the enduring partnership between the U.S. and the UK. This visit highlights their shared commitment to defence innovation, military readiness, regional security and reaffirms the allied forces' dedication to staying ready, capable, and stronger together.

13.3.2025

Lisa Skinner, aged 48, served as the postmistress of Lakenheath Post Office from 2013 until its closure in February 2024. Beyond her role in postal services, Lisa is deeply involved in music as the lead singer of the melodic power metal band Sorceress of Sin. In January 2021, the band released their debut album, *Mirrored Revenge*, which received positive feedback, particularly from metal communities in Italy, Portugal, and Belgium.

In March 2025, Lisa's musical journey took a significant turn when she joined the choir "Hear Our Voice" on Britain's Got Talent. This choir comprises victims of the Post Office Horizon IT scandal, where over 900 sub postmasters were wrongfully convicted due to faults in the Horizon accounting system between 1999 and 2015. The choir's performance on the show was met with a standing ovation, highlighting their emotional and powerful rendition.

Lisa's involvement in both her community and the music industry showcases her dedication and resilience.

16.3.2025

Lakenheath Youth FC enjoyed a great morning of open training at Lakenheath Playing Fields this morning. With over 40 children attending there were plenty of smiles and fun being had. hopefully all the new players will find a team space in the forthcoming new football season.



19.3.2025

Lakenheath Youth FC announced exciting news. The club will be starting Wildcats Girls Football sessions at Lakenheath very soon. "What are Wildcats?" you may ask - quite simply, it is casual football for girls aged 5 to 11. It is all about having fun and making new friends. Better detail will follow.



20.3.2025

The post office advised the community that they are delighted to let us know that following the closure of Lakenheath Post Office they will be re-opening the branch on Wednesday 23 April 2025 at 13:00. This will be in a new location - Lakenheath News, 65A High Street, Lakenheath, IP27 9DS. Customers would access Post Office services at a low-screened, open-plan, modern serving point that's part of the retail counter. Working with the postmaster, the shop owners will adapt the current store layout, fixtures and fittings to accommodate the Post Office till if needed.

Lakenheath Parish Council added with an update on the provision of LAKENHEATHS NEW POST OFFICE that customer posters are displayed around the new post office location. It is great to look back at how the new post office becomes a reality.

Lakenheath Parish Council and Lakenheath News got together with Post Office Ltd., working together towards the common goal of providing post office services again to our community

West Suffolk Council were aware of the efforts and contributed to its success. Thanks to all those who gave so much time and energy to the project.

22.3.25

Apolo Stables ran a cake stall today. They raised £140 for Comic relief.



23.3.2025



A new post-box topper up for Great Tommy Sleep out, which is a national award-winning fundraising challenge designed to support veterans that are experiencing homelessness in the UK, for which a resident undertakes annually whatever the weather

24.3.2025

It is with a heavy heart that The Paddocks Coffee Bar announced their closure. Due to the expansion of other areas in their business, the owners made the decision to lease out the premises, meaning they will no longer be managing the coffee bar. The last day of trading will be 30th March.

25.3.2025

Wangford Road in Lakenheath shut this afternoon after a large lorry had tipped over and churned up some of the verge.



27.3.2025

The community were informed that the 48 FW at RAF Lakenheath will be conducting an active shooter EXERCISE during the afternoon of Wednesday, 2 April. Expect delays at the gates. There will be use of the giant voice system and emergency responders will be responding. All on base personnel will be required to follow giant voice and emergency responder instructions, including any directed lockdowns, unless in a non-play area.

Active shooter exercises are routine training exercises designed to enhance readiness and safeguard base personnel and their families.

29.3.2025

Mother's Day pop up shop by Sallys floral flowers was available outside CJ's today.



Rainfall for March was 3mm only.

3.4.2025

Lakenheath Pavilion were thankful to a fantastic customer at The Lancaster, who has made these 4 amazing benches so customers can all enjoy a drink in the sun.

8.4.2025

This morning 8 Aviano (Italy) based F-16s arrived into RAF Lakenheath for a two-week deployment.

13.04.2025

RSPB Lakenheath Fen today enjoys a special free event with about 200 visitors to celebrate its 30th birthday. Visitors to the fen could learn about the site's history, watch the opening of an overnight moth trap, enjoy a guided walk and wildlife activities.

When Lakenheath Fen's land was bought by the RSPB in 1995 it was used to grow carrots. The charity turned the carrot fields into a wetland which now covers nearly 500 hectares, including a mature reedbed that attracts rare species such as marsh harriers, bitterns, cranes and bearded tits.

15.4.2025 The community are informed that the nuclear protesters have come to sell more flags and patches whilst holding a peaceful protest



17.4.2025

The community were reminded by the local press that A Post Office is set to return to Lakenheath High Street to the delight of its residents.

The new Post Office is reopening on Wednesday at 1pm as another service offered by Lakenheath News at 65a High Street, after closing in February 2024 due to the resignation of the postmistress.

The new services will be open between 9am to 5pm from Monday to Friday and 9am to noon on a Saturday.

Cllr Nick Smith, vice chair of Lakenheath Parish Council, said: "It's been a long old haul and it's taken a great deal of effort to achieve this.

"The feedback so far from the parishioners and residents has been great and they can't believe it.

"It's hugely positive news for the village and it will definitely give it a bit of a boost.

Cllr Smith added that Lakenheath Parish Council worked with Post Office Ltd and Lakenheath News, as well as West Suffolk Council, to get the new Post Office sorted.

Mrs Anantharajah will be the postmistress of the Post Office.

The image contains two posters. The left poster is for the Lakenheath Post Office reopening. It features the Post Office logo at the top, followed by the headline "Great news". The text states: "We'll be reopening Lakenheath Post Office at a new location: Lakenheath News, 65A High Street, Lakenheath, IP27 9DS On Wednesday 23 April 2025 at 13:00". It also provides contact information for comments and a consultation hub. The right poster is for an "OPEN TRAINING" session. It features the Lakenheath Youth Football Club logo and a starburst that says "FREE". The text reads: "If your child is aged 5 to 7 and wants to get into Football Please do not miss this opportunity". It lists details: "6 week training programme", "Qualified coaches", "Sunday mornings 10:00 to 11:30", "£ Free", "Commencing 16th March", and "@ Lakenheath Playing Fields". It also includes a table of opening hours and a call to action to contact the club for more information.

POST OFFICE

Great news

We'll be reopening
Lakenheath Post Office

at a new location:
Lakenheath News, 65A High Street, Lakenheath, IP27 9DS

On **Wednesday 23 April 2025 at 13:00**

If you'd like to know more or to tell us what you think
about our plans visit our Consultation Hub - postofficeviews.co.uk

We'll be accepting your comments until:
Wednesday 2 April 2025

Want to tell us what you think
right here and now? **SCAN HERE:**

Other ways to share your views:
comments@postoffice.co.uk
FREEPOST Your Comments
(Please note this is the full address)
Call 03452 66 01 15 Textphone 03457 22 33 55

Opening hours	
Monday	09:00 – 17:00
Tuesday	09:00 – 17:00
Wednesday	09:00 – 17:00
Thursday	09:00 – 17:00
Friday	09:00 – 17:00
Saturday	09:00 – 12:00
Sunday	Closed

For information in Braille, large print or audio call 03452 66 01 15, Textphone 03457 22 33 55 or to see a copy of our Principles of Community Engagement about changes to the Post Office network, visit our website postofficeviews.co.uk

OPEN TRAINING

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

- 6 week training programme
- Qualified coaches
- Sunday mornings 10:00 to 11:30
- £ Free
- Commencing 16th March
- @ Lakenheath Playing Fields

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

ACCREDITED CLUB

10.4.2025

The Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) has warned that US nuclear weapons may be stationed in Britain and is supporting the Lakenheath Alliance for Peace's protest at RAF Lakenheath from 14–26 April. Activists will set up a peace camp and hold a 24/7 vigil outside the main gate, ending with a blockade on the final day.

The protest follows reports of a government cover-up revealed after CND legal action led to the declassification of documents showing US forces in Britain are exempt from nuclear safety regulations. This means local authorities, including Suffolk County Council, may not be informed if nuclear weapons arrive, and may not have emergency plans in place for a potential accident.

The two-week camp will include:

17 April – Greenham Women’s Day: Former Greenham Common protesters lead a demonstration.

21 April – War Crimes & Genocide Day: Activists protest RAF Lakenheath’s role in US/UK/NATO military operations and support for Israel’s actions in Gaza.

24 April – International Peace Conference (Bury St Edmunds): Speakers discuss US militarism, NATO expansion, and environmental impacts.

26 April – Base Blockade: Protesters plan to block the main gate, with CND staging a demonstration highlighting government secrecy.

19 April 2025

The Paddocks Coffee Bar in Lakenheath has been taken over by new owners, Kellie Nafile and her husband Umut, who plan to transform it into a Mediterranean-inspired restaurant and bar. The couple previously ran the Fork and Fire food truck and are now redeveloping the Willow Grove Farm site.

The new menu will feature Turkish-influenced Mediterranean dishes such as shish, chicken, and steaks, alongside vegetarian and gluten-free options. Breakfasts will still be served, and a new bottomless lunch offering will include a three-course meal with unlimited drinks.

As there is currently no kitchen on site, meals will initially be prepared using the couple’s food truck, with a permanent kitchen planned after summer. The owners hope to open within weeks, starting with a soft launch followed by a grand opening with live entertainment.

Live music nights are planned throughout the summer, and customers may also be able to enjoy shisha in the garden, weather permitting. Singer Valentina Russo is confirmed to perform at the grand opening, starting at 5pm.

22.4.2025

This evening the end wall to the cottage left of St Mary’s Church collapsed. Following an inspection the following day by a structural engineer the building was designated as uninhabitable and too dangerous to be occupied.



23.4.2025

Lakenheath Post Office, formerly based at 42 High Street, was temporarily shut following the resignation of its postmaster in February last year. Post Office Ltd asked residents for their views about its plans to restore the service - and received responses that welcomed its return.

Lakenheath Post Office is now open for business as of 13:00 today. The new Postmistress Mrs Anantharajah, completed the first transaction of the new post office situated within Lakenheath News, 65a High Street where the Vice Chair of Lakenheath Parish Council Nick Smith and Councillor Denise Smith made cash withdrawals, part of the everyday banking services now provided. Other services are, of course, postal. Letters and parcels including collect and return.

Since Lloyds Bank withdrew their mobile bank visits and the post office closed last year this is a great sign to the area that Lakenheath is up and running.

The Parish Council urge the village to support the new Post Office or the facility will be lost.

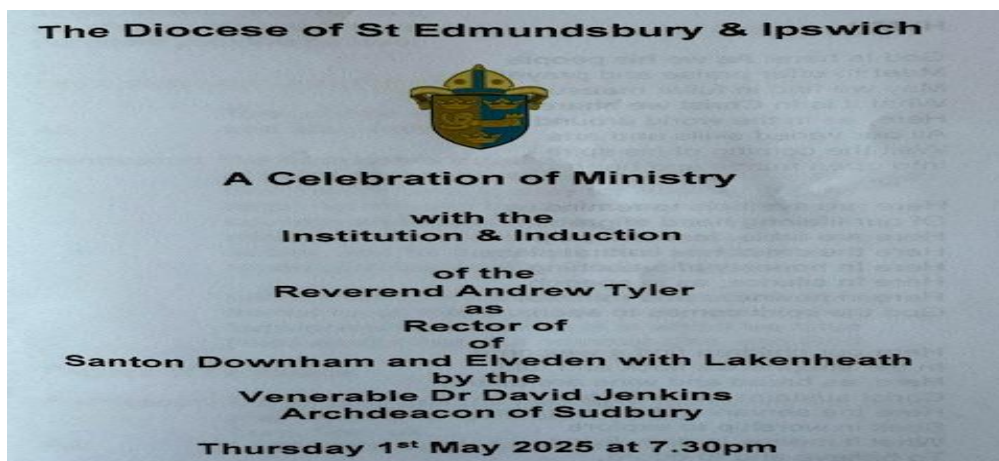


24.4.2025

It was today announced that The Ministry of Defence has confirmed that the US Air Force has frozen the Local National Direct Hire programme, meaning no positions at Lakenheath or Mildenhall are open to local residents as long as the freeze continues.

Unfortunately, the Minister has said "there is no further planned engagement" with the USAF about the decision, so the Government will do nothing to rectify the situation. This inaction is incredibly disappointing, so I will now write to the USAF for more information.

27.4.2025



29.4.2025

Five fire engines were tackling a blaze at a tyre processing plant today; Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service were called to a fire at Murfitt Industries in Station Road in Lakenheath at 5.36pm. Crews discovered a fire in the roof space of a building that houses tyre rubber recycling equipment. The building measures 25m x 7m. Firefighters were using a 13.5m ladder, hose reel jets, and thermal scanning equipment to tackle the fire over 5 hours.



30.4.2025

St Mary the Virgin Church posted that the induction service for Rev Andrew on May 1st has had to be postponed.

Total rainfall for April was 23 mm.

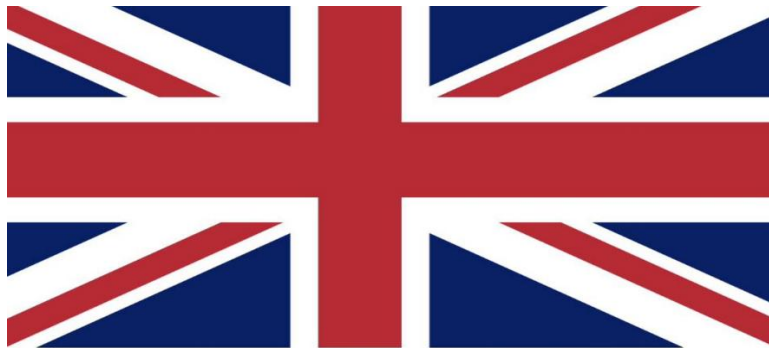
1.5.2025

Lakenheath Community primary School advised that a couple of weeks ago, a group from year 6 took part in a demanding and very hot Orienteering competition. They had to work in pairs to find 20 points in 20minutes. They all worked so hard in their pairs in the difficult heat.

After awaiting results, two of our pairs both incredibly scored 20/20 each. They therefore were the **WINNERS** of the whole competition. such an amazing achievement and another new shield for the school trophy cabinet.



Lakenheath Parish Council posted this information



OYEZ, OYEZ, OYEZ

VE DAY 2025

80 Years On

**On the 8th May,
Lakenheath celebrates!**

09:00

**Flag raising Lakenheath Playing Fields, opposite the beacon
Proclamation**

18:30

The Church Bells will ring out in celebration

21:00 – 21:30

**Address by the Royal British Legion
Lighting of the Beacon and fire shells in Union colours**

Lowering of the flag

Closure

The Lancaster Room will be open from 18:00

In addition Lakenheath Parish Council put out this invite to the community
LAKENHEATH ANNUAL ASSEMBLY Friday 9th May 2025 starts at 6pm at the Football Club Lakenheath
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's open to all Lakenheath residents - come along and have your say!

Running order:

1. Welcome, introductions and Chairman's report

The business stuff:

2. 2023/4 Annual Meeting notes

3. Lakenheath parish council accounts

The good stuff:

4. What's happening: Updates from Lakenheath groups/ local organisations, grant recipients

5. General discussion- ideas going forward

All welcome, please feel free to attend

2.5.2025

A couple are set to start a new adventure together ahead of the opening of their village restaurant after transforming it from a café.

Kellie Nafie, 49, and her husband Umut, 43, took over The Paddocks Coffee Bar in Station Road, Lakenheath, a couple of months ago and have now turned it into a new restaurant and bar.

A soft opening was held on Monday ahead of the grand opening on Saturday which will have live entertainment.

7.5.2025

A black cow escaped its field and was in the middle of Eriswell Road hold as you enter Lakenheath from the Southern end.



8.5.2025

Lakenheath Parish Council Chair, Cllr. Nick Smith, advised that today on the 80th anniversary of Victory in Europe eternal gratitude was given to those who in the words of Winston Churchill “drew the sword against tyranny”. This anniversary is not about the end of the war but celebrating 80 years of peace.

Oyez Oyez Oyez

Eighty years ago, today the United Kingdom and its allies from around the globe celebrated VE Day – the end of the war in Europe.

Today as we come together to commemorate what came to be known as VE Day our thoughts turn to thanksgiving and remembrance of those millions that gave so much to achieve the freedom we all enjoy today.

We remember those we lost, those who were wounded or scarred, those whose lives were forever changed by war. Nobody was immune from the impact of that terrible conflict.

Let us pause to remember their sacrifice.

We reflect too upon the words of our late and glorious Queen, Elizabeth – “Never Give Up, Never Despair”.

And so we offer thanksgiving for the selflessness of those who gave up

so much in order that future generations should enjoy the blessings of freedom, democracy and peace.
God Save the King

This was followed by the raising of the flag at Lakenheath Playing Fields.



9.5.2025

A shed fire breaks out and spreads at Roughlands in Lakenheath. Emergency services were called just before 1pm after a call that a shed blaze spread to a garage and hedge nearby.



Three fire crews were sent to the scene as well as a police car. No injuries have been reported and the fire brought under control.

Notes from the Lakenheath Parish Assembly arranged by Lakenheath Parish Council which took place tonight.

Venue: Lakenheath FC Clubhouse

Attendees

Gerald Kelly, Nick Smith, Nicola Glading, Martin Taylor, Denise Smith, Robert Rolph, Joanne Beek David Beek, Iain Frost, Bryan Bellard, Mike Rowntree, Daphne Austin, Barry Austin, Jill Learner Jenny Hastings, Sharon Fletch, Peta Gyte, Alan Gyte, Abi Cartwright Thoms, Tony Bush, Trevor Webb Di Smith, June Meases, Wendy Barnes, David Jones, Kevin Watts, George Plumb, Richard Horrex Susie Howe, S Creasey, Mervyn Mead, Christine Mead, Hermione Brown, Jo Chambers, Derek Bennett all signed in.

There were other attendees who did not sign in.

1. The Chairman, Nick Smith, welcomed all to the Assembly.
2. The Notes from the 2024 Annual Assembly were Agreed as an accurate record (Appendix A)
3. The Summary of the LPC Accounts was received (Appendix B)
4. Updates from local groups

Tony Bush

Told the meeting about Active Suffolk, an investment for Sports England. This is about the whole community being more active. Working with Health Authorities and Councils. First phase is to look at the barriers to being active, things will evolve over the next year, and will be shaped by the community. Abi is `on the ground` and has been in post for two months. She is the development officer, encouraging positive engagement with the community.

Jo and Richard are the community connectors. Partners are Health, Leisure Centres. Regular steering group meetings will be held with sub groups emerging.

Library

Jo Chambers: has organised a games group, book group, knit and natter sessions, craft group, Reiki sessions, toddler group, baby bounce. A big3 thankyou for coming in. 540 followers on Facebook. Posts viewed over 20k times. 2,000 more books were borrowed in the past year. 400 volunteer hours logged. Previous 292 footfalls increased to 1539 this year.

Consolidated Charities

Robert Rolph: Reported that the Charity pays out at Christmas time to residents that apply having lived in the village at least 10 years and are over the age of 75. Less people apply every year.

Goward & Evans

Mr Rolph is also the Chairman of the Goward and Evans Charity, which supports the school and youngsters with further education.

St Marys Church

There is a full team of bell ringers, sixteen people in the choir, and fresh flowers are always evident. The youth group meets on Sunday mornings. During the past two years, there has been no rector; a new incumbent is commencing in two weeks.

Lakenheath Friendship Club

After lockdown, many people had lost confidence in attending. The club meets fortnightly on a Thursday afternoon. Currently approx. 45 on the books. Entrance fee is £2. An auction helps boost funds; there is a bi yearly party.

Heritage Group

(David Jones) The group supports people undertaking research on the heritage of the village. A previous historian, the Revd. Munday, a past resident was very popular and knowledgeable. Sadly, some of his work has been lost because of an outdated form of printing. The reprint and update of three of his booklets most relevant to Lakenheath are kept on record by the group and available to anyone who wants a copy for a donation, suggested as £3 for one book or £5 for both volumes.

A reprint of the village Trail booklet is available now. The Cubs and Scouts and key stage 2 school pupils are using this. Lakenheath has had a Co-op since 1892; the group will be telling this story shortly. Thanks were given to Lakenheath Times for publishing our work.

Scouts, etc.

(Wendy Barnes) The group was the first in the Bury area to open a Squirrels section. There are waiting lists (42) for all sections. Eight leaders and could do with some more volunteers. The group offer a varied programme of activities. Thanks to the Parish Council, Goward and Evans Charity and Christian Enterprise for their financial help.

Sedge Fen Village Hall

The Baptist Church and land was given to the community by departing US Baptists. The Parish Council has funded the reconnection of utilities. It is proposed to hold community events in the Summer. Sedge Fen now has more young families, good that they and the older folk are sharing amenities.

Lakenheath Youth Football Club

(Richard Horrex) the chair grew up in the village; He wants to ensure that today's kids can enjoy a fun sport in a safe environment. The club currently is made up of 90% boys, 10% girls. Affordable subs of around £70 pa per child with no match fees. The activity builds confidence and helps cope with failures. Currently we have 17 head coaches, all voluntary. The Club logo and colours have changed. Two under 7's teams have now been set up. Two-star accreditation was achieved this year. `Wildcats` training - c. 25 attend regularly now. The club needs more coaches. We will have an under 17s team next year. The Challenge Cup is this weekend with around 500 attendees expected. Presentation day is in June 2025.

Lakenheath Youth Club

(Sharon) opened a youth club in the methodist Church which is still developing, numbers starting to come up. More volunteers are needed to enable the group to grow and prosper.

Lakenheath FC

(Chairman) Working hard to build the club up and bring players through. Two-star club status – thanks to Richie and Shane.

Ladies Keep Fit

Attendees age from 60 to 91. About 18 members attend each week. Gentle exercise to music, Thursdays 10-12noon

Curling

Adapted version of the Olympic sport, started by Active Lives and the group took it over. £2 a session.

Cemetery Committee

(Cllr I Frost) This is a group of volunteers (all parish councillors) who look after our Cemetery, seeing it as a sacred duty. Amongst the issues we have faced recently are Wildlife- deer eating flowers, Chafer grub ingress and moles.

Two projects going forward: the flowerbed walls at the gates are to be replaced, and a memorial garden in the old cemetery created.

Community Centre

(Joanne) plans to bring the Centre up to date. Will open for a meal on Sundays. The bar is becoming reasonably popular.

Lakenheath Silver Band

We love the village and have been going for 20 years. We practice in the Community Centre, although the fee is reasonable, it still has to be paid. We gave a show at Icklingham. Urged people to come along to join our happy band. Learning a new instrument is encouraged and can be provided.

Good Neighbours

(Cllr P Gyte) has been running the scheme for 20 years- helps people with transport problems to access shopping, doctor, dentist, hospital, collect prescriptions. Currently we have 11 members. However, the future is in doubt, some of the volunteers are older than the service users, we are desperate for younger volunteers. It would be sad to lose this service, which is so valued and appreciated.

Lakenheath Playing Fields Association

(Kevin) Chairman of the LPFA - there will be a Mayday event; there are 70 cars booked in for the event on 26th May 2025. We are planning a Halloween party. There are two new committee members. Cricket opening soon Thanks to the parish Council who helped us financially with the new posts and fencing. We are looking to improve the hard landscaping.

Lakenheath in Bloom

(Jill Learner) I have been left on my own with this initiative. Dryness has meant that some plants have died, looking to plant drought friendly plants; the Scouts have been helping.

Flower Club

The Chair explained that the club had been meeting for over 40 years. There have been workshops and demonstrations (NAFAS). Meet at the Peace memorial hall 10-12noon.

Nelsons Journey

New Charity, hope to have design courses. Open to everyone.

Speed watch Team

This is manned by 6 people (3 is the minimum) and have to be approved by Police. The group held 17 roadside sessions in the past year, resulting in 151 vehicles reported to the relevant authority. Information from the Speed Indicator Devices mean that Police can be made aware of and target day/ time of most speeders. They are taking particular interest in illegal parkers in the High Street.

Christian Enterprise Foundation

(Hermione Brown) the charity supports schemes that will benefit inhabitants of Lakenheath in relation to health, education and leisure. We particularly aim to benefit children, young people, senior citizens and people with disabilities. Recent beneficiaries include the Monday Club, Camera Club, Epic dad Luncheon Club, Our local community primary school for various projects, Siler Band, Lakenheath Peace Memorial Hall, Friendship group and Scouts.

Lakenheath Parish Council Chairman

Outgoing LPC Chairman, Cllr G Kelly: This has been an eventful, busy year, the village is becoming ever more populated and vibrant, some groups are not here.

The telephone boxes were cleaned and organised. Active Lakenheath is a new, major initiative for the village. The Parish Councillors have been working their socks off in the past year, as have all of the groups and committees. The new school is progressing, and we are working with the new Village Hall Management Committee. Thanks for your help in the past year.

Lakenheath Times

(Cllr D Smith, editor) I have been editor for the LT for one year, this is my 5th edition. The magazine is going from strength to strength, with fascinating articles throughout the year. Many new advertisers are buying space. Thanks to our amazing distributors.

Appendix A

NOTES FROM THE LAKENHEATH ANNUAL ASSEMBLY 2024

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

1. Apologies had been received from Cllrs Hugo, Cahill, Hastings and Overy.
2. The Notes from the 2023 Annual Assembly were agreed.
3. The Lakenheath Parish Council Chairman, Cllr Gerald Kelly, told the meeting that this has essentially been a year of difficult decisions. Contractors engaged in grass cutting, etc are providing a perfectly adequate service after the departure of the Village Keeper. There is a big difference in expenditure, the cottage is being let.

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

The influx of US Air Force personnel means that rents are high in the village. US personnel do not pay Council Tax, hence the precept has gone up. This situation is being taken very seriously by West Suffolk Council.

The district is paying for the conversion of street lights to LEDs as 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 Speed watch 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 the making of decisions on spending. Difficult to compare (e.g.) care of elderly with potholes. We are behind the curve with potholes. Lakenheath Village Plan will be interesting and helpful. Persimmon are building near to the Cut, some provision of affordable housing. Social housing is allocated according to a points system.

There has always been noise from the base, which has increased. However, the Base does bring in a lot of money.

Mr Putin's behaviour leads Cllr Noble to assume that US personnel will be with us for some time.

The two biggest issues are parking and speeding, good to see that Lakenheath has an effective Speed Watch team. He often sees drivers parking on the zig zag lines when will they realise that these are not parking areas?

Q: Road signage needs cleaning and is sometimes covered by trees etc.

A: Report on website, get a reference number

Q: Update on Station Road development?

A: None at the moment. Cocksedges started to put the roads in but the company are no longer involved with the development. The school will be built before the houses.

Q: Will the school be big enough?

A: Yes, it 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 illustrative panel relating to the Royal Observer Corp 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 Mundy, 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 hereunder

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.

Community Speedwatch

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Emergency Plan

Emergency Planning

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Jenny

Environmental Report May 2024

I am sorry I cannot be with you this evening.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Judy.

Lakenheath FC

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

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

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

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

Alan

Lakenheath Library

Lakenheath Library

A pretty amazing year for the library.

A new manager, Jo Chambers, joined Lakenheath and got to know the village, and its 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 advertised on social media and posted in village notice boards. There is an amazing range available for all ages, from Baby Bounce, Lego, Crafts and now an opportunity to learn sign language.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Some interesting stats to take home.

Our Facebook posts now have a reach of 14.1K which is up 61.3%

Content interactions (content and replies) 4.6K up 227.5%

The manager and I, as Chair of FOLK would like to thank everyone for their continued support in the village.

Let's remember Suffolk Libraries has 44 libraries, in size we are number 42.

With your help we are batting above our weight!

Let's keep it going !

Thank you.

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

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

Meeting closed at 8.25pm

9.5.2025

The Beaver group popped in to the library today to earn their reader badge. They learned about the rules of the library, why people should use bookmarks and even got to design a fabulous book cover.



21.5.2025

Today we learn that The U.S. Air Force is planning to return its F-15E Strike Eagles from RAF Lakenheath in England and consolidate its fleet stateside. Currently, the F-15Es in the United Kingdom are the only permanently forward-deployed examples of the aircraft, which remain the service's first choice for a wide variety of critical missions around the globe.

Confirmation of the plan to bring the two squadrons of F-15Es back from Lakenheath was provided yesterday by Chief of Staff of the Air Force Gen. David Allvin. This came during a hearing on the Posture of the Department of the Air Force in Review of the Defense Authorization Request for Fiscal Year 2026, held by the Senate Committee on Armed Services.

24.5.2025

A new post box topper, nursery rhymes, little boy blue, Mary had a little lamb, little Miss Muffet, dinosaurs and cavemen outside the old Post Office in the High Street.



Following a refurbishment the play park is reopened today.

25.5.2025

A dog was shot with an air gun on Undley Road, near Lakenheath today sometime between 4pm and 4.30pm. The red Hungarian Vizsla was shot near a public footpath and woodland behind the dog owner's property.

26.5.2025

The Playing Fields Association put on their very first Car Show at the playing fields. The rain held off till the very end. The committee gave thanks to all stall holders and show cars for supporting them. 122 cars. The winners of the car show. Best restored classic. Best Novelty and Best in show



30.5.2025

14 x F15's from Panthers squadron headed off on deployment today.

Rainfall for May was 22 mm.

01.06.2025

A former sub-postmistress, Lisa Skinner, turned choir singer said performing in the final of Britain's Got Talent was an "amazing and overwhelming experience". She also fronts a melodic metal band.

Lisa who worked at Lakenheath Post Office in Suffolk for 10 years, said being able to raise awareness of the Horizon computer scandal was victory enough. Lisa said "I am genuinely shattered and drained but it was an amazing and overwhelming experience and I loved every second of it - it was truly awesome to be a part of."

3.6.2025

Lakenheath Parish Council took to social media to praise volunteers who were conducting a community speed watch in the village.

While recording drivers they caught one travelling at 53 mph on a section of 30 mph road. The council said that the speed watch helps "to make our village roads safer."

Data recently released showed that nearby on Station Road in Lakenheath 627 drivers were caught travelling in excess of 50mph during November last year, with one driver recorded at more than 80mph.

4.6.2025

Today the first cuckoo was heard.

Today the Council were alerted to the movement of tributes without permission from a grave. The Cemetery Committee immediately responded and regrettably discovered that a number of tributes from other graves had also been removed and placed in another part of the cemetery. The individual or individuals responsible for this act are difficult to identify. Their motive is very hard to understand as it causes great distress to those relatives who so lovingly look after their places of rest. All recovered tributes are now placed at the Chapel wall for anyone wishing to pick up and replace the items.

The Cemetery Committee from Lakenheath Parish Council have been working hard to keep the area in an immaculate condition for everyone who visits their loved ones.

7.6.2025

Presentation night for Lakenheath Youth Football Club provided a great way of celebrating a superb season for their teams. More than 300 medals and cups were given out.

Huge thanks were given by the club chair to all that helped make the event what it was but special mention to Shane for all his hard work in coordinating the day.



9.6.2025

Lakenheath Parish Councillors had a busy morning with their continuing program of improvements at the play park.



11.6.2025

A superb effort from the Girls of Lakenheath Community Primary School cricket team who came 4th in the district competition yesterday.

14.6.2025

Lakenheath Community Primary School gave thanks to the community that supported their summer fair. Yesterday. They raised an INCREDIBLE £3400 for the school.

16.6.2025

The new 'Sparks Farm Path' opens across Elveden Estate between Eriswell and Lord's Walk, near Lakenheath

18.6.2025

Today saw RAF Lakenheath fenceline even busier than usual because 12 x Lockheed Martin F-22A Raptors from Langley Air Force Base in the USA, arrived in the dark for a two day stay on their way south.

27.6.2025

TREND14 20-5608 F35A 57WG/6WPS:WA USAFWS (United States Air Force Weapons Squadron) arrived at RAF Lakenheath with another four F35s this afternoon (Will be issued to the 48FW).

Today Lakenheath Methodist Church announced a cancellation (until further notice) of the after school youth group for a while, due to lack of volunteers. They hope to be able to reopen in the autumn.

28.6.2025

Today it was confirmed that on Friday, November 22nd, last year, amidst reports of "small unmanned aerial systems" spotted over RAF Lakenheath and RAF Mildenhall, a police helicopter was carrying out a late night patrol.

The report from the UK Airprox Board - which investigates near misses - said the crew saw red flashing lights in the area of the Lakenheath ATZ, which they believed were drones.

"After climbing to approximately 4000ft, they started heading east towards Bury St Edmunds, tracking a 'drone'", the report said.

At one stage, they had a significant rate of descent at 145kt and the 'drone' overtook them, maintaining a constant height above them.

"Once they started heading in a westerly direction (now at 5500ft) one of the 'drones' appeared to converge with them and fly above and in front of them."

At this point the two aircraft came within 1,900ft (579m) of each other, and the pilot then became concerned for the safety of the aircraft and left the area.

Rainfall for June was 31mm

2.7.2025

An area in Lakenheath cordoned off today following the finding of a grenade. The bomb squad attended but the cordon lifted in the evening as they confirmed that the item found was not a live grenade

3.7.2025

The new Primary School for Lakenheath Construction started this morning. Completion is hoped for September 2026. Earth moving equipment is on site along with more site cabins.



Concept of the new school which is the first net zero operational school in Suffolk.



The proposed school plan.

5.7.2025

Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service was called at 12.48am on Saturday to reports of a blaze in the roof of a bungalow in Sandgalls Drive in Lakenheath. Four engines from Mildenhall, Brandon, Newmarket and Haverhill were sent to the scene together with an Operational Support Unit and a water carrier.

Upon arrival, crews discovered the fire was in the roof of the property. Firefighters used two teams in breathing apparatus, two hose reel jets and a larger covering jet to tackle the flames. The fire was extinguished at about 3.40am.

All persons in the property were accounted for and there were no casualties. A spokesman for the fire service said investigation works would take place on Saturday to establish a cause.

15.7.2025

The visiting 12 F22's (Raptors) from Langley Air Force base left RAF Lakenheath Today to return home.

21.7.2025

CJ's café announced that they will be hosting a **FRUIT & VEG STALL** as from 25th July 2025 every Friday. They are super excited to have Kevin and his team outside their premises with fresh produce. This worked so well before and they have struggled to find someone reliable to take it on again.

It came to light today that currently there are 90 homes completed on the Persimmon site in Eriswell Road. Oddly this has to date only produced 7 Children which attend the local Primary School.

21.7.2025

We are informed that the Football Club premises were broken into overnight and various items stolen. The van loaded was caught on CCTV. It was found on 23rd July burnt out in Wisbech.

On the 22nd July for the second night running there was a further break in at Lakenheath Football Club in Back Street. This morning at 3.33 am the tractor lawn mower with its grass cutting addition was seen driving past the little India restaurant. The thieves did not stop to open the club gates they merely drove through them and buckled the gates. The tractor was hidden in a drove in Sedge Fen, covered with tarpaulin and straw bales placed behind it. Not with standing this the tractor was found and returned to its owners damaged at the front and to the grass cutting attachment.



24.7.2025

Suffolk police were called to a crash at 10.55am near RAF Lakenheath, at the junction with Wangford Road and the A1065. The incident involved a car which hit the control box for the traffic lights. There has been damage to the lights, with highways called to attend the scene.

25.7.2025

The community are advised that the Manager Steve Holder of Lakenheath FC freshens up the squad for the 2025/26 Thurlow Nunn League Premier Division campaign

A fresh fruit and veg stall set up in the forecourt of CJs today with loads of variety and a beautiful selection. It will now be available every Friday between 6 am and 2 pm.



July rainfall was 45 mm

1.8.2025

Lakenheath Youth FC posted their first annual report



LAKENHEATH YOUTH FOOTBALL CLUB COMMITTEE 2025-2026

Chair: Richard Horrex
Secretary: Sarah Howe
Treasurer: Gemma Horrex
Revenue Officer: Clare Taylor
Development Football Officer: Rob Taylor
Fund Raising Committee Lead: Natalie McManus

Vice Chair: Shane Howe
Welfare Officer: Zoe Hovell
Media Officer: Jason Newland
Grounds Development Officer: Tom Hovell
Committee Member: James Gabriel

WELFARE OFFICER

The role of sports clubs in keeping children safe:
Sports clubs have an active role in keeping children safe. Just like schools/doctors etc., coaches build strong relationships with children and can be trusted adults. Coaches may be the first person a child talks to about their worries.

At Lakenheath Youth Football Club, Zoe Hovell is the club's Welfare Officer and is there to support and to report to with any concerns about safeguarding and children's welfare.

Contact Zoe if you have any concerns: welfare.lyfc@gmail.com



Work has already begun on getting the playing fields ready for the new season. It is a huge task maintaining the pitches and many thanks to volunteers (especially Tom) for watering etc. during the hot spell, the fields are slowly recovering from the drought. The club has also secured the Eriswell playing fields for this season and will continue to use Beck Row. If you are able to help with pitch maintenance, please speak to Tom, Shane or Rich.

VOLUNTEERS

The club is completely reliant on volunteers for its success. Without a team of people covering a wide variety of tasks - administration, event organising, coaching, fundraising, maintaining the grounds etc. the club would not be able to provide the things it does. Whatever your skill set, whatever time you have to give, there is a role for YOU! If you would like to be part of the team, please speak to your child's coach & look out for opportunities to sign up to volunteer at events.

Let's be a club of 'EVERY LITTLE HELPS'!



www.lakenheathyouthfc.co.uk



2025-2026 SEASON

We are very pleased to report the club is getting bigger and bigger every year; with new teams starting up, and in particular, a new U8s girls team. During presentation day, we had a great signing-on event. The boys & girls officially signed their contracts and had their photos taken in the 'boardroom'. If you haven't signed on yet - there is still time!



WILDCATS

Wildcats is starting again in August - look out on social media! Wildcats is non-competitive football for girls aged 5-11 years, who want to give it a go for the very first time or want to play with other girls their own age. Most importantly, Wildcats is all about having loads of fun and meeting new amazing friends.

We are looking for volunteers and coaches to help run these sessions - please get in touch with Richard Horrex or Shane Howe (email: richard.horrex@gmail.com, shaneus01@hotmail.com) or your child's coach if are interested in helping.

TOURNAMENTS

Although the 2024-25 season has officially come to an end, many teams have had great success at local football tournaments.

We hope everyone is looking forward to the new season; many teams have already started training again. There will be lots of football to be played and enjoyed. More importantly, memories to be made.





LAKENHEATH YOUTH FOOTBALL CLUB



CHALLENGE CUP

Challenge Cup is always a special event and this year was no different. Over 500 children played on Challenge Cup weekend - all for FREE! After the games had finished, it was a joy to see families socialising and children playing - what a fantastic community event! All of this, would have not been possible without the hardworking team putting it together, Lakenheath Football Club, the coaches, the referees and all the families coming to support the teams.

Looking forward to next year & dates have been penciled in the diary already!



PRESENTATION DAY

Over 300 awards were given out on presentation evening! A big thank you to Shane, all the coaches, children, parents and helpers for making it a huge success. It's always the highlight of the year and a superb way to end the season.

Diary Dates:

- **Youth Sponsor's Day (tbc):**
Sept 2025
- **Challenge Cup 2026 (LFC):**
Friday 1st May - Sunday 3rd May 2026
- **Presentation Evening (LFC):**
Friday 8th May - Saturday 9th May 2026



5.8.2025

Today West Suffolk District Council planning service validated for consideration a Reserved Matters Application from Persimmon Homes - submission of details under outline planning permission (part 2) of DC/14/2096/HYB - a. appearance, layout, landscaping and scale of development for 375 dwellings, together with Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace, open space, sustainable drainage features and associated infrastructure for land off Station Road North.

Lakenheath Parish Council today advised that on 15 August 2025 the village will celebrate the 80th anniversary of VJ Day (Victory over Japan), honouring the final victory that ended World War II across

the globe. This year, we come together to remember the bravery, the service, and the sacrifice of those who fought for freedom, both in Europe and in the Far East.

Please join us on the grounds of the Peace Memorial Hall and Community Centre. The Union Flag is already flying and we intend to gather there at 11:55 for a short introduction.

This will be followed, along with government guidelines, two minutes silence at 12 noon. Following which a further address will follow and we will close with a prayer.

The Community Centre bar will open offering people the opportunity to swap stories and chat whilst having refreshments.

8.8.2025

Lakenheath Playing Fields today installed their new metal soldiers at The Playing fields



9.8.2025

At RAF Lakenheath, a U.S. Air Force F-15B Eagle fighter jet has been taken out of service in a process that leaves the aircraft permanently unusable. Last month, a contractor carried out the demilitarization on behalf of the 48th Maintenance Group, using heavy equipment to crush and shred the airframe. The aircraft had been serving as a ground instructional trainer, allowing maintainers to practice procedures without the risk and cost of working on operational jets. With the training role complete, the decision was made to dismantle it rather than send it to long-term storage.





Lakenheath Fete 2025 was held today. Lakenheath Pavillion gave thanks to everyone who came down to support them which makes the event worthwhile. They also thanked the stallholders and vendors, their volunteers and the Lakenheath Playing Field Association committee, who all had a hand in organising today's event. They also thanked Melody Makers for their performance today, and to We Entertain for the magic show!

Finally, they gave thanks to their event sponsors: Central Garage Lakenheath; DBL CASTLES; Elveden Estate; Lakenheath Opticians; Lakenheath Pavilion; ShanRye Surveying & Architectural Services; Freedom Recycling; DJ Jay Disco & Entertainment; and The Lancaster @ Lakenheath Pavilion - without their generosity, this event would not be possible.

10.8.2025

With Exercise Cobra Warrior 25-2 starting 15 September 2025, RAF Mildenhall and RAF Lakenheath may host USAF F-16s from:

31st Fighter Wing (Aviano, Italy)

52nd Fighter Wing / 480th FS (Spangdahlem, Germany) (possibly cancelled)

Aircraft will likely fly Monday–Friday, two missions per day, across 3 weeks — with night flying in the final week.

Arrivals are expected 4–6 days before the start date, along with Ramstein-based C-130Js for support.

Base assignments are not confirmed yet. Current guess:

Spangdahlem F-16s → Mildenhall

Aviano F-16s → Lakenheath

(Confirmation welcome.)

Exercise Details

Dates: 15 Sept – 3 Oct 2025

Mission Duration: ~90–120 minutes

Exercise Frequency: Usually every other day (non-exercise days may include low-level flying)

Participating Units (Non-UK)

Germany — Typhoons to Waddington

Italy — Typhoons to Coningsby

Canada — CF-188 Hornets to Waddington

USA

B-52s (93BS) to Fairford

F-16s (31FW & possibly 52FW) to Mildenhall/Lakenheath

F-15s & F-35s (48FW) from Lakenheath

KC-135s (100ARW) from Mildenhall

Note: Participation may change due to operational requirements.

Viewing & Photography Reminder: If the community visits Mildenhall or Lakenheath:

- Be respectful and follow all rules
- Comply with MOD Police and law enforcement
- Report suspicious activity (e.g., drones)
- Avoid blocking roads and parking areas
- Drinkstuff car park, Mildenhall, is usually off-limits weekdays, but grass parking in front is typically acceptable

14..8.2025

Welcome Holy Desserts to CJ's Sandwich bar. They will be serving their stunning desserts from 4pm until late every Thursday. Make sure to come and try these irresistible treats!



15.08.2025



VJ Day today marks the anniversary of the end of the six-year-long war in Japan. Much of the celebration in 1945 focused on VE (Victory in Europe) Day in May, with those who served in the Far East labelled The Forgotten Army. Today a simple ceremony was held at the Peace Memorial Village Hall and community centre to give thanks to those who took part in the second world war on VJ day 80th Anniversary. The flag was raised, a 2-minute silence followed in line with the whole of the UK

Retired ex submariner, Denis Pipe, then read out the following:

As the fighting ended in Europe in May 1945, Allied troops in the east were still engaged in fierce warfare.

Burma (Myanmar) was liberated by the 14th Army, the principal British force in the east. It was an extraordinary army composed of troops from South Asia, Africa, British, Burmese and Gurkha units. Some 85% were from pre-partition India. By 1945 the British Indian Army was the largest volunteer force in history made up 2.5 million men and women. The war claimed the lives of 87,000 of those volunteers, many from this village. Through the early months of 1945 the 14th Army fought intensely and pushed determined Japanese forces back through hundreds of miles of malaria infested jungle, supported by continual supply drops from the air.

In the Pacific, Australian forces faced fierce resistance on Borneo and US forces fought to take the strategically important islands of Iwo Jima and Okinawa; battles which were marked by appalling levels of casualties. After Okinawa fell on the 22nd June an invasion of the Japanese home islands was planned with enormous levels of casualties expected. Before the invasion was to take place the most destructive war in history came to a rapid end. On 6th August the United States dropped the first atomic bomb over Hiroshima. 2 days later the Soviet Union declared war on Japan followed by a huge attack on 9 August. That day also saw the dropping of the second atomic bomb over Nagasaki. The number of deaths from the bombs has been estimated as high as 200 000.

Recognising that victory was impossible the Japanese government finally accepted the Allied surrender terms on 14 August. The following day was declared victory over Japan (VJ) Day.

Joy at the end of almost six years of global war and hope for the future burst out in towns and cities across the Allied nations as well as on former battlefields. Parties and parades were held from New York to New Delhi from Manchester to Melbourne.

Tens of thousands of Allied prisoners of war had to be located across vast areas including the Japanese mainland. They had been held under appalling conditions and many put to work as forced labour.

The process of demobilisation began for British and Commonwealth forces, although thousands remained on active service in occupied Japan and the Southeast Asia Command (SEAC), depending primarily on Indian troops, reoccupied Malaya, the Dutch East Indies and the French Indo-china where new nationalist conflicts were beginning.

Yet VJ Day was a day of final relief and to give grateful recognition for the sacrifice of those who had served. We remember them 80 years on.

The chairman of Lakenheath Parish Council, Cllr Nick Smith continued:

VJ Day was the final victory in a war that changed the world, and we honour those who served in the Far East with enduring gratitude. Just as we proudly marked VE Day, we reflect on the courage, sacrifice and resilience shown by so many to secure peace. Their legacy must never be forgotten, and it's our duty to pass their stories on to future generations.

A closing prayer was read out by Cllr. Nick Smith, Chair Lakenheath Parish Council:

God of the nations, our refuge and our dwelling place,

we remember with thanksgiving those who service achieved Allied victory in the Pacific, and hold before you all those who suffered from the devastation, and trauma of war.

As we pray for those who suffer the atrocities of war, strengthen our resolve to pursue what makes for peace, through the one in whom we are reconciled and made one, even Jesus Christ our Lord.

A m e n.

19.8.2025

RAF Lakenheath Public Affairs has advised the community that the 48th Fighter Wing will conduct a Combat Readiness Exercise (CRE) from Monday 25 August to Friday 29 August 2025.

This routine training helps ensure the wing is prepared to operate alongside UK and NATO partners under realistic conditions.

What the Community Can Expect

- Increased base activity throughout the week
- Pyrotechnics, blank ammunition, and “Giant Voice” loudspeakers (day & night)
- Noise cannon use during daylight hours only
- Security Forces training, including:
 - Force-on-force scenarios
 - Blank-firing weapons
 - Drone operations within the base perimeter (day & night)
 - Flying Activity
 - No night flying planned
 - Daytime flying only
 - Reduced flying on Monday 25 August (Bank Holiday) to limit community impact

Other Information:

1. Normal base access remains unchanged
2. Personnel in protective gear may be visible during scenarios
3. Increased movement and possible traffic delays between RAF Lakenheath and RAF Feltwell, including at night

RAF Lakenheath states they will aim to minimise disruption while ensuring forces remain fully prepared for operational requirements.

Thanks was given to the local community for their continued support and understanding.

28.8.2025

An update on the school construction was received by the community.

Pentaco Construction Ltd,
Suites 5&6 Joseph King House,
Southwell Road,
Horsham St Faith,
Norfolk,
NR10 3JU

Mobile: 07940294719
Barney.aldrige@pentaco.co.uk
www.pentaco.co.uk
20/08/2025

Second update of Lakenheath Primary School Project

Dear Residents and local business's I hope this letter finds you well. Work has now started on the Lakenheath Primary School Project, and I wanted to take the opportunity to update you on our progress.

We have completed the cut and fill exercise, and both the foundations and drainage are well underway.

The steel frame is due to site in a few weeks, before we move onto further substructure works thereafter. This will progress nicely into our next update, where I will share some photos of the structure going up!

One of the previously mentioned low carbon initiatives is the Ground Source Heat Pump. The works have started for this, and we are currently drilling the boreholes that bring the heat up from deep underground to service the building.

I have attached some progress photos below:



Above: (Left) Car Park area being built up



Above (right)



Above: (Left) Boreholes being drilled for the Ground Source Heat Pump

Above: (Right) General site overview

I would like to reiterate that we are committed to keeping disruption to a minimum and working respectfully within the local community.

I will release a further update in approximately 6 weeks time.

Please don't hesitate to get in touch if you have any questions or concerns.

We appreciate your understanding and cooperation as we carry out this work and look forward to being a considerate presence in your neighbourhood.

Warm regards,
Barney Aldridge
Project Manager
Pentaco Construction



31.08.2025

The Dog Shack in the High Street transferred their business to premises in Methwold. The Pearly Paws dog grooming, who operated a table within the Dog Shack has taken over the whole shop and will reopen in September to expand a successful business model.

Rainfall for August was 33 mm.

14.9.25

The village are told that that Station Road in Lakenheath will be closed between Monday, September 29, till Friday, October 3 from Wangford Road to the Station.

Alix Hovell, who owns Ali Wagz dog groomers, says the impact of recent roadworks has led to the decision not to open during the works. She said: "This is now the third time in the last four to five months that they are closing the road to conduct work.

"Last time they closed myself and my clients had to ask to be let through the temporary barriers at Wangford to get to the location, this wasn't a big issue. Until, they completely shut off the road and you had to take the (minimum) 30 minute detour to try and access Christmas Hill Farm from the Hockwold direction

17.9.2025

Today U.S. Airmen and Soldiers represented the U.S. military alongside service members from the U.K., showcasing the enduring strength of the U.S.-U.K. relations in honour of President Donald J. Trumps second state visit, demonstrating allied partnership and an inviolable commitment between the two nations.

A founding NATO member, the U.K. hosts almost 10,000 U.S. service members who remain unwavering in their commitment to face the complex security challenges of today and tomorrow in partnership with European allies.

18.9.2025

There have been two separate incidents of theft on the Liberty Gate estate this week. The thieves have stolen tools and attempted to break in to a camper van.

Tyre blow out at RAF Lakenheath today.



21.9.25

RSPB advise that for the third day running, an Osprey has been spotted at Lakenheath reserve.

At around 10:45 am it circled and hovered above the river just north of Gary's Pool, before heading westwards towards Joist Fen. If visitors want to see it it is suggested that they walk along the riverbank as the river is where it will likely be looking to catch a meal.

An under 18's pool competition was held at the Lancaster Bar today. Huge congratulations to Amelia you were brilliant.



23.9.2025

A free bike fix was held at the Playing Fields where 11 bikes for residents of Lakenheath were repaired for free.

26.9.2025

This morning a family stood outside the school on the double yellow lines, asking fellow parents not to break the parking enforcements by parking on them. Previously, parents have had to walk out in front of potentially oncoming traffic to ensure the safety of children crossing.

Parents were reminded that double yellow lines opposite a school are there to protect pedestrians and should not be treated as a drop off point or to park on them. Additionally, a blue badge does not provide entitlement to park on double yellows opposite a school.

The message advocated was for the safety of children. Emphasising that **EVEN IF YOU ARE LATE, DO NOT PARK BY OUR GATE**



28.9.2025

Lakenheath Parish council has warned of the "illegal and dangerous" placement of Union Jack flags appearing on the high street in Lakenheath on Saturday morning. They issued a warning after some of the flags were found to cover Belisha beacons.

A statement from the authority said: "It is illegal and dangerous for members of the public to cover a Belisha beacon, as the beacon's flashing light is a legal requirement to alert drivers to the presence of a zebra crossing. Doing so removes the essential safety feature of the crossing, potentially putting pedestrians at risk. If you were responsible for this, please take them down or they will be removed."

Today, the crew at Brandon Fire Station had the privilege of being invited alongside other emergency services to attend an event on RAF Lakenheath as a part of their Situation Preparedness Month. They said thanks for a fantastic opportunity for crews off base to ask and answer questions with on-base crews.



Today two families set up a cake stall to raise funds. They gave thanks to all that came by and supported their Macmillan coffee/cake sale morning. Together they raised an incredible ££437.81, including donations. The children, Lily & Tommy Harrison and their next-door neighbour, Rory, did an amazing job.

29.9.2025

We learn today from Lakenheath Youth Football Club who gave huge thanks and congratulations to Zoe Hovell, one of Lakenheath Youth's fantastic coach & welfare officers.

Zoe entered the Play Safe competition and WON it. She's brought home an amazing prize of a brand-new Nike Play Safe full team kit containing:

- ✦ 15 youth kits
- ✦ 1 goalkeeper kit
- ✦ 1 Nike football bag

This brilliant initiative is all about raising awareness of safeguarding in football and creating ever-safer environments where children and young people feel supported and heard.

Lakenheath Youth F.C. 2025 / 2026

CONGRATULATIONS!
You're a Play Safe prize winner!
You've won
Nike Team Kit

18 Teams	267 Players	Annual Membership cost £70
2 Female teams	FA Programme	ACCREDITED CLUB ★ ★ PART OF ENGLAND FOOTBALL FA Accredited
£900,000 Social value	40 Coaches	16 Mixed teams
0% Increase in Membership cost from 2024	42 sponsors	8 Pitches

www.lakenheathyouthfc.co.uk

Partners: **FOR ALL**, **PLAY SAFE**, **NSPCC**

September rainfall was 55 mm.

4.10.2025

Lakenheath surgery had their first clinic to provide both covid and flu jabs to eligible residents who were invited during September. For Flu all patients aged over 65 were eligible; as well as anyone who is pregnant, immunosuppressed or has a chronic illness such as diabetes. In addition, all patients aged over 75 or those with an immunosuppressed condition were eligible for COVID Vaccines. 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.

The Epic Dads group in the village are hoping to encourage families to take part in activities for whole families. Their new portable mini golf course is all set up for dads and kids fun club at Lakenheath Primary School today.



A cake stall was set up outside the doctors' surgery to raise funds to support Mallory get to Portugal to represent Great Britain in a rolling skate challenge. ALL SOLD OUT and £345.50p made.

Today during storm Amy a massive tree came down just past sharps corner. It was chain sawed and moved away.



6.10.3025

Lakenheath Parish council apologised for the Eriswell Road speed reminder sign not working. Over the weekend someone has vandalised it. It was repaired the following day and back in action

Persimmon Homes, developer on Eriswell Road, via social media invited the village to a spook-tacular Halloween Hunt at their development, Liberty Gate, in Lakenheath.

“Come along”, they said, “for a Halloween Hunt and be inspired by our exceptional autumnal interiors. Celebrate not only Halloween but also our new development by imagining life at Liberty Gate, Lakenheath. Friday 31st October. 10am - 5pm”. A Free gift for attending children will be provided and drinks and snacks for all.

8.10.2025

Suffolk Constabulary today advised that three men have been charged after police located a suspected ‘chop shop’, a term used to describe a facility used to store and dismantle stolen vehicles, with parts from these often shipped off.

The facility was located in an agricultural building in Undley, Lakenheath on Monday 6 October, following the execution of a warrant, with three stolen vehicles, two BMWs and a Mercedes, found inside.

10.10.2025

Land west of the High Street (former Garden Centre land) Planning application for 15 dwellings with associated access, landscaping and public open space was today validated at West Suffolk planning department.

18.10.2025

Lakenheath Youth Football club held a cake sale to raise funds for equipment for their club.



Car crash in the High Street this evening when a car hit two other parked cars and flipped over.

23.10.2025

🌍❤️ Lakenheath FC Youth Day ❤️🌍 This Saturday, October 25, 2025, Lakenheath F.C. is calling all players, coaches, parents, family members, and friends.

Get ready for the inaugural Lakenheath Youth FC (LYFC) Youth Day at the stadium! This is a special day dedicated to bringing our entire youth community together to celebrate the club, bond, and dream big.

Come on down, let your hair down, and enjoy a full day of football action and fun. Watch our young talent play on the first team's "hallowed turf," meet the senior squad, and inspire our future stars!

Special Entry Deal for LYFC Members

We want to see our future stars out in force!

* LYFC Players: Must come dressed in their official club kit and will receive FREE entry.

* Family Discount: Any person who enters with an LYFC player in a full kit gets a 50% discount on entry! Pay only £4 instead of the standard £8.

Let's fill the stadium and show our Lakenheath pride!

We can't wait to see you all there @followers

25.10.2025

We learn today the results of the Abbeycroft Leisure Award – In particular the detail of the unsung Hero award, sponsored by West Suffolk Council.

This special award celebrates those whose passion, dedication, and kindness make sport possible for so many, the people who work tirelessly behind the scenes to support others.

💎 This year's Unsung Hero is Lakenheath Youth Football Clubs, Chairman, Richard Horrex. 💎

Huge congratulations, Richard, and thank you for everything you do to support your club and community. Your commitment truly makes a difference.

They say not all heroes wear capes... but this one does.



**ALL-AGE
CARPET BOWLS AND
MINI GOLF SESSIONS**

Sunday 26th October (3:30 to 5:30pm)
Sunday 30th November (3:30 to 5:30pm)

Lakenheath Indoor Bowls Club, The Nest, Back Street,
Lakenheath, IP27 9HN

Free Sunday afternoon activity sessions for all ages including
carpet bowls, mini golf, Lego, soft play, giant games,
refreshments, and lots more!

www.active.lakenheath.org

27.10.2025

Today we learn that Poultry is set to be culled after an outbreak of bird flu at a commercial flock near Lakenheath was discovered. Suffolk poultry farmers are calling for action ahead of their critical Christmas period.

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) said the highly pathogenic avian influenza H5N1 was confirmed in commercial poultry at a premises near Lakenheath on Sunday. A three-km protection zone and 10km surveillance zone have been declared around the premises.

Defra also said all of the birds on the site will be culled. Suffolk was also declared part of a regional avian influenza prevention zone in December 2024, with measures being lifted on May 15.

Despite its effect on birds, the UK Health Security Agency advises that the risk avian influenza has to public health is very low and poses a very low food safety risk for UK consumers, according to the Food Standards Agency. It is not the first suspected outbreak of bird flu in Suffolk this year.

Avian Influenza Prevention Zone

An Avian Influenza Prevention Zone is in place in this area.

By law you must follow strict biosecurity and hygiene rules to minimise the risk of them becoming infected with Avian Influenza.

If you suspect bird flu in poultry or other captive birds, you must report it to APHA immediately by calling **03000 200 301**.

Check GOV.UK/birdflu for further information.



Animal & Plant Health Agency



Bird Registration



It is now a legal requirement for anyone that keeps birds to be registered.

You will:

- receive important updates on any **local avian disease outbreaks**
- receive information on **biosecurity rules** to help protect your birds.

Take action now, **register online**.

You are **breaking the law** if you do not register.

Some exclusions apply, check the website for further details

Check the exemptions and register in England and Wales at GOV.UK



Check the exemptions and register in Scotland at GOV.Scot



Animal & Plant Health Agency

Il Salvatore, Italian Restaurant, opened in the former Plough pub, Mill Road, in Lakenheath last October serving up food, cocktails and loaded milkshakes. On their anniversary Carlos Magalhaes and his partner Patricia Maria, owners of the restaurant, said: "We are completely over the moon with the warm welcome we received and the brilliant success we have had this year."

He added: "We want to thank each and every customer who has supported us this year. "Next year, we are hoping to update the menu and have a couple of new surprises to announce for the new year."

In June, the restaurant launched a new breakfast menu, which includes The Big Italian Stallion Breakfast made with Italian sausage, guanciale, salami, fried egg, garlic mushroom, beans and mozzarella tomato toast.

They also added three types of souffle pancakes to choose from, including Kinder Beuno, chocolate and pistachio, and Lotus Biscoff and banana.

Connor Benn, a world-famous boxer, also visited Il Salvatore in the summer. He posed for photos with members of staff at the restaurant after finishing his meal.



29.10.2025

Today this notice appeared on the Parish Council Facebook page.

LAKENHEATH GOOD NEIGHBOURS SCHEME TO CLOSE

For almost twenty years Good Neighbours have been serving the village community with lifts to hospital, dentist, collecting prescriptions and taking residents shopping.

Sadly, at the end of the year this service will come to an end. This decision has not been taken lightly but, despite numerous appeals over several months on the village face/book pages, the village magazine, and the notice boards, we have not been able to recruit more volunteers, and as many of the present volunteers are over seventy years of age the future of the scheme is no longer viable.

I should like to take this opportunity to publicly thank ALL the GN volunteers, both past and present, who have given of their time so generously over so many years. Their loyalty, commitment, friendship and care have been absolutely outstanding, and I know their service will be greatly missed by many in the village.

It has been a pleasure and a privilege to have served the community for so many years, and our very best wishes go out to all of you.

Peta Gyte Chair Lakenheath Good Neighbours.

Two alternative services which may be of some help:

Hospital Car Service Transport. Tel: 03009996666

Connecting Communities. Booking Line:01638664304

31.10.2025

48th FW F-15Es returned to RAF Lakenheath today having been deployed to Gando Air Base, for Exercise Ocean Sky 2025. Also in attendance were Indian AF SU-30s, Portuguese AF and Greek AF F-16s, Spanish AF F-18s and also German AF Typhoons.

Rainfall for October was 74 mm

1.11.2025

What a wonderful Pony Day was had at Apollo Stables with crafts, lunch and pony rides from 9am until 3pm. Huge thanks were given to Rich Keeble from EPIC dad and Active Lakenheath. This was also extended to the hosts, Emma and Gary Spencer, from Apollo Stables and their amazing team. In addition, thanks were given to the Fundraising group at the library and EPIC dad with Active Lakenheath for their financial support. This event could not have taken place without them

5.11.2025

Major Changes Coming to RAF Lakenheath (USAF Report) announced today:

494th "Panthers" will switch from F-15E Strike Eagles to F-35A fighters
F-15Es begin leaving 2028
F-35As arrive from 2029
492nd "Bolars/Madhatters" will disband
F-15Es will start departing 2027, returning to the US

Result:

RAF Lakenheath will operate three F-35A squadrons, marking a major shift to fifth-generation aircraft.

Why This Is Happening?

- USAF is reducing older F-15E aircraft
- Expanding total fighter fleet from 1,271 to 1,558 by 2035
- Congress has previously blocked retirements — plans could still change

F-35s Already at Lakenheath

495th "Valkyries" — arrived Dec 2021
493rd "Grim Reapers" — arrived Apr 2022
54 F-35As originally planned across both squadrons

Bottom Line:

RAF Lakenheath is shifting from F-15Es to F-35As, with one squadron closing and another converting — making it one of Europe's largest F-35 bases.

7.11.2025

Today the Lancaster Bar at the Pavilion celebrated trading 1 year.



8.11.2025

Donna and Richard during their stint offering RBL poppy appeal merchandise outside the Coop in the High Street, Lakenheath.



9.11.2025

Remembrance Day parade and wreath laying ceremony took place today with a huge village gathering.





Every one of the Lakenheath Youth Football Club teams (18) took time before their matches to pay their respects with a minute's silence and proudly wore poppy stickers on their shirts. It was wonderful to see everyone coming together to honour those who gave so much.

The players then joined the Lakenheath Remembrance Parade through the High Street to the memorial. They were so proud to see Amelia from their brand-new U8 Girls team and Henry from the new U7s team lay a wreath on behalf of Lakenheath Youth FC. It was a lovely service, and we'd like to thank all of the children for their fantastic behaviour and respect throughout.

10.11.2025

Message from Lakenheath Parish Council.



CHRISTMAS IS COMING!

Join us for the Christmas Tree Lighting Friday, 5th December 2025 from 5.00pm for lighting at 5.30pm on Hall Drive, Lakenheath!

Mola Cafe & Lounge has once again generously allowed us to gather in their car park for a safe and enjoyable viewing experience.

Mola is also remaining open and craft stalls are being set up. Refreshments will also be available to purchase from this well known cafe.

Please note that the car park will be coned off from 3.30pm for everyone's safety.

The Parish Council eagerly anticipates your presence at this festive community event.

Let's come together and celebrate the holiday season.

LOVE WHERE YOU LIVE!

16.11.2025

St Mary's Church, shoebox Sunday. Another 105 shoeboxes are going to less fortunate children overseas. Over 2000 boxes have been sent from Lakenheath in 20 years of supporting this cause. Well done and thank you everybody for your excellent response with contributions again.

Lakenheath Bowls Club gave Congratulations to their Egham Squad this morning, winning 89-67 against Beccles, which sees Lakenheath into the area semi-final.



18.11.2025

The area around the village sign has been cleared and gravel laid for a vast improvement in making the area look better.



Nick Timothy MP covering Lakenheath: This note is being delivered to each dwelling in the village. Listening to residents about the future of Lakenheath.

Dear Lakenheath resident

Lakenheath is growing quickly. A total of 720 new homes already has outline or detailed planning permission. This means the village is set to grow by more than a third by the mid-2030s, with around 1,700 new residents joining the community.

A new school is being built to support this growth and it is due to open in September 2026.

As Lakenheath continues to change and grow, I welcome the announcement of up to £20 million in Pride in Place funding for the village over the next ten years. This is a major investment in Lakenheath's future — one that builds on the Conservative government's work to strengthen local communities and restore pride in place.

Now I want to hear from you how you think this money should be spent.

To shape how the funding is directed, a Neighbourhood Board will be created, made up of residents, a ward councillor, community organisations, local businesses, and me as your MP. The Board will be chaired by an independent appointee chosen by the local authority after consultation with me.

The Board's job will be to develop a ten-year vision for Lakenheath, supported by a detailed Regeneration Plan. This plan will set out specific projects and investments, designed to complement other government funding in the area and, where possible, combine with other sources to deliver the best results.

Possible projects include improvements to the High Street, new green spaces, better roads, and enhanced bus services.

The make-up of the Neighbourhood Board is expected to be confirmed by July 2026, with the Regeneration Plan submitted to the Government by winter 2026–27. Decisions on approval are expected by spring 2027.

This is a fantastic opportunity for Lakenheath — a chance for all of us to shape the future of our village together. But to make it a success, I need to hear from you.

If you are a resident of Lakenheath or the surrounding area, I would be very grateful if you would take a few moments to fill in your answers to the questions below.

Best wishes

Nick Timothy, Member of Parliament for West Suffolk

24.11.2025

Today an F-15 had an emergency Landing at RAF Lakenheath when the hook had to be deployed to ensure a safe landing.

Lakenheath Beavers brought in donations for the Church food bank and decorated wraps for them with xmas cards. The second picture shows the donations ready to be dropped off. The final picture shows the goods set out ready for collection by people in need within the village.



26.11.2025

Thanks were given to the community who donated to the annual Shoebox collection in any way: donating items, wrapping, filling and checking boxes, knitting hat sets or donating money to buy things.

The group managed to complete 153 boxes which are being distributed in Kosovo this year.

A request was also made to start collecting pens /pencils/colouring pencils etc for pencil cases for next year as it is appreciated that a notebook and filled pencil case can be placed in every box. The group also include a flannel and comb alongside toiletries.



29.11.2025

The community Christmas tree outside Lakenheath community centre was lit this evening.



Rainfall for November was 139 mm.

9.12.2025

Lakenheath Playing Fields Association gave out this statement today.



LAKENHEATH
PLAYING FIELD
ASSOCIATION



Lakenheath Pavilion, Eriswell Road, IP27 9AF



secretary@lakenheathplayingfields.org

Chair's End of Term Statement

It has been my honour to be entrusted as chair of the Lakenheath Playing Field Association for the last 5no. years. I feel the time is now right, however, for the reins to be handed over to someone new. This exchange will, no doubt, bring a fresh approach and new ideas, which will be welcomed by me, and I think is important to retain the momentum of the association.

I would just like to take this opportunity to thank the committee members that have run the charity over the last 5no. years. As I am sure you will appreciate there is a LOT of work that needs to go on behind the scenes, this includes, but is not limited to, putting on of events (approx. 10no. every year), the accounts (including annual 'return' to the charity commission), upkeep of the playing field itself and buildings & equipment thereon, improvements (e.g. Lancaster Bar addition, air conditioning, CCTV, Eriswell Road entrance lighting & surfacing), documentation, bars running, third party hire booking.

Namely: Tracy Whitehand – Vice Chair

George Plumb – Treasurer

Monica Schichtel – Secretary

Margaret Satterley – Committee Member

Paul Bowe – Committee Member

Nathan Makcrow – Committee Member

Brian Rutterford also. Many, in the village, know Brian the farmer, property owner and businessman. However, many might not be aware of the time and his own staffing that he selflessly gives to the LPFA free of charge.

Linda Watts also. Linda is the LPFA booking clerk. This takes a lot of time both liaising with hirers and showing them around the facility.

Terry Bail also. Terry checks the charity annual 'return' and is always available to give legal advice (as a former solicitor).

As well as former committee members Debbie Cohn, Marcus Goldson and Anita Sutton.

And let's not forget the former driving force and tireless chair (2009 to 2020)

David 'Cowboy' Gathercole. I hope I've done ok in your footsteps David!

Conclusion

I just wanted to take this opportunity to, not only thank the committee, but give a brief outline of what goes on at the Playing Field. The local public are invited to the annual AGM (in November) but was poorly attended this year, hence publishing this account.

The playing field (overseen by the association / committee) continues to thrive and serve the village of Lakenheath and will, I'm sure, continue to do so under new tenure. As part of the Active Lakenheath funding award the LPFA have proposed 4no. additions (Tennis Court, Table Tennis Tables, Indoor Gym and Sunken Concrete Skatepark). We dearly hope to be awarded with at least one of those items.

I would like, finally, to thank the villagers of Lakenheath yourselves for using the facility and continuing to support it. Remember, Lakenheath Playing field Association is a non-profit making registered charity (no.304908) so your support is vital for it's survival.

Lakenheath Playing Field Association • Registered Charity #304908

11.12.2025

Father Christmas did the rounds of the village collecting money for charity over 3 nights. They tried to include every street in the village.



13.12.2025



LAKENHEATH PLAYING FIELD ASSOCIATION

The Lakenheath Playing Field Association is pleased to announce that we have signed a new lease with Elveden Estate, running until the end of June 2051.

The renewed lease allows us to plan further ahead, undertake longer-term projects, and secures the future of Lakenheath Playing Fields and Lakenheath Pavilion for many more years to come.

The 25-year lease term is in line with previous agreements between the LPFA and Elveden Estate. Historically, leases have been for 25-30 year terms and have always been renewed at the end of their term; we do not expect this lease to be any different at its end.

18.12.2025

Thanks were given to everyone who came out in the cold and driving rain to sing some carols with members of the PTA and pupils to help raise funds for the new Lakenheath CP school. The money is to be used towards new outdoor play equipment.

Instead of sending cards, Fotolec, chose to donate that money to Lakenheath Community Primary School, supporting their fundraising for new outdoor playground facilities

Some of the team wrapped up warm and joined the school's community carol singing event, singing alongside pupils, parents and staff - in absolutely pouring rain. Cold, wet, and full of festive spirit!



19.12.2025

Year 6 gold pin children delivered Lakenheath Community Primary School Christmas cards around this village this week. They sang songs and wished every doorstep where they stopped a Merry Christmas.

They had a lovely surprise when they were invited into one home to sing Merry Christmas with hand bell ringers who were having a practice session.



The school is moving to a new building with excellent indoor spaces, but very limited outdoor play provision. Their fundraising will help create a safe, engaging playground where children can play, explore and develop important physical and social skills. This is considered an important part of the National Curriculum.

A huge thank you to everyone who organised such a brilliant community event - and a lovely reminder of what the festive season is really about.

23.12.2026

The 492nd FS Bolars, based at RAF Lakenheath, hosted their annual Christmas party in collaboration with the East Anglia Children's Hospices, providing gifts and holiday cheer to over 120 children and their families.

2 hampers were delivered to local families this morning



25.12.205

The East Anglia Daily Times advised that a \$264million project could transform RAF Lakenheath to enable it to become capable of storing nuclear weapons.

27.12.2025

Betty Milner celebrating her 104th Birthday today.

Rainfall for December was 56 mm.
Total rainfall for the year was 585 mm.

The year 2025 at the RSPB reserve, Lakenheath.

It is always difficult to know where to start when summarising an entire year on this large and complicated nature reserve - so much seems to happen, in terms of changes for the wildlife and for visitor infrastructure too. However, it seems only right to begin with the wildlife that lives here and to try to recount their dramas first.

We continued to see evidence of a changing world as newer species were seen in greater numbers and more frequently than before, continuing a trend that has been underway for a number of years. Following the establishment of Little Egret in the

1990's and Great White Egret in the 2000's in our countryside, Cattle Egret is now the newest member of the heron family to be making itself known on the reserve- and we only had to wait until 2 January in 2025 to spot our first ones of the year. They are a bit smaller than a little egret, and an easy way to tell them apart is their yellow bill - Little egrets have black bills. Great white egrets have yellow bills too but these are much larger- a little taller than a Grey Heron. Cattle Egrets are quite different in their behaviour- much more active, running around and making short dashes here and there looking for invertebrates, often following livestock around as they do so. They quite literally get under the hooves of our grazier's cattle or ponies in search of food. Our first record for this bird came in a bitterly cold spell in early 2020, and now we seldom go a couple of weeks without a sighting. They breed locally at the Ouse Washes, which is jointly managed by the RSPB and the WWT. Another new kid on the block made another appearance in 2025 - the White-tailed Sea Eagle. Sometimes the 'sea' is dropped from their name and with good reason- they aren't always found at the coast. Like our Red Kites and Buzzards, they are keen scavengers, clearing up roadkill and wildlife that dies of natural causes in our countryside, but they do like fish and research has shown that most White-tailed Sea Eagles end up living at coastal locations where they hone their hunting skills and catch more fish and seabirds there as they get older. Younger birds, dependent on carrion, are more likely to be seen roaming inland, such as over our reserve on 31 March 2025. This is not our first record - and we seem to be recording one or two per year these days. Young eagles won't begin to breed until they are 3-4 years old, and if successful they will rear a chick or two per year so their population in the UK should steadily increase.

Rarities in 2025

On 14 June we had our first ever record of a Caspian Tern on the Hockwold Washes (this area is leased (but not owned) by the RSPB and can be viewed from the riverbank of the Little Ouse) which stayed for two days. Caspian Terns are huge gull-like birds and the largest species of tern in the world, weighing over half a kilogram. They have a very obvious shaggy black crest on the top of their head, and a huge dagger-like red bill. Many of our volunteers and visitors enjoyed seeing this rarity on their local patch and we only wish it had stayed a little longer.

The Caspian Tern wasn't to be our last rarity of the year as our warden Haydn disturbed a Wryneck from the track down the middle of the reserve on 15 September. Wrynecks are a member of the woodpecker family and hunt for insects at ground level - each year the UK sees a few during the warmer months, especially as they pass through during their spring and autumn migrations. They have most incredible plumage - a mixture of stripes and streaks in grey, black and brown. When handled by a human or predator, they can twist and contort their neck up to 360 degrees - hence the name 'Wry' neck. Unfortunately for visitors it settled in an area which doesn't have public access but this was probably deliberate by the bird - it will have been quite undisturbed on the track there and able to hunt for bugs without worrying about having to move for people walking past.



The Wryneck and Bittern photos both belong to our warden Henry Cook.

Although we didn't have any spring records of Osprey, we were blessed with a visit in the autumn, 12 September, of a bird on 'passage' migration - moving south after the breeding season. It seemed interested in fishing along the Little Ouse but didn't stay for more than a day - it was last seen flying along the river towards Hockwold.

Altogether, we finished the year having recorded 139 different species of bird, seven more than the 132 in 2024. We also recorded 23 different species of butterfly and 21 different dragonflies, which is similar to previous years. For the third year running we recorded Norfolk Hawker dragonflies, and in their highest numbers yet. These are spreading at quite a speed now from their stronghold in the Norfolk Broads, which their population had contracted to following the historical drainage of the Fens. They have stunning bright green eyes which are obvious enough that you often notice them even when they are flying around at high speed.

A Dry Spring

Despite these rare and unusual creatures dropping by, at the start of the year there was no escaping the growing realisation that we were heading for another very dry spring. Our local ringer Simon did his rounds of our Barn Owl boxes (he holds the correct licence to disturb and handle the owls when necessary for their monitoring) and found either empty boxes or abandoned eggs. While we can never be sure why we were having the worst breeding season on record for Barn Owls, as a result of almost no rainfall between March and June, the vegetation was stunted and this could have impacted the numbers of Field Vole (who are vegetarian) who may not have had enough sustenance to breed themselves. Field Voles are a staple food item for most Barn Owls so this could have been behind their poor season. This wasn't just the situation at Lakenheath Fen but it also affected nesting pairs in nearby farmland and villages too. Towards the end of the year we began to spot Barn Owls on the reserve once more, after a summer of almost no sightings.

Despite the reserve's resilience to dry weather (it is designed to hold on to as much water as possible) several areas either dried out completely or came very close. For several weeks there was no water to see at Joist Fen Viewpoint, and just a trickle remained in the deepest part of the pool at New Fen. Birds like warblers, Cuckoo and Hobbies, who feed mostly on insects and who do not depend directly on the wetland itself seemed to have a good season, even as the reserve slowly dried out.

We know from our spring surveys that we had several Marsh Harrier nests and a record high of 17 booming Bitterns on the reserve, which was a very heartening discovery and which many of the volunteers were so pleased to hear- especially after their hard work on reserve management during the weekly work parties.

Our Cranes had a mixed season- for the second year running we had three pairs present here, but only one pair raised young- B2- and they managed to fledge both of their chicks. This variability is normal for a species which not only nests on the ground but takes around 16 weeks to incubate their eggs and then rear those hatchlings to flying stage- which is a long time for a ground predator to find them. We believe Pair A lost their eggs to predation and we think Pair C didn't attempt to nest- as far as we could tell.

Changes for visitors

Quite early on in the year, we took delivery of a brand-new, top of the range all-terrain mobility scooter- a Trampler (made by Beamer). An anonymous donation by a visitor who had used one elsewhere at other outdoor venues came as a delightful surprise - we had settled on the thought that our modest budget allocated to the visitor experience here would never come close to funding one. The Trampler (pictured) has been well used and enjoyed by any visitor with mobility difficulties (we don't judge or ask to see a blue badge) and has been hired once or twice per week in our warmer months, and less often when colder, as expected. We do not charge for its hire but do gladly accept donations from users which help us to fund its annual service, for which it is booked in for mid-March 2026. We take bookings by telephone or in-person and it can also be hired on the day if it isn't being used at the time. Another kind donation from the Breckland Society enabled us to replace the old and rotting wooden benches at New Fen Viewpoint with some smart new durable ones with metal legs. This was an important consideration for us in replacing them as timber (even treated) rots so quickly in our wet, peaty soil here.



Photo courtesy of Heidi Jones



Photo courtesy of a member of the work team

Other changes include the installation of a new dipping pond early in the year- which we hope will mean we don't have to stop offering pond dipping sessions as soon as the weather gets warm in May - our old dipping pond was very leaky and the contents used to drain away very quickly and soon became too low to safely lean over the ground-level boardwalk to dip nets into. Our new one is built into a raised surround- at the specific height recommended for wheelchair users, so we hope it

will be accessible for as many of our visitors as possible. It is also lined, and quite deep- so should hold water for longer. We filled it using water from the nearby Visitor Centre pond so that it came with plenty of pond creatures already in it!



Photo courtesy of Heidi Jones

Our work parties, led by our two wardens Henry and Haydn, also did a brilliant job of planting a new hedgerow of native shrubs, mainly Hawthorn and Blackthorn, leading from the paddock edge in Brandon Fen, skirting below the mound and finishing near the Visitor Centre. The young whips are protected by chicken wire on both sides to help prevent browsing deer from eating the young plants whilst they get established. We hope that in time, the berries and the shelter these shrubs provide will attract wildlife for visitors to enjoy as they sit atop the mound or walk around the area. It will take a few years to get going, so watch this space!

Aside from these bigger jobs, the weekly work parties did an excellent job (as always) of maintaining the network of paths around the site, repairing and maintaining the viewpoint structures and the views from them, and filling in potholes as and when they appear on driven tracks. Given that we have five members of paid staff and nearly 50 volunteers, I think it's clear to see what an impact they make in helping to keep Lakenheath Fen as a haven for wildlife and for the human visitors too. I look forward to reporting on the happenings here in 2026 in a years' time.

Written by Heidi Jones
Visitor Experience Officer, RSPB Lakenheath Fen

Hermione Brown
Recorder for the Parish of Lakenheath
During the year of 2025