Lound Parish Council Report 2021

Parish Report for Lound Village for the previous year

Parish Councillors:
Miles Thomas
Judith Hobbs
Paul Strowlger
Gayle Welsh
Jenny Ozinel
Peter Larcombe
Connor Moore

Parish Clerk :
Jill Brown

Local District Councillors
Paul Ashdown
Keith Robinson
James Reeder (out-going)
Edward Back (in-coming)

Meeting at 7.00pm, Monday 24th May at the Village Hall. Also on-line by Zoom by following the link on the Parish Website Meetings page. Please join us!

The Heath

Recent works in Lound Heath have been carried out to reduce the sycamore encroachment. The Heath is a great environment and is sanctuary to lots of wildlife. We are keen to ensure the ongoing success of this great place and so local wildlife conservationist Dan Goldsmith has been reducing the sycamore encroachment on behalf of the PC. The removal to date has been mostly around the bowl of The Heath in preparation for native tree planting scheduled for later in the year. There is still work to do as in recent years The Heath has become top heavy with sycamore. The trees are now infilling and taking away valuable light, and out competing the slower growing older trees. This would, if left, cause the other tree varieties to eventually die back and there would only be sycamore trees remaining. Similar works to improve the diversity in woodland have been carried out on the neighbouring Somerleyton Estate, and at Lound Lakes where Dan was originally involved with his work to create a balance some 15 years ago.' Peter Larcombe has also repaired the three footpath entrances to the heath and, with Enid, has markedly improved the paths in the area.

Our Parish Council Meeting on Monday July 5th at 7.30 will be held at the Heath to discuss its use.

Lound Allotments & Garages

The three Garages that are managed by the Parish Council have continued to have the same tenants. We have increased the rent by 10% this year as this has stayed the same for several years.The council would also like to thank Peter Larcombe for looking after the “forecourt”.

The allotments have also had their rents increased this year by 10%. The council has drafted a new agreement between the Council and the Users. There is a waiting list of approx. 6 potential holders.

Lound Poor’s Trust

The annual meeting of Trustees was held on 3rd November 2020 and the Christmas distribution to Lound householders of pension age was agreed. Income continues, primarily from the rental of land at Back Lane and Church Lane. The tenancy for the approximately 3 acre paddocks on Church Lane will expire in 2022. Anyone interested in renting should contact the Clerk (see below).

There will be 1 or 2 vacancies for Trustees in the near future. Anyone interested in helping to maintain this long established Charity, for the benefit of Lound residents should contact the Clerk (see below). The role is straightforward and requires little time commitment.

The Trustees are:
Rita Flatt – Chair
Paul Strowlger – Clerk (07811 935044)
Fr. Glen Brooks
Sally Popham
Miles Thomas

Lound Village Hall

It has been a difficult year with the Covid closing the Village Hall to users. However as we emerge from the pandemic various works are going on. The floor to the Gazebo is being concreted and the sides reinforced which should make the Gazebo more stable and should last a few more years.

The gateway to the Green, using Councillor Keith Robinson's Locality Grant, is being reinforced to help stop cars getting stuck there. Chris Baker will carry out the works. The front half will be reinforced under the grass with concrete blockwork and the other half will be done using a plastic grating. Once this is place we can start to use the green for more community events.
Garry Smith

Footpaths and Highways

There have been two litter picks in the last year which have been carried out while under Covid regulations This has been greatly helped by the PC's purchase of a litter picking kit for 10 users funded by the Locality Budget of Councillor Paul Ashdown

We have seen a great deal of use especially from visitors. Together with the bad weather some areas have been badly over used. The drains on The Street were flushed in September which has mitigated flooding along the street in heavy rain. We have reported other areas to Suffolk Highways. Thanks should go to the folk who cleared the drainage from the roads and paths to the ditches to help mitigate flooding..

We have had a lot of use of footpaths during the pandemic causing some degradation to the routes as well as users drifting off the route. The Parish Council has reported this to Suffolk Highways who are looking at the problem. The council is also looking at improving signage along these paths. Hopefully this work will be completed by the Autumn

St. John the Baptist Church

It has been a 'funny old year' – with very few services and almost no opportunity for meeting and worshipping together. Nevertheless, we have been busy with other things.

Last year the Annual Parish Church Meeting did not take place, as the country went into the first Covid lockdown just before it was due. It was a great grief to me personally, to have to close the Church just at a time when people needed it most. Although we arranged for the Church to be open for private prayer on Wednesdays and Sundays throughout lockdown, this was a poor substitute. That the Church was needed was evidenced by the visitors who signed the 'Test & Trace' form, and probably by as many who didn't – there were many occasions when candles had been lit without those concerned leaving any details.

At the beginning of lockdown, the Church joined forces with the Parish Council and the Village Hall Committee to form a village help group, delivered information leaflets throughout the Parish to make sure that people who required help, shopping, medicines, transport or just a chat and TLC, got what they needed, and so that nobody should feel isolated or left out. The response to our appeals for volunteers was staggering, and huge thanks to everyone who helped in any way.
When restrictions were eased in the summer, temporary arrangements allowing one Group service each week enabled us to have a service at Lound in each of July, August and October. Some ingenuity was needed by each of the churches in order to accommodate 40 – 50 people with social distancing, hand-gel, anti-bacterial wipes etc.. We then entered the second lockdown; the Remembrance Sunday service at Blundeston, which was permitted because it was held outside, was the only service between then and Christmas.

Wonderfully, we were able to hold Midnight Mass (albeit without singing), with the church fully dressed in flowers and candles. Christmas morning Mass, which was a first for us, was also well attended. Since March, as restrictions have eased once more, and the benefits of vaccination are being felt countrywide, we have been able to resume the pattern of one weekly service in the Group. We also held our usual Maundy Mass and Gethsemane Watch, and the Easter Sunday Mass, which was packed – notwithstanding social distancing! Because of ongoing repair work the building is now out of action. We had hoped to be able to resume normal service by the end of May, but it seems likely that this will now be in June.

There has been a programme of building works going on through the year, arising from the 2019 Quinquennial Inspection Report. Happily the disruption has mostly coincided with lockdown, so the timing has actually been quite fortunate. The

stairs inside the tower which lead to the roof, and which were crumbling, have been made good. They are probably only used once or twice a year, but were becoming dangerous. The refurbishment of the organ commenced before the first lockdown was lifted, but as singing is forbidden, we have only been able to use the temporary organ lent to us by the organ builders, two or three times for accompaniment to services. So apart from a large pile of organ innards taking up the back pews, the lack of organ has not been too inconvenient.
The re-rendering of the inside of the tower with lime plaster, which was brought forward to be completed before the organ re-build, has proved more of a problem because of the very tight working space and the need for the renders to work round all the electrics, which are suspended in a cradle under the organ-blower platform. The work has inevitably taken longer than anticipated. The plaster has to dry out through the summer, and the plan is to have all restored and the organ rebuilt in August/September.

Outside, the builders have also given the roof a 'once-over', replacing loose tiles, lime rendering on the abutments, and a broken gutter. The frosted bricks in the west buttress have been replaced. In the new churchyard two seats have now bee installed, one in memory of Anne Davis – this still awaits its plaque as the shop has been closed. The new graveyard trees and hedge are doing well despite the desperately dry weather last spring and summer. We did some supplementary planting last December to fill gaps, but the failure rate of only about 20 from the original plant of 850 was extremely good – 10 - 20% is the norm.
We have of course not been able to have any of our regular events or fund raisers. Like many institutions we have suffered considerable financial loss through the pandemic, but are still expected to pay our 'parish share' to the Diocese. We dipped into reserves last year, and will almost certainly have to do so again this year. Clearly we can't keep doing that, so we have to get really serious about increasing our income by every means possible. Amongst other ideas, we have in mind a season of organ recitals for next summer!

No weddings or funerals in church have been allowed, but there have been 3 interments of ashes, and our first burial in the new graveyard, with a simple graveside service.

As ever, my great appreciation and thanks go to all the helpers who undertake flower-arranging, catering, cleaning, gardening etc. This year they have mostly been on stand-by, but nevertheless they are always willing and happy to help when needed. It will be good when we can again undertake activities that also involve the village.

JH – 24.05.2021

Lound Lakes Report

Like for all of us, it has been a strange year on the Reserve, which has impacted with both positive and negatives for wildlife and visitors. What it hasn't done is stop the work to enhance the habitats and has actually increased the faceto-face Wardening.

A selection of the work done on the reserve includes Alder and Willow thinning at the waterside and in the reed bed, to stop further tree encroachment. Randomised felling was undertaken in the Plantations of Bloodman's Corner/Dorking Road and Lord Somerleyton Plantation during the winter to enhance understory growth. A section of old tall straggly roadside hedge (bowing over) with no base growth, has been laid to create new hedge line which has also given a fantastic view from the southern end of Hoblands footpath.

This was a Ragwort year with the grassland turning yellow and due to it being a hot spring, some of the wet fen plant species suffered, so our orchid shows were down. The annual grazing of Suffolk Red Poll cattle resumed in April with 23 on site. They were moved around the reserve and all fields were grazed during the year. All cattle off site by midDecember. All areas of botanically rich species have been cut and removed and a percentage of the remaining fields not grazed have been high topped according to prescription. Sight lines cut through the phragmites reeds were completed to encourage new growth and give viewing corridors.
To help our feathered friends we ploughed, harrowed and planted a wild bird cover crop in a 'Wildlife & Wardens' only location to encourage Finches and Buntings. A bird feeding station has been installed at the Barn which has been visited by 14 species to date. The Owl boxes were cleaned out, signs of Tawny owl nesting and one had a single Barn owl roosting. In the last year we have lost the two families of Mute swans from site and the majority has been due to them flying into the high powerlines, but we now have three new pairs of which, all are presently sat on eggs.

We have had no school visits during this year due to school restrictions, Covid regulations and closures. What has been identified is a greater number of children on site due to home educating and families getting out. This gave me and another volunteer Warden an opportunity for a more informal, interactive, and distanced method of educational learning. Delivery of identification (show and tell) was undertaken with family groups on site,

showing Slow worms under Fen Barn garden tin, Wasp spiders pointed out with a stick and any other flora and fauna we could make exciting or give a fact on. This was very beneficial and possibly had a greater impact and learning experience to our visitors.

Face to face engagement with visitors has been a key part, be it offering advice on walking routes, what to see and where, showing images of plants before flowering and asking them to check before putting that picnic blanket down or why we don't want BBQ's and not a place for a game of football, why your dog should be on a lead here, but did they know about the new off lead areas. An East Suffolk Council Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) now covers the Reserve, this is an enforcement associated to dogs on leads and picking up poo.

Fencing has been undertaken on site and recycled plastic furniture of 2 bench seats and 3 picnic tables have been purchased and installed. During Covid lockdown the site leaflet was revamped, and map redrawn. This has now been printed and available in dispensers within the car park and at other Suffolk Wildlife Trust (SWT) visitor centres around the County.

From mid-May and following some relaxation of social distancing the site went from quiet to manic, with visitor numbers greater than anyone (volunteers of over 15 years) could remember. This brought difficulties as most treated the Reserve as a park, with no respect. We had lots of litter, BBQ's, open fires, swimming, large groups, trespass over fences and post and wire fences being removed to gain access to areas closed to public. Myself, my volunteer Warden and other SWT Wardens were patrolling the site to deal with the anti-social behaviour and also to be the friendly Warden face, offering the usual advice to those that weren't revelling but had been told about the site or seen it on social media that were advertising how nice it was. A decision was made by Essex & Suffolk Water as owners, to put in place a security contract, for a guard to cover the site daily. This along with Police attendance and usual warden patrolling slowly lowered incidents. I cannot thank my regular volunteers enough, following relaxation of Covid restrictions and completion of risk assessments/managing group sizes; they gave hours of time on random days when they could spare an hour plus to catch up and get on top of the Ragwort issue. They were the first SWT volunteering group in the County to reform after lockdown restrictions had been relaxed. This is a small Reserve with a strong few, who even with the early lock down together with the second and third have undertaken 1331.5 hours of volunteering.
This is only a very short report, if anyone would like more detailed information, please contact me on lound.lakes@suffolkwildlifetrust.org
Andrew Hickinbotham Lound Lakes Warden

Pandemic Provision

During the pandemic a working group from the Church, Village Hall and Parish Council was set up to help see parishioners were not neglected during this time. Sally Popham should be particularly thanked for her weekly information sheet which kept spirits up and people informed about the support and services available. I hope that as the PAndemic recedes all the services will return to normal.

Northern Parishes and Councillor Support

The Northern Parish Group has suspended their meetings during the Pandemic which is a shame because it was useful to know how other parishes operate and work to support each other.

Our three district councillors Paul Ashdown, James Reeder and Keith Robinson have given valuable support and advice and we would like to thank them for their unstinting efforts to help the Parish. We would say goodbye and wish good luck to James Reeder who leaves to support Gunton and welcome Edward Back in his place

Buses

The Public Bus service to the village ceased in Oct 2019. After investigating different possibilities Councillor James Reeder brokered a deal between users andLowestoft Rugby Club who are running a weekly service from the village to Tesco's in Gunton and return. This was paused during the Covid 19 Pandemic and is now being trialled again with the new rules. Lowestoft Rugby Club is to be thanked for their generosity in providing this service as is Jenny Ozinel for organising things in Lound

Lound Mardle

Thanks to Anna and Rob Moyse have looked after the area over the last year. It has become very popular over the pandemic and had a great deal of use from both villagers and visitors to the village.
The Village sign broke at the base in early Autumn which was repaired by Chris Baker and Stuart James and should be far more robust.
A bid was written for a display board to enhance the visitor experience and Councillor Paul Ashdown has provided the funding from the local well-being budget whilst Mark and Judith have been working on the design and this should be placed soon.

Blacksmith's Loke

The surface Blacksmith's Loke was successfully renovated by Sam Perks in August 2020. This was long overdue and was enabled by Locality Funding from Councillors Keith Robinson and James Reeder, the Parish Council and all the residents of Blacksmith's Loke. Hopefully it is a more pleasant experience walking along it!

Lound with Ashby Herringfleet and Somerleyton Neighbourhood Plan

The Steering Group are pleased to announce that the Regulation 14 consultation documents have been submitted to East Suffolk Council.
The final documents can be viewed at
http://lound.onesuffolk.net.neighbourhood-plan/neighbourhood-plan-regulation-15-documents

The plan will now go forward for further comments from the public and interested parties before the examination stage and eventually a referendum. Once it has been approved it will become a material consideration in all planning applications until 2036.
In these difficult times we would like to thank all who took part in this important community engagement whether by written responses' email or Zoom meetings.

This has been a very extensive process and I would like to thank the steering group for their work and particularly Mike Brackenbury, Paul Strowger and Miles Thomas for their work on the final documents.
I would also like to acknowledge the support of both Parish Councils, East Suffolk Planning Officers, Councillor Paul Ashdown, the Somerleyton Estate and our planning consultant Graham Nourse.
The group also recognise the dedicated contribution given by Louis Smith from the outset until his health prevented him from participating – a sad loss to us all.

Jenni Livingstone

Parish Council Chair's Report

This is the first opportunity we have had to acknowledge the enormous amount of work done for the Village by Louis Smith, our previous Chairman. I don't think we can ever match his efforts but I feel that as a Council we are trying to adopt the ethos he created in trying to improve the Parish and life for all Residents.

It has been two years since we met for the last Annual Parish Meeting which is why we are producing a paper report prior to the meeting as there is so much to report.

The main projects I hope have been covered in the preceding pages. Despite the difficulties caused by the Pandemic the Parish Council has continued to operate by using "Zoom" which has had its challenges but also some things have been made easier. We have taken the opportunity to use Technology to improve our communications and record keeping especially around Audit time! As restrictions ease we are hoping to host Face to Face meetings involving the public. The first will be Monday 5 July at 7.30 when we will be meeting at the Heath which will be the focus of our discussions. There will also be public meeting in late June, early July to discuss proposals from Somerleyton Estate who propose to build on the land between the Village Maid and Mardle House and re-wild an area to the West of the Street.

I would lie to thank my fellow councillors in stepping up to help with various projects and also to the Local Councillors who really have supported the Parish Council and the Village over the last two years.

Miles Thomas