

Chairman's report for 2012

As we all know 2012 was an exceptional year for our country and, in many ways, it was an even more exciting and rewarding year for the Conservation Society.

Committee Matters

First of all, however, I would like to say how sorry we are that Margaret Dowding has decided to step down from the Committee for family reasons. She joined us in 2004 when her husband John died and she has been a huge support and help in very many ways, not least in looking after the Society's publications.

I am pleased to welcome to the Committee, John Partridge, who brings with him a wealth of experience having set up a similar organisation in his previous local area.

We would very much welcome a volunteer from Wiston to be co-opted onto the Committee. A Wiston resident would be extremely useful in monitoring planning applications there and we feel the balance of the Committee is too weighted towards Nayland at present.

Lot 3

In May we purchased two thirds of Lot 3 of Thrift Farm from Buntings in co-operation with the Anchor Inn. The land will remain as a separate grazing area and may be increased in size should the Anchor not require its allocation for car parking purposes.

Planning

We continue to monitor planning applications and where appropriate, either support, object or state our concerns.

Horkesley Park:

A further application has been made by Bunting & Sons and a Colchester Borough Council planning meeting to consider the application is scheduled for 28th February 2013 at 6.00pm in the Charter Hall, Colchester.

Summerhouse and the River frontage

The proliferation of summerhouses and hard landscaping along the Bear Street river frontage has been raised with Babergh Council. However planning restrictions have recently been relaxed to allow development in rear gardens, inspite of the fact that in this case, they could be considered in the front of the buildings – facing the river. The problem is that the river is not deemed a highway as it is not technically navigable and so the gardens are treated as being at the rear and not subject to restrictions as to size and location.

Meadow

A path was created in the wrong place due to the riverside public footpath not been cut at the appropriate time while Andora was laid up in the late spring. The situation was remedied and the EA, Dedham Vale Project were consulted with regard to a fence and gates being erected to stop walkers going over the wild flower belt. However, this would have been very costly and unsightly, so we are having a trial this year and roping off the sensitive area. If the notices are ignored again, we will have to reconsider the fencing option. It is sad that a few people are spoiling what should be a wonderful habitat

for the benefit of wildlife and our local community. We are grateful to Trevor Street for cutting the hedges for us in December.

John Constable sketch

In early July we were alerted to the fact that an original sketch by John Constable, of the St. James Church reredos, was due to be auctioned at Christies. After some discussion within the committee, it was decided to bid for it. We were successful and the picture is now framed, kept in a secure place and displayed at our public meetings. Postcards have been produced and a copy hangs in the church together with the background to the acquisition of the sketch. We are very grateful to Robert Holden for alerting us to the forthcoming auction and to Andora for her hard work over this.

K6 BT Kiosk

The K6 BT Kiosk from Wiston was re-instated in Bear Street and given a wonderful makeover by John Padget. It was opened as a book and magazine exchange in September and we hope it will be well used. We are delighted to have brought back a K6 box to the original spot in Bear Street where it is an iconic part of the street scene.

We are very grateful to John Parsonson for supervising the project and for obtaining the replica *telephone* glass panels.

The Village Test Pit Dig

And finally, perhaps the largest project ever undertaken in Nayland happened over 3 days in early October, when Dr. Carenza Lewis and her team came to supervise the digging of 34 test pits all round the village. Some pieces of Roman pottery were found and a lot of medieval pottery which proves, according to the archaeologists, that Nayland was not affected by the Black Death. Over 100 people of all ages and from all parts of the community, together with some outside volunteers with previous digging experience were involved over the 3 days. A pottery expert analysed samples as they were brought in to the Carvers' Barn. A wash-up meeting will be held on 29th April by Carenza Lewis here, in the village hall. This project would not have happened without Andora's hard work and encouragement in persuading the archaeologists that Nayland was an ideal place to dig. We are grateful to Managing a Masterpiece and the Heritage Lottery Fund for financing the dig.

Membership

We welcomed Barry Wakefield as our life President at the AGM in March. We are delighted that he has agreed to take on this role which was previously held by Jock Neighbour. Membership continues to grow with several new members this year.