

Nayland with Wissington Conservation Society
Registered Charity no 268104

Chairman's Report for 2020

When the year started no-one could have foreseen the extraordinary events that would affect everyone's lives so deeply in 2020. Your Society was severely affected but it still managed to perform many of its functions and even managed to squeeze in the AGM in March just before the first imposition of a lockdown.

COMMITTEE: I regret that during the year we lost two stalwart members from the committee. The first to leave us was Tom Gardiner whose assistance in planning matters will be sorely missed. In December our Honorary Secretary Jill Slater also decided to resign. Jill has been the brains behind the management of Open Gardens for many years and her loss to the Society is considerable. On behalf of the Society I thank them both for their huge input and support over the years. Jill's departure in particular impacts upon the smooth running of the Society and we are anxious to find a replacement with IT skills as soon as possible. If anyone would like to have a go at the position on a trial basis please let me know.

The current membership of the committee is as follows: - Chairman Mike Hunter, Vice Chairman Martin Wright, Committee members John Partridge, Lucy Carpenter, Suzanne Cullen, Frank Warren and David Heigham, our Hon. Treasurer, all of whom are offering themselves for re-election in 2021 -2022. I extend the thanks of the Society's members to the committee who, as usual, have done an excellent job over the past year.

Our President Barry Wakefield has unfortunately suffered from ill-health and we wish him and his wife Elizabeth well. Our web site manager Lorraine Brooks has continued to provide invaluable support to the Society especially during this difficult period and I express the Society's thanks to her.

OPEN GARDENS: The decision to cancel Open Gardens in 2020 was taken with a heavy heart but the suggestion of a Virtual Open Gardens by Society members Simon and Liz Carter helped to alleviate the gloom. 32 residents agreed to participate in the scheme whereby photographs of the gardens were taken during the period of the 1st to the 7th of June. These photos were then displayed in the Society's web page and were very well received by both Society members and the public. It is hoped that Open Gardens will once again take place on the 13th of June 2021.

MEETINGS: Your committee held eleven meetings in 2020 of which nine were conducted via Zoom. As previously stated we managed to conduct our AGM at Nayland Village Hall in March when Jules Pretty gave an excellent talk on the topic of Climate Change. All other speaker meetings were cancelled as a result of the Covid restrictions. However, we managed to arrange a speaker meeting in November via Zoom when Rick Lewis spoke on the subject of Timber Framed buildings and carpentry in the 15th to 17th Century. The Society will hold the 2021 AGM and all future speaker meetings on Zoom until such time as we are permitted to return to meeting in our Village Hall.

SWIFT NESTING BOX PROJECT: Society member David Lowe suggested that the Society should lead a project which involved the installation of nest boxes for swifts. The number of

swifts in the UK is diminishing largely as a result of loss of habitat. Residents were invited to participate in the scheme whereby they would pay for the purchase of the box and the Society would meet the cost of installation. On the 1st of July local building contractor Tom Lowe and his team installed 31 swift boxes onto 19 houses and the local primary school. With luck next spring will see some new residents in the village.

FOOTPATH IMPROVEMENT: The Stour Valley Path progresses through the village from the A134 down a steep slope alongside the tunnel through which the river flows. The Land Company had the idea of improving the path but was unable to pursue the project as it was outside the charitable objects of the company. Accordingly, the Society offered to step in and obtained grants from the Nayland with Wissington Community Council and the Dedham Vale and Stour Valley Project to cover the cost of the installation of steps and a handrail to facilitate the descent from the A134. The Society expresses its thanks to our contractor Steve Barnes for doing an excellent job.

AIRSPACE OVER THE DEDHAM VALE: The reduction in commercial flights over our village was one of the few benefits arising from the prolonged lock down however after a quiet period the number of flights increased substantially. Your Society engaged in correspondence with the company controlling flight routes (“NATS”) and has sought a reduction in the extent of overflying.

NARCISSI PLANTING ADJACENT TO THE A134: Following an idea from committee member Suzanne Cullen the Society has planted 500 naturalised narcissi on the northern side of Horkesley Road where it meets the A134. With luck evidence of this planting should be seen before the next edition of the Community Times.

PLANNING: Your committee made representations on 12 planning applications during 2020. The planning register is reviewed every week by committee members and substantial consideration is given to every application. In addition, the Society responded to the Government’s White Paper “Planning for the Future” which proposed a fundamental change to the planning system and a general presumption in favour of development. The Society was pleased to hear that in view of the huge negative response to the White Paper the Government has agreed to revisit its proposals.

LAND COMPANY AND THE MEADOW: Members will recall that the Nayland with Wissington Land Company was created to acquire and hold the Conservation meadow, which abuts the river and a smaller area of field, which abuts Horkesley Road. The Land Company has its own board of directors and trustees and is an entirely separate organisation from the Society. However, as the funding for the purchase of these fields was raised by the Society members it is appropriate to mention the Land Company’s activities in this report. The board have been exceptionally busy and have increased the management of the two meadows substantially. Most recently they have organised the laying and coppicing of the double hedge dividing the meadows and have also erected a seat (funded by the Community Council) at the south west corner of the main field.

COURT KNOLL PROJECT: The Covid 19 restrictions prevented any meaningful work on the project save that radio carbon dating of wood recovered from trench 1 has taken place and the results have suggested a 9th century date which gives a strong possibility that the roof timbers were mid 10th Century. This is earlier than had been expected. It may be that the roof has been reused from another church on the site but even so it would have been a carved and elaborate roof

from a significant building. This date is entirely contemporary with the will of Ælfgar and the references in his will thought to relate to Stoke by Nayland may now be redirected to our own village. A grant application has been submitted to cover the cost of further radio carbon tests.

FILM OF NAYLAND: Members will be aware that the Society has decided to appoint local cameraman Stuart Howells to make a short film of Nayland. Ten Society members have agreed to fund the cost of making the film and Society members Wendy Sparrow and Peter Drew have agreed to write the script and narrate the film respectively. It is hoped that the film will be complete by the end of spring 2021.

MEMBERSHIP: The Subscription remains £8 single and £12 double and the use of Standing Orders is encouraged to facilitate the collection of subscriptions. Life Membership remains £30 single and £45 double. Membership currently stands at about 260.

Finally, the Data Protection legislation requires that our records are dealt with in a secure manner and everyone who receives emails from the Society is reminded on a regular basis that if they wish to be deleted from our data base we shall be happy to oblige. For the avoidance of doubt our membership list is not made available to anyone or any organisation outside of the Society.

Mike Hunter
January 2021