

Nayland with Wissington Conservation Society

Registered Charity no 268104

Chairman's Report for 2021

The Society adapted quickly to the second year of the Covid 19 restrictions and although Open Gardens had to appear as a virtual event for the second year running we were able to restore some of our meetings and other activities to pre-pandemic levels.

COMMITTEE: We almost managed to get through the year without the loss of a committee member but in December, David Heigham, who has been our treasurer for the past twelve years or so, decided to offer his resignation, which was most reluctantly accepted. David has undertaken a highly professional and reliable service to the society and will be sorely missed. We wish him well in his retirement!

I am pleased to announce that during the year three new members joined the committee. Mandy Cook, long-time resident of Fen Street accepted the task of Secretary and Colette O'Shea, who only arrived in the village within the past two years, agreed to join the committee. Colette's partner Richard Evans also agreed to take on the role of Treasurer, so I am delighted to advise members that the committee has returned to full strength.

The current membership of the committee is as follows: - Chairman Mike Hunter, Vice Chairman Martin Wright, Secretary Mandy Cook, Committee members John Partridge, Lucy Carpenter, Suzanne Cullen, Frank Warren, Colette O'Shea and Richard Evans, our Hon. Treasurer, all of whom are offering themselves for re-election in 2022 -2023. I extend the thanks of the Society's members to the committee who, as usual, have done an excellent job over the past twelve months.

During the year we received the sad news that our President Barry Wakefield passed away. Barry will be remembered for his tremendous support to the Society both as Chairman and President and we extend our condolences to Elizabeth and her family.

John Alexander, our previous Chairman has agreed to accept the office of Life President and we welcome him to this position.

As usual 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: For the second year running Open Gardens had to take place virtually with 22 residents submitting photographs of their gardens for display on the Society's web site. Plans are already afoot for the return of the real event on the 12th of June this year.

MEETINGS: Your committee held eleven meetings in 2021 of which the majority were conducted via Zoom. After an initial hiccup our AGM took place via Zoom in March when Jeremy Greenwood gave an excellent talk on the artist John Nash and his life at Wormingford. In June Peter Tatum spoke via Zoom on the subject of the Stour Valley path and at last we were able to return to the village hall for a meeting in person in October when John Taylor spoke on "How to live Net Zero in rural Suffolk" which turned out to be a most thought provoking subject. Our final meeting in November brought about one of our largest attendances for years when Simon Hooton gave a talk on the subject of Swifts.

RESTORATION OF THE COURT KNOLL SIGN: In 1978 the Society arranged for an information board to be erected on Court Knoll, Nayland's listed ancient monument. Over the years the sign had deteriorated and the committee decided that a restoration was in order. It has now been re-erected in gleaming condition and most appropriately it was unveiled by two of the founder committee members, Wendy Sparrow and Linda Clapham.

FILM OF NAYLAND: The film of the history of Nayland, paid for by twelve members of the Society and filmed by Nayland resident Stuart Howells was completed during the year and its premiere was held in the village hall at the beginning of our November speaker meeting where it was very well received. It can still be seen by clicking on to the link on the Society's web site. Our thanks are also extended to Wendy Sparrow, who wrote the script and to Peter Drew who undertook the narration.

NATIONAL GRID PYLON PROPOSALS: It became clear during the year that National grid were considering the installation of two additional lines of pylons alongside the existing pylons on the %ß°æ 1ß.#1#Ö 1~°.#oute. The new pylons will be of far greater height and the existing pylons will be retained. Objections were filed by the Society in the initial public consultation and the committee of the Society continues to keep a close eye on developments.

PLANNING: Your committee made representations on nine planning applications during 2021. The planning register for the parish of Nayland with Wissington is reviewed every week by committee members and substantial consideration is given to every application.

WATER LEVELS ON THE STOUR: The regular cessation of any flow over the weir on the river Stour resulted in regular contact with the Environment Agency to ascertain the cause of the problem. It appears that occasional heavy rainfall in areas up-river were causing water surges which triggered the flood relief channel gates. The gates are programmed to return to their usual position after an extended period and as the water surge was only for a limited time this resulted in the main flow continuing through the channel even though it had reverted to its normal level. This had the consequence of lowering the level of the main river with the resultant drying up of the weir. Sadly, it seems no action can be taken to remedy this problem.

OTHER ACTIVITIES: As usual the Spring Footpath Walk took place on the first May bank holiday and Chris Hunt took members on a memorable circular walk around Boxford and Groton. In conjunction with the Parish Council two litter picks were undertaken, one in April the other on October and Society members also participated in the two village hall gardening sessions.

LAND COMPANY AND THE MEADOW: Members will recall that the Nayland with Wissington Land Company was created to acquire and hold ownership of 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. It has been another very active year for the Land Company with the completion of the hedge laying project which included many training days for volunteers who were interested in obtaining this ancient skill. Additionally, the company is constructing five stag beetle log habitats (the stag beetle is the largest insect species in the UK) and a box for an owl has already been erected.#

The Land Company is endeavouring to increase its profile to ensure that the meadow becomes a focus for nature, biodiversity, ecology and environmental others. If you have any thoughts or comments in this connection please don't hesitate to contact Martin Wright (our Vice Chairman and the Chairman of the Land Company). #

COURT KNOLL PROJECT: Unfortunately, Covid 19 restrictions continue to prevent any meaningful work on the project although some that radio carbon dating has continued. It is to be hoped that some momentum can be recovered in the next twelve months.

MEMBERSHIP: The subscription rates have remained the same for many years so your committee decided to raise the subscription rates to £8 single and £12 double for annual membership, £40 for single and £60 for double Life Membership. 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 2022