

Report for Bawdsey Parish 2017



2017 was very eventful on a number of fronts, some positive and others more worrying.

On the plus side, Bawdsey Manor was bought in April by the adventure holiday firm PGL (Parents Get Lost) for £5 million. They operate a residential outdoor education centre for schools and provide summer camps and EFL programmes in the summer. They lost no time in opening their doors and welcomed young people from June-September. This entailed the creation of 100 jobs including management, maintenance, ground works, housekeepers and activity instructors.



Furthermore, as owners of the frontage of Bawdsey Quay including the jetty, they have allowed the continuation of the Bawdsey-Felixstowe ferry, the Boathouse cafe and the Bawdsey Haven Yacht Club boat park.

On site, they have put in planning applications for new activity areas including hard standing for tents and zip-wire towers. They also intend to dredge the River Jordan to allow boating activities to take place.

A meeting between PGL and the parish council took place at the end of 2017 and councillors were pleased with the openness and the desire to cooperate with the village which was evidenced.

Bawdsey Quay Amenity Site: The long cherished project of building a visitor centre and cafe on the amenity site has had to be abandoned due to uncertainty surrounding the project and SCDC's decision not to pass the site to the parish council as promised. However, the public toilets on the site, closed for the past few years, are being reinstated and the Parish Council has been instrumental in putting in a new mains water supply. Before this, the water and sewage supply was dependent on Bawdsey Manor.

In December the stagnant pond on the amenity site was dredged and overhanging trees which had obscured the sunlight were lopped, making the pond viable. Planting will take place in the spring of 2018 making it an attractive site to sit by. Money for this project was provided by the Tesco Bags of Help scheme.

Car parking charges may be instituted following a car park consultation by SCDC.

A tin chapel on land adjacent to the amenity site and owned by PGL may be restored if the East Suffolk Building Preservation Trust can get grants to do so. If successful, this could possibly be used as an information centre.

Life on the Deben Film: Bawdsey also featured in the film *Life on the Deben* presented by John MacCarthy and directed by Tim Curtis. The film describes the course of the river from its source, through East Suffolk to the estuary and shingle bar at Bawdsey/Felixstowe Ferry. Both Peter and Mary Wain were interviewed and featured towards the end of the film - Mary in her role as Chair of Bawdsey Radar Trust and owner of one of the former RAF houses on Bawdsey Quay; Peter, as an expert on medieval Bawdsey and the former port of Gosford.

Bawdsey Quay: On January 1st the Deben Dip raised £245 for the East Anglian Air Ambulance. The Ferry was running and together with the sale of mice pies and mulled wine raised £765 for the Felixstowe Volunteer Coastal Patrol Service.



An all-year-round dial-a-ride ferry was instituted in October. Normally the ferry operates between Easter and the end of September. This measure is meant to encourage tourism particularly as a coastal footpath is being developed around the coast of Britain and the ferry will be part of this route.

Coastal Matters: Perched on the end of the Deben Peninsula, Bawdsey is very vulnerable to coastal erosion both at Bawdsey Quay and at East Lane. Measuring the level of the shingle banks takes place every week by volunteers, and massive changes in beach levels below Bawdsey Manor and along the mouth of the estuary have been noted. Collecting data is very important in assessing how the coast should be managed in the future. The Parish Council along with the Deben Estuary partnership liaises with the Environment Agency and SCDC's Coastal Team. Plans for an Enabling Development to fund flood protection measures for Flood Cell 1 along the Deben between Bawdsey and Shottisham is progressing.

Public Space Protection Order consultation: This SCDC consultation in September which proposed prohibiting dogs off leads from a stretch of beach from Shingle Street to East Lane, Bawdsey, awakened a lot of anger in residents. The measure was to protect nesting birds on scrapes on the lagoons. However dog walkers felt they would be criminalised needlessly. The parish council decided to ask for a review and the PSPO was withdrawn for this area.

Bawdsey Radar Trust Museum: Following the successful bid of £1.4 million from the Heritage Lottery Fund in 2015, the Trust has transformed the Grade 2 listed transmitter block, home to the radar museum, into a modern facility with a new interactive exhibition. It is now no longer on the buildings-at-risk list.

The new museum opened for a few days in November with a special preview for local residents. The launch of the new exhibition will take place after Easter 2018.

At the end of November a book launch was held at the museum. "The Magic Ear" by Jenny Webb is a children's book about Bawdsey, its radar story and its special environment as a village at the end of the peninsula facing the North Sea.



Jenny Webb and Mary Wain (Chair of the Radar Trust)

Shingle Street: This hamlet situated a mile along the coast from Bawdsey, falls anomalously under Bawdsey Parish although it is much nearer Hollesley by road. It is a quirky settlement with many former London residents. In September, there was an Open House event at Beach House, a distinctive modernist house designed in the 1960s by Suffolk-born architect John Penn (1921-2007). Profits went to the Shingle Street Settlement which raises funds for sea protection.



In May Shingle Street was also chosen to be one of the settings for the BBC drama "A Child in Time" starring Benedict Cumberbatch, from the novel of the same name by Ian McEwan. Marine Villa was transformed into a public house. The drama was enhanced by the discovery of a badger sett beneath the only road into and out of Shingle Street which could have caused the road to collapse. Natural England said the repair work could not begin until July 1 when the protected badger breeding season ended. Highways therefore had to put in a temporary road ramp to ensure traffic access until that time.

The Johnsons of Marine Villa celebrated 50 years of living in Shingle Street and held a big party in the summer with a marquee.

Scottish Power Windfarms: East Anglia One and Three: Bawdsey is the landfall site for cables from two offshore wind farms, East Anglia One and Three. The cables will come ashore on the eastern side of the peninsula and thence be laid under the Deben using HDD (Horizontal Directional Drilling), continuing through to the sub-station at Bramford; a number of villages will be disrupted by these works.

The work commenced in February 2017 and has involved up to 400 archaeologists with about 250 working at any given time as well as 20 members of the Ipswich and District Metal Detector club.

Archaeological work preceded the start of this project and for almost a year, two fields on either side of Ferry Road were full of archaeologists in hard hats and high viz jackets. The finds from both sites were displayed in the village hall in August.



The site on the right hand side of the road adjacent to the River Deben (west) has revealed Roman and Anglo Scandinavian artefacts as well as evidence of medieval (12th-14th century) activity including ships 'clench' nails.

The site on the opposite side of the road (the seaward side) revealed Roman, Anglo- Saxon and Anglo Norman artefacts. Part of the site demonstrated evidence of multiple occupations starting in the Bronze Age, continuing in to the Iron Age and extending into the Romano British, Saxon and Medieval periods.



Finds exhibited at the Archaeological Open Day at the VH in August

The village is not looking forward to 2018 when up to 100 movements of Scottish Power related traffic will be coming through the village on a daily basis. Special lay-bys have been constructed to allow for vehicles to pass one another but the noise and mud that will inevitably ensue is a great worry especially as farm traffic is getting heavier and farm vehicles longer.

New Village Sign for Bawdsey: Every village on the Deben Peninsula has its own distinctive decorative village sign except for Bawdsey. Local amateur artist Mark Dovey, also a councillor, designed an original sign in the form of a stylised radar transmitter tower. It was showcased at the Annual Parish Meeting in April but has since proved somewhat

controversial with the traditionalists fighting a rearguard action. It remains to be seen whether it will see the light of day in its proposed form.



Bawdsey Village Hall and Recreation Ground: Even though Bawdsey has under 300 residents, (280 on the electoral roll), and has a high number of second homes, it is a very active village with its own village hall and a recreation ground with children's playing area and tennis courts. Sadly the cricket club folded a number of years ago but Saxon Football Club started playing its league matches on the playing field which otherwise is only used for the annual Fete. This only lasted for a few months due to external factors.

The hall is used throughout the year. Winter lectures are put on by the Bawdsey Haven Yacht Club from January- March. Coffee and Chat group meets every month. Craft Group meets bi-monthly and attracts people from far and wide. A monthly food market begins in March and continues into the autumn. A new venture has been a Chair-based Exercises class which has proved very popular since it began in April.

Events:

February: Jumble Sale in aid of the VH and St Mary's Church raised £315

April: Easter egg Hunt raised £105 for Save the Children

May: Annual fete on Whit Monday raised £4,500 which went towards insurance costs

June: Open Studios with Sophie Cook (ceramics) and Mark Dovey (mixed media). He had Open Garden too which raised £220 for the Elizabeth Hospice

September: Village Garage Sale and Car Boot raised £175

October: Harvest Supper

November: Bonfire night at East Lane

December: Coffee and Chat Christmas meal. Christmas Craft Fair.

Bawdsey CEVA Primary School: In order to ensure viability in the years to come, the new head teacher Katie Butler has instituted a Mother and Baby and Toddler group on Fridays; a Nursery Class for over three year olds and a Before and After School Club. OAP Lunches are held monthly.

The 80 or so pupils on the roll acquit themselves very well in local competitions. Martha Rankin was chosen as a finalist for the East of England in the British Gas Smarter Power competition with her cartoon strip showing how to use a smart meter. A team from the school got into the finals of the Farming School of the Year at the Suffolk Show. The school also hosted the World's Biggest Coffee Morning in October in aid of MacMillan Cancer Support. The whole of KS2 sang at the Snape Maltings Schools Concert in March.

St Mary's Church: In February a commemorative medal of Edith Cavell was stolen from the church and has not been recovered. The aunt and uncle of the WW1 heroine nurse lived at Bawdsey Hall and Edith often visited them, hence the connection.

Flower Festival on the theme of *Books in Bloom* took place in July and raised £595. The tower was open and visitors enjoyed panoramic views from the top.

The Suffolk Historic Churches ride raised funds for the church in September.

Harvest Festival, Remembrance Day and Carol concerts are an integral part of the church calendar.



View from the top of Bawdsey Church

A special 80th birthday: Long-time Bawdsey resident, former Chair of BPC and lay reader Lydia Calvesbert celebrated her 80th birthday on 5th November. Parking on The Street was bumper to bumper and a special party was held at the village hall going on all afternoon and evening.

Housing: Rural housing is a nationwide problem especially in coastal villages with a high proportion of second homes. There are no affordable homes in Bawdsey and house prices are high. The government has this year put aside money to target the most affected coastal communities in Suffolk including Bawdsey. Under the auspices of SCDC district councillor, Christine Block, a Community Land Trust is in the process of being set up to manage housing on the peninsula and to develop more affordable housing to rent.

Orwell Housing has purchased a strip of land abutting The Street and plans to build 12 homes, eight of which would be for rent with four sold at market price. No formal planning application had been put in by December 2017 but a consultation with residents is to take place.

Saffron Housing has paid an option fee on the School Meadow site behind the school which will last for a year. They are willing to liaise with the village to amend the plans for 13 homes which are not deemed to be suitable for locals.

Only three houses were sold in 2017: A one-bedroom end of terrace for £165,000; a three-bedroom detached house on The Street for £240,000 which will need updating and a four bedroom house on the Manor Farm Estate for £375,000.

Highways: This topic has proved to be the most controversial one for the parish council and the one which raises the most hackles. As most villages are experiencing, the 30mph speeding limit is often disregarded and farm vehicles are getting heavier and longer. In order to tackle speeding, stickers saying "Please slow down in our village" were purchased by the PC and residents put them on their dustbins. Discussions have taken place as to whether to buy a SID device which flashes motorists' speed but councillors have deferred a decision for the time being.

Austerity is hitting all departments of the county council and the Highways department is no exception. It has been noticed that repairs to potholes and broken up sections of the road are not taking place and that verges are left uncut. Councillors have had to cut vegetation around 30mph repeater signs to make them visible, unblock grips and clean signs. The village sign at the start of the village has been knocked several times and now has one leg and is looking very battered. There is little optimism that things will improve in 2018.



Jenny Webb, January 2018

