

Report for Bawdsey Parish 2018

2018 was a memorable year and Bawdsey like many parishes commemorated the hundredth anniversary of the Armistice marking the end of World War 1 with a variety of creative projects. Bawdsey residents raised funds to clean up its war memorial with outstanding results. Many of the names of the fallen had become illegible due to an overgrowth of lichen. The stonework was cleaned up and the names newly incised in time for the poppy-laying ceremony on Sunday 11th November. It is now on Historic England's list of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest.



Before and after

Pupils from Bawdsey Primary School visited the churchyard of St Mary's on Friday November 9th and located the graves of those who died in WW1. Paul Martin from the Royal British Legion led the remembrance.



Interested people also worked with neighbouring parishes on *The Poppy Project* and ladies from the Bawdsey Craft Group created a stunning tapestry of commemorative panels. All art work was displayed at the Suffolk Punch Trust in November.



Bawdsey Quay Amenity Site: The long cherished project of building a visitor centre and cafe on the amenity site was abandoned in 2017. However, the public toilets on the site, have been reinstated and will open in 2019. The East Suffolk Building Preservation Trust undertook to spearhead an attempt to renovate a Victorian tin chapel on land adjacent to the amenity site, owned by PGL, and was awarded a grant of £30,000 in December to undertake a feasibility study in 2019. If successful, the chapel could be used as an information centre.



Chapel in early twentieth century and now-dilapidated

Bawdsey Quay: On January 1st the Deben Dip raised £120 for the RNLI. The Ferry was running and together with the sale of mice pies and mulled wine raised £800 for the Felixstowe Volunteer Coastal Patrol Service. An all-year-round dial-a-ride foot ferry, instituted in October 2017 continued until October 2018.

The Quay is a magnet for visitors all the year round with its estuarine landscape, its connection to Felixstowe Ferry and the Boathouse Cafe which contribute to making it a popular spot. At half-terms and school holidays families come down to the Quay to go crabbing, relax on the small beach area and take the ferry across to Felixstowe.



However this summer, with temperatures in July and August of over 21 degrees C, (70 degrees F) its popularity brought significant challenges with higher visitor numbers. Parking has always been a problem along the road leading to the Quay and this was exacerbated by a large number of camper vans which parked facing the Deben where spectacular sunsets can be seen. This led to significant erosion of the verges and more littering. With bins becoming overfull, the Parish Council had to ask the district council to empty the bins on a more frequent basis. Parking on the Quay itself sometimes led to congestion and Bawdsey PC has decided that a solution to the problems must be found before the next summer. The Quay and jetty is owned by Bawdsey Manor which was bought by the holiday company PGL in 2016. Hence they will have to be involved in any solution along with SCC Highways which has been approached for advice.

Coastal Matters: Bawdsey is very vulnerable to coastal erosion both at Bawdsey Quay at the mouth of the Deben and at East Lane. The storm nicknamed the **Beast from the East** hit the coast in March and a tidal surge flooded the Quay. The sea wall at East Lane was damaged and sand bags were laid down by the Environment Agency. The coastal path was broken up and had not been mended.

A review of the Shoreline Management Plan is due to be undertaken and the contract was awarded to Jacobs in December 2018 who will study the movement of shingle along the coast and decide whether the current position of “holding the line” is feasible.

Alarming a report from the Committee for Climate Change has indicated that coastal communities across East Anglia could be abandoned to the sea within several decades since

it would not be economically viable to save small communities with low populations. Prime agricultural land would be at risk at East Lane but Bawdsey village lies approximately 5-10 metres higher than East lane car park.



Damage caused to footpath on the seawall

Bawdsey Radar Trust Museum: The museum formally reopened at Easter 2018 following the restoration of the Grade 2 listed transmitter block into a modern facility with a new interactive exhibition. It is now off the “at risk” buildings register.

Freeland Rees Roberts Architects was nominated for a RIBA East (Royal Institute of British Architects) regional award and an award in the 2019 Civic Trust AABC Conservation category.



In June Bawdsey Radar welcomed the RAF 100 Baton Relay Team to commemorate one hundred years since the formation of the RAF.

The new museum was formally opened on Thursday July 19th by the Duke of Gloucester when he unveiled a commemorative plaque. Pupils from Bawdsey Primary School greeted the duke as he arrived with home-made flags. Invitees enjoyed a buffet tea in a marquee.



Mary Wain, Trustee, showing the Duke of Gloucester the new building and plaque.

Concrete Renovations won several awards for their extensive work on the concrete blast walls which were in a state of serious disrepair leaving much of the top layer exposed to the elements. An award of merit was given by the International Concrete Repair Institute. A Conservation Grant from the Association of Independent Museums allowed the Trust to conserve one of the few surviving pieces of equipment, the electrical switchgear that controlled the power taken from the National Grid to run the radar transmitters.

The Museum was voted one of the 10 top unusual places to visit by Visit Suffolk and also won an award in SCDC's Quality of Place competition in the Conservation Category.

A new play entitled *Unseen Enemy, Radar and the Cold War* by Suzanne Hawkes was put on in the marquee in July.

More highlights can be seen in the two newsletters produced in 2018.

Shingle Street: Shingle Street lies a mile along the coast from Bawdsey and is part of Bawdsey Parish and is an SSSI. The shingle is home to a significant number of species of vegetation which have been surveyed over the past few years. With the help of a grant from an AONB Sustainable Development Fund, a new survey was carried out in the summer of 2018 indicating that some species have spread. These included sea kale, sea pea, sea beet curly dock and beautiful yellow-horned poppies. The expansion of grasses in this area has led to skylarks singing over the shingle for the first time.

In June 2018 a small book "Shingle Street Shell Line" was published telling the story of how two cancer survivors constructed a 300 metre long line of white whelk shells stretching from the coastguard cottages to the edge of the sea over the course of ten years. They started the line in 2005 and come every year to augment it. It costs £9.95.



Yellow horned poppy and the shell line at Shingle Street

A local controversy was caused by the presence of a commemorative stone bench which was erected without planning permission. This has since been granted.

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 works for which started in 2017 with extensive archaeological investigations. In February 2018, the cables came ashore on the eastern side of the peninsula and were laid under the River Deben, the Queen's Fleet and the Landfall site using Horizontal Directional Drilling. SP excavated across Ferry Road to install the cable ducts. HDD drilling was carried out from 0700 to 1900hrs, 7 days a week.

Councillors were invited on to the site in June to see the equipment being used.



Horizontal Directional Drill and members of Bawdsey Parish Council

The movement of heavy equipment to the site during the first three months of the year was problematic with up to 60 heavy vehicles a day passing through the village causing a great number of complaints about the noise, the speed of the vehicles and the mud on the road. Householders complained that their verges were being destroyed by the wide vehicles which had to mount the verges in order to pass oncoming vehicles. Some householders installed posts on their verges to prevent this from happening. Road safety was also a consideration.

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 a children's playing area and tennis courts. The VH and Recreation Ground has its own committee which in 2018 raised funds to restore the war memorial in time for centenary commemoration of the Armistice. £1,000 was spent on the zip-wire in the recreation ground, funded by the Community Payback scheme and play equipment was cleaned and repaired prior to a ROSPA inspection.

There had been problems in the village hall regarding access to the loft as the ladder had no hand rails. Loft stairs were installed in 2018 paid for from a £1,000 grant from the *Tesco Bags of Help* scheme. The upstairs room can now be used for storage.

The village hall is designated an **Emergency Centre** in the event of floods, power outages and other emergencies. In March 2018 walkie-talkies were purchased to allow for communications between the village, Bawdsey Quay, East Lane and the neighbouring village of Alderton.



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. For the past few years a local artist, Perienne Christian, has given art classes in the hall which culminated in an exhibition of students' work in June. Chair-based exercises continued for the second year running. Bawdsey Bird Club is active and holds lectures throughout the year.

2018 Events:

February: Jumble Sale in aid of the VH and St Mary's Church raised £262

March: Easter Egg Hunt raised £182

May: Annual fete on Whit Monday raised a record £5,000 which went towards insurance costs

June: Open gardens in aid of St Elizabeth Hospice. Art exhibition in VH

September: Village Garage Sale and Car Boot raised £200

October: Harvest Supper

November: Bonfire night at East Lane

December: Coffee and Chat Christmas meal. Christmas Craft Fair

Death of Doreen Bull: Long standing member of the VHRGC, Doreen died after a short illness on 30th October and was buried next to her husband Ed in St Mary's Churchyard.

Skylark Farm: Manor Farm Estate: This local business run by Emma Aldous at Skylark Farm went from strength to strength in 2018. A new timber goat milking shed was built which led to greater production of cheese, sold at Bawdsey Market and in the village shop in Alderton.

Goat Yoga: Outdoor yoga classes took place on the farm during 2018 led by Diana Malone.



New Village Sign for Bawdsey: In 2017 local amateur artist Mark Dovey designed an original village sign in the form of a stylised radar transmitter tower to be made out of corten steel. However at a coffee morning in February designed to fundraise for the sign, there was sufficient negative feedback to dissuade the parish council from continuing the project in its present form. The Chairman expressed the wish that the project be revisited at a later date.



Bawdsey CEVA Primary School: The 80 or so pupils on the roll acquit themselves very well in local competitions. A group took part in the national Lego League competition in Basildon and won the best robotic programming trophy. They were highly commended for teamwork in the eastern region.

The school won the Suffolk School Games Gold Sports Award for the fourth year running. They also took part in the Quadkids competition against 400 pupils for the Suffolk School Games.

As a small school, the school's sports leader arranged competitions in different schools for the local small schools with the support of Farlingaye High School. Pupils also trained with local sportswoman, Kate Sealy, a Belize Olympic competitor.

The school plays a large part in the local community. On every second Thursday of the month the school offers a lunch for OAPs in the village for £3.40. A baby and toddler group session continues to be held once a week. A MacMillan Coffee morning was held in September. In December the school hosted a free NHS Health Check for residents under the auspices of One Life Suffolk.

Death of former head teacher: Brian Foster, a former head teacher of Bawdsey School for over 30 years who continued to live in the School House behind the school, died in January 2018. His funeral was held on Friday 9th February in Alderton Church which was filled to overflowing. Testimonies to a hands-on teacher who believed in taking the children out of school for hands-on experiences were many. A keen Morris dancer with the East Suffolk Morris Men, this team danced the Bonny Green Garters at the end of the funeral which was conducted by the Rev Ruth Hatchett.

St Mary's Church:

A Flower Festival on the theme of *Holidays and Holy Days* took place in June. The Suffolk Historic Churches ride raised funds for the church in September. Harvest Festival, Remembrance Day and Carol singing round the village are an integral part of the church calendar. Food bank box collects food for the Salvation Army in Woodbridge.



Housing:

House prices in Bawdsey are above the national average and over 30% of the houses in the village are second homes. Central Government earmarked funds to alleviate this situation in coastal communities. In response to this a Community Land Trust was formally constituted in February 2018 to manage housing on the Deben Peninsula and to develop more affordable housing to rent. It was hoped that all villages on the peninsula would work together to champion local houses for local people.

Two outstanding housing developments are earmarked for build in 2019.

Orwell Housing, a Suffolk housing association, held a public meeting on Wednesday 21st February to showcase their plans for a new housing development along The Street below the Bawdsey Farm Estate. This is an “exceptionable” development. Plans are for four homes sold at market rate and 8 “affordable” homes, comprising two bungalows and two pairs of semi-detached houses. These will be for rent for local people and kept in the village in perpetuity. **The plans were eventually approved by SCDC Planning in December 2018.**

A site on School Meadow was approved in 2015 but has not yet been built. Saffron Housing paid an option fee on the site behind Bawdsey Primary School in 2017. Their building arm Crocus Homes liaised with the local CLT in 2018 and intends amending the plans for 13 homes approved by SCDC whose design and scale are not deemed to be suitable for locals.

Only three houses were sold in 2018:

Beauville, Red House Farm Lane: Edwardian semi-detached 4 bedrooms £398,000

2 Farm Cottages, Bawdsey Manor Estate; semi detached 2 bedrooms £297,950

Dove Granary, Manor House Estate, detached £245,000

Planning and PGL

PGL put in a number of planning applications in 2018 most of them uncontentious. These included a replacement sewage treatment plant, the installation of concrete bases for the siting of a tent “city” and the conversion of squash courts to a shower block. They were also granted planning permission for the siting of activity structures including concrete ground fixings. These included towers for zip wires.

Water-based activities have not taken place at the PGL site to date because the River Deben is not suitable for beginners learning to sail or canoe. To this end the restoration of part of an on-site channel called the River Jordan at Bawdsey Manor Estate took place.

More controversially was an application to create a lake for recreational activities such as raft building and kayaking on a piece of low-lying land abutting Ferry Road within the Bawdsey Manor Estate. After consultation with residents, the Parish Council rejected the application due to noise and environmental concerns. The application was subsequently withdrawn.

Employment opportunities were advertised in March including those in Admin/Catering/Retail/Housekeeping/Maintenance/Instructing

Highways:

With regard to maintaining the roads, SCC Highways has outsourced the work, awarding the contract to Keirs. Current austerity has meant that its budget has been cut drastically and priority is given to communities with higher populations. Concerns about broken up pavements and lanes and potholes haven't tended to be given a high priority in Bawdsey. Last February/March when "The Beast from the East" brought snow and high winds, snowdrifts occurred on those stretches of roads without hedges, making access to and from the peninsula quite difficult. It was left to local farmers and builders with heavy equipment to clear the drifts.



The Alderton to Bawdsey road

However, speeding is the single issue which causes most concern in the village. As most villages are experiencing, the 30mph speeding limit is often disregarded and farm vehicles are getting heavier and longer. A SID device which flashes motorists' speed was finally purchased in September 2018 and has proved a useful deterrent. A Speedwatch team was also set up which was able to share radar equipment with a number of other villages and monitor speeding every few months. However the parish will probably purchase its own speed gun since the team is keen to use it with greater frequency than is currently possible. Broken up pavement was an issue which was reported to Highways. A combination of bad weather and the fact of heavy vehicles climbing the pavement have contributed to its poor state.



The new SID and broken pavements on The Street

Village Services: Bawdsey has no shop but a mobile grocer comes every Thursday from 12.30-1.00pm. A fish man comes every Wednesday. The mobile library comes to Bawdsey every month on Tuesdays.

Wild Villages: Enjoying the wildlife in Bawdsey, Alderton, Hollesley and Boyton.

Funding was secured for a second year of Wild Villages. This entailed holding events held for exploring and sharing the wonders of the natural world. A walk at Boyton Marshes looking at winter birds on the marshes took place in February.

Beach Bonkers: Four beachcombing workshops took place in March, May, June and September at East Lane. Kate Osborne took people out on guided beach combs to hunt for treasures on the shingle beaches such as sea shells, sharks' teeth, amber and fossils. Two beach combing and art workshops took place in March and September when after beach combing in the morning, artist Carole Massey led drawing lessons of finds.

SLHS History Day in Bawdsey: A very successful study took place on Saturday 9th June with approximately 35 members of the Suffolk Local History Society in attendance. Village recorder, Jenny Webb, gave an introduction to the village which was followed by two in-depth talks. One was on *Bawdsey and the medieval port of Gosford* by Peter Wain and the other was entitled *Bawdsey and the Quilters* by Val Dudley.

At lunchtime a map was provided for a self-guide around the village including the Church of St Mary's. Finally the visitors proceeded to Bawdsey Radar Transmitter Block where they were given a tour of the museum. The day ended with tea and cakes at the village hall.



Dr Margaret Thomas introducing the morning and delegates at Bawdsey Radar Trust

*Jenny Webb,
February 2019*