

Wimbotsham Parish Council

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting of the above-named Parish Council held on Tuesday 14th May 2024.

Parish Councillors: Ian Cable (Chairman), Dean Chilvers, Chris Hitchens, Steve Mingay
and Jackie Squires
Borough Councillors: Cllr Colin Rose and Vivienne Spikings
Parish Clerk: Nicola Forrest
Public: Six

1. Welcome by the Chairman and apologies for absence

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

To receive Apologies for Absence

Cllr Fendley and Cllr Smith (other commitments)

Cllr Brian Long - Norfolk County Council

2. Minutes of the Annual Parish meeting held on the 16th May 2023

Having been circulated previously, the minutes of the meeting held on the 16th May 2023 were approved and signed by the Chairman as an accurate record.

3. Public Participation

A member of the public stated the footpaths are in good condition but the roads have an enormous number of potholes which are dangerous to cyclists.

ACTION: The Clerk to report the issues to Highways.

4. Reports from Community Groups and Organisations

Reports received from Community Groups and Organisations (Appendix 1 and 2)

5. Chairman's Annual Report for 2022-23

The Chairman read his annual report (Appendix 2)

Chairman_____

Date_____

Report from Wimbotsham History Group for Parish Council AGM on Tuesday 14th May 2024

The last year has been an exciting year for Wimbotsham History. Firstly, with the setting up of a Facebook page called 'Wimbotsham History'. It provides photos and descriptions on topical village history data to a wider audience. Gradually, the numbers of 'Followers' have increased, from interested local people but also from Australia and Canada. The Australian connection asking for birth records of family in the 1800s, which we were able to supply.

Most of the latter part of 2022 into 2023 was focussed on creating a memorial occasion suitable for the crew of the Lancaster EE118. After 3 years of research and much correspondence between our group, the Parish Council, the RAF Historical Association and the MOD, the Memorial Plaque insignia and wording was agreed.

We received excellent advice and guidance from Gary Haines, an Archivist at the RAF Museum London. Also, Neil Mason of Masson-Seeley the sign makers, was extremely helpful dealing with all the delays and changes required by the MOD and producing a very nice, easily maintained, long-lasting plaque.

Andy Moore, the RAF Downham Market historian, offered to metal detect the old orchard for remains of EE118 and all items found are now on loan and displayed in Discover Downham.

We did initially experience some delay from RAF Wyton due to the Ukraine emergency and change of leadership. It was only our attendance at the re-dedication of the Bexwell RAF memorial in July 2023 that we were then able to make direct contact with Group Captain Frederick Wigglesworth and his padre from RAF Marham, both of whom expressed an interest in taking part. Later, RAF Wyton sent Squadron Leader Mathew Parle to represent the former Pathfinder Force base.

Special thanks to the Rev. Canon Dr. David Karoon who arranged the printing of the Order of Service and sorted the music via Rev. Eddie Wynn, the RAF Padre. The Last Post/Reveille was played by Jan Wyndham-Hall supported by Helen Driver from King's Lynn Town Band. Tim Dutton, a PFF researcher from Downham Market and a Trustee at the PFF Collection at RAF Wyton, stepped in during the very last stages and gave an outline of the Pathfinder Force and how its actions in the air turned the war around in the Allies favour.

The 29th of September turned out a beautiful day and everything went to plan. Approximately 150 people turned out for service; villagers, families of the crew of EE118, RAFA, British Legion and ex-RAF personnel all wearing their medals. After the service a vintage tea was enjoyed, and the atmosphere within the village hall was buzzing. The history display on the stage received a lot of attention. The last visitors departed after 4.30pm. Grateful thanks to the Steve Mingay and Sarah Wicks for the loan of their equipment and china.

Many compliments were received, as well as some generous donations including £150 from the Booker family, to be spent on an item for the benefit of Wimbotsham Village. This was handed over to the Recreation Ground Committee in October 2023. After completion of our own 2023 Accounts, we felt that our History Group could also add to this cause and £50 was passed over to the Recreation Ground in March 2024. We are awaiting a purchase decision that meets with the Booker family wishes.

In November 2023, I was contacted by Dr Sarah-Louise Miller from King's College London, Defence Studies Department. She is compiling a book, commissioned by the War Museum, about the Lancaster Aeroplane. Being a former Downham Market resident, Sarah had read about our story and wanted to include it in her Legacy chapter. The book is in proof stage with a section on the Wimbotsham air crash. We hope to hear more from her soon.

A most important part of the event was being able to locate and invite eight family members for two of the crew, including a nephew from Bermuda and 2 nieces from Wales. They mentioned that taking part in the service was both emotional and poignant. The Booker and Orchard families gave us copies of many family documents from their deceased family member and some originals were also handed over to RAF Wyton's PFF Collection for their safe-keeping. We were lucky to have present at the Dedication Service, the two people who gave us their boyhood stories about the Lancaster crash – Roy Docking and Derek Neale (former villagers).

Late in January 2024, we were contacted by a niece of the RCAF (Canadian) navigator. Joann had only just found our May 2023 message on her Ancestry family tree. We have since sent her numerous historical articles and photos to show her brother and sister as they had little knowledge of the circumstances of the crash. She thanked us all for what we had achieved in remembering the Lancaster crew and mentioned Wimbotsham is on her 'bucket list'.

Work goes on, the files are being reviewed and updated where necessary and saved to One Drive and memory sticks in case of a computer meltdown. Three more local history interviews will be undertaken this year.

I am aware that Doris Boughen may have distributed her history files to other villagers before she died. It is quite possible there are additional documents or photos surviving. It would be so nice to keep them in one place for future generations.

Carolyn Seymour & Chris Chapman

May 2024

Wimbotsham and Stow Academy

Update for the Parish Council

The school continues to provide education for 3- to 11-year-olds and we have 117 children on roll. With the preschool provision, we are able to offer the full 30 hours funded places. This year all our preschool places are full and we have limited places from September. The school numbers are strong. Reception admissions for September 24 are full and we have limited places in two-year groups.

The leadership structure of the school changed in September '22 when my Co-Headteacher moved on so I took on the role of Executive Headteacher across Wimbotsham, Magdalen and St Germans. In January '23 we appointed an Executive Deputy Headteacher (Miss Palmer) who also works across the three schools as well as having responsibility as our Special Education Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo). We also have a parent support advisor who works across the three schools. Mrs Clarkstone works with children and their families to support with finances, behaviour and a range of external services through Just One Norfolk.

The school also works as part of Unity Education Trust which supports a range of schools across Norfolk including secondary, alternative provisions, specialist provision and primary and infant schools. This is a very strong network of support for staff at all levels. We work closely together to align training opportunities, observe good practice and develop our coaching skills.

In July 22 the school continued to be judged good during the Ofsted Inspection. Since this we have continued to develop and refine our curriculum. We introduced a new phonics scheme called Read Write Inc and this is supporting early reading and fluency. We still base our curriculum around themes which the teachers plan with staff from across all three schools. We enrich this with trips and visitors. This year we have already been to Gressenhall, Norwich Castle Museum, King's Lynn Museum, Stories of Lynn, a residential to Norfolk Lakes and a police car visit. Parents are regularly invited in for parent café's, reading and special events such as Christmas performances.

The Year 6 pupils take on many lead roles across the school. Three years ago, we introduced House Teams. This involves all children of all ages meeting fortnightly with their house team. The Year 6 captain has an agenda and they take minutes which they then discuss with myself to finalise decisions and identify what we need to do next. The children really rise to this role and always remind me when we need to have a meeting! They discuss a range of items across the year such as behaviour, safety, school trips and special events. Currently the children have been discussing ideas for health and wellbeing week which takes place after May half term. They are also working on reintroducing our fruit tuck shop at morning breaks and we are hoping that the produce will be supplied by Landymores.

Coming up –

The summer term is always busy as we come towards the end of the academic year. We have lots planned already which include:

- Health and Wellbeing week – during this week we aim for children to be exposed to a range of sporting activities. This year the children will take part in circus skills, watch a BMX stunt team and take part in an Olympic themed dance workshop.
- Athletics Day at Lynnsport – Key Stage 2 pupils from all three schools join together to take part in competitive track and field events.
- Colour Run

- Whole school trip to Bewilderwood (decided by the children!)
- Year 3 and 4 are taking part in OAE event at the corn exchange. This involves them singing alongside storytelling with a live orchestra.
- Year 1 and 2 – attending Dance festival at the corn exchange.
- Year 6 leavers trip to London – The children see famous London sights and watch a musical (this year we are watching Matilda)

Next Steps

- Further develop outdoor learning opportunities for all children.
- Revamp the library by moving it from the corridor to the end of the hall

We are also looking for new community members to join our local governance called 'Academy Schools Committee' This involves three meetings a year (during the school day) where we discuss the schools and how we can develop links within the local communities. If anyone is interested in joining, I would be more than happy to discuss this further.

Louise Arrowsmith

Executive Headteacher

Wimbotsham and Stow Academy, Magdalen Academy and St Germans Academy

Allotment Association Report

A representative from the Allotment Association provided an update on the current status of the allotments. It was noted that Downham Market Town Council had approached the Association with a request to allocate allotment plots to their residents. However, due to limited availability, there is currently no capacity to accommodate residents from outside the parish. As such, priority for plot allocation will remain with Wimbotsham residents in accordance with the Association's policy.

The condition of the existing allotments was reported to be very good, with plots being well-maintained and actively cultivated. In response to growing local interest, the Association confirmed plans to open six additional allotment plots in the coming months to help meet demand from Wimbotsham residents.

Chairman Report 2024

Welcome to the annual parish meeting and thank you to parishioners for taking the time to attend.

Last year we welcomed our new clerk, Nicola. The first year has been a steep learning curve for Nicola and she has taken the role in her stride, including various training courses and we are now starting to see the real fruits of Nicola's first year in post, the learning curve will continue, and I am confident the parish council will ultimately be more effective.

During the year we invested in technology, a laptop and projector, these are making the meetings more effective with all present being able to view and comment on documents to achieved more informed decision-making.

I am pleased to report we have received a very positive internal audit to complete the year.

Finally, after some protracted delay and battle with NCC we have seen completion of the trod to link us with Stow Bridge, this is been well used and we need to keep on top of maintenance.

We now battle with NCC to get the footway link from Low Road to Broomhill completed. This will provide a much safer pedestrian route for both Downham & Wimbotsham residents including children heading to school.

During the year we have supported a number of village events including the memorial dedication in September 2023 and regular café connect in the VH, to help foster community spirt.

We continue to support the recreation ground, history group, village hall and of course, the church, for which we are pleased to see planning permission has been approved, we hope this will provide new opportunities for the village in the years to come.

In spring the daffodils planted in October brightened up the village green, we hope to plant more.

The PC are now working on a 'village vision' plan to help shape how the council operates in the future, and set short-, medium- and long-term goals and budgets, the need for this was also highlighted at recent training received by parish councillors.

So, the PC continues to progress on behalf of the village, though more councillors and energy are required, with two PC vacancies for the coming year as I will be stepping down as PC chairman and councillor having served 10+ years. I thank you all for your support.