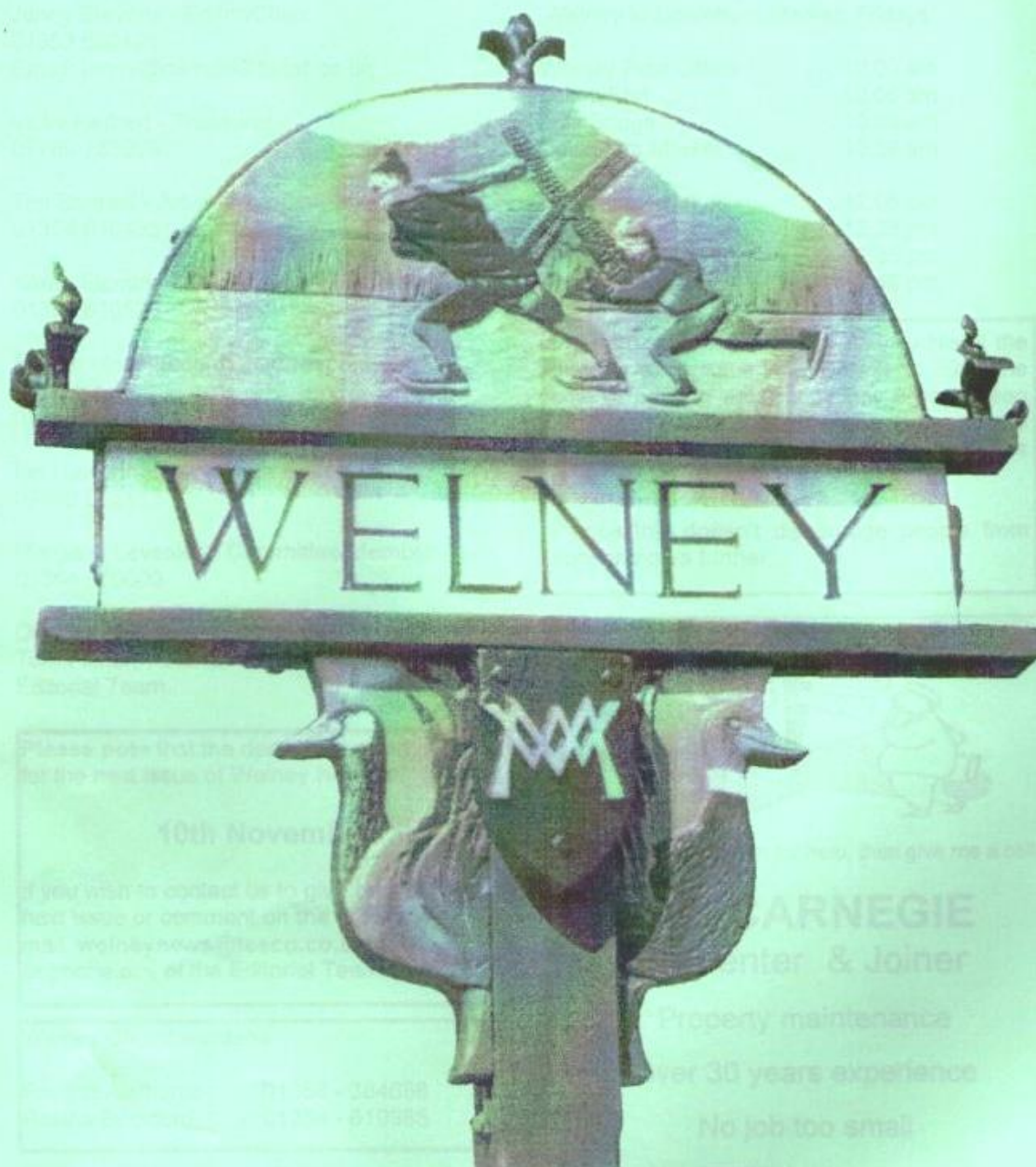


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October 04 — November 04

25p



WELNEY NEWS

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Please note that the deadline for contributions
for the next issue of Welney News is;

10th November

If you wish to contact us to give articles for the
next issue or comment on the current issue; E-
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or phone any of the Editorial Team.

Welney Churchwardens

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OCTOBER - NOVEMBER EVENTS

St. Mary's Church Autumn Fayre Saturday
13th November 10.30.

Public meeting Parish Hall Tuesday 12th Oc-
tober 7.30pm

Welney Bus Services

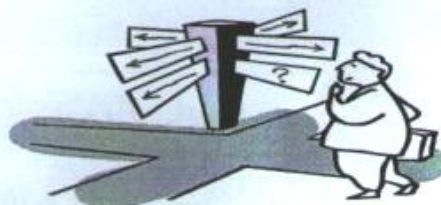
Welney to Downham Market: Fridays

Welney Post Office	10.00 am
Lakes End	10.06 am
Lots Bridge	10.08 am
Downham Market	10.26 am

Downham Market	12.05 pm
Lots Bridge	12.33 pm
Lakes End	12.35 pm
Welney Post Office	12.40 pm

From the next issue of the Welney News the
price of each issue will increase to 30p. The
cost of printing each copy has always been
greater than 25p and we would not be able to
continue for much longer if we kept it at this
price.

I hope this doesn't discourage people from
supporting us further.



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EDITORIAL

I would like to firstly express my thanks to all those involved in the organising of such a wonderful Gala and dance on 28th August. It is a real pleasure to be part of a community where so many are willing to give up their valuable time for such good causes.

Secondly please make an effort to go to the meeting described below. Remember, you have no right to complain about the ideas or decisions of others if you make no input yourself into village life. This sort of opportunity doesn't come around every day.

Finally as I am sure you all know, Peter Johansen died in the early hours of 9th September. He was a great man who gave a lot to Welney and will always be fondly remembered. A full tribute will be paid to him in the next Welney News.

Jenny Stevens

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What do we what?..... When do we what it?.....

Come along and find about how our collective views can be assimilated into a "PARISH PLAN", which will help to determine the future of our village at a

Public meeting
In the Parish Hall
7.30pm
Tuesday 12th October

when Janice Howell of the Norfolk Rural Community Council will give a short presentation to be followed by a question and answer session. The aim of this meeting is to encourage us to become involved in a project for which funding, help and guidance are being offered. All being well the resulting Parish Plan should put us in control of the destiny of our own community.

All Welcome



WELNEY
GALA
2004



WELNEY GALA

The 2004 gala showed that the move to the playing field was well overdue. Space was abundant with the organisers offering us a slick and professional day of entertainment – even the weather came to order!

This free to enter event had all Welney could wish for in side attractions, environment awareness, refreshments, games, competitions and the chance to see an award winning garden in a field – not many of those about!

It was so good that a few parachutists dropped-by to see what all the fun was about!

Our roving MC kept us informed and entertained in true 'Farmer Giles' fashion. Could those teeth have been second-hand?

Did you pluck-up courage to sit on one of the Harley Davidsons or were you too busy enjoying the buns and tea of the W.I.'s offerings?

A night of music and dance finished-off an enjoyable day.

Thank you to the organisers for getting Welney's gala back.

A MESSAGE FROM THE WELNEY GALA 2004 ORGANISING GROUP

The Welney Gala 2004 Organising Group would like to thank all the people who contributed to the success of the Gala. The list includes the sponsors, people who made donations, ran stalls, made cakes, gave a bottle or two for the bottle stall, the Lamb & Flag, the band 'Against the Grain' (who gave their services for no payment) and to all the people who attended and supported the Gala and dance. It really was a team effort.

The provisional profit figure is around £3,500, (there are still a few sponsorship cheques to arrive and one or two small bills to pay) which we think is quite an achievement for a first attempt. All that remains to be done is to obtain the new play equipment; this can best be achieved by utilising the position and influence of the Parish Council to obtain further funding

in the form of a grant, possibly matching the amount raised by the Gala. The Parish Council will hopefully discuss this at a meeting in October and with any luck we may have the new equipment installed and ready for action next year.

In the meantime the money is being held in a special Parish Hall Management Committee Gala account with Barclays Bank and will be handed over to the Parish Council when they are in a position to accept it in a similar 'ring fenced' account.

Once again thank you all.

The Welney Gala 2004 Organising Group

CONGRATULATIONS

As two ex-pats we would like to congratulate the organisers of the Welney Gala held on Saturday 28th August.

After the press reports of the event in the local papers we have heard people praising the event and saying how happy they are that next years gala is already being considered.

During our long lives we have been involved in various functions in the area where we have lived so we know the hard work put into this very successful event.

To the younger members of the community may we say "get involved" you will find a lot of fun and satisfaction in being involved and of course to keep things going it is necessary to have some younger blood in the pipeline.

WELL DONE ALL

Charles and Peter (March) Late of Hundred Foot Bank

(This letter was written and submitted before the demise of Peter.)

WELNEY HOMEWATCH

This is a warning about Canadian Lottery Scammers

We are becoming increasingly concerned about international fraudsters targeting older people via the 'Canadian Lottery' telephone and mail scams.

Victims receive an unsolicited phone from Canada congratulating them on winning the big prize in a national lottery such as the Canadian, Australian or Spanish. The victim is told that before they can claim the prize, they must send money to pay for taxes and processing fees. This request will be an ongoing process.

Whilst the exact number of victims in the UK and the true amount of money paid out to the scammers is unknown, the Office of Fair Trading is aware of some cases where the potential losses could reach six figures. They also know of an individual who has lost £67,000 responding to more and more telephone calls demanding payments to cover costs in order to receive the prize. *The prize does not exist, it has never existed.*

Older people are particularly at risk from this crime. Over 80 per cent of victims are more than 65 years old. The caller may pose as government official, customs officer or a lawyer. Evidence shows that most victims don't report the crime; this can be due to embarrassment or to a fear that they may lose control of their finances.

Anyone who has been a victim, or is worried that an elderly relative or friend has been targeted, can call the OFT on **020 7211 8111** to report it. The OFT is gathering evidence which the Canadian authorities can use to prosecute the fraudsters.

Tips for dealing with Lottery Scammers are;

Be cautious, if you have any doubts about the caller – **hang up.**

Never send money in order to receive a prize. **Don't** give out your private financial information or other personal information over the phone.

Canada doesn't have a national lottery like the

UK!

Tips on how to spot a scam are:

If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is. You are often asked for money up front in order to release your 'win'. You are asked for your bank account, credit card details or other confidential information. The caller is more excited than you are. The caller wants to be best friend. You must reply straight away or the money will be given to someone else.

Please warn all your members, friends and relatives about this scam, especially if they fall into the vulnerable category.

A 74 year old man has become the latest victim of Bogus Builders in our area. Between 3pm and 6pm on Tuesday 24th August the man was visited in his King's Lynn home by two men who offered to clear out his gutters for £20.

One of the men climb a ladder whilst the other kept the victim talking, he was then informed his roof need repairing and it would cost him £756. The bogus builders drove him to a cash point machine and accepted £300 from him.

One was described as being a White male 5'9" tall, medium build, round face with short black hair and the other a White male 5'7" tall, stocky build, black cropped hair and stubble.

This is just the latest incident of Bogus Callers targeting the elderly in West Norfolk. Please reiterate this warning to your elderly friends, neighbours and relatives, remind them not to do business with callers at the door and remember reputable tradesmen don't cold call and don't carry out work on a cash in hand basis.

Once again the number to call if you wish to report a scam phone call is **020 7211 8111**

Thank you.

THE VICTOR MELDREW COLUMN.

Well, if you are one of those people concerned about the speed of traffic through the village; did you put 'your money where your mouth' is by filling in the PC's questionnaire? If you agreed to fork-out then I'm not sure if the council are going to come round to get your 100 quid/pence off you or it will be levied through the precept, as this wasn't made clear. Main Street residents will be first in the queue no doubt.

It's a pity that we are unable to follow the progress of the council's efforts due to reports in the WN with non-descripts as per the last report where the revealing news of 'Several various points relating to highway matters were discussed'. O.K it could be said that if you don't turn up to meetings then you don't deserve to know. Surely it is incumbent upon the PC to publish (e.g. in the WN) in some detail the minutes of its meetings for the sake of those that are unable to attend.

Could the same be said of the Parish Hall meetings? Again they appear to have some 'concern that matters relating to the committee and their responsibilities were not progressing', '....further communication be made with the NCAPATC to try and sort out the various problems...'

The majority of the village who do not attend the meetings will surely say what's all that about then?

It could be said that it made a change to have the other end of the village blocked -off for three weeks. Three weeks to lay a bit of tar-mac on a bend? Hope these are not the people who may erect the proposed speed signage!

Tragedy and joy have visited the village in the past few weeks. I make no apologies in yet again mentioning the Wash Road - another death and a car crash at Suspension Bridge. What's that saying - there but for the grace of God go I. This is a beautiful stretch of road - be it summer or winter, but it needs to be driven through with respect for the conditions. A pipe dream would be for a new causeway to be built (with EU money, which is really our own, recycled, less expenses) and the existing route to be turned into a nature walk - what an asset that would be for the village. Also tragic

is the case involving Fenland Care, who house troubled youngsters in Welney. No disrespect to the people in Welney, but who would want to place youngsters here? Perhaps Fenland Care could write into the WN and explain itself and its ambitions to the Welney community so that all could be enlightened and also provide some contact details?

Joy was said to come from the Gala on the playing field. An older generation may be of the opinion that it lacked the old village 'feel' of hustle and bustle next to the water's edge and a chance to sit on the bank and chat with friends. But that's progress.

Perhaps the Parish Hall Committee can arrange a summer social gathering for Welney-ites to chew the fat and generally sit around drinking tea and complain about the speed of traffic passing through the village.....?

VM

The views expressed by VM are not necessarily those of the News Team - Ed.

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CHURCH FETE 7th AUGUST



WELNEY CYGNETS

Here is a message to all our readers from the new Playgroup Leader of the Welney Cygnets'.

My name is Anne Lee. I live in Chatteris with my Husband and three beautiful children. Joseph age 8, Esther age 5 and Timothy age 4. I am very excited about taking up the post of Welney Cygnets Playgroup Leader. I love working with children and their families to encourage them to get the most out of their playgroup experience.

I have always worked with children in one way or another. Last year I was working for a Playgroup in Chatteris as a play leader, which I really enjoyed. Before that I ran a mother and toddler group for five years for the church that I attend. I am also a Junior church leader, youth leader and Deacon for my church. I am also a support foster parent for a child with special needs.

I look forward to being part of the community of Welney and helping it's children to reach their full potential.

Over the next term the children who will be attending Welney Cygnets will be enjoying activities based around the following subjects:

September - Weather and Seasons

October - Letters

November - Shapes

December - Christmas

They will be experiencing many new and exciting things during this time and so will I as I endeavor to provide them with the skills they will need to thrive at school and in life.

Thank you all for your support in the past and I would like also to thank you for your continued support.

Anne Lee.

The Committee of the Welney Cygnets would like to take this opportunity to extend a warm welcome to Anne and offer all the help and support that they can to enable her and Jean, our well-established Deputy Playgroup Leader, to fulfill their expectations for the Cygnets children and their families.

ALL ABOUT HORSES!

Bodney Camp

Quite by chance we heard of the annual open day hosted by the Household Cavalry at Bodney Camp in Norfolk. The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment undergoes a three-week training period at the Camp in August each year, allowing the horses, riders and associated staff some time in fresh air and open spaces too. Their stay in Norfolk culminates in what has become a regular annual event, the Open Day.

All recruits to the Mounted Regiment undergo basic military training for 12 weeks at Pirbright. On completion of this phase they move on to Mounted Training. Most of the recruits have not previously ridden horses; the Army prefers to begin from scratch rather than have to get a recruit to 'unlearn' different ways of doing things. During an intensive 14 weeks of mounted training, all the recruits learn to ride and jump. They also cover stable management and basic veterinary care. They learn to drill and parade in full ceremonial dress, and may go on to advanced skills such as sword drill and riding with one hand.

At Bodney Camp riders at all levels have an opportunity to develop their skills, and the element of competition is much in evidence as a training aid. The more recently-trained riders and their young horses take part in jumping contests and practise teamwork in gymkhana-type events. More senior riders may take part in tent-pegging and 'pillow polo'. During the Open Day, members of the public can witness the results of all the training, when a whole series of events takes place. Show jumping and Tent-Pegging (the skill of lifting a tent peg from the ground with the point of a lance while riding at speed) are more formal; these events are in contrast with more 'fun' - but no less skilled - activities such as a horse and a quad bike competing on an obstacle course, or a coach and four racing a Landrover! Pillow-polo, a version of polo where two teams of horses and riders compete for possession of a multi-handled leather 'chukka' which can be passed hand-to-hand or thrown between team members, is fast, furious and reminiscent of Rugby in many respects - imagine all that pushing, shoving, and general mayhem, but with a lot of hooves and flying manes and tails,

and you get a fair idea...

The Open Day is designed as a family event and for this one day each year the beautiful black cavalry horses are freely available to be patted, stroked, fed and generally enjoyed by visitors of all ages. Visitors can also see the horses being groomed and bathed, and can see one of the regiment's blacksmiths at work. Some of the horses are paraded in full ceremonial harness, including a magnificent Clydesdale drum horse. There are refreshments available and some stalls to walk around. Included in the program of events this year was a breathtaking free-fall display (strictly for human participants!)

If you think you might enjoy this event, look out for adverts in the Norfolk papers in late August next year. For information, try phoning Bodney Camp on 01753 755 297. The open day is featured on various websites, including the NFU's and the Household Cavalry's own websites. It's a great value day out; entry is £5 per car regardless of number of occupants. (NB dogs are not allowed)

Bodney camp is on the B1108 near Watton. Possible routes are; from Swaffham take the B1077 towards Watton then on reaching the junction with the B1108 follow signs for the Open Day. Alternatively, from Brandon go north on the A1065 then turn right onto the B1108 towards Watton. (nearest village - Little Cressingham).

MARIFA LODGE NEWS

Our car boot and summer fayre held on saturday 21st August was a success. we have raised £340 for our residents by guess the mileage of a classic car, bric a brac stall, raffle, tombola, refreshments and a BBQ cooked by our new proprietor Graham.

We had a lovely social gathering enjoyed by residents, visitors and staff alike, the weather held and the majorettes entertained us throughout the afternoon. Thanks to all who donated prizes and helped on the day

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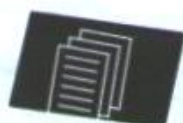


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HELLO TEDS AND GOD'S GANG ENTHUSIASTS!

"Rain, rain, rain and more rain. Won't it do anything else but rain?!!" So moaned the holidaymakers of Britain this year, and so queried Noah and his family as they put the finishing touches to their enormous land-locked boat (a source of much amusement amongst their neighbours!). The last laugh was Noah's though, when he gathered his family and two of each creature on the earth (woops! they forgot dodos, dinosaurs, dragons and unicorns!) and set sail on the rapidly rising flood waters.

The Teddy Church children made their ark out of red kneelers collected from the church pews. The boat was then carefully filled with matching pairs of animal teddies from my boys' toy collection, plus the children, their own teddies, the adults of the group and, finally, my new little puppy, Skye. (Could this be the forerunner of a Pets Church Service one day?!!) We had great fun acting out the age-old story and making it new again - special, unique and ours.

Sharing old and new stories is an important part of all our lives, and I had the pleasure of attending a 'Godly Play' storytelling training session with 'Upwell' Wendy (fellow God's Gang leader) and Anne Lee (the new Cygnets Playgroup Leader) recently. We were given the opportunity to share three Bible stories, told in the 'Godly Play' manner, (based on the Montessori teaching techniques). This method of storytelling draws upon the viewer's imagination and sense of wonderment and invites questioning thought and involvement in the story. I have used an adaptation of this technique at Teddy Church before and it seemed to be enjoyed by all who took part, both children and adults. Wendy and I now hope to draw the interest of God's Gang children with this inspiring and fun storytelling technique - and encourage them to have a go themselves and also explore their own responses to the stories.

God's Gang folk continue to meet on the **3rd Sunday of each month, from 10.45am - 12 noon, at St. Mary's Church, Welney**. The numbers of children who join us are still low, but no oak tree ever started big, and this children's church acorn is no exception! Give it time ...

All Infant/Junior age children are welcome to come along and give God's Gang a try. Pre-School children (birth - 4 3/4 yrs) have automatic membership of **Teddy Church** (meeting on the **1st Wednesday of each month at 10.30am, also at St. Mary's, Welney**) and Sally Kerr and myself would be delighted to have you with us and our fellow Teds.

If you would like more information about either group, feel free to ring me on 01945-773932. See you soon, I hope.

All the best from Holly Goodwin
(Honorary Teddy and God's Gang member).

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THE PARISH COUNCIL

The meeting of the Parish Council was held in the Parish Hall, Welney on Tuesday 14th September, 2004 at 7.30 p.m.

It was reported to the meeting that despite the fact that the vacancy on the Council had been advertised no-one had come forward expressing an interest in becoming a Councillor. It was therefore agreed to readvertise the vacancy. There must be someone out there interested enough in our village, to join the Parish Council. Please give it some thought and come along to our next meeting on 12th October, or contact me on 610226 if you would like further details.

Council are looking into the possibility of replacing our very sad notice board which is currently fixed to the Village Hall, and it is hoped that a decision can be made at the next meeting, so that a suitable enclosed board is ready before the winter months.

The emptying of dog bins is again being taken on by the Borough Council. The late Bill Thompson had originally agreed to do free of charge.

The Village Sign has now been repainted and looks splendid. Grateful thanks were extended to Cllr. Farrow for her hard work in organising the repainting and to the anonymous benefactor who kindly paid for the work to be carried out.

It was unanimously agreed that a meeting should be arranged between the Parish Council and the Playing Field Committee so that responsibilities etc. can be agreed and matters put on a correct footing.

The Parish Council Annual Audit has been advertised in the Post Office and the Notice Board and the Audit Commission form was signed in readiness to be returned to the Audit Commission for the 27th September, the date set aside for the Welney Parish Council Audit.

Details were received of the Rural Bus Challenge Fenland Connections. Concern had been expressed regarding the timetable of the bus particularly the bus which travels to Wisbech and it was agreed to contact the Company and ask them for an up to date timeta-

ble. Norfolk Constabulary are holding a Public Meeting at King's Lynn on 20th September.

Planning permission was refused for Mr. J. Read, Rose Villa, Tipsend to change the use of a garage conversion to bungalow.

Speed Restriction measures: Following the article in the last edition of the Welney News only 9 replies were received with comments and observations - 6 in favour of the Council's suggestion and 3 against. Following discussion it was decided to ask the NCC to carry out a survey of the proposed site for the illuminated sign so that they could give us an exact price for the work. It was felt that the offer they made was a very generous one and that if possible we should take advantage of it. It was reported to the meeting that a large proportion of the maximum of £2,000 which the Parish Council would have to find may be forthcoming from benefactors, and in view of this it was agreed that the matter should be pursued further.

A letter was received from Gillian Shepherd MP regarding the willow trees on the Wash Road with a copy of a letter from the NCC. Cllr. Bennett confirmed that he would be willing to talk to the people concerned to try and get the trees pollarded so that they were in the best possible condition.

A meeting was held on 31.8.04 with Mr. Deller and Mr. Allen of Highways to discuss the problems being experienced with the Wash Road flooded signs. Mr. Deller confirmed that he is going to try and get some extra signs installed in strategic places where they were removed when the new signs were installed. Mr. Allen is going to try and find out how the system works with the Environment Agency as to how and when they decide that the signs should show that the road is flooded. He has promised to let us know - and as soon as the Council hear we will publish the details.

A letter was received from the Welney Gala 2004 Organising Group and congratulations were extended to the Group for their hard work and excellent total realised. The Group wished to present the cheque to the Parish Council for the sole purpose of the eventual purchase of Playing Field Equipment, and the matter will be placed on the Agenda at the

next meeting for discussion.

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday 12th October, 2004 in the Parish Hall at 7.30 p.m. when Janice Howell of the Norfolk Rural Community Council will be giving a talk about Parish Action Plans. We hope as many of you as possible will attend so that we can move forward with this important project.

Pat Copeman
Clerk to the Parish Council.

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W.I.

The weather couldn't have been better for the August meeting. A glorious summer evening, in a pretty garden bursting with colour, when members met at the home of President Amy Markham and her sister Blanche for a barbecue.

While the coals were warming up, Amy informed the members that they were invited to birthday celebrations with the Littleport Branch and Harvest Festival invitations came from Three Holes and Emneth.

Bettine Watson received a handkerchief for gaining maximum points in recent competitions.

Members thoroughly enjoyed the traditional barbecue fayre, which made a pleasant change from the usual meeting.

The lucky judges who tasted the homemade lemon curd in the competition were Jean Newell and Rita Sweet. Cissie Bedford and Jennifer James gained 5 points Amy Markham 4 points with 3 points going to Queenie Johnson and Vera Singleterry.

Raffle winners were Cissie Bedford, Queenie Johnson and Peggy Smart.

Amy Markham welcomed everyone to the September meeting, which included visitors from March St. Mary, Christchurch, Littleport and Fridaybridge

After a short business session the guest speaker for the evening was introduced, a familiar face to many in the village, Adam Giles. After giving up his job in London Adam and his girlfriend decided to travel the world for a year. Among the many places they stayed were China, Hong Kong, Singapore and Australia where they took work on fruit farms. After spending a wonderful Christmas with relations in Perth the New Year found them in New Zealand and then on to the beautiful islands of Fiji and Bali before returning to the Fens.

Apart from lots of photographs, Adam had everyone in fits of laughter as he regaled his audience with hilarious stories from their travels along with a few sad moments and a selection of clothing they wore in hot countries. All too soon it was time for refreshments but it is hoped that Adam may make a return visit some time in the future.

Amy organized a quiz on London Underground Stations and raffle winners were Ann Wright, Peggy Smart, Blanche Markham, Rosemary Easy, Irene Munting and Joyce Henchman.

To enter the competition members had to decorate a doily. Margaret Sparrow was judge and awarded Queenie Johnson 5 points, Blanche Markham 4 points and Amy Markham 3 points.

The speaker for the October meeting is connected to the Air Ambulance Service, and the competition is for the best Chocolate Sponge. (lucky judge)

November is celebration time with the Birthday Dinner, which this year will be at the Lamb and Flag.

HABITAT CREATION FOR LOCAL RESIDENTS IN NEED!

Living here in Welney we are accustomed to the breathtaking sight of large flocks of Lapwing over winter fields, the far-carrying calls of Redshank in spring, and the enigmatic sound of drumming Snipe on a still summer evening. It is easy to forget that the national status of these and other wetland birds is giving great cause for concern. Numbers of many wader species went into decline in the 19th century with agricultural changes and major land drainage projects. Despite some periods of recovery, the general trend is still one of overall decline. Even refuges such as the Ouse Washes are not the havens they once were.

Since the mid-Seventies, records show that late flooding (May-June) has occurred on the Washes in three out of every four years. As is well known, such floods are disastrous for ground-nesting birds, including waders, and the frequency of flooding means that populations do not get a chance to recover. Numbers can only be sustained without decline if flooding is restricted to once in every five years on average.

For some years, the RSPB, the Environment Agency and others have joined forces to look at ways of reducing the frequency of late floods, including the holding of water further upstream in the flood defense system. Such measures would be prohibitively expensive and would only barely achieve the desired result given present rainfall levels, with no 'slack' to accommodate probable further increases in extreme weather conditions.

In years of late flooding, some birds attempt to nest in arable land adjacent to the Washes. The typical crops of potatoes, beet and winter wheat are not hospitable to nesting waders; cover for nests and young birds is poor, and there not enough invertebrates – earthworms for the adults and insects for the chicks – for their feeding needs. Consequently breeding success is low.

In 2001, some land close to the RSPB's centre at Welches Dam became available for tenancy. It was ideal – an area of six fields running alongside the Washes. The County Council agreed to let the RSPB become the tenant, and in autumn 2002 the handover took

place.

The task of converting arable land into the required damp grassland was a major one. The land needed to be levelled – Fen farmland is anything but flat when looked at closely – and a network of shallow channels established to enable water to be dispersed over the surface while avoiding excessive pooling of surface water. In order to be able to control the water table precisely the area had to be physically isolated from surrounding fields, and a system of water pumps and piping devised and installed. Water extraction rights had to be negotiated. Finally the land was to be sown with a grass mixture that would provide the necessary 'lumpy' appearance, with clumps and tussocks to give cover and nest sites.

The isolation was achieved by laboriously installing stout plastic sheeting to a depth of 2m around the entire perimeter – over two kilometres – of the land. The levelling of each field and the creation of surface furrows would have taken many months by conventional digging methods. The decision was taken to import a piece of technological wizardry, a Rotary Ditcher, from the prairies of the USA. While this was a big capital outlay it meant that the work was ultimately completed in days rather than months. The land was levelled and, with a special laser guidance system, the furrows were automatically kept truly level and the depth precise during cutting.

When all the preparation of the surface was complete, the area was sown with a mixture of nine different grass species, some coarser and some finer, in order to achieve a 'patchy' look. This effect would later be enhanced by the introduction of cattle, which tend to graze selectively, leaving the clumps of coarser grasses to grow tall.

The water table needs to be raised to about 20cm below the surface during the breeding season; to bring invertebrates such as worms and leatherjackets close to the surface, and to keep the ground soft so that wader species can probe for their prey. Water is gravity-fed from perimeter ditches into the furrow system, with levels maintained by pumping from either IDB drains or from the Washes themselves. Outside the breeding season, the water table can be lowered to allow the earthworms and other food species plenty of room to multiply

before the next breeding season.

The pilot project area has now been in use over two breeding seasons. Results so far have been encouraging, particularly following the late flood in May 2004. Numbers of breeding pairs of Snipe, Redshank and Lapwing on the six fields went up abruptly as the flood waters rose, as did those of various species of duck. It was no less attractive to smaller bird species such as skylarks, well known to be suffering nationwide from a lack of suitable nesting grounds. In addition, aquatic plant species and those suited to damp ground have begun to move in, and the furrow and ditch system is increasingly providing a home for many invertebrate species. On a warm day in late summer or early autumn large numbers of dragonflies can be seen hunting over the fields.

The pilot project is still in its early days but is already providing much data on the process of habitat re-creation, which will be of great value for similar projects elsewhere. The project area, with its characteristic pattern of surface furrows, can be seen from a number of points along the Barrier Bank where flights of steps lead up to the RSPB viewing hides. To get to the RSPB reserve, head for Manea from Welney, drive along the main street through the village centre, and as you leave the village watch out for a turning on the left, signposted for Welches' Dam. Follow this road towards the Washes until you eventually arrive at a small group of houses and farms; the road terminates at the RSPB car park where there is a small visitor centre. For information call the RSPB on 01354 680212, or try the RSPB website, www.rspb.org.uk

WELNEY SUCCESS AT PISCES

Pisces Caravan Park and Fishery, has been awarded a Gold medal from the David Belamy Conservation organisation. The award is well-deserved recognition for all the hard work Mike and Julie Jones have put into turning the site around in just 2 years, from a tired and shabby holiday park into an oasis for wildlife and fishermen alike.

Mike and Julie moved down to Welney with their children, Melissa, Tamzyn and Zac, in

November of 2002. While waiting to purchase Pisces they were accommodated at the Lamb and Flag pub, for a full 3 and a half months. Many friends were made during this very stressful time, and deepest thanks are deserved to Den and Gina, and staff.

Pisces is a small friendly site, 22 acres in total; this includes 4 well-stocked fishing lakes. We have a diverse range of wildlife including; badgers, water voles, bank voles, a pair of mute swans, nesting kingfishers, muntjac deer, numerous butterflies and dragonflies, at least 3 species of bats, all three species of native British woodpeckers, and nesting grebes.

Over the past two years Mike & Julie have carried out extensive planting of trees and shrubs throughout the site, in a project that will continue this year. All the swims around the main lake have been dug out and made safe. An ornamental Koi pond has replaced the old storage sheds in the car park with a visitor's office full of local information and wildlife identification posters alongside it. Perhaps the largest improvement so far, has been the replacement of the site's electrical supply, and the addition of low level energy efficient lights all around the main lake.

Pisces is a popular fishery and in the past 12 months world champion angler Bob Nudd has been on site several times and filmed 2 specialist angling videos here, the Angling Times uses Pisces as a testing lake for new equipment and in the past few months Sky Sports have been down to film the Young Angler of the Year.

Unfortunately for all you anglers out there Pisces no longer offers day tickets and is exclusively for holidaymakers and caravan owners. It is this policy that this played a part in Pisces winning the award as it's very quietness encourages all manner of wildlife.

The award is very prestigious and both Mike & Julie are overwhelmed at their success, both pledge to continue the improvements to the site and look forward to another successful season in 2005.

Rachel Brown

CHURCH SERVICES DATES AND TIMES

October, November, December 2004

Oct. 3rd	9:30 HC <i>The Ven. J. Beer</i>
Oct. 10th	11:00 AAW <i>Stephen Tooke</i>
Oct. 17th	9:30 MP <i>Stephen Tooke</i>
Oct. 24th	9:30 MP <i>Revd. G. Letts</i>
Oct. 31st	United Service- 10.00am Christchurch <i>Revd. S. Tooke/S.E. Tooke</i>
Nov. 7th	9:30 HC <i>The Ven. J. Beer</i>
Nov. 14th	11.00am Remembrance Service <i>Revd. S. Tooke</i>
Nov. 21st	9:30 MP <i>Stephen Tooke</i>
Nov. 28th	6.30pm Advent Praise <i>Revd. S. Tooke</i>
Dec. 5th	9:30 HC <i>Revd. S. Tooke</i>
Dec. 12th	11:00 AAW <i>Revd. G. Letts</i>
Dec. 19th	9:30 MP <i>Stephen Tooke</i>
Dec. 24th	8.00pm HC <i>Revd. S. Tooke</i>
Dec. 25th	United Service-10.00am Manea <i>Revd. G. Letts</i>
Dec. 26th	United Service -10.00am Manea <i>John Crisp</i>

THE NORFOLK SHIRE HORSE CENTRE

If you and your family enjoy anything to do with horses, another good destination is the Shire Horse Centre at West Runton, near Cromer. The Centre is a working museum with an extensive display of horse-drawn agricultural machinery, carts, and Roma trailers. On most days there are demonstrations of ploughing or harrowing, following which the stars of the Centre – the horses themselves – are given an introduction in a long and quite detailed presentation by the Centre's proprietor. Each

of the three British draught horse breeds, the Shire, Clydesdale, and the Suffolk Punch are represented, as are the continental Percheron and Ardennes. The Suffolk Punch is the rarest of these breeds and it was good to see that the Centre's resident mare Bess had a healthy foal with her this summer!

It is permitted for all visitors to pat and feed the horses; and though feeding by hand is known to make horses prone to biting, it certainly didn't seem to be the case for these huge but most gentle animals. It was quite a sight to see an 18-hand Shire Horse delicately taking food from the tiny hands of some of his young visitors. My favourite was McTavish, the Clydesdale, whose mouth was certainly the softest as he carefully 'hoovered' up the food from my palm.

At the other end of the size scale in the equine world are some of the native British pony breeds. There are all colours of Shetland at the Centre including two lovely ermine-spotted Appaloosas and the glossy black mare 'Star' who is a very clever counting pony. The counting demonstration is very well done, with lots of audience participation. There are New Forest and Welsh ponies too, with many young foals to be seen in the late spring and summer. As with the big horses, the ponies can be touched and fed, and, perhaps atypically, they are all very good-natured.

There is a childrens' corner with ducks, geese, pigs, goats, chickens, donkeys and many more. There is also a play area, a 'touch table' display where among other things you can feel the weight of one of those huge collars, and a Maize maze in late summer. Along with a café and gift shop there is lots to see and it is quite easy to while away an afternoon here.

There is good access to most of the Centre for wheelchairs and pushchairs. Dogs are allowed on lead.

The Centre is open approx. April to October, every day except - rather oddly - not on Saturdays. It is easy to find, not far from the main coast road and in the village itself. For more information, prices etc the telephone number is **01263 837132**, and there is a website, www.norfolk-shire-horse-centre.co.uk



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FRIENDSHIP CLUB

The club had a very enjoyable day out in August, with a visit to Thetford then, after refreshments, on to Banham Zoo. They were very lucky with the weather as it wasn't until they all piled on to the bus for the homeward journey that the heavens opened.

By the time you read this article they will have journeyed to the tiny village of Crich in Derbyshire, which is the base for many old trams that have been restored to their former glory, and some are in operation in the grounds.

Some members were recently invited to the Harvest Festival celebrations at Christchurch over 60's.

On October the 12th club members are holding their party in the village hall, with November 9th pencilled in as a shopping trip to Lakeside.

The Friendship Club meet every other Tuesday for a chat, cup of tea and games such as whist, dominoes and bingo. If you would like to pop along or want to find out more about the outings, call Cissie Bedford on 01354 610206



The Gala Bar



WI meeting and BBQ at Amy's 4th August

A RURAL VIEW

Despite the inevitable concentration by the media on the even messier situation far away in Iraq it can hardly have escaped anyone's notice that back home the foxhunting debate has also been cracked up a few notches.

Just when you thought that there might finally be some resolution to the seemingly interminable and irreconcilable arguments for and against this country pursuit things have got much nastier.

Living in the heart of the fens as we do, we are fortunately, somewhat detached from the issue, since this is not fertile hunting ground. Largely spared from the divisive impact of living in an area where hunting regularly takes place, we are fortunate that it is still possible to sit on the fence - there being no walls - as we do not have to agree with either of the equally passionate sides of the argument.

It is curious to see how recently the disruptive behaviour of the 'antis' has apparently transferred total across to the 'pros' and had a few additional degrees bolted on to it. The sight of people bursting into the chamber of the House of Commons and yesterday preventing Peter Hain from leaving his house can hardly be described as dignified behaviour. I fail to see how such behaviour can benefit their cause.

On the other hand though it does ably demonstrate the strength of feeling possessed by those really caught up in the argument.

Surely this alone presents a very strong case for having the issue resolved once and for all by our legislators? Strange then that only a few weeks ago the whole issue of fox hunting was being described as a waste of parliamentary time and a distraction from what really matters to the country. I think not.

What particularly bothers me at present is how the pro-hunting lobby purport to speak on behalf of all those living in the countryside, when quite clearly they don't. Apparently the passing of this bill is a threat to life in the countryside as we know it. That's curious because surely hunting could also be described as a threat to life in the countryside too! Doubtless the media are to blame for not highlighting

other aspects of living in the country, which in reality are putting our lives in the flatlands under far greater threat. Surely whether you are for or against foxhunting you have to be concerned about the lack of public transport, the cost of private transport, the closure of schools, shops and post offices etc. Country-side Alliance posters urging the government to 'stop the prejudice' would generate more support if they referred to the fewer resources, lack of funding and generally higher cost of living in rural areas.

This is common ground and is ultimately far more important, but because of our inflated and mixed up concern for that well known creature *Vulpes vulpes*, we have little energy left to fight for it.

Another thing that concerns me is the almost obsessive belief that poor old Reynard is a pest and that he and his kind have to be controlled. Of course there are clearly situations where control is necessary, but each case needs to be judged on its own merits. In the fens foxes are not classified officially as agricultural pests and generally cause few problems that cannot be overcome without killing them. One has to ask why then so many people feel the need to get rid of them. On the other hand what about the real economic pests, why aren't people even more hell bent on getting rid of those?

That other cuddly creature the rabbit doesn't have people dressing up in strange clothes and chasing after it. Why Not? A cynic could conclude that as a rabbit makes a good meal for a fox we can't control them because there'd be fewer foxes to kill. But surely if there were more foxes there'd be fewer rabbits, or have I got it all wrong.

Finally, the alternative method of fox control - legal that is - shooting has come into sharp focus recently. In the last few weeks the national press has reported the deaths of two people and the critical injuring of a young boy probably as a result 'accidents' that have happened during 'lamping'. That seems to me to be an alarmingly high strike rate. If hunting actually does get banded and more people feel impelled to pick up a gun, it could well be us that need to watch out and not the fox.

Tim Bennett

Dates for your diary

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				October	1	2
3 9.30 HC	4	5 	6 WI 	7 	8 	9
10 11 AAW	11	12  Public meeting	13 	14 	15	16
17  9.30 MP	18	19 	20 	21 	22	23
24 9.30 MP	25	26	27 	28 	29	30
31 10 US November	1	2 	3 WI 	4 	5 	6
7 9.30 HC	8	9	10 	11 	12	13 Autumn fayre
14 11 Remembrance	15	16 	17 	18 	19	20
21  9.30 MP	22	23	24 	25 	26	27
28 6.30pm Advent Praise	29	30 				



Carpet Bowls
Ring Pat Rix for details of
available evenings



Line Dancing 7-30 pm
Pavilion



Parish Council Meeting
7-30 pm Village Hall
Open to the Public



Teddy Church
10-30 am St Mary's



Mobile Library
9-30 Hale Drove End
10-30 The Lamb & Flag Car
Park



God's Gang
St Mary's Church
10.45-12



Parish Hall
Meeting



Friendship Club
2-00 pm Village Hall



Yoga Sessions
8 pm to 9.30 pm
Village Hall. Wed's
Yoga Session
10.00 am to 11.30 am
Pavilion Thur's

WI

Women's' Institute
7-00 pm, Village Hall

Church Services;
MP = Morning Prayer
HC = Holy Communion
AAW = All Age Worship
US = United Service