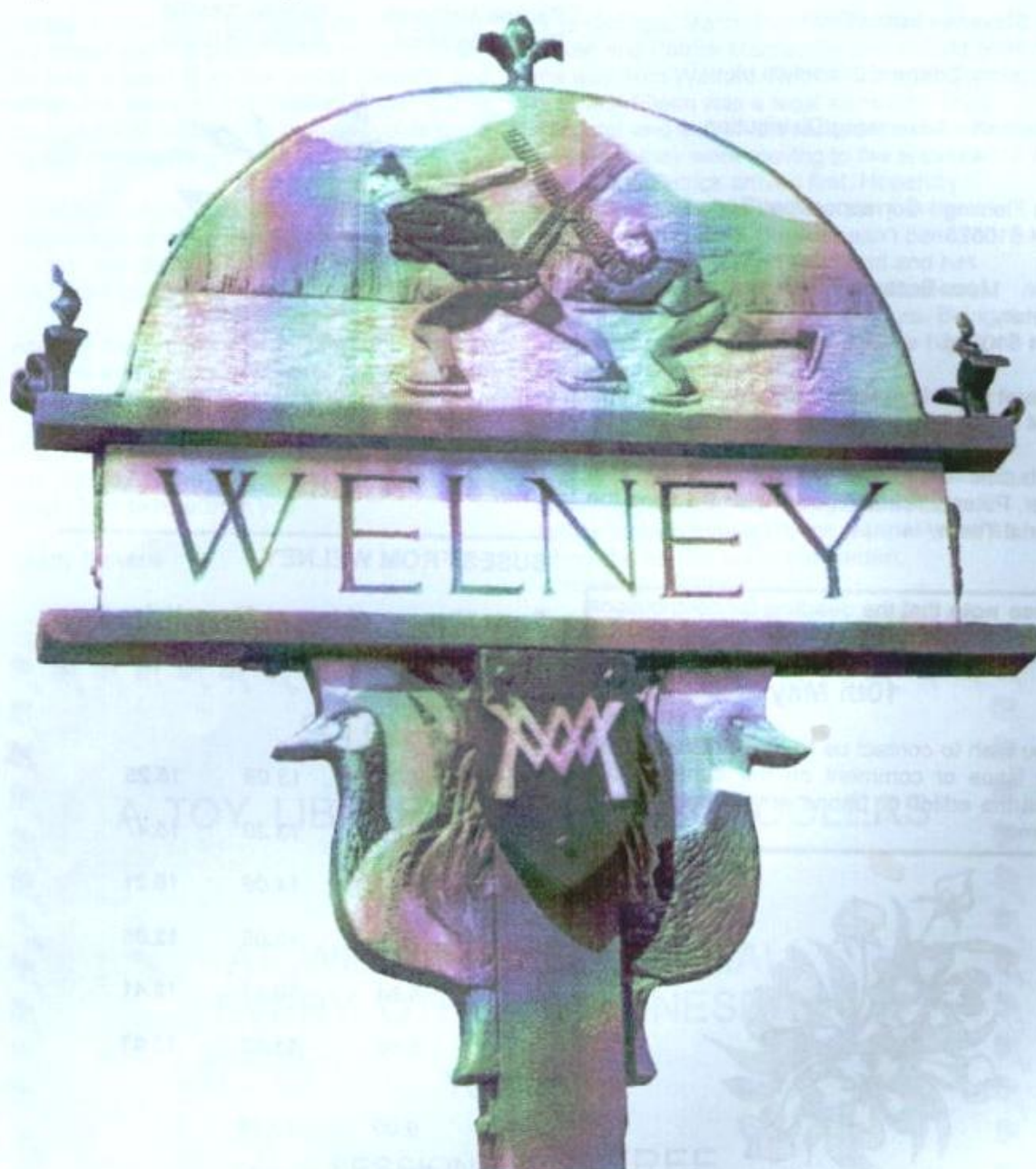


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WELNEY NEWS

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

10th May

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



DISCLAIMER

All items and articles in the Welney News are
not necessarily the opinion of the Editorial team
or anyone else connected to the Welney News.
We reserve the right to alter submitted material
in consultation with the person submitting the
article.

Welney Churchwardens

Pauline Aisthorpe 01366 - 384658
Rosina Beckford 01354 - 610385



BUSES FROM WELNEY

Some changes of bus at Three Holes may
be required

Monday-Saturday

March 9.00 13.08 15.25

Welney 9.22 13.30 15.47

Wisbech 10.01 14.06 16.21

Wisbech 10.05 12.05

Welney 8.24 10.41 12.41

March 8.50 11.03 13.03

March 9.00 13.08

Welney 9.22 13.30

D'Market 9.57 14.03

D'Market 7.50 10.08 12.05

Welney 8.24 10.41 12.41

March 8.50 11.03 13.03

EDITORIAL

Spring is now here, the evenings are becoming longer and the grass needs mowing again. So take a break from the spring cleaning and enjoy this issue of the Welney News. It is packed full of articles, reviews of events gone by and exciting things to do in the future.

I am particularly enjoying reading about the happenings and new developments down at Pisces and there is another chance to enter the house building competition for a £50 prize.

Another page definitely worth a look is page 23. It is always very good to see people embarrassing themselves for a good cause!!

If anyone wants to become involved in making the Welney News please get in touch. We would love to hear from you

Jenny Stevens

WELCOME TO WELNEY

The Cottage, March Road is the new home of Eileen and Patrick Mackenzie who moved all the way from Watford. Patrick is a retired postman and Eileen was a legal secretary. Their daughter and son-in-law started the ball rolling by saying they were moving to the area but Eileen and Patrick arrived first. Hopefully it won't be too long before they can join them in our part of the world. Patrick hasn't been too well lately but is now on the mend and has been amazed at our excellent medical services and the kindness of neighbours. Being a postman for 39 years he also speaks highly of our local postal services.

At the moment Eileen and Patrick are busy decorating and the other two occupants of The Cottage are keeping them on their toes. Carla and Laura are six-month-old Golden retriever pups, very popular with the grandchildren. Eileen is looking forward to the warmer weather when she can be out in the garden. Welcome to Welney.

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WELNEY PARISH COUNCIL

Following a very busy January for the Parish Council, the amount of work continued with an additional meeting being held on 10th February 2005.

A vacancy had arisen on the Trustees of Marshalls Charity, Welney, following the death of Denis Booth, and Cllr. Steve Kerr was appointed to fill that vacancy.

A request had been received from the Borough Council and the Housing Society responsible for the new houses being built on the Lamb and Flag carpark, for the Parish Council to put forward suggestions for the name of the road. Three suggestions were confirmed:- 1. Flag Close, 2 Old Bedford Row and 3. Bridge Close. As soon as we receive information as to which name has been chosen, we will let you know.

In-house Parish Council Training has been arranged for Tuesday 22nd March at 7 p.m. in the Parish Hall.

The Chairman then gave a brief explanation of the situation regarding the Parish Council's use of an area on the Welney Web Site. Mr. Peter Cox, the web master attended the meeting and explained how the web site was set up, and how the Parish Council pages could look. A short agreement was then prepared for signature by both Mr. Cox and the Chairman of the Parish Council in connection with our web pages.

(Note: The agreement has now been signed and as those of you who have access to the internet will no doubt have seen, our Web Pages are up and running, complete with minutes of previous meetings etc. In due course further information will be displayed together with accounts, and we all hope this will be very worthwhile for the village.)

Finally under the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act the council have to agree a charge for Parish Council information that is requested by members of the public. Such a request has to be received in writing and it was agreed that a charge of 10p per A4 sheet would be levied for all copies requested.

The Annual Parish Meeting was called, as re-

quested by Law, at 7 p.m. on Tuesday 8th March, 2005 in the Parish Hall. However the Parish Council were disappointed that not one single member of the public attended the Annual Parish Meeting, and Council spent a short time discussing a meeting with Mr. Eastgate of the NCC Highways that had taken place earlier in the day.

The Regular meeting of the Parish Council commenced at 7.30 p.m. on Tuesday 8th March, 2005. C.Cllr. H. Humphrey and 7 members of the public attended in addition to the Parish Council members.

The Citizens Advice Bureau surgery has now been held on two occasions. Unfortunately no one attended the first session, but we understand that the second session was supported. A problem arose with the CAB not vacating the Kitchen area in time for the Doctors visit, but a request has been sent to them stating that the Kitchen must be available for the Doctor by 10mins to 12, and this will be monitored.

Parish Action Plan Committee. Cllr. Bennett confirmed that two meetings have been held and a further meeting is planned within the next week. In order to satisfy the requirements of application for funding, the committee has now been appointed an official sub-committee of the Parish Council and will therefore have to operate strictly to the Parish Council Standing Orders.

Parish Meeting with Gillian Shephard - Several of the points raised at the meeting had now been attended to including highway matters, illegal shooting etc. Cambridgeshire County Council are not prepared to pay for an additional sign at Tips End, so it was agreed that we should contact Christchurch Parish Council to see if they would be prepared to assist.

Meeting with Elgoods Brewery - Four options for the site were put forward by Elgoods Brewery, together with two from councillors, for consideration and these are:

DEVELOPMENT SITE - OLD THREE TUNS PUBLIC HOUSE ETC, WELNEY

The following options were put forward to Elgood and Sons at their meeting with the Parish Council on 25th January, 2005.

1. To build a new Public House on the site of The Three Tuns and close the existing Lamb and Flag. The existing Lamb and Flag could then be sold off.

2. Repair the Lamb and Flag (which is subsid-ing badly) and build an extension to the exist-ing building to give more room. This would mean that the existing planning permission on the River Bank site for 7 houses would re-main,.

3. To purchase the site of the Parish Hall from the Parish Council (the Council would have to first purchase the site from the Environment Agency) and then the PC would have funds to go towards the building of a New Parish Hall on another site.

4. Pay a lesser sum for the site of the Parish Hall and then build a new Public House on the River side site with a Function Room built onto the end which could be used as a Parish Hall and a Function Room, to make a complete Waterside Development.

If the Parish Council were to go for Option 4 then Elgoods would make sure that an agree-ment was written into any covenant for the new Lamb and Flag that the Function room was to be made available for the use of the village as a Parish Hall. In any event the ex-isting Lamb and Flag would remain open until such time as a new Public House was built and ready to move into.

Option received from Cllr.T. Bray

5. The possibility of Elgoods purchasing the site of the Parish Hall, and then a new hall be-ing built on the site of the existing Lamb and Flag keeping all buildings on the same site, and still having the use of the Car Park facili-ties.

Option received from Cllr M. Jones

6. Where the current Playing Field/pavilion is situated, he believes that the car park is within the building line. Consideration could there-fore be given to selling it off for three or four first time private dwellings (i.e. £50,000 to £60,000 per plot. This sorts one of Welney's problems.

The funds would be ample to re-build the pa-

vilion to accommodate ample space for a new Hall/Pavilion in one, and this would meet Prob-lem 2 (only one buildings running costs.) The field is ample size to build a loose gravel track for outer perimeter parking for the Hall/ Pavilion.

I would estimate the build cost at around £60,000 to £80,000 leaving up to £160,000 towards replacing the children's Play Area completely and therefore Problem 3 would be sorted.

The remaining money can then go towards 3 No. Speed cameras for entering into the Vil-lage (Problem 4) As we pay for or towards them then we get some or all of the fines and they become self-maintaining and in fact could support a small income toward the village and maybe enough to support a village person be-ing part time employed as Parkie/Grounds person.

I have checked the access road where the en-trance is and the 30 mph signs are in the wrong place when coming from March and should be further towards March where cam-era 1 could be located facing into the village. This would slow traffic on approach to the en-trance to the playing field. There would also be sufficient funds left over to allow traffic calming measures which would again slow vehicles and make that entry safe (Problem 5)

We sell off the Hall as suggested to Elgoods with a proviso that when they sell off the old Lamb and Flag it is not to be for council/ Association Housing but for first time buyers again, thereby generating further income to support payment of Grounds person.

Finally due to the income generated from the sell off and the reduction of two buildings into one, I believe that for 2006 the council can lower the precept to our Parish drastically and therefore that would sort Problem 6 - com-plaints of High Council Tax.

We therefore gain more respect and confi-dence in our community.

Following general discussion with the mem-bers of the public and the Parish Council it was agreed that a further meeting would be held on 16th March, 2005 to formulate plans for an Open Meeting and/or Referendum of

the village as soon as possible.

Three quotations were received for a new Parish Council Notice Board, and the quotation from Mr.S.Kerr was accepted.

It is very much hoped that it will be possible to hold a Gala on the Playing Field again this year. Mr.D.Stevens agreed to liaise with those who had put their names forward. If there is anyone else who would be willing to help please let the Clerk have your names as soon as possible so that arrangements can be put in hand at the earliest opportunity.

A further vacancy has arisen on the Marshalls Charity Trustees due to the resignation of Mrs.J.Maton. Mr. T.Bray and Mr.P.Cox were nominated, and after a secret ballot, Mr. T.Bray was duly appointed to fill the position.

A grant of £200 was approved to St.Mary's Church, Welney to assist with the upkeep of the Churchyard.

Various items of correspondence were considered and dealt with as necessary.

Following a recent request for parishioners to come forward to join the Parish Hall Management Committee, no names had been received. Following discussion it was therefore agreed that the Management Committee should be dissolved and full responsibility for the running and management of the Parish Hall should be handed to the Parish Council. It was unanimously agreed that letters of thanks should be sent to the committee members.

The Chairman also reported that he had had a meeting with members of the Playing Field Committee and it was confirmed that this is a sub-committee of the Parish Council and therefore falls under their Standing Orders. Officers of the committee will therefore be appointed at the Parish Council AGM in May. It was also agreed that a separate bank account would be opened for the Playing Field, rather than have these monies included in the general Parish Council Account.

THE NEXT REGULAR MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL WILL BE THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND WILL BE HELD ON TUESDAY 10TH MAY, 2005 AT 7.30

P.M.IN THE PARISH HALL.

Pat Copeman (Clerk to the Parish Council.)

FRIENDSHIP CLUB

Friendship Club members were tucking in to hot cross buns on 15th March and it was good to see Mr. Pink back in circulation. Unfortunately another popular member, Ken Sorenson, was in hospital so best wishes go out to him and everyone hopes he will be back joining in the games and quizzes before too long.

Dates and destinations for outings are yet to be finalised and everyone is looking forward to the first one, which is likely to be in May. If you would like to join in the fun at the village hall why not pop along one Tuesday (see diary page for dates) The Easter raffle will be held on the 29th March.

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PISCES PROGRESS

By Rachel Brown

The entrance to the day lake has been dramatically altered; previously the only access to the lake was a shabby and slippery old bridge over the drainage ditch, but the ditch has now been re-routed and replaced with pipes before being covered over. This opens up the lake beautifully and makes access for our holiday-makers much simpler and altogether safer. Next part of this project is the turfing... weather permitting the plan is to lay over a thousand pieces sometime next week... gulp!

Never one to rest, Mike has already set his sights on the next job. This time he is planning a woodland / nature walk through an area of overgrown and untouched trees. We hope to create a little oasis, a place to take a quiet walk through the trees. Once the path has been created, Julie's expertise will be called on to decide which plants / flowers are needed.

Smaller jobs completed in the past few weeks include bird and bat boxes being put up all around site, fencing added along the back corner of the park giving caravan owners more privacy and security, whilst the car park has now been gravelled. The leylandii hedge that runs along the front of the park has been cut back to a manageable height and our log cabin style office has been put in place. All in all the entrance area has been transformed

over the past two years and is now considerably more welcoming to van owners and holidaymakers alike.

A plant auction visit resulted in another large selection of trees being added to the site: walnut, beech, cherry, apple and plum trees to name just a few, plus numerous shrubs.

Wildlife-wise we are privileged to see almost daily a barn owl patrolling up and down the lane, the kestrel I mentioned in my last Pisces update is also a regular visitor and in the past few weeks we've seen fieldfares, mistle and song thrushes, plus a family of long-tailed tits who have become regular visitors to our bird feeders my home made fat block seems to be their favourite!! (Ingredients: suet, chopped apples, sultanas and peanuts) Recently we have also seen weasels, rabbits and water voles here on site...what a wonderful place this is!

Here's a second chance to have a go at winning yourself £50 all you need to do is guess the date that the Jones family will spend their first night in their new home...closest guess wins. (all entries need to be on the voucher below, if more that one person correctly guesses the date the prize money will be shared equally...) winners name in a future edition of Welney News.....We have had a mere two entries so far....so come on take a guess...what have you got to lose?

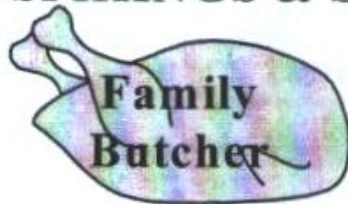
Hello again Teds!

In February, as we were about to embark on the season of Lent, we celebrated the opportunity to gorge on pancakes and all things delicious by creating culinary masterpieces with a selection of fine, fresh ingredients (well, alright then, well-fingered plastic play food) which we pretended to devour, with relish (or tomato sauce, mayonnaise!). We talked about why we have the seasonal binge followed by forty days of abstinence from chosen pleasures (no, I'm not giving up my chocolate for anyone ... I'm giving up sprouts!), then I panicked everyone present by proclaiming that the fast would begin immediately and we would not be having our customary drink and bis-

(Tel: 01945-773932 ... Holly ... if you would like to know even more about Teddy Church, or just come along and join us.)

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BROADBAND FOR WELNEY.

Although BT originally required one hundred people to register, on the BT website, their interest in Broadband before adapting a telephone exchange, they will now give Welney Broadband on 18th May.

The following is for people who wonder whether to stay with their present ISP or subscribe to a different one. The website www.uswitch.com is very helpful and easy to use. After answering questions about your pattern of Internet usage you will be shown packages from various ISP's best suited to your needs. For instance, if, like me, you want Broadband mainly in order to free your telephone line, then speed and down-load limits won't be as important as they would be for someone who wants to download a lot or who works from home. Happy surfing or whatever you like doing online!

Marlen Moss-Eccardt.

EATING OUT WITH BILLY BUNTER

On those odd occasions where you find that our own Lamb and Flag is booked-up, you may want to look a bit further afield to dine. So this series of articles may give you an idea of where to try.

As a kick-off the Golden Lion has been sampled. You will find this pub at Stonea, just before you get to the railway underpass where you always feel obliged to duck, even though you are in your car.

The Golden Lion has been advertising itself lately as having 'an award winning fire' amongst other things. First impressions on pulling into the car park were not that good – but don't judge a book by its cover! Once inside your eyes were drawn to that fire with tables neatly assembled in front of it. This particular Saturday night visit in January had the pub quite deserted initially, filling up as the night went on.

Bombardier and IPA were on offer as hand-pulls at around £2.00 per pint. Our reserved table soon came available and we were shown through to the glass conservatory where service was quick and friendly. The 8 oz rump steak was good as was the lamb shank, with the prices being £8.25 and £8.50. Generally desserts seem to be a let down nowadays, mostly on offer here was something from the freezer at £2.75 (why are such things so expensive?).

The menu gave a good selection of food, even with take-away pizzas available. The conservatory was a nice setting, more so in summer I would think as on the night it could have done with improved lighting – the portable gas heaters are not the most endearing of things – yes certainly a good summer place to be.

After the meal it was nice to retire back to the fire for more drinks and conversation with the landlords George and Mandy who were extremely amiable.

Would I go back again?
Yes, certainly.

DOG FOULING

In response to a request from residents experiencing problems with dog fouling on the village pavements, here is a reminder to the people responsible of the possible consequences of not clearing up after their dog. Information supplied by Kevin Moore, Senior Environmental Officer.

"The Dogs (Fouling of Land) Act 1996 makes it compulsory to clean up after a dog on any highway maintainable at public expense where the speed limit is 40mph or less.

The Act also covers footways of such a highway, footpaths, cycle tracks and all grass verges adjacent to the above. In addition the borough council has also designated a number of other areas where it is compulsory to clean up after a dog, e.g. playing fields, parks, football fields etc.,

If an authorised officer of the borough council witness's a dog foul on designated land and the person responsible for the dog at the time fails to clean up after the dog, that person shall be guilty of an offence and upon conviction may be liable to a fine of up to but not exceeding £1000. Not having a bag or other suitable means of removing the faeces is no excuse for failing to clean up after a dog."

Please have some consideration for others.

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WHAT'S NEW IN THE WILD WORLD?

In Welney we are very fortunate to have a wonderful nature reserve right on our doorstep – and a team of staff who are more than happy to share its beauty with us, in a range of talks, slide shows, and guided activities. (Look out in particular for family events during the school holidays).

Just occasionally it's good to have a change of scene, and without having to go too far we can visit a number of other wildlife refuges.

The RSPB Ouse Washes Reserve at Manea is open all year, and also has some special events which you can enjoy whether or not you are a member of the RSPB. Most of these events are free of charge! Here is a selection:

Monday 2nd May - 'Bank Holiday Ferry Service'. Take a boat trip to one of the hides, where a warden will help you to identify the birds and understand their behaviour. Trips take place between 10am and 4pm.

Sunday 29th May - Dawn Chorus Walk on the Reserve. Join one of the wardens for an early morning walk around the reserve, 'tuning in' to the sounds of the many bird species that breed on and around the reserve. The early morning magic is well worth the effort of getting up extra early! 5am to 8am.

Monday 30th May - 'Bank Holiday Ferry Service'. Details as for 2nd May.

Sunday 26th June - 'Walk the Washes'. Take a stroll on the reserve, looking at washland plants, dragonflies and birds. Learn how the reserve is managed. Enjoy the experience of peace and open space on the Washes. 1pm to 4pm. (There is a charge for this event; £3 adults, £1-50 children, reductions for RSPB/Wildlife Explorers members).

Places should be booked in advance for these events. Please come prepared with suitable outdoor clothing! Under-16s must be accompanied by an adult.

For more information and bookings, please contact the RSPB Ouse Washes office; 01354 680212.

A little further afield but well worth the travelling is **Ramsey Heights Countryside Classroom**. A little different from the surrounding Fen landscape, Ramsey Heights is the site of a disused brick and tile works owned and operated by the Summers family until the time of World War I. The family and the workers lived on the site, and where cottages and gardens once stood are now wild areas of trees, shrubs and brambles – home for many wild creatures including spiders, butterflies and moths. Boardwalks give access to pond and marsh areas where amphibians such as Great Crested Newts can be seen. Mature trees and remains of old buildings give shelter to owls and bats. The original fuel store has been renovated and is now a spacious – and rustically beautiful – classroom. Ramsey Heights specializes in guided events for families, and here are details of two of them:

Friday 22nd April – 'Amphibian Evening'. An introduction to the world of amphibians, and a dusk walk around the reserve to see Great Crested Newts by torchlight.

Wednesday 1st June – 'Wildlife Safari'. Go in search of wildlife on the reserve with magnifying glasses at the ready! A family activity for Half Term. 2pm-4pm.

Ramsey Heights is managed by the Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Northamptonshire and Peterborough Wildlife Trust. Family events are open to non-members of the Wildlife Trust. There is usually a request for a small donation to help with running costs. Please book places by telephoning the **Centre Manager, Helen Moore, 01353 664745 or 07703 582065**. The reserve also hosts school visits and now runs events for reception and year 1 children.

To find Ramsey Heights, head for Doddington between March and Chatteris, then take the B1093 and B1096 for Ramsey. A few miles from Ramsey is the hamlet of Ramsey Heights (best found by looking in your road atlas) with signposting for the reserve itself.

Karen Fleming

Osborne Place Boarding Kennel

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PAVILION

The Playing Field Committee are trying to come up with ideas to make better use of the pavilion. One suggestion was for family groups (with a supervising adult) to hold snooker/pool or table tennis evenings, making a welcome change from the TV and computer screen. There would be a small charge for hire of equipment and the pavilion. There is a limited amount of equipment available at the moment, small pool tables, cues and a selection of balls but if enough people show some enthusiasm for this project there is a good chance that more can be purchased.

There is an A.G.M. planned for April (date to be agreed and announced) so if you are interested in any of the above or have some ideas of your own to put forward please come along. Details from Pat Rix 01354 610292

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THE NORFOLK OLDER PEOPLES' STRATEGY

And now for some more details about the 'Living Longer, Living Well' strategy, which was mentioned in our previous issue.

The Strategy was devised after contributions of information were made from many individuals and groups of people, and from many professional organisations. A profile of the population of older people in Norfolk was produced, and their wants and needs were summarised. Existing services and opportunities were looked at; and where wants and needs were not met, a list of priorities and needed actions was drawn up.

The Facts; approximately 180 000 people in Norfolk are over the age of 65 - this number is 26% of the adult population! Of these, 18 000 provide care to others. 20 000 have difficulties with shopping, 40 000 are unable to manage domestic tasks such as gardening, and 4 000 cannot dress and un-

dress themselves. More than 12 000 have dementia. 31 000 people over the age of 75 live alone, and 76% of these are women. Many elderly people in Norfolk live in rural areas with poor public transport. Older people in Norfolk are more likely to be on Income Support than are older people in other counties. There are 46 000 people over the age of 80. The proportion in the population of over 65s will grow significantly over the next 8-10 years, and the proportion of over 80s will grow even faster.

The Feedback:

What do older people want?
to stay in control of their own lives
to access mainstream services
to remain in their own homes and to receive care there if necessary

What prevents them achieving this?
inadequate income, and cost of services
poor access to information
poor transport
lack of confidence

The Principles of the Strategy

the contribution of older people to the life of the County should be recognised and valued older people should be enabled to lead the lifestyle of their choice

services should focus on maximising the independence and well-being of older people and should be as non-intrusive as possible

Who will make the Strategy work?

The implementation of the Strategy and its future success will depend on the collaboration of all in Norfolk who are interested in or involved in the well-being of older people. Various bodies within Norfolk County Council at planning and local strategy level will need to co-ordinate with Age Concern and other volunteer organisations, housing providers, transport providers, and so on.

The importance of information.

Information services need to be made more relevant and accessible to older people. Standards need to be introduced for information and advice services. Many people, not just the elderly, can find themselves in need of advocacy to help them through complex legal or financial problems. Age Concern already does this with their 'Money Matters' project in which volunteers – themselves often retired from business or financial professions – spend time guiding those who cannot cope with financial or other matters.

Information on leisure pursuits is another important area. Many adult education courses are naturally suitable for older people anyway, and there are now courses specifically targeted towards the over-50s. These include arts, crafts, exercise groups, creative writing, using computers, etc. For many older people, the confidence to give something a try may be the issue; but the message is that adult education really is open to all.

With leisure pursuits as with many other things, transport may be a major difficulty. Norfolk County Council and voluntary community transport groups are already addressing this issue. The Older Peoples' Strategy recognizes that there is a particular need for door-to-door services.

Information on benefits also needs to improve. Uptake of available benefits is lower in Norfolk than in other counties. Norfolk County Council will be looking at ways to make it easier for

people to undergo assessment and to find out what benefits they are entitled to. People who are eligible for a range of services such as help at home are now being encouraged to take part in a scheme called 'Direct Payments'. Recipients are given an allowance, which they can choose to spend according to their needs; perhaps to pay for transport to local swimming sessions, not just for care at home. Direct Payments is designed to help people have some choice and control in their lives.

Some Contact Details

Fire Safety; Norfolk Fire Service **01603 810351** for an assessment of fire safety in your own home.

Benefits Information; Age Concern on **01603 787111** or Norfolk County Council's Welfare Rights dept **01603 224447**

Money Matters (Age Concern) **01603 787111**

Direct Payments; ask your social worker for information

'LIST' Local Information and Support Team (for West Norfolk) concerning assessments for occupational therapy, handyman services, benefits advice
01553 669300

Community transport; Dial-a-bus **01553 776971** or Community Transport Officer **01603 223956**

Norfolk Home Call; has directories of approved services eg shopping, gardening, painting, decorating, cleaning, personal care.
Tel **01603 223243**

Adult Education for the over 50s. **01603 674312**



Gillian Shephard and Pat Copeman
Village hall meeting 21st January

GILLIAN SHEPHARD IN WELNEY

The village hall was the venue on the 21st of January for an open meeting with our MP Gillian Shephard where villagers were given the opportunity to air their views on any local issues. Although the temperature inside and outside the hall was cool, the general atmosphere was warm and relaxed – no matter what your flavour of politics may be, Mrs. Shephard proved to be an enthusiastic and eager listener as she entered into detailed conversation with all attending and showed a genuine interest in the problems that ensued.

Some twenty people attended with a mix of District and County Councillors and villagers who had a problem/query to put forward. This format had been rolled-out in other villages with reportedly good results and now it was the turn of Welney.

The content of the meeting was covered in a loose insert in the last edition of the Welney News and it is pleasing to see that some of the issues have already been addressed, with more on the way.



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W.I.

The February meeting began with the singing of Jerusalem, and the usual announcements. W.I. member Blanche Markham gave a demonstration on Encaustic Art by creating abstract pictures using a hot iron and wax. Several members tried their hand and were quite pleased with the results.

A homemade Valentine card was required to enter the competition, which was judged by Ada Thorpe. Jean Newell gained 5 points with Amy Markham, Bettine Watson, Queenie Johnson, Blanche Markham and Jennifer James receiving 4 points each.

Lucky raffle winners were Jean Newell, Ada Thorpe and Vera Singleterry.

Peggy Smart and Bet Smith each received a small prize for shouting 'Bingo' in two games organised by Bettine Watson.

The March meeting saw a welcome return of popular speaker Mr. Butterworth who brought films of Borneo. Members had to bring along something beginning with the letter A to enter the competition.

April is member's night when the committee take a back seat and members organise the entertainment. A souvenir spoon is required to enter the competition.

Ms. Roe will be the speaker for the May meeting, and the competition has to be an item beginning with letter B.

Enquiries Amy Markham 01354 610340

CARPET BOWLS

We have now finished the Winter Season's Matches at Downham Market and although we haven't had the final results through yet we are confident that we shall finish higher in the League than we have done previously.

We have to consider very carefully whether we shall play in the Summer League as there are only six players in the group and the Summer League uses all six players.

If anyone would like to try carpet bowls as a gentle exercise and a bit of fun please come along to the pavilion and have a go on Thursday nights at 7.15 pm. It only costs £1, which includes a cup of tea or coffee, and finishes around 9.00 pm.

Enquiries: Pat Rix on 01354 610 292.

WELNEY HOMEWATCH and AGE CONCERN

Watch out for ever-new strategies from the distraction burglars. In Downham Market recently a man called at the house of an elderly lady claiming that he was from the 'Electricity Board' and had come to 'check her light switches'. He had no identification, and the lady, in her 90s, refused to let him in. **Remember, if you are in the position of being alone and vulnerable in cases like this, you are entitled to contact the police immediately on 999!**

Be on the alert for cold-calls from a company describing itself as the 'European Environment Agency'. Callers will offer a home security and fire check, with postcoding of valuables. However they will also try to sell you a very expensive fire alarm system. Please note that this is not an accredited company! If you are approached by them the police and the Trading Standards Agency would like to hear from you. If you would like to have more peace of mind the police will do a **FREE home security check on request; simply telephone 01553 665037.**

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THE VICTOR MELDREW COLUMN.

No doubt you have noticed that we Welneyites are now paying an extra penalty for village living. Namely the cost of oil that we are obliged to buy seeing as there is no gas supply (please, no reference to council meetings) near here. At one time oil heating came a second to natural gas, but I wonder now if electric or possibly bottled gas (though I doubt it) is worth considering. Two or three years ago the price was 16p per litre and now 23p per litre. We need that bloke back who was running the WHOPS scheme to get us some cheaper oil.

Whilst on the subject of fuel, we also get penalised here for the petrol we need to buy, those living nearer King's Lynn or regularly travelling there will see a considerable lower price of petrol. I had thought that once the BP garage at Ely was up and running there may be some healthy competition about, but after an initial 1p less they soon fell in with the likes of Q8 (I think that should be 18). Tesco at Ely seem the only credible alternative (why isn't their price the same lower one as that at Tesco King's Lynn?).

The odd reader who ploughs through this column, may remember my tirade about the BBC and its extortion which passes for a licence fee, well now they hand over £4000 to Fearon as a reward for services rendered to the countryside. I don't believe it!

You've got to raise a glass to Elgoods; despite all the goings on in the past they still want to consult with the village, what's that I hear you say – yeah they are after our village hall plot? Well actually 'we' don't own the plot or the building, the Environment Agency does. Elgoods have proposed that we could buy the plot from the agency and in turn sell it to them out-right, or for a lesser sum have a room annexed to a possible new pub where the good old Tuns was (is). This will mean that the approved building of the seven houses on the bank side will not go ahead. This in turn begs the question as to market value of such a plot both from the point of view of the Agency and Elgoods. Apparently Elgoods will loan the money to cover any such purchases by the village.

Would you want the resulting pot of money to be spent on something at the playing fields, the abandoned Lamb and Flag site or possibly the borough council land at Sandgate corner? Then again you may prefer a better hall where it is at the moment and forego any involvement with Elgoods?

I for one will be keeping my powder dry until all the facts come forward, hopefully sooner than later.

Decisions, decisions – it's enough to drive you to drink, if you could afford the petrol!

There's one thing for certain, the parishioners need to come forward and make their opinions heard; grumbles and complaints after decisions have been made will be too late this time.

VM

USE IT OR LOSE IT

Since February the Citizens' Advice Bureau has been holding sessions in the Parish Hall on alternate Monday mornings. This valuable, free, confidential counselling service will continue for a few more weeks before being reviewed. If then it is deemed that there is insufficient demand it is likely that the service will be withdrawn and you'll need to travel to one of our local towns.

Forthcoming dates are April 4th and 18th, and May 9th and 23rd, 10.00 - 11.45.

CALLING ALL CAKE FANS!

Along with the WWT tea room, Denver Mill and Church Farm Park at Stow Bardolph, here's another hot tip for connoisseurs of Real Cakes! If you are in the Downham Market area and feeling hungry and thirsty, turn off at the Downham Market Garden Centre (on the A10, by Q8's Stone Cross Services). Tucked away among the wellies and bags of compost is the 'Gardeners' Rest' tea room. Here you can sample homemade soups, jacket potatoes, and sandwiches, in suitable gastronomic preparation for a delectable array of scones, cakes and hot puddings. And you don't need to know a thing about gardening to eat here! Don't miss out – drop in to the Gardeners Rest!



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Do you want to help with
the Welney News?

Please contact any
member of the Editorial
team for more informa-
tion



The Wigeon Tea Room Open 10 am - 4:30 pm

Feel free to visit our charming tea room and gift shop at one of the most important nature reserves in the area

Entry to the tea room is free but a small charge is made for entry to the reserve

Enjoy a variety of hot & cold light lunches/snacks (served from 12 - 3 pm)

Call in for afternoon tea and try our delicious home-made cakes!

(Booked groups catered for)

Visitor Centre & Reserve 10 am - 5 pm
Disabled Access/Baby changing facility
(all profits go towards our conservation work)

WHAT'S GOING ON AT THE WILD-FOWL AND WETLANDS TRUST?

Most of our famous winter visitors, the swans, have departed and we are busy preparing for our warmer weather residents. Why not come along to the reserve this Easter to see how many species of our summer visiting birds you can spot? Bring the children and follow the Wind in the Willows theme trail to discover all about 'Ratty' and water voles and make a water vole glove puppet to take home!

While you are out and about around the village and local area please keep your eyes open for any swans, or other wildfowl, that may have come to grief flying into power cables. At WWT Welney we have been keeping details of swan strikes since the late 1980s and are now helping EDF Energy by supplying them with details to support their nationwide programme to monitor this problem. Do phone us and let Darrell Stevens, Centre Manager, have any information you are able to offer.

No doubt you have heard the exciting news that the reserve is due to have a new visitor centre in the not too distant future. Preparatory work has already started to make way for

the service routes and contractors are about to clear the remaining areas of the main site. Our old visitor centre and the reserve will remain open as usual while the building work goes ahead so do call in and take a look at how things are progressing.

We are open daily from 10am to 5pm. Tel. 01353 860711.

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THE ACTION PLAN SEESACTION

Past issues of 'Welney News' have mentioned the possibility of us producing a Parish Action Plan in order to ensure that we have the maximum influence on what happens in our community over the next few years.

Your Parish Council has fully embraced the process, and a Steering Group of eight people - four of them non-councillors - formed.

The Group has already met several times, twice with special outside advisers present.

Once a budget has been finalised, an applica-

tion will be made for "Fens Leader +" (European) funding and possibly also to the Borough Council for a grant, so that the project can really get underway.

A first trawl through a list of over 300 standard questions is currently taking place after which those selected will be tailored to our particular requirements and a few specific ones compiled.

It is hoped to distribute a questionnaire to every household in the Parish of Welney and adjoining properties that are considered to be part of the village in June or July. Careful thought will be given to the design of the questionnaire itself to ensure that it will both look and actually be simple to complete. However, as little or as much help and advice is necessary will be available to ensure the best possible response. As a further incentive to encourage the completion and return of as many as possible, each responding household will be entered into a draw with cash prizes. The questionnaire will be totally confidential. And all steps will be taken to ensure that it is not possible to identify a particular household.

It is the consensus view of the community that is required and not any one's personal opinions. For statistical reasons there will though need to be a number of questions relating to each household.

Everyone will have the opportunity to contribute, and special interest groups, such as the school, will be brought into the process by additional methods. The Action Plan is not merely a repeat of the excellent Village Appraisal carried out by Tom Fisher and his team in the late 90s. As its name suggests the Action Plan will literally be a plan of action, a kind of business plan for the village, which will identify what we want and spell out how and when we are going to get it.

Put simply, by producing our own Action Plan we determine our own destiny rather than have others decide for us.

Our plan will feed directly into the strategic planning process and will be incorporated into the revision of the Local and Regional Plans due in the next couple of years. There are also major financial implication, as communities that can demonstrate that they have un-

dertaken consultation exercises and formed a collective view are much more likely to be successful when applying for grants for large projects, such as the provision of new village halls, or children's playgrounds.

The Steering Group intend to release regular bulletins about how the whole process is progressing to ensure that everyone knows what is happening and that everything is as transparent as possible.

'Welney News' came about as a direct result of the Village Appraisal exercise, which identified the need for better local communication.

Watch out for further updates and get ready to have your say - it could bring great benefits to one and all.

P.S. The Steering Group would be happy to hear from anyone who would like further information about the process, or wishes to help in any way.
Please contact Tim Bennett, Coordinator, Tel. 610433.



Not sure where to turn for help, then give me a call!

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A RURAL VIEW

After several weeks of cool, if not cold weather a dramatic change to mild conditions in Mid-March brought an immediate response from our wildlife. Frogs and toads, which had in recent years been heading to water, in order to spawn during February, finally moved en masse across the road towards the Old Croft River only to be flattened by the passing traffic. The following morning there were dozens of corpses on the road, but I expect few people even noticed them.

Butterflies, too, finally stirred and took to the wing in search of spring flowers. How on earth the small Tortoiseshell that regularly over winter in a corridor of our house can tell it's time to move on I'll never know.

A drive across the Washes at this time was particularly rewarding as the water levels were ideal for both wildfowl and waders. Spectacular species such as Pintail and Shoveler and Black-Tailed Godwits were really close to the road. What a pity it was not possible to stop and have a proper look!

I don't remember seeing as many birds so close by and almost oblivious to the passing traffic, the drivers of which were probably even more oblivious to the presence of such a visual spectacle.

I wouldn't be surprised if the pollarding of the willow trees earlier in the winter has made a difference, since these kinds of birds usually keep well away from tall trees. I hope the County Council stick to their intention of repeating the exercise every three years, because if they do, we could be in for similar treats each winter, assuming the water levels are suitable.

The new wind turbine next to Whitemoor Prison is a striking landmark when the sun is on it, but in duller conditions it can be surprisingly difficult to see. The view from most of Welney is obscured, but it stands out particularly well from near Pisces and parts of Tipps End. I understand that people at the prison are not too happy about it, because of the noise. I stopped by it the other day and was surprised at just how noisy it was, but I'd rather have that whooshing sound, as opposed to the constant drone of traffic. In a situation like that the turbine could be a useful

landmark from the air, too. I wouldn't be surprised if the swans use it next autumn to help guide them back to the Washes.

Returning to the roads, I've yet to see any signs of Hedgehog activity, but it cannot be long before the spiny corpses become a familiar sight pressed into the tarmac. One can only wonder at just how many there must be around for the population to withstand such carnage.

Muntjac numbers continue to increase locally, although one recently came of worse which crossing Wisbech Road.

Finally, the Barn Owls along the Hundred Foot Bank have been putting on a good show over the last few weeks. That side of the Washes is usually more reliable, if you want to see them, but judging by the number of sightings in the March Road and Tipps End areas things are looking up across this side. Considering the amount of time they spend crossing and re-crossing the roads, it's amazing that more of them aren't killed by traffic. But then their eyesight is so much better than ours.

Tim Bennett.

GRAHAME SEATON

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WILLIAM MARSHALL SCHOOL - THE SCHOOL COUNCIL

What is the School Council?

The School Council is a group of children who meet regularly to make decisions about things that are going on in school. There is one child from each year group and Miss Radford.

How is the School Council chosen?

All the children on the council were voted on by the rest of their class. There is an election every September.

What happens at a School Council Meeting?

The Council discusses ideas brought forward by Miss Radford, council members or other children. They debate ways of solving problems and vote on the best course of action. The members also ask their year group what they think about issues.

What has the School Council done so far?

The Council has already done a lot. Here are some examples:

- decided on a charity to support and organized fund raising events
- raised money for water bottles
- decided what playtime equipment to buy
- reorganized lunchtimes so that the children went out side quicker
- organized a survey to find out what food children wanted at their Christmas party
- discussed how children could take a more active role in assemblies
- organized stalls at the Christmas fair

By Christie Stewart (Y6 Council Representative) and Kyle Cowles (Y5 Council Representative)



WELNEY CYGNETS NEWSLETTER

Hello

Has anyone out there got a few hours they can spare approx once a term? We desperately need committee members including a Chairperson and Secretary to take the minutes at our meetings. Anyone who feels they would like to help can contact me on 01945 774286.

A sponsored "Toddle Waddle" (possibly at the WWT) is being planned for some time in May when hopefully the weather will be a bit warmer to raise much needed funding ... watch this space for more details.

The "Spring Bazaar and Play Session" held during the half term break had a poor turn out but thanks to the valiant efforts put in by committee members and a few parents we did manage to raise some much needed money. A BIG THANK YOU TO THOSE THAT DID SUPPORT US.

The Playgroup badly needs your support to survive into the next school year so if you are approached for sponsorship please give what you can.

Best Wishes
Wendy
Vice Chair

BRUSH YOUR TEETH – AND DO YOUR HEART A FAVOUR!

A study at an American university has found that good oral hygiene may reduce the risk of heart disease and stroke. The link between gum disease and heart disease had previously been suspected, but this project found a direct link between the quantity of gum disease bacteria present and the amount by which a major artery, the carotid artery, became narrowed. Changes in the artery were linked only to gum disease bacteria and not to other types of bacteria present in the mouth.

The only factor which can't be ruled out by the study is that people who look after their oral health more carefully may also be more diligent about other aspects of their health, such as diet. This is an ongoing area of study with over 600 subjects being studied over a period of years.

1980



2005

The Friends of Welney School
Celebrating 25 years of Fundraising

25th AGM

The Friends of the School held their Annual General Meeting on Monday 28 February at 7.00pm.

A bound booklet containing reports, photos and accounts was presented at the meeting. Also included was a copy of the minutes of the very first friends of the School meeting 25 years ago. It made interesting reading.

The first fundraising event was to be pancake races on the School field. The races were to range from toddlers to pensioners. 5p entry to the field for everyone over the age of 12. Does anyone out there remember being involved in the pancake race? Other events planned were a Film Show, Olde Time Music Hall and Cowboy Evening.

The Friends 25 years on have once again had a very full agenda of fundraising and events for the children during the year. Our first was the Easter Fayre followed by a Sponsored Walk, Garden Gala and Car Boot sale, End of term disco, Happy Halloween Party, Christmas Fayre and Christmas Party. An incredible £3,000 was raised during the year. A huge achievement for a small School.

Raising so much enabled us to purchase Multi-media projectors for each classroom at Christmas. They are being put to very good use.

Aside from this we bought all the children a cap embroidered with the School's logo, purchased new blinds for the Juniors classroom, funded a visit by a theatre company to entertain the children, Christmas presents, leaver's presents, book tokens for prize giving, guitars for the after school club, £109 to the Garden Club plus all the food and trimmings for various parties.

It was noted how very grateful we were for the support of the village at our events. Much of what we do for the children would not be possible without the support of village folk – it is very much appreciated.

Our 25th year celebrations will end with a Gala on the 25th (aptly!) of June 2005. We hope by this time to have raised enough money to purchase 2 Interactive Whiteboards to go with the projectors. The cost of this being £2,000.

The Friends committee now stands at 9, including 2 School representatives. We are always grateful of new members, you do not have to have children at the School to join so please consider joining our merry throng!!

To conclude the friends have contributed much to the School during the year and provided funds to purchase some much needed items. Additionally we have continued to provide those extra special treats for the children which they so appreciate and enjoy and add such an enhancement to their School life at William Marshall.



Red Nose Day fun at the school



Dates for your diary

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1 	2
					April	
3	4 CAB	5	6 WI Toy library	7	8	9
10	11	12 	13 	14 	15	16
17	18 CAB	19	20 	21 	22	23
24	25	26 	27 	28 	29 	30
1	2	3	4 WI 	5 	6	7
May						
8	9 CAB	10 	11 	12 	13	14
15	16	17	18 	19 	20	21
22	23 CAB	24 	25 	26 	27 	28
29	30	31				



Carpet Bowls
Ring Pat Rix for details of
available evenings



Teddy Church
10-30 am St Mary's

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



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

WI

Women's Institute
7-00 pm, Village Hall



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



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



Parish Hall
Meeting



Friendship Club
2-00 pm Village Hall

CAB - Citizens Advice
Bureaux 10am - 11.45
Village Hall