

Issue 56

WELNEY NEWS

APRIL—MAY 2007

30p



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REVD. HUGH REID (DECEASED)

Helene and the family of the late Revd. Hugh Reid wish to express their sincere thanks to those who attended the funeral service in Ely Cathedral, sent cards and letters of condolences, gave donations to the Addenbrooks Kidney Patient Association and for your prayers, which have been a great comfort to the family at this very sad time.

Beauty Treatments

By



Jane

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Welcome to the new edition of your Welney News.

Following on from our Flood special we have a full copy of the question our MP Christopher Fraser raised in Parliament on our behalf along with DEFRA's reply. Fascinating reading and it's good to see the issue of pro-longed flooding being raised at a national level.

If you have anything to say on this or any other subject please do drop me a line...

Rachel

**ST. MARY'S SPRING FAYRE
MAY 26TH
2pm**



**VARIOUS STALLS
RAFFLES
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**The Friends of
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Invite you to our Nursery
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**Little Miss Muffet Tea Room
Jack and Jill Lucky Dip
Games**

Competitions

**Mary, Mary Flower and Plant Stall
10 Green Bottles Tombola**



WELNEY
Wetland
CENTRE

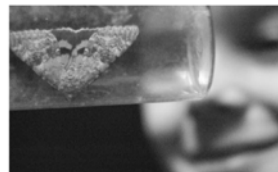


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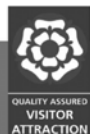
This Spring and Summer marvel at the ever changing wildlife of the WWT Welney wetland reserve.

Full family and wildlife events programme with highlights including Easter Party, Warbler ID Workshop, Fen Tiger's Tale, Dawn Chorus Walk, Fathers Day Fun Day & BBQ, Dragonfly ID Workshop & Moths for Breakfast!

Explore the innovative visitor centre and the Fenland Worlds discovery area. Relax in the Wigeon Café and spend time discovering the wonders of the internationally important wetland reserve.



Hundred Foot Bank, Welney, Norfolk PE14 9TN T 01353 860711
Visit wwt.org.uk Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust registered charity number 1030884



R.I.P
GERALD COX
ADA THORPE

Delph House news Marifa Lodge Care Home

New bus: In March we purchased a minibus for the use of residents. The bus has a tail lift for wheel-chair users and for those who can not climb steps. A few residents have already been on shopping trips to March, Downham Market and Littleport.

We are very excited about the benefits this will bring us during the summer months and are now planning trips to places of interest.

A committee which includes residents has been formed to manage residents' activities and funds including planning trips out in the bus. We would welcome any suggestions of places to visit.

Volunteers are needed to accompany residents on trips and help those who use wheelchairs. Please let Zoë, Graham or Teresa know if you are willing and able to help.

On Sunday 8 April at 3.00 pm. - Our Easter draw in aid of the Residents Amenity Fund will be held on Easter Sunday. Raffle tickets are now available to purchase. All donations of prizes will be gratefully received. These funds help to finance entertainment, trips out and other activities for our residents.

Don't forget to check our web-site for detailed information about our services: www.delph-house.co.uk

Graham Rainbird

Youth Club: Thanks very much to Gina and Den at the Lamb & Flag for having a quiz night and donating £103 to the club.

Much appreciated.

Julie, Heidi and Lissy (Youth Leaders) and all the kids.

Welney Friendship Club

The Friendship Club had its usual meetings with members enjoying bingo, dominoes or cards during the afternoon. There were doubts about some of the members from Littleport being able to attend, but one of the Littleport contingent generously collected all the others and brought them round.

The details of the summer trips are about to be finalised and by the time this magazine is delivered the list will probably be on display in the Post Office.

If anyone is interested in any of the outings please get in touch with either Queenie Johnson on 01354 610409 or Pat Rix on 01354 610292.

W.I.

Members were eagerly anticipating the February meeting because speaker for the evening was Adam Giles.

Entertainment is guaranteed when Adam turns up. On this occasion the subject was of local interest when Adam showed a film of Josh Scott, former warden of the Wildfowl Trust. Everyone enjoyed seeing Josh on his motorcycle rounding up the cattle on the washes, feeding the swans and recalling the wonderful old local stories.

The monthly competition had reached the letter S which prompted a selection of items including a swan, scarecrow, socks, soldier, stamps and snake.

Amy Markham gained 5 points, Bettine Watson. Queenie Johnson and Jean Newell 4 points, Vera Singleterry and Dawn Stevenson 3 points, Sheila Dore, Carol Halls, Cissie Bedford, Blanche Markham and Jennifer James 2 points. For social time, Amy organised card bingo with Queenie Johnson, Vera Singleterry and Bettine Watson being the winners. Lucky raffle winners were Jean Newell, Blanche Markham and Queenie Johnson.

The March meeting began on a sad note as a minutes silence was observed for Ada Thorpe, a loyal member who died recently.

Following a short business session Mrs. Ashfield was introduced to show members how to paint a landscape. Everyone was given paints, red blue and yellow together with brushes and special A4 paper. All had a jolly good laugh at the final results of some of the masterpieces!

The competition reached the letter T with Mrs. Ashfield kindly judging, items included a thimble, tiger, torch, tray cloth and several teapots but a tractor attracted most points. Bettine Watson gained 5 points, Blanche Markham 4 points, Jennifer James 3 points, Amy Markham and Carol Halls 2 points with Queenie Johnson, Vera Singleterry, Cissie Bedford, Sheila Dore and Jean Newell a point each.

Winners of the raffle were Bettine Watson and Blanche Markham.

The April meeting will be Members night when the committee put their feet up. Competition reaches the Letter U.

Enquiries to Amy Markham on 01354 610 340

DEADLINE FOR NEXT TIME IS MAY 17TH

**All items gratefully received
WN team contact details on page 19**

CRYPTIC CROSSWORD COMPETITION BY MARK BROWN

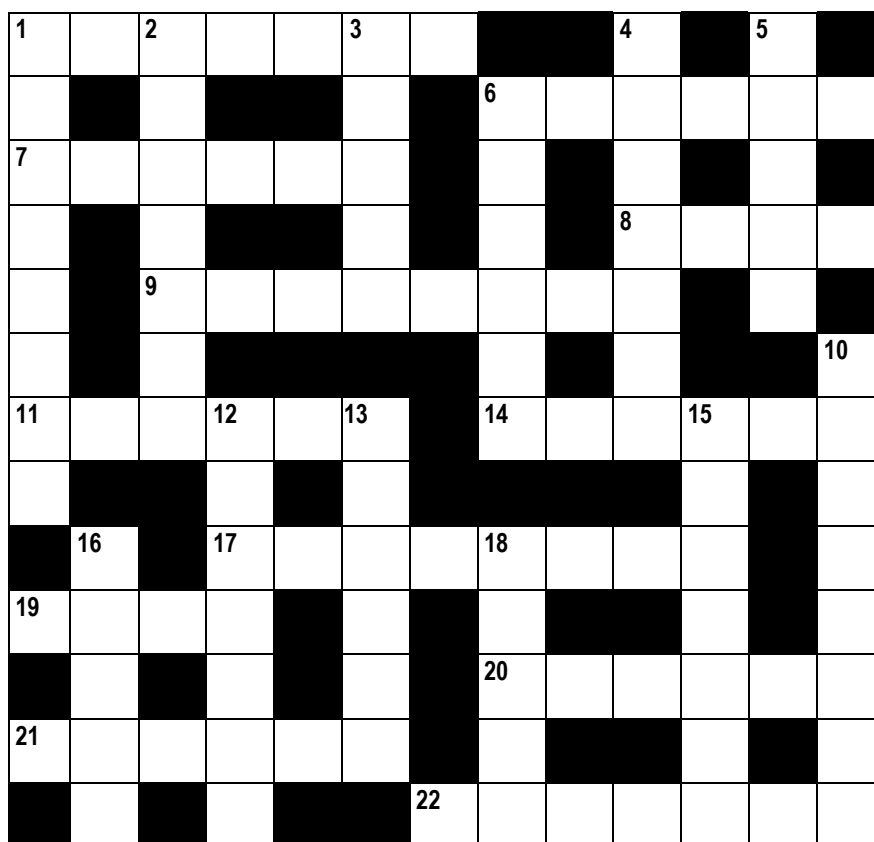
Send your completed
crossword to the Editor by
May 6th and you could win a
bottle of wine.

Name:

Telephone:



Lucky winners last time were
Peter & Charlotte Cox



ACROSS

1. Visit the bank for further use (7)
6. Pester secretive native mammal (6)
7. Remind actor to be punctual (6)
8. Coin held revered figure (4)
9. Deceiver adopts trim pose when assuming false identity (8)
11. Herein got secretive, concealing gold bars (6)
14. A conundrum put through a sieve? (6)
17. See 2 down
19. See 16 down
20. Elgar offering variations on code-breaking (6)
21. Go off at full pelt in a two-beat stride (6)
22. Snake angered by ambition to achieve one's hopes and dreams (7)

DOWN

1. People in a state, holding power (8)
- 2/17a Shutting Manchester suburb? Everything must go! (7,4,4)
3. Luck of the draw? You'll need a lot to get big money (5)
4. In a way, I'd dream of being so well thought of (7)
5. Opted to locate the warehouse (5)
6. Showed unrelenting hostility towards real ale (6)
10. Chosen instrument of the musical typist? (8)
12. Hospital attendant keeping things neat and tidy (7)
13. Deal successfully completed with the help of a needle and thread (4,2)
15. Barge in to lower the bed? (7)
- 16/19a Escape one's constraints to carry on working uninterrupted (5,4)
18. Discards garden buildings (5)

SOLUTION TO LAST EDITION'S X-WORD

A	S	S	O	R	T	E	D		P	A	T	H
	C		W		I		R		O			U
C	R	A	N	E	D		A	L	I	B	I	S
	A				A		G		N			K
	W	A	V	E	L	E	N	G	T	H		Y
	L		I				E		L			P
	E	A	C	H	T	O	T	H	E	I	R	
	D		T		E				S		O	
C		R	O	A	D	C	L	O	S	E	D	
Y			R		I		A					U
C	A	S	I	N	O		P	O	L	I	C	E
L			A		U		E		A		E	
E	A	R	N		S	I	L	K	W	O	R	M

WORDSEARCH

Y	A	S	F	R	E	B	T	S	Y	R	A
A	G	H	M	A	Y	P	O	L	E	F	S
D	Y	O	B	R	S	G	M	T	I	W	A
I	S	T	C	E	G	N	S	U	T	R	P
L	L	C	H	L	G	A	P	L	H	B	R
O	I	R	Y	I	E	Y	R	I	E	S	I
H	D	O	A	G	N	C	I	P	A	S	L
K	O	S	T	I	F	T	N	S	T	E	S
N	F	S	M	O	E	Y	G	E	H	I	H
A	F	B	U	N	N	Y	T	K	R	K	O
B	A	U	E	N	L	A	I	M	O	S	W
A	D	N	U	G	H	C	M	T	H	E	E
B	T	S	Y	F	U	R	E	Y	B	U	R
C	H	O	C	O	L	A	T	E	S	L	S
T	I	S	W	D	T	S	C	A	S	B	E

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		2		6	7			
	6		9	2		3	4	5
	1		8		5			
	8	5		7	2			
2				1				3
			6	8		4	5	
			7		6		1	
8	2	9		3	4		7	
			2	5		9		

Farming Diary

What a difference a week of dry weather can make. Not only does the wash road become passable again but land work has started in earnest this last week.

Spring is possibly one of the busiest times in the farming calendar as it is obviously the time that many crops are planted and drilled. Following this of course is the tending and caring of the crop to bring it to full harvest potential. The last week has seen a flurry of activity as with the sun and wind the land surface has dried quite rapidly and I am sure most villages will have noticed an increase in tractor activity over the last few weeks.

Before we were able to start any spring land work we had a drainage problem to deal with, one of our fields in Tipsend adjoining the junction with Wisbech and March road had become severely waterlogged. With the large volumes of rain that fell over winter this field was showing acute signs of waterlogging and had water laying in puddles on top of the winter ploughed land. We decided that as the field was to be cropped with potatoes we would need to drain the field before normal farming operations could commence. Only 4 acres at the North end were affected so this was not going to be too expensive. The underdrainage work as it is known was carried out by the Lincolnshire drainage company who use a tracked machine which trenches the land and installs a fibre coated but perforated plastic pipe beneath the surface of the field at depths from 2 feet and below. Levels are taken to ascertain the level of the land and the necessary direction to take the water using a slight downward gradient of the pipe so that the water flows out and into the nearest ditch.

In this instance they installed a main pipe across the south end and linked about 7 smaller ones into this and within 30 minutes of the pipe being laid water was flowing. Gravel was introduced by the machine as the pipe was laid and this gravel sits above the pipe and allows water to drain from the soil around down to the pipe and creates a better drainage environment. The job took less than a day to complete and cost around £750.00 per acre. Looking at the pipe the morning after they had finished water was flowing out at over 50% of the pipe size so it was working very

well. As the land was very wet, when the work was being carried out some rutting and waterlogging was occurring but as the new drains begin to work and the land dries, cultivation of this area at a future time will hopefully help to bring the land back to its normal condition.

Just as important as the drainage of the field is the condition of the dyke and ditch to which the water is fed. Sean and I spent an afternoon removing plastic sheets, carrier bags, flowerpots, tyres and many other items either discarded by motorists or carried there by the wind. These items will restrict the water flow in the ditch and can even have the disastrous affect of causing flooding and water logging further along the ditch system. For those householders that have dykes and ditches around there properties it is a good idea to keep your boundary ditches clear for the winter. This will help to keep your property well drained and less likely to have drainage water problems. Of course it is not just the man-made material that can block the ditches; foxes find the dyke banks good places to build a den and the excavations they create when making the burrows will often block the ditches, as will rabbits and even worse badgers that are beginning to migrate to the area. Rats will sometimes block the pipes under field and property entrances and it is a good idea to check these annually, especially if they are old, smaller diameter pipes. Rodding will usually remove leaves and other such obstructions but if animals like rats have taken large amounts of soil in then the pipe may need to be water jetted.

The great work that the Dutch engineers did when draining the fens back in the 1600s made this area what it is today and regular maintenance of our local dykes and ditches is important for us all to keep our fields and properties free from flooding. It is a great pity that those in charge of our large rivers and waterways that drain the Ouse Washes do not do the same.

More on Spring cropping next time.

Ken Goodger



INVITATION

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**Christopher Fraser (South West Norfolk, Conservative) :**

I am grateful for the opportunity to raise the issue of fen flooding in South-West Norfolk, which is of great concern to many of my constituents, especially those living close to the Ouse Washes.

I pay tribute to the community representatives and local residents who have worked so hard to find a solution to the problem, particularly Borough councillors David Pope and Vivienne Spikings, and Welney parish council chairman Ken Goodger and his council colleagues.

No community has been more deeply affected by the flooding than the residents of the village of Welney. Once again this winter, the inhabitants of this rural community have found themselves isolated by flooding up to 3 ft deep across the A1101, which traffic surveys show is used by more than 2,000 vehicles each day in the dry season. For more than 80 days since last November the road has been impassable. The flood waters receded at the end of January, but the respite was short-lived and, once again, the road is under water. The duration of the flooding is not unprecedented, but it has been significantly worse in the past seven years compared with a decade ago.

According to the Environment Agency(EA), between 1990 and 1997, the road was flooded for a total of 100 days; in the past seven years, it has been impassable for almost 300 days. This season, it seems probable that the road will be flooded for more than 100 days. There is an escalating trend—an extremely worrying one that reflects the problem of climate change that we all face. With global warming likely to increase the frequency and intensity of extreme weather and winter rainfall, it seems inevitable that unless the Government step in, residents of Welney will be cut off for even longer periods, and probably face an increasingly dangerous situation. The result of flooding is that, for increasingly long periods, local businesses are denied passing trade. They also lose custom from those living on the other side of the Welney wash, because residents face diversions of 20 miles in each direction. That is a massive inconvenience for them and for others trying to use ever more congested alternative routes through the county. The loss of trade is keenly felt by local businesses, such as shops, pubs and, importantly, rural post offices.

What assessment have the Government made of the economic impact of the annual flood on South-West Norfolk and, in particular, the Norfolk fens? What assistance is available to those who are suffering? If no help is forthcoming, it is inevitable that those businesses will close or relocate, leaving yet another rural community with no amenities. I should also like to ask the Minister, given the increase in housing planned for the area and Norfolk generally, what guarantee the Government can give that plans will take account of the fact that a significant detour is inevitable when the A1101 is impassable. Will that be borne in mind when infrastructure projects such as new schools, hospitals and other services are planned?

In the past, steps were taken to increase the flow of water along the Bedford and Hundred Foot rivers. The construction of Welmore sluice was intended to increase the outflow by 50 per cent. and residents were assured that the built-in water jets would prevent silt from reducing its operational effectiveness, but I am told that the sluice gates across the wash, particularly those in the north such as the Denver sluice, will soon be sealed shut by silt. Welmore sluice is little better. The problem is now so severe that a former flood defence manager has told me that there will be problems getting boats into the locks from the middle level. Will the Minister confirm whether that is true? What steps are being taken to clear the channels?

The catchment flood management plan issued by the EA highlights the fact that the Great Ouse is "very sensitive to sediment problems", and notes that those tend to "accumulate in or around in-channel structures such as bridges, culverts and outfalls, reducing the ability to function properly, and thus increasing the risk of flooding as the river channel's ability to hold and convey water is reduced". It continues: "The tidal Great Ouse River, particularly from the Wash to Earith shows significant sediment accumulation...regular maintenance to clear accumulated sediment is required."

Yet the EA's approach to the river is inconsistent. Fallen trees, urban debris and an abundance of reeds are, in addition to the sediment, causing severe blockages in some main river channels. This regularly leads to local flooding and can significantly heighten the likelihood of a major flood incident. As the Minister will know, all landowners are required to pay a general drainage charge to the EA, and in return, it maintains some stretches on their behalf. However, in other areas, it insists that the responsibility fall to the landowners themselves. There seems no rhyme or reason why some areas receive preferential treatment. However, the EA is clear on one point. It states emphatically that dredging is inappropriate because "significant silting of the river may reoccur during or within a short time of completing any dredging".

To my constituents, such an argument seems absurd. If the level of silt deposits is so great, that surely strengthens, rather than weakens, the argument in favour of regular dredging.

During the period before the EA's assuming responsibility for the river, a dredging programme was in place. At one stage, some 15 to 18 drag lines were in constant operation. Since the agency took charge, these operations have ceased. Surely it cannot be a coincidence that since that time, the severity of flooding in the Welney wash has, as I said earlier, increased enormously. If silt is preventing one part of the system from working properly, does that not place excessive strain on other sections?

I emphasise that we in South-West Norfolk are not looking to blight other communities downstream. What we are calling on the Government to do is to recognise that the bottleneck at Welney is just a few miles short of the sea, and we want them to find ways of moving the floodwater that few miles extra to the coast.

CONTINUED OVERLEAF.....

Continued from previous page

Perhaps the most difficult aspect of this debate is that although a great deal of money has been spent protecting areas along the River Ouse in Cambridgeshire and Bedfordshire from flooding, no money is being spent on protecting much of the section in Norfolk. Why do the Government find it acceptable to take steps to alleviate the problem of flooding in Bedfordshire, but abandon the people of Welney to cope with the consequences? To them, it seems inevitable that the bottleneck around Welmore, aggravated by the huge silt deposits, could dramatically increase the severity of any future floods. Local people also think that it increases the likelihood of a breach in the tidal floodbank, the consequence of which could be catastrophic.

The question is: how can the Government appear to put a higher value on the lives of people further upstream than on those further downstream in my constituency, in terms of money going into flood alleviation projects? Once again, the people of Norfolk find themselves at the wrong end of the Government's priority list. *[Interruption.]* I note that the Minister is laughing at that comment, but for the people who live with this problem daily, it is no laughing matter. Residents and parish and district councillors are gravely concerned that if the current trend continues, lives will be lost and homes made uninhabitable. The lack of adequate flood warning has on several occasions endangered livestock, as well. Given the speed with which the waters rise, if no action is taken it will be only a matter of time before a tragedy occurs. What steps are the Government taking to ensure that the local flood embankments and the tidal floodbank can cope with the predicted future increases in floodwater levels? What assessment has been made of the need for an early warning system?

The EA claims that dredging would have significant environmental consequences. Surely significant environmental damage will occur if no action is taken?

The wetlands have deteriorated drastically over the past three decades, owing to excessive flooding because the EA has failed to maintain the rivers. That poses a grave threat to plant and animal species in Welney wash. Having destroyed the existing area through the neglect I have just mentioned, the Government propose spending £15 million to create new wetland. Is not that another short-term and short-sighted fix that ignores the greater long-term problem? The proposal starkly demonstrates the fact that the Government are simply turning their back on the problem. Will they search for a new site each time the old one becomes unviable?

The draft management plan states: "The nature conservation value cannot be allowed to decline any further."

Clearly doing nothing is not an option, nor is simply abandoning the current wetland. Instead of spending the money on new wetland, Instead of spending the money on new wetland, the Government would, without doubt, achieve more by spending it on addressing the problems in the current wetland area. More than a decade ago, it was assessed that the cost of dredging a new central channel along the most severely affected eight miles of the tidal river would be approximately £300,000 and that the work would take eight days. That would have enabled the river to flow more freely and assisted the natural process of clearing the

remaining silt, so I urge the Government to reconsider that option. The issue of paramount concern to my constituents in Welney is the state of the A1101. In recent years local roads such as the A141 and A10 have been upgraded. Work has even been carried out on the bridges at either end of the wash road, yet the A1101 has remained almost untouched. The residents and the parish council would like the road access across the wash raised so that it is passable. I hope there is an engineering solution that can overcome the subsoil problems, but if not, what other solution can the Government offer local residents? What assessment have the Government made of the cost of such modifications?

The alternative would be to build an entirely new road with culverts, which would be difficult and more expensive given the protected nature of much of the area, but of course if the Government were able to support such a scheme local people would welcome it. In either case, neither Norfolk county council nor the East of England regional assembly is in a position to foot the bill, nor should they have to do so. Our armed forces do a magnificent job swiftly laying floating roadways across rivers in war zones and areas of conflict and disaster, so why is that solution entirely beyond the Government's capabilities on home soil when there are problems such as those in the fens?

My constituents feel excluded and frustrated by the apparent lack of interest in their predicament. They feel desperately let down by the Government and are extremely frightened for the future. The current consultation is a case in point. It took my office two weeks, three phone calls and two e-mails to track down a copy of the draft catchment flood management plan, which, unlike those for other rivers, is not on the EA website. I was sent the wrong document, told that the most recent document relating to the Great Ouse was published in 2005 and then sent a summary with no indication of how to obtain the full document. That does not seem to be the comprehensive public consultation that such an important issue warrants. I should be grateful if the Minister could ensure that the document is, at the very least, made available online.

There have been sustained problems of neglect, buck-passing and lack of leadership on the issue. To date, the Government's policy has been entirely passive. A strong proactive approach is desperately needed. The Government designated the Ouse washes a statutory flood storage reservoir and in doing so condemned the people of Welney to annual flooding. The Government therefore have an obligation to offer a solution to the local community.

I have chosen to raise the issue in the House of Commons because the Government are ultimately responsible. I sincerely hope that the Minister will not simply pass the buck to the EA, as has happened so many times before, although not by this Minister but when things were devolved to other organisations. I remind him, even though he probably does not need reminding, that the agency was appointed by the Government and is accountable to him and to the Government.

It would also be unacceptable if the buck were passed to the local authority as an issue of local priority, as other issues, such as the road infrastructure, have been in Norfolk. Government legislation is the single cause of the problem and they are responsible for providing a solution to local people.



Minister's reply



Ian Pearson (Dept for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs)

I congratulate the Hon. Member for South-West Norfolk on securing this debate and want to assure him that, as a Government, we take flooding extremely seriously.

I recognise the inconvenience that is clearly caused to residents of Welney and others by closure of the A1101 by floodwater.

I understand that flooding depends mainly on the volume of water entering the Ouse washes at the Earith sluice. Following heavy rainfall, large volumes of water have to pass from Earith to get to the outfall into the tidal river at Welmore sluice. The EA operates the Earith sluice within parameters that are designed to keep the sluice operating optimally to avoid flooding elsewhere and that cannot be overridden except exceptional circumstances.

I should emphasise that the flood storage area is working as it was designed to work that is, transferring large volumes of water that would otherwise flood homes and land out to sea. There is no practical way to stop the flow of water across the Ouse washes. It is my understanding that the only practicable way to reduce the risk of the road flooding would be to elevate the road. I understand that the cost of doing that would be between £6 - 7 million, based on 2003 estimates. This is clearly a matter for the local highways authorities in the first instance.

The Welmore sluice, which assists the draining of the washes, was reconstructed in 1999 at a cost of some £5 million. With three sets of large gates, it is 50 % larger than the old sluice. It allows a one-way transfer of water through gravity discharge from the Ouse washes into the tidal river while preventing water from flowing in the opposite direction back into the washes when the river is high. The problem of the silting up of the sluice itself is managed by water jets to clear any build-up, which is then further washed away by the flow of water through the sluice. There are two drainage pumps at Welmore and provision for additional temporary pumps. These evacuate lower levels of flood water off the washes in the spring when gravity discharge is no longer effective. They are not designed to evacuate large volumes of winter flood water off the washes. Welmore lake sluice is currently fully operational. It is able effectively to discharge flood water from the washes down to a level below that of the Welney road—the A1101. That is, when the inflow of water at Earith ceases, Welmore sluice will effectively clear the road of flood water.

The EA does not believe that the flooding of Welney road is directly related to the height of the tidal river caused by the level of silt. The ability of the Welmore sluice to discharge water is dependent on the low tide level in the tidal river. In the sense that silt raises the height of the river, it does reduce the discharge efficiency of the sluice. However, the water still has to cross the road to get from Earith to Welmore. Welmore is currently able to clear the road once water has ceased to enter at Earith. So, the solution to the problem works at the moment and we do not believe that clearing the silt will have a significant or major impact.

The majority of the silt deposited in the river comes from the tide as it comes in and out twice a day. The fact that the outgoing tide is slower than the inward tide causes silt to be deposited in the channel. The extent to which that happens is dependent upon natural river flows. Silt is currently raising the level of the river bed,

as a result of low water flows out to sea caused by two very dry winters and summers. The bed levels are higher than those experienced in 1996-97, which followed another prolonged drought period. However, by contrast, after the wet winters between 1998 and 2003, river bed levels reduced by over a metre, which demonstrates the natural silt-clearing effect of sustained winter flows.

I understand that the proposal to de-silt to adequate levels would cost in the region of £4-£5 million and would take a number of years to complete. As the EA has stated significant silting of the river could recur in a short time. The option thus does not seem to be sustainable. However, as a result of the build-up of silt between Denver and Salters Lode, in an attempt to improve navigation—I stress the word "navigation"—the EA plans to plough part of the river in the next few weeks, which involves disturbing the silt on the river bed to assist its transport back out to sea. The EA will monitor that work to determine how effective it is and whether it might have some applicability to improving the outflow from the Ouse washes.

The EA recognises that silt in the tidal river is a long-term issue and is undertaking a study to develop a tidal river strategy, which will consider options for managing silt in the tidal river over the next 50 years. The study should report in late 2008.

In the past five years, the EA has spent in excess of £12 million on improving flood defences in Norfolk alone. The annual spend on the tidal river for the stretch about which are talking is in the region of £200,000, which is for asset and structural maintenance work and pumping costs.

The EA has not undertaken a specific assessment of the cost of the Ouse washes flooding. However a 2003 report for Norfolk County Council on the viability of improving the A1101 concluded: "The actual cost of disruption is not possible to quantify because of the various and diverse nature of traffic using the road and the wide spread of alternative route options".

The EA is not considering offering additional assistance to those affected by the closure of the road, other than by giving advance notice of a closure and reopening the road as soon as possible. Warnings that the road is flooding are given as soon as is practicable and whenever water starts to encroach on the road. The general view is that it would be difficult to provide earlier notice because the situation is dependent on rainfall, flow rates, catchment conditions, the discharge capability of the tidal river and tidal influence.

Regarding new housing development, It is the view of the EA that road flooding would need to be considered as part of the planning process. Additional development in the area might affect the economic viability of improvements to the road and the washes, so that would be a factor to be taken into consideration.

Climate change is part of the ongoing tidal river strategy review. Until that review has been completed, we cannot really provide information about any change to the frequency and duration of flooding of the Ouse washes and the A1101.

I understand that the Hon. Gentleman is meeting the EA later this week. I am sure that it will be pleased to discuss the problem in more detail. I thank him for bringing the matter to the attention to the House. He has rightly raised this important issue on behalf of his constituents and I wish him all the best in pursuing it with the EA.



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The February Meeting of the Parish Council took place in the Parish Hall on Wed 21st at 7.30 p.m.

Save our Waterways - It was agreed that a letter should be sent to DEFRA, expressing our concern with regard to the reduced funding which was being allocated to British Waterways.

Closure of Rural Post offices - We received a reply from Jim Fitzpatrick, Minister responsible for the post office & a letter from Christopher Fraser MP, promising support.

Meeting Reports - Cllr. Bennett attended the meeting of the Downham Market Road Safety Committee on 25th Jan. Mrs. Bryant of the CPRE attended the Parish Hall on 31st Jan and gave valuable advice on planning applications.

100 club - The February draw took place and results are shown in the Welney News.

Elgoods - A letter has been sent off to the Borough Council to ask their initial opinion on the proposed development at Sandgate Terrace/Playing Field. The Planning Department replied asking for an Informal Request Form to be completed, and this had been done, following receipt of a plan from Mr Peter Humphrey setting out the proposed residential development on the site. It was agreed to send these off but to stress that the Parish Council are only interested in the new Community Centre, access road and car park, and the details of the proposed housing is for the Carter Family.

Playing Field: Once again problems are being experienced with residents allowing their dogs to foul the playing field. It was agreed that notices will be displayed at the field & that letters should be sent to any persons who are seen letting their dogs foul, asking them to refrain.

Planning Matters - The following planning approvals were received from the Borough Council - Mr & Mrs CJ Purliant, 2 New Farm Cottages, Bells Drove, change of use and conversion of barn to residential dwelling, Copes Hill Barn, Wisbech Road. The following planning application was received - Mr. R.F. Green, The Old Crown House, Suspension Bridge, Installation of wind turbine on front of dwelling, it was agreed that council would support this application.

Wash Road Flooding - A meeting took place on 5th Feb between Council Highways Departments of Norfolk and Cambridgeshire, the EA and the Parish Council. Two District Councillors and the County Councillor were also present. The EA gave a lengthy and detailed talk & confirmed that they had commissioned a major study of all the water problems but the report would not be available until 2008. Both Highway representatives detailed their concerns regarding the flooding and in particular the signage when the road is flooded and the Parish Council again mentioned raising the road. After approximately two hours it was agreed that to improve matters for the future:

A) improved road warning signs would help.

B) Earlier information regarding possible flooding of the road to the Parish would be of a great advantage

C) Getting flood water off the road more quickly so that the road is impassable for a much shorter time span and

D) sorting out the siltation problems would allow the Welmore Sluice to discharge water at a quicker rate.

The Chairman confirmed that there had been more press coverage & our MP Christopher Fraser had confirmed that he would be raising the matter in the House of Commons on 26th February & would keep us informed of developments. Cllr. Humphrey agreed to try and instigate a survey to find out the amount of traffic using the A1101. Support had been received from several of the neighbouring parishes, and it was agreed to call a joint meeting once again towards the end of March.

W.A.S.H. Committee held a meeting on 24th Jan, and have arranged another Social Evening on Sat 28th April in the Parish Hall commencing at 7.30 p.m. A further meeting would be held to make the final arrangements.

Council were reminded that the next meeting would be on 14th March and would be preceded by the Annual Parish Meeting at 7 p.m. They were also reminded that the Parish Council elections would be taking place on 3rd May, 2007.

Pat Copeman, Parish Clerk.

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The March Meeting of the Parish Council took place in the Parish Hall on Wed 14th at 7.30 pm preceded by the Annual Parish Meeting at 7 pm. There were no members of public present.

Save our Waterways - Our letter had been sent off to DEFRA with copies to various Ministers. Councillors were provided with a copy of DEFRA's reply & a letter from Christopher Fraser MP.

100 club - The March draw took place and results are shown in the Welney News.

Elgoods - A letter was received from Peter Humphrey regarding the plans he had submitted on behalf of the Carter Family on the Sandgate Terrace land. He also enclosed a letter from the Borough Council advising him that the development was unlikely to receive consent because there was no specific need indicated. Mr. Humphrey asked if a housing survey had been done. It was confirmed that a copy of the Action Plan survey had been sent to the Council and this indicated the need for affordable housing within the village. A letter was also received from Elgoods setting out the current situation regarding the development on the Parish Hall Site, especially in view of the extended flooding of the Wash Road. Mrs. Sutton enclosed a copy of a letter which they had written to Christopher Fraser MP asking that he give support to anything which can cut down the amount of time that the Wash Road is flooded. In view of the period of approximately 90 days when the road has been impassable since November 2006, Elgoods are very reluctant to commit themselves to any development on the Parish Hall Site.

Planning Matters - The following planning application was received from the Borough Council and was recommended for approval Ref No.07/00362/F Mr.D. Stock, Old Welney Nursery, Wisbech Road, Extension to Bungalow and erection of a detached Garage. The Parish Council had also received details from the Borough Council of the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust application for a Premises Licence at their premises on Hundred Foot Bank. Council considered the paperwork supplied, and confirmed that they would be happy provided that any alcohol sold on the premises was for consumption on the premises either at a special event, or with a meal in the restaurant.

Highway Matters - Two requests had been received for help in making up the section of Hurn Drove leading from March Road to at least the Pavilion. This section of roadway is in a bad condition with large potholes. It was agreed to contact Highways to see if they had any plans that they might be able to provide for spreading in the affected area. It was also agreed to contact the adjoining residents and the Borough Council, to see if they would be prepared to make a donation towards the cost. The Parish Council would also be prepared to make a contribution.

Meeting with Adjoining Parish Councils - This has been arranged for Wednesday 28th March 2007 at 7.30 p.m. at the Parish Hall and the main item on the Agenda will be the A.1101 Welney Wash Road Flooding and related problems. It was agreed to ask the participating councils to put together something to explain how it affects their villages. So far Denver, Nordelph, Manea, Christchurch, Hilgay and Littleport have all shown an interest in attending the meeting and it is hoped that this will go from strength to strength.

W.A.S.H. Committee - It was confirmed to the meeting that a Social Evening has been arranged on Saturday 28th April, 2007 at 7.30 p.m. in the Parish Hall, when the speaker will be Mr. Mike Petty. The Committee will be holding a meeting on 3rd April to make all the final arrangements, and then posters will be displayed in an around the area, in the hope of a good attendance.

Members were then reminded that the **Election** for the Parish Council will take place on 3rd May 2007. The Clerk had already advertised the elections, and had received all the paperwork. All Councillors present took a Councillors pack and were reminded of the deadline set by the Borough Council for forms to be returned.

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 11th April, 2007.

Pat Copeman, Parish Clerk.

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<u>APRIL</u>	
Sun 1st : 7.30pm - Aled Jones Tickets: £22.50	
Wed 4th – Sat 7th : 7.30pm <i>King's Lynn Operatic & Dramatic Society present</i> Rogers & Hammerstein's OKLAHOMA! Tickets: £14, £12.50, £10.50	
Mon 9th – Wed 11th : 7.30pm -The Play What I Wrote A celebration of Morecambe & Wise. Tickets: £17.50	
Thurs 12th : 7.30pm - That's Amore Dean Martin & Friends. Tickets: £19.50	
Fri 13th : 7.30pm - Foster & Allen Tickets: £17.50, £16.50	
Sat 14th : 8pm - Ridin' on a Soul Train With Jaki Graham & Jeffrey Daniel. Tickets: £18.50	
Sun 15th : 2pm & 5pm -The Chuckle Brothers Spooky Going On 2 Tickets: £12	
Wed 18th : 7.30pm <i>Opus 1 Opera Company present</i> La Boheme Sung in Italian Tickets: £24.50, £22.50, £23.50, £21.50, £9.50	
Thurs 19th : 7.30pm Solid Silver 60s Show Starring The Searchers, Merseybeats, Wayne Fontana & John Walker Tickets: £21.50	
Fri 20th : 8pm Tag Me... VS The City Tour from the UK's leading Hip Hop Theatre Company Tickets: £14.50, under 16s & students £9.50	
Sat 21st : 8pm The Meatloaf Trilogy Starring Steve Steinman Tickets: £17.50, £9.50	
Sun 22nd: 8pm - Jimmy Carr Tickets: £15. Adults Only!	
Thurs 26th : 7.30pm City of London Sinfonia Tickets: £17.50, £14.50, £11, £9.50	
Fri 27th : 8.45pm Comedy Club Tickets: £8.50, Adults Only!	
Sat 28th : 9am—4pm Original King's Lynn Fleamarket Tickets: 80p, under 16s free	
Sun 29th : 7.30pm Independent Ballet Wales present The Bride of Flowers Tickets: £15, under 16s £8.50	
Mon 30th : 7.30pm - Petula Clark Tickets: £23.50	

Whats on at : Box Office 01553 764864	
<u>APRIL</u>	
Sat 14th : 8pm -Tony McPhee Tickets: £10.50	
Fri 20th : 8pm - Punt & Dennis Tickets: £14	
Sat 21st: 7.30pm - A Celebration of Flanders & Swann Tickets: £12	
Fri 27th : 8pm - Dr. Teeth Big Band Tickets: £11.50	
Sat 28th : 3pm - Yuck! It's A Duck The real story of the ugly duckling for 4-11 year olds Tickets: £6, Family Ticket (3) £16.50, (4) £22	

Whats on at: Box Office 01485 532252	
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<u>APRIL</u>
Sun 1st : 7.30pm The National Youth Jazz Orchestra Tickets: £13.50, £12.50, £11.50, £9.50
Tue 3rd: 2.30pm - Humpty Dumpty & the Alien Princess For children aged 3 years plus Tickets: £7.50, Family (3) £21 (4) £28
Sat 7th : 7.30pm - Roger Dean sings Johnny Cash Tickets: £12.50, £11.50, £10.50, £9.50
Sat 14th:7.30pm- Stardust A musical flashback in time starring Maureen Nolan. Tickets: £14.50, £13.50, £12.50, £9.50
Sun 15th : 3pm - We'll Meet Again Hits from the blitz Tickets: £10, Groups 10+ £8.50
Sat 21st: 7.30pm- Ken Dodd Tickets: £17.50
Wed 25th - Fri 27th: 7.30pm Private Lives By Noel Coward Classic comedy drama Tickets: £14.50. £12.50, £13.50, £11.50
Sat 28th 7.30pm - Magic ELO and Queen tribute band Tickets: £14, £13, £12, £9.50

Whats on at Ely Cinema in April

Credit card bookings: 01353 616991 www.adec.org.uk

Music & Lyrics (PG)

Sun 1st: 7.30pm & Thurs 5: 3pm & 7.30pm

Stars: Hugh Grant & Drew Barrymore.

A spot-on send-up of the shallow world of pop music.



Charlotte's Web (U)

Weds 4, Weds 11 & Thurs 12: 3pm

Stars: Julia Roberts & John Cleese.

A charming combination of live action and animation.



Miss Potter (U)

Weds 4: 7.30pm

Stars: Renee Zellweger

A magical biopic that follows Beatrix Potter's rise to being the most successful children's author of all time.



Hot Fuzz (15)

Weds 11: 7.30pm

Stars: Simon Pegg & Jim Broadbent

Top London cop finds himself reassigned to the sleepy West Country village of Sandford.



Dream Girls (12A)

Thurs 12: 7.30pm

Stars: Eddie Murphy & Beyonce Knowles.

A sparkling music-drama that boasts a dazzling array of music set-pieces and toe-tapping songs.



The Queen (12A)

Sun 15: 8pm

Stars: Michael Sheen, Helen Mirren.

An intimate portrait of Queen Elizabeth II in turmoil during the days immediately after the death of Princess Diana.



Casino Royale

Thurs 19:

7.30pm

Stars: Dame Judi Dench, Daniel Craig.

All the jaw-dropping action set-pieces and tongue-in-cheek humour that has made the Bond franchise so enduringly popular.



Amazing Grace (PG)

Sun 22: 3pm &

7.30pm & Weds 25: 11.15am & 7.30pm

Stars: Rufus Sewell, Ioan Gruffudd.

This truly inspiring film follows William Wilberforce's role in the long battle to outlaw slavery in the United Kingdom.

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The Winners of the **February 100 Club** draw were

- 1st Prize £50.00 No.66 Julie Jones
- 2nd Prize £25.00 No.84 Esme Coulson
- 3rd Prize £15.00 No.25 Carolyn Loveday
- 4th Prize £10.00 No.74 Sally Claxton.

The Winners of the **March 100 Club** draw were

- 1st Prize £50.00 No.89 Henry Mann
- 2nd Prize £25.00 No.43 S. & M. Hancock
- 3rd Prize £15.00 No.94 Frank Harmer
- 4th Prize £10.00 No.91 Rosina Beckford.

Potato competition

Metric tone price would have been
£1102.54

Imperial ton price £1120.56

No one got the metric ton price correct but
congratulations go to **Derek Levesley**
who was the nearest to the imperial
measurement.



Your sack of Pates Tates will be delivered shortly...enjoy!

USEFUL NUMBERS:

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March Police : 0845 456 4564
Q E Hospital Kings Lynn: 01553 613613
North Cambs Hospital Wisbech: 01945 488088
Upwell Health Centre: 01945 773671
NHS Direct: 0845 4647

Bus Services — Monday-Saturday

March (Broad St)	9.00	13.08	15.20
Welney (Post Office)	9.20	13.30	15.57
Wisbech (Bus Stn bay 5)	10.01	14.06	16.33

Wisbech (Bus Stn bay 5)	10.05	12.05	
Welney (Post Office)	8.24	10.41	12.41
March (Broad St)	8.50	11.03	13.03

March (Broad St)	9.00	13.08	15.20
Welney (Post Office)	9.20	13.30	15.47
Downham Mkt (Bus Stn)	9.57	14.03	16.22

Downham Mkt (Bus Stn)	7.50	10.08	12.05
Welney (Post Office)	8.24	10.41	12.41
March (Broad St)	8.50	11.03	13.03

*****Some changes at Three Holes may be necessary



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Welney Churchwardens:

Pauline Aisthorpe 01366 - 384658
Rosina Beckford 01354 - 610385

Disclaimer:

Articles that appear in the Welney News are not necessarily
the opinion of the editorial team. Articles submitted for pub-
lication may have to be edited for reasons of space.

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Marlen for her proof reading skills, Margaret for her accounting skills and
to all our team of volunteers who distribute the WN come rain or shine.

Diary index



Mobile Library:

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Teddy Church:

9.30AM St Mary's



Pauls Fresh Fish Van

1-1.15 pm outside the Post Office



Carpet Bowls: 7.15pm
Pavillion



Doctor: Monday Noon

Nurse : Thursday 10am
At Village Hall



Yoga at the Pavillion
Thurs: 10am-11.30am



**Parish Council meet-
ing:** Village Hall 7.30pm



YC Youth Club: 6.30pm—
9pm at the Pavillion



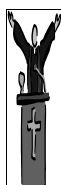
Womens Institute:
7pm Village Hall



Friendship Club:
1.30pm Village Hall



Bingo: Doors open 6pm
Game stars 7pm
Village Hall



MP Morning Prayer 9.30am

April 15th

April 22nd

May 20th

May 27th

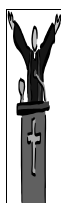


HC Holy Communion

April 1st 9.30am

April 8th 11.00am

May 6th 9.30am



AAW All Age Worship 11am
May 13th

USC

United Service Christchurch

April 29th 10.00am

APRIL 2007

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
1 HC	2	3	4 	5 YC	6 	7
8 HC	9 	10 	11 	12 YC	13 	14
15 MP	16 	17	18	19 YC	20 	21
22 MP	23 	24 	25	26 YC	27 	28
29 USC	30 					

MAY 2007

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
		1	2 	3 YC	4 	5
6 HC	7 	8 	9 	10 YC	11 	12
13 AAW	14 	15	16	17 YC	18 	19
20 MP	21 	22 	23	24 YC	25 	26
27 MP	28 	29	30	31 YC		