

BLYTHBURGH PARISH NEWS



Issue 49

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November/December 2009

You've had your say, now make it happen

Blythburgh Parish Council is to hold a special meeting in December to discuss the next steps in the Parish Plan, which was presented to the November meeting of the council.

Speaking at the open forum, Siobhan Quinn, chair of the plan's steering committee, emphasised that the plan was a community document and neither the Parish Council nor any other agency could influence its content. She said that it was not a list of commitments but identified issues of interest or concern to village residents.

Some issues in the action plan had already been addressed by the council and others were being dealt with. Many others were dependent on residents coming forward to participate and that could present difficulties.

The proposals were for the long term and did not demand instant action.

Ms Quinn said that the aim of the plan was to identify and address issues raised by parishioners based on consultation through a questionnaire and two village events. Stressing the importance of the plan to the village she said: "For the first

time, the Parish Council has clear guidance on what villagers care about."

In response the council has invited members of the steering committee to meet them at an open meeting on December 7 to review priorities and decide which are the direct responsibilities of the council and which could be delegated to working groups, which may include parish councillors.

Whilst there have been some developments since the May 2008 survey, the residents' main concern remains traffic management within the village and on surrounding roads; the maintenance of footpaths; conservation of the existing environment; and the lack of social activities within the parish. Ms Quinn said that a number of villagers who attended the evening reception in the White Hart to launch the plan had indicated in which areas they were prepared to help.

The council put on record its appreciation of the work done by the steering committee. The special parish council meeting to discuss the plan will take place at 7.30pm in the Village Hall on Monday December 7 and is open to the public.

Post Office set to open for longer

Laura Lofty, who runs the White Hart and village shop with her husband Sean, told the open forum that they hope to take over the post office in January.

She is being trained in December and will train other staff members so it may be possible to extend opening hours to include afternoons and Saturday mornings and improve facilities offered. Mrs Lofty said more advertising boards on the A12 would be considered. The shop's winter

opening hours (7-4 weekdays, 9-4 weekends) were based on staff advice. The Parish Council is to write to Adnams and the Prince of Wales, who have both taken a personal interest in the shop, stressing how important the shop and post office are to the village.

The council will also seek ways of encouraging villagers to use the shop more. The Parish Plan committee is to give Mr and Mrs Lofty its survey findings on the use of the post office and shop.

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Helicopter row: no help from council

In September a number of Blythburgh residents objected to the landing of a helicopter in Angel Lane, Blythburgh. The Parish Council wrote to Stephen Baker, chief executive of Suffolk Coastal District Council, to ask if it had looked into the safety of the situation and the environmental impact of the take-off and landings. The Parish Council also asked if Suffolk Coastal would be prepared to offer mediation. Mr Baker replied:

“I am indeed aware of the concerns of local residents (about the helicopter) and can fully appreciate both the safety and environmental issues they have.

“The council does not have sufficient powers to bring legal action against the pilot or owner of 4, Angel Lane. It is also my understanding that unfortunately the Civil Aviation Authority is unable to assist. Furthermore, the health and safety executive has confirmed that it only deals with issues where there is ‘work activity’ taking place and it is for the same reason that the council’s own health and safety officers are not able to take action.

“There appears to be some misunderstanding in relation to the council’s investigations into

environmental impact. The council is not undertaking any such investigations since it has no powers under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 to investigate noise from aircraft. Helicopters fall under the classification of aircraft for the purposes of this legislation. That said, the council has been in contact with Natural England regarding potential damage to wildlife/environment of the area. It is currently looking into this matter.

“Mediation has been offered on many occasions. Both the pilot and the owner of the property have agreed to participate but the complainant has not.

“In view of the above comments, it is with regret that the council cannot offer any further assistance in relation to this issue. Please be assured that officers have done everything within their power to try to find a resolution. Indeed, the entire case file was recently reviewed by one of my strategic directors in order to ensure that all avenues had been explored”

**Stephen Baker, Chief Executive,
Suffolk Coastal District Council**



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John Craven Pritchard (1899-1992)

Jack Pritchard was one of the great champions of the modern movement in architecture and design. 'Isokon', the retirement house built for him and his wife Molly in Dunwich Road in the early 1960s, is a rare example in East Anglia of the application of the movement's ideas.

Jack's awareness of the development of continental modernism can be dated to his student days at Cambridge. In 1925 he joined the Venesta Plywood Company, hence his nickname Plywood Pritchard. He looked for more imaginative uses for the material and commissioned furniture and shop designs. He worked with the architect Wells Coates, who designed the Lawn Road flats developed by Jack in Hampstead and finished in 1934, a fine example of a rigorously modern housing development and now Grade I listed.

The flats were the heart of iconoclastic Hampstead and a gathering place for the avant-garde. Marcel Breuer and Lazlo Moholy-Nagy, refugees from the German design school, the Bauhaus, designed furniture and graphics for Jack's company Isokon. Breuer's Long Chair is a twentieth-century classic, and the modest Isokon Donkey still houses many collections of Penguin books. Jack Pritchard even commissioned an exhibition stand from Le Corbusier.

During the war Jack worked for the Ministries of

Information, Supply and Fuel and Power. He visited the United States and was impressed by a housing development designed by Marcel Breuer and Walter Gropius, another Bauhaus refugee for whom he had provided a home and sponsorship in Britain before he went on to the States. That housing development took full advantage of a sloping site to trap the sun and exploit its winter value for space heating. Such ideas inspired the Blythburgh house.

After the war Jack worked for Bratt Colbran, Lebus and GKN, and became the first director of the Furniture Development Council. Described as one of the great ideologists of 1930's modernism, Jack Pritchard could almost have been the model for Osbert Lancaster's Hampstead progressive, drawn in a twentieth-century functional room in his book *Homes, Sweet Homes*.

Jack's long retirement saw him travelling, lecturing and gathering many honours. The Isokon Furniture Company was revived. Mill Farmhouse was bought with fifty acres. 'Isokon' was built and the farmhouse sold again. The Pritchards' Blythburgh house was designed for retirement not the heady days of a working career, but it allied the outcome of design revolutions with a fitness for purpose and sensitivity for its village site.

Alan Mackley

Blythburgh joins Sizewell liaison group

Blythburgh Parish Council has joined the Sizewell Liaison Group, established to provide a forum for discussion between the communities likely to be affected by a Sizewell C project and to promote constructive discussion and a better understanding with the operators.

Twenty-four parish and town councils have been invited to join the group. Suffolk Coastal District Council and the County Council have agreed to a meeting. EDF, the company likely to build the reactor, has not yet agreed to meet the group. If Sizewell C goes ahead, construction could start in 2015. The impact will go far beyond the years of construction to include decades of operation. The group is developing a view of the local

improvement and infrastructure the project would require and will argue that EDF should contribute towards their cost.

Blythburgh has identified a need for a pedestrian crossing, flashing speed signs for the A12, road improvements for the diversion of through traffic away from Dunwich Road and Angel Lane, and capital investment in the play area.

The group is promoting the concept of a social partnership to require the Sizewell operator to have a responsibility to local communities. Lord Mandelson, the Trade Secretary is being asked for Government support.

Blythburgh Soapbox

Does our litter lout have no shame?

Shameless: that's what our litter lout is. No warning of up to a £5,000 fine has stopped that selfish person's refusal to behave reasonably. But whoever it is, they seem to have a lot of children, or at least a lot of children's books and toys which could have gone to charity.

Nor did they fancy donating their pillows and duvets – presumably they were too embarrassed at their filth: well that's all I can assume since yet again these things were dumped at the recycling point.

They're duvets and pillows may have been too dirty to hand on but they have clearly been working on their house. Floor covering, plaster, tiles, plastic buckets and more all dumped but, of course, not in the right place.

Their children are clearly growing up as booster seats were also dumped but what sort of example are their parents setting? But it doesn't look as if they care.

One thing, among the many that really get to me is: broken glass left beside the glass recycling container. Not only are our flytippers selfish, they are clearly dead idle.

If this piece seems harsh it is really only a pale reflection of how irritated I am by the lack of consideration shown to others who live in the village and the disrespect these vandals have for the beauty of our area.

It takes little effort to take rubbish to the tip in Southwold: but it also wins brownie points for keeping our village clean.

Maybe the tipping has now stopped. (And thanks to those villagers who, unasked have taken it upon themselves to clear the rubbish.)

There can't be much rubbish left in the miscreants' house. Let's hope so. Or maybe they have left the village. That would be a result.

Olive Forsythe

RNLI DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Supper Quiz St Edmund's Hall, Southwold, 7.30pm, Friday November 20. Tickets, including lasagne and garlic bread, £8.00 each.

Prizes, grand raffle, licensed bar.

To enter teams of four, ring 0779 0612225

Christmas Shop to 20 December, Garden Room, Sutherland House, Victoria Street. All proceeds to the RNLI.

YOUR PARISH COUNCILLORS

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david@dytler.freeserve.co.uk

Vice Chair/Chair finance sub-committee

Ro Williams

Chair planning sub-committee

Rob Benson

Councillors

Binny Lewis, Lucy Clapham
Alan Mackley, Cliff Waller

Parish Clerk

Jim Boggis. 01502 478687

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Neighbourhood Watch

Rob Benson 01502 478047

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Don Black interviews Professor John Allen of Blythburgh

Last of the boffins recalls the great days

John Allen's love of Suffolk began in 1930 when his uncle George Druitt retired as a stonemason and quarry owner and bought a house at Southwold. John recalls that its cost then would now just about buy the equivalent of one plank for a beach hut in the town. From then on he spent nearly every holiday in the area.

He never dreamed when seeing seaplanes for the first time at Felixstowe in 1938 that six years later he would have responsibility for their development. Educated at state schools in London, taking a BSc in aeronautical engineering at London University, he earned top prizes in his discipline. A student apprenticeship with Handley Page honed his practical skills.

A long-term Blythburgh resident, Professor Allen is the one active surviving boffin among scientists who kept Britain at the forefront of advanced aeronautics in war and peace. He was science officer with the Marine Experimental Research Establishment (MAEE) at Rhu, Scotland. When the unit returned to Felixstowe in 1945 he was appointed head of its technical office.

John supervised the ballistics and aircraft integration of Blue Danube, Britain's first atomic bomb, at Farnborough from 1950 until 1954. From 1960 he was deputy director of Avro's new weapon research division, working on development of the hydrogen bomb. (Britain's first atom bomb was dropped over Christmas Island in May 1957 by Group Captain Ken Hubbard, a former resident of Blythburgh. Though the two men became close neighbours they never met.)

In 1969 John was appointed chief future projects engineer with Hawker Siddeley, involved particularly with development of Harrier and Hawk aircraft that for decades made an impact while training or giving displays with the Red Arrows formation team.

Why did naval and air chiefs choose Suffolk to play a vital role in our defences throughout a dangerous half century? He says: "One reason was its mainly flat and remote, sparsely-

populated terrain. Another was the generally steady air conditions over the North Sea, untroubled by mountain turbulence. That makes for more accurate test flying."

This past summer has produced evidence, if any were needed, that we enjoy clear skies when western regions lay beneath low, dark clouds. Our easternmost location also gave the area a strategic advantage. Harwich harbour, sharing its easily accessible shelter with Essex, could be turned into a seaplane base simply by laying a few buoys and shore slipways.

Seaplanes left the British scene very rapidly after the end of World War II. Professor Allen points out that concrete runways were built near and far to meet military needs, engines were more powerful and wing flaps permitted shorter airfields and heavier aircraft. The landplane took its place as the ultimate machine for civil and military flying.

MAEE folded in 1953. By then John Allen had moved to Farnborough to supervise the ballistics and aircraft integration of Britain's first atomic bomb. From 1950 until 1954, he had charge of ballistics in dropping dummy nuclear bombs from a height of eight miles over Orfordness by Lincoln bombers based at Martlesham Heath.

"People on the ground could hear the aircraft but not see them and that gave rise to rumours about secret weaponry. How right they were."

He has never lost his love for seaplanes and has designed some imaginative aircraft for *Flight International* magazine. He is, however, realistic when discussing the possibilities that seaplanes might return: "Flying boats, amphibians and floatplanes still operate in specialised niches. The hydrofoil and hovercraft are variants which seem likely only to play a minor role in aviation."

Eighty-nine next February, he has no intention of retiring from research and project design that is published worldwide.

John married Peggy Heath in 1948 and they had two sons who became engineers, and four grandchildren. Peggy died in 1987.

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Parish budget set for 2010–2011

Expenditure for the next financial year was agreed at the November meeting of the Parish Council, following the recommendations of the finance sub-committee.

The council has £2,541.79 which will cover outstanding expenditure for the current financial year, and £7,664.65 in the savings account. The council agreed that savings in the next financial year should be kept at the level of this year's precept of £5,200.

The budget for the next financial year allows for £1,500 each to be spent on a new village hall soakaway and a new bus shelter on the A12. It does not include any possible expenditure on the play site. The budget assumes that costs

incurred in the current year will remain unchanged.

It was also agreed that donations and subscriptions from the council should be set once a year. Donations to charities were agreed at £355, representing 5 per cent of the precept; subscriptions to organisations supporting council work, at £175. Any applications for extra donations or subscriptions will be considered at the budget meeting in November 2010.

In order to meet the needs of the budget for the next financial year and maintain the savings level at one year's precept, the council agreed that the precept should be increased by £550.00 to £5750.00.

The Blythburgh Parish News wishes all its readers a Happy Christmas and a Prosperous New Year

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COUNCIL NEWS

Proposed caravan site rejected

At a special meeting in October, the Parish Council objected to a retrospective planning application for the change of use of agricultural buildings to a caravan site on the plot at Red House Farm Units, Hazel Lane, Blythburgh. The council believed two factors would lead to a significant increased risk of accidents occurring at access points.

The council questioned the suitability of access for caravans and traffic generated by activity at this site. Access from and to the A12 is on a dangerous bend at the crossroads of lanes from Wenhaston and Dunwich, especially turning caravans, with lack of visibility along the A12. Traffic from the south cannot be seen because of the hill drop to Thorington, nor will such traffic see turning vehicles until the last minute. In addition, Hazel Lane carries significant

through traffic from Wenhaston to the A12. As a single lane track caravans coming to and from the site could not pass freely. Although there are occasional dusty passing places, these are not established passing places and are inadequate to offer safe access. There is a possibility of traffic blockages occurring in the lane which could back up to the A12 at busy periods.

New buildings have been erected on the locations of demolished agricultural buildings. A new access road is being introduced onto Hazel Lane from the site. There is a change of boundary to the north, where agricultural landscape within the Area of Natural Beauty is enclosed to be part of the caravan site. The council believes that the development of the site within the AONB is contrary to current planning policies.

The Heatseekers are on their way

New state-of-the-art thermal imaging equipment will soon be doing the rounds in Suffolk Coastal to identify homes with poor insulation and save residents money. Starting Monday, November 23 and across the district in the following five weeks, the Heatseekers patrol will survey all homes overnight gathering a thermal image of each to see if improved insulation could benefit residents.

The thermal image will reveal sufficiently insulated areas of the home in green and heat escaping areas in red. If areas of poor insulation are identified one of the Heatseekers' surveyors will arrange to visit residents to discuss possible ways of improving efficiency. Heatseekers can offer both loft and cavity wall insulation at competitive prices.

Installing these should reduce heat loss significantly, and could save large amounts on energy and heating bills. If both cavity and loft insulation are installed residents could see potential annual savings of up to £300 a year and a reduction in CO2 emissions of over a tonne.

With more than 55,000 homes in Suffolk Coastal, as many as 40,000 could benefit from the service. Suffolk Coastal already has initiatives in place that can help with the cost of insulating homes so making them more energy efficient need not be restricted because of the cost.

For more information contact the Heatseekers team on 0845 390 9390, visit the website www.homeheatseekers.co.uk or contact a member of the SEAL team on 0800 022 88 938

**An open invitation to the next meeting of the
Parish Council on Monday January 11 at 7.45pm in the Village Hall**

**Everybody is welcome and you are invited to raise your own
concerns and questions at the Open Forum from 7.30pm**

Hedgerow survey volunteers lead the way

Blythburgh's Hedgerow Survey, initiated by the Suffolk Coastal GREENPRINT Forum, is complete. Guy Ackers, chairman of the Suffolk Hedgerow Survey, described the work as a very well documented and accurate example of how the survey should be conducted. The survey forms and working maps were very well completed and the entire recording process was excellent.

The survey team was established in 2005 by Henrietta Maslen, with Richard Maslen and Kate Doran among its members. After two years of inactivity in 2006-7, the survey was resurrected by the other original team members, Thomas Lond-Caulk, Ursula Mackley and Brenda Motley, who together completed the work this year. Reports were compiled for more than 130 hedges. The team used Google Earth to help locate hedgerows, and found other computer software to assign accurate Ordnance Survey references to them.

The results show that Blythburgh is pretty close to the statistical average parish for species richness but the parish is divided into two distinct parts, the claylands of Hinton and the sandlands elsewhere. The Hinton results suggest there was less hedgerow removal there in the 1960s and 70s and there may even be

survivals from the feudal medieval period before landscape reorganisation under the eighteenth-century Enclosure Acts. It was pleasing to find veteran oak trees, a most unusual medlar, and one hedgerow containing a remarkable seventeen different species.

Being on the threshold between sand and clay, Blythburgh has a lower density of hedgerows than its neighbours immediately to the west. Although 40 hedgerows could not be accessed, the survey did cover comprehensively the whole parish area. The results will contribute to Suffolk's Landscape Character Assessments and provide the Planning Authority with a tool for environmental risk analysis in connection with planning applications. The gaps in the survey may show where planting, gap-filling and replanting could be useful, with the survey indicating which species are most likely to survive.

In Guy Ackers' words, the excellent survey has made an indelible, permanent and unequivocal contribution to the heritage and inheritance for future generations of the landscape hedgerows in our parish.

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Want to get fit for the New Year?

The Active Wellbeing project, supported by Suffolk County Council, Suffolk Sport and Sport England, offers a programme of sport and physical activities for adults provided in village halls. To enable the December meeting of Blythburgh Parish Council and the Village Plan steering committee to consider whether there is a demand for this in Blythburgh, please complete this survey and send it to James Boggis, Marsh End, Church Road, by December 7.

Please tick all that apply.

1. Are you....?

Male Female

2. Which age range do you fall into?

19 –24 25 –34

35 –44 45 –54

55 –64 65+

3. On average how often do you take part in structured physical activity/exercise? (lasting at least 30mins each time)

At least 3 times a week Once a week

Once a fortnight Once a month

A few times a year Less often or never

4. What activities do you normally participate in?

Aerobics Badminton Bowls

Cycling Dance Golf

Pilates Running Swimming

Tennis Walking Yoga

Other Please state _____

5. What new activities would you like to participate in? (Tick all that apply)

Aerobics Badminton Bowls

Cycling Dance Golf

Pilates Running Swimming

Tennis Walking Yoga

Other Please State _____

6. Would you prefer to take part in exercise...?

During the week Weekends No preference

7. Would you prefer sessions to be in the....?

Morning Afternoon Evening

8. Are there any factors that would encourage you to participate in physical activity more often?

Notes from Daisy Bank xxxvii

My 'Disgruntled From Daisy Bank' days are over. Let the railway come, the motorbikes have their world championships and the water continue to flood on to the marshes. Frankly, I have lost the will to protest.

However, I do have a confession. After moaning about the breach in the river and the possible dire implications for Daisy Bank, I now have to admit that I quite like the view from our back garden. Swapping skylarks and grazing cattle for curlews and little egrets has not been all that bad. And yes, one of these days we may well have to retreat upstairs and use a boat to get to the shops, but who cares. I suspect that when that happens, I will have more important things to worry about.

I could always, courtesy of the landowners I hasten to add, dredge a channel from the river up to our back gate and call Fern Cottage a desirable waterside property with landing stage and mooring facilities. An advert in *The Sunday Times* and suddenly I'm a millionaire and on my way to a villa in Tuscany with a Porsche 911 to follow or perhaps a Ferrari as it's Italy. But then, of course, I'd have to move and wouldn't be able to look over the marshes in the evening and watch those glorious and inspirational sunsets. The curlews and the little egrets would be a distant memory. And of course, no more looking up at the church and feeling that sense of privilege at living so near to such a wonderful building.

At the bottom of our garden now, you will see a small Gunter rigged dinghy with sails, mast, boom and tiller, all ready to go. Sadly, its days of going are no longer. The sails are from a previous dinghy and never really suited this one. It sailed as though you were dragging a kedje anchor behind you and was consequently not so much fun. When the transom started to bend under the strain of the outboard, it was time to call it a day. So as I said, now it

stands at the bottom of the garden. It's a memorial to happier boating times and lots of laughter, when things, inevitably, went wrong and we ended up in the reeds or on a mud bank.

Two or three years ago I spotted a double hulled work boat tied up near Blythburgh Creek and put a note in it saying "If you ever want to sell this boat, I'm your man." It turned out that the boat belonged to somebody I knew and who sadly died this summer. John Quinn from Wenhaston was a great lover of nature and a very competent painter so I was always pleased to see him. So, his widow made contact and now John's boat is mine.

Inevitably the outboard having laid dormant for a couple of years because of the inadequacies of the old boat, failed to pass its MOT and now languishes in the bottom of a skip in Beccles. So again, courtesy of the landowner who allows us to keep our boats in the creek, next summer awaits and with a new outboard, it will be a whole new chapter of Blythburgh boating.

Here's a quick boating anecdote to finish. Some time ago I was in Madras in southern India. Having been invited by the local expatriate yacht club to sail in one of their races, I teamed up with a colleague and race we did. The club, its members and the class of dinghies were all straight out of the era of pucker sahibs and the Raj.

The race started and not being used to the boat, we began to fall behind. With my friend at the tiller and me crewing I became aware of a large tanker coming into Madras harbour. Tacking around its stern, most of our fellow competitors had to backtrack to prevent colliding with the monster and as a result we came second. Pink gins flowed in abundance that afternoon. They're probably still there or anyway, I like to think so.

Paul Bennett

BLYTHBURGH LATITUDE TRUST. Please make all applications to the honorary administrator, Jim Boggis, Marsh End, Church Road, (478687. He will offer advice on how to complete the application forms.