

Woolverstone News | 10th April 2016

Dear All,

Spring is happening all around us

What a joyous period of the year it is! Freston woods will soon be carpeted in bluebells and wild garlic. If you haven't experienced this, try to. It certainly exceeds the experience offered at some "official" bluebell woods. Our own Horsepond's Green is looking beautiful this year. Why not stop by and have a look or sit awhile on the bespoke bench circling the acquisition oak. We planted three fruit trees after Christmas as part of the ANOB Scattered Orchards project; a plum, a damson and an apple. We have a mulberry promised in the Autumn.

HMS Ganges update | We need your help please

As you know, the Parish Council has made an application for Judicial Review on the decision by Babergh District Council to grant planning permission for building 285 houses etc. on the former HMS Ganges site at Shotley Gate. The application has been approved by the Hon Mrs Justice Lang who has given permission for our case to go forward to a full two day hearing saying that there are "*arguable grounds in respect of a difficult planning decision*". Shortly a date will be set for the court hearing and we will let you know more as and when we do.

Help with our legal costs

Now that we have reached the full hearing stage, the Parish Council wants to secure as much financial help as possible from the residents of Woolverstone and others from the Peninsula. Whilst we are confident that our application will be successful, win or lose we will have a sizable legal bill to pay. Already our solicitor and barrister has completed considerable case preparation and there is more to do to prepare for the two day High Court hearing. So far we have also had to pay over £900 in court fees.

If we win, so far as possible, we will ask for our legal costs to be paid by Babergh District Council. If we are not successful with our application, the High Court has already capped our liability to the Council at no more than £10,000. This is because the court agrees we are bringing a valid claim that is concerned with the quality of our environment which a planning issue could greatly harm.

Members of the Parish Council have pledged £500 each to help pay for the first stage of our application and we have had a £500 donation from Freston Parish Council, which we are immensely grateful. These funds together with Woolverstone Parish Council's reserve funds has helped get us this far.

Would you like to help, please?

We are immensely grateful for the financial help we have already received or been promised. However, we will need solid support from residents within Woolverstone as well as friends and supporters from outside the village. Just imagine the impact

on our lives and homes if HMS Ganges is built, not only over the five years of construction but for ever after all the new houses have been built. All the construction traffic and new residents will have to drive along our part of the B1456 to HMS Ganges.

Help by giving us a pledge

Over the next two weeks you will receive a letter from Woolverstone Parish Council to explain how you can make a financial pledge towards our legal costs for our claim against Babergh District Council. Each pledge will help fund the litigation that seeks to stop the substantial increase in traffic and noise through our village.

Help by attending our fundraising events

We are also planning to hold a variety of fundraising events which will also help raise funds.

Help with more ideas

In addition, we are seeking support from across and beyond the Peninsula. If you have other fundraising ideas, please get in touch with me. We are also looking for help to co-ordinate and manage our fundraising. If you would like to us with this task, please make contact with me, Simon Pearce (Chair) or Romy Blackburn (Clerk). Many thanks.

Including all the village within the 30 mph zone

It has always seemed incredibly unfair that part of Woolverstone village is outside the 30 mph zone. Cars are travelling up to or above the national speed limit past these seven houses making entering and exiting houses dangerous. There is no footpath. The road twists and makes visibility very poor. Peter Patrick - one of our District Councillors – gave up leafleting along this stretch. He felt it was too dangerous. The Parish Council has been seeking the support of David Wood - our Suffolk County Councillor – for years to have this situation changed. Recently the process for change at Suffolk County Council has changed and become more democratic. There is now a "Speed Limit Panel" to whom we can make representation for change.

Call for your evidence

A few weeks ago we had a meeting with David. He promised to support our application to have the entire village within the 30 mph zone. We now have to present evidence to support our case. This should be letters from the residents, service providers (e.g. postman), Police, Parish Council, information from the village questionnaire and so on. We are aiming to have collected this evidence in time for an application in May or June. Please help with making our case if you have an experience of the difficulties at the East end of our village. Write a letter showing your concerns and reasons. Please send it to me, Simon Pearce.

Woolverstone Statement

On March 7th Shotley Parish Council released a statement in response to our application for Judicial Review about HMS Ganges. This can be read on their website: <http://shotley.onesuffolk.net/news-2/local-news/statement-from-the-shotley-parish-council/>

The statement was sent to all Parish Councils on the Peninsula, the EADT, the local MP, the High Court and Babergh District Council. Woolverstone Parish Council's response outlining our view is included at the end of this newsletter.

Speeding through Woolverstone

Woolverstone's Community Speedwatch is now operational and conducting surveys at different times during the week. We have taken on two new members whom we are able to train ourselves. If you want to help record details or relay reg. numbers/make and model/ colour/type you would be really welcome as it will share the burden and responsibility. Plus, we will be able to cover more periods in the week. You just have to fill in a short application form which is forwarded to the Police for their records. If you would like to volunteer to be part of the Community Speedwatch Team, please get in touch with me or Romy Blackburn, Clerk to the Parish Council, on 780731 blackburn_30@btinternet.co.uk

Queen's 90th Birthday (Official)

We will mark our Queen's Ninetieth birthday celebrations over the **weekend of 10-12 June 2016** and are planning to join forces with the Royal Harwich Yacht Club.

This is the shape of the day we plan:

- St Michael's Monthly Market 9.00 – 12.30
- Lunchtime picnic/BBQ centred on the Church. 12.30 -2.00.
- Children's games on Church Field in the afternoon. 2.00 – 3.00
- Music and tea in St Michael's in the afternoon. 3.00 – 3.45
- Sail past RHYC 4.30. Club open to visitors and members for drinks and eats followed by lighting of a beacon on the foreshore – around 9.00

Is there anyone out there that would like to run/organise the games for children on the field? Rounders? Treasure hunt? Skittles? Kite making competition?

If you would like to help with the organisation of this event, please contact me, or Romy Blackburn.

Queens 90th Birthday celebration (Actual)

Sunday 24th April | St. Michael's Church | 4.00 p.m.

"Songs of Praise" - with Peter Crompton on the organ - to celebrate the Queen's actual birthday. The songs have been chosen by people born in each decade of the Queen's life. There will be a cream tea following the singing.

Village Questionnaire

Thank you so much to everyone who completed and returned their questionnaires. I now have 83, which is about 80% of the village households that have responded. I have made contact with University Campus Suffolk who are going to help us with the analysis.

Vacancy for Clerk to the Parish Council

Romy Blackburn is retiring from her role as Clerk to Woolverstone Parish Council in May this year. We are very, very urgently seeking her successor. We would rather not have to go outside the village. It would be beneficial if there was some time working in tandem.

If you think you have the qualities needed for this role and would be interested in this job, please contact me or Romy. The sooner the better!

Potholes

There are a number of potholes appearing in the road through the village. If you notice one you can report it on the SCC website all the information you need is here:

<https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/roads-pavements-and-verges/potholes/report-a-pothole/>

A photograph is really useful to go with the location.

Re-surfacing Main Road

Highways engineers from Suffolk County Council have advised that Main Road, Woolverstone - from the Marina to Harkstead Lane - is currently scheduled for resurfacing from the 12th September 2016 and this is due to continue for five nights.

Date for your diary

Ipswich High School is hosting a Girls Day School Trust residential weekend, which includes camping, between **12th and 15th July 2016**. The school will not be open to Woolverstone residents over that weekend due to understandable safeguarding concerns. I would like to thank HIS for allowing us to enjoy their grounds for so much of the year. It is hugely appreciated.

Best wishes,

Simon Pearce

Chairman, Woolverstone Parish Council | 01473 780009 simonpearce@gmx.co.uk

Proposed Development at the former HMS Ganges site, Shotley Gate

Woolverstone Parish Council's response to the Statement from Shotley Parish Council dated 7 March 2016

Woolverstone has always supported redevelopment of the Ganges site but only on an appropriate scale. We believe 285 new houses, a hotel, care home and business units in addition to the Marina development of 150 houses will overwhelm the B1456 - the only route in and out of the peninsula - causing unacceptable environmental damage to an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and our designated conservation village. The planning process has been protracted because of the determination of the developer to build so many homes at a location classified as "non-sustainable", on the tip of a peninsula at the end of a 8.5 mile narrow, twisting road passing through four communities. The original plan to build 500 houses was reduced to 325 but we fought and won a Public Inquiry in 2006 when the Secretary of State rejected the scheme pointing out:

" the inaccessible, unsustainable nature of the proposal site and the harm to the environment arising from the increase in traffic that would be generated . . . the site is not within an urban area, nor is it an urban extension nor is it located around any node in a good public corridor."

The current plans do not address the criteria for sustainability nor take into account how they will affect neighbouring villages. We welcome Shotley Parish Council's willingness to work with us to mitigate the impacts of the increase in traffic but do not believe any meaningful mitigation is possible. The provision of "sensitively designed white gates" at either end of the village is derisory. No clear figures of the total traffic generation have been shared with us although it is described as "substantial" and "significant." We understand from the developer's figures the increase will be up to 38% - a huge number of additional vehicles on the road making over 3000 extra trips a day. Such an impact is comparable to that of the scheme rejected in 2006 and remains unacceptable.

The Government is keen to see houses being built; it is also keen to ensure they are built in sustainable locations. The homes provided by the Ganges development are not even needed for Babergh to meet its housing targets. We agree with Shotley Parish Council that an acceptable and sustainable solution should be found for the site and have consistently said so at many consultations but such a massive scheme is neither.

Nor does Woolverstone PC believe the current proposal is the "best" that could be achieved for the site or the communities along the B1456. We fundamentally disagree with the view expressed in Shotley's statement regarding the Section 106 monies. The guaranteed sum is £1,079,480 phased over the period of construction, nearly half of this destined for education. Any further monies to be obtained,

potentially up to £5.984 million, depend on the viability and profitability (20%) of the project. There are to be three valuation points to assess these. Only if the valuations show viability and a profit over 20% will additional monies become available. There is no certainty that the project will be sufficiently profitable to trigger any extra payments. Furthermore, it is really hard to see the "rewards" of such a development to the villages along the B1456 and the wider community.

Shotley Gate is at the end of a long winding road passing through four communities - Wherstead, Freston, Woolverstone and Chelmondiston. It is surrounded on all sides by an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Its classification as a "non-sustainable location" has not stopped it becoming a vibrant community and to be congratulated on becoming "Suffolk Village of the Year 2015". But that village status could soon end. By adding 1,500 to the population, the Ganges and Marina developments would transform Shotley from what is officially a "hinterland settlement" into one of the largest communities in the Babergh District.

All the villages along the B1456, including Shotley until the eleventh hour, objected to the current proposals. Woolverstone, supported by Freston, is now prepared to challenge Babergh's decision at Judicial Review. Previously the Peninsula Parishes Alliance, including Shotley, worked together to protect our unique and beautiful peninsula. We have fought and won before and hope to once again. That said, we embarked on Judicial Review proceedings with a heavy heart. It was not a decision taken lightly but we believe Babergh made an error in law and that the scale of the development is simply too large and damaging to go unchallenged. A High Court judge has now decided that we do have an arguable case.

We agree with Shotley Parish Council that change is inevitable. But we believe that what we are facing would degrade and destroy our environment irrevocably for all time, for our children and grandchildren. There is nothing "sympathetic" about the increased volume of traffic, danger, noise, vibration, emissions and community severance.

The Shotley Peninsula is a very special place with tranquil countryside running gently down to the banks of two glorious rivers. There are moves afoot for the interior of the peninsula to be added to the AONB so protecting it from the ravages of future development. Our hope is that all the communities of the Peninsula will once again work together to protect its rare beauty and character for posterity.

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