



Woolverstone News

January 30th 2017

Dear All

Well, we are midway through winter and the evenings are slowly but surely lengthening. Although we are not out of Winter's clutches yet there are hopeful signs around us; the snowdrops are flowering. The shy snowdrops with their delicate white heads tipping diffidently downward: "a symbol whence we know/ That brighter days are nigh". Traditionally, snowdrops are supposed to flower on Candlemas Day -February 2nd. Indeed, another name for the snowdrops is Candlemas Bell. There is an old country rhyme for Candlemas Day that foretells the prospects for our weather for the remainder of Winter:

*"If Candlemas Day be fair and bright
Winter will have another fight.
If Candlemas Day brings cloud and rain,
Winter will not come again."*

We shall have to wait and see how accurate this proves to be!

There are beautiful small displays of snowdrops in St Michael's churchyard; but the best of all is to be seen part-way down Manning's Lane, past the first group of cottages and on the right as the lane drops steeply down to the river. Here, every year, you can find a breath-taking carpet of snowdrops reminding us that Spring is just round the corner.

There is a public "engagement" initiative on the future merger of Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils which runs until 5th February.

This has been superseded, I think, by the decision of the new Babergh District Council Leader, Councillor John Ward, who was elected on January 4th following the resignation of Councillor Jennie Jenkins in December, to hold a referendum on the subject of a merger between the two councils. However, it would be wise to make your feelings known.

Any decision seems to turn on the "business case" for a merger. Would we, as residents, see our Council Tax be more effectively used in a bigger Council? This seems to be the major determinant rather than any sense of identity, place or emerging localism.

Furthermore, there is currently a telephone survey being undertaken by ComRes of 2,000 Babergh residents which we are told is statistically robust and "balanced in terms of age, gender, geography, socio-economic grade and ethnicity." This will feed into the decision making process.

I think it fair to say that Babergh District Council cabinet wants the merger to go ahead. This is reflected in the information that has been put into the public realm by letter. The letter includes this statement: "The cabinet (*has*) provisionally endorsed the proposal to dissolve both councils and create a single new District Council for the area." There is no mention of a referendum in the letter to Parish Councils, attached, which is at odds with statement following the election of John Ward as leader of Babergh. See the East Anglian Daily Times article on 4th January:

<http://www.eadt.co.uk/news/new-babergh-leader-john-ward-promises-merger-referendum-1-5343521>

If you would like to take part in this public "engagement" initiative you can make online comments through this link: <http://www.babergh.gov.uk/the-council/onecouncil/>

On this web page there is an information leaflet, FAQs and an opportunity to take part in an online survey. I have attached a copy of the leaflet as well as the letter from Babergh District Council.

Some Dates for your Diary:

St Michael's Churchyard. Maintenance team. Friday 2nd February 10.00 -12.00

Restoration and maintenance volunteers: keeping our churchyard and open spaces beautiful. We are meeting at Horsepond's Green at 10.00 a.m. There is some clearance work to be done as well as hedge cutting around the boundary of this area. It is good to see the snowdrops we planted last year showing through.

Monthly Morning Market at St Michael's Church. Saturday 10th February 9.00 – 12.30

Theme: "St Valentine's Day".

Don't miss the bacon butties! There will be local fruit and veg from Tattingstone, specialist artisan breads from Anchor Bakery, Aloe Vera products, Game Keeper's Daughter with wild meat goodies, local crafts, plants and trees and much more.

Take a chance to catch up with friends and neighbours and buy some local produce in the most beautiful and peaceful surroundings.

Helping our Community

Woolverstone "Spring Clean" Weekend – Saturday 3rd and Sunday 4th March

Our village "Spring Clean", an annual tradition, is the weekend 3rd and 4th of March.

The Big Rubbish Clear Up is on Saturday 4th March at 10.30 a.m. Meet outside Berners Hall. We have Hi-Viz waistcoats, litter pickers and bin bags. Bring gloves and a "litter picker" if you have one!

If you can't make the Saturday clean sweep, choose any area over the weekend, maybe the hedge opposite your home or a path along which you walk, or an area which irks you! Walkers can also help along the footpaths towards Freston, Chelmondiston and Pin Mill. Please let me know where you have been so we can keep a track of areas that haven't been reached.

It would be good to join the "Sea Shepherds UK" beach clear up as well along the side of the Orwell. Any volunteers?

Please try to help out over "Spring Clean" Weekend and keep our village looking beautiful. It could be a family event to help our young people feel a part of their environment. I hope the Ipswich High School students will join us again this year.

Over the weekend, it is also a good opportunity to do a within Parish boundary footpath check and see if styles, gates and paths are clear and are in passable condition for people to use and enjoy. So, if you are walking along a footpath over the weekend, would you check the state of it, the accessibility and report back, with picture and location? If the footpath sign is not clear due to undergrowth, rotten post or some other reason please take a picture and location to include in your report.

Ipswich High School

We are so very privileged to be allowed to walk through the grounds of the Ipswich High School after 6.00 during the week, throughout the weekend and during the holidays. The only proviso is we are asked, please, to keep our dogs on leads while they are in the grounds and to clear up behind them. It would be a shame to lose this wonderful opportunity by failing to follow the guidelines we have been asked to follow. Please, please keep dogs on leads within Ipswich High School grounds.

Local History

It would be great to collect and digitise more photographs and recollections from the past in Woolverstone. The history of the Widows Homes, Berners Hall, Woolverstone House, the Saw Mill at the Timbers, the Post Office in Number 24 Main Road, war time recollections to name but a few. Most recently, gathering recollections from the period at Woolverstone Hall of the London Nautical Training School 1947 -1952.

So, could we set up a Woolverstone history group? If you think you might like to be part of helping to set up this group, contribute photographs or memories or write up a topic, then please make contact with me or Jen Young. Let's see what we can do!

Parish Councillor

We have a vacancy for one Parish Councillor. If you think you would be interested in being part of the PC and would like to know more, please get in touch (780009)

Community Speedwatch

In order to have a continuing presence we really need people who are prepared to give a couple of hours a month to support us.

If you would like to be part of the team to help keep the traffic flow through the village to safe limits, please make contact with me. We've got the kit but need to get this project moving and regular. (780009)

If you know your neighbour is not on the internet, or does not get this newsletter, please print of a copy and drop it through their letter box. If you know someone who would like to be on the mailing list please ask them to send me an email to the address below and I will add them to the group email list. Many thanks.

Best wishes

Simon Pearce. Chairman, Woolverstone Parish Council (780009). simonrpearce@gmx.co.uk)