



Report for Bawdsey 2016

2016 was a momentous year both nationally with Brexit and globally with the unexpected election of Donald Trump in the US. Bawdsey too was affected by an unforeseen event which will have far-reaching implications for the village. In August news emerged that Bawdsey Manor (run as Alexanders College for the past 25 years) was closing due to financial troubles. It went into administration and was put on the open market by the Administrators. This has had a profound effect upon everybody connected with Bawdsey Quay including local residents, Bawdsey Parish Council and the District Council.

Suffolk Coastal District Council had promised to hand over a large amenity site at Bawdsey Quay to Bawdsey Parish Council which hoped to build a Visitors' Centre with exhibition space and a cafe to boost tourism in the area. Three years had been spent planning this project with the receipt of grants, the production of a firm business plan accepted by SCDC, an innovative green design of the Visitors Centre by award-winning architects, Modece, and on-going plans for an outdoor classroom. Bird and Bat boxes had been sponsored and installed on the 3 acre wooded site. The District Council has now informed the Parish Council that because of the great uncertainty surrounding the outcome of the sale of the Manor it would not now commit to transfer the land to the Parish Council until the outcome of the sale is clear. If the District Council subsequently decides not to transfer the land to the Parish Council then, the project as originally envisaged won't happen. As a result the Project is on hold, lending an air of disappointment to the end of 2016.

Village Events: Village life can be very rich; events tend to follow the same pattern over the course of the year and are anticipated and well supported. **Every January 1st** a handful of swimmers brave the icy waters of the River Deben at Bawdsey Quay in what is known as the Deben Dip. Money raised goes to a different charity each year. This year it was the Sunrise Children's Charity in Ipswich Hospital which received £146. At the same time the harbour master, John White, was ferrying customers from the Quay over the mouth of the estuary to Felixstowe Ferry. It was cold but sunny with little breeze and a magnificent sum of £1,440 was raised for the Felixstowe Volunteer Coast Patrol Rescue Service.

The village hall had a defibrillator installed in January donated by the British Heart Foundation and two training sessions took place led by the first responders from the village. **February** saw the annual village jumble sale, **March**, the Easter Egg Hunt in the recreation ground and on **May Bank Holiday** the village fete took place as usual, this year opened by Ipswich striker Terry Butcher, raising £4,200. Bawdsey Market operates once a month from May-October selling local produce and hand –made cards in the village hall. Bawdsey marked the Queen’s 90th birthday with a tea party outside the village hall on **June 11th** and villagers brought a plate of finger food to share. Also in June Open Studios saw three artists in Bawdsey displaying their art. Mark Dovey, his driftwood sculptures, Alison Calvesbert-Rearden her mixed media memory boxes and Louise Mock her ceramics.



The Car Boot and Garage Sale, another popular event in **July** saw the whole of The Street turned into a mini market with many outsiders supporting the event, raising £200. Also over the weekend **9/10 July** was the Church of St Mary’s Flower Festival on the theme of Shakespeare which raised £607.24. The Harvest supper took place again in **October**, and on the wettest night of the year it was the village bonfire night on a field next to East Lane car park. Remembrance Day saw a commemoration at the war memorial and a week before Christmas villagers went around the village carol singing for the Children’s Society. These events are all documented in the monthly Bawdsey Bulletin, held in the archive.

Coast: As befits its position at the end of the Deben Peninsula, Bawdsey is partly defined by its relationship with the sea. It has its own boat club, the Bawdsey Haven Yacht Club and during the winter months it held talks in the village hall. In February it was “Sailing on Norwegian Fjords”, and in April “A Sail through the North West Passage.

Of more immediate relevance is the vulnerability of the coast, both at East Lane and at the mouth of the Deben estuary. The Environment Agency has been shoring up the coast at East lane with huge boulders, known as Rock Armour, brought in on long trailers, the weight of which has broken up the narrow lane down which they passed. They have been stored in a depot near the car park and earlier in the year work was carried out necessitating the closure of the footpath along the sea wall.

The village Emergency Group has had its revised Emergency Plan approved by the Joint Emergency Planning Unit at SCDC. The village hall has now been designated an Emergency Centre in the event of floods, power outages and other emergencies.

A group called Bawdsey Coastal Partnership was set up in 2014 comprising landowners and representatives from interested parties to think up ways to protect the coastline. Two reports have been commissioned but the likelihood is that landowners will have to donate land for an Enabling Development whereby housing is built on donated land and the proceeds given to flood defences. The HR Wallingford Report commissioned by the Crown Estate on the extent and causes of coastal erosion entitled Bawdsey Coastal Process was published in 2016. This is going to feature more strongly in 2017 especially the boosting of defences for Flood Cell 1 which protects Woodbridge.

A dramatic incident occurred on Saturday September 10th when a group of six suspected illegal immigrants, four men and two women, landed from a yacht at Bawdsey Quay after 6pm where they were picked up by a black Range Rover which was later found abandoned in the car park of the Unruly Pig in Bromeswell.



Bawdsey Radar Trust: Following the successful bid of £1.4 million from the Heritage Lottery Fund in 2015 the Trust has begun to transform the transmitter block, home to the radar museum, to a modern facility and to fund an exhibition to make it a fun and vibrant attraction. The Transmitter Block, situated on the Bawdsey Manor Estate, was part of the world's first operational radar stations. The last visitors were welcomed over the August Bank Holiday and work started almost immediately to repair and reinforce the concrete blast walls. Work has also begun on the removal of the concrete roof and the 1.5 meters of shingle blast protection. One third of the shingle will be removed from the roof entirely allowing the area underneath to be made watertight. The adjacent third of the shingle will then be moved across to the repaired section allowing the next third of the roof to be made safe. The last three months of 2016 has seen the exhibition team researching, documenting, and developing storylines for the exhibition. The museum hopes to re-open in September 2017.



Housing: House prices in Bawdsey are above the national average and over 30% of the houses in the village are second homes. The old cottages are often bought as weekend retreats, a case in point being a 3 bed-roomed end of terrace house which sold at £250,000 this year. Only one of the whole row of five cottages is lived in full time.

The decision in 2015 to grant planning permission for 13 houses to be built in a meadow behind Bawdsey Primary School against the recommendation of the parish council was controversial. However no building has taken place throughout 2016. An application to build 5 houses on the old industrial site of Cranes Garage at the beginning of the Street in March 2016 was turned down both by the parish council and by SCDC. It went to appeal which was dismissed in November 2016. It entailed turning the existing buildings into holiday lets which was also contentious.

Also for sale in May 2016 was a 3 acre building plot on the Bawdsey Farm Estate following the burning down of the original farmhouse there in 2013. Sold by Jackson Stops with an architect's design, the asking price was £575,000. It has been Under Offer for a number of months.

The oldest house in the village, Manor House, has been for sale for over a year at £600,000. It includes the original school building. Other houses for sale include a 4 bedroom mews house for £395,000 on the Bawdsey Farm Estate, a 3 bedroom terrace house on Bawdsey Manor Estate for £430,000 and a 2 bedroom house on Bawdsey Quay for £395,000

Shingle Street: This pretty seaside hamlet is part of Bawdsey parish. Two publications came out in 2016; one was a history of the hamlet entitled "Life on the Edge" by Tim Miller. The other was a study of the wildlife of Shingle Street called "Knowing your Place, " by Jeremy Mynott.

Bawdsey Manor: A major blow came to the village in August 2016 when the receivers were called in and closed Alexanders College due to outstanding debts by the owners. January had seen a relaunch of the school and a change in its status from an international college to an independent secondary school. It was put on the market with Knight Frank mid-

September at a sum of £5 million. The closure of the school led to several redundancies of villagers who worked there. More crucially it has indirectly dealt a body blow to the parish council who aimed to build a visitor centre on the amenity site at the Quay. The Manor also own Bawdsey Quay, the jetty, the boat park, the Boathouse Cafe and Sailing School as well as a number of other properties on Ferry Road. If no buyer can be found for the Manor, the other properties will be sold in lots.

Parish Council: Two of the eight parish councillors who were elected in May 2015 have resigned. They were David Baker and Tony Osmanski. Two more have been co-opted, Andrew Rouse and Andrew Block. Chairman Brian Johnson agreed to stand for a second year due to the council's ambitious project to build a visitor centre at the Quay which had been making good progress. A Local Housing Needs Survey was carried out which indicated general support for more affordable homes. The Working Group was very busy promoting the Visitor Centre project and the Scottish Power sub-group have been scrutinising Scottish Power's plans for the landfall site for EAW 1 and 3 which will begin in June 2017. The village website has been updated and has now a more modern look. www.bawdsey.onesuffolk.net

Bawdsey Primary School: Newly appointed head teacher Rob Duncan retired in July 2016 and has been replaced by Katie Butler. A mother and toddler session has been started up at the school. OAPs can book a lunch at the school once a month. Cuttings from the EADT have shown pupils at the school performing very well in both sporting activities and science events.

Jenny Webb, Bawdsey Recorder

January 2017