

Report for Bawdsey Parish 2019

2019 was a memorable year full of diverse happenings including extreme weather events, the latter a reminder of the vulnerability of small coastal villages in this era of global warning. Two spates of burglaries in November have compounded this feeling of being at risk. Three elections this year reflected the current political uncertainty, and continuing austerity has been felt in the withdrawal of visits by the community policeman from the Woodbridge Safer Neighbour Team and in the need for the parish council to pay Suffolk CC for Highways works.

But community feeling is strong in this small village of 195 households (which also comprises the hamlet of Shingle Street a mile north of Bawdsey) and the year has been punctuated by numerous community events. This report includes for the first time a paragraph about farming in the area.



New rock armour shoring up the sea wall at East Lane. View towards Shingle Street

Coastal Matters: Bawdsey is very vulnerable to coastal erosion both at Bawdsey Quay at the mouth of the Deben and at East Lane. A local Coastal Erosion Measuring team has been measuring the extent of the erosion at Bawdsey Quay over the past six years and feeding the information into a national data base. It appears the shingle is being moved across the mouth of the estuary on to the Knolls and causing a narrowing of the channel, posing a risk to sailors entering and exiting from the river. A link to satellite imagery of the inlet over the last year with accompanying blog can be accessed at <https://suffolkinlets.wordpress.com/2019/12/18/a-year-in-the-life-of-the-deben-inlet/>

The sea wall at East Lane was damaged during last year's Beast from the East and earlier this year the remains of the stock of rock armour was used to shore up the coast. (See photo on page 1). The sea has been undercutting the cliffs from East Lane to Bawdsey Quay and there have been a number of cliff falls. Worryingly the National Coastal Path team at Natural England has not dismissed this leg of the route as being too dangerous despite reservations expressed by both the local landowner and the parish council.



A revised report on coastal processes by Jacobs UK which was commissioned by Coastal Partnership East to inform a new Shoreline Management Plan was published this year. Funding for stage 2 is being sought. Coastal processes are still not fully understood so a “wait and see” approach is recommended rather than going down one route for coastal protection. It may be that the current designation of “holding the line” will be changed to that of “managed retreat”.

The Deben Estuary Partnership, a body concerned with the management of the Deben and its immediate surrounds has received funding for a weather station to be mounted on the cliff at Bawdsey Manor which will collect data such as wind speeds and monitor erosion.

Bawdsey Coastal Partnership is another local body concerned with the challenges of living near the coast. It came together with the clear objective of “facilitating the renewal and management of the sea defences on the 5 miles of the Suffolk coast from Shingle Street to the mouth of the Deben”. Its AGM was held in February where Felixstowe councillor Andy Smith explained the current thinking on coastal protection, the different agencies tasked with coastal defence and the available funding streams.

52 North Charity Walk: On June 26th Richard Smith (middle) chose to walk across Britain at its broadest point from Felixstowe to Fishguard, Pembrokeshire along the line of 52 degrees North in order to raise money for green initiatives. He began the walk at Martello Tower W at East Lane.



Shingle Street: Shingle Street lies a mile along the coast from Bawdsey and is part of Bawdsey Parish. Like Bawdsey Quay, it suffers at the time of high spring tides and was temporarily cut off on January 8th when a flood surge made the road from Hollesley impassable.

It is an SSSI and attracts film makers for its attractive settlement features. In August The Daily Telegraph included it in its 20 Most Beautiful Hidden Beaches travel article in Britain. Richard Curtis set a scene at Shingle Street for his film “Yesterday” where in an alternative reality John Lennon had become an artist and lived at The Beacons, a chalet on the beach. Due to its situation as part of the AONB Coast and Heaths, it benefited from a scheme of undergrounding its electricity cables in the summer costing £425,000, protecting birds and the environment by installing 3.8km of underground cables.

In September an event called Tea on the Beach took place in aid of conserving the historic environment of the area.



Electricity cables at Shingle Street have now been underground

The dangers of its shingle beach at low tide was demonstrated in November when a young girl sank up to her waist in an area where a lagoon usually fills at high tide. Fortunately, she was able to extricate herself. Hollesley PC is hoping to erect warning signs since the incident took place north of the Bawdsey PC boundary.

Bawdsey Quay: On January 1st the Deben Dip took place as usual with a few hardy swimmers braving the waters. The foot ferry to Felixstowe was running and together with the sale of mice pies and mulled wine raised a magnificent sum of £1,168 for the Felixstowe Volunteer Coastal Patrol Service. The ferry runs from Easter to the end of October.



A tidal surge occurred in January but fortunately peaked before the high spring tide at the quay. Parking continued to be a problem along the road adjacent to the estuary, exacerbated by many camper vans which park facing the Deben where spectacular sunsets can be seen. Significant erosion of the verges has taken place over the years and steps to alleviate this failed to make progress in 2019. However, there are hopes that cooperation between East Suffolk Council, Suffolk CC and Bawdsey Parish Council will see a reconfiguration of the parking arrangements in 2020.

Bawdsey Quay Amenity Site: The toilets at the amenity site finally opened in June following an upgrade of the facilities. Last year they were connected to the new mains water system and in 2019 PGL at Bawdsey Manor upgraded its sewage system and linked it up with these toilets. It is open 24/7 and self locks in the evenings.

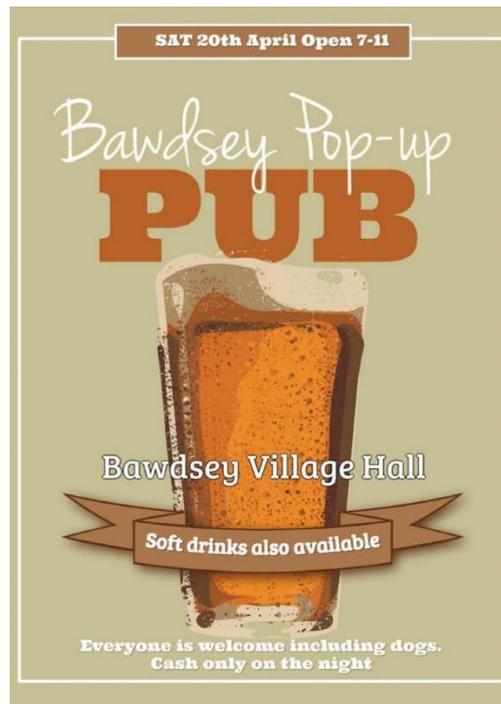
The East Suffolk Building Preservation Trust has undertaken to spearhead an attempt to renovate a Victorian tin chapel on land adjacent to the amenity site, owned by PGL on Bawdsey Manor grounds. PGL is willing to give up the chapel and a piece of surrounding land to the trust. A feasibility study was carried out in 2019 and the interior has been shorn up with scaffolding to halt further deterioration of the structure. The recommended usage by the consultancy firm Cultural Engine is for a resource centre for over eight groups from different universities which are carrying out research on the Deben Estuary and its salt marsh.



Chapel in early twentieth century and now-dilapidated

Bawdsey Village Hall and Recreation Ground: Bawdsey is a very active village with its own village hall and a recreation ground with a children's playing area and tennis courts. The VH and Recreation Ground has its own committee, a registered charity, separate from the Parish Council.

New ventures this year have included a monthly Pop up Pub in the Village Hall which has attracted a lot of older locals who might not otherwise have gone out in the evenings.



The old cricket pavilion on the recreation ground has undergone a transformation with new kitchen, loos and floor lining which means it can now be rented out for parties, thus attracting more income. The playground has suffered from moss and algae on its surface making it dangerous for youngsters and necessitating closure during the cold winter months while the moss was scraped off. The distinctive cupola on the village hall, built in the Quilter era, has been repaired and repainted.



The hall is used throughout the year. Winter lectures are put on by the Bawdsey Haven Yacht Club from January- March. Coffee and Chat group meets every month. Craft Group meets bi-monthly. A monthly food market begins in March and continues into the autumn, with a special Christmas event in December. For the past few years a local artist, Perienne Christian, has given art classes in the hall. Chair-based exercises continued for the third year running and have proved very popular.

Bawdsey Bird Club is very active and holds lectures throughout the year. It hosted a talk in March entitled Saving our Suffolk Swifts. Numbers of swifts have halved in the past 20 years

and so recording, protecting existing nesting sites and installing new nest boxes is very important. A pair have been erected at the back of the village hall.
The village hall is designated an **Emergency Centre** in the event of floods, power outages and other emergencies and has gas heating and a gas oven.

2019 Village Hall Events:

February: Jumble Sale in aid of the VH and St Mary's Church

March: Easter Egg Hunt raised £180

May: Annual fete on Whit Monday raised a record £5,200 which went towards insurance costs

July: Village Garage Sale and Car Boot raised £255

November: Bonfire night at East Lane

December: Coffee and Chat Christmas meal. Christmas Craft Fair

St Mary's Church



Bawdsey is part of the benefice of Wilford which comprises 8 parishes on the peninsula led by Rev Ruth Hatchett.

A roll of honour commemorating the men of Bawdsey who fought in WW1 was put together by local historian Judy Foulger and put in the church. It gives the calligraphed names of those who returned from the war as well as those who died.

St Mary's Church events:

April: Bawdsey Spring Fair raised £602

June: Flower Festival on theme of Teddy Bear's Picnic £501.20

September: Ride and Stride Historical Churches Cycle ride

October: Harvest Festival and Harvest Supper

November: Remembrance Day service and wreath-laying with soldiers from the Rock Barracks, Sutton. Poppy appeal made £473.44

December: Nine Lessons and Carols. Community Carol singing in aid of the Children's Society

Phone Box: Like many BT phone boxes, Bawdsey's has not been used for many years so BT removed it in October 2019 from its position in front of the Village Hall.

Bawdsey CEVA Primary School: Bawdsey school plays a large part in the local community. On every second Thursday of the month the school offers a roast lunch for OAPs in the village. A baby and toddler group session is held once a week. A MacMillan Coffee morning was held in September and the community is invited to Summer and Christmas fairs, supported by an active Parents' Association.

Pupil numbers fluctuate between 50-80 pupils and are taught in three classes, Starfish (ages 2-5), Seahorse (6-8) and Turtles (9-11). Headteacher Katie Butler works half the week at Bawdsey and the other at Chelmondiston CEVA Primary School. Pupils acquit themselves very well in local competitions including in a variety of sports. Pupils worked with the Ipswich Triathlon Club this year and the school won a Platinum Award in July at the Suffolk Schools Games. Another programme the school excelled in was the East of England Lego League competition where pupils had to program a robot to do different tasks. Wild Beach sessions were held for all pupils this year.

The community was shocked when news came that burglars had broken into the school in mid-November. The office safe was forced open and a sum of money was taken.

Bawdsey Radar Trust Museum: The Bawdsey Radar Transmitter Block re-opened at the start of April. Since its reopening at Easter 2018 after a major upgrade, the museum has gone from strength to strength. The retail team won the Shop of the Year award from the Association of Cultural Enterprises (ACE) in January 2019. especially against some tough competition from the Imperial War Museum and Kettle's Yard in Cambridge. Bawdsey Transmitter Block itself also recently won a prestigious Civic Trust Conservation Award for 2019 with the results announced at an evening event at Imperial War Museum North in March. Architects Freeland Rees Roberts, who carried out the conservation on the Block were on hand to receive the award.

The museum opens twice a week on Thursday and Sunday and bank holiday Mondays. During the summer it decided to open on a Wednesday also. Helped by two young interns, this worked well, and a number of talks and events took place throughout the season, all well attended. Trip Advisor awarded Bawdsey Radar a Certificate of Excellence from with a 4.5-star rating.

Bawdsey Radar won the Suffolk Museum of the Year Award for the under 15,000 visitors' category, awarded at a ceremony at the University of Suffolk in December. A grant from SHARE Museums East and Suffolk County Council will help to promote the story of the women working as radar operators and other roles during WW2 which will be showcased in 2020. Next year will also see the 80th anniversary of the Battle of Britain in which radar played a vital part.



The shop team at the award-winning shop

In November Michael Portillo visited the site for his BBC TV programme Great Railway Journeys and interviewed Mary Wain former Chair of Bawdsey Radar Trust and Dr Phil Judkins, radar expert. It will be shown in January 2020.

Bawdsey Reunion Association made up of service personnel who worked at RAF Bawdsey held its annual get-together at the Manor on June 1st. A short welcome speech was made by Derek Rothery – the last serving C.O. of RAF Bawdsey. During his speech he thanked Mary Wain, the impetus behind the setting up of Bawdsey Radar for keeping the Reunion alive. Mary has decided to retire from this role and has now passed the baton to Doreen Calver who served at RAF Bawdsey in 1968-70.

PGL and Bawdsey Manor: The holiday company PGL (Parents Get Lost) which owns Bawdsey Manor has been operating on this site since 2017. It provides residential adventure holidays for schools and youth organisations throughout much of the year.

A controversial planning application was submitted to the district council in 2018 for a lake to be built on marshland adjacent to Ferry Road for recreational activities such as raft building and kayaking. After consultation with residents, the Parish Council rejected the application due to noise and environmental concerns. The application was subsequently withdrawn but was resubmitted in March 2019. Although the parish council once again rejected the application, it was passed by East Suffolk Planning Committee.

PGL has responsibility for protecting its cliffs from erosion and is putting new coastal defences in place.

Scottish Power Windfarms: East Anglia One and Three: Bawdsey is the landfall site for cables from two offshore wind farms, East Anglia One and Three. In March the onshore cable contractor Prysmian started installing the cables through pre-installed ducts. Every 2k underground jointing bays have been constructed where the cable sections are connected. Cables are pulled through from one jointing bay to the next by means of a winch. The only jointing bay on the peninsula is on Bawdsey Marshes and the next on the other side of the

Deben. A transition bay on the main site connects offshore and onshore cables. By October the work for EA1 was completed and the heavy plant at the landfall site was removed. Work continued until the end of the year lifting aggregate from the site, involving numerous Tippers R Us trucks driving through the village. Scottish Power will keep the landfall site under wraps until the completion of EA3 due to start in 2021. The infrastructure is in place for when cables from EA3 will be drawn through the existing ducts.

Local Government: Suffolk Coastal District Council has been amalgamated with Waveney District Council to form East Suffolk DC, the largest in the UK, and cost-cutting measures are afoot such as the promotion to parish councils to read planning applications online rather than receiving hard copies. District wards have expanded, and the new Deben Ward now comprises 12 parishes. East Suffolk declared a Climate Emergency this year and James Mallinder of Deben Ward is championing recycling and new environmental initiatives.

Bawdsey Parish Council: A new council was elected in May 2019. Two long-serving councillors stood down, Liz Mark and Rawdon Saunders, to be replaced by Cll Clare Walker and Cll Rob Johnson. The project to install a new village sign on a green area in the village was abandoned because of opposition to a modern radar design and because there were concerns about underground BT cables on the proposed site. The council has announced a green agenda for the village and the current feeling is to put a commemorative bench on the green area instead.

Elections: Three elections took place this year- local elections on 2nd May, European Elections on 23rd May and a General Election on 12 December.

James Mallinder (Con) from Hollesley was elected as the new East Suffolk District Councillor taking over from long-standing councillor Christine Block (Lib Dems), resident of Bawdsey. Two new parish councillors were elected. (See above). In the European Elections the East of England elected seven MEPs: three Brexit Party members, Michael Heaver, Richard Tice and June Mummery; two Liberal Democrats, Lucy Nethsingha and Barbara Gibson; one Green Party, Catherine Rowett and one Conservative, Geoffrey Van Orden.

In a snap General Election on December 12th sitting MP Conservative Therese Coffey who now holds the position of Work and Pensions Secretary in Boris Johnson's government held her seat with 32,958 votes; second was Cameron Matthews of Labour with 12,425 votes; third was Jules Ewart, Liberal Democrat who increased her share of the vote with 8,719 votes; fourth was Rachel Smith-Lyte with 2,713 votes with +1.5 share of the vote and last was Independent Tony Love with 1,493 votes. He was stood down as a candidate for the Brexit Party. Turn-out was 71.2% of the total electorate of the 81,910 registered voters.

Housing: Bawdsey has under 300 residents. House prices in Bawdsey are above the national average and over 30% of the houses in the village are second homes. Many homeowners have opted to extend their houses in the past few years.

A new Peninsula Villages Community Land Trust was formally constituted in February 2018 to manage housing on the Deben Peninsula and to develop more affordable housing to rent. After painstaking preparatory work, it was awarded £455,000 in March 2019 from central government which it will use to purchase four affordable homes in the School Meadow Development to rent to people with local connection.

Two outstanding housing developments were earmarked for build in 2019 and **Orwell Housing development** below Manor Farm was started in March 2019 with completion due in September 2020. By December, good progress had been made. Planning permission had originally been granted for 12 houses, including two bungalows but a second application was submitted in September seeking to alter the second phase of construction. In lieu of 4 open-market houses previously approved, 7 affordable dwellings consisting of 3 houses and 4 flats will be built instead. Six properties at the front adjacent to The Street will be for shared ownership. Local people or those with a connection to the village will be given priority for these homes.

Work installing a foul water drainage system entailed four weeks of roadworks while the drains were connected to the pumping station at Alderton.



Two sets of semi-detached houses have sprung up since March

The site on School Meadow was approved in 2015 but has not yet been built. The housing plans were altered to reflect local needs following a Housing Needs Survey and were approved by East Suffolk Council in the summer of 2019. Thirteen housing units are due to be built by Crocus Home early in 2020 and the development will be named Martello Close, a name chosen by pupils at Bawdsey Primary School.

Former Cranes Garage site put in an application in April to build three new homes on the site and renovate existing buildings for workshops and holiday lets. Following planning refusal, the owner withdrew the application for a second time.

Houses sold: Twelve houses in the village were sold in 2019. According to Rightmove, the average house price of sold houses in 2019 was £411,111, more expensive than Hollesley, Felixstowe and Old Felixstowe. House prices were up 49% from 2018 but 3% down on 2015. However, the average price may only reflect the mix of properties sold rather than changes in the local market.

The oldest house in the village, Manor House, 34 The Street was sold in Jan 2019 for £400,000. A detached 4 -bed, the property has extensive land including an adjacent plot on which stands the original primary school.

Other houses sold in the village proper were:

Alma House, The Street, Detached freehold, 3 beds £335,000 (March)

Paddock Cottage, The Street, Detached residential 5 beds £595,000 March

The Old Bakery, 29 The Street, Detached Freehold 4 beds £370,000 (July)

21 East Lane, Bawdsey 3 beds £300,000 (August)

4 East Lane, Bawdsey Terraced Freehold 4 beds £320,000 (August)

6 Cavell Close, Bawdsey, Detached Freehold £500,000 (August)

26 The Street, Semi-detached Freehold 3 beds £302,500 (Nov)

Four properties were sold on the Bawdsey Manor Farm Estate which sits above the village and which was conceived originally as a holiday home estate. The original farmhouse burned down in 1999 and all the outbuildings were converted into holiday houses.

Gross Lodge: Detached Freehold £305,000 (Feb)

The Drove Dairy: Detached Freehold 3 beds £275,000 (March)

Dairy Cottage, Semi-detached Freehold £325,000 (May)

Holly Lodge Detached Freehold 4 beds £775,000 (Sep)

Skylark Farm: Manor Farm Estate: This local goat business run by Emma Aldous at Skylark Farm has been sold, with the business relocating to Bungay. Her goods will be sorely missed by visitors to Bawdsey Market especially her goat cheeses and ice creams.

Farming: The two farms in Bawdsey are Red House Farm and High House Farm which are farmed by two brothers from the Mann family. They are arable farms and grow staple crops of sugar beet, onions, lettuces, turf and wheat. The turf harvest is carried out with just one machine which cuts, rolls and stacks the turf.

Unexpected heavy winds and rains in September ruined a crop of barley along Ferry Road while a mile away, another crop was unharmed!



A turf harvester at work in August

Highways: One of the challenges for rural communities has been the increase in heavier and wider vehicles using roads and lanes which were not built for their weight or dimensions. In Bawdsey heavy tractors and trailers and high-sided turf lorries plus many vehicles used by Scottish Power in the building of the wind farms have caused major concern. These vehicles sometimes have to mount pavements or drive on to verges to pass one another, causing damage and alarm. Stretches of Red House Lane and Long Lane are broken up and fill with water but are not a priority for Highways.

Moreover, in cases of heavy rain, mud and sand spill on to roads and can block drains causing localised flooding. In October 2019 the storm rains caused extensive flooding up to 2 inches deep in places. Parish councils on the peninsula are getting together to log all the instances where the roads and potholes need repairing and drains need sluicing out more regularly to present to Highways.



Flooding along East Lane

Speeding has greatly improved in the wake of the village's SID (Speed Indicator device). A Speedwatch team monitors speeding every few months.

Extreme Weather: 2019 witnessed a few extreme weather events. Torrential weather in October led to flooding in the bottom half of East Lane when water ran off the fields and entered numbers 45 and 47.

Village Services: Bawdsey has no shop but a mobile grocer comes every Tuesday from 12.30-1.00pm. A fish man comes every Wednesday. The mobile library comes to Bawdsey every month on Tuesdays. Connecting Communities, provides a dial-a-ride service known as CATS. Another sign of austerity is that from 1st April bus passes were no longer accepted on this service so senior citizens have to pay full price fares to Woodbridge.

Bawdsey is fortunate to have a surgery in the neighbouring village of Alderton. At the end of the year, it amalgamated with Church Farm Surgery in Aldeburgh as a means of streamlining services.

Fred Garnham: Local resident Fred Garnham who had worked on the land in the parish of Bawdsey man and boy died on June at the age of 87. He had worked for Simper Farms for over 40 years and had received a Long Service Award presented by Princess Anne at the Suffolk Show. Fred then became self-employed and became a well-known sight sitting on his old Ford tractor chugging along the Street to look after locals' gardens. His plant stall at the end of Fern Terrace was a popular place to stop and buy.



Jenny Webb, Bawdsey Recorder, 5 Fern Terrace, The Street, Bawdsey, Suffolk IP12 3AH

February 2020