

Good evening,

I have been proud to serve as chairman of the Parish Council for another year, we have a great sense of community in our village and it is an honour to be elected as a councillor.

I would like to thank you all for your attendance and achievements and support over the last year.

We continue to have a full panel of Councillors. Cllr Parry, Cllr Broughton, Cllr Keeley, Cllr Doe, Cllr Pace, Cllr Stockham and Cllr Prior who all contribute in their own way and taking time to help our village. Members bring together diverse skills to support the Council work.

I would like to extend particular thanks to our Parish Clerk Sarah Foote who has done an exemplary job of guiding us to adhere to protocol, tirelessly working in the background to help us achieve all of our project goals and supporting us to fulfil our roles to the best of our ability.

I would like to thank our Suffolk County councillor Jessica Flemming who comes along to many of our meetings and supports our projects.

I would like to thank our district councillor Tim Weller who continues to attend our meetings on a regular basis and help us to navigate some of the more complex changes proposed in our area.

Brome and Oakley is extremely proud of its Voluntary groups and organisations which have worked tirelessly to support the community in many different ways, we will hear from many of them here tonight.

During the last year, a Community speedwatch group has been formed and I know the group, via councillor Ian Stockham, would be very interested to have additional volunteers to operate the scheme.

The Diss and District Neighbourhood development plan is now embedded as planning policy.

We have been consulted on a number of small and large planning applications this year, this is an aspect of the council work that involves a lot of research and discussion. Some of the larger projects still under discussion are the Cranswick expansion, The charging/service station on Brome airfield and the upcoming proposal for a solar farm which is still in the non-statutory consultation period. All of these projects have the potential to impact our villages enormously so it's important to understand the impact on our roads, our environment and our community as a whole. Some of the issues that have been discussed at length this year are around flooding, drainage and how we manage our water supply in a more joined up way. We are keen to collaborate across the different parishes and districts to look at large proposals in a more strategic way. The more opinions we hear from you about these projects, the more we can effectively represent your views so please come and talk to us at our meetings, all meetings have a public forum for you to voice your views. You can also comment on individual planning applications on the mid-suffolk planning portal.

I'd like to tell you about some of the projects we are most proud of this year. We have supported the renovations of Village hall to a total sum of approximately £2,000. This has been a big project where we continue to provided financial support to pay for materials complete work on the ladies toilet renovation. The next part of the project we plan to support is the installation of Solar panels which is in line with our sustainability goals.

This year we have rented out the full allotment area behind Bromelands again, most of this is to be used for grazing with one remaining plot being rented for veg growing and held a very enjoyable and successful bird box building event.

We look forward to another year of activities to support our community and invite you all to join us at any meeting for the public forum to share your ideas or concerns.

Thanks

BROME AND OAKLEY WELFARE TRUST

Report for the Annual Parish meeting, 24th March 2025

The activities of the Welfare Trust have continued through the last year, much the same as the previous few years. We gather for formal meetings at appropriate intervals, and have an active face-to-face and on-line communication network.

The Trust's finances remain healthy and adequate for the current low level of activity. Income from our investment accounts and donations has been adequate to fund all activities. We have not received any additional donations during the past year although the forthcoming community lunch on 26th March has us as the month's worthy cause. The current financial holding of the Trust is in the order of £40,000, which is a little higher than the previous financial year.

The Reverend Helen Grover joined us as Ex-officio Trustee in January. Other Trustees are David Hardaker, Chair; Jo Cullen (secretary) Barbara Pace, Sarah Gore and Jane Pearse (Treasurer). We feel that Rev'd Helen will be an asset, particularly because of her pastoral involvement with the community.

In 2024 donations to those identified as in need have continued to be relatively few in number, and primarily given to assist individuals who need to make regular hospital visits, to help with travel and parking costs. This low level of provision of financial assistance is thought to relate to the challenges that arise for the Trust to identify those in need within the parish. Occasionally a non-trust person will notify us of case for consideration which we can confidentially follow up. Rarely will an individual approach the trust for help, albeit that we retain information in confidence and do not have a very simple request procedure. We continue to think that the low demand is probably because of a combination of factors such as a relatively affluent community, welfare benefits already in place and visibility of the Trust, although we have worked on that.

Jane Pearse, Treasurer

The Elizabeth, Lady Cornwallis Almshouse Trust
Annual Summary for Brome and Oakley Parish Council
24 March 2025

Summary

We have had another year of stable, full occupancy, with all Weekly Maintenance Contributions duly paid. This is a good state as it provides full income evenly spread throughout the year, and removes the administration effort that would be required to identify, vet and install new tenants. Realistically, we do not have many applicants for the cottages and people who do approach us are almost invariably from outside of the area. The cottages are on two floors with a fairly steep staircase and are not ideal for anyone with mobility challenges; also, the rural location with absence of village facilities and regular transport is a bit of an off-putter, as is and the absence of a vacant cottage at the time of enquiry.

The finances continue in a good state, thanks the diligent management of John Pary, with income covering all general running expenses and most maintenance. The age of the Almshouses does offer a few extra challenges, mostly related to managing damp in the structure – this has gradually improved since 2018 when we adopted various actions, all of which have now been addressed. However, there is quite costly ongoing maintenance such as limewashing external walls and dealing with any internal problems related to damp or ventilation.

The roof has always been a concern and potentially could require significant work in the not-too-distant future. The status of that is being evaluated at present.

Changes since last year include a rebuilding of sheds at the rear of the Almshouse to provide storage for residents and shelter for our lawn tractor. A second shed already erected is waiting to be fitted out to house a tumble dryer for residents' use; this should assist in removing condensation that arises from drying clothes inside and on radiators.

The Trustees are the same as 2024. We have not replaced Rev'd Adrian Wilkins who was the Ex-officio chair until summer 2023 because we want to take a look at how we are organised. For the past 18 months we have very satisfactorily used a rotation of Trustees for chairing meetings, with the Chair agreed at each meeting. Because a key part of running the Almshouses is building management, we felt that a useful qualification for any new trustee, was experience of that. In that respect, we have had an appropriate observer for the past several months, with the hope that he may join us.

Trustees are currently, Tim Moss, Tom Pace, John Parry (Treasurer), Jane Pearse (Secretary) Milly Prior.

Jane Pearse
Secretary

Subject: Re: Brome and Oakley Annual Parish Meeting - Monday 24 March 2025

From: [REDACTED]

Date: 07/03/2025, 20:20

To: Clerk <clerk@bromeandoakleyparishcouncil.gov.uk>

Hi Sarah

Hope you are well, thank you for the Parish meeting email. Do you want someone from our project to attend?

We were originally aiming for the last tablet on the memorial, to be unveiled by a visiting crew members relation from America in May. However, she is now looking to come over in July and with all the 80th Anniversary events for VE Day in May and the Oaksmere being busy, we have postponed the unveiling of this last piece of the memorial until she visits.

Also, extra information had surfaced for the booklet (well, soft-back book edition now) which is still being prepared. We did get two proofs printed last springtime, as it timed with a civilian casualties relative visiting from Australia. We presented her with a copy and kept the other for reference. I then found details of extra information on the plane's conversion and these files and its potential contents made postponement of printing the best option. Unfortunately the files that were hoped for haven't materialised, the historian/author in question has search and search but ... so sad.

On a positive, during the time waiting for any potential info on that front, I researched the crews sad journey from Brome to interment in Kent and the story of their repatriation or reinterment at the Cambridge Cemetery. An added dimension that isn't well known at all.

Alongside this, I discovered a recent publication by an American author on the American radar development and its twist and turns that go along with our narrative. I am currently reading and researching the details connected to our aircraft and crew which is filling the gaps I didn't have time to fully research back in 2023.

We have also had some great feedback from the articles in the local parish magazine from last November and December. These will be added to the books civilian section.

I really want to get the narrative right for this definitive edition as it will be in reference libraries and heritage centres etc so ...

~~I apologise for not taking the time to bring you up to speed on the project, and~~ What has happened since we had the lovely meet at the memorial last Armistice day. Me, Maggie and Clive spoke to the gathered, small but very engaged group of mainly civilian relations and a few locals. The artist who has done the drawing for the last panel, arrived with the original artwork (perfect timing) and the gathered group was very engaged and positive about future plans.

I have been in contact with ~~Fraser from~~ the Oaksmere as well, ~~he~~ ^{Fraser} is adding a path to the memorial, as their new marquee is having similar work and he is has offered to sort the path as part of that work. This was something the memorial group were looking at doing, so it is great he has taken this on.

So even though progress has slowed, it has been positive and continues to add to the overall story and efforts are still focused on keeping the memories alive and the memorial relevant in the landscape.

I hope the above meets with the parish council approval and I again, apologies for not keeping you updated.

All the best

Steve Andrews (on behalf of the Brome Pathfinder Project)

Sent from my iPhone

On 3 Mar 2025, at 18:06, Clerk <clerk@bromeandoakleyparishcouncil.gov.uk> wrote:
Dear all,

The Brome and Oakley Annual Parish Meeting will take place at 7.30 pm on Monday 24 March 2025 at Brome and Oakley Village Hall. We hope you will be able to attend and, if appropriate, provide a report for the organisation you represent.

Thank you.

Please note change of email address. Thank you.

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Sarah Foote, Clerk
Brome and Oakley Parish Council
Tel: 07554733621
www.bromeandoakley.onesuffolk.net

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<Agenda Annual Parish Meeting - 2025.doc>

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