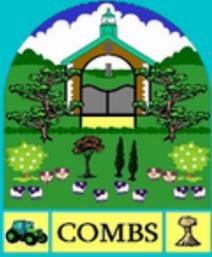


COMBS PARISH COUNCIL

Winter 2023 Newsletter



Chairman's Report

First and foremost, can I take the opportunity to wish all residents a very Happy New Year: may 2023 be very kind to you.

We've set our budget for the forthcoming term starting in April and I'm pleased to report that we have managed to keep the precept (which is the income we receive as part of your Council Tax contributions) at the same level as the last two years without impacting too heavily on the support we can provide for community needs. It's a small proportion of the overall amount but every little helps.

We've also completed a 5 year plan for improving our Parish infrastructure so that we can allocate our Community Infrastructure Levy funds most effectively. Councillor Ian Walker kicked the work off before he stepped down and in completing it we pay tribute to his passion and commitment. We've looked at all the projects suggested by residents and evaluated them both in terms of importance to the community and urgency to obtain a prioritised list. The main outcomes include continued support for Oaks Meadow (do have a look at the new play area if you are able – it is most impressive), helping the Cricket Club upgrade storage areas and WC facilities, making our roads safer and more pleasant to use, enhancing the experience of local countryside walking and improving the layout of the cemetery.

The plan has been shared with our County and District Councillors and with the Mid-Suffolk DC Infrastructure team. It will be reviewed and re-assessed periodically to take into account changing priorities. You can find the plan here: <http://www.combsvillage.org.uk/parish-council/parish-infrastructure-investment-plan/>. We'd welcome suggestions and constructive feedback from residents – it is, in effect, your plan after all.

We await guidance on the plans for King Charles's coronation in May from the Pageant Master. We understand that the wish is to keep things low-key at local levels – so no beacon lighting this time – but we'll let you know any details nearer the time.

Council elections take place in May. Tony Bamber our Parish Clerk has written a piece (see page 2) explaining the process. I would encourage residents to consider standing and making your voices heard.

We councillors plan to make ourselves better known and more available to discuss any ideas and indeed concerns you might have. We wish nothing more than to represent the best interests of the community we serve: please engage with us so that we get it right.

Tony Kitson - Chair

Local Elections

Local elections will take place this year on 4th May. For Combs, this is an opportunity to vote for representatives in Mid-Suffolk District Council and also for representatives in your Parish Council.

The district council looks after planning, waste recycling, housing etc. The parish council is the 'grass roots' level of government. Among other things it provides input to the planning department on local applications, co-ordinates maintenance of street furniture including streetlights and benches, maintenance of the cemetery and seeks to assist local residents – in reality largely in directing them to the appropriate official department in the district or county council.

So far as the parish of Combs is concerned, the council is permitted to have 7 councillors. We only have five councillors at present and anyone who would like to consider joining is warmly invited to speak to the clerk or any current councillor to learn more about the role. Guidance on the nomination process is available online but the clerk would be happy to help anyone who prefers to talk to a human.

To be eligible to sit on the parish council a candidate must be nominated by two electors from the village (whose names must appear on the current electoral register) and satisfy certain conditions.

The role of a councillor is varied, and each of the councillors tends to bring their own experience and aptitudes to help in the administration of the village, with meetings in Combs every month except August (usually).

Please note that voters must now have photo ID with them in order to vote. There are various options if you don't have either a passport or a driving license, but it is best to arrange alternatives in good time.

If anyone would like to chat about the elections or the process please feel free to contact me.

Tony Bamber

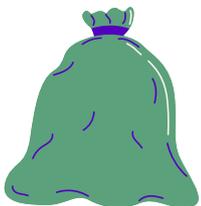
Combs Parish Clerk

combsparishcouncil@gmail.com

JOIN US FOR THE SPRING LITTER PICK

Sunday 2nd April @ 9am

The Tannery Carpark



Come and help make a difference to our neighbourhood! It's fun, gets you outside and the instant results are very satisfying. On arrival you will be given a location, bags and a grabber. We have some hi vis jackets but please wear your own if you have one



The Oaks Meadow Project



The Trustees and volunteers have continued to work on the meadow throughout the autumn and Christmas period with some amazing results. The most noticeable is the play & exercise equipment and wooden gazebo, which was funded by the Valencia Communities Fund (previously Viridor Credits) & MSDC.



Due to the excessive amount of rain during construction it is not possible to take vehicles onto the meadow, but anyone is welcome to access the meadow via the pedestrian footbridge. We are planning an official opening of the site on SUNDAY MARCH 26TH please save this date.



Our website www.oaksmeadow.org.uk has had a makeover, take a look to keep up to date with all the news and activities. A further 100 trees have been planted from the Woodland Trust plus a very special Silver Birch, which was from the Queen's Green Canopy. We are one of just four sites in Suffolk to receive this and it is even more poignant that it has been planted in the Platinum Jubilee year and just after the Queen's passing.



Christmas Tree & Crib Festival

During December 2022, St Mary's Church in Combs invited local businesses, schools etc to decorate a tree in the theme of a Christmas carol to display in their festival. Combs Parish Council rose to the challenge and decorated a tree in the theme of "While Shepherds Washed Their Socks by Night"! All the trees looked brilliant and I'm sure a lot of fun was had decorating them and also by the visitors to the church during the festival. Collection tins were placed by each tree with the donations going towards restoring the church bells - the winner was Combs Ford Primary school



On The Farm

The winter months give us a bit of a break and time to reflect on the past year and plan for the next, so this means sitting in the office and dealing with plenty of paperwork. There has still been plenty going on, for the last few months is when most of the crops leave the farm. Lorries have been loaded with milling wheat destined for flour mills at Corby and Peterborough, feed wheat delivered to the animal feed mills at Bury St Edmunds, barley has been moved to Muntons for malting in Stowmarket. Our spring peas have gone to Gainsborough in Lincolnshire and Kings Lynn for processing into animal feed, that just leaves us with the winter beans that will leave the farm in March. We will have produced over 2100 tonnes of crops in 2022.

The winter months also allow us time to service and repair much of the equipment and machines ready for another season. In the winter we carry out some hedge cutting, this we do in rotation around the farms and only cutting one side of a hedge to leave growth for wildlife on the other. A few new hedges and trees have been planted and gapping up a hedge where needed.

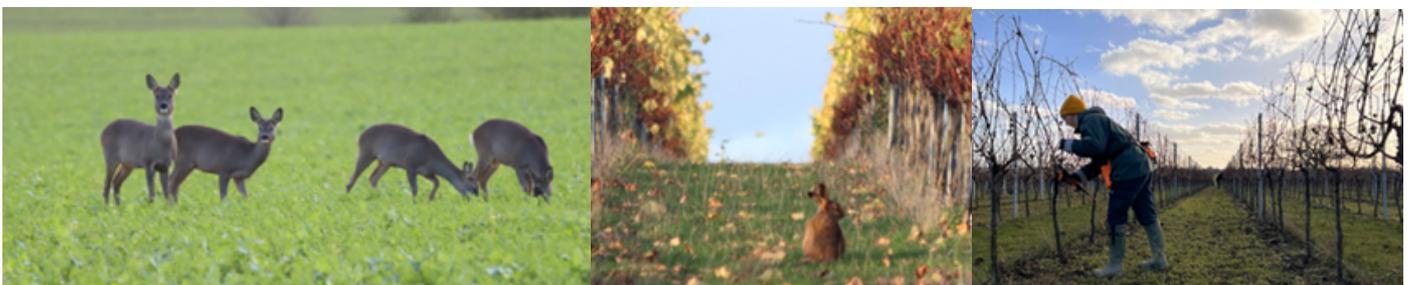
With a couple of months break in the vineyard work started again at the beginning of January. The first job to get on with is pruning the 46,000 vines. This year Catherine has taken to carry this work out in house and not use contractors. Six local people have been taken on and trained to carry out one of the most important jobs of selecting the right cane and spur, as this will effect the vines for the next 2 years. This job will take all of January and the most of February to complete along with pulling all of the dead wood out of the wires, then as sap rises in the plant each vine will have its cane tied onto the fruiting wire. It's not all hard work in the vineyard at this time of year as it is now time to taste the wines that have been made from last years grape harvest, these will be bottled in March ready for release in the spring.

Having a very cold spell in December was quite unusual for a change, it might also have appeared to have been a wet winter but for the year, rainfall has been down on average and I wonder the consequences of this for the years crops.

With settled weather at the moment this has allowed James to start work back on the fields applying fertiliser to the wheat, spraying to destroy the cover crops ready for drilling the spring barley and peas.

And so another year starts.

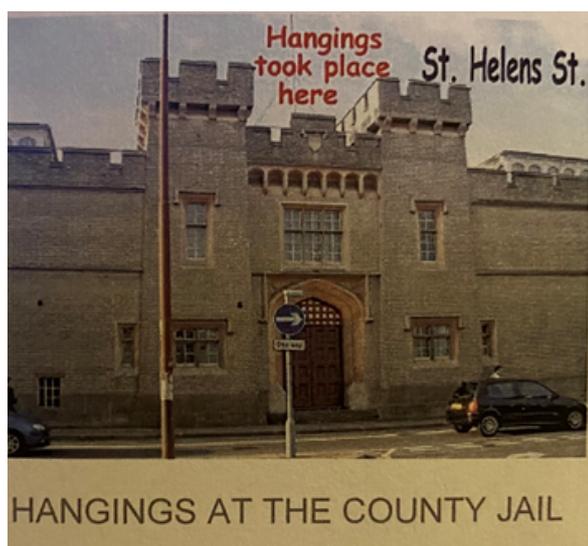
Stuart Scarff



Did You Know.....

This was written and permission given to share by Sharon Robinson of Combs

LIONEL LEE and THOMAS ROBINSON



It all started with a quiet drink in the Nutshell in Bury St Edmunds. The smallest pub in Britain is renowned for having interesting artefacts all around the walls and ceiling. One such thing was a list of people who were hanged in the 19th century in Ipswich and Bury for various crimes. We noticed that one of them was from Combs, his name was Lionel Lee and he was hanged for the crime of burglary in April 1804 between the two towers of the county jail in St Helens Street, Ipswich. The paper recorded the event: ***Saturday last Lionel Lee was executed here pursuant to his sentence, in the presence of a vast concourse of spectators.***

Once home we were determined to try and find out some more about him. Some detective work at the Ipswich records office led us to finding out that he was married to Ann and they had a child called Lionel Lee who was christened in Combs church on the 18th October 1797, so he would have been 7 when his father was hung.

Unfortunately we could not find any prison records for him as the records did not start until 1805 but from looking at extracts from the Ipswich journal we found out the he had stolen goods from a Mr Thomas Robinson who lived at Burnt House Farm.

We found that Thomas Robinson also had a very interesting history. On January 17th 1807 a fire broke out on his farm which destroyed most of his outbuildings for which he was not insured and in 1822 there are records of the farm being sold off. We found Thomas in the Ipswich Journals again in March 1828, when he was charged along with George Ely for having broken into a barn belonging to a Mr George Ruffle of Combs and stolen wheat and a sack. They were sentenced to 12 months imprisonment and hard labour. Our information on Thomas finishes after 1830 as he was transported to Australia for the theft of some logs.



My name is Suzanne Ottewell and I am your Local Recorder. This is a voluntary role, overseen by the Suffolk Local History Council, who have Recorders in many Suffolk parishes. One of our tasks is to keep a record of day-to-day life and note changes in the parish. This will be available for future historians to understand what it was like to live in our villages during our life-time. Each year I write and submit an Annual report, which is deposited in the Suffolk Archives.

As a Recorder, I am very interested in local history and appreciate how important old documents, records and photographs are for research purposes. If you are having a clear-out of any *Combs* related items, no matter how old or new, do get in touch.

My contact details are

suzottewell@btinternet.com

Mobile: 07502 297884 (leave a message on my voicemail and I will return your call)

Wattisham Museum

Wattisham airfield holds a long and distinguished history. From its very beginnings the Station has been at the forefront of aviation technology and home to the RAF, United States Army Air Force, Army Air Corps and REME along with various other support units. Building of the airfield was completed in April 1939 as part of expansion plan by the Air Ministry to build new airfields as the clouds of war threatened. Blenheim Bombers based at RAF Wattisham delivered the first Bomber Command raid on enemy shipping on the 4th of September 1939, the day after war was declared on Germany.

Thousands of Americans arrived in 1943 in the form of the 4th Strategic Air Depot spreading into the neighbouring parish of Nedging in the role of repair, maintenance and salvage of US aircraft in the European Theatre of Operations. They were joined in 1944 by fellow Americans, the 479th Fighter Group of the 8th Air Force flying P-38 Lightnings and P-51 Mustangs, escorting 8th Air Force bombers and in a ground attack role. Post War, RAF Wattisham was a crucial Cold War airfield.

The list of fighter jets based here is a long one and just about all types of aircraft were either based here or visited, but Gloster Meteors, Hawkers Hunters, Gloster Javelins, the English Electric Lightning and FGR and F4 Phantoms are the most renown. The predecessors to the famous Red Arrows Display Team in the form of the Black Arrows were based at Wattisham in the 1950s, famously performing a 22 aircraft loop in 1958. The RAF handed the Station over to the Army Air Corps in 1993 flying Gazelle and Lynx Helicopters and today the Apache.

This important and fascinating part of our local, national and international history is chronicled at Wattisham Station Heritage Museum sited on the airfield and displayed within two buildings. A Nissen hut, formerly the USAAF chapel during WW2 and a Cold War Hardened Aircraft Shelter (HAS).

The story of the airfield from acquisition of farmland to present day is presented in the old chapel in artefacts, photographs, uniforms and other memorabilia. The HAS is home to our restored and protected aircraft, including an immaculate Black Arrows Hawker Hunter and a former Wattisham display Phantom which was also returned "home" for all to see. 2023 sees the 30th anniversary of the arrival of the Army Air Corps at Wattisham 1993, and the 80th anniversary of the first Americans to be based here.

Visits to Wattisham Station Heritage are by appointment only. To book a visit on one of our open Sundays or to make an enquiry, please visit our website: <https://wattishamstationheritage.com> our open season commences in April 2023 We look forward to seeing you.



Battisford & District Cricket Club

As the sun starts to shine you may have noticed, if you have been driving past the cricket club, that the outfield has been cut as has the square, ready for the start of the season on Saturday 15th April. We do hope you can come along and support the teams as they play throughout the season.

You will see that work is underway on a small extension to the side of the pavilion and the reinstatement of the veranda. Once completed there will be new ladies and men's toilets and the addition of a disabled toilet and baby change facilities. The showers will also be upgraded and some minor internal changes will make it more suitable for players and visitors alike. We are also upgrading our practice nets to make them safer and more user friendly. We are extremely grateful to have received a significant capital grant from Mid Suffolk District Council; £8,000 from Combs Parish Council; and other grants from the district councillor for Battisford and Ringshall ward, the Suffolk County Councillor and Battisford Parish Council.

Once the work is complete we are really keen for the facilities to be available to the community so do get in touch if you want to use the venue with or without our marquees. Come along from 2-4pm on Monday 8th May when we will be showcasing the work undertaken and to say thank you to those who will have worked so hard to deliver a really important addition to the club premises.

We are always looking for sponsors to advertise around the ground and we are keen to replace our picnic benches so please do get in touch if you are interested in either of these opportunities.

Finally we are celebrating our half century as a cricket club which is a credit to everyone at the club. We still have some founder members involved and we will be holding events throughout the year linked to our 50 years. We want to ensure that the club continues to thrive and so are always looking for new senior and junior male and female players, so if you or your child want to come along to play cricket new members are always welcome.

Website <https://battisforddistrict.play-cricket.com/>

Twitter @BattisforDCC

Facebook @BattisfordAndDistrictCricketClub

Or contact Julia Stephens -Row secretary@battisfordcricket.co.uk

Parish Council Meetings

Battisford & District Cricket Club 7:30pm

Monday 13th March

Monday 17th April (delay due to Easter)

Tuesday 9th May (delay due to bank holiday)

Inc. AGM & Annual Parish Meeting

**Please contact our clerk 7 days before
if you wish to suggest an item
for the agenda or to attend a meeting
combsparrishcouncil@gmail.com**

Stowmarket Foodbank

Thank you to everyone for your support of Santa's Sleigh in December 2022. Your generous donations across the two evenings totalled £500 and 445 Kg of food and other goods for the Stowmarket Foodbank, enabling them to provide much needed support for families and individuals in the area.



Orchard Barn News

Here at Orchard Barn we love our Volunteers! They come from all walks of life for all kinds of reasons. We are always looking for more Volunteers and would particularly welcome help with packing the light straw clay mix again from April onwards. If you would like to become part of our team, learn new skills in beautiful and peaceful surroundings with friendly people, then do get in touch.



To find out more, look at our website <http://www.orchardbarn.org.uk>, email carole.orchardbarn@gmail.com or call Sarah on 07766 054042.

Orchard Barn, Ringshall, Stowmarket,
Suffolk, IP14 2LY

Citizens Advice

"My employer asked me to work some extra hours lately, but I don't appear to have received the extra pay. I asked my boss about it and they said they would look into it, but I don't seem to be getting anywhere. What should I do?"

If you think your pay is wrong, or you haven't been paid for extra hours worked, the best thing you can do is talk to your employer and find out what's going on. If you and your employer can't agree on how much you should have been paid, you can challenge them. You should act quickly though – it'll be harder to get your money after 3 months from the date the problem arose.

You should start by checking your payslip if you've got one. This will help you see how your pay has been worked out. Check things like: .

- Whether you've been paid for the number of hours you've actually worked
- If you've been paid at the correct rate
- If you've been paid overtime, a commission or a bonus
- Whether you've been paid any sick pay
- If your employer has deducted any money that you weren't expecting

Ask your employer to explain anything you don't understand on your payslip or why you haven't been paid what you believe you are owed. If you disagree with anything, explain why. If your employer has made a genuine mistake, ask them to pay you the money you're owed straight away – you should not have to wait until your next pay day.

If you need more help, you can contact Citizens Advice Mid Suffolk to get advice on the next steps. Citizens Advice Mid Suffolk can provide advice on this and other issues, including debt, employment, benefits and family law. You can contact them on 01449 676060 or use the contact form at midsuffolkcab.org.uk/contact-us . More information and our opening hours can also be found at midsuffolkcab.org.uk/contact-us .



Combs Green IP14 2NP
from 10am – 12pm
on the 2nd Thursday
of each month
Next visits are
9th March
13th April
11th May
8th June

Contact Diana 07494 572153
www.ruralcoffeecaravan.org.uk