

The Warborough & Shillingford Society

The Warborough and Shillingford Society has had a busy 12 months since our last report in April 2024, all focussed on :

- supporting and protecting of community environment
- managing and developing our community history
- arranging talks and other village events
- communicating planning applications via the Community email and encouraging individuals to comment to the relevant planning authority.

To these ends we have, in the past 12 months:

Organised village Litter picks last Autumn and just recently on 15 March. Disappointingly, we continue to collect an impressive pile of rubbish thrown into our verges. We are grateful for the 20+ volunteers who come along to help for a few hours and we will continue to organise these bi-annual events.

10 days ago we arranged a coffee morning at St Lawrence Hall to show case the work done by the Local History Group – we have had a minor re-brand; changing this group's name from the Archive Group to the Local History Group. Over 60 people came along to this highly successful morning and everyone left having spent longer than planned and wiser and more knowledgeable about our local history. We have a rich history and there are plenty more stories to be told.

In addition to our own local historians we have had talks in the past year from the War Graves Commission, the Archivist at St Johns' College (the College owned large swathes of W&S until the early 20th Century) and, last May, we learnt about W&S critical part in the Norman Invasion in 1066 and the subsequent Norman conquest.

We have, finally, moved the Quaker headstones from Wallingford to the Whitehead Plot, but progress has stalled on how best to develop and maintain this Plot for the community benefit.

Last summer the Society helped run 3 Friday night Pop Up pubs at the fantastic new Sports Pavillion, raising over £1,000 which was shared equally between the Lunch Club, the Mowers & Growers and Women's Institute. With the temporary closure of The Six Bells last Spring we also conducted a community survey, to gauge community views on maintaining a pub and we have subequesntly begun work on registering The Six Bells as a community asset. This project has stalled a little over the winter as Committee members got involved in the Plough Field Appeal, but we will be shortly renewing our work on this application. Registering The Six Bells is very much a back-stop plan as we hope that Henry and Eve will continue to successfully run and develop the pub.

Most recently, we have finally begun work on the Phone Box book exchange refurbishment. We are grateful for the grant from the Parish Council towards the costs of this work, along with a grant from our Distict Councillor and we are aiming to re-open the Book exchange in late May, subject to weather conditions and the time our group of volunteers have to work on this project.

While the W&SS cannot claim any credit for the the fantastic restoration of the Plough Monument, I would like to take this opportunity to thank David Seymour for his immense effort in completing this project.

The Society continues to rely on a committee of dedicated residents and I would like to thank them, as well as the legion of volunteers who help us. When our community works together we can achieve a tremendous amount... which brings me to the Plough Field Appeal and the Neighbourhood Plan.

Directly and indirectly the W&SS have been fully engaged in both these major activities in the past year. Neither are "over" and its not my remit to dig into these 2 major activities, except to re-commit the W&SS support to both projects that are so vital to our village.

The W&SS are hugely grateful for the work done by those who lead and work on these (and other) community projects, as well as the everyday work done by our Parish Councillors.

Our membership numbers continue to grow steadily – we now have 189 members and we are keen to explore ways to get even more residents involved in our community. We welcome any ideas and we are happy to work with any group in the village to further protect and develop our community spirit. We are looking forward to the Summer Fair and supporting this event.

To that end, looking ahead, the W&S Society have the following events scheduled over the next few months, including:

- A visit on 11 April to the Museum at RAF Benson – while numbers are limited we hope we can arrange another visit later in the year for those who are on the waiting list
- A talk from a expert in researching local and personal history, on 23 April
- A talk from Julie Godson (who entertained us about 1066 and the Normans last year) on 18 June, when she will tell us about some of the salacious stories from our community past.
- Our Society Annual General Meeting on 17th September and we invite all members to come along on that evening.
- We are also aiming to arrange a talk later in the year about Swan Upping and have plans for other talks – please look out for notices on village notice boards or via the Village magazine for details of all these events.

In closing, I would, once again, like to thank everyone who supports the Society and the work we do.