

13 May 2024

Dear Parishioners

On behalf of Litcham School, I would like to express our sincere gratitude for the invitation to the Annual Parish Meeting. It is with regret that I must convey my apologies for not being able to attend in person due to prior commitments.

As we navigate through the academic year, it is astounding to reflect on how quickly time has passed, with only 10 weeks remaining until the summer break. Since the commencement of the school year in September, our students and staff have been engaged in numerous activities and achievements, some of which I am pleased to share with you.

Sports

The year has seen much sporting participation and success across all year groups, including:

- Mid Norfolk Cross County, where a number of students qualified for the Norfolk School Cross Country Championships
- Girls football festival
- U12 girls football county cup
- U14 Area netball
- Y7, 8 & 9 annual Synergy Trust Games Tournament
- U13 indoor cricket
- KS1 and KS2 Cross Country Event
- U16 Area Netball Tournament

Our Year 5 pupils had the opportunity to participate in a Bikeability course. Bikeability is offered free to every child who can ride a bike in years 4, 5 and 6, this is paid for through our membership of West Dereham and Norwich Sports Partnership.

Our Primary pupils from Years 4 to 6 performed a dance routine at The Space in Norwich to a large audience, partaking in the SSP's yearly Dance Show.

Our Primary pupils from Years 1-6 also enjoy a half term swimming at Dereham Leisure Centre.

Continued ...

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towards Artsmark
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Trips

Year 7 adventurous activities trip to Bramley Lakes, where the emphasis is very much on team-building, helping students to gain confidence, grow their self-esteem, and not least, have fun. The activities included canoeing, zip-wire, archery and high ropes.

Our annual ski trip to Salzburger took place during February half term.

In June we have a group of lower school students traveling to the South of France. Students will enjoy a range of outdoor activities, featuring a two-day descent of the Ardeche river by kayak as well as climbing and caving.

Primary Phase Bus

On Friday 16th February, we were delighted to hold a ceremony to officially open the bus. Members from the press joined us to take photos and a piece was written in the Dereham Times.

We were delighted that Mr Charles Sanders from Sanders Coaches could officially open the bus for us by cutting the red ribbon, as well as being joined by volunteers from along the way.

We are currently using the bus space for interventions, sensory support, clubs and reading.

School Production - Operation Clutterbuck

Our students performed yet another spectacular Production in March over three nights to sell-out audiences, showcasing the incredible talent and potential that Litcham School nurtures.

This was the culmination of a year's worth of dedication and hard work put in by both our staff and students. The cast's commitment to excellence was evident in every aspect of the performances, and it has made all of us at Litcham School incredibly proud.

Preparations for next year's Production, 'A Right Royal Racket' are already underway!

Church Links

Our Primary Phase pupils have participated in and enjoyed a number of services at Litcham Church; Harvest Festival, Christingle Service and Easter Service. We have decorated Christmas trees for the church and held our evening Carol Concert with our parents and carers also in the church.

Pupils have enjoyed fortnightly assemblies with Rev Andrea. Our thanks to Rev Andrea for all the work she does with us.

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Litcham School Secondary and Primary Phase representatives proudly at-tended a service of Remembrance at Litcham All Saints church. Reverend Canon John Blore and churchwarden, Richard Vogt kindly led the service, held the two minutes silence and played 'The Last Post'.

We have also enjoyed 'Soul Space' at the church across both phases.

These are just a few highlights of the busy and productive year we have had at Litcham School.

Kind Regards

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stuart Wilson". The letters are cursive and slightly slanted to the right.

Stuart Wilson

Head of School



Litcham Jubilee Hall- report May 2024

This year has seen some significant changes to our trusts administration.

Our finance's also suffered a blow when earlier in the middle of June, the long planned Kings Coronation Street Party had to be cancelled within a day before the event due to a National weather warning of severe winds and potential flooding.

In June/July, two of our long standing dedicated Trustees, Liz Christie (Chair) and June Bevan (Deputy Chair) resigned from the Trust due to ill health. Their positions were taken up by Mike Oldfield (Trustee) who became Chair and Sally Kiddle-Morris a

Trustee as (Deputy Chair). A former member Mary Anderson also gave up her position as signatory.

Fundraising activities continued with Bingo once a month and other suggestions from the fundraising team included Beetle Drive, Table Top sale, and Art competition and mini table top games. Sadie Bailey also suggested an annual festival event that encompassed a variety of activities including pancake tossing. Weight watchers continue to hire the hall on a weekly basis. On some occasions in partnership with Litcham Methodist Church we jointly arranged Bingo or Quiz nights with profits being equally shared.

In August the poor condition of the interior and exterior of the hall was still causing concern, but with little funds or grants being forthcoming progress was slow.

Val Horton and Sarah White suggested forming a working party to carry out our own DIY decorating project for the interior. The working party met in August and proposed that notices and adverts were posted in the village magazine and website to encourage residents to help with this task or to donate decorating materials we could use. This was moderately successful in that Val Horton and Nina Hart both received new and used decorating supplies and a local professional decorator donated tins of paint and varnish. Later it was evident that the task of decorating the main hall ourselves was more challenging due to the high ceilings. It was therefore decided to contact local decorators and obtain quotes for the main hall. The kitchen, toilets and entrance hall would be carried out by committee and volunteers.

Claire Lawrence also contacted a local roofer/builder to view the site exterior especially the roof and gutters. Some repairs were made to ensure the building was water tight.

Val Horton and Sarah White continued to look for grant and funding opportunities, but

often we were not eligible or could not meet the application requirements.

The National Lottery Community Fund short listing application that we applied for in June was not successful. In July we closed our 'Just Giving.com' webpage as we felt after almost 7 months it had only generated £85.00.

Sarah White followed up and applied again to the 'Supermarket shopping token scheme' with Tesco and Waitrose. This is still active.

The 'Easy Fundraising' site continued to bring in increasing funds after a recent advert in the local village magazine.

To introduce a variety of fundraising activities in the coming months, the fundraising committee suggested a 'Race Night' a 'Novelty Christmas Photo Calendar' and a 'Art Exhibition' All suggestions were warmly welcomed and planned for the middle to end of 2024.

Once again September and October 2023 saw a Quiz night and Bingo respectively, organised by Sadie Bailey, these were well attended, and seemed to be enjoyed by all.

A local photographer was identified by Nina Hart for the photo Calendar, who would take photos of local village people, groups and businesses from January 2024.

More quotes were obtained from local builders to tackle the exterior renovation, but costs were prohibitive and not available. It was subsequently felt it might be more appropriate to carry out the renovations in stages by applying for smaller bespoke grants for specific projects.

By November remedial work had been completed on the roof and gutters and a local decorator Ian Barker had been appointed to carry out work in the main hall in the middle of January 2024.

There was concern by the treasurer Claire Lawrence regarding the Trusts finances in able to pay for any renovation work, so in November a Extraordinary Meeting was held to vote on how the current trust funds should be spent. The result was unanimous in favour of using the current funds for the maintenance and repair work. This was in order to keep the building in good order and hireable.

December and January 2024 was a quiet period in the Jubilee Hall diary but a Arts and Craft Christmas Mingle morning got everyone in the Christmas spirit.

The weather that morning was cold and icy but that did not deter people from turning out to enjoy the mince pies, mulled wine and the crafts. A lovely morning was had by all.

By the middle of February 2024 the decoration for the main Jubilee Hall was completed. It was amazing to see the transformation, with a light and bright functional room.

March and April saw work for the remainder being undertaken by the committee and private local contractors. The kitchen was installed and plumbing for the gents toilet finished. Work for other minor jobs was prioritised for late summer.

In late April 2024 an 'Official Opening' was arranged, invitations were extended to thank all the people who had contributed to the project.

In particular to remember Mrs Liz Christie (former Trustee and committee member) who sadly passed away in the middle of March. She had dedicated the last 10 years raising funds to help preserve the hall for community use. She was a long-time

supporter of the Jubilee Hall and Litcham Village in general. She was so close to seeing her efforts and determination come to fruition. She will be sadly missed.

To encourage the use of the hall a notice was put in the village magazine and on social media platforms to advertise its hiring potential. This resulted in a few more enquiries being forthcoming, namely from a Meditation Guru and for baby and toddler

sensory sessions. At the same time an advert was posted asking for more volunteer fundraisers and committee members.

Monthly activities were also in full swing with a 'Beetle Drive' evening and a Quiz in April. These were both a lot of fun. Then a 'Bingo' evening in May. We also had monthly 'Plant Sales and Coffee Mornings' in the months of May and June.

For the coming months the committee pledged to continue finding grants and funding that would help with the exterior maintenance and repair issues.

All in All this year has been filled with moments of happy and sad occasions. Notable though is the hall's renovation success. The organisation and planning tasks were at times challenging. The Trustees and I thank the management committee team for all their hard work and perseverance in bringing this project about. Also the local businesses and community supporters who have contributed so much.

The Trustees consider that the main activities of LITCHAM JUBILEE VILLAGE HALL are in accordance with the objective and that they are of public interest. The Trustees have had regard to the guidance issued by the Charities Commission on Public Benefit.

Summary of Minutes of LRINC Trustee Meetings - January to December 2023

- Claire Lawrence and Nina Hart have been welcomed on to the LRINC Board of Trustees as Litcham Parish Council co-opted members.
- The Charity Commission has been updated with the names of the new trustees and an updated summary of the aims and objective of the LRINC has been uploaded onto the Charity Commission website.
- To date, LRINC has donated £1,385 in the form of charitable relief this year. Charitable support will continue to be advertised in the parish magazine and in the high school newsletter.
- A notice board has been erected in the allotment car park. This will be used by the committee to keep allotment holders and wider community up to date with news and information. It may also be used by plot holders to advertise items relevant to the allotments. Contact Cathy on 01328 700433 if you wish to display a notice.
- Richard Bales has agreed to act as allotment warden. He has kindly fixed gates adjacent to plots 3 and 25 and organised tractor cutting of the hedges bordering Dunham and Dereham Road. This has significantly improved the appearance of the allotments. Thank you, Richard. The trustees have agreed to finance the roadside hedge cutting every two years.
- Plot 26 was subdivided at the beginning of the year into three smaller plots. Two of these have been amalgamated into plots 24 and 25.
- Rental charges for 2024 will remain the same. However, a review of rental charges in relation to plot size will be carried out next year.
- All plots are in use and there is currently a short waiting list.
- The possibility of providing water to the allotments in the form of standpipes was investigated. The cost was extremely prohibitive. Other more sustainable methods of provision were explored. LRINC applied for an Environmental Initiative Grant from Breckland Council. This money helped to finance the construction of four rainwater harvesting stations to supplement allotment holder's own water collection systems. Where possible the stations have been located in areas with vehicle access to provide equal access to all. Construction is now complete and plot holders are invited to use the rainwater stations at their own risk.
- LRINC will be working with the Norfolk Ponds Project on a conservation project to open up the woodland pond area adjacent to plot 30, to encourage biodiversity. This will be financed by a grant application.



Report from Litcham Childcare

7th May 2024

Firstly we must say how lovely it is to be able to share with you all what a wonderful place Litcham Childcare is.

We are situated in the building which was Litcham Children Centre which is now managed by Litcham School. We have been in this site for 17 years. Christine Mayes has been manager for 15 years supported by two deputies and a staff team of 10 currently. Unfortunately, she is leaving in July 2024 and we are currently advertising for a replacement.

We have a management trustee group made up of parents and members of the community.

We are open from 7.45 am until 6pm each day during term time. We offer a breakfast club, early years provision and afterschool club. We also offer a holiday club 8am – 4pm during the holidays. We currently have 41 children on our extended schools register and 41 children on early years register, 20 of these come from Litcham which is the highest it has been for some time. The others are made up from children from surrounding villages.

We are a registered charity and the majority of our income comes from early years funding and our families paying for our services. We receive no other grants or income. We also complete fundraising to top our income so that we can purchase equipment and resources for the children to use.

We are currently full and have a healthy waiting list for our early years provision when 20 children leave for Primary school.

We work closely with Litcham School with several joint events with Red Robins, their reception class. We join them to watch the Nativity, we have enjoyed Easter Egg hunts together and they also visit at special times of the year. The reception Teacher, Mrs Lake, does this to build relationships and to ensure a smooth transition to school. Not all our children feed into Litcham School and we have already invited reception teachers from our surrounding schools to meet the little ones joining them in September 2024.

We have a very busy time learning as we play. At the start of the term the children were busy looking out for signs of Autumn. They made patterns from coloured leaves, enjoyed playing with conkers and making snails. We also talked about and read stories about animals hibernating. We then moved on to making large poppies to say thank you to the armed forces for keeping us safe. The children enjoyed using their fingers to make patterns on the poppies. We have also learnt about the 'festival of light' Diwali by again using our hands and fingers to create diva lamps.

We celebrated Children in Need by creating Pudsey pictures and decorating biscuits.

We have our own enclosed outdoor play area and throughout our very wet weather have enjoyed splashing and playing in the puddles. What else is there to do!

We have also enjoyed finding out about animals in the jungle and on the farm. Looking at patterns on their fur. We had a focus on our favourite books too and the children were encouraged to bring in their favourite books from home.

We are currently investigating under the sea, creating an under the sea display and finding out about all the creatures that live in the sea

We have a weekly music session during term time from Sarah. The children enjoy learning new songs, following the actions and dancing to different instruments and rhythmns.

We have celebrated Christmas with a Nativity which families were invited too and Chinese New Year. It is 'The year of the dragon' so we decorated lanterns and practised our Chinese writing.

We are currently planning our May and Summer holiday clubs. We have had some lovely visitors throughout the year. Ed from Mini Beasts which included a bearded dragon and a tarantula. The children loved them. Staff not so much! We also had music with Bonnie which the children loved.

We are always looking for support from the community to ensure that we continue to thrive and offer the best care and education in the area.

Thank you for listening.

Christine Mayes (BAHons)

Manager

Litcham Common Conservation Group
Report for Litcham Annual Parish Meeting on 13 May 2024

Litcham Common Conservation Group was set up in January 2004 to assist with conservation work on the common. The group is relatively informal, with no written constitution or formal membership list, and uses the Litcham Common Management Committee bank account to hold funds. We are a member of The Conservation Volunteers (TCV), a national organisation for voluntary groups such as ours.

The group did not receive any income over the past financial year although a grant request was submitted to Litcham Parish Council in November 2023, a decision on which was deferred, for consideration in the current (2023/24) financial year.

Volunteers meet on the second Saturday of each month and carry out a variety of tasks. Over the past year work done has included removing invasive scrub and trees, clearing footpaths, mending fences, removing ragwort and picking up litter. The numbers attending tasks has been variable but we always manage to make a difference.

Other Conservation Group members carry out regular welfare checks on the ponies that graze the common, on a rota basis. A couple of long-standing volunteers have stepped back, but new ones have come forward so that we have enough people to ensure that the ponies are checked on a daily basis. We are fortunate to have some volunteers who are very competent and confident in handling the animals when we need to round them up for visits by the vet or farrier.

Tim Angell

Litcham Common Management Committee

Report for Litcham Annual Parish Meeting on 13 May 2024

Litcham Common is a Local Nature Reserve and a County Wildlife Site. The Management Committee's primary responsibility is to manage the site for wildlife, taking particular account of its importance as an area of lowland heathland. At present, funding is received from Natural England under a Higher Level Stewardship (HLS) agreement. The agreement was due to end in February 2022 but has been extended for a period of five years while we wait for the replacement environmental schemes to be set up.

The Management Committee was established in 1984 when Norfolk County Council and Lexham Hall Estate entered into a legal agreement regarding the management of the common. Although the agreement continues, the County Council no longer provides funding and has not sent a representative to attend committee meetings for some years. The present Committee is made up of Neil Foster (who owns the freehold of the common), Mike Oldfield (representing Litcham Parish Council), Aaron Brown (representing the Norfolk Wildlife Trust), Juliette Short, Roger Watts, Adam Pain and Tim Angell. Adam, who joined us last year, is a regular volunteer with the conservation group.

Conservation grazing is a key part of the management strategy. We have a herd of four Dartmoor ponies, which have the right qualities of hardiness and an appetite for the rough grazing found on the common. Local volunteers play a vital role in the work that we carry out, and we are very grateful for all they do.

Once again, we also expect to have some cattle grazing the common this year. The ponies and cattle complement each other with their different grazing techniques and this helps maintain a diversity of vegetation.

In 2023 we were able to make repairs to the perimeter fencing following the receipt of grants from Breckland Council and the Norfolk Wildlife Trust. Although the most urgent repairs have now been carried out, more work on the fence-line will need to be done over the next few years.

Ongoing management work is carried out in accordance with the terms of our HLS agreement with Natural England and we receive advice and support from the Norfolk Wildlife Trust. The Wildlife Trust produced a management statement for us in 2017 and this is available to view on Litcham's website. Work carried out over the past twelve months has included the felling of a relatively small number of mature trees and the continued clearance of scrub that has encroached onto the open heathland areas.

Litcham Common Management Committee paid Norfolk County Council a lump sum of roughly £75,000 for the installation of the cattle grids, bypass gates and new highway road signage in 2012, on the understanding that the County Council is responsible for all ongoing maintenance. At the 2018 parish meeting I reported our frustrations that both bypass gates were in need of repair and SLOW markings on the road needed to be reinstated. While the gates have been repaired it is disappointing and frustrating that the SLOW signs have still not been repainted; we were originally told this would be done in 2017! In addition, we are waiting for the County Council to repair more recent damage to the fence alongside one of the cattle grids.

We will be taking part in a Norfolk Wildlife Trust event in July, sharing our experience of managing the nature reserve. This will involve a walk round the common on Thursday 4 July. We are also hoping to organise a "fungus foray" this autumn.

A lot has been achieved in recent years and we are confident that the common is in a good position to flourish in the future, both for the benefit of wildlife and local people.

Tim Angell

Litcham Bellringers

Report for Litcham Annual Parish Meeting on 13 May 2024

Litcham's church bells have been rung regularly over the past year. We aim to ring for at least one church service a month and also to mark special occasions such as the Coronation in May 2023 and the church's recent Village Wedding and Flower Festival. Occasionally visiting groups from other areas will come to ring the bells.

Aside from ringing, we had a well attended open day in June 2023, giving people the opportunity to see the ringing chamber, bells and clock close up, as well as the views from the top of the tower.

Four residents of Litcham are members of our band with other ringers coming from surrounding villages. We have established contacts at Litcham School and are hoping to develop these so that more youngsters have the opportunity to give bellringing a try.

Litcham's bells and fittings have for some time been in a poor state of repair and the bells are notorious as being difficult to ring. Last year I reported on our plans to fully restore and properly tune the bells, which have been part of our village heritage since Matthew Halcott paid for the present church tower to be built in 1669. We are grateful to Litcham Parish Council for agreeing to provide a grant of £1,000 towards the cost, and to the Friends of All Saints Church for earmarking a further £840. As at 31/12/2023 we also had £5,352 held by Litcham PCC in a designated Bell Fund account, representing donations and funds raised over the last few years.

We are now preparing a grant application to the National Lottery Heritage Fund and in the process have become more ambitious in our objectives. There are many wellbeing benefits to the activity of bellringing – it is a free, shared activity for people of all ages that exercises both body and mind and brings a sense of achievement. Our aim is not only to have a properly tuned set of bells that sound better and are easy to ring, enabling more people to participate, but also to promote the rich cultural heritage – unique to Litcham – that is associated with the bells and tower. To do all this we are seeking to work together with a variety of local organisations, including the parish council and school. The cost of the work on the bells and fittings alone is estimated to be in the region of £65,000 plus VAT, but it seems that if we apply for additional money to pay for heritage engagement activities we will be more likely to receive a grant.

We would welcome any comments or questions people may have about our plans and with this in mind residents of Litcham should have received a questionnaire in their copy of May's Church & Village magazine. We would like to hear from as many people as possible, whether or not they live in Litcham, so please do let us know your thoughts by filling in and returning the forms.

Finally, if anyone is interested in learning to ring, or indeed in supporting the project, then please contact me.

Tim Angell