



Longstanton & District Heritage Society

Protecting and Promoting
the Heritage of
Longstanton & District

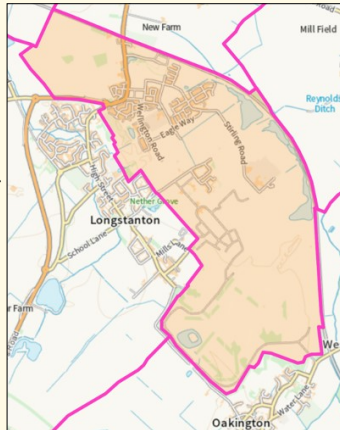
NEWSLETTER

No. 14 September 2021

A Warm Welcome To Northstowe Town Council

April 2021, saw the beginning of a new era for Northstowe and our villages as the new town formally became independent from Longstanton and Oakington, with a new boundary being drawn. This was followed in May with elections to the first Northstowe Town Council. The Longstanton & District Heritage Society (LDHS) welcomes this historic moment and looks forward to working with the Town Council and Northstowe residents on various heritage matters, as determined by the LDHS Constitution.

With a new boundary drawn for Northstowe from the parishes of Longstanton and Oakington and Westwick, we now have the shared history that LDHS has emphasised for many years. An example of this is Longstanton Station, once a very busy station on the St Ives to Cambridge Branch Line. This historic building now lies within the new town of Northstowe. No boundary change takes away the fact that this was Longstanton Station and that Northstowe is being built on what was Longstanton and Oakington parish land. This shared history is even more apparent when we consider Phases 2 and 3, which will be built on the former RAF Oakington/Oakington Barracks site. Once Longstanton and Oakington shared the history of the airfield but now Northstowe and its residents share that history too. This shared heritage is a fantastic way to bring our communities together and LDHS welcomes the role that we can play in facilitating this.



Staff at Longstanton Station - LDHS via Len & Rene Sanders

Since archiving started in 2005, the Heritage Society, and those who founded it, always realised that the history of our communities is not just what happened in the past but is also what happens today. LDHS endeavours to remember this in everything we do and we are delighted that Northstowe News donates copies of their magazine to the Society for safe-keeping within the LDHS Archives.

Membership Renewals

Annual subscriptions were due on 1 April 2021. Membership costs £10 for an individual and £15 for a family. However, as we are half way through the year new members are offered the chance to join LDHS **Free of Charge until 1 April 2022**. Membership forms can be downloaded off our website: <https://www.ldhs.org> Alternatively please contact the Secretary by any of the methods outlined below and we will provide you with a form.

Community Engagement

With the coronavirus pandemic, social distancing and lockdowns impacting on society in general, LDHS has had to adapt also. Whilst our usual talk seasons have been suspended LDHS has found other ways to engage with members and local residents. This year has seen a greater use of email with members having the opportunity to access remote talks held by other heritage organisations, including the Cambridge Antiquarian Society. Indeed, many non-local members have enjoyed access to these talks which are usually held in Cambridge. There have been some benefits to remote meetings and we hope that some talks will continue to be held this way to facilitate wider access.

In addition to the publicising of talks held by other organisations, LDHS has used Facebook to share historic information that we feel is of interest to members and the wider community. We have also been delighted to have assisted members of the public with their own research projects by providing information from the LDHS Archives.

Work Continues On The LDHS Archives

Despite the pandemic the archives have continued to grow. It is now over 15 years since archiving of our shared history began and the collection we have put together is of historic importance. We hope with our immanent move to the Heritage Annex building, the LDHS Archives will be safeguarded in perpetuity and can be appreciated by members of our communities and visitors, for generations to come.



Postcard image of Longstanton High Street c 1930's - LDHS via H Stroude

Northstowe Update

Planning applications have been submitted for Phases 3a and 3b and at the recent Northstowe Forum held in July, indications were that planning approval for these last phases of Northstowe will be achieved by the end of the year. However, with the H R Wallingford reports published, there remain questions and concerns regarding the future sustainability of the aquifer located within the River Terrace Deposits that lie beneath Longstanton and Northstowe. It is hoped that any planning permission for these last phases of the new town will ensure that there is no further damage to the aquifer and that there is mitigation for the damage caused by the de-watering works which took place on Phase 1.

It was also announced at the Northstowe Forum that both the Phase 1 and 2 lakes should be open to the public by September. Residents from all our local communities are looking forward to this and it will be a lovely place for visitors too. The lakes on Phases 2 and 3 will be on the former site of RAF Oakington and will be a peaceful area for relatives of veterans to come to remember their loved ones. In addition to the lakes, LDHS was involved in ensuring that the rare Oakington Pillboxes were given Listed status and the Society was a consultee in the management plans put forward for their re-use and preservation. The plans include one of these rare pillboxes being open to the public on occasion.

Words from Northstowe's First Mayor

I moved into one of the first houses to be completed in Northstowe in June 2017. Following three years representing Northstowe residents on Longstanton Parish Council, I was one of fifteen councillors elected to the first Northstowe Town Council, and at our first meeting I was honoured and humbled to be elected as Town Mayor.

As a Town Council, our priorities are shaped around making Northstowe a great place to live, work and visit. The council comes into being at a critically important time: development of our first commercial and employment areas is imminent, key decisions are being taken about the approach to management of open spaces in the town, and we have an increasing number of young people in need of local activities. With the development of residential areas near to Rampton Drift, we need to ensure that their interests are represented. Furthermore, we are committed to making Northstowe a sustainable place to live, nurturing biodiversity across our green spaces and ensuring we live up to our standing as a Healthy New Town. The next few years will be an exciting time as we add a new chapter to the rich history of the area!

Cllr Richard Owen, Town Mayor

Heritage Annex Update

Whilst the Heritage Annex project is on-going, the pandemic has impacted both time-scales and costs and it is perhaps inevitable that the original building design is no longer possible. With additional support for the building coming from Homes England, on condition that the building provides storage and work space for LDHS, the project is once again making progress. For LDHS, this will mean considerable work to move the archives into this new and long-awaited home. We hope to have the support and assistance of our local councils and residents as we start work on displaying the LDHS Archives and we would love the support of our local communities to ensure this heritage building is a great success.

Airfield Research Group Support

LDHS is pleased to announce that the Society is now mutually affiliated with the Airfield Research Group (ARG). ARG is a most respected organisation with expert knowledge of historic airfields. ARG offered to become an affiliated society because they support LDHS's efforts safeguard the heritage of RAF Oakington. Members of ARG have offered us assistance as we seek to put together displays which will tell the story of the airfield.

More information on ARG can be found on their website: www.airfieldresearchgroup.org.uk



*Stirling Bomber at RAF Oakington -
LDHS via H Stroude*

LDHS Talks

Sadly with the safety implications of the pandemic, the LDHS Committee had to take the decision to postpone our series of talks for the remainder of 2020 and 2021. In addition, the **2021 AGM** will take place remotely on Friday 3 September, as was the case last year. LDHS has also made the decision not to restart our talks programme until it is safe to do so out of concern for our members comfort and safety. We hope that it may be possible to restart talks in 2022, and we will keep the situation under review.

The Year Ahead

The priority for LDHS over the coming year will be to support the Heritage Annex project and to ensure that the LDHS Archives are moved safely to their new home. Whilst we intend to work with others on the opening exhibition, we hope that going forward we will have the independence and freedom we need to make our own display decisions, so they can reflect the aspirations of both our membership and our communities.

We are hopeful that residents, members, our local councils and others will come forward to assist with the management of LDHS and our archives. The collection is unique and irreplaceable and it is beholden on us all to take the right decisions to safeguard this archive for the future. The work we have done over the last 15 years and the considerable work we need to do now will have a lasting impact on our communities for generations to come.

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