

## Village Recorder's Report – Campsea Ashe 2017



This is the annual Village Recorder's Report for the village of Campsea Ashe, compiled for the first time by a representative from the village's Heritage Group. Reference material for this report can be found at:-

[https://www.campseashechurch.org.uk/Village\\_Today.php](https://www.campseashechurch.org.uk/Village_Today.php)

**The Campsea Ashe Station House Project.** This year, amongst its normal day-to-day affairs, two conspicuous matters have had an impact on the village. Firstly, and most importantly, there has been the completion of the ambitious project to restore the station buildings – nominally *Wickham Market* station – and convert them into a community-based resource with meeting rooms, social amenities and a café. Known as *Station House Community Connections Ltd.*, this venture has been the brain-child of Robert & Rosamund Webb, who must take the bulk of the credit for its progress since 2013, and its continuing success after the official opening in September. Special community events that have been organised here already this year have included 'One Life Suffolk' walks around the local area, school homework & self-study facilities and a 'Creative Computing' Club. Full details of the Station House facilities and its programme of events can be found on its website at:-

<http://www.stationhousecampseashe.co.uk>



**Figures 1 & 2: Campsea Ashe Station House and railway line, December 2017**

**Rising Volumes of Heavy Traffic through the Village.** The second matter that has become of increasing concern to villagers during the last 12 months or so is the high level of commercial and residential development taking place in neighbouring villages such as Rendlesham, Bentwaters, Melton and Framlingham, and in particular the impact that rising volumes of heavy traffic along, and around, the B1078 is having. Being rural roads, these routes have traditionally been used, as expected, by local farm vehicles, but in recent months very much larger construction plant, articulated lorries and other HGVs moving between the surrounding industrial estates and building sites have significantly added to the traffic flow, and have created more noise and congestion. Naturally residents of Campsea Ashe are finding this inconvenient and disruptive, and are actively lobbying local councillors to be aware of and address these issues.



**Figures 3 & 4: views to the church from the north, April & December 2017**

**The Nextdoor Private Social Network.** A third, more ‘background’, initiative in which individual villagers have become involved this year is the *Nextdoor* on-line private social network. This is an internet-based platform for disseminating news, information, classified advertisements and such like to the residents of local villages, typically within a catchment of five miles or so of Wickham Market. At December 2017 a little over 10% of the estimated 178 households in Campsea Ashe were registered as members of the scheme. *Nextdoor*’s website is:-

<https://nextdoor.co.uk>

**Campsea Ashe Parish Council.** Campsea Ashe is fortunate in having an active Parish Council. It holds public meetings regularly in the Village Hall, and discusses a wide range of business associated with the village residents and their amenities. Key topics for discussion this year have inevitably centred on local concern about the increase of heavy traffic through the village - especially lorries - and its impact. Where appropriate these discussions have touched on restriction notices on certain heavily affected roads. The Parish Council is also generous in its subsidies for local activities: for example, having been badly damaged last year, the distinctive Village Sign was refurbished and replaced outside the *Allonsfield* residential care home in July, the village Mother & Toddler Group received a grant for equipment, the Village Hall benefited from funding for plumbing renovations, and the Campsea Ashe Heritage Group was able to publish a professionally printed booklet on the history of the village and circulate it to residents. More administrative matters noted by the Parish Council have included the temporary closure of the public footpath across the railway line while engineering works were undertaken, and the Village Recorder responsibilities passing to the Heritage Group. The relevant *OneSuffolk* website provides details of the Parish Council’s activities and minutes:-

<http://campseaashe.onesuffolk.net>

**Campsea Ashe Church and related Social Affairs.** Arguably the heart of the village remains the church and its affairs, in spite of falling numbers of attendees with sometimes only a handful of worshippers in the congregation. In January 2017 Campsea Ashe was formally integrated into the ‘Orebeck’ Benefice of seven local churches, the others being Parham, Hacheston, Marlesford, Easton, Brandeston and Kettleburgh. Typically village services and ‘rotated’ benefice services have been held two or three times per month throughout the year. One occasion of particular note this year was the funeral service on 10 August of Ian James Alastair Graham, OBE, FSA, the renowned Mayan scholar and long-term resident of Chantry Farm in Ash Road who died aged 93. Obituaries to Ian Graham appeared afterwards both in the national press and learned journals around the world.



**Figures 5, 6, 7: safety fencing surrounding the base of Campsea Ashe’s church tower, December 2017**



2017 has seen the retirement of the benefice’s incumbent – the Revd. Deirdre West – in the summer, and the appointment of her replacement, the Revd. Canon Graham Hedger, in December. A tribute to the Revd. West was included in the July issue of the Parish Magazine. Unfortunately this followed one of the village’s longest-serving Churchwardens moving away from the locality, creating a vacancy for a Churchwarden (which has yet to be filled), meaning that the church operated for a few months with what might be thought of as a ‘skeleton staff’ of volunteers.

Nonetheless the church was able to function through its Parochial Church Council (PCC) which met regularly, and which presided over the church's daily running and its maintenance. Some calendar highlights for the church during 2017 have been the Church Festival held at the Old Rectory in July, the Harvest Festival in September, the Act of Remembrance outdoor ceremony beside the War Memorial on Armistice Day, and the December Christingle service. Other activities associated with the church have been the Mothers' Union which continues to thrive with meetings and social events, bell-ringing for which regular practices have been held on Saturdays and Tuesdays, and the annual fund-raising bicycle ride in conjunction with the other churches in Suffolk.

Fund-raising in general for the church is an on-going issue, both for its running costs and for its maintenance. This year, for example, additional fund-raising has been under way to pay for fabric repairs as masonry had been falling from the tower. Besides service collections, sometimes fund-raising is innovative and it is worth noting that the modest, but still vital, sum of £74 was received this year from Co-op customers donating their shopping 'divi'.

Alongside the church's social affairs for the village are those of the Village Hall which, for example, has hosted coffee-mornings, jive/swing lessons and dances, quiz nights, bingo and children's fancy dress parties. Also for local youngsters the play equipment on the nearby village Recreation Ground has been in daily use. In August a cricket match in aid of the MacMillan cancer charity was held in Ashe Park, the grounds of the former Campsea Ashe 'High House'.

As well as taking on the Village Recorder role, the Heritage Group has been active during 2017 publishing a newsletter, a number of articles in the Parish Magazine – several marking the centennial anniversaries of fallen servicemen in the First World War – and a 40-page *Memories of Campsea Ashe* booklet which was distributed to all village residents. It has also attracted some 4000 visitors to its website, which it shares with the church:-

<https://www.campseashechurch.org.uk>

**Business and Commercial matters.** Campsea Ashe is noted, of course, for the Clarke & Simpson auction rooms which in 2017 continued their regular calendar of sales: the weekly Monday Sale, plus special Antiques & Fine Arts, Art Deco, Agricultural Machinery & Rural Byegones sales several times during the year. Adjacent to the Village Hall the recently rejuvenated 'Dog & Duck' pub increased its reputation for good food and organised some live music events, while the other principal business in the village – the *Allonsfield* Care Home – continued to provide for its residents; towards the end of the year the care home advertised several staff vacancies. A little distant from the village centre the *Brick Kiln Farm* Camping complex enjoyed a successful holiday season.



**Figures 8 & 9:**  
**New build along**  
**Mill Lane,**  
**December 2017**

The property market in Campsea Ashe has been active during 2017, with about a dozen houses changing hands or being advertised for rent. Most prominent were the sale of 'The Hame' for approaching £1 million on the Tunstall Road, and part of the former Ashe Abbey buildings in Loudham becoming available for rent. Meanwhile *Flagship Homes* have been constructing a number of new houses in the Ullswater Road area off Mill Lane.

**Village Amenities.** The Suffolk County Mobile Library has continued to make monthly visits to the village this year, and a mobile police station has been set up in the Station House car park on several occasions. A recently created No.62 bus service operated by *PF Travel* and 'First' now runs through the local villages.