**Dunwich Organisation Reports for the 2023 AGM**

**Dunwich Town Trust.** The trust has seem many changes of personnel over the last financial year. Nick Mayo chair and trustee for many years ended her service in December. We thank her for her dedicated support of The Dunwich Town Trust. Gussie Schacke Andersen was appointed chair in January 2023 and Dennis Cox became the vice chair. The other trustees are Jane Hamilton, Julian Perry, Henry Tomlinson, Rod Smith, Sharon Earp, Nigel Barham and Val Bethell. The trust also appointed a new clerk Julia Davison-Wilson and a new bookkeeper Jon Dawson. We meet every two months. Clarke and Simpson continue to manage the properties owned by the trust. They regularly report to the chair and any issues re maintenance etc are dealt with as soon as possible. The chair takes action between meetings if there is a vital issue; for example, a new boiler was required at one property this year during the cold months. It was important for our tenants’ comfort and health that this was installed as a matter of some urgency. From time to time trustees may visit a property if there is a complex issue that is not directly maintenance for example a decision over trees or fencing. The trust continues to provide care alarms for those in need in the village and also pays for alarms for those who were once villagers but have moved out of the area for housing reasons. We give grants not only to individuals but other organisations that support people in the area directly or indirectly. Grants given this year The Saxmundham Food Bank, Ipswich and Colchester Hospital Charity, James Paget Hospital Charity, Disability Advice, MacMillan, St Elizabeth Hospice, Alde Valley Foodbank, Headway and Leiston CAB. The trust gives out £600 in the form of a winter fuel grant that can be applied for or a resident in need has been identified. The list of beneficiaries is reviewed every year. Individuals have been awarded grants for further education and out of school activities. Grant application forms are available from the clerk and applications are considered confidentially at the following trustees meeting. These are noted in our confidential minutes and are not available on the web site. The general minutes from the meetings are available on the website once they have been ratified at the subsequent meeting. The trust wants to be very much part of ongoing matters in the village and as such has subsidised the next village funday. Working with the museum the trust has also funded the purchase of coronation mugs for the children of the area. The next meeting of the trust is on May 15th and any new applications for funding will be considered then.

**Gussie Schacke Andersen, Chair**

**Dunwich Greyfriars Trust.**  After 2 years of delays, largely the consequence of the pandemic, we have been able to complete the long-planned works on the stable block. This involved repairing major cracks in the stableyard wall that made it an unsafe structure, replacing lintels over the stall doors, digging a soakaway and fitting guttering to carry rainwater away from the building, and other odds and ends. The hole dug for the soakaway revealed a large posthole from some medieval structure on the site along with contemporary shards of pottery. The archaeologist who attended the digging was unable to say what sort of a structure it might have been but we know that the precinct of the old monastery would have been littered with agricultural and similar non-durable buildings. We now have, in the stable block, a sound, weatherproof building that will need little attention for years, and the trustees are starting to think of how we might best use it in the longer term.

The local Barn Owl seems to like the improvements for he (or she) is now using the stable as a regular roost and resting site, leaving pellets and other evidence almost daily. The south side of the precinct, comprising rough grassland, is perfect hunting territory for owls and holds a large population of field mice and voles. Hopefully the Barn Owl will eventually nest in the box that we installed a couple of years ago on the edge of the Wood overlooking the precinct.

In the woodland, the drought conditions in the summer of 2022 have affected many of our trees and their weakened state has enabled some of the diseases they suffer to prosper. The Oaks and Sweet Chestnut in the Wood, which are very deep rooted, have come through without much damage, and the Yews similarly are resilient, but a fungus disease that attacks Sycamores, Sooty Bark disease which thrives in drought conditions, is now very obvious on a lot of trees. Those in an advanced stage of the disease and that lie close to paths are being felled. In many ways this is a good thing as it allows more light into the Wood and promotes the growth of the understorey that is a much more diverse habitat than diseased sycamores. Elsewhere our working parties have continued with clearing dead elm from the slopes above The Ship, which encourages both the growth of understorey again, and the development of young elms growing from the healthy root systems of the dead ones.

Organisationally, the Trust has this year formally become a registered charity, which makes little practical difference but does enable us to continue to claim Gift Aid on subscriptions and donations.

The joint venture with Dunwich Museum and Art Branches continued throughout the summer of 2022 with a series of public events, many within the Greyfriars precinct, under the umbrella title Chronicles of Greyfriars. These were enjoyed by a large number of individuals and families and raised the level of our public engagement. They will continue through summer 2023, funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund.

My personal thanks are due to the team of Trustees who give freely of their time to help manage our organisation. We all owe great thanks to our membership without whose financial support and volunteering Greyfriars would be a much diminished place.

**Geoffrey Abell, Chairman**

**PCC of St James Church, Dunwich.** There are 25 on the Church Electoral Roll and many more in the village who support St James.

**Services.** The times of Church Services are shown on the notice boards. On average 16 attend the Sunday services with more at special events**:**

* At harvest the food collected in church and the service collection were donated to the local Alde Valley Food Bank; 24 came to the Fish and Chip Harvest Lunch in the Reading Room.
* Many came to the wreath laying on Remembrance Sunday.
* A Christmas Celebration of lessons, carols, readings, poems and a short play, followed by mince pies and mulled wine was attended by 50.
* This year’s Easter Sunrise Service on the beach, with hot cross buns and hot drinks to follow, attracted over 70. The sun did show itself though a little late.

There were three weddings during the year and two burials of ashes.

**Things that have happened during the year:**
A brass plaque naming those interred in the Barne Family vault that lies under the Leper Chapel, is now in the Chancel. About 20 members of the Barne Family came to a service at St James last December when the plaque was ‘unveiled’.

The side flagpole, which had become redundant, was removed and the central pole refitted and painted in time for the Queen’s Platinum Jubilee celebrations.

Two benches, in memory of Kenneth and Katharine Riches, and of Derek and Joyce May have been placed in the churchyard.

Some work on trees in both the churchyard and graveyard was required for safety reasons.

**The church has been recognised as an ‘Eco Church’:**
Suffolk Wildlife Trust were invited to advise on how best to manage the church land for the benefit of wildflowers, insects and reptiles, their recommendations are being addressed. Two bird surveys identified 19 species while 28 different plants have been found on the church land.

Energy savings have been made as far as is practicable; the night-time floodlight has been switched off and will only be used for special occasions. On the Church of England Energy Footprint tool St James scores an ‘A’.

The PCC supports The World Land Trust, in part to offset the church’s carbon footprint.

**Flower Festival**:

For the second year running our main fund-raising event, took place over the first weekend in August. The theme ‘Happy and Glorious’ celebrated the long reign of Queen Elizabeth. This was a happy and successful occasion and we thank the many from the village who came to help and participate.

The following weekend the Rosewood Acoustic Trio presented a concert of folk music which the PCC funded and raised £769 in aid of Ukraine.

**This summer**:
i) Repair works on the walls of the church and tower along with repainting and repairing the clock face is due to commence the week beginning 5th July and expected to last 6 weeks.

ii) The FF will again be the first weekend in August with a concert by Syzewell Gap the following weekend, which will be free with donations in aid of Ukraine.

iii) The Bishop of Dunwich will be leading a service in church on Sunday 13th August.

**The Flower Team**, organised by Jane Zarins, keeps St James looking beautiful which is remarked on by many who visit the church. Jane would love to hear from you if you could help too – church attendance is not a requirement!

FINALLY we are incredibly grateful to those in the village, both church and non-church goers, who support the St James by annual or regular donations. If anyone would like to know more about how they can give please get in touch with Geoff Abell, the church treasurer.

PLEASE DO COME AND JOIN US IN CHURCH – our services are very informal

Christine Palmer, Churchwarden

**Dunwich Community Heritage Centre (Dunwich Museum)**

Within the last 12 months, Dunwich Museum has been busy. Since we went to seven days a week opening at the beginning of April, there have been days recently when we have over 100 visitors coming through our doors before closing time.

This year, with help from a grant from SHARE East to cover consultancy costs, we have transformed

the Dunwich Reading Room and Museum Charity into a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO)

registered with the Charities Commission, with a constitution updated so it’s fit for the 21st century.

The charity is now formally known as the Dunwich Community Heritage Centre. The new

organisation is a membership organisation more closely linked to the community of Dunwich., Stay

tuned for the launch of the new charity... Our plans for the Dunwich Community Heritage Centre in

the future include being a centre for education on coastal erosion and climate change.

The project to renovate the Reading Room progresses. We are preparing a bid for funding from

Heritage National Lottery Fund for a project to evaluate the whole site, consult with the community,

investigate feasibility and establish a funding plan for future development. The bid will also allow us

to continue the Chronicles project and undertake a conservation program. Currently the existing plans

for the Reading Room are being digitised to allow 3D computer models to be made from these plans

which will greatly facilitate the development and help in funding bids.

As ever, we need volunteers to help run Dunwich Museum, and not just for front of house shifts.

Contact our Manager Jane Hamilton to discuss possible volunteering opportunities. We had a recent

evening event for volunteers, we have a full programme of family-friendly events throughout the

season, and our series of Chronicles of Greyfriars events in partnership with Art Branches and

Dunwich Greyfriars Trust continues. The Joshua Kirby map exhibition continues, we plan provisionally to have an exhibition on pilgrimage for the 2024 season.

It is with sadness that we note the recent passing of John Francis after a short illness. John was a

former trustee, treasurer and volunteer of Dunwich Museum, always ready to step in to cover shifts,

often at very short notice.

Another great loss this year was Stuart Bacon, who also passed away. Some of you may have met him

when he came to give a talk at a Museum Dinner. Daredevil diver, pilot and racing driver, Stuart

Bacon led the Dunwich Dives from the 1970s through to the 1990s which discovered the locations of

the ruins of several Dunwich churches on the sea bed. Working in some of the worst diving conditions

in the world, Stuart and his team brought up some of the fragments of church stonework now on

display in the Museum. He also discovered the Dunwich Bank Wreck and brought up its cannon, as

well as being a key figure in the ensuing struggle with the Receiver of Wrecks and the Admiralty to

ensure the cannon finally found a home in Dunwich Museum. His work has inspired exploration

which still goes on, including exploration led by David Sear, Professor of Physical Geography at

Southampton University and now one of our Trustees.

Looking ahead, we are holding a Summer sale on July 1st, for arts and crafts, collectibles and bric-a-brac.

It will make use of the marquee, and tables may be booked.

We are hosting an Art Show over the first weekend of August to coincide with the Flower Festival.

Works can be for sale or just display, with a small charge per painting, and commission on sales, and

Jpegs of potential work should be submitted by the end of June.

Matt Salusbury, Chair

**Dunwich WI**

Dunwich WI Annual Report for the Parish Meeting April 2023

We have had another busy year with a full programme of speakers, outings and social events.

Outings were to Carlton Marshes, Crows Hall, Debenham and to Southwold Theatre.

Outside caterers provided a very enjoyable Christmas meal for us in the Reading Room. We also celebrated Dunwich WI’s 104th birthday with supper in the Reading Room where we were entertained by 4 splendid musicians - singing and playing guitars and penny whistles.

Once again we helped with the annual beach clean organised by Suffolk Wildlife Trust.

We had speakers on a wide range of subjects. Some of our own members gave talks - on Wildlife Gardening, Shetland ponies, Wellbeing and The NHS.

In the spring a speaker came from Magpie Bakeries and brought delicious samples. In the autumn an excellent speaker related tales of well known East Anglian Characters.

The committee had a relaxing time listening to music when members organised an evening of Desert Island Discs. Everyone chose a disc with some meaning for them and a luxury item they would take to the island - quite an interesting collection.

So, ladies, do come come along, we promise a warm welcome, varied entertainment and splendid refreshments.

Maureen Williams, President

**Dunwich Jubilee Committee**

The Dunwich Jubilee Committee was established for the benefit, wellbeing and social cohesion of the community of Dunwich; its past achievements demonstrate this and the future activities of the Committee exist to solely support this.

We continue with our responsibility of reaching out to the community in the spirit of friendship and companionship by hosting events that foster, trust and a sense of belonging and enjoyment.

The committee as of 2023 consists of Sharon Earp and Helen Morris and was ably supported by Treasurer Doug Boechler in 2022.

In 2022 we held a successful three-day programme for the village to celebrate the Queen’s Platinum Jubilee. The main event attracted 140 villagers on the day. The additional non-ticketed events of the ‘Lighting of the Beacon’ and the ‘Animal Parade’attracting many more. The programme was significantly financially subsidisedby the Jubilee Committee.

Mindful that the village has in part entered a period of transition with a number of new residents, we introduced an autumn/winter programme of Village Suppers, running from November 2022 to March 2023; a monthly, evening supper in The Ship pub. These have been popular, with an average of 25 villagers at each event, they have been run at cost with the Dunwich Jubilee Committee financially subsiding speakers and additional costs.

For 2023 the Jubilee Committee will host the annual Dunwich Village Fun Day on Saturday 24th June : a BBQ/Barn Dance with live band at the Reading Room & Field. Tickets for this event are currently being sold at £15 per adult, with children up to the age of 16, complimentary.

To date we have 48 villagers who have purchased tickets for this event.

Sharon Earp