• Walberswick Common Lands Charity

• *Registered Charity No 206095*

ANNUAL DROP-IN MORNING
SATURDAY OCTOBER 20 10:00 – 12:00
VILLAGE HALL ANNEX

At this year's Annual Parish Meeting the Trustees made a commitment to increase the transparency of the Charity. We already publish the donations we make to worthy causes however for reasons of confidentiality we never reveal the support provided to individuals in the Village. Likewise as the largest landowner in the Village, with over 65 neighbours, we occasionally deal with issues which are confidential between us and our neighbours. It is for these reasons that the Trustees hold their meetings in private. However the Trustees are conscious that they are ultimately accountable to the Village as a whole and are determined to increase transparency wherever they can.

The increased transparency started with the bi-monthly reports of our meetings in the Village News and continues with our first annual drop-in morning where the Trustees will be available to talk about the work of the Charity and to answer your questions. The format will be informal, tea and coffee will be provided, everyone is welcome and we look forward to your feedback so that we can ensure the event meets your needs in future years.

BACKGROUND TO THE CHARITY

The formal origins of the Charity, or 'the Trust' as it is frequently referred to, go back to 1901 when a Scheme was established for the *"regulation and administration of the Charity known as the Common Lands in the Parish of Walberswick in the County of Suffolk and for the application of income thereof"*. The Charity's lands and property include; the large heath land known as 'the Common'; the grazing marshes SW of the River Blyth; much of the salt marshes behind the beach; the Ferry Road car park and areas occupied by the houses and huts alongside the river; the Cliff Field car park and surrounding area; Bennett's Copse and Drift plus the Potters Wheel cafe and the Lantern Gallery on the Green.

The largest source of the Charity's income is from Walberswick Car Parks Limited, which is a company controlled by the Charity. The policies of the Company are set by its volunteer Directors and it has been managed over the summer months by the Operations Manager, Mr John Harris.

The work of the Charity is governed by the Scheme and by the Charities Act 2006. The priorities of the Charity are laid down by the Scheme and in order of priority these are; maintenance of our land and buildings, providing support to individuals in need and finally providing general benefit to the inhabitants of Walberswick. These priorities are managed by the Trustees who meet formally six times a year. The Charity is administered on a day to day basis by our Clerk, Mrs Jayne Tibbles.

The Trustees comprise four Nominative Trustees appointed by Walberswick Parish Council;
two Co-optative Trustees appointed by the Trustees themselves and one Ex-officio Trustee, the Vicar of Walberswick (or equivalent). Following the death of Keith Webb there is a vacancy for a Trustee and if you are interested in finding out more about this worthwhile role please contact the Chairman or Clerk, or come to our drop-in morning.

Further information about the background of the Charity, its policies and how to approach the Charity if you need our support can be found at our website:

http://walberswick.onesuffolk.net/walberswick-common-lands-charity

WALLY'S BRIDGE

Last year the Environment Agency announced that it was intending to remove the bridge over the Dunwich River adjacent to Eastpoint in order to save maintenance costs. This is an important resource for the community and economy of the Village. It is one of the two crossing points from the Ferry Road car park to the beach and is also a significant tourist attraction in its own right, attracting hundreds of crabbing enthusiasts each year.

Given the significance of the bridge to the Village we are pleased to report that, subject to contract, terms have been agreed with the Environment Agency for transfer of the bridge to the Charity. However this is not the end of the story, the bridge is in a very poor state of repair so we are in the process of obtaining the required planning consent and finalising terms with a specialist marine contractor. These works will result in the bridge looking substantially the same as it does today, although safer and stronger.

With regard to funding, the agreement is that the Environment Agency will meet 50% of the estimated costs; the Charity 25% with the remaining 25% being met by very kind donations from the Freud and the Fincham families. Hopefully this will be sufficient however there may be a need for further public fund raising if the condition of the bridge proves worse than anticipated.

Finally, it has been agreed by Trustees that the refurbished bridge will be named *'Wally's Bridge'* as a lasting memorial to the late Keith Webb which seems appropriate given his love of the sea, his 30 year association with crabbing and his long service as a Trustee of the Charity.

THE COMMON

We are very fortunate that our former Chairman, Barbara Priestman, has agreed to take on the role of Volunteer Warden responsible for conservation and maintenance of the Common. Barbara will be at the drop-in morning and available to talk about the issues facing the Common and the options she is considering.

One major issue is controlling silver birch which is very aggressively trying to colonise the Common. One possible option is to fence off areas for grazing animals that would eat the silver birch, similar to the approach taken in Dunwich Forest. However this could restrict access and impact dog walkers, so Barbara would welcome your ideas and feedback.

Barbara would also welcome members to join her band of volunteers who valiantly battle against gorse and birch every Wednesday afternoon during the winter months.

CHARITY CONTACTS

Trustees:

N Mr Clive Brynley-Jones
N Mrs Madeline Dabbs
N Mr James Darkins (Chairman)
EO Rev Brian Fisher
C Mrs Kate Goodchild (Chairman Walberswick Car Parks Ltd)
N Mr Nigel Hunt
C Vacancy

Clerk:
Mrs Jayne Tibbles
Lima Cottage
Ferry Road
Walberswick, IP18 6TN
Email: wclc@walberswick.suffolk.gov.uk

N – Nominative Trustee; C – Co-optative Trustee; EO – Ex-officio Trustee

JD - October 2012