

Foulness Island

June 2019

As a motorist, or a passenger, do you remember life before the bridge? Now it's very much taken for granted, but do you remember its construction and the difference it has made to journeys? Before the bridge was built, do you remember the tide of traffic that swept up to the tunnel – and stopped? Yes, it's *that* bridge we're on about, not *this* one. Linking Essex and Kent, it's been open for a number of years now, but many of us can remember driving across the Queen Elizabeth II Bridge for the first time and, for the first time, not having to wait to cross the Thames. (Of course, there are some of us old enough to remember having to use the Blackwall Tunnel to 'get to the other side' – for the young ones, that was in the days even before the Dartford Tunnel was built.)

As a motorist or a passenger, do you remember life before the bridge, Havengore Bridge, that is? I realise that those of us who are old enough to remember that first momentous construction are now gone, and it's a dwindling number who can remember the building of the current bridge. Now it's the primary means of access to the island, but what on earth was life like before the bridge, with journey times on and off the island dictated by the tides, or the accessibility of a boat?

Overcoming natural barriers, bridges provide pathways, bringing together communities and people that were formerly isolated from each other. Can we think of something, each one of us, that would provide a bridge, something that would link us to someone else in a positive way?

In Memoriam

In June we remember

*Frank Cook
Betty Dent
Eunice (Tibby) Hume
Andrew Lilley
Alf Rawlings*

Gone but not forgotten

Foulness Parish Council

Due to the issue regarding the recording of meetings, the Parish Council continues to hold two separate meetings.

We are holding an informal meeting with QinetiQ, the DIO and the MOD which commences at 7.00pm on the night of Council meetings. This is for the Parish Councillors and the Parishioners of Foulness Island only. This is followed at 7.15 pm by the Parish Council meeting

QinetiQ Report to residents

Early starts:

23 May, 08:00 at Q Battery
22 & 23 May, 08:30 at DAT
11 June, 08:30 at DAT

Road closure: There will be a safety closure on the spine road on Tuesday 21 May with a backup day of Wednesday 22 May. This

will result in a delay to traffic of approximately 20 minutes. The closure will be from Jerrywood to just past Taylor's Hut.

Large safety trace -17-21 June:

There is a trial scheduled for June at Q Battery that has a large safety trace. This is still to be confirmed, but it may mean that we have to advise residents in the White City area not to venture out to the rear of their homes. Further notification will be issued nearer the date if the trial is confirmed.

Empty property viewings – scheduled for 5 & 6 June. DIO is hosting a number of viewings of 22 & 30 Churchend for potential new tenants on 5 & 6 June.

Road repairs – Landwick roundabout: Essex Highways has confirmed that it intends to carry out road surface repair works to Landwick roundabout on Thursday 9 May between 09:30 and 15:30. Traffic management controls will be in place.

Group Property report

Bridge: The bridge is currently working and tests lifts are being carried out every day at 16:00.

Roads: There are no works scheduled this month and minor pothole repairs are being planned.

Tree Works and Ground Maintenance: The village verges are due to be cut in the next four weeks. There should be no impact on tenants.

Power Impacts: No planned interruptions to residential supply.

Water: There are no planned interruptions to residential supply.

Let Estate: There was a mix up with electricity meter reading requests where both QQ and DIO made separate requests to residents. Please send your readings to DIO or ask Edwin Birch for assistance.

Prepared by Nicki Uden, Community Liaison Officer, and Edwin Birch.

Parish Council

The Parish Council held its Annual meeting on 8th May 2019 commencing at 7.15 pm.

County and District Councillor Mike Steptoe and District Councillors Daniel Efde and Jo McPherson were in attendance.

Councillor Elaine Pitts was appointed Chair of the Parish Council for the 2019/20 Council year and signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office. Councillor Gary Bickford was appointed Vice Chair.

The meeting approved the minutes of the meeting held on 10th April 2019.

Councillors Steptoe, Efde and McPherson gave reports on County and District matters.

The meeting approved the payment requests for the period April to May 2019 and noted the receipts during the period.

It was agreed that the fees in respect of the Parish Burial Ground for the 2019/20 Council year should not be increased.

The Clerk was instructed to commence the Councillor Co-option process in respect of the two vacancies on the Council.

The Clerk was also instructed to update the Bank Mandate once the Co-option process had been finalised.

Council agreed the meeting dates for 2019/20. These would be put on the Council website.

Council also agreed that the Clerk should go out for quotes in respect of the Council Play Area.

Finally, it was agreed that the 2018/19 tenders in respect of maintenance of the Parish Burial Ground be extended for a further year.

The next meeting of the Council will be on Wednesday 5th June 2019 commencing at 7.15 pm. This will be preceded by an informal meeting with QinetiQ which will commence at 7.00 pm.

All documents presented to Council can be viewed on the Parish Council website.

John Watson

Parish Clerk

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Children's Society Boxes

I am grateful to those of you who have managed to get your boxes delivered to me at Hall Farm – thank you. I need to gather up the remaining ones and get things totalled and banked for credit to Children's Society, then I'll let you know the total in the next possible newsletter.

Denise

Newsletter Deadline

There will not be an August newsletter. If you've something in mind for insertion in the newsletter, please think ahead and get the information to Denise at

Hall Farm by 18th June for insertion in the July edition.

Foulness Newsletter

In the past, June has been the traditional month for getting out the begging bowl, bearing in mind that this newsletter is produced and delivered free to every house on the island, and to others further afield, people who want to keep in touch with this community and who have the grace to make a donation towards postage. Unlike newsletters elsewhere, we cannot survive on advertising revenues.

We are immensely grateful to those who have already made a donation this year but we would like to appeal to those who find these things slip their minds. If you would like to show your appreciation of this newsletter and its contents (even if it's only to giggle at the And finally ...) or have found it useful to publish Council Notes, thanks or any other message, any donation, however small, would be much appreciated.

With a small fluctuating population like ours it is harder than ever to keep things going, so the editorial committee would be grateful for anything you may choose to give. Please pop your donation in an envelope and drop it through the door of 23

Churchend next time you are passing. We'll happily bank anything you give us and will be especially pleased to receive donations from new sources. Go on, surprise us! Cheques for larger amounts (!) may be made payable to Foulness Island Newsletter.

Is summer on its way ...?

If you have looked around your gardens and the nearby hedgerows, you may well by now have seen small fledglings and heard the twittering. You may even have one or more nest boxes in your garden and been delighted in the contents coming and going. But apart from boxes and hedges, birds sometimes choose the oddest place to nest – why would oyster catchers nest up in a barn gutter unless it's to escape those creatures which predate ground-nesting birds' nests? They may have been the same oyster catchers which nested on the grass verge by Taylor's Hut and deserted their nest after a late spring charity cycle ride.

It's upsetting for many to see fledglings and larger birds squashed on the road. So often we see carcasses of various sizes on our roads. We know that wildlife has a tendency to try to commit suicide but do please try to look out for these little bundles of fluff.

If you're walking your dogs or your children are out playing, please be aware that many patches of greenery will contain bird's nests and/or young. We need to have respect for the countryside in which we're so lucky to live.

Foulness Tide Times

June 2019

	AM		PM	
Sat 1	11.42	5.4	23.58	5.5
Sun 2	***		12.23	5.5
Sat 8	04.19	5.8	16.45	5.4
Sun 9	05.12	5.6	17.38	5.2
Sat 15	11.38	5.5	23.56	5.6
Sun 16	***		12.25	5.6
Sat 22	04.03	5.4	16.14	5.3
Sun 23	04.42	5.2	14.51	5.1
Sat 29	10.09	5.0	22.31	5.2
Sun 30	11.04	5.2	23.24	5.4

Have things changed in 20 years?

Snippets from our magazine

Residents were asked to walk below high water mark when they were walking on the Shell Bank, to avoid disturbing nesting birds – do you remember when we were allowed to walk there? Any passing yachtie can come ashore at weekends but we can no longer

go there to fish or even walk to look at the birds.

Despite the atrocious weather on the day, there was a successful and well-supported church fete which raised over £400.

The evening in the village hall when people demonstrated and talked about their many and varied hobbies was successful and certainly interesting.

Foulness Conservation and Archaeological Society

The Centre will be open next to visitors on Sunday June 2nd, from 12 till 4pm. If you're a new resident and haven't yet paid us a visit, do come along and learn more about this place you've chosen to live. We'll be more than happy to see you and your visitors.

Have you read ...

Bent Spanners *by Alan Keys*
Support for Scotsmen

by Jock Strapp
The Longboat Men *by Vi King*
Old Cycle Routes

by Penny Farthing
The Book of Nonsense

by Tom E Rot
Downcast *by Dee Jected*

Thanks to Roy Eighteen for these

Trouble with a faceless company?

Writing to the boss of a company can be a good way of getting a problem sorted, but we're often left wondering just where we start. After my (successful) war with DPD I discovered belatedly the existence of **ceoemail.com** which is, I understand, a website which will give you the means to communicate with the boss of the company offending you.

I haven't tried it myself but it was recommended in the Money Special section of a recent Radio Times.
Denise

Have you tried ...

The Company Shed
129 Coast Road
West Mersea
CO5 6PA

☎ 01206 382700

This place opened in the late 1980s and boy! has it changed over the years. It was opened by the wife of a local oyster fisherman and initially she set out simply to sell local sea food 'plain and simple'. We discovered it soon afterwards and really enjoyed the place. I remember going on one occasion and coming home with several

servings of fresh fish, (including 2 Dover sole), and we'd both had a good seafood platter and we'd only had to shell out £32 in total.

Over the years the address and reviews have appeared on too many occasions in upmarket newspapers and magazines, and now the world and his wife know about the place. It's no longer the comfortable place we used to know; your ears are more likely to be assailed by plummy London accents or various foreign ones rather than the local Essex accent of the coast.

When we first went, we found it was always a case of first come, first served; there was no booking of tables and if you weren't prompt you could forget about a table: the waiting queue could well be stretching out the door. Now they even allow you to book some of the tables, though not all, and it is made clear that you need to get there by 12 especially at weekends and in the summer. If all the tables are already full, they will take your name and give you an estimated time when a table will be free, or tell you frankly that you haven't a hope of a table that day.

The reason why this weather-beaten old shack has become so popular is simply because of the

quality of what is served. It certainly isn't because of the décor. The floor may well be covered in lino, you may find yourself sitting on an old wooden bench or one of an oddly-assorted collection of wooden chairs and the table napkins are torn from a kitchen roll. It's not unknown for water to be sloshing about on the floor. Those in the know bring their own bread and wine, though nowadays local beers and wines are available. Glasses for your drink are on a nearby rack, and they won't be likely to match. Lead crystal they ain't.

Remember those early prices? When we last went, there was very little in the way of wet fish to stock up the freezer with, and the seafood platters are now £20 for a crab platter and £17.50 for a cockle platter. For the best variety, it would pay a couple to have one of each and share, as the crab platter has smoked salmon, smoked mackerel, both plain and peppered, prawns in and out of their shell, a green-lipped mussel, a crevette and half a crab. The make-up of the cockle platter is quite different, so you can swap backwards and forwards between plates.

They also offer a chance to make up your own platter these days, and list various items that would

have been unheard-of in the early days. There's beetroot gravadlax, salmon terrine, smoked fish pates and smoked cod's roe, among other possibilities. Oysters come at £15 a dozen these days, or £1.50 each. They come a lot cheaper if you go for the take-away option: closed oysters 75p, or 85p if you want them opened for you. The take-away option seems to be available on everything on offer in the place, though we haven't tried it yet.

Another instance of changing with the times (and perhaps the nature of the clientele) is the availability of hot dishes, which may include herb-encrusted tiger prawns or scallops with shards of bacon and a tomato salad.

An important thing to remember is the time of the tide: if you plan to go to Mersea you need to make sure that high tide is not covering the Strood, the causeway to the island, or you won't make it till the tide has gone down. If you plan to go, they're open from 9-4 Tuesday-Saturday, and 10-4 on Sundays. Take-away service is still available an hour after closing time as well. It's a few months since we went though I plan to go again as soon as I've recovered from the braying pompous ass on the next table

who thought most of the world was interested in his ideas.

And finally An old couple was lying in bed one night. The husband was on the verge of falling asleep but the wife was in a romantic mood and wanted to talk.

She said, "You used to hold my hand when we were courting."

Wearily he reached across, held her hand and tried to get back to sleep.

A few moments later she said, "Then you used to kiss me."

Mildly irritated, he reached across, gave her a peck on the cheek and settled down once more to try to go to sleep.

Thirty seconds later she said, "Then you used to nibble my neck."

Angrily he threw back the bed covers and got out of bed.

"Where are you going?" she asked.

"To get my teeth!"

Items for publication, (an advert, an opinion, news, 'free to a good home') are always welcomed. For inclusion in the next newsletter, items should be with Denise at Hall Farm by the 18th of the preceding month.