

Report for Dereham Town Council Annual Meeting.

This year has continued to show how the town can work together and, with the number of events increasing year on year, Dereham is moving in a positive direction. Events always include members of aboutDereham as participants and often as organisers.

The 2024 Heritage Open Days built on the amazing 2023 numbers and the town saw even more places open to visitors as well as vintage busses ferrying passengers to the more distant parts of the town. Thanks to a grant from the Town Council, one of our members was able to get the leaflets printed and they proved to be a great success, showing people where to find all the events. Dereham HODs for 2025 promises to carry on building on these past successes and we hope to have at least two new sites open to the public for this year.

Dereham Day has also gone from strength to strength and aboutDereham is always pleased to take part in this great showcase for the town.

The new Dereham Action Partnership, made up of businesses, voluntary sector, public sector, representatives of the Churches in the town and members of the public, is moving along well and, with a new steering group established, to help run the group, it is hoped to find achievable ways to improve the town centre. It is especially encouraging to have all levels of local government sitting in the same room, sharing ideas and looking for solutions together.

Routine activities

- We held regular, two monthly, aboutDereham Partnership meetings. At each meeting we always have at least one main speaker on a wide range of topics (e.g.). These meetings are also where aboutDereham agrees priorities, ambitions and actions.
- We continued to invite all local voluntary and community organisations (for which we have contact details), and whether members or not, to attend our Partnership meetings;
- We sent out a regular e-newsletter to all on our mailing list and if you would like to be kept informed about what we are doing, please let us have your email address.
- We further developed and maintained the aboutDereham website, which is a very important shop window for us and Dereham generally.
- We continued to update and distribute the Town Guide 'Dereham: a great place to visit'. Updates have recently been funded by a grant from the town council.
- We maintained the aboutDereham Facebook page and welcome informative posts.

Events

- Christmas saw another great event in the Ellenor Fenn Garden, including Father Christmas and his sleigh from the Round Table and carol singing by the Mid Norfolk Singers.
- aboutDereham, as such, doesn't usually put on events, but we do try to take part in events put on in the town if we are able to.

We now have over forty members and welcome more.

We have continued to have regular, very positive meetings with Dereham Town Council and we feel that it is essential that we work together to help improve the town. It is great to have a good relationship with the Town Council, District Council, County Council and our MP, so that we can all move forward, supporting each other for the common goal.

The aboutDereham website continues to provide a comprehensive shop window for Dereham, including images and information about the town, the programme of events, the visitor attractions, information about our voluntary and community organisations and much more. The events listing is an important benefit of membership and the number of visitors to the website and the number of clicks continues to increase. Advertising income from business supporters effectively covers the direct costs of providing the website. Our thanks to webmaster Robert Campbell for managing the website.

As Chairman, I want to thank all the organisations, individual members and business supporters who have shown their continued support for the town of Dereham and for their efforts to promote our town and to generate a sense of pride and belonging.

The Management Team, without whom aboutDereham could not, and would not, function has lost one member and gained a new one. We thank Helen for her hard work with media and publicity and look forward to continue seeing her at our meetings. Our new member of the Management Team is Ryan Seymour. Ryan runs his own web business and also runs Park Farm Camping at Swanton Morley with his wife.

Chairman (Glynn Burrows), Vice Chairman (Ken Hawkins), Secretary (Carolyn Coleman), Treasurer (Mike Webb) and (Management Team member) Ryan Seymour. The Management Team is always on the lookout for willing helpers and, if you are interested in events, publicity, or just want to help us to improve aboutDereham, please do drop us an email.

Glynn Burrows

chair@aboutdereham.org

Chairman

March 2025

WALKERS ARE WELCOME CIC

MEMBERS' ANNUAL RETURN FOR THE YEAR JAN TO DEC 2024



Your Annual Return and subscription are both due by 31 January 2025. **Please complete this report electronically and send it as a Word document to secretary@walkersarewelcome.org.uk by 31 January.** If you anticipate or experience any problems completing the Return and/or making your payment in time, please advise us as soon as possible.

To maintain your accreditation as a Walkers are Welcome town or village, it is essential that you show how you have met the criteria during the previous year by completing this Annual Return. Please answer every question and provide the fullest information; it is time to shout about your achievements. *The form expands to allow additional data.*

We are always looking for evidence that Walkers are Welcome members are making a difference in their communities, and it is wonderful to learn of your successes and to share innovation across the network.

Town or village name	Dereham
Name of group or organisation	Dereham Walkers are Welcome
Population:	19,256
Source of population figure?	https://www.citypopulation.de/en/uk
Amount of payment due, see subscription population levels	£110
New Subscription paid	not yet
Date paid and how or date it will be paid	6 January 2025 by cheque
Name of mentor	??

Key to comment colours:	<div style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: green; border: 1px solid black;"></div> Well done, criteria met.
	<div style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: orange; border: 1px solid black;"></div> Some concerns, your mentor will offer guidance and monitor progress.
	<div style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: red; border: 1px solid black;"></div> Criteria not met.
Annual Return s expected	Overall Assessment
Excellent Annual Return and a great benefit to the community of Dereham. There is nothing I can add as you have everything under control. The work do mainly fall to a couple of people and that is usually the case in most groups so keep working on recruiting new members to lighten the load. As you are users of Facebook you understand that it is a useful source of getting information out to the community. Great reinstatement of a long ploughed out restricted byway, a feather in your cap and it demonstrates that the group is well respected with the local authorities. Please pass on our congratulations to the team for all the hard work they have done and continue to do. Many thanks. Helen Kenneally Temporary mentor	

Achievements & innovation this year Shout about your group s main achievements this year. Please include innovation and projects that go beyond the criteria that you are proud of.	This has again been a 'steady as she goes' year, continuing our previous level of activity across all fronts; though without any major new initiatives, we consider this a significant achievement. We have started trialling a very basic questionnaire to ascertain local spending by those who come on our walks.
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The six criteria are:	
1. Demonstrate popular local support from the community and local businesses for the concept Detail here how other groups or partners and residents you are working with have helped you to achieve your goals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We continue to maintain good links with The Ramblers and Dereham U3A, the other main walking groups in the town • We are an active part of aboutDereham, an umbrella group for community organisations, pressing for actions which enhance Dereham as an attractive destination • During the year, the Dereham Action Partnership was established, bringing together local government, local businesses and community organisations under the leadership of our local MP and the town's rector; the WaW contribution to the work of this Partnership in pushing for the regeneration of the town is inevitably

	<p>small, but we're in there!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We again provided a stall at the <i>Dereham Day</i> event which brought in large numbers of residents and visitors • We have 214 people on our emailing list for information • We have a regular attendance on our walks - averaging about 10-15 on our Easy Tuesday walks and on our short walks (though largely different people) and often more on our longer walks; walkers are a mix of a slowly changing core of 'regulars' plus a good mix of new walkers • Some walks are linked to local businesses, eg the Partea Hut (café at Dereham Windmill) and the Mid-Norfolk Railway, with the Tuesday walks regularly ending at <i>The George</i> • We have continued our links with Dereham Heritage Trust, with which we have jointly produced town walk leaflets as well as jointly running Heritage Open Days town walks • We held our Annual Public Meeting, generating proposals which have been incorporated into our planning
<p>2. Demonstrate that the local council formally endorses the application for Walkers are Welcome status.</p> <p>This would have been originally demonstrated by the local council (Town, Parish or Community Council) passing a resolution in support, being represented on the steering group, and making a financial contribution where possible. How has this developed in the current year?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The original supporting resolution of 2015 still stands • The DWaW Chair is also Community Access Warden (CAW) for Dereham Town Council, reporting formally to its Heritage and Open Spaces Committee 4 times a year; this role ensures continuing awareness by the Council of footpath issues, where DWaW can address problems both of 'ordinary' maintenance (eg vegetation growth and the like) and longer term issues requiring County Council action (eg the failure to enforce the use of a restricted byway) • A notable success this year has been the reinstatement of a long ploughed out restricted byway, following pressure from Dereham Walkers are Welcome and the action of the Town Council in setting aside funds to support legal action if necessary • Our link Town Councillor regularly participates in DWaW activities and has hosted refreshments in his (and his wife's) garden at the end of a walk
<p>3. Demonstrate a commitment that the local public path network will be maintained in good condition.</p> <p>This might be ensuring that all the local paths were walked in the last year and problems reported to the relevant authority (or landowner in Scotland) whilst checking that faults are rectified and/or reporting the actions which your own maintenance team have undertaken.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We undertake regular monitoring of all public rights of way and other public open space in the town • Minor issues (nettles, brambles, small fallen trees) are dealt with by WaW, bigger issues referred to the County Council; happily, there have been few problems to resolve this year • Longer standing issues have been raised with the Town Council, with follow up including County Councillors • We have pressed for the improvement of a restricted byway whose public use has been largely by walkers and a few cyclists, but whose private use for access to allotments has resulted in motor vehicles creating numerous potholes which fill with water after rain; the County Council declined to act without evidence as to which vehicles caused the damage (!), but the Town Council has now redirected its Parish Path Partnership funds to levelling and improving the byway
<p>4. Demonstrate that there is adequate marketing of the town's Walkers are Welcome status.</p> <p>This can be demonstrated in several</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are maintaining distribution of our short walks booklets and two town walk leaflets, which are also on our website; our original longer walks booklet remains available as a free download

ways: for example, online presence, press coverage; signs/map in the centre of town advising visitors of walks they can undertake; waymarked walks starting from the town centre; leaflets readily available; local shops encouraged to display Walkers are Welcome stickers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stickers have again been distributed, concentrating on refreshment outlets We continue to use Facebook and it has proved a regular source of people joining our walks We have regular adverts in magazines in 12 villages round and about Dereham
5. Demonstrate how the town encourages the use of public transport. This can be demonstrated, for example, by including clear public transport advice on marketing leaflets or lobbying for improvements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The public transport available to reach Dereham is featured in our publicity materials All walks start within reach of public transport At least one walk each year is bus/train (heritage railway) out, walk back; in 2024 we did one by bus and one on the train Half of the 14 walks leaflets are bus/train out, walk back
6. Demonstrate the mechanisms in place to maintain Walkers are Welcome status. This can be demonstrated through having a well-balanced and committed Walkers are Welcome steering group from within the community. Please list your current committee or organisation members and state how their roles support the group continuing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Donations from those walking with us has continued to provide us a good income, allowing us to maintain a comfortable reserve of funds and to welcome anyone who wants to join us, whether or not they donate Committee numbers have remained stable, though two share the leading of the Tuesday walks, another two look after our Facebook platform and one mainly looks after the website, so much of the planning falls to just 2 of us and we are always seeking new members Current committee: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tim Birt: website management Carolyn Coleman: Facebook Catherine Hawkins: Treasurer and Minutes Secretary Ken Hawkins: Chair and Secretary Becca Holland: Facebook Sue Rothwell: walk leader Dorothy Sneesby: walk leader All the above also contribute ideas and participate in some or all of DWaW's work
Records Update – Website Profile Please confirm here that you have checked that your profile entry on the national website is complete and up to date, including a photograph, and that the contacts shown are correct. If they are not, please note here updates required and say when this will be corrected	Yes - it is checked regularly to ensure it remains accurate
Priorities 2025 It is important each year to review the previous year's achievements and equally to think about the year ahead. Please indicate your specific plans/priorities for the following year.	<p><i>We have only one entirely new plan but have plenty to do to continue and extend previous plans.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>New for 2025: an evening walk in conjunction with DTC and the Wildlife Trust to learn about the developing country park</i> <p><i>Updated from 2024:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Review three town walks booklets produced for use on Heritage Open Days to consider wider permanent publication: no progress made</i> <i>Continue a regular programme of walks, one a month: exceeded, with monthly programmes of short walks and of Easy Tuesday walks for those needing good level surfaces, plus a number of other, longer, walks</i> <i>HODs participation: we led one town walk (twice): achieved</i> <i>WaW logos, refreshing logos at shops and businesses in the town: partly achieved</i> <i>Production of a web map and descriptions of all public</i>

	<p><i>rights of way in Dereham: not achieved</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Recruiting more people to the committee: partly achieved.</i> • <i>A report on all footpaths to Dereham Town Council: started but still in progress</i> • <i>Proposed guided walk led by a local landowner/farmer with interests in environmental issues; not achieved - the committee member offering this left</i> • <i>A new leaflet detailing our walks programme for the year, to attract a wider audience: achieved</i>
<p>National Executive Committee: We always welcome your feedback. Here is an opportunity. We also encourage participation in WaW national events and activities - please let us know of anything you have done this year. Please make your suggestions here.</p>	Our Chair is a member

Declaration

- We wish to apply for continued status as a Walkers are Welcome town/village.
- We will pay our annual subscription to Walkers are Welcome in January. (See separate invoice).

Name:	Ken Hawkins
Position:	Chair
E-mail:	ken-hawkins@tiscali.co.uk

THANK YOU

REMEMBER, WE ARE ALWAYS HERE TO HELP –

Please email the Secretary secretary@walkersarewelcome.org.uk or your Mentor for assistance at any time.

102024

Dereham Heritage Trust Annual Report 2024

Introduction

This has been a good year for Dereham Heritage Trust thanks to the hard work of the committee members and our band of volunteers. Visits to the Museum have increased, we have enjoyed stimulating monthly talks and our special exhibitions have been much appreciated. We returned to Beeston Ploughshare for an excellent meal together and we continue to work towards gaining a Heritage Centre for Dereham.

Bishop Bonner's Cottage Museum

Our visitor numbers increased this year from 619 in 2023 to 942 in 2024. This number consisted of 797 adults, 90 children, 27 members and 28 others. The Museum closed on only one afternoon in the whole season which is a testament to the work of our volunteers. We had particularly successful Heritage Open Days with 489 visitors including 22 children. This year our display, assembled by Jane Heyburn, featured information on shops and businesses in the town in the nineteenth century; we do appreciate her efforts in creating fascinating Museum displays. Upstairs, the north room was arranged with household items as it may have looked when occupied by our last resident, Anne Coe. The mystery box of ten items in the reception room created much interest and led to interesting discussions. One young boy came back a second time! Our special exhibition *Picturing Peace* arranged by Katie Goodman was so moving. It was inspired by the artwork of John Craske and that too prompted thoughtful conversations. All those who filled in feedback forms enjoyed their visit 'a lot' apart from one whose form was incomplete. Our thanks to our willing volunteers and also to Catherine Hawkins who arranges the rota and patiently deals with emergencies re staffing.

2025 is the 80th anniversary of the ending of WWII so we will have a display relating to Dereham and VJ Day in the lower middle room. This is because the majority of Dereham men were enlisted into the Norfolk Regiment and they served in the Far East. It will also incorporate the centenary of Brian Aldiss who also served in the Far East. The larger lower end room will display the history of the Kings Arms from 1758 to its demolition in 1967 and re-birth as Woolworths and now Poundland. Accompanying this will be a display of the history of the Corn Hall and then the building's transition into a cinema and live music venue. All the displays will be supported by items from our archive, photographs and information from the Dereham and Fakenham Times. In addition a booklet outlining the history of the Corn Hall is underway and will 'match' the Assembly Rooms and Bishop Bonner's Cottage Museum booklets. The handling box and the mouse trail and activity sheets will remain but will relate to the new displays. The remaining rooms will be as last year with perhaps some repositioning of objects and information.

Dating Bishop Bonner's Cottages

Tree-ring dating combined with a study of oxygen isotopes in the tree rings has enabled us to discover dates of the construction of the cottages. The rings on the mantle beam in the south cottage has given us a felling date of between 1575 and 1600 which is earlier than we expected. The roof truss in the north cottage was felled between 1680 and 1705. We now know that the cottages were built at different times and their preservation is particularly important.

The Archive Centre

The Dereham Archive Centre is completely full. We have bound volumes of the *Dereham and Fakenham Times* which we should love to share more freely with visitors. We are now renting an attic room in Church House by kind permission of Rev Paul Cubitt but we badly need storage for heavier items.

Dereham Heritage Trust Annual Report 2024

Museum Acquisitions

We are delighted to have received a good number of items during the year. Space allows us to mention only a few here. These include the 1889 Corn Hall Programme; a WWII Civil Defence medal awarded to H Sampson of Dereham (to be used in 2025 museum display) and an early 20th century photograph by Herbert T Cave of a woman in his studio chair. In addition we have a wonderful fireman's helmet from the mid 20th century, digitalised films from the 1930s, a calendar of F and G Vincent of Swaffham Hill and a group of 20th century printed and photographic postcards. We are grateful for all these donations which have been mentioned in the newsletter: they are a treasure and are ably looked after by Robena Brown.

Assembly Rooms

This year we were able to open the Assembly Rooms in our Heritage Open Days. The ballroom looked so inviting with the display arranged by Jane and Katie. 264 people visited us including 22 children. Many were so glad to see the ballroom for the first time. We appreciate the fact that the Town Council opened this room for us.

Monthly talks

These events are an important part of our organisation. The numbers have steadily increased from 31 attending in January to 46 in September. We ended the year with a joyous Christmas celebration with Chanter's Jigge. The evening was greatly enjoyed by all. Our thanks to our secretary Sue Rockley for arranging these and to Catherine and Ken Hawkins for all their efforts on the evenings. We also appreciate Katie's advertising on Facebook.

Publications

In August we published *The Assembly Rooms, Dereham* by Susanna Wade Martins in time for Heritage Open Days.

Susanna is now working on the text for a booklet about the history of the Corn Hall, in collaboration with Gordon Olley. He will write about the history of the Dereham Cinema which celebrated 100 years in November. This publication is in the early stages but it is hoped the booklet will be ready by next May.

A Heritage Centre for Dereham and the surrounding villages

We feel that Dereham is far behind other market towns with regard to heritage provision. There is strong support for such a centre, as was clear at the meeting we had at the Golf Club in February. We also have a lengthy petition signed by residents of our area. However, we cannot do this without support. We hope to have the Town Council working with us as well as support by an initiative started by George Freeman and Rev Paul Cubitt. We shall continue our efforts as this centre is absolutely vital to preserving our heritage for today and for the future.

Community Engagement

During 2024, Dereham Heritage Trust has conducted a substantial programme of community engagement. Full details are included in the Appendix to this report, but include

- *John Craske: Picturing Peace* - a community art and wellbeing initiative, including an exhibition in the Museum, participation in Dereham Peace Day 2024, a craft and coffee morning at Flow Craft Café and a creative activities day with a coffee and cake sale
- turning Bishop Bonner's Cottage Museum purple to support Dereham Cancer Care's *Turn Dereham Purple Day*

Dereham Heritage Trust Annual Report 2024

- displaying the winning entries from the Aid Centre's *Poems for Peace* competition in the Museum - an event in the programme for Norfolk Creativity and Wellbeing Week
- taking part in the Dereham Does Pride rainbow trail
- holding a 'Craske Crafternoon' at Dereham Library, opening the door for further history-themed craft activities in 2025
- the arrival at the Museum of Bonnie the Mouse - the first ever children's mascot
- joining Dereham Community Crafters on Dencora's Medieval-themed Family Fun Day, running a charity bake sale raising over £80 for us
- hosting a showcase where local artist Clare Welfare exhibited her stop-motion animation film, *A Saintly Tale*, based on the story of Saint Withburga in Dereham
- joining twenty nine other groups to decorate a Christmas tree with the theme *Christmas Past in Dereham* for the first ever Christmas Tree Festival at St Nicholas' Church

Our sincere thanks go to Katie Goodman for her imaginative displays and workshops. We also appreciate the fact that she has raised the profile of Dereham Heritage Trust on Facebook.

Hilary Williams, Chair

Appendix: *Picturing Peace and Community Engagement*

- In February 2024, the Trust launched its first ever community art and wellbeing initiative, 'John Craske: Picturing Peace', inspired by the story of Dereham's famous fisherman-turned-artist. The project was opened to the local community, asking people of all ages (and all artistic abilities) to create a picture of the place or thing that brings them peace, in the same vein as John Craske and his seascapes. We received over 90 entries, all of which were exhibited in Bishop Bonner's Cottage Museum last season, alongside three reproductions of John Craske's work from the Dereham Heritage Trust Collection.
- As part of 'Picturing Peace', the Trust embarked on a series of free community engagement events in the hope of encouraging new audiences to engage with Dereham's history and heritage, whilst also increasing interest in Bishop Bonner's Cottage Museum:
 - On Saturday 24 February, we were delighted to be able to take part in Dereham Peace Day 2024, an initiative of Dereham Aid Centre that encourages the local community to come together in the name of peace. Throughout the day we hosted an art table where people could come along and create a picture of the place that brings them peace. We had 27 people visit us and take part, with all the artworks created at Peace Day featuring in the 'Picturing Peace' museum exhibition.
 - On Tuesday 19 March, we hosted a fully booked 'Picturing Peace' craft and coffee morning at Flow Craft Café in Dereham, which resulted in another 12 entries for 'Picturing Peace'.
 - Saturday 6 April saw us put on our own 'Picturing Peace' event. Held in Church House, throughout the course of the day we were joined by 46 families who came to take part in 'Picturing Peace' themed creative activities. The day also featured a donations-only coffee and cake sale (which raised £35) and Beanie's local history book sale, which also proved a big hit.

Dereham Heritage Trust Annual Report 2024

- By taking 'Picturing Peace' into the local community, the Trust was able to build valuable relationships with local businesses, charities and community groups, including Dereham Aid Centre, Dereham Cancer Care, and Dereham Does Pride.
 - In March 2024, we turned Bishop Bonner's Cottage Museum purple to show our support for Dereham Cancer Care's 'Turn Dereham Purple Day'.
 - After being welcomed into the Aid Centre on Peace Day, we reciprocated by displaying the two winning entries from the Centre's 'Poems for Peace' competition in Bishop Bonner's Cottage Museum last summer. The collaborative display was an event featured in the programme of events for Norfolk Creativity and Wellbeing Week 2024.
 - In June 2024, we took part in the Dereham Does Pride rainbow trail and were proud to have a special pride pebble "hidden" in the one of the museum's windows.
- Beyond 'Picturing Peace', the Trust has been able to build a valuable working relationship with Dereham Library. In the 2024 summer holiday, we collaborated with the library on a 'Craske Crafternoon', where each art activity on offer was inspired by the story of Dereham's famous artist. We were joined by 43 children and 23 adults, which made for a wonderfully busy afternoon! The crafternoon was the library's best-attended children's event of 2024 and has opened the door to us hosting various history-themed craft activities at the library in 2025, starting with 'A Very Victorian Valentines' in the February half-term.
- The 2024 summer holiday also saw the arrival of Bishop Bonner's Cottages' newest resident, Bonnie the Mouse. Bonnie has become the museum's first ever children's mascot, with her fellow mice hiding throughout the cottages to make an interactive activity trail for our youngest visitors.
- On Saturday 31 August, we collaborated with the Dereham Community Crafters on Dencora's Medieval-themed Family Fun Day 2024, running a charity bake sale which raised over £80.00 for Dereham Heritage Trust.
- Last November we joined twenty nine other groups in the community to decorate a Christmas tree for the first ever Christmas Tree Festival at St Nicholas' Church. The theme for us was Christmas Past in Dereham. Three members of the committee plus a volunteer had a cold but rewarding morning dressing our tree. Katie Goodman prepared beautiful card decorations of our town in winter plus examples of Victorian Christmas cards in addition to festive decorations from the past. Our tree aroused much interest as visitors examined the cards. The tree did look attractive with candle shaped lights and brightened dark November days. Many thanks to Katie and the other volunteers for their efforts in contributing to the success of the festival.
- On Saturday 14 December the Trust hosted an artist showcase, where local artist Clare Welfare used the museum to exhibit her papercut stop-motion animation film, 'A Saintly Tale', based on the story of Saint Withburga in Dereham. The event was an overwhelming success, with a constant stream of visitors leaving generous donations to support the work of Dereham Heritage Trust. This was the first time the museum building had been used in such a way, but it is hoped similar events will be hosted in the near future.
- Online, awareness of the activities of Dereham Heritage Trust and Bishop Bonner's Cottage Museum grew exponentially in 2024, with our Facebook page starting the year with 71 followers and finishing the year with 327!