



# Friends of St Catherine's, Ludham

Newsletter Winter 2023

Charity No: 1041950

The Friends of St Catherine's is a registered charity that raises money to preserve and improve our 14th Century Church of St Catherine's, Ludham. Our main fundraising events are Ludham Open Gardens, and The Ludham Illuminated Boat Parade.

## WELCOME

The second Ludham Illuminated Boat parade took place on the 16th of September. The weather was glorious and the conditions perfect. The first parade, in 2021, was so successful that the route for the second parade was extended to Potter Heigham. This was to provide more viewing areas and stop Ludham Staithe becoming overcrowded. The parade of 21 boats left Womack in daylight, with the Ignite band playing and the crowd growing.

## POTTER HEIGHAM

The arrival at Potter Heigham, just after sunset was magical. Probably 2500-3000 people watched from all available vantage points around the bridge and cheered every boat. The Occasional Ceilidh Band and The Blakeney Old Wild Rovers entertained the crowd from outside the Pilot Station while they waited.

While the parade was a huge success, we learned some lessons on the night. We expected the Ludham car park to fill with 1000 cars - our main source of charity income - but only 350 parked there. This was something of a shock as in 2021 we had 450 cars. Teams of volunteers were ready to receive, but had little to do.

About 80% of those driving to the event went to Potter Heigham. Lathams had very kindly lent us their car park, but it was filled by 5.30 and Potter Heigham roads became jammed with parked cars.

Once they had found somewhere to park, a huge crowd thoroughly enjoyed the event, as did the businesses - one business owner said "You've given us an extra Bank Holiday"

## WOMACK STAITHE

At Womack Staithe, the crowd there had been entertained by Ignite, refreshed by The Kings Arms, and fed by The Big Shop and were in great spirits.



*"Peggy" as a Mississippi Paddle Steamer*



*Lady Godiva on "Hetty"*



## THE FUTURE OF THE PARADE

We collected £2,600 on the night, but when costs are accounted for we raised less than predicted. We have decided to continue running the Illuminated Boat Parade in alternate years with the Ludham Open Gardens. The next Parade should happen on 13th September 2025.

We have already identified a field in Potter Heigham where we can park 1000 cars. However, there will be considerable costs involved and we are looking for major sponsors to reduce the risk.

## THANKS

The Parade only happened because dozens and dozens of people generously gave their time, their brains, and their hard work. Thanks to The Womack Staithe Trust, Mike Flett specifically, without whom we wouldn't have ever staged the parade. Matt Monk, and the team of willing helpers he always brings with him, freely donated so much time, his field, a stunning mobile bar,- actually constructed on the day - a portable stage, a massive generator, and his enthusiasm and support of anything that gives the people of Ludham a good time. The boat owners and their crews absolutely smashed the event. The themes were inventive and brilliantly executed. Hunter's Yard who have supported us from the very beginning. Lathams and Herbert Woods who generously gave us their car park. Norfolk Wherry Trust for bringing Albion. Ludham and Potter Heigham Parish Councils who were both very supportive. The Volunteers - who set up, took down, shook buckets, took money in the car park - especially Alice and Tim Oldman who ran Potter and Tim picked up ALL the litter in Potter Heigham the next day before any of us had got out of bed. Mick Biggs who helped in numerous ways and ran Womack Staithe. Anthony Seymour who did so much, but gets special mention for manning the Road Closure barrier in Potter when things got ...spicy. Stephen Pitkethly and Ezra who led the parade. The Officers and Cadets of 222 Broadland Squadron who ran the car park and safety on the Staithe. Rachel Brown and the Potter Heigham Marine Cadets who did the same job in Potter. The Occasional Ceilidh Band and the Blakeney Old Wild Rovers who were brilliant fun. Phoenix Fleet for their electricity and being so helpful. The Broads Authority and their rangers who enthusiastically support the event, and PC Matt Pritty, Broadsbeat and the Coastguard, who keep us safe.

## THANK YOU EVERYONE

