

Nayland with Wissington Parish Council

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Nomination for Babergh Achievement Award

Nayland with Wissington Community Council

Nayland-with-Wissington is a rural parish of only 1200 residents yet it has a vibrant spirit. Twenty five different societies and voluntary groups with a wide programme of activities involving young and old alike are testament to that. The Community Council, innovative at the time, was constituted in 1966 as a voluntary umbrella organisation for those groups whose representatives, together with a few co-opted individuals, make up its membership and elect an executive committee each year. It has encouraged the whole community to get involved and has enriched village life for residents of all ages. Nayland with Wissington would be a less vibrant place without this wide diversity of societies, churches and schools continuing to co-operate today in the spirit of mutual support. Over the years hundreds of residents have worked with the Community Council and have never failed to pull the parish together in a wide variety of community events.

Since 1966, these hardworking volunteers have raised money for a central community fund while enabling all groups and organisations to improve their own fundraising potential and reach a wider audience for their activities. In the first few years money was raised to acquire land to build Nayland Village Hall which has become a focal point for community life and continues to receive support from the Community Council for refurbishment and equipment.

The Community Council also makes grants from its own fundraising to a wide variety of local organisations or individuals as needed. Over the years these have included Mother and Toddler Group, Nayland Playgroup and Woodland Corner, Scouts and Youth Club, the Over 60s Club and the British Legion. Nayland Primary School has received grants towards such diverse purposes as a community renewable energy project and the publication of three local history books. The Nayland Players drama group and the Emergency First Response Team have received grants for equipment. Individual students from our parish working as volunteers on projects in Tibet and South America have been sponsored.

As well as co-ordinating fundraising for the benefit of all parish organisations, the Community Council also provides a social focus for the community through regular events such as the annual Fireworks Bonfire Night, Village Quiz, Christmas Family Fayre and the Millstream Duck Race. It provides the Christmas tree in the centre of the village where residents gather for carol singing accompanied by a silver band. Street Fairs, Summer Music and Food Festivals and this year's Picnic in the Park provided performance opportunities for local musicians, including many youngsters from local schools, and for local artists to exhibit their work. The superhuman effort put into special events such as the Jubilee celebrations in 2012, or the events staged throughout 2000 to celebrate the Millennium, brought the whole community together.

However, the Community Council is not just about fundraising and social events. Their excellent free newsletter "Community Times" has been published and distributed every two months for the past 25 years and this year was awarded Runner Up status in the Suffolk Newsletter of the Year Awards. This lively publication gives clubs and groups an opportunity to advertise or report on their own activities while informing newcomers about village life and inspiring voluntary involvement. Another Community Council initiative is the popular calendar of local views produced for sale every year using the winning photographs from the Annual Photographic Competition alongside old photographs, historical facts and anecdotes. The newsletter, previous calendars and photo albums, as well as Community Council information and minutes, can be seen on the community website www.naylandandwiston.net

None of this could have been achieved without the commitment, effort and time given freely by executive officers of committees and their teams of volunteers who have ensured the Community Council's success. The Parish Council believes that this long-term achievement is worthy of a nomination under the Community Achievement Scheme and therefore commends Nayland with Wissington Community Council to you for an award in the Voluntary Group Category 3.