

Mileham Charities Report 2024

Mileham Charities incorporates three charities which are Neatherd's Charity, the Charity of William Glover and the Fuel Allotment. Neatherd's Charity consists of 2 acres of land known as Long Pasture situated on the north side of the Litcham road just beyond the last house in the village. Glover's Charity, dating from 1821, comprises of about three and a half acres of land which is the site of the village allotments. The Fuel Allotment was made as part of the Enclosure settlement for the village in 1814. This process took land into private ownership so by way of compensation for the poor of the parish who had lost rights, 28 acres of probably the worst land in the village was set aside for their benefit. The rents from these pieces of land provide the income of the Charity.

Looking back at my report from last year progress has been made in some areas. The bank account with Barclays which we could not access is now operational. An insurance policy has been purchased to provide indemnity for the Charity. We have a Grazing Licence for the tenants of Long Pasture and a new agreement is about to be implemented for plot-holders on the allotments.

I mentioned the bad state of the allotment field last year. The few allotments that are in use are looked after well but those that had been vacated were left with all sorts of junk that needs removing while brambles and nettles have been allowed to take hold. I have shown the site to the Project coordinator for un-paid work for the Probation Service and am hopeful that they will be able to do the necessary clearance work for us.

The Fuel Allotment, Mileham Fen, is now a County Wildlife Site and has been provided with a management plan by the Norfolk Wildlife Trust. The site is a mosaic of habitats – fen, reed bed marsh, woodland, scrub and damp areas of mixed herbage. The management plan is designed to conserve the best features and increase the species richness of the site as a whole. I have put a notice in the Church and Village magazine asking for volunteers to help with conservation tasks and am pleased to say have had some response but more help would be greatly appreciated. Some cutting back of scrub and clearing-up has been done but the wet weather of the seven months from early October have made access to the Fen by any machinery impossible. This has meant that the removal of invasive scrub and the clearance of cut reeds have had to be abandoned for now. A new bridge over the river is required as the old one is now dangerous. If anyone has the skill-set to manage this job please contact me.

Julian Cason
May 2024