

November 2023

Richard Holland

We had a collective panic when our booked speaker was suddenly unable to attend in November. Fortunately, Richard Holland was able to step in at the last minute to tell us about his involvement in four Felixstowe based areas.

Firstly, he explained how Felixstowe Travel Watch had been set up in 1972 as a voluntary organisation to fight the perceived threat to close the branch line. With the motto 'Use it or Lose it', membership exceeded 400 (now 300). A campaign was launched to promote and encourage greater use of all forms of public transport in our area. Issues such as access for wheel chairs and the provision of litter bins and a telephone box at Felixstowe Station (before mobile phones!) kept the group busy. A wildlife area, which was developed opposite the station, is now home to common lizards, slow worms, deer, foxes and butterflies. Outings to places of interest such as Flixton and the creation of voluntary Station Adopters are ongoing activities, with the recent additions of five planters/seats and an Amazon Hub on the platform at Felixstowe station. Another of Richard's long-term interests has been his involvement with 'The Hut' – built originally in 1965 by the Round Table in a favourable position alongside the Prom at the bottom of Bath Hill. It was subsequently handed over to the Red Cross to run with the help of a loyal team of volunteers. Thousands of people enjoy a day trip here every year. Booking begins annually on the third Wednesday in January when a huge number of visitors, including Care home residents, are keen to book their slot. A booking fee of £60 per day raises an income of around £12,000 per year which is ploughed back into property maintenance such as replacing the shutters which are subject to battering by the coastal winds.

Broadway House is also something that Richard has been involved with for many years and currently holds the position of Chairman. The present building, built in 1974, replaced a wooden structure dedicated to the well-being of elderly Felixstowe residents. The name Broadway House came from the street name Broadway which was the section of Orwell Road between the former Job Centre and Scarborough Opticians. The local town council is responsible for the upkeep of the building and the profit from the very reasonably priced tea bar covers the rent. The building is used by many local groups such as U3A, Scrabble groups and our own Family History Society monthly drop-in sessions.

Finally, Richard touched on the Felixstowe/Wesel Association which he had spoken to us about earlier in the year. 2024 is the 50th anniversary of the twinning and commemorative events will be held during 19th, 20th and 21st April. So, please look out for more detailed information about this nearer the time.

Many thanks once again to Richard Holland for his entertaining and informative talk!

Ann Sanderson

Membership No: