

FENLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL

PRESS RELEASE

26 May 2022

Benwick's Jubilee seat brings history back to life

Volunteers and residents in Benwick have brought a piece of village history back to life as part of The Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrations.

A Jubilee tree seat has been installed around the Oak tree on the corner of High Street and Doddington Road, thanks to Benwick In Bloom and local residents Arthur Clapham, Janet Fountain and Adam Kepler.

In 1911, an Oak tree was planted to celebrate the coronation of King George V, and a seat was installed around the tree some years later. However, it is believed the tree and seat were burned and destroyed during VE celebrations in 1945.

Years later in 1983, Benwick resident Charlie Burbridge, who lived on Chapel Farm, left money in his will for three Oak trees to be planted in the village.

Now, a replacement tree seat made from 100% recycled materials has been installed around the tree once again. The seat has been funded by Benwick In Bloom, along with donations from Arthur Clapham, whose father Harry Clapham was the Benwick butcher for many years, and Janet Fountain and Adam Kepler, who donated the remaining profits from the sale of their book 'Benwick Bygones', published in 2008.

Among those attending the official opening of the tree seat on Wednesday (25 May) was Cllr Peter Murphy, Portfolio Holder for Environment at Fenland District Council, which helps co-ordinate and support the district's many Street Pride, In Bloom and Friends groups.

He said: "It was an honour to be invited to the opening of this tree seat which not only revives a piece of village history but is a lovely way to celebrate The Queen's Jubilee too. I'm sure the seat will be enjoyed for many years to come."

Chairman of Benwick in Bloom, Jill Hindle, added: "Benwick in Bloom Street Pride volunteer group was founded in 2012 with the aim cleaning, tidying, and planting up the village, working with and for the community. This includes promoting local history and things of interest, and the Jubilee tree seat is a wonderful example of this.

"We have blossomed out over the years with more volunteers and will continue to do our best to make Benwick a better and more interesting place to live."

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Notes to Editors

For media enquiries, please contact the Fenland District Council press office on 01354 622226 or email: communications@fenland.gov.uk