DENSTON HAWKEDON POSLINGFORD STANSFIELD STRADISHALL
ASSINGTON GREEN CLARE COWLINGE THURSTON END and WICKHAMBROOK

PARISH PUMP

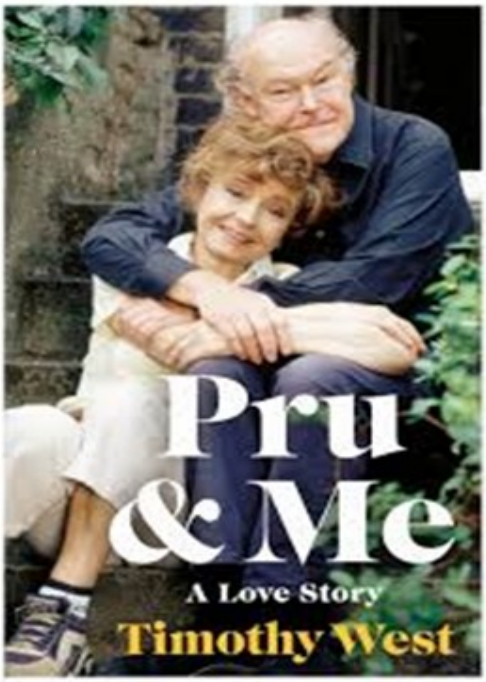
No 383 parish.pump@gmail.com April 2025

I call it an eclectic mix of what makes up our lives in Suffolk!















We sincerely thank *Refined Blinds and Shutters* for kindly sponsoring the colour pages this month which we think makes the Parish Pump special!

WICKHAMBROOK and DISTRICT GARDEN CLUB 24th February 2025 7.30 in WI Hall
THATCHING Chris Dodson



We enjoyed an excellent presentation and talk by a professional thatcher, **Chis Dodson,** whose father and grandfather were thatchers before him.
Chris chose to go into thatching after school and at 31 started his own business. He is a Master Thatcher, a position which has to be applied for when a thatcher has his own business and his work is up to standard.
His presentation took us back to the earliest Neolithic thatching of round huts. Local grasses and reeds were used and often the whole community would come together to do it. In 1212 in the reign of **King John** the thatching of buildings was banned in London. Estates had a thatcher who thatched cottages and also stacks of wheat waiting to be thrashed.
Chris was dismissive of the modern NVQ qualification which has too much theory and not enough practical!
He talked about the many types of thatch, for example, water reed which may last from 40 to 50 years, and much of which is imported. A thatcher may use at least 160 bundles a day. The ridge is made of straw, which bends, and may last about 10 to 15 years.
Long straw has to be soaked and lasts 20 to 25 years. It is now grown specifically for thatching and harvested by hand.
Every thatcher has his own style. It takes from 10 to 15 years to become a good thatcher. Straw finials are now back and he showed us examples from hares to even a ballet dancer, requested by the house owner!
Ruth Seal

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The mallards have actually stayed this year. For once the moorhens haven't driven them away. We are hoping for chicks now.

Rector's Ramblings – April 2025 (April Blossoms and Eternal Hope)





Dear Friends,
April finds us nestled in that liminal space between the starkness of winter and the vibrant promise of summer. As the daffodils push through the damp earth and the birdsong fills the morning air, we are reminded of the cyclical nature of life, of renewal, and of hope. This year, however, these familiar signs of spring feel particularly poignant.
The world around us continues to grapple with complex challenges. News broadcasts paint a picture of ongoing conflicts, economic and political uncertainty, and the ever-present shadow of climate change. We see the struggles of our brothers and sisters across the globe, and perhaps even within our own community, as they navigate hardship and uncertainty. It's easy to feel overwhelmed, to succumb to a sense of despair.
Yet, as we journey through April, we are reminded of the most profound message of hope: Easter. The empty tomb stands as a testament to the enduring power of love and the triumph of light over darkness. It is a beacon in the midst of turmoil, a reminder that even in the face of death, there is resurrection.
The Easter story is not simply a historical event; it is a living truth that resonates with our own lives. It speaks to the possibility of transformation, of new beginnings, and of the enduring presence of God's love. Just as the natural world awakens from its winter slumber, so too can we find renewal and strength in the promise of Easter.
This April, let us take time to reflect on the meaning of Easter in our own lives. Let us consider where we might find moments of resurrection, of hope, and of renewal. Perhaps it is in a rekindled relationship, a renewed sense of purpose, or a deeper connection with our faith.
Let us also remember the importance of community. In times of uncertainty, it is our shared faith and our support for one another that sustains us. Let us reach out to those who are struggling, offer a listening ear, and extend a helping hand. Let us embody the love and compassion that Christ exemplified.
As we move forward into the brighter days of spring, let us carry the light of Easter within us. Let us be beacons of hope in a world that so desperately needs it. Let us remember that even in the midst of darkness, the promise of resurrection remains. This month, I encourage you to join us for our special Easter services and events *(for more information visit **www.stourvalley.org.uk**)*. Let us come together as a community to celebrate the joy of the resurrection and to reaffirm our faith in the enduring power of God's love.
May the peace of Christ be with you all.
Mark
The Revd Mark Woodrow (Rector)

Who was Michel Lerpinière?




This box was left in Stradishall church porch. Has anyone any ideas? It almost certainly contains cremation ashes.

Monthly rainfall inches 2024/2025

2025	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Nick Burton- Stradishall	55	31.5										
Tina Lee- Stradishall	45	32										
Sam Slater- Stansfield	46	30										
Rod Taylor- Stansfield	64	35										
Jay Gridley-Hundon	59	26										
Victoria Pakenham - Fenstead End	73	33										
Elaine Plumpton - Great Saxham	63	42										

2024	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Nick Burton- Stradishall	55	115	45	64	96	15	94	14	99	58	47	42.5
Tina Lee- Stradishall	57	119	47	87	91	19	93	16	98	68	31	38
Sam Slater- Stansfield	51	129	55	60	114	19	85	15	76	55	33	63
Rod Taylor- Stansfield	59	121	59	68	99	23	88	16	80	73	42	51
Jay Gridley-Hundon	71	128	57	74	104	21	93	16	108	71	39	39
Victoria Pakenham -Fenstead End	53	132	59	62	106	21	90	16.5	88	38	39	79
Elaine Plumpton Great Saxham	54	129	66	69	78	23	90	16	99.6	52	43	53

QUIZ NIGHT

Denston Village Hall

Saturday 3 May

DOORS OPEN AT 7:00 WITH QUIZ START AT 7:30
PRICE: £12.50 INCL. FISH & CHIPS DINNER

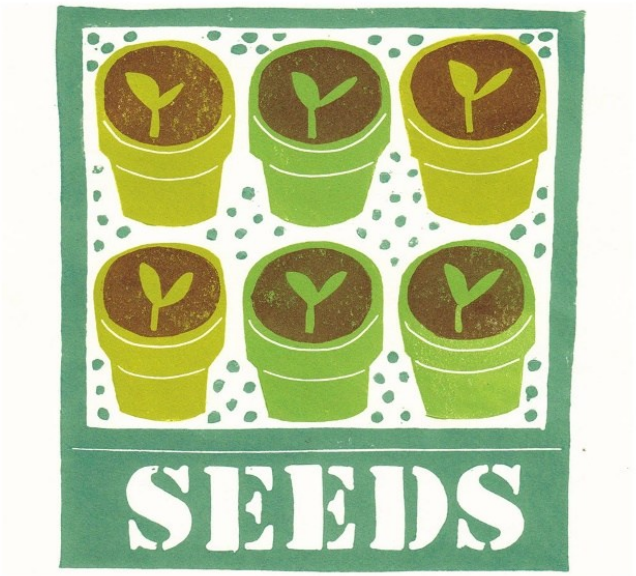
TO BOOK: Stefan 01440-820675 or
email: denstonvillagehall@gmail.com

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Gardeners Get Ready!

donations wanted for Stansfield Plant Sale

Saturday 17th May



*** Calling All Growers ***

Could you raise some extra plants this spring
to help support your village hall?
Herbs, flowers, fruit and veg - all gratefully received.

Stansfield Village Hall Charity No 304939

Hi everyone, every month I nearly always need a few photos to fill final white spaces. So if you have any you would like to share please send them to parish.pump@gmail,com

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February Farming by Portia Brown

We have had a busy month on the land. At the beginning of the month, we cultivated the ploughed land ready for the spring oats and linseed.

Cultivating aids loosening and lets the air and March sun assist in drying the soil. The winter wheat and barley have been fertilised, as well as some of our meadows we cut for hay.

From the pictures you will see we use the dual wheels on the tractor; although they are seen as an old method these vastly assist to spread the weight and lower the ground pressure to reduce compaction.

Last week we drilled and rolled the spring oats.

We roll to consolidate the seed bed and ensure the optimum amount of seed to soil contact to enhance germination.

The linseed is the last of the spring crops to be drilled. As the ground is drying, we have used the power harrow to break down any remaining clods and prepare a lovely fine seed bed for the spring linseed to be drilled into. Linseed has to be my favourite crop: when it flowers the field is a sea of blue.

This attracts lots of bees and butterflies. Oh, and I must add linseed honey tastes yummy.

The cattle will hopefully be back out to grass in the next 3 weeks with lambing starting at about the same time. Next month's edition will be all about lambing.













Erratum/Apology

In the March edition of the **Parish Pump** we included an advert for the garage in Stradishall. We have been made aware that the advert contained some errors. Fundamental to that was the inclusion of an incorrect contact number. The correct number is 01440 820391; we inadvertently used 01440 800391.We wish to extend our apologies to Mr Dabbs and his customers for any inconvenience that we may have caused.



Prices for advertising in this magazine

INSIDE PAGES			
	Price for the period		Price per issue
	12 months	6 months	individual advert
Eighth page	£90	£50	£ 10
Quarter page	£ 185	£100	£ 20
Half page	£275	£150	£ 35
BACK PAGE			
	Price for the period		Price per issue
	12 months	6 months	individual advert
Eighth page	£ 165	£ 90	£ 20
Quarter page	£255	£ 140	£ 30
Half page	£ 420	£ 230	£ 45

Loft Insulation Offer gives Suffolk residents 50% off eco-friendly insulation

According to **The Energy Saving Trust,** an uninsulated home ***loses*** a quarter of its heat through its roof. For the second year in a row, help to afford eco-friendly loft insulation is now available for Suffolk residents. **The Suffolk Climate Change Partnership** has teamed up with an insulation provider to help Suffolk residents make their homes warmer and save money on their energy bills. Residents will receive a **50% discount off their purchase of 200mm or 370mm wide insulation rolls (up to £200)** with free delivery,



from High Loft, the UK's leading eco loft insulation brand.

The offer is open to anyone in Suffolk and will close once the allocated funding has been spent. Simply go to www.bit.ly/suffolkloft and fill in the form to receive your personalised link to order or call High Loft's insulation experts on 01706 248203 (Mon – Fri, 9am - 5pm).

Or, to find out more visit www.greensuffolk.org/at-home/funding.

This appears to expire on 17th April 2025

SAVE THE DATE

WICKHAMBROOK SUMMER FETE AND FLOWER SHOW
SATURDAY 12TH JULY 2025
FROM 1PM – 5PM

CAR SHOW, DOG SHOW, INFLATABLES, VARIOUS CRAFT
STALLS AND ATTRACTIONS, BBQ, BEER TENT, GRAND
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BRING THE FAMILY ALONG FOR A FUN FILLED DAY

WICKHAMBROOK SUMMER FETE COMMITTEE

After a very successful Summer Fete last year, with a substantial amount of money raised, the Wickhambrook Summer Fete Committee are in a position to offer funding to the village organisations who may require funding for any new projects, new equipment etc.

For more information or apply for funding please contact **Maggie Elers** on email: maggieelers@hotmail.co.uk Telephone: 01440 820559

Country Cooking with Louise Mackrill



Gifting at Easter is always a nice thing to do, so here are a couple of easy ideas which make lovely, tasty presents ….

Little Easter simnel cakes

Makes 4 baked bean tin size
6 oz butter/marg
6 oz light muscovado
3 eggs beaten
8 ox plain flour
Pinch salt
1 teaspoon cinnamon, nutmeg, mixed spice
4 oz glace cherries washed and chopped
90z currents (I use 8)
4 oz sultanas (I use 2)
Lemon rind and juice from 1 lemon
Marzipan for topping and eggs
Grease and line chosen tins or ramekins
Preheat oven to 150oC or 170o for non-fan assisted



Easter Simnel cakes

Beat butter & sugar together until pale. Slowly add eggs, if it curdles add a little flour. Add flour, salt, spices, dried fruit, lemon rind and juice and FOLD together. Place half mixture in the clean baked bean tins. Roll out marzipan and cut out discs. Place a disc on mix in each tin. Top with rest of mixture & level surface.
Cook in oven at 150oC for 20 mins then turn oven down to 20oC and cook a further hour, until skewer comes out clean and they are a nice colour. Leave to cool in tins for an hour then turn out to cool. Meanwhile roll out 1 more marzipan disc for each cake and make teeny marzipan eggs to decorate. Assemble and decorate (cut the top off the cake to level first). Blow torch marzipan to golden and wrap in brown paper as a gift.

Chocolate chip cookies

Here is a great way to use up those leftover chocolate Easter eggs.
Any mixture of chocolate can go into these, milk, dark & white, just chop it all up & throw in.
3 oz soft margarine
4 oz caster sugar
1 egg
6 oz self-raising flour
2 oz chopped chocolate



Mix all ingredients thoroughly. Place small spoonfuls well apart on lightly greased baking trays, flatten slightly using the back of a spoon. Bake for about 15 mins until golden and just firm. Cool on a wire rack and store in an airtight container. Wrap in little cellophane bags and tie with pretty ribbon.

Chocolate chip cookies, perfect for using up left-over Easter eggs

Rhubarb gin

You will need to use bright pink, early forced rhubarb and allow at least 1 week after making before drinking. This gives the gin a beautiful pink colour and fresh, sweet rhubarb flavour. Add a few slices of fresh ginger, ½ vanilla pod or perhaps a star anise or a few strips blood orange zest if you want a more aromatic flavour.
500g/1lb 2oz forced rhubarb (trimmed weight), washed and into 5mm/¼in thick slices
250g/9oz caster sugar
500ml/18fl oz dry gin
For the optional extras
½ vanilla pod, split in half
4–5 slices fresh root ginger
2-star anise
1 blood orange, pared zest only
Tip the rhubarb into a large, wide-necked clip lid jar and add the caster sugar. Stir well to combine and thoroughly coat the rhubarb slices in sugar. Add the vanilla, ginger, star anise or orange zest, if using, cover with a lid and set aside at room temperature for 12 hours or overnight, shaking the jar from time to time. During this time the sugar will dissolve and draw out sticky pink juice from the rhubarb. Pour the gin into the jar, stir well to combine with the rhubarb, cover and set aside for at least 1 week and up to 1 month, giving the jar a shake every day to draw out as much flavour from the rhubarb as possible. Strain the gin through a fine mesh sieve into a jug and decant into clean bottles. Serve over ice in tall glasses and topped up with either soda or tonic water and a slice of lime or blood orange.

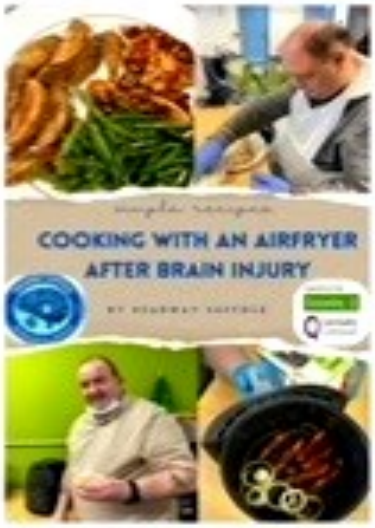


Rhubarb gin





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Jeff Fellows wines



Continuing with the theme of categories of white wine the next group are classed as soft. These are the wines which are pleasant and easy drinking. Use as an Apéritif and they invariably go well with food.

What to expect from these wines. Quite often very pale in colour with flavours of lemon, peach, and melon. Much more aromatic than crisp whites and don't be surprised if you think that you can smell petrol, it is not uncommon in these wines. Alternatively, you may also find it has a honeyed tone to it. There is also quite often a hint of sweetness.

I mentioned Pinot Gris last month and would include that in this group when from Alsace.

Another Alsace wine is Pinot Blanc. I recently had a bottle from Waitrose. Wolfberger PB which is described as light and delicate with ripe stone fruits and a floral background. I agree with that having had it with a piece of haddock. 13% £9.95.

Two unusual finds which fit into this group. Zibbibo. Duca di Castelmonte. Lidl. This is an IGT from Sicily. The Zibbibo grape is from the Muscat family, not native to the Island but has been grown there for 5,000 years. From the Marsala(Western) region. This has a most distinctive taste of peaches which gradually fade. Refreshing and with a long finish. '22 13% £8.99.

Long finish is also to be found in Tesco's finest Falanghina. This is a Wine made in Campania(S Italy) from an ancient grape variety, Aglianico, which also was the basis of Falernian wine drunk in Roman Times. An interesting wine with acidity, aromatics, minerality with a long finish but with a hint of spritz about it. Anyone who has drunk Vinho Verde will recognise that. Seafood most definitely for this. '23 13% £9.95.

Chenin Blanc is a grape used for the Loire's white wines. The Cremants (sparkling wine) are made with the grape. The still wines provide floral hints backed up by minerality but in a rounded way. Try Majestic's Meunier Vouvray Sec 22/23 12.5% £9.99.

Another wine/ grape not well known here is Austria's Gruner Veltliner. Think green vegetables (Gruner is green in German) with a hint of spice and, once again, minerality. Weiner schnitzel would be the dish with Majestic's GV Kremstahl DAC to confirm. 22 12.5% £9.99

The best examples of this genre are from Alsace. They are Riesling and Gewürztraminer. Waitrose have the answer here. Beblenheim Riesling offers a floral, mineral acidity with plenty of flavour of Citrus fruits and a good finish. Think Salads, fish and white meat dishes for this. 12% £12.

Cave de Turckheim Gewurztraminer is arguably the most aromatic of these. Fills the palate with peach and Lychee notes and hints of peach and apricot. Has a dry finish. Crab and scallops partner well with this wine, and it is one of the few that can also accompany the local Quiche Lorraine. 13% £11.50.

Jeff Fellows



Gatehouse Charity: NHS Mindfulness Course

The Mindful Life Group

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We are a Clinical Psychology led organisation offering cost subsidised programs for older adults to promote good mental health.

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Visit our website

www.the-mindful-life.com

to register for updates

Services at Hawkedon St Mary



Services at St Mary's Church, Hawkedon in April:

13 April Palm Sunday 9am BCP Holy Communion

20 April Easter Sunday 8.30am said BCP Holy Communion

27 April. Morning Prayer with hymns

Also: Advance Notice and Save the Date!

Friday, 20 June 2025 at 6pm at Hawkedon Village Hall.

A SPARKLING EVENING of fizz and finery, gems and jewels!

Many thanks and nothing for Poslingford this month from me!!!
Best wishes, Heather

Heather Tilbury Phillips
htapr@dircon.co.uk
01284 789 250/07774 275656

Memories are Golden

OPen
Monday-Thursday 09.30-2pm

The Old Parkway School, Unity Offices, Park Road, Haverhill, CB9 7YD

Memories are Golden specialises in offering day care services to individuals living with dementia and suffering from heart conditions, diabetes, and other long-term physical challenges.

We also support people in their journey towards combating loneliness and isolation from families, friends, and their community.

Our Community Hub provides a safe space to socialise and build friendships, as well as providing meaningful activities, entertainment, and social events, to improve well-being. We also provide a 2 course nutritious meal every day.

£55 per day

We are accredited with Suffolk County Council who can commission service users to attend the hub if they meet criteria

We offer a taster day FOC - If you would like to book a visit please call Kelly on 07538920731
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Website: www.memoriesaregolden.co.uk

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0% Loans Helping Suffolk Homeowners Stay Warm and Cut Energy Bills



For many homeowners, improving energy efficiency can feel out of reach due to the high upfront costs. But with support from **Suffolk County Council and Lendology CIC**, more people in Suffolk can now access interest-free loans to make their homes warmer, greener, and cheaper to run. From solar panels and battery storage to insulation, glazing, and heat pumps, these upgrades can reduce energy bills and cut carbon emissions, all while making homes more comfortable.
One local homeowner, Mr R from Martlesham Heath, recently shared their experience: ***"Lendology's people are kind, helpful, and caring. They take the time to keep applicants informed and guide them through the process. The results were delivered on time and in excellent style."***

The Suffolk Warm Homes Loan offers up to **£15,000 at 0% interest**. This means that you don't pay any interest on the loan amount. However, the **Representative 0.2% APR** is a standard rate used to show the cost of borrowing, including any fees associated with the loan, based on a typical loan amount. This helps potential borrowers compare different loan offers. The loan can be repaid over **terms of up to seven years**. For example, if you borrow £5,000, you could repay it in monthly instalments to a maximum of 7 years, with no interest added to the amount you owe. This makes it more affordable for homeowners to spread out the cost of energy-efficient home improvements.

For more details on the scheme and how to apply, visit https://www.lendology.org.uk/partner/view/suffolk-council/

Before starting work, it is recommended that you carry out an **independent retrofit assessment**. This is a thorough review of your home's current energy performance and helps to identify the most cost-effective improvements. For example, an independent assessor might recommend insulation, double glazing, or heat pumps, based on your home's specific needs and budget.

Representative Example (0% fixed interest rate, Representative 0.2% APR). Loans are subject to status and are typically protected by a Title Restriction. Borrow £5,000 over 60 months, £83.33 monthly repayments, with the final payment of £83.53. Total amount payable = £5,020.00, including £20.00 fee for registering the Title Restriction against your property at the Land Registry. The £20.00 fee is only payable if a loan is agreed by Lendology, and you decide to proceed with a loan. We do not charge interest on the fee. A Title Restriction means that you may not be able to sell your home without our permission unless the loan is fully repaid. Missing payments could affect your credit rating and ability to obtain credit in the future. The above example is for indication purposes only.

Eligibility for all loans depends on your individual circumstances and your local council's policy. The loan allows for **early repayment without penalties**. For example, if you decide to pay off your loan earlier than planned, you won't incur any extra charges. This means that if your financial situation improves and you can afford to pay the loan off sooner, you won't be penalised for doing so.



Wickhambrook and District Garden Club
PLANT SALE
Saturday 24th May in WI Hall, Wickhambrook

9am. Please bring your potted plants to the Hall to be sorted for sale. Tea and Coffee will be served.
10am. Sale opens
This is a chance to donate spare seedlings and cuttings to raising funds for our Club.
Also to buy plants you have never grown in your garden before, to fill gaps and experiment with different varieties.
Please come and support us!

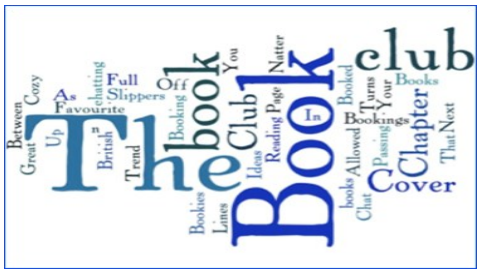


One of our new guest advertisers - please see the back page.

Hello, my name is **Tom** and I'm a documentary wedding photographer. I grew up in north **Essex** but my journey into photography began in the unlikeliest of places— whilst researching tsunamis in the Caribbean! What started as a scientific field-trip quickly evolved into a passion for capturing moments through a lens and I've since discovered that wedding photography ticks so many creative boxes for me.

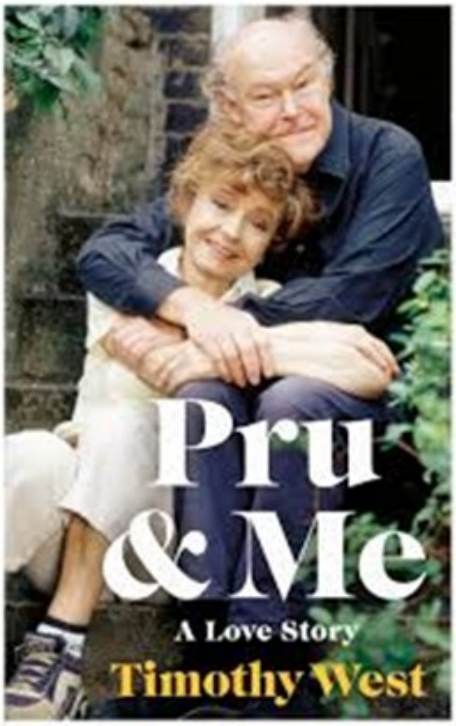


I get huge pleasure from documenting people being themselves - living, laughing, crying, dancing, and experiencing life in its most raw and unscripted form. For me, wedding photography is a concentrated version of all that magic - a day full of emotion, unrepeatable moments, and a wonderful mixture of chaos, joy, and love. I believe every moment of a wedding is special, not just the big milestones like exchanging rings or the first dance, but the little moments too: kids running wild, uncles trying to break dance, or grandmothers sharing shots of tequila.
I aim to create images that transport you back to those moments, so when you look at your photos, you feel like you're reliving your wedding day all over again - the laughter, the tears, the nerves, the happiness. It's not about posing or directing, it's about letting the day unfold naturally and being there to capture the genuine emotions as they happen. Every wedding is different, and that's what excites me most: the endless stream of creative possibilities.
Ultimately, my work is about connection. I'm not just an observer; I'm there, fully immersed in the day, capturing the spontaneity and joyfulness that make each wedding unique.



Book: *Pru and Me* by Timothy West

This month's book was a charming account of the life the actor, **Timothy West**, led with his wife, Prunella Scales. It is subtitled **A Love Story** and is, in the main, a tribute to his wife, the well-known actress, **Prunella Scales.**



Book club members enjoyed the book as a light read and something that was easy to pick up and put down. They felt that it was interesting to learn about the Wests' early married life as jobbing actors and the hardships they endured. However, whilst life was undeniably hard, they always had enough money to employ a full-time nanny.

Members felt that the book skated over West's divorce from his first wife and the chapter dedicated to his daughter from this marriage was also brief. This was possibly due to his unwillingness to cause further pain to his daughter, or perhaps because the book, as its subtitle suggests, is primarily aimed at telling the story of his life with Pru and of their love for each other. Had it been West's autobiography, he might have been more self-critical, whereas it is clear that the book is a celebration of their love and life together.

We enjoyed reading about Pru's interpretation of the role of **Sybil Fawlty** in *Fawlty Towers*, which made her a household name. Before she agreed to undertake the role, she was insistent on working out why two people, who are clearly unsuited to each other, ended up running a hotel together. She put her own take on Sybil, ignoring what had originally been envisaged by the writers, **John Cleese and his wife Connie Booth**, and produced one of the most memorable comedic characters of the period.

West, for his part, expresses his frustration that he has not received the level of recognition for some of his roles that he felt was merited, notably *Brass* and *Edward VII*. However, he has more recently achieved considerable acclaim for his performances in *East Enders* as Stan Carter and as the father in *Gentleman Jack*.

The last section of the book entitled *Great Canal Journeys*, recounts the adventures had by West and Scales on a narrow boat and which were the subject of a TV programme with the same name, which appeared between 2014 and 2019. This chapter in their lives followed Pru's diagnosis of vascular dementia the previous year. No longer able to work, or learn scripts, this was a chance for a new lease of life. The couple had owned their own narrow boat and had regularly taken family holidays on the UK's waterways. This section of the book was greatly enjoyed by members, both for its interesting insight into how it was filmed with the couple having to share the limited space on a narrow boat with an eight-strong film crew and also for West's phlegmatic approach to dealing with Pru's illness. His advice to live in the moment, enjoying all the sights and sounds that the canal had to offer, and to appreciate her continued sense of humour, rather than mourn what she had lost, would appear to have enabled another successful "performance" by the two actors.

West poignantly ends the book with a dedication to Pru, in whose direction his eyes have been pointing for over sixty years. He concludes "I am an extraordinarily lucky man" – a Love Story indeed.

Our Book Club meets once a month in members' homes. Our next book is *Lily: a tale of Revenge* by Rose Tremain, which we will be discussing on 31st March. Please contact Anne Dennis on annedennis1@live.co.uk if you would like to join us.

Sarah Hopkins



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Stradishall Church's Harmonium



With **Marc Antrobus's** assistance we have finally got Stradishall's harmonium going. This is a cry for help really - we need someone who has practical experience with them to make sure we have got it going to its full potential. It seems a bit quiet at the moment but it does look good!

Advertise your Business

Not only will you appear in over 700 copies of the Parish Pump, hand delivered to all homes in **Stradishall, Stansfield, Hawkedon, Thurston End, Poslingford, Assington Green and Denston**. (also available in **Clare, Cowlinge and Wickhambrook)** you will also be included in our online edition, landing in over 400 email inboxes.

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Explore what's on in your village

10am - 1pm
Stansfield Village Hall

Ask Questions

*

Make Suggestions

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Please recycle me

Stradishall Church refurbishment

The new gutter is finally in place. We must now see if it works and stops the final leak.



Denston Village Hall 100 Club Quiz night

STEFAN, TREASURER
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This is the March2025 draw for the 100 club
The Denston Village Hall 100 club winners for March 2025 are:-

1.John Crysell £20
2.Twitchet Family £10
3.Twitchet Family £ 5

Thanks Stefan

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First Full Year of Help….Stansfield Good Neighbours Scheme

Stansfield Good Neighbours

Lifts to medical appointments have topped the list of the 50 tasks completed by Stansfield Good Neighbours Scheme volunteers in the past year…..

But a wide variety of other tasks, some of benefit to individuals and others to the whole community, have also been undertaken. Their first fund raising initiative raised almost £250 for the Suffolk Wildlife Trust.

The scheme is to hold its second AGM early in April and among items to be discussed will be how to make the voluntary help offered more readily accessible to residents, call handling arrangements, a rota for delivering copies of Parish Pump to a section of the Village, whether to answer requests from other villages, and some social events for residents.

The scheme has 19 volunteers and would welcome more. Please ring the Helpline if you are interested. A warm welcome for anyone who cares about their fellow residents.

Helpline 07827 128511

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Thursday - Coggeshall Market Hill 7-12pm
- Long Melford 1:30-4pm

Friday - Clare market 7:30-10am
- Lavenham 11-1pm
- Depden 2-4pm

Stradishall Parish Council News

A meeting of Stradishall Parish Council took place on Monday 3rd March 2025. County Councillor **Bobby Bennett** and District Councillors **Karen Richardson and Marion Rushbrook** attended the meeting along with 6 members of the public. Items on the agenda included approving final information for the internal audit of the Parish Council's accounts and a review of the budget.

Reports from County Councillor Bobby Bennett

Cllr Bennett spoke about devolution. Suffolk is now on the Government's priority programme. Suffolk County Council supports one unitary Suffolk. Suffolk County Council proposes to bring Suffolk libraries back in house as it failed to agree terms with the current contractor.

Reports from District Councillors Karen Richardson and Marion Richardson

District Councillor **Karen Richardson** spoke about devolution which will lead to a reduction in councillors for the area to two. District Councillor **Marion Rushbrook** spoke about the budget and setting the Council Tax. . An amendment was put forward to keep parking charges the same to ease the burden on businesses, but this was outvoted by 3 votes.

Annual Parish Meeting

Stradishall's Annual Parish Meeting will take place on Monday 12th May 2025 at 8pm in Café 33. This is a village meeting, not a parish council meeting, and residents of Stradishall are warmly invited to attend.

Why not come along and find out more about what is happening in Stradishall and meet your local councillors and representatives from other village organisations? There will also be an open discussion about any issues raised by members of the public.

Dates of future meetings

Monday 12th May 2025 - Annual Meeting of the Parish Council followed by the Annual Parish Meeting at 8pm.
Monday 14th July 2025
Monday 1st September 2025
Monday 3rd November 2025
Monday 5th January 2026
Monday 2nd March 2026
Meetings usually start at 7pm and take place in Café 33.

Contact details for Stradishall Parish Council

Tel: 07880 686069
Email: stradishallparishcouncil@yahoo.co.uk
Website: www.stradishall.onesuffolk.net

Road Safety Poster Competition



Stradishall Parish council is organising a children's competition to create posters encouraging drivers to slow down and make them aware of the dangers of speeding. The posters will then be printed and displayed around Stradishall.

If you would like to take part, please draw a poster on A4 paper. Once all the drawings have been received a winner will be chosen.

The competition winner will receive a £10 voucher to spend at Stradishall Convenience Stores next to Café 33.

The competition is open to children of all ages.
Please drop completed posters to Louise Latarche at 9 Hawthorne Way, CB8 9XZ or at Stradishall Convenience Stores (Best One).

The closing date is 30th April 2025.

Wickhambrook WI March Meeting

Members of **Wickhambrook WI** were on their best behaviour as we welcomed a visitor from the police to our March meeting. **Acting Superintendent Janine Wratten**



came to talk to us about her career in the police force. Starting off in the Metropolitan Police Force in London in 2004 aged 22, Janine described how life was very different in the force twenty years ago. Describing the toxic nature in the Met back then, she eventually made her way through the ranks to become an Inspector in 2014. On the way Janine married and had two children which made life become a juggling act between home and work. In 2021 Janine made a fresh start in Suffolk which means a commute from Essex as her husband is now an Inspector in the Metropolitan Police Force. Suffolk Constabulary has been very supportive and Janine is keen to support and mentor other females within the force.



Wendy Mansfield

Wickhambrook WI Craft Group

On Saturday 15th March our craft group held a class learning how to make hand tied bouquets. Led by the President, **Hilary Bradfield,** members were shown how to produce colourful bouquets of Spring flowers. The results were quite stunning as the pictures show. This is part of an initiative to introduce new skills and crafts to the group which meets once a month on a Saturday afternoon.

Wendy Mansfield









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Spring into Action opportunities for everyone in Stansfield!

Saturday morning on April 26th at Stansfield Village Hall! Coffee, tea, squash and cake (free!) plus activities for children and young people are being offered by the Parish Council Village Hall (VH) and Good Neighbours (GN) scheme. Everybody in or connected to Stansfield is invited to this opportunity to chat to neighbours, parish councillors and explore what's on in the village.

Can improvements be made in Stansfield? Suggestions and questions are welcomed at any time, but this is a specific chance to focus on what residents think. Information about the village and its assets will be on display. Cake stall and preserves.

The coffee morning will run from **10am to 1pm** alongside the **annual village tidy-up** for which picking sticks and high-vis vests and guidance will be available. Anyone



who would like to help tidy their village, either on the day or at another date or time, please contact the parish clerk stansfieldpc@outlook.com or any councillor.

Speeding in and around Stansfield: Nick Timothy, our local MP is to be asked to include Stansfield in his efforts to help tackle speeding and reckless driving in rural villages and lanes, parish councillors decided at their March meeting. ***A copy of his petition asking for more powers for parish councils to tackle this issue will be available to sign at the***



coffee morning on April 26th mentioned above.

Data about speeding from the ANPR camera placed in Stansfield in October last year by SCC is awaited. There are only ten of these cameras in Suffolk , and Stansfield has one on a rota. Speed bumps can pose problems as well as being expensive, it was reported.

Meanwhile the appeal for poster designs to be displayed in Stansfield to deter speeding continues. Several entries have been received ..further entries to any councillor or hand them in at the coffee morning on April 26th. Prizes for all entries received.

Devolution

Both **SCC Cllr. Bobby Bennett** and **WSC Cllr. Sarah Pugh** spoke about the current discussions under which some powers like Highways might transfer to a new combined Norfolk and Suffolk authority and more powers might be given to Parish Councils.

Events

Lots happening in Stansfield the next few months!

Saturday April 26th 10-1pm at the Village Hall. Coffee morning and village tidy-up.

Wednesday 14th May 7pm Village Hall. Annual Parish Council Meeting. **Tuesday May 20th** 7pm Village Hall. Annual Parish Meeting. This is an open meeting for residents to raise any issues about the village. **Sunday July 20th Summer Fun Day**. This will include refreshments, games and competitions…details are being worked on now and any suggestions and offers of help will be welcomed at stansfieldpc@outlook.com. Ideas for a symbol or a poster for this event are also being sought from anyone artistically inclined!

	PARISH COUNCILS - WHO'S WHO in YOUR VILLAGE?		
Parish Council	**Chair**	**Vice Chair**	**Clerks**
Denston	**Jeff Fellows** jefffellows.crown@gmail.com 01440 820 310	**N/A**	**Jeff Fellows**
Hawkedon/ Thurston End	**Rotating**	**Rotating**	**David Jarrold** dmj1800@icloud.com
Poslingford	**Martin England** martin.england@poslingford-pc.gov.uk 01787 278413	**Marc Allison** marc.allison@poslingford-pc.gov.uk 07958337282	**Chris Turner** clerk@poslingford-pc.gov.uk 07814246204
Stansfield/ Assington Green	**Rex Barnes** rexstansfieldsoc@gmail.com 07778 058425 www.stansfield.onesuffolk.net	**Andrew Pallett** andrew.pallett.spc@btinternet.com 01284 789434	**Annie Lines** stansfieldpc@outlook.com.
Stradishall	**Ian Hutchinson** stradishallparishcouncil@yahoo.co.uk 07970717116	**Robert Deeks** 07940548407	**Joanne Kirk** stradishallparishcouncil@yahoo.co.uk 07880686069
Clare	**Rob Eyre** rob.eyre@clare-suffolk.co.uk 01787 277 559	**Paul Bishop** paul.bishop@clare-suffolk.co.uk,	**Davina Neale** clerk@clare-suffolk.co.uk
Cowlinge	**Linda Aston** lindaaston555@gmail.com	**Jane Nesham**	**John Barnett** 01440 783 903
Wickhambrook	**Mike Lavelle** mike.lavelle@wickhambrook.org.uk	**Paul Couzens** 07713 740 984 paul.couzens@wickhambrook.org.uk	**Hilary Workman** 07508 039 810 parishclerk@wickhambrook.org.uk



CAR AID REPORT - FEBRUARY 2025 ,CLASP Committee Meeting Thursday 13th. March 2025

Dear Drivers
Herewith the Report presented to the CLASP Committee yesterday evening.
You will note that I now have updated car park passes for WSH which now are valid to 31/03/26. **If I have not yet been able to get your pass to you I would appreciate you contacting me to make an arrangement to achieve this.**

I also informed the Committee that I will be going on holiday to Yorkshire for a couple of weeks from 4th. April in order to enjoy celebrations with Anne's family and friends who were unable to attend our wedding in Clare last December. We discussed the need to find someone to cover CarAid booking arrangements for me during this period, or the acceptance of bookings will cease for that time. Rob Eyre, the Chairman of Clare Town Council and. CarAid Driver, has very kindly agreed to take over as temporary CarAid Organiser. MANY MANY THANKS ROB!
An important reminder. The CLASP Annual General Meeting will take place at The Clare Old School on Thursday 22nd. May at 7.30pm. This is an extraordinarily important Meeting this year with the continuity of CLASP in its current form being a key consideration. ***YOU ARE SERIOUSLY URGED TO ATTEND IN THE FUTURE INTERESTS OF CLASP AND CLARE.***
Best regards as always, and many thanks for your continuing support.
John Webb

Monthly trips made historical easy reference summary:-
17-24-30-14-28-22-24-22-18-29-21-24
Total Year 2022 = 273 c/w 237 in 2021
32-32-42-24-41-48-31-26-21-25-35-32
Year 2023 total = 389 total, 32.4 average
47-62-29-37-38-34-46-33-27-37-31-23
Year 2024 total = 444 total, 37.0 average
20-24 Year 2025 to date = 44 total, 22.0 average
Bookings taken as at 8th. March month to date – 18
The number of trips made in the 2023 year at 389 was **42%** more than made in 2022.
The number of trips made in 2024 at 444 was higher by **14%** than 2023.
The demand for our service in January and February totalling 44 trips was significantly less than the same months in the previous two years. It was noticeable that there were a number of trips cancelled by the medical destinations.
Despite the low demand so far this year it can be seen from the Statistics Summaries above that the underlying demand for our service continues to grow significantly. However, the difficulty in finding volunteer drivers has continued. Reminder - Our recent and final appeal for volunteer drivers in the Hundon Herald sadly had a nil response, and so we have now stopped providing CLASP CarAid for Hundon and Ridgewell.

Nevertheless, we have always managed to provide the service required for other locations, despite demands sometimes arising or changing at short notice. **It is important to note that in the last 3 quarters, we used 30 drivers during each quarter, virtually our whole available complement. This confirms the need to recruit more volunteer drivers.**
I have completed the process of updating the ANPR CarAid car registration details for West Suffolk Hospital and BMI Bury Hospital. We have a "fleet" of 37 cars and theoretically 36 drivers. Andy Stoodley-Smith has withdrawn – he now drives a company car and has been advised by his employer that he does not have insurance cover for CarAid. I have received the new WSH passes expiring on 31/03/2026 which are now being distributed to our drivers.
The ongoing relevant CarAid Statistic - In the 83 months, since April 2018 when I took over, CarAid has helped 254 different clients, making 1,881 trips averaging 22 per month.

John Webb 8th. March 2025

Suffolk Trade Centre—Get to know your local businesses

Suffolk Trade Centre has been family owned & run since 1991. We supply quality used cars to customers across the whole of the UK, with a comprehensive selection of cars in stock and a relaxed no pressure sales policy. Part exchanges are welcomed, with excellent prices offered. All our cars come fully prepared with multiple warranty options. Our staff are courteous & professional with extensive motor trade knowledge. We do not lack space at STC Ltd. with ample off road safe parking & our kettle is always on.



This month we welcome on board Tracy who will be looking after service bookings and MOT's.

All makes and models of car and commercials are welcome.
To all our customers we thank you for your loyalty over the years and look forward to seeing you soon.
For the months of March April & May we are offering £10 off an MOT if you book a service as well.
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01440 820994.

Tracy serving you



Oldfangled music at Cowlinge

A friendly, curious little church, **St Margaret's at Cowlinge.** Friendly, because when you walk through the door, it always seems pleased to see you (try it). Curious, from its dedication to St Margaret of Antioch to its most unusual of wall-paintings; from the little group of evidently comfortless tiered seating tucked away just inside the entrance -– the building's chilliest corner, to its



engaging abundance of late-mediaeval doodles on the stonework throughout.

And then, at the west end of the nave against the western tower, almost hidden, our demure little western gallery. Not too many of these left now; but western galleries are nevertheless worth a thought for, from the seventeenth to the early-nineteenth centuries, in the days before many small parish churches had organs, it was in the western galleries that music, by instrument and voice, was made.

Let's ponder western galleries for a moment.

Whilst the story of church gallery music occupies but a brief moment in the long history of church worship, its story is an engaging one. Until the early eighteen hundreds, many smaller parish churches did not have organs and, in any event, hymn-singing was not established as a regularised part of church worship. But music was required nevertheless, and so local musicians and singers formed groups which became church bands – and western galleries were where they performed. And so it was that before the uniformly-surpliced and chancel-based choir under the close supervision of the celebrant appeared in the nineteenth century, the western gallery was the source of music.



By the eighteenth century, Cowlinge may be assumed to have been a well-populated settlement. Certainly, by the nineteenth century, more than 800 people were recorded as living in the parish – a population large enough to be able to muster competent musicians and singers.

Gallery music was often based in traditional tunes. These brought musical vitality and pace to the parish church service. The performers in the western galleries, a nave-length's distance from the celebrant were, however, less susceptible to close clerical supervision than clerical authority may have wished. Certainly, it is recorded that church bands could be independently minded to the point of disputation with the incumbent. Thus, gallery music, musically sophisticated as some of it could be, came to be thought of by the clergy as *not quite the thing.*

In the nineteenth century, the church was moving towards standardisation of worship. Gallery music -– always 'unofficial' – openly fell out of favour with church authorities; at parish level, the harmonium and the organ became more evident. In response, church bands either dispersed or were welcomed into nonconformist places of worship, where Methodist hymn-writers, of whom **Charles Wesley (1707–88)** is perhaps the best known today, were admired for good, rousing stuff.

So it was that western gallery music-making died; the destruction of many galleries followed. It is our good fortune that here in Cowlinge, this Victorian fashion for destruction in the name of restoration passed us by.

For all churches, music-making moved to the eastern end.

Accordingly, it will be to the eastern end of **St Margaret's, Cowlinge** that, later this year, in June, we shall welcome the Abbot Consort of Voices.

Drawn from East Anglian choirs, the **Abbot Consort of Voices** performs on only a few days in the year; Cowlinge is fortunate indeed. We hope that on the day both audience and performers will enjoy that St Margaret's acoustic which musicians so relish.

Cowlinge Church Companions



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The Bansfield Benefice

The Bansfield Benefice

The Bansfield Benefice is the collective name for the Parishes of Cowlinge, Denston, Lidgate, Ousden, Stansfield, Stradishall and Wickhambrook in the Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich, Suffolk, United Kingdom.

Services for April 2025 DRAFT

https://www.bansfieldbenefice.org.uk/services/

Date	Time	Church	Details
06 Apr	10:00 am	Ousden (Passion Sunday | HC)	Celebrant: Revd Eve Bell Organist: [CM] Liturgical colour:
13 Apr	10:00 am	Lidgate (Palm Sunday| HC)	Celebrant: Revd Eve Bell Organist: [KI] Liturgical colour:
18 Apr	10:00 am	Wickhambrook* (Good Friday | Walk of Witness)	Celebrant: Revd Eve Bell Organist: [-] Liturgical colour: -
20 Apr	10:00 am	Denston (Easter Day | HC)	Celebrant: Revd Eve Bell Organist: [DO] Liturgical colour:
27 Apr	10:00 am	Wickhambrook (Second Sunday of Easter | HC)	Celebrant: Revd Barbara Sherlock Organist:[] Liturgical colour:

Year C

*Walk of Witness - From the Wickhambrook Memorial Social Club car park to the Methodist church.

HC = Holy Communion; CW = Common Worship Order One; BCP = Book of Common Prayer; SOP = Songs of Praise, MP = Morning Prayer; CWOT = Common Worship Order Two
[Organist's initials]
Elder: PB = Paul Bevan

Please check the Benefice website for changes each week



Summer Concert -
Abbots Consort of Voices
Saturday 7th June;
7pm
St Margaret's Church, Cowlinge

Tickets by donation, complimentary refreshments included.
For more information see our website:
https://cowlingechurchcompanions.co.uk/events/



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Cowlinge Church Companions

Great Cowlinge Easter Egg Hunt



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Easter Monday 21st April;
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Mary's page

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The Role of Intermediaries in the Family Court

Intermediaries play a crucial role in the family courts of England and Wales, ensuring that individuals with communication difficulties can effectively participate in legal proceedings. Their involvement is vital for upholding the principles of fairness and justice, particularly when vulnerable parties are involved.

Definition and Purpose of Intermediaries

An intermediary serves as a neutral facilitator who assists parties in communicating and understanding the court process. Their primary aim is to enable effective participation by establishing rapport and comprehending the individual's communication needs. This role is distinct from that of mediators, who focus on resolving disputes between parties.

Types of Intermediaries

There are two main categories of intermediaries:

- **Registered Intermediaries**: Trained by the Ministry of Justice, they work primarily with witnesses in criminal trials.
- **Independently Trained Intermediaries**: Soon to be designated as Court Appointed Intermediaries, they assist defendants in criminal cases and support parents and children in family proceedings.

Role in Family Proceedings

In family courts, intermediaries assess an individual's communication abilities, considering both receptive and expressive aspects, as well as emotional regulation during court sessions. Based on this assessment, they provide tailored recommendations to facilitate effective communication. This may involve simplifying language, scheduling regular breaks, or modifying questioning techniques.

Guidance on Appointing Intermediaries

The appointment of intermediaries in family courts has been guided by recent case law. In the High Court case of *West Northamptonshire Council v KA (Mother & Anor) (Intermediaries) [2024] EWHC 79 (Fam)*, Mrs Justice Lieven provided comprehensive guidance on this matter. Key points include:

- **Exceptional Appointment**: Intermediaries should be appointed for the entire trial only in exceptional circumstances and not on a "just in case" basis. Judges must carefully consider the necessity of such appointments.
- **Compelling Reasons**: There must be compelling reasons for appointing an intermediary. The decision should not be based solely on the potential improvement of the process.
- **Alternative Adaptations**: Judges should evaluate whether other adaptations, such as simplifying language or allowing breaks, can sufficiently ensure effective participation without the need for an intermediary.
- **Judicial Discretion**: While expert recommendations are valuable, the final decision to appoint an intermediary rests with the judge, who must consider the specific facts and issues of the case.

This guidance emphasizes that advocates must adapt to the witness, ensuring that the proceedings are fair and that vulnerable individuals can participate effectively.

Procedural Considerations

When an intermediary is appointed, a preliminary Ground Rules Hearing is essential. This hearing sets the parameters for the fair treatment of vulnerable witnesses, ensuring that their support needs are identified and addressed before the final hearing. Such measures are crucial to maintain the integrity of the judicial process and protect the rights of all parties involved.

Funding and Accessibility

Funding for intermediaries in family proceedings is not statutorily mandated. However, the HM Courts and Tribunals Service (HMCTS) can provide funding when no other sources are available. Judges may order assessments and funding for intermediaries to ensure that parties or witnesses can properly participate in proceedings.

Conclusion

Intermediaries are indispensable in the family courts of England and Wales, ensuring that individuals with communication challenges can engage effectively in legal proceedings. Their role upholds the principles of fairness and justice, adapting the court process to meet the needs of vulnerable parties. Recent guidance and case law have clarified the circumstances under which intermediaries should be appointed, emphasizing the importance of judicial discretion and the consideration of alternative measures. As the legal landscape evolves, the role of intermediaries will continue to be pivotal in safeguarding the rights and participation of all individuals in the family justice system.

Mary Cleaver

A Sparkling Evening
of Fizz and Finery, Gems and Jewels!

FRIDAY, 20 JUNE 2025
6pm at Hawkedon Village Hall



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	DENSTON			
	LIDGATE			
	OUSDEN			
	STANSFIELD			
	STRADISHALL			
	(Assington Green)			
	WICKHAMBROOK			
STOUR VALLEY	CLARE	The Revd Mark Woodrow	01787277515	The Revd Dr Karen Smith
	POSLINGFORD			
SUFFOLK HEIGHTS	HAWKEDON	The Revd Clive Fairclough	01284 615828	Mrs Heather Phillips Mr David Taylor
SUFFOLK HEIGHTS	(Thurston End)	As Hawkedon	As Hawkedon	As Hawkedon

Wickhambrook Parish Council February minutes



Hello, I hope you are all keeping safe and well. I've enjoyed some lovely weekends working in the garden and it really seems that spring is around the corner, despite some very cold days at times! At the beginning of March, we had our first Cemetery tidy day of the year. With a great turnout, we were able plant 4 small Hawthorns at the corner of the cemetery by the footpath entrance, clear leaves, brambles and ivy from around the memorials and Chapel of Rest and rub down and oil one of the memorial benches for installation this month. Do come along to if you would like to join us – we're a friendly bunch and meet on the first Wednesday of each month between now and November (10:30 to 1ish).

Thanks go out to **Mary Jolland** who leads our litter picks from The Pavilion, MSC, and the MSC team for refreshments.

Our dates this year are:

Sunday 6th April (get the worst of the weather out of the way and be tidy for Easter)

Sunday 6th July (in advance of Wickhambrook Fete and Flower Show)

Sunday 10th August (in advance of VJ80 day on 15th August)

Sunday 2nd November (in advance of Remembrance Sunday)

If you would like to litter pick in **the Clopton Green/Wickham Street** area, our lovely Cllrs Andrea and Kevin Grimes lead litter picks on the Wednesday/ Thursday before these dates (this is so the litter collected can all be picked up by West Suffolk on the following Monday!).

You may have seen a lot more daffodils on the greens this year. Thanks go out to the WI, who with a grant from the parish council last autumn planted bulbs across many of our greens in Wickhambrook.

April signals the start of a new financial year in the clerk's calendar, with preparation of accounts for the past financial year, and submission of all the documents for the annual audit.

Our draft Neighbourhood Plan has now been submitted to West Suffolk, and they should be starting their consultation in early April. Thanks go out to **Cllr Tracey Turner** and the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group who have put in so much work on this – it would not have been possible without them. We will hopefully be on track for a referendum on the plan



in the autumn.

On 24th April, we'll be holding both the Annual Parish Meeting (7:30pm) and a parish council meeting (6:00pm) taking place in the Dulcie Smith Room, MSC.

If there is anything you would like the parish council to consider, please do get in touch with me.

Do feel free to forward this message on to neighbours, friends and family in the parish and ask them to get in touch with me at parishclerk@wickhambrook.org.uk if they would like to be included in our e-newsletter mailing list!

Wishing you all the best, keep safe and well

Hilary Workman
Clerk for Wickhambrook Parish Council

West Suffolk District Councillors

West Suffolk District Councillor for Denston, Stansfield, Hawkedon, Brockley, Wickhambrook, Stradishall, Clare, Hundon, Cavendish, Stoke by Clare, Kedington and others Bobby Bennett

bobby.bennet@suffolk.co.uk

West Suffolk District Councillor for Whepstead Wickhambrook Denston, Stansfield, Brockley, and Hawkedon

Sarah Pugh sarah.pugh@westsuffolk.gov.uk

West Suffolk District Council for Clare, Kedington & Hundon ward

Cllr Nick Clarke -

nick.clarke@westsuffolk.gov.uk

Cllr Marion Rushbrook

marion.rushbrook@westsuffolk.gov.uk

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TALKING TO STRANGERS

Conversations in pub in a small moorland village a couple of hundred miles from here in God's Own County. A weird and wonderful weekend.

Conversation no. 1

Breakfast time, with couple at next table

Me: And where are you heading for today?

Him: I'm working in Newcastle this evening.

Me: What sort of work?

Him: I do some after-dinner speaking

Me: On what sort of topic?

Him: Football. I used to be a footballer.

Me: Forgive me – if I asked your name, would I know it?

Him: Kevin Kegan

Conversation no. 2

Sitting outside in the late afternoon sun, with couple and dog

Them: We're a bit tired. Drove here this morning. Just walked a 10 mile loop. Still have to walk another mile up to the reservoir to get to the car to drive all the way back home.

Us: We can give you a lift to collect your car. We know where you mean, we used to live here, 40 years ago.

Them: You didn't by any chance know the Johnsons?

Us: Of course! Both sadly dead now. Their daughter used to baby sit for us.

Him: I used to go to school with their son. I was his best man!

Conversation no. 3

With 2 walkers having dinner at the next table.

Them: It's been a good day, but we're not used to this uppy-downy terrain.

Us: Where are you from?

Them: Just outside York. A bit flatter there.

Us: We're from Suffolk – not entirely flat, but nowhere near as hilly as here. But we used to live just outside X [a small village in County Durham] up a very steep hill and down a farm track.

Them: It sounds just like where our friend Mary-Jane lives. Dale End Farmhouse.

Us: Mary-Jane?? She bought Dale End from us!!!!

To preserve privacy, some of the names have been changed. (But not in conversation no 1!)

Wickhambrook and District Village Garden Club

This is a new class in the **Flower, Vegetable and Craft Show**, to be held in Wickhambrook Memorial Hall on Saturday July 12th, when the results will be announced and a special cup awarded. Residents of Wickhambrook, Stradishall and Denston may enter. The gardens will be judged by members of local garden clubs in this area.

To enter your garden, please email Polly at pollypuxley@aol.com or text 07588811069



Cottage Garden Cup

Martin

Eighty five today, fantastic! Congratulations from us all



As I settle down with my iPad to write for this month's issue, a little sunshine is glinting through the window. I have been out to take the bin to the kerb, and it is my birthday. Not any old birthday but a fairly big one. This very morning in 1940 I arrived in a Nottingham Nursing Home (don't ask why !) in a snowstorm. I am told I was very tired and didn't bother to cry much but yawned a lot. "Born tired", my father used to say. Actually, he was right most of the time, I have always liked my bed.

But today is a time when I hope you will indulge me and let me talk about myself. Today I am 85. It has to be a day for reflection and thinking about some of the extraordinary things that have happened. Certainly, I never expected to get here ! No personal achievements but many experiences. I have climbed up the inner chamber of the Egyptian pyramid of Cheops into its inner chamber, unfortunately immediately following a flatulent Japanese businessman who had obviously just had a lot of seaweed sushi. I assisted in the opening ceremony of the British Industrial Exhibition in Caracas, Venezuela with the Duke of Kent. This seven-month posting allowed me to visit the Angel Falls and to make friends with the indigenous tribes in the Amazonian Rain Forest at Canaima. I have seen the sun rise over the Buddhist Temple at Borobudur. This was abandoned when the water supply ran out and it was later buried under volcanic lava and vegetation eventually to be unearthed under the governorship of Sir Stamford Raffles, one of our greatest explorers, educators and supporters of international culture, alongside **Darwin** and his Origin of the Species. I was able to present my uncle, who had been a special personal private secretary to **Sir Winston Churchill,** to her Majesty Queen Elizabeth when she opened the Cabinet War Rooms, and I received the Host from Pope John Paul 11 in St Peter's in Rome on the occasion when Mozart was first performed there, and the dome did not fall in ! I have taught children and students all over the world, in Thailand, Florence, the Philippines, Macao, the United States and Latin America in everything from Marketing, Salesmanship, International Relations and just being British. None of this is a personal achievement and in no way reflects glory. It is just what happened.

Being brought up in a Military family I was brought up to hate the Germans. I am now proud and happy to have many close German friends. A close relative was crucified to a tree by the Japanese in front of his comrades on the Burma Road and for years I was unable to think of Japanese in any kind of positive way. Today I am happy to say my attitude has changed.

My life has been full of incident, filled with extraordinary experience, free from engagement in war and very, very happy. I cannot help but feel that in all history of these islands we call Britain I have lived in a most privileged time.

The papers, broadcasters and influencers today are full of foreboding. We gasp, in wonder where the world leaders have sprung from and today, at home and internationally, we can only hope that future generations will be able to sort out the mess we oldies have bequeathed to them.

I thank all those who have taught me what I know, all those who support me now in every way, and give the greatest thanks to the quirk of fortune that allows me to live here in this little corner of Suffolk. I love it and you all more than I can here convey.

Those in some way are the thoughts of an old man taking stock on his birthday and so happy to be here. I hope your lives are full in your own ways. I am sometimes asked what advice I would give to young people. My first would be to travel, to look , listen and absorb as off piste and as widely as your life allows. Going to Benidorm is NOT travelling ! Read intelligently and as widely as possible. Be kind to people and to listen. We have one mouth and two ears ! Take chances, look at nature, relax your shoulders, enjoy and love yourself and what you do and love your fellow man, whatever his origin, accent, shade or person. May your lives be as blessed as mine has been so far and thank you

Martin

Wickhambrook Local History Society News

For our March meeting we welcomed **Mahaut de la Motte,** Assistant Curator of Gainsborough's House Museum in Sudbury. We enjoyed a lively talk with beautiful illustrations on the life and art of **Thomas Gainsborough.**



Gainsborough was born in Sudbury in 1727, the youngest of nine children and did not have an easy start in life as his father was made bankrupt twice. He inherited £20 from a relative to learn a craft and took up painting. Landscapes were his great love but he found that painting portraits was a more lucrative way to earn a living and slowly but surely he began to make a name for himself.

He came into money on the death of his wife and moved to London where he painted a mural for the Foundling Hospital, working alongside more famous and accomplished artists before returning to Sudbury to continue painting local landscapes.

Mr and Mrs Andrews is one of his most recognisable paintings and combines portrait and landscape which at the time was unique to Gainsborough. It was thought to have been painted to pay off some of his father's debts. He then went on to paint local dignitaries with great success and moved to Bath where the wealthy congregated, and became famous for his portraits of aristocrats.



His family background in weaving may explain how he was able to portray fabrics so stunningly and the play of light on satin etc is a feature of his work.

He moved to London and was one of the Founders of the Royal Academy whose first exhibition was in 1769.

He fell out with the RA in 1784 over how his paintings were displayed but several members attended his funeral in 1788.

Such a lot of information! Lots to learn and marvel at! Another excellent evening.

Problem page

with Carol Reay-Glover



CAROL is a trained counsellor living locally who can offer advice on personal problems, such as relationships, divorce, child issues, employment, depression - or general worries. Email her in complete confidence at carolreay1@icloud.com

Dear Carol,
I have just had a baby, and my mother-in-law is driving me mad. I feel so guilty even thinking that let alone saying it but I need to get it off my chest.
She lives very very close to us and my family live a two-hour drive away. At first it was sweet. because she would bring meals and be very helpful. She has a key and now just lets herself in and sits down and chats. I am too polite to say anything, but I don't want unannounced visits at all, and I am starting to act crossly around her because I have this pent up annoyance. I have spoken to my husband who doesn't really see it as a problem. He's out at work and to him, a visit from his mother is not a big deal. But I am on maternity leave, and this is spoiling my precious time alone with my gorgeous little girl.
I really do not want to rock the boat and yet I can't have these unannounced visits anymore. I really cannot!

Help!

K

Dear K
Oh dear I completely understand how you find yourself in a situation that simply is not ideal. It started with the best of intentions but now it does not work for you. I believe you are being perfectly rational not wanting anyone to have free access to your home. You also want to enjoy your maternity leave. There is no solution that does not involve having some honest conversations. As you are aware that pent up emotions will come out, it will be best to get on with this to offset the risk of an inadvertent angry outburst.
Start with your husband. Explain how you feel and that it is a serious issue for you. Be strong and clear on that; you have the right to feel this way. Hopefully he can see that it is not ideal to have anyone having complete free access to your home. Then plan a chat with your mother-in-law. Either with your husband or woman to woman. I would make this as gentle and safe for her as you can. Maybe you take her out to lunch and explain to her. Make it clear how much you value the help she has given you and her support. But that you need this boundary. Make your boundary plans in advance according to what you need – perhaps that she texts you to ask if it's convenient to drop in? Or that she doesn't use her spare key except in emergencies? Or you could even set times for her visits in advance? Know in advance what you are asking for. The more gentle and kind you can be the better this will go. And be prepared to follow it up if she initially feels hurt by the change. Give her some time to adjust. New boundaries can cause issues but clear boundaries are actually helpful for all.

Good luck K. With clarity, kindness and goodwill this can be changed.
Carol

THE CLASP 2025 SURVIVAL/SUCCESSION PROBLEM

CLASP has three core activities: -

The **Seniors' Lunch Club** operating *every* Wednesday, providing an affordable lunch and a social interaction opportunity for between 20 and 30 clients each time.
The **Shopping Minibus** taking clients to Haverhill *every* Tuesday morning, as well as being used by CLASP itself and other local organisations for occasional excursions.
CarAid taking clients to and from medical appointments whenever required, using a pool of about thirty volunteer drivers using their own cars. This in 2024 has averaged 37 trips per month.

In addition, there are two support activities: -

Monthly Table Sales in Clare Town Hall, a fund raising activity.
Ad hoc fund-raising events, such as concerts, raffles and race nights.
The **Seniors Lunch Club.** This provides a lunch (costing £8.00), with pre and post lunch social association and activities, and is used by between 20-30 clients. A significant number of those clients are taken to and from the Centre by the CLASP Minibus, and they depend on this service to be able to attend the lunch. The Centre is run by a Senior Centre Manager assisted by several volunteers.
The **CLASP Minibus.** The use of this is currently organised by the CLASP Chairman, and the minibus is driven on a rota basis by either the Minibus Manager or one of the appropriately qualified volunteer drivers. The organisation of this service requires the arrangement of the drivers' rota, the refuelling and cleaning and servicing of the vehicle, as well as the "paper administration" such as the licensing and invoicing users for its services. At present, the CLASP Chairman is also the Minibus Manager.
NB. The minibus operation is clearly essential for the Shopping Minibus service, as well as being an integral and necessary part of the Seniors Lunch Club operation, a significant number of whose attendees depend on the minibus to transport them to and from the Club.
CarAid is run by a CarAid Organiser and although falling under the CLASP "umbrella", CarAid could be operated independently of CLASP, subject to a funding source being found. However, it should be noted that the CarAid Organiser has been doing this task for 7 years, and it would be prudent for an alternate to be identified.



If the Minibus service were to cease because there was no Minibus Manager, or drivers available, the Shopping Minibus trips would end. It would also clearly have a detrimental impact on the numbers of clients able to attend the Seniors Lunch Club.
The forthcoming changes in CLASP Management in May 2025 will need to ensure the ongoing management of the Minibus, to ensure that CLASP can continue its current levels of operation.

This is almost certainly the most difficult immediate problem facing CLASP at present, followed closely by the difficulty in finding a new CLASP Chairman.
John Webb

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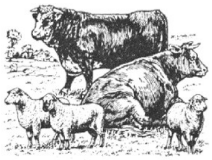
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