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PARISH PUMP

No 381 parish.pump@gmail.com January/February 2025

Christmas has passed but it is not forgotten!









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Stradishall Parish Council News

A meeting of **Stradishall Parish Council** took place on Monday 6th January 2025. District Councillors **Marion Rushbrook, Karen Richardson and Nick Clarke** attended along with two members of the public. The Parish Council discussed a number of items, including approving documentation for the annual audit in April 2025.

District Council Report

Abbeycroft Leisure are keen to organise a fitness event on Stradishall Playing Field. Councillors supported the idea.

Suffolk County Council update - Devolution for Suffolk

Suffolk County Council held a meeting on 9th January 2025 to decide whether it should submit an expression of interest to the Government to be part of the Devolution Priority Programme.

Key to the proposals is a reorganisation of council structures, particularly in two-tier areas like Suffolk, with a shift away from district, borough and county councils towards unitary councils. The government argues that unitary councils can deliver better outcomes for residents and save money that can be reinvested in public services.

Alongside reorganisation, the government is also proposing to create new mayoral authorities – with a single directly elected mayor covering larger areas (for example Norfolk and Suffolk) and with powers over strategic policy areas like transport infrastructure, health improvement and blue light services.

At this stage, no decisions have been made about what will happen in Suffolk.

BT phone box in The Street

BT has applied to remove the telephone equipment from the phone box in The Street as the phone is not used. As the phone box is listed, Suffolk Preservation Society submitted a response stating that they are happy for the telephony to be removed but BT should remain responsible for preserving the box. Stradishall Parish Council agreed with Suffolk Preservation Society's comments and submitted a similar response.

Consultation on strengthening standards in local Government

The Government is currently consulting on strengthening the Standards and Conduct Framework which sets out the seven principles of **selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership** which councillors should adhere to. The changes would introduce the power for all local authorities to suspend councillors or mayors found to be in serious breach of their code of conduct and, as appropriate, interim suspension for the most serious and complex cases that may involve police investigations. A new category of disqualification would be introduced for gross misconduct and for those subject to a sanction of suspension more than once in a 5-year period.

Comments are invited from local councils and residents. The closing date is 26th February 2025 and the online survey can be found at https://consult.communities.gov.uk/local-government-standards-and-conduct/strengthening-the-standards-and-conduct-framework/consultation/

Contact details for Stradishall Parish Council

Tel: 07880 686069



stradishallparishcouncil@yahoo.co.uk
Web site: www.stradishall.onesuffolk.net
Minutes of meetings are available on the Parish Council website.

Are you interested in playing cricket?



Lidgate and Ousden Cricket Club are looking for new members to play and help with the running of the Club. It welcomes players of all ages, ability and experience and where you live is no barrier to joining.

The Club started in Lidgate in 1978 and has its ground in Ousden. It is an enthusiastic supporter of friendly village cricket, with many of its dozen or so annual fixtures held against other local teams in the area.

They are at a point where several players and committee members are getting on a bit, resulting in a need for new people to join who can play and/or help with the many aspects of running a cricket club.

If you are interested, and would like to get involved, please contact us to have a chat and find out more, please contact **John Whitefield on 07967 165043.**

Meet the Wickhambrook Parish Recorder

Are you interested in village history, or the history of your house?
Do you remember the Millennium Project?
Do you have information to share?
I will be at the Wickhambrook Farmers' Market in February
Please come and say hello
Dorothy Anderson

Rector's Ramblings – February2025



Rector's Ramblings – February 2025 (Love – it's all Greek to me!)

February, the shortest month of the year, often feels like a blur. Yet, nestled within its icy grip, we find a celebration that warms the heart: Valentine's Day.

For many, it's a day for grand gestures – extravagant bouquets, romantic dinners, and perhaps even a diamond ring. But what is love truly about? Is it simply fleeting emotions, a whirlwind of passion, or something deeper, more enduring?

The Bible offers profound insights. The New Testament was originally mostly written in koine Greek (with a smattering of Aramaic and Hebrew). In modern English we frequently use the word "Love", in the koine or Biblical Greek there are at least four different words for "Love" each with a different meaning.

The bible uses the Greek word: **agape** – a selfless, unconditional love, the kind God bestows upon us.

This is the love that forgives tirelessly, that rejoices in truth, that endures all things. It's the love that binds us together as a community, as a family of faith.



But the Bible also uses the Greek word: **eros** – acknowledging the powerful, passionate, romantic love that draws two souls together. This love, when nurtured with respect, honesty, and commitment, can be a beautiful reflection of God's own love.

Valentine's Day, then, can be a poignant reminder to nurture these loves in our own lives.

Through **'Agape':**

Love your neighbour: Reach out to the lonely, offer a helping hand to those in need, and strive for kindness in all your interactions.

Forgive freely: Let go of grudges and resentments and extend grace to those who have wronged you.

Love your enemies: This may seem impossible, but it's a profound challenge that can transform our hearts.

Through **'Eros':**

Communicate openly and honestly: Share your hopes, dreams, and fears with your spouse or partner.

Show appreciation and affection: Small gestures of kindness – a thoughtful note, a gentle touch, a listening ear – can go a long way.

Prioritise quality time together: Put away distractions and truly connect with your loved one.

But love is not just for romantic relationships, there is also **'Philia'** the Greek word used for friendship and affection. This might be used to remind ourselves to love our own self, to practise self-compassion, forgiveness of your own shortcomings, and ultimately to cultivate a healthy sense of self-worth. Something a good friend will do for you.

Finally, there is also the word **'Storge'** which is the word used when we talk about the special love that we have for our closest family, children, or parents, and siblings.

Ultimately, love is a verb. It's not just a feeling, but an action. It's about choosing to love, even when it's difficult, even when it's inconvenient.

This February, let us strive to embody the love of God in all our relationships. Let us choose kindness over criticism, forgiveness over resentment, and compassion over indifference.

May this month be a time of renewed love, not just for our spouses or partners, but for our families, our friends, our neighbours, and ourselves. May we all experience the warmth and joy that come from a life lived in love.

With love and blessings

Mark

The Revd Mark Woodrow (Rector)

Monthly Rainfall 2024/2025

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

2023	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Nick Burton- Stradishall	42	5.5	95	51	66	19.5	94	56	70	170	88	75
Tina Lee- Stradishall	50	1	75	57	75	22	93	55	68	168	88	69
Sam Slater- Stansfield	36	4.5	111	69	49	22	94	55	73	181	108	80
Rod Taylor- Stansfield	54	6	105	63	46	19	94	62	66	180	95	90
Jay Gridley-Hundon	40	4	111	60	56	24	84	69	66	187	96	89
Victoria Pakenham - Fenstead End	45.5	5.5	93	54.5	36	19.5	92.2	60	73.8	186.8	88	79.4
Elaine Plumpton - Great Saxham	60	4	114	62	65	28	70	63	49	172	85	94

Rainfall figures have been published in the Pump from the early days under Richard Evan's editorship and after a break of a few years re-emerged some 4/5 years ago. I have been amazed over this time how much interest and comments have been made about the variation between the individual results, which proves people look at them!!! **We have witnessed locally in Stansfield torrential rain in Assington Green and nothing at all in Upper Street** which proves that in the extreme.

As everyone knows our weather patterns are changing and in over 20 years of recording, last February was the wettest I have witnessed. Similarly, September was one of the wettest I have recorded.

May I take this opportunity to thank those that kindly take the time to record and send in monthly results and if anyone else wishes to contribute monthly figures please let Peter know.

Rod Taylor

Wendy Mansfield

WICKHAMBROOOK WOMEN'S INSTITUTE



Wickhambrook WI enjoyed three festive events at the beginning of December. On Saturday 7th December members hosted a "Tea and Cakes" afternoon which also included a Bottle Tombola, Raffle, a Christmas Hamper Raffle and a "Guess the Weight of the Cake" competition. The cake was made by member Jo Taylor. This was followed by a "Wreath-making" afternoon on Sunday 8th December led by **Mitch Karunaratne**. This was very successful and members were delighted with their efforts to produce stunning home-made wreaths. Finally on Tuesday 10th December approximately 40 members enjoyed a Christmas Evening Dinner at the Three Horseshoes pub in Barrow. Meals had been pre-ordered and the staff coped well with a large group of lively WI ladies! The evening became livelier as more bottles of wine were consumed and ladies enjoyed their meal. **Hilary Bradfield** wished everyone a **Merry Christmas and Happy New Year** and members each left with a festive gift.







Hare today gone when…….?

St Mary's Church Hawkedon

Happy New Year (although feels as if its well on its way now!)
Services at St Mary's Church Poslingford for February please:
Sunday, 9 Feb. 9am BCP said Holy Communion
Sunday, 23 Feb 11am. Morning Prayer with hymns
Tuesday, 25 February. 6pm. Taize service
Best wishes, Heather

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If you have seen the regular reports on CLASP CarAid in this monthly magazine, you will be aware that more volunteer drivers are needed to continue to provide the ever increasing demands for its service to your community.

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Wickhambrook, Suffolk

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.

Christmas Carol Services

All the churches in the Parish Pump area had lovely Christmas carol services . Below are some photos that are wonderfully typical













Without volunteers, we'd be a nation without a soul. It is the volunteers that make our churches look so beautiful at Christmas

Country Cooking with Louise Mackrill



February 2025 **Marmalade**
Although there is nothing local or seasonal about oranges to us folk here in Suffolk, many of us will be making marmalade this month as it is very much the season for tarter than tart oranges from the southern Spanish province of Seville. Right now, they are plentiful in our shops, and it is a very British thing to be making marmalade, a staple of our breakfast table. But here I am thinking beyond toast, with an unusual but delightful flavour combination.

Seville minted chicken
6 chicken joints
4 tablespoons home-made marmalade
Small bunch of fresh mint, chopped OR 1 teaspoon mint sauce
3 garlic cloves, crushed
Grated rind and juice of 1 orange



1 oz softened butter
Season the chicken with salt and pepper and arrange in a roasting tin.
Combine marmalade, mint, garlic, orange rind and butter in a bowl and spread over the chicken. Roast at 190oC for 35 – 45 minutes, basting a few times with the pan juices. Remove the chicken and keep warm. Make a sauce in the same pan by slowly adding 10 fl oz chicken stock with 1 heaped tablespoon cornflour and the orange juice.

Bring to the boil stirring briskly and simmer for 2 – 3 minutes, season well, perhaps with a dash of sugar too, and pour over the chicken joints.

Whisky & marmalade pudding
8 slices day-old crusty white bread, crusts removed
50g very soft butter
4 tbsp Seville orange marmalade plus 4 tsp
300ml full-fat milk
248ml pot double cream
3 large eggs
seeds 1 vanilla pod
4 tbsp golden caster sugar
1 tbsp whisky



Butter each piece of bread on both sides, then spread 4 with the 1 tbsp marmalade each. Pop the remaining bread on top to make 4 marmalade sandwiches. Cut into triangles and nestle in rows in a large baking dish. Heat oven to 160C/140C fan/ gas 3.
Beat the milk, cream, eggs, vanilla, sugar and whisky together, then pour over the bread. Leave to soak for 30 mins. Dot the remaining marmalade all over the top of the pud and dust with icing sugar. Bake for 45 mins-1 hr or until puffy and starting to caramelise where the bread breaks out of the custard. Serve warm with a good dollop of clotted cream.

Ginger
I have always been rather fascinated by this funny knobbly rhizome, probably because I didn't really know what to do with it and 'why eat ginger when I don't really like it'? But g is our favourite 'anti' - it is anti-viral, anti-septic, antihistamine, anti-inflammatory and g you have a head col sinus congestion which is a very common thing at this time of year. Ginger is renowned for soothing the stomach & helping to relieve nausea. It is incredibly useful for any inflammatory problems in the body, from rheumatoid arthritis to easing muscle pain after strenuous activity and exercise, this because it contains compounds or essential oils called gingerols that help to interrupt the inflammation process. When we experience a cold, we feel all bunged up with mucus, although most of that feeling comes from inflammation of the mucous membrane in the nose & sinuses. Most conditions & pain in the body are associated with inflammation including muscle pain, arthritis & even skin conditions. Because of these gingerols it can help enhance circulation & lower blood pressure. Of course, ginger has been a staple for Chinese medicine for more than 2,500 years.
So, what is there NOT to like about ginger? Adding a small chunk to your juice is a fantastic way to boost the nutritional value of the juice. It will support your overall immune system so is great to use during the winter months to help fight off colds and bugs.
For a comforting nutritious drink simply blitz a chunk of ginger (scrape the peel off with a small spoon) with freshly squeezed lemon, top up with boiling water and stir in a spoonful of Manuka honey which is said to have higher antibacterial effects than other types of honey. Or, for a daily dose of intense nutrition, juice one apple with a chunk of peeled ginger and knock back the shot in one!
Louise

Carols on Christmas Eve at All Saints Church Stansfield



This year the traditional **Christmas Eve Carol Service** returned to All Saints Church, Stansfield after a short break.
The service was well received by villagers and visitors alike, as the church was filled to capacity of nearly 150 people.
Traditional carols were sung joyously, with the children in the congregation taking a starring role to sing the first verse of Away in a Manger around the crib.
The Christmas story was related in the six readings and afterwards we were all treated to mulled cider and hot mince pies and sausage rolls. The service was taken by our vicar, the **Reverend Eve Bell,** who kept a careful eye on proceedings, ensuring that all ran smoothly.
The church was beautifully decorated with seasonal greenery by a team of volunteers and looked very festive. Worshippers were welcomed to the church by the sound of the bells ringing out through the village. Once inside, we all appreciated the melodic playing of the organ by the talented **Rodney Bullock.**
The PCC would like to thank all those who contributed to making this service a wonderful celebration of Christmas from the cleaners and decorators, the artistic sign painter, the readers, the contributors and servers of mince pies, sausage rolls and mulled cider to the bell ringers and the organist.
The collection was donated to **Nicky's Way,** which is a local charity, which provides support to young people and children in West Suffolk, who have suffered a bereavement. Many thanks to all those who donated.

Sarah (Hopkins)

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I hope that the wines drunk over the festive season were enjoyable and may have encouraged you to learn more about them, so that we can increase the pleasure we derive from imbibing. Whilst we are in the cold, dark, and dreary days of Winter we can take the opportunity to expand our knowledge and thereby learn more about the wines we drink and what to expect from the bottles we buy.

Here are some instruction manuals to help you begin your voyage into the fascinating world of wine.

waterstones.com

Jancis Robinson is a world-renowned wine writer, author of many books, and for a beginner offers the 24-hour Wine expert (£7). Which will begin your journey being a primer it explains the basics. They also offer **Oz Clarke's** Wine by the Glass (£15) Best wine in the Supermarket (£10) and **Hugh Johnson's** Pocket Book '25.(£16)The latter is a comprehensive guide to worldwide wines and vintages and other useful info.

Amazon. The Little book of wine (£6.43) **J. Breitnaur** is another pocket guide.

How to drink wine (£12.75). **T Surgey**.

We all think we know how to drink wine,

Jeff Fellows wines



but this explains how to do it properly, to extract the most pleasure from doing so.

Wine Dine dictionary (£16.39) Is an A-Z of matching food and wine.

A cheaper version is **Which Wine When** (£12.25).

It is a fact that some wines are only meant to be drunk with food and that is when the full complex nature of the wine becomes apparent. This is learnt from experience and experiment but do not be frightened to try any mix of food and wine which appeals to you. These protocols are meant to be broken.

In addition, there are many second handbook shops and sites where wine books are to be found. Here are three,

1 onlineshop.oxfam.org.uk

2 Worldofbooks.com Old editions of HJ's pocketbook

3 MusicMagpie.co.uk HJ's World Atlas of Wine for £3.36

So, in addition to browsing the above you will learn what wines suit your palate, what to look for in a wine and be able to discuss with other oenophiles the endlessly fascinating subject of wine.

Jeff

This magnificent Harmonium was kindly donated to Stradishall Church by Mat Antrobus, one of our bell ringers



Many, many thanks.

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Wickhambrook WI January Meeting

For the first meeting of 2025 we welcomed **Steve Amer** who was introduced as a voice coach. It quickly became apparent that this was to be a talk which included audience participation as Steve talked about the importance of music, and in particular singing, on people's physical, emotional and mental health. We were encouraged to join in a call and response aboriginal lullaby - led by Steve. After that we launched into a rousing rendition of "Que Sera Sera", "There's a Kind of Hush" and "Puppet on a String". Steve had been impressed by the fact that we had sung "Jerusalem" at the start of our meeting as this is a tradition that not all WI's maintain. It was no surprise that all our members joined in the community singing.

Steve works with the charitable group Beccles Choir which began with the idea of forming a choir for people who cannot sing! The aim is to make the choir inclusive for people who perhaps cannot read music or who feel self-conscious about their singing ability. More information can be found at **The Voice Cloud**.

Steve talked a bit about how after the Second World War two servicemen realised the effect of nurses singing to wounded soldiers had on their recovery. Music Therapy has since become an important part of helping in the recovery of physical and mental health. Suffolk Record Offices wanted to engage young people in researching their past and thought music would be a useful tool. They were particularly interested in sea shanties linked to the fishing industry along the Suffolk/Norfolk coastline.

We all enjoyed Steve's interactive talk and were in agreement that music truly has a positive effect on one's physical and mental health. **Wendy Mansfield**

Memories are Golden

OPen

Monday-Thursday 09.30-2pm

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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.

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The Morris Men of Little Egypt - We need new Members and Musicians!



In the early summer of 1988, a motley band of **Glemsford** men decided that they would form a Morris Dancing team in support of the Church fete. It was intended to provide some light entertainment to the village folk and, hopefully, raise a few pounds for the Church.

Frederick Sanders (a renowned local expert in matters Morris and a fine Melodeon player) was recruited to teach that motley band a couple of dances that they could perform in the grounds of the vicarage at the June fete.



"Willing volunteers" were plucked from the village……and what a mixed bunch they were! We had a local farmer, a Parish Councillor, a retired USAF Colonel, a thatcher, a teacher and an assortment of business people and tradesmen……all living within the parish boundary of **Glemsford**. Nervously, we set about practising the dances in readiness for the big day…….and, of course, much discussion followed in the **Black Lion** after each session…. what will we wear? Where can we purchase bells? Fortunately, one of the team was the Purchasing Manager of a local office furniture company…. rolls of fabric, straw hats and boxes of bells suddenly appeared and, with the help of our wives and partner`s tailoring skills, we were fully kitted out.

On a glorious sunny afternoon on the 18th June, 1988 we assembled with our Melodeon player and mentor on the "sweeping lawns" of the local vicarage. The melodic tune for our first dance, **Bean Dibbing,** started and we were off, followed, in quick succession, by our two other dances, Banbury Bill and The Blue Bells of Scotland.

We were all stunned by the response from the crowd……. we expected chortles and guffaws…. **what we received were cheers and relentless applause**. What was even more surprising was just how much we had all enjoyed ourselves!

After retiring to the Black Lion for well-earned refreshments we reflected on the afternoon and the great fun we had. After considerable further "refreshment" it was decided that it would be a terrible waste to just do that one performance…….and so it was that **The Morris Men of Little Egypt** was born.

Some 36 years later we are still going strong with some of the original members still dancing. During that time, we have danced all over the UK and have toured Germany, France and Ireland and been rapturously received.



Hopefully, some of the readers of this fine magazine will have enjoyed seeing us perform locally. We are always dancing at the Cavendish and Hartest Fetes, we hold the Summer Solstice event at the Hawkedon Queens Head every year – with the infamous sacrificial burning of the Straw Man, and we dance at local pubs throughout the summer months.

Like many groups we do need new recruits to keep the tradition alive for the future so if you have ever thought about giving Morris dancing a go or if you are a musician and fancy playing for us why not give it a go? You certainly do not need any Morris experience to join us - we were all complete novices when we started, and you will find that we are a very friendly and sociable bunch from all walks of life. We are also renowned for not taking ourselves too seriously and we put great emphasis on maintaining a strong social element on the side.

Over the winter months we practise weekly in **Glemsford** in readiness for the following season and this is an ideal time to come along and see whether you enjoy it……. I can tell you that very few people fall by the wayside.

If you would like to give it a try why not call or email me to have a chat or just turn up at a practice night – at the Glemsford Methodist Church Hall every Tuesday at 8.00. After practice we are always in the bar of the Cavendish Five Bells…. usually before 9.30!

Whether you are keen to try Morris dancing, would like to play for us or are just curious…. I can assure you that you will receive a very warm welcome !

Neville Parry Squire – The Morris Men



Denston Village Hall 100 Club Quiz night
STEFAN, TREASURER
Denston Village Hall
01440 820675

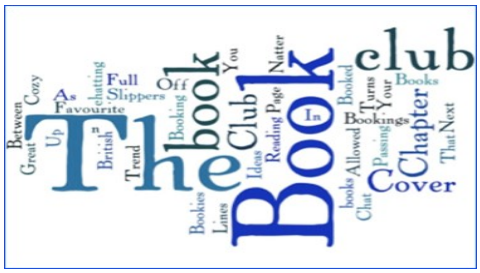
This is the January 2025 draw for the 100 club

The Denston Village Hall 100 club winners for January 2025 are:-

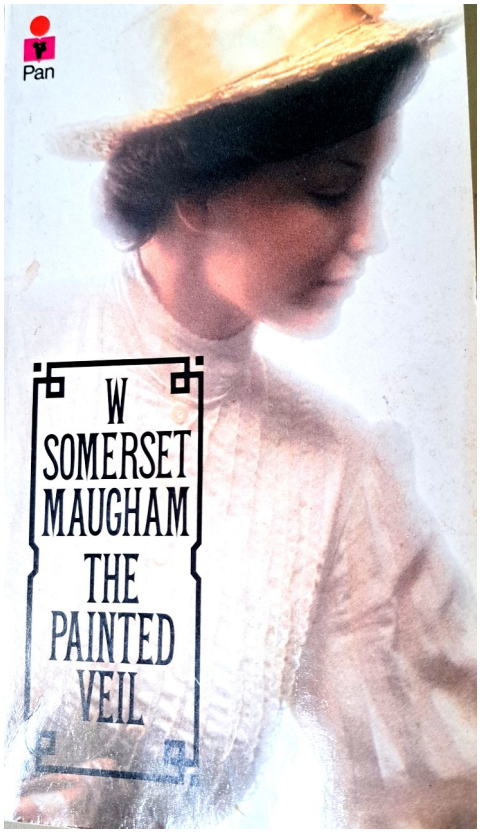
Peter Eborall	**£20**
Twitchet Family	**£10**
Rosemary Macaire	**£ 5**

Thanks Stefan





Recent calls in book club to read 'a classic' led to a lot of deliberation as to what to choose -in the end we plumped for '**The Painted Veil' by Somerset Maugham,** which proved a popular decision. Written a century ago it



offered some fascinating insights into the life of the British middle classes at home and abroad in the colonies during the 1920s. We were intrigued by the title which is derived from a quote from **Percy Bysshe Shelly**: 'the painted veil which those who live call Life'. We connected this to the many characters in the book who are living a façade – a false life ('the painted veil') – where social niceties and expectations are more important than being true to oneself and living a more genuine life. Our protagonist, **Kitty Garstin,** is one such character, but the twists and turns of fate deliver her on a path of self - discovery – 'the path that led to peace'- from being a vain, shallow 'silly and frivolous' socialite to someone capable of being in touch with a more authentic sense of self and able to live a more fulfilling and honest life

Kitty's inner revelations are precipitated by a journey which takes her from the comfortable drawing rooms of South Kensington to the depravities of a remote ancient city in China, Mei-tan- fu, where a cholera epidemic is raging. She arrives there via a spell in Hong Kong where her husband Walter Fane works as a bacteriologist for the colonial government. She has married not for love but for fear of 'missing the market' and being left 'on the shelf'! Bowing to social pressure and worried she was 'beginning to lose her first freshness', rather than making the 'brilliant match' her good looks had promised, she settles for Walter, a man she comes to variously describe as 'very reserved', 'has no charm', 'restrained, cold and self- possessed', but who 'loved her madly'. The story starts with Kitty being caught in flagrante with the dashing Charles Townsend, Assistant Colonial Secretary, with whom she started an affair shortly after arriving in Hong Kong. For Walter, love turns to contempt, and he wreaks a terrible revenge – she is to accompany him to the cholera- stricken city where he intends to be the doctor in charge, or he will petition for divorce. Rather than face the social disgrace of the latter she is forced to choose the horrifying prospect of the former, 'was it possible he wanted her to die? She answered her own outrageous thought'.

The 'dated' style of writing takes a bit of getting use to and some expressed a slight tedium at the beginning but were soon on board once the story moves to Mei-tan-fu. The author's skills as a playwright shone through with the compelling and dramatic dialogue between the characters which really helped to move the plot forward and build characterisation. We admired how depictions of the minutiae of facial features and outward appearance could not only create a vivid image of the characters but were also analysed to determine their personality and temperament. Someone noted the similarity to **Dickens** in **Maugham's** detailed physiognomic descriptions of characters.

Kitty's ongoing internal dialogue is particularly revealing in how her character changes and develops in relation to external events. In Mei-tan-fu, stripped of 'Society', Kitty is forced to reassess her life, her misplaced love for Townsend – whom she comes to regard as 'a worthless creature' - and her feelings for her husband. She sees his 'exquisite kindliness' and accepts the painful experience of being alone when his love is removed. She is drawn to the French nuns at the convent where they care for orphans and the sick. She is 'deeply touched' by their dignity and reverence and in their presence feels 'humble and ashamed'. Out of all this comes a new sense of purpose and perspective where the things which were once so important to her seem absurd and insignificant. Through all the unhappiness she has suffered and facing up to her 'faults and follies' she builds an inner strength to move forward and to accept whatever is to come.

The novel captures the social attitudes and behaviours of the time. We were shocked by the pervasive Anglocentric view of beauty influencing Kitty's first, very negative, reaction to the Chinese orphans. Colonial life displays the casual presumption of British superiority in relation to the indigenous population. Attitudes to women are equally abhorrent to the modern reader – however, from coping with her own tribulations at the hands of men Kitty develops a very enlightened outlook for her own daughter 'I want her to be fearless and frank…a person independent of others…'

The outright racism and sexism are features of its time but as a study in personal growth through pain and suffering it is timeless. There were **Somerset Maugham** enthusiasts in the group who recommended a second reading to really appreciate the profundity and insightfulness of the text. It was also interesting discussing the book in relation to the film adaptation – although not entirely true to the book its brilliant cinematography greatly enhanced how we experienced the written word. We were all impressed and allowing for the slow burn start we awarded a unanimous 4 stars.

Next time we are reading **Mother's Boy** by **Patrick Cale** and if you would like to join us please contact annedennis1@live.co.uk or 07557357362.

The sexist, racist and misogynistic attitudes and behaviours were quite a shock to the modern reader but had to be seen in the context of the time.

Anne Dennis



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January Farming by Portia Brown

I hope you all had a wonderful Christmas and New Year. We have been busy calving over Christmas and have ten gorgeous calves with another two due from the 1st group of twelve heifers, 1st time mothers. We will then start again in February with another twenty cows due. As the cattle are housed over the winter months, we feed them haylage, fermented grass cut from our fields and fodder beet. Fodder beet is a natural high energy, highly palatable feed source for cattle and provides an excellent source of sugar energy to help rumen function and help with milk production. We call it cattle chocolate.

The sharp snap of cold weather enabled us to finish ploughing which was a great relief after a very wet couple of months. The breeding ewes have been running with the rams since the 2nd week in November. All the ewes are being scanned in February to see if they're in lamb and how many lambs they are carrying. They will also be dagged. **Dagging,** also known as **crutching**, removes the wool between the legs, the tail, and the rear end of the sheep. We do this prior to lambing, as it keeps everything clean and also allows us to see the rear much easier.













Stansfield: Good Neighbours and the Parish Council help wildlife conservation.

Suffolk Wildlife Trust have thanked **Stansfield Parish Council** and the village Good Neighbours Scheme for raising £242 towards their wildlife conservation work in the county. This figure was described as 'significant ' and very welcome by SWT conservation officer **Cathy Smith** who gave a talk organised by the Parish Council at Stansfield Village Hall in November, with refreshments made and served by Good Neighbour volunteers. The money was raised by collection at that event, and also at the Village Hall Shopping Christmas Evening, later in the same month, when Good Neighbour '*Elves*' ran games including Name a Reindeer and Guess the Weight of a pudding made and donated by GN volunteer **Yvonne Spillett.** Good Neighbour volunteers were busy throughout December giving lifts to and from medical and hospital appointments and collecting and delivering shopping for those unable to get out. Please ring our **HELPLINE 07827 128511** if you need practical help ..or just a chat! Want to become a volunteer? We'd love to have you …Please give us a call.

EVENTS IN STRADISHALL

We have a programme of events planned, including a summer concert by a professional cellist, a delicious Harvest Lunch, and A Village Christmas – with Father Christmas himself!

First of all, a date for your diaries: to see out winter, on **Saturday 22nd March, C B Jackson,** author and professional storyteller, will be telling some *Scary Suffolk Tales* (Fortify yourselves with mulled wine in the interval! – soft drinks also available)

Further details next month. Carol Thompson

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West Suffolk



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The former Officers' Mess RAF Stradishall

"Sydney Camm's Monoplane Piston Fighters"

F36/34 Hurricane to Sea Fury



Presented by display pilot Rod Dean

Thursday 20th February 2025 at 7.30pm

Admission free to members Visitors £4 at the door, no need to book For more information text or sms 07784065101

www.havavsoc.org.uk

www.havavsoc.org.uk

HT Young's Fish Ltd



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Wednesday - Willow Tree farm shop 9-1pm
Thursday - Coggeshall Market Hill 7-12pm
- Long Melford 1:30-4pm
Friday - Clare market 7:30-10am
- Lavenham 11-1pm - Depden 2-4pm

East Anglian Times Press Release

Stradishall church famous - what???

Church community embark on roof repair project for village's 700-year-old church

A Suffolk church community is embarking on a project to repair its 14th century church – with a structural investigation revealing its roof is water damaged.

The south aisle roof at St Margaret's Church in Stradishall is in dire need of repair and water was discovered leaking into the building, with buckets put out to catch the drips.





Churchwarden **Peter Thompson** temporarily sealed the roof and applied for money from the Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich's £9 million Minor Repairs and Improvements Grants fund – securing £3,600 for investigation work to assess the damage.

Peter, who has experience refurbishing a number of buildings both in England and in France, said interest in the ancient church had grown in the community since the work began to restore it.

He said: "People in the village, many who were not really churchgoers, have got involved and have offered to help. "What is great is we have done a lot of things inside the church as well, helped by the village community.

"We have now painted the inside of the building; it's a lovely church to come and visit.

" Although my background is in the chemical industry, I have always had an interest in building and restoration, so I thought I'd help by using my experience to put things right."

T The main part of the church building dates back to the 14th century, including its magnificent 16th century bells which ring out across the area every Wednesday, and a church on the same site was recorded in the Domesday Book.

In December, architect Philip Orchard and structural engineer Rupert Clarke visited St Margarets to investigate the damage in advance of putting together a rescue and repair plan.

Peter said there were plans afoot to apply for additional grants and fundraise for the estimated £120,000 cost of repairing the roof. Despite the damage to the roof, the church continues to host services and events as part of the Bansfield Benefice.

Toby Hart, the Diocese's Church Buildings Support Officer, said: "We were happy to support the church community with a grant to pay for investigation work to discover how the roof can be repaired.

"It is so important our churches are protected as places for worship as well as vital community buildings.

"We would encourage churches in Suffolk who are looking for funding through the Minor Repairs and Improvements Grant scheme to get in contact."

For more information on the Minor Repairs and Improvements Grants fund see www.cofesuffolk.org/for-parishes/church-buildings-accessible-to-all/minor-repairs-and-improvements-grants





CLARE LIAISON AND SUPPORT PROJECT
(Charity No. 1029710)

2025 FUNDRAISING TABLE SALES

CLARE TOWN HALL, 9.30 a.m. to 1.00 p.m.
On the following Saturdays

February 15
March 15
May 17
June 21
July 19
August 16
September 20
October 18
November 15

all dates coincide with Clare Market

FOR INFORMATION AND TABLE BOOKINGS.
TEL. 07980 948167
email; fundraising@clasp-clare.co.uk

TABLES **£9** (+ Tombola Priez Donation) **Double table £15**
Tables are provided size: 6' x 2'

DOORS OPEN TO TABLE HOLDERS 8.45 am.

REFRESHMENTS and TOMBOLA in Aid of CLASP

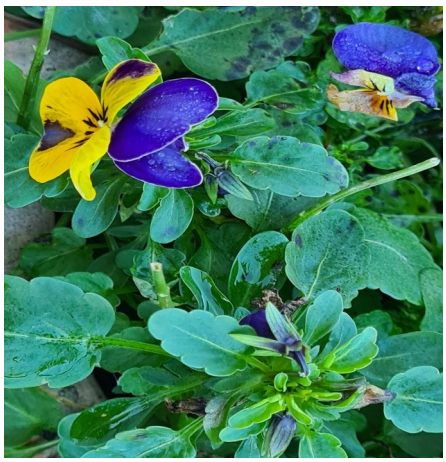
I don't know if you saw/heard it but Kathy Stanford, Toby Hart and I were on BBC radio and television and ITV Anglia at the weekend of 12th Feb— quite an honour.

Supporting Each Other: Focus on Winter

Support available this winter
Debt can cause financial hardship and stress. Sometimes even well-managed debt can spiral out of control when life circumstances change. Do not struggle alone. There are several services, both West Suffolk wide and nationally that can support with financial concerns and managing your wellbeing. For local support please visit the council's Cost of Living support pages: Cost of living (westsuffolk.gov.uk)
Check your entitlement to other benefits such as Housing Benefit, Support for Mortgage Interest, Council Tax Reduction, Attendance Allowance, Carers Allowance and more. These could increase your income and help you better afford your bills. Use an online benefits calculator or contact an advice agency such as **Age UK or Citizens Advice.**
www.entitledto.co.uk
For specialist debt advice, the following organisations can help:

Citizens Advice West Suffolk Citizens Advice West Suffolk | Free, confidential, independent advice (suffolkwestcab.org.uk) Advice line: **0808 278 7868** (Monday to Friday, 9:30am to 3:30pm)
National Debt line Telephone appointments, webchat **0808 808 4000** (9am-8pm, Monday-Friday) https://nationaldebtline.org
Christians Against Poverty (CAP) Face to face appointments, home visits 0800 328 0006 https://capuk.org
Local Support
Local Welfare Assistance Scheme: www.suffolk.gov.uk/lwas A fund set up for those experiencing financial hardship and can help with food, heating, clothing, fuel and white goods. Full details and eligibility criteria can be found on the website. This fund is changing so it is important you keep up to date by visiting the website.
Applications are made online, or with support from a partner organisation such as Citizens Advice.

Warm Homes Suffolk: *Warm Homes Suffolk* Grants available to help insulate and make properties more energy efficient. Eligibility can be checked online or by contacting **03456 037 686.** This fund is available to homeowners, renters and landlords and is provided throughout the county.

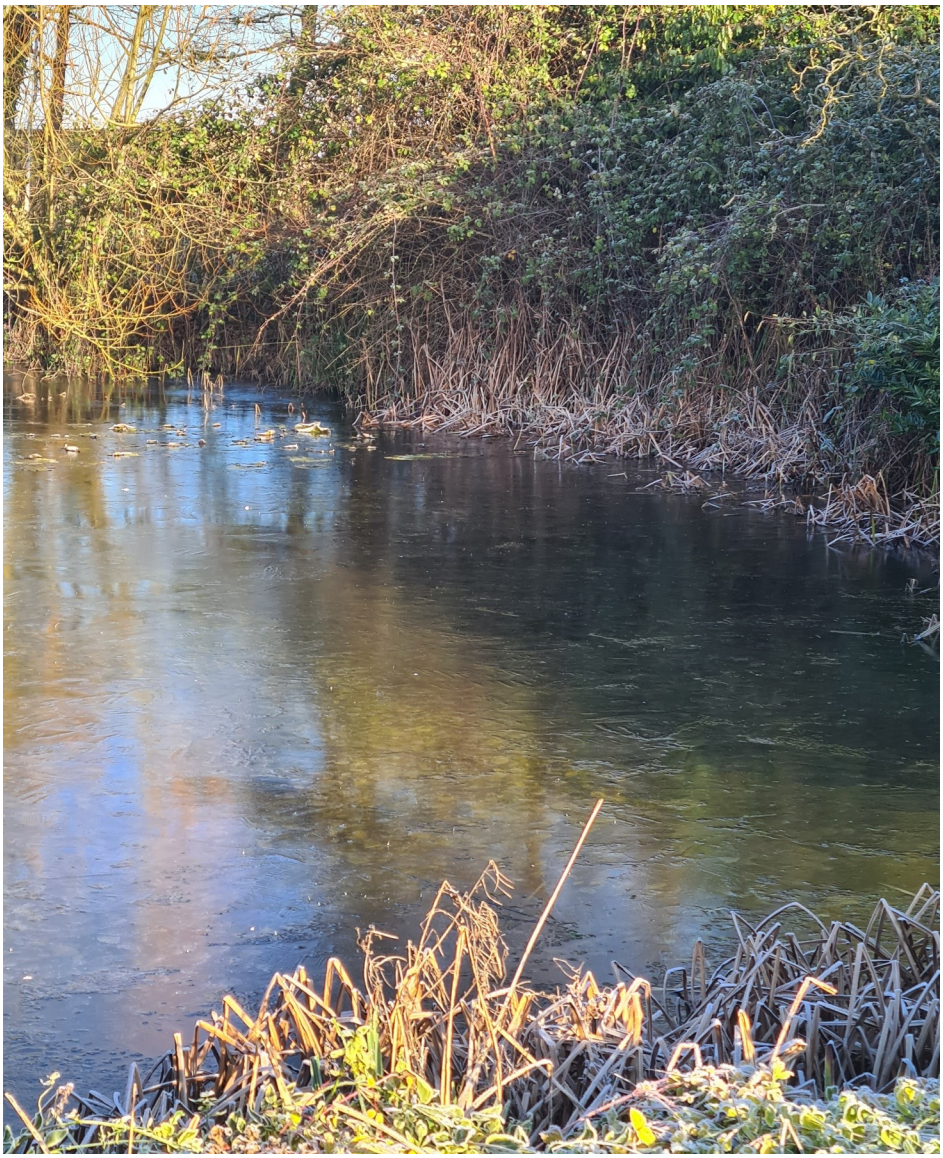


Free Defibrillator lessons LIDGATE Village Hall Saturday 1st February 14.00. everyone is welcome, just turn up



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

A Suffolk pond to be proud of - the moorhens love it



Community Engagement Policy

Good News: No increase for Stansfield residents!
For the second year running, Stansfield residents will **not** face an increase in the amount of parish rates they pay.
At their meeting in January Stansfield Parish Council (SPC) decided to hold the parish rate precept for 2025-26 at the same level as in the past year. *"We feel this is important and prudent when many residents are struggling with their household finances*," said Rex Barnes, chairman of SPC.
Dangerous driving.
Concerned about dangerous and intimidating driving along the lanes in and around Stansfield, the Parish Council will send a second letter to Suffolk County Council Highways and to Suffolk Police asking if there are any deterrents that can be deployed. A first letter had received an acknowledgement but no response, the Parish Clerk said.
Gathering ideas, needs and concerns about Stansfield from residents.
Ideas are being sought from residents on ways in which the Parish Council can best encourage them to give their views. This is to support the work now starting on drafting a **Community Engagement Policy** for the Council, which will set out what, how, when and where the PC will try to gather opinions.
Assets of Community Value.
The village pub, the Village Hall and playing field, the two old water pumps, the old telephone booth, and the footpaths and views around the village, are some of the assets that the parish Council is to ask West Suffolk Council to record as being of value to the village community. If anyone would like to propose any other assets to join this list, please contact the Parish Clerk : stansfieldpc@outlook.com
Next Meeting of Stansfield Parish Council :
Wednesday 12th March 2025 at the Village Hall, 7pm
Coffee Morning and annual village tidy-up, Village Hall,10-1pm Saturday 26th April

Rex Barnes

Chairman Stansfield Parish Council

	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** **poslingforddd@outlook.com** **07814 246 204**	**Marc Allison** marc@theallisons.co.uk	**Chris Turner** **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** **077946851198**
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**

Wickhambrook Local History Society News – December 2024

Forty members of the Society enjoyed a Savoury Supper prepared by the ladies of the committee. Homemade soup with crusty bread followed by crumbles and other desserts and tea and coffee were enthusiastically received before we settled down to listen to the speaker for the evening, **Kev Kitcher.** Kev joined the army at 16 and enjoyed a varied career, travelling the world before becoming a Beefeater at the Tower of London. He and his family lived there (very cold!) and he enjoyed giving guided tours and taking part in many ceremonial occasions. He then became part of the **Yeoman Guard.** It was amazing to hear behind the scenes stories of State occasions, such as the Queen Mother's 100th birthday and the funeral of Queen Elizabeth II.
We return in the New Year. Tuesday 21st January at 7.30pm in the WI Hall when **Jenny Barley** will talk on **The Stuart Monarchy** in Suffolk
Dorothy Anderson



CAR AID REPORT - DECEMBER 2024
CLASP Committee Meeting Thursday 9th. January 2025

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
Bookings taken as at 5th. January month to date – 11

The number of trips made in the 2023 year at 389 was **42%** more than made in 2022.
This year the number of trips made in 2024 at 444 is higher by **14%** than 2023.
As will be seen from the Statistics Summaries above, the demand for our service continues to grow significantly. However, the difficulty in finding volunteers has continued. Nevertheless, we have always managed to provide the service required, despite demands sometimes arising or changing at short notice. **It is important to note that in Q4 2024, as in Q2 and Q3, we used 30 drivers during each 3 months, virtually our whole available complement.**
One item to report. Jacqueline Webb, a lady for whom John Knight made numerous twice weekly prescriptions pick up and delivery for several months during the last quarter, sadly passed away last Christmas Day. Many thanks to John for his considerable assistance for Jacqueline.

I REPEAT LAST MONTHS'S COMMENT. - Recognising the increasing difficulty in servicing demand, I propose we concentrate our service on Clare and the immediate villages and stop providing CarAid to Ridgewell, Wixoe and Hundon. We have no Ridgewell drivers, and only one Hundon driver. Despite regular advertising for drivers in the Hundon Herald, we haven't had a single response.
NB again. I am passing Cavendish requests to Cavendish Care, and Stansfield area requests to Stansfield Good Neighbours.
The ongoing relevant CarAid Statistic - In the 81 months, since April 2018 when I took over, CarAid has helped 250 different clients, making 1,837 trips.
John Webb 5th. January 2025

CAR AID - STATISTICS

2023	Journeys	Clients	Where to	Drivers	Mileage £	Cancels
First Quarter Total	*106*				*1,318.90*	*21*
Second Quarter Total	*113*				*1,692.85*	*16*
Third Quarter Total	*78*				*1,080.40*	*5*
October	25	20	11	11	343.25	3
November	35	26	15	11	443.25	3
December	32	25	15	11	404.45	3
Fourth Quarter Total	*92*				*1,190.95*	*9*
Year 2023 Total	**389**				**5,283.10**	**51**
Year 2023 Month Average	**32.4**		**Months**	**12**	**440.26**	

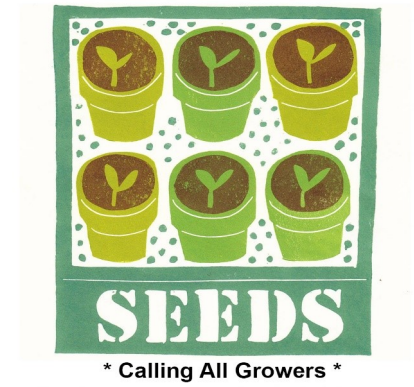
2024	Journeys	Clients	Where to	Drivers	Mileage £	Cancels
First Quarter Total	*138*				*1,721.05*	*14*
Second Quarter Total	*109*				*1,601.95*	*14*
Third Quarter Total	*106*				*600.60*	*19*
October	37	25	14	21	496.80	5
November	31	20	9	18	328.00	4
December	23	16	12	13	248.40	6
Fourth Quarter Total	*91*				*1,073.20*	*15*
Year 2024 to date Total	**444**				**4,996.80**	**62**
Year 2024 Month Average	**37.0**		**Months**	**12**	**416.40**	

Stansfield Village Hall News – February 2025

Cinema in Stansfield
After a break in January 'Cinema in Stansfield returns on Friday 21st of February, when we will be showing '**After Love'** starring **Joanna Scanlan** who plays Mary in a role that won her the 2021 BAFTA for Best Actress. Mary is a white, English Muslim who converted many years ago to marry Ahmed (Nasser Memarzia), with whom she lives near the Dover cliffs. Ahmed's work takes him back and forth across the Channel to Calais and when Ahmed dies suddenly, Mary discovers that the husband she thought she knew had another life in France, a life completely at odds with the home they built together in England. Cast adrift, Mary makes the voyage to Calais, the white cliffs crumbling in her mind's eye as she crosses the water into an unknown world. The more she discovers about Ahmed's newly discovered identity, the more she wonders about her own – how she got here and where she now belongs.
'After Love' won 3rd place in the 2024 poll of screenings suggested by our audience, but there wasn't space for it in the 2024 schedule. So we are offering it now as a New Year treat – to kick-start the 2025 season of 'Cinema in Stansfield'. Doors 7pm, Film 7.30 pm. Licensed Bar, Hearing loop. Ticket £5 on the door.



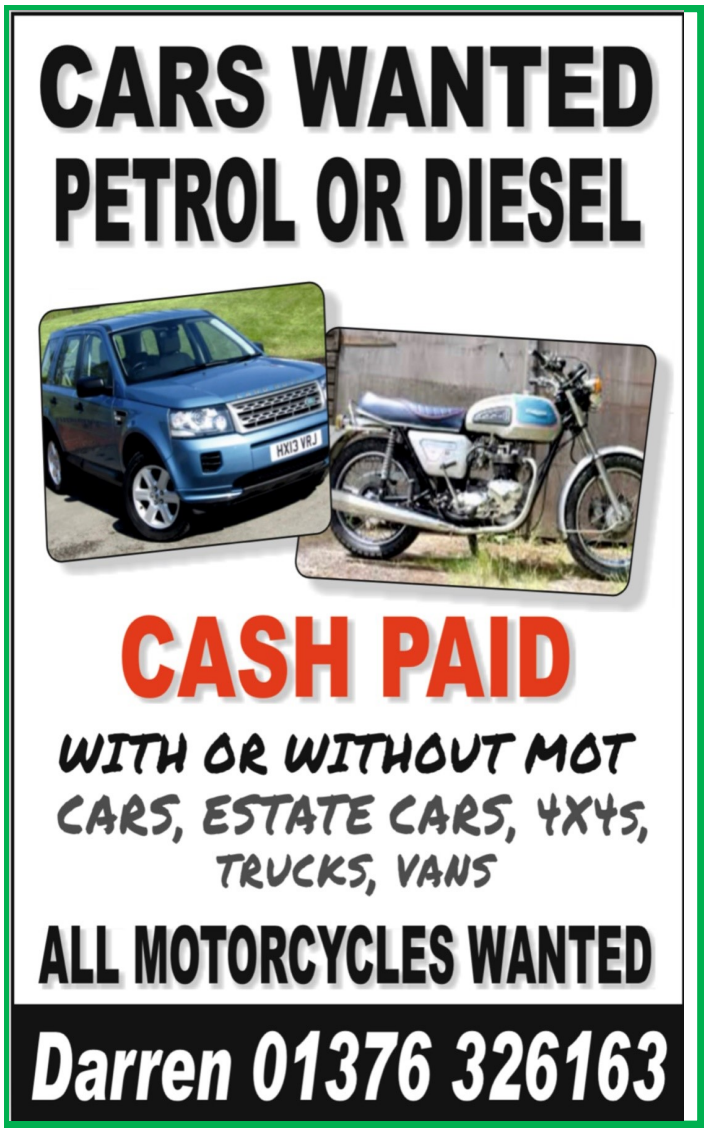
Stansfield Plant Sale – grower's appeal
We are planning to hold this year's plant sale on Saturday 17th May. Calling all growers – could you raise some extra plants this spring in aid of our village hall? Herbs, flowers, fruit and veg, all gratefully received. Thank you!



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 bobbybennet@suffolk.couk
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 Cllr Karen Richardson karen.richardson@westsuffolk.gov.uk





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Tel/Fax 01787278016
www.davidprykemotorrepairs.co.uk
Email: davidpryke@aol.com

The Bansfield Benefice

Services for February 2025 DRAFT
https://www.bansfieldbenefice.org.uk/services/

Date	Time	Church	Details
02 Feb	10:00 am	Denston (Candlemass | HC)	Celebrant: Revd Barbara Sherlock Organist: Liturgical colour: Proper
09 Feb	10:00 am	Cowlinge (Fourth Sunday before Lent | HC)	Celebrant: Revd Eve Bell Organist: Liturgical colour:
16 Feb	10:00 am	Ousden (Third Sunday before Lent | HC)	Celebrant: Revd Eve Bell Organist: Liturgical colour:
23 Feb	10:00 am	Lidgate (Second Sunday before Lent | HC)	Celebrant: Revd Eve Bell Organist: Liturgical colour:

Please check the Benefice website for changes each week

RED KITE TILING

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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



Martin is taking this month off. We wish him all the best and look forward to next month

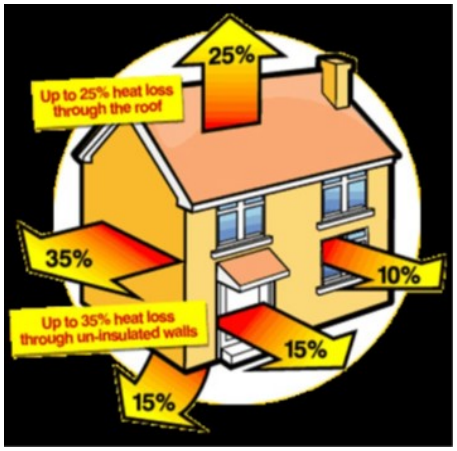
Wickhambrook Parish Council January minutes



Spring bulbs are starting to appear, and if you're walking past the cemetery, you'll see that the Cherry Trees planted two years ago now have their first blossom appearing.
It's still cold though, so don't forget the Warm Winter Wednesdays being put on at the Women's Institute Hall on:

22nd and 29th January.
5th, 12th, 19th and 26th February

Pop in for free tea, biscuits and soup etc and spend time in company at card games, board games jigsaws etc (between 12 noon and 3 pm). I try to pop in too, so if you see me and have any queries or issues you want to raise, please do have a chat!
Did you know that **The Suffolk Climate Change Partnership**, which is made up of all the Local Authorities in Suffolk, have purchased several thermal imaging cameras which they are loaning out to community groups to carry out surveys in their areas for free. Wickhambrook has booked a camera between 13th February and 25th March.
The aim of the project is to raise awareness about insulation, and if possible, help you to improve the energy efficiency of your house. This could mean a reduction in fuel bills, better health and also reducing the total amount of carbon dioxide that we emit into the atmosphere which is important for



stopping climate change. If you would like more information about the project, to participate as a volunteer or have your property included in the survey, please contact the clerk. At its January meeting, the parish council:
Agreed the budget for the next financial year (beginning in April '24), and the precept **£55,404 based on its agreed 3 year work plan**
Reviewed and updated its Risk Management Policy and supporting General Risk Assessment
Appointed Suffolk Association of Local Councils as Internal Auditor for the current financial year and confirmed that the clerk continue to act as its Responsible Financial Officer
Considered nominations for the Alf Hicks Biscuit Barrel Award to be presented at the Annual Parish Meeting in 2024. Noting the reach that the volunteer run events have and funds raised for other local charities, Members agreed to award the Alf Hicks Biscuit Barrel Award to the volunteer team who organise the Warm Winter Wednesday events

The public forum session in the meeting focussed on concerns and questions raised by residents about the footpath and highways issues, and Cllr Bobby Bennet was able to answer many questions. The parish council is working hard to advocate on behalf of residents to address a number of issues, including a reduction in in the speed limit on the A143 at Wickham Street from 40mph to 30mph and improvements to drainage and surface issues on the Byway and carriageway at Coltsfoot Green. Don't forget to check out our report a problem page. If you have any highways or drainage/flooding issues, please report them directly to Suffolk County Council Highways. Issues are prioritised, so the more that are reported, the higher the priority for addressing them. Bird Nesting season begins in February – if you are a landowner and have hedges running along Public Rights of Way or Highways, there is still time to trim them back. Our next scheduled parish council meeting is on 27th February 2024. At this meeting the parish council will be considering the following matters:
Appointment of Sole operator at Wickhambrook Cemetery
Renewal of Insurance Cover in accordance with the Long-Term Agreement and Asset Register
Authorising Due Payments for 2024-25 and Direct Debits
Donations to Charities and Local Organisations (if you are aware of any local charities which may benefit from some parish support, please ask them to contact the clerk by 20th February.)
Parish Council Meetings are open to the public so why not come along? If you would like to get more involved there are lots of ways to contribute, by:



- attending meetings and asking questions
- joining in with volunteer events (tidying the cemetery, cleaning play equipment) – our first parish tidy day will take place on Wednesday 5th February
- joining the Road Safety Working Group
- becoming a Councillor!

If you would like to find out more, please do call me or one of our councillors, or come along to one of our meetings. If you would like to be considered as a councillor, please take a look at the website, and complete and return a co-option application and eligibility form to Hilary. We look forward to hearing from you!
If there is anything you would like the parish council to consider at a future meeting, 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! Thank you once again to everyone who has supported the parish council in its work this year. Wishing you all the best for Christmas and the New Year, keep safe and well.

Hilary Workman Clerk for Wickhambrook Parish Council





Mary Cleaver

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Mary's page

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Mary Cleaver Partner - Duty Solicitor and Higher Courts Advocate
Oslers Solicitors

Lawyer Type:• Solicitor Years Qualified: 25 years

Court Rules Against Direct Contact Between Adopted Child and Birth Mother

A family court judge has ruled that it is too soon for a four-year-old adopted girl to have direct contact with her birth mother, citing potential risks to the child's well-being. In the case of **BM v AM & Ors**, His Honour Judge Marin declined the birth mother's application for face-to-face contact, stating that such an arrangement would pose an "almost guaranteed risk" of harm to the child. The judgment comes amidst growing calls for greater openness in post-adoption contact. While the legal framework remains cautious about such arrangements, some experts and practitioners are advocating for a reassessment of the traditional approach to contact between adopted children and their birth families.

A Balancing Act

The Public Law Working Group (PLWG) has been at the forefront of these discussions, recommending in November that courts adopt a 'greater focus' on direct contact where it is deemed safe and beneficial for the child. The group's report proposed a 'sea change' in attitudes, suggesting that meaningful contact with birth families could offer long-term emotional benefits for adopted children. However, it also emphasized that courts should not impose contact arrangements on unwilling adopters.

In **BM**, Judge Marin acknowledged this evolving landscape but reiterated the principle that the child's welfare remains the court's paramount consideration. While the law permits courts to order direct contact in adoption cases, such orders are rare, particularly when adopters are opposed. Judge Marin referenced Lord Justice Baker's statement from the Court of Appeal that it would be "extremely unusual" for a court to mandate face-to-face contact against the wishes of adoptive parents.

Risks of Harm

Central to Judge Marin's decision was the potential risk of emotional and psychological harm to the child. Experts presented evidence that direct contact at this stage could disrupt the child's stability and attachment to her adoptive family. The judge concluded that granting the birth mother's request for one or two annual visits could jeopardize the child's welfare.

This cautious approach reflects the current legal emphasis on protecting the adoptive family's dynamic. Advocates for increased openness in post-adoption contact argue that it should be introduced gradually and with robust safeguards to minimize risks.

The Path Forward

The case underscores the tension between traditional practices and evolving attitudes toward adoption. Historically, adoption severed all ties between a child and their birth family, with indirect contact, such as letters or updates, being the norm. However, modern perspectives increasingly recognize the potential benefits of maintaining some level of connection with birth relatives, provided it is safe and in the child's best interests. While the PLWG's recommendations signal a shift toward more openness, Judge Marin's ruling highlights the practical and legal challenges of implementing such changes. Courts must weigh the benefits of contact against the potential for harm and the need for adoptive parents' cooperation. Without the adopters' willingness, even well-intentioned arrangements may fail to achieve their intended goals.

Conclusion

The case of **BM v AM & Ors** serves as a reminder that decisions about post-adoption contact are complex and highly context-dependent. While there is momentum for a more inclusive approach, the priority remains safeguarding the child's well-being. As attitudes continue to evolve, future cases may explore new ways to balance the interests of adopted children, birth families, and adoptive parents.

Mary Cleaver

Prices for advertising in this magazine

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This set up is similar to CLASP. Both apply to their own geographical area. If you live in the Clare area please phone John Webb at 07724698283

Wickhambrook and District Horticultural Society

During our AGM. on Monday 25th November 2024:

Our Chair, **Jackie Merry** said we had had an active and productive year

Treasurer, **Deirdre Smith** submitted accounts showing we have £ 3,036 in our bank account, which is up about £ 900 from last year

Show Secretary, **Polly Pituck** said we had 114 participants and 65 classes in this year's Show. It was a very good Show.

Programme Secretary, **Matthew Lawfield** told us about the excellent programme planned for 2025 with a wide variety of topics at our meetings and an outing to **Hyde Hall Flower** Show and in June to Ashfield Green Farm for wine and cheese with **Philip and Joyce Draycott.**

The meeting approved the committee continuing. **Jackie Merry** told us that she wished to share the post of Chair with **Audrey Lawfield. Kay McEvoy** was keen to come on the Committee. Proposed by **Jackie** and seconded by **Ruth.**

AOB. A suggestion box for speakers and outings received five suggestions.

After the AGM meeting, we relaxed with wine and food provided by the Committee, while we puzzled out the alphabetical quiz **Roger Merry** had set us.

The winners were **Rosemary Vergine** who was first, and **Haley Dalzell and Carol Thompson** tied second.

Next Meeting - 27th January "In the garden with William Morris".

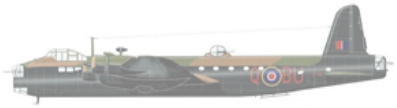
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Stirling House Speaker Programme 2025

Feb 20th	**Rod Dean**	**Sidney Camm Monoplane Fighters**	**Sept 18th**	**Paul Beaver**	**Secrets of the Battle (Battle of Britain)**
March 20th	**Guy Thomas**	**Ramrod 564 Special Operation (Amiens Prison Break)**	**Oct 16th**	**Jeff Hawley**	**UK Airfields Research Group**
April 17th	**Krys Lanowski**	**White Eagle in Foreign skies (Witold Lanowski story)**	**Nov 20th**	**Rick-Peacock Evans**	**The Folland Gnat**
May 15th	**Smudge Smith**	**Bristol Blenheim (at Duxford)**	**December**	**TBA**	**AGM and Guest Speaker**
June 19th	**Andrew Colley**	**The Man who tested Parachutes**			

Talks may change at short notice due to speaker availability

www.havavsoc.org.uk

Poslingford Church

The Christmas festivities kicked off in Poslingford with a heartwarming gathering of local ladies, all eager to create stunning wreaths. Armed with a bounty of gathered foliage, they transformed simple materials into beautiful creations, each wreath bursting with natural beauty. Their efforts raised an impressive £72 for the Poslingford Church, which serves as the venue for our monthly gatherings.

Later that afternoon, the spirit of community blossomed as villagers came together to decorate the church and adorn the trees in preparation for the much-anticipated Carol Service. We were delighted to have the enthusiastic Police cadets join us, assisting in adding twinkling lights to the trees, creating a magical atmosphere that complemented the festive season.

As the decorations came together, a warming hot chocolate was served, accompanied by an array of delightful puddings that brought smiles to everyone's faces.
The church bells rang out to welcome the villagers to the Poslingford Christmas Carol service.

Our vicar, **Mark Woodrow**, treated the congregation to a chocolate version of the Christmas story.
Hattie Fuller sang a beautiful solo of Away in a Manger, accompanied by Mel, who played the keyboard throughout.

Delicious mince pies, sausage rolls and mulled wine, finished the evening, and were enjoyed by all.
Wishing everyone a prosperous New Year.
Heather Phillips

















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,

What a year it has been. I am writing to you because my son, my youngest son, in his early 20s has been told he has a serious mental illness. I don't want to say what it is out loud here. He has been ill for quite a while. Getting worse since he was about 18 I suppose. I just don't know what to do. I am sort of shocked and in a real tizz about it. What does it mean? What should we do? Will he be alright?
I write here because I do not know what to do.
Please help.
J

Dear J,

I am so sorry to hear your and your son's news and want to say thank you for writing in.
You don't say what his diagnosis is, and I respect that.
I am hoping that as he has a medical diagnosis that he is safely in the hands of the mental health professionals who know about managing his illness.
If I am reading your email correctly it is that you need help coming to terms with whatever this diagnosis is. And it sounds like you need information and help with what the future may hold and how you can best manage things.
J, I suggest you have some brief, short term counselling and I am emailing you some options.
Adjusting to a diagnosis of any kind is tough and you say you are shocked and in a tizz. I wonder if you are feeling frightened too? It can really help talking your feelings through; respecting those feelings and working on the adjustment that will come with time. You even say you don't want to say his diagnosis out loud which makes me wonder if you might have complicated feelings of even shame about it? This is not uncommon sadly but no one need feel shame about any illness J.

Then you clearly need information and practical help. Start with your son's mental health team. Ask them the many questions you have – perhaps make a list of all your questions first. There is also much help to be gleaned from the mental health charity Mind. There are even groups for parents with children (and young adults) suffering from certain conditions. You need help and it is important to seek it out. It is out there.

I am suggesting you channel your emotions into actions here J. Please do not suffer alone.
I wish you and your son all the very best J,
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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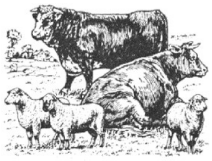
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