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

PARISH PUMP

No 382 parish.pump@gmail.com March 2025

What a wonderful place our Suffolk is!



This lovely scene comes from Portia's farm . Please go to page five to see her beautiful animals.



Venus and the moon



We especially thank The Old Goat Brewery for kindly sponsoring the colour pages this month which we think makes the Parish Pump special!

Jenny Barley, a member of the committee, was the first speaker of the year and gave an interesting talk on the Stuart Monarchy in Suffolk. Jenny used to work at the National Horseracing Museum so was well-qualified to explain the Royal and racing connection to the county. James VIth (and Ist) started coming to Newmarket to escape the plague in London. He would bring his favourites with him to enjoy hunting at Thetford and often stayed with friends in the area to save money. He eventually had Palace House built by Inigo Jones on the site of The Griffin Inn and decreed that the road from London to Newmarket should be improved. He described Newmarket as a 'poor little village' at that time. His son, Charles I also came to Newmarket and as well as hunting and racing, he played tennis on a real tennis court in the town, which is still there today.

Charles II loved racing and started the race for the Town Plate, still run today. He built a new palace as the original had become a ruin during the Civil War and the influence of the Dutch architect he chose is very evident. His mistress **Nell Gwynne** bought a house in the town and although many searches have been made to find a tunnel between her house and the Palace, no evidence has been found. He also was the first monarch to have a Royal yacht which took part in races between Harwich and Aldeburgh after the Thames was declared too boring!

William and Mary also loved racing and William also enjoyed cockfighting at a Pit in Newmarket as well as gambling.

Queen Anne often came to Newmarket and had a Pavilion built from where she could watch the horses on the Heath. She had some houses taken down as they spoiled the view! She gave £1,000 to pave the streets of the town and £40 to educate poor children. As her health failed, she had Ascot developed for horse racing as it was nearer to London.

Much to learn and much to enjoy! A great start to the year! **Dorothy**

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Poslingford 'From horses to horsepower'

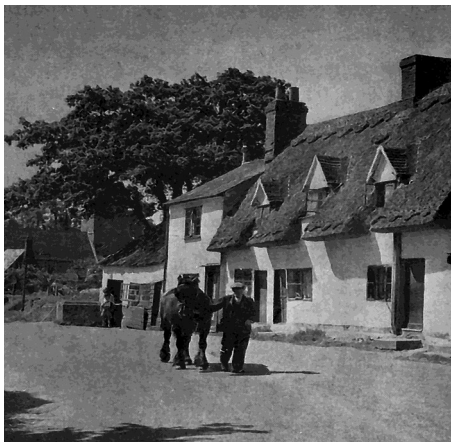
In times past, the charming villages and hamlets of Suffolk echoed with the soothing methodical 'clip clop' of working equine hooves. Now, these same tiny rural roads reverberate to the sounds and excessive speeds of vehicles of all sizes and classes.

While picturesque, their diminutive scale can make our villages feel forgotten and overlooked by road law. Often only a single track, they are far more dangerous than their larger village cousins who boast a landscape of white entrance gates, greens, pavements and active speed deterrents. Like other villages, **Poslingford,** with its hazardous narrow 'street', blind corners and no pavement, faces constant threat from speeding vehicles which endangers other road users, especially pedestrians. With only a few faded signs, there is no effort to control, reduce and enforce an appropriate speed for the road conditions. This creates a psychological 'invitation' to drive fast with no consequences for the driver. In January, **MP Nick Timothy** visited Poslingford. We discussed a carefully compiled visual '**Journey through Poslingford'** document to highlight the key issues and a dynamic yet sympathetic proposed solution including a sense of arrival, appropriate speed controls and importantly the urgent need for a deterrent for those who refuse to obey traffic law. The ultimate goal is to help make our villages' and hamlets' roads safer. Many of us have an anecdote or two about the 'The Street' through our idyllic village. Unfortunately, many of these are about speeding rather than salvias!

The people of Poslingford









Curate's Chronicles – March 2025 (Living Hope)



LIVING HOPE



I actually like Lent, despite the fact that its forty days are considered by Christians to be a time of deep reflection, prayer and self-denial. It marks when Jesus went off into the wilderness to get ready for his public ministry.

The word 'Lent' itself derives from the old English word ***'lencten'*** which meant 'lengthening', so it points to the lengthening of the days. Spring is just around the corner and so I like Lent for this reason and of course for all the 'proper' reasons too!!

In Spring I open the windows, let the light and fresh air in and crack on with some much-needed Spring cleaning around the house. But Lent is also an opportunity to Spring clean our hearts and minds as well: to ensure we have our priorities straight, that we are bearing fruit that will last, that we are letting go of bad habits and behaviour, to ensure our life will be more fruitful.

I hope that all of you will consider joining, with the members of our six Parishes in the Stour Valley Benefice, our Lenten spiritual discipline, and do a little spring cleaning of hearts and minds too.

The Church of England produces a wonderful daily prayer App called "Everyday Faith" which is available to download for free, and when Lent begins the App will incorporate special Lenten material called **"Living Hope".** For more information or to download the app, visit: https://www.churchofengland.org/faith-life/exploring-faith/everyday-faith

You are also very welcome to attend any of our Lent services (details of which can be found on the Benefice website, Facebook, Twitter 'X', or BlueSky accounts – just search @StourValleyCofE) and I very much look forward to meeting you!

The Revd Dr Karen Smith

Wickhambrook Local History Society News – February 2025

Kevin Pulford's talk in February was called 'Regency Lowlife in Bury St Edmunds' and was based on information taken from the records of the Quarter Sessions in the borough.
There was no police force, so any complaints were brought to the magistrates.
At that time, small crimes and misdemeanours were dealt with by Justices of the Peace who would visit villages to make judgements. In **Wickhambrook** these sessions were held at **The White Horse Public House**, now a dwelling house opposite All Saints Church.
The Magistrates' Court was held in the Guildhall in Bury St Edmunds and such crimes as theft, (usually poaching or stealing produce from fields) and other minor offences were dealt with there.
Kevin had many stories of Poor Law applications, disputes between apprentices and masters, recusants who refused to attend church, and trouble with the local militia, among other issues.
We were amused that traffic offences were taken very seriously. You could be fined for having no one guiding the horse, no name on the cart, being drunk in charge, blocking the road and carrying night soil in the daytime!
Our next meeting is on Tuesday 18th March, when our speaker will be the curator of **Gainsborough's House Museum** in Sudbury
Dorothy Anderson

Monthly Rainfall 2024/2025

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

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

Wendy Mansfield

WICKHAMBROOOK WOMEN'S INSTITUTE
February Meeting



At our February meeting we welcomed three members representing **St John Ambulance. Trevor, Stuart and Chelsea** came along to give us some helpful hints



on basic first aid which could one day help to save somebody's life. Trevor had been a member of St John **Ambulance** for 25 years, starting off as an ambulance driver and now gives talks and instruction to others. He began by setting up a scenario where we had to imagine we had found someone collapsed on the floor, and he then talked us through the various steps to be taken, and critically in what order, depending on whether the casualty was breathing or not. First step was to check for any immediate danger, so that in helping someone you were not likely to become a casualty yourself! Speak to the patient to elicit a response and then call for help. The next job is to check they are breathing and make sure their airway is clear. Push head back and watch for rise and fall of the chest. Phone or ask someone to phone for an ambulance. With Stuart as a willing casualty Trevor demonstrated placing a person in the recovery position which can help to save someone's life.
If the casualty is not breathing then is the time to begin CPR. Start with 30 chest compressions with hands locked together in the centre of the chest. Follow this with two mouth to mouth breaths and then continue chest compressions until the ambulance arrives. It is crucial to keep up a steady rhythm in order to get the heart beating again. If there is a **defibrillator** nearby, this can be used to shock the heart back into action.
We then had a demonstration on how to use a triangular bandage in different situations. Members also had questions concerning **EpiPens** and how to use a defibrillator if one is to hand. We all felt reassured that in an emergency we would be able to do something to help which is better than doing nothing at all.

Wendy

Cowlinge Church



From the Cowlinge Church Companions

Progress at the church in Cowlinge

We are delighted and relieved that the considerable hole in the church roof has been expertly repaired and the rain-catching buckets in the Nave and other parts of the building can be removed. It has been a worrying time, especially given the heavy rains of 2024, when we feared for the safety of parts of the church fabric, most critically for the Doom painting over the Chancel arch. A treasure of national significance in its individuality, we would have been devastated at its destruction, and the village would have lost a link with its past. So many generations of Cowlinge families must have sat and wondered at the painting since its creation over six hundred years ago.
We are immensely grateful for the support of a number of regional grant-giving bodies; it is through their generosity that this most important repair has been achieved. We are now turning our attention to what needs to be funded next. **Margaret Phillips**

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February Farming by Portia Brown

Calving 2025 is coming to an end with only a few cows left to calve. We have had 30 healthy calves born so far. As calving is coming to an end, it means only one thing: lambing will be starting soon.
Scanning went well and we are expecting around 500 lambs from April.
As spring is around the corner, we are starting to plan our spring drilling of oats in March and linseed in April.
Until then we are continuing with the winter jobs around the farm, consisting of maintaining ditches and drains, servicing machinery, as well as our day-to-day duties of looking after our livestock, feeding and strawing up the cattle and supplementary feeding the sheep out in the fields with hay and a few whole oats as the goodness in the grass deteriorates over the winter months.
Our meat boxes continue to be in high demand, which we believe is a sure sign that people want to know where their food comes from.
Our slow-grown lamb boxes will be available again next month, just in time for Easter before lambing starts at the beginning of April. **Portia**











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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.



SAVE THE DATE

WICKHAMBROOK SUMMER FETE AND FLOWER SHOW
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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



I am SO pleased we have made it to March. The days are growing longer, and the daffodils are showing their green leaves already. March is a tricky month for those of us that like to cook with the seasons as it isn't quite spring yet, so we need to combat seasonal confusion with warming recipes while the temperatures are still low. However, seasonal produce is picking up now and we can look forward to spring vegetables in the next few months.
Meanwhile, get to grips with some lentils and other store cupboard ingredients.

Lentil Soup

This vegetarian soup with red lentils, carrots and leeks is warm and filling, low in calories and fat and delivers three of your five-a-day. You could make a tasty meat version using chicken or ham stock.
1.5 - 2 litres vegetable stock
150g red lentils
6 carrots, finely chopped
2 medium leeks, sliced
Small handful of chopped parsley to serve
Heat the stock in a large pan and add the lentils, bring to the boil allowing the lentils to soften for a few minutes. Add the carrots and leeks, season, bring back to the boil then reduce the heat, cover and simmer for 45 mins – 1 hour until the lentils have broken down. Scatter over the parsley and serve with cheese scones. Blend the soup if you don't like chunky vegetables.

Lentil Bolognese

Adapt a family mealtime favourite for vegetarians. For carnivores, this tastes so good nobody will know it's meat-free!
2 tbsp olive oil
1 large onion finely chopped
2 carrots, peeled & chopped into cubes
2 garlic cloves, crushed
2 sprigs rosemary



200g dried green lentils
Glass red wine
2 x 400g tins chopped tomatoes
1 tbsp tomato puree
1 tbsp balsamic vinegar
Sauté onion & carrot in oil 5 – 6 mins until soft. Stir in garlic & rosemary, tip in the lentils, pour in the red wine, season & stir well. When most of the wine has reduced throw in the chopped tomatoes and add a tomato tin of water. Stir in the tomato puree & cook for 20 mins until thick & soft. Stir in the balsamic vinegar & season well before removing the rosemary sprigs. Serve with cooked pasta & grated parmesan or vegetarian cheese.

Easy Carrot Cake

I cannot resist a good carrot cake; this is so easy and will impress …
8 oz grated carrots or peelings
6 oz self-raising flour
6 oz marg or butter
6 oz caster or light muscovado sugar
3 eggs
1 teaspoon baking powder
1 oz walnuts, chopped
2 tbsp orange juice
2 oz ground almonds
Topping: 2oz soft butter, 4 oz Icing sugar, 6 oz cream cheese beaten together well Grease and line an 8" cake tin. Set the oven at 180 oC



Beat together sugar and marg. Add flour, baking powder and eggs, beating all together until pale and creamy. Then fold in the carrots, walnuts, almonds and OJ until mixed well.
Pour into the tin and bake for 75 mins until set, test with a skewer.
Leave to cool, then turn out and when completely cold spread on the delicious topping.
Louise

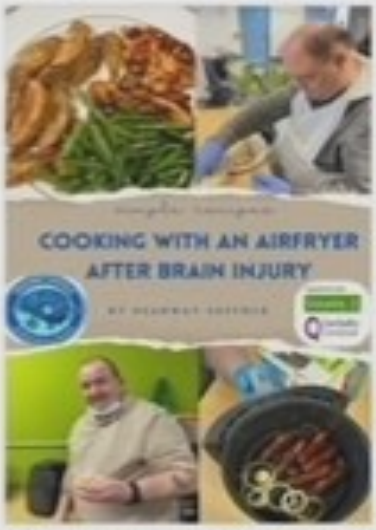
OLD GOAT BREWERY

It's been 22 months since the **Old Goat Brewery** at the Stansfield Compasses opened their doors to the public in May 2023 and the brewery/tap room is going strong. The brewpub saw significant growth in 2024, becoming a community hub for the village as well as attracting beer enthusiasts from the outer villages and beyond. The addition of live music and food trucks has helped the business grow. "Crafting beer has been first and foremost the mission of this business" says **Roy Elder** the brewer and publican, "but music, being a musician myself, has been something that we wanted to have as part of the culture here as well. It's been slow-going to develop this aspect of the business, but we are finding our wheels. Our back beer garden offers a stunning setting for music that is too good to pass up." There is more live music to come in 2025 with one monthly show in both March and April and plans for twice monthly from May through September (**Music In the Garden series**) with food trucks as well. The brewery also started a monthly pub quiz every third Thursday of the month and this year will start hosting an open mic night every first Thursday. The pub offers a warm lively atmosphere. **Roy** and his partner **Alexis** are friendly hosts and are always open for chat. Roy loves to talk about beer… and music.



Roy and Alexis

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Jeff Fellows wines



With Spring just around the corner, we can liven up our jaded palates with crisp, refreshing white wines. Something to add zing in the glass. Wines in this category would offer light, pale in appearance wines and hints of fresh fruit. There may also be notes of minerality.

My first choice for this would be Pinot Grigio (**PG for short**). Usually low in alcohol but with acidity. A few examples, Tesco. Terre de Montefore (Venezia) a DOC wine with slight notes of peaches.12.5% £9.25. They also have an old favourite La Vieilles Ferme, of Family Perrin. A blend from the Rhone which is always welcome. Slightly more rounded. 13% £8.50 Waitrose. A hand harvested, Organic, wine from Sicily Terre di Vita. Peach and melon hints to this one. Ideal for fish and seafood dishes. 12.5% £10 Alta Italian (Trentino). Straightforward PG 12.5% and £6.95 (down £3) Sainsbury's. Graffigna. A PG from Argentina with peach and nuts.12.5% £9. Although it is the same grape there are wines produced which offer a dryer, more aromatic version of the grape. This is called Pinot Gris. The originals come from the Alsace region, but this style is now grown elsewhere. I have had many bottles of this from Raymond Paccot, La Colombe, in Fechy, near Lausanne. The following are available here.

Sainsbury's. New Zealand Pinot Gris. Grown near Napier on the North Island. A zesty, aromatic, dry wine with hints of tropical fruits. 13% £11 Waitrose. A regular producer Beblenhiem PG (reserve). The go-to PG from Alsace. Dry with balanced notes of fruit. All PG's are suitable partners with appropriate dishes and particularly Asian food but spicy sausages can be added to that list. 13% £12 Urmeer Loss is from Germany. Is sharp and crisp with peach flavours. 12.5% £9.75 Aldi. The bargain basement PG is their Freeman's Bay PG. 12.5% £7.99 Tesco. Polenta Estate XIV. An Argentinian wine. Another hand harvested wine offering peaches and apricots. Ideal with Roast Pork. Sold direct from Drayman Direct. £18.99 I buy wines from Auction houses where I am able to purchase wines which suit my palate, namely Vintage Bordeaux and Burgundy wines but many of the same type from Spain and Italy. There is a forthcoming sale where on offer is a bottle of Marques de Murrieta '01 Reserva (a Rioja) It is a GOLIATH. A bottle I have never heard of, but which contains 27 litres. The equivalent of 36 bottles. That would be a celebration and a half.



Best,

Jeff

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

This is the February 2025 draw for the 100 club

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

1.Camilla Hamilton	**£20**
2.Rosemary Vergine	**£10**
3.John Crysell	**£ 5**

Thanks Stefan

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Visit our website

www.the-mindful-life.com

to register for updates

Services at Hawkeden St Mary



Services at **Hawkedon St Mary in March are:**
Sunday, 9 March at 9am. BCP said Holy Communion

Sunday, 23 March at 11am. 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
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Memories are Golden

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Poslingford, Saint Mary



Hawkedon, Saint Mary



Who got them mixed up then? Guilty my Lord, I did. So I must apologise to both Heather of Poslingford and Heather of Hawkedon!! Sorry - Peter!

Haverhill Aviation Society (West Suffolk)

Haverhill Aviation Society was formed in 1982 by a local group of enthusiasts. They were keen to fill an obvious gap for such an organisation in a part of Suffolk rich in aviation history, and previously the location of six wartime airfields, all in close proximity to Haverhill, Bury St. Edmunds and Newmarket.
The main aim of **Haverhill Aviation Society** was simply to offer members a regular programme of good quality speakers, all in some way involved in the vast subject of aviation. Visit have always been with members, their families and friends. They have included trips to operational airbases, air shows and museums
The format has proved to be most successful and to date the Society has hosted more than 250 quality speakers, many famous in their field of expertise and others speaking about personal experiences.
Recent guest speakers have included air crews from Mildenhall & Lakenheath and well-known TV historian Andy Robertshaw.
Good quality meeting venues have presented problems to many groups and following an early nomadic existence the Society has been privileged to meet in what is certainly one of the finest venues for any UK aviation society "**Stirling House"**,



Wellington bomber crew at Stradishall in 1941-42.

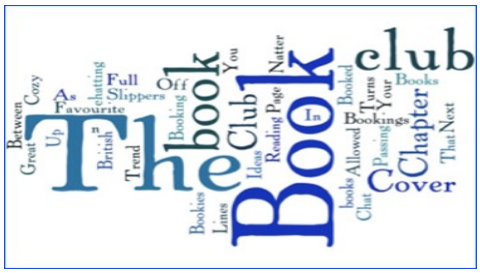
the original Officers' Mess of **Royal Air Force, Stradishall**, **3 Group Bomber Command** during WW2 and post war home of **Number 1 Air Navigational School**, until its closure in 1970.
The airfield, apart from a brief use as a refugee centre, was then left to return to nature.

This would ultimately change when most of the site was designated to become one of Her Majesty's prisons, "**Highpoint",** a project which necessitated removing most of the original RAF buildings.

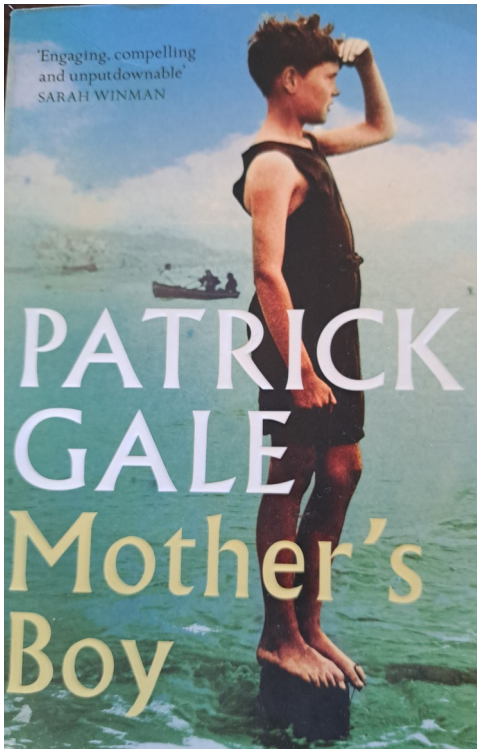
Fortunately, the bulldozers missed a few including the old Officers' Mess. The building was then used in a variety of ways, sadly none reflecting its historic role of 1938 when it was opened and the following dramas of Second World War bomber operations. Happily, the situation changed when it was chosen to be re-furbished and to provide a Residential / Training / Conference Centre for the Prison Service. Apart from returning the fine old building to structural health it was decided to retain a strong element reflecting its RAF History. Members of both the Royal Air Force Memorial Trust and Haverhill Aviation Society helped in selecting appropriate interior décor. Various pieces of aviation memorabilia adorn the walls and the effect is dramatic. "More RAF than RAF" has been the comment of more than one speaker who had served at Stradishall. **Haverhill Aviation Society** meets at **"Stirling House"** during the months February to December and details of its forthcoming speaker programme can be seen at the society's website or contact us **www.havavsoc.org.uk Email: havavsoc@gmail.com**

John Rye chairman





There was a surprise for many of us when we finished reading **Mother's Boy, by Patrick Cale,** and realised it was a 'loose retelling' of the early life of a 'real life' Cornish poet, **Charles Causley**, and his mother, **Laura**. We obviously had not read the epigraph which is a quote from one of his poems and most of us were obliged to admit we had never heard of him! The book is based on extensive research using diaries, letters and oral accounts, although the author warns his readers that his work should not be mistaken for a 'scholarly biography of a great man' as much is conjectured and



many of the characters are made up. It covers the period from the outbreak of the First World War, when Charles's parents meet, to the end of the Second World War when Charles returns to his hometown Launceston, from service in the navy, to live with his widowed mother and become a schoolteacher and writer. There is much historical interest here, offering a fascinating social commentary on the times, and a compassionate portrayal of the impact of war on those who fought in service and those who kept 'the home fires burning'. While some thought the war 'bits' a tad overlong, we mostly found this tale of life lived by ordinary people in extraordinary times a compelling read.

The story opens in 1941 with Charles on board a ship in pitched battle with the enemy. It's a powerful chapter and immediately pulls us in with vivid descriptions of the wind and swell, the explosions lighting up the night skies, the cries of the wounded, the mastery of emotion and unquestioning deployment of duty. All this contrasted with Charles's momentary reimagining of being in the midsummer sun, surrounded by birdsong, lying beside his childhood friend, whom he has just learnt is now surely dead.

We then go back to 'Teignmouth - 1914' and the story of Laura and Charles begins with each chapter thereafter depicting a particularly significant event and its year. In '**Laundry Blues – 1918'** the horrors of war come alive for Laura through the sight, 'stiff with mud and blood', and the smell, 'a mixture of slaughterhouse and farmyard', of her husband's army uniform. **'Penny Buns – 1922'** is a poignant description of a last outing Charles shares with his father and '**The Pork Butchers Son – 1925**' depicts Laura as a mother fiercely protecting her son whom she recognises as 'the kind of boy to be picked on … too keen, too trusting, too ready to speak'. Other chapters focus on Charles's friendships, the joy of swimming in the sea for the first time, his dread of sport, his early accomplishments in reading, writing poetry and playing the piano and his awakening sexuality in a country where homosexuality was a criminal offence. All are set against a backdrop of working-class life in small town Launceston, his mother's back breaking work as a laundress and her endless domestic chores. When Charles signs up for the Navy in 1941 his world opens up, and away from the place where 'to live and work there was to know yourself constantly observed and reported on', he finds space to be himself and discover his poetic voice. In '**I am a Sailor – 1941**' class issues again come to the fore as the Navy confirms everything he 'thought wrong with the country… the flagrant inequalities …worship even, of upper class authority'. At home Laura's horizons are also broadened with the arrival of American GIs, prisoners of war and London evacuees to Launceston. She embraces all with an open mind, grace and generosity, which really endeared her to us.

At the book's core is a tender and evocative love story, with all its ups and downs, between a mother and her son. Laura was not blind to her son's faults – 'her funny, prickly boy' whose tone could be 'withering'- neither did she understand his 'strange poems' nor 'sooner have asked about his writing than she would have tried to stroke the feral cat'. But she was unswerving in her maternal love and support. Although he found Launceston 'oppressive' as a teenager, Charles returns to live with Laura after the war, he keeps his sexuality hidden and gives up the possibility of another life -there is a very moving scene where he rejects his former lover 'Don't you see it's completely impossible now?'. He is a man both apart and apart in his relations to others – someone who has struggled to belong but who settles into the position of being on the outside looking in, this perhaps being the place from which his creativity grows. We loved how the wonderful, wholesome food Laura cooks features throughout their story and becomes a form of communication between them – a silent way to show her 'prickly' son her love and sometimes, for Charles, showing his enjoyment of her cooking would become 'a coded apology' for his difficult behaviour. We all agreed this was a beautifully written novel, which felt entirely authentic with characters we really cared about. Allowing for the criticism of some overworked war 'bits' we decided on 4 stars. We also appreciated the additional bonus of being introduced to **Charles Causley's** poems – 'Angel Hill' being quoted in the Author's Notes.

Next time we are reading **Pru and Me by Timothy West** and if you would like to join us please contact annedennis1@live.co.uk or 07557357362



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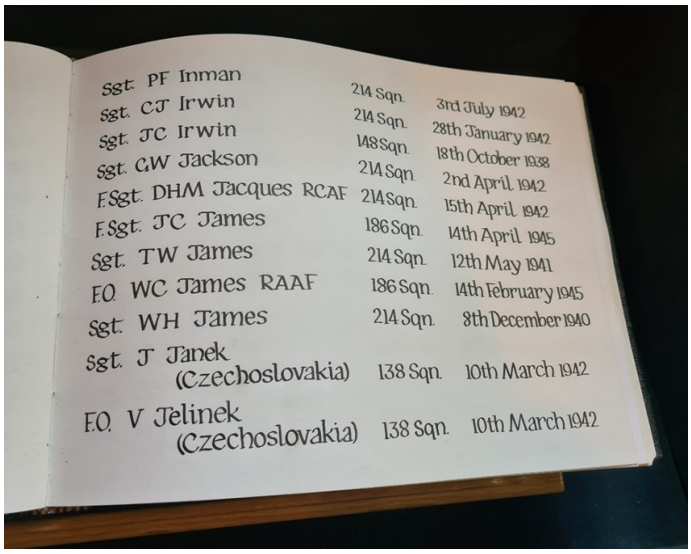
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REMEMBRANCE AT ITS BEST



Last month I received a letter from a gentleman living in **Millom, Cumbria**. He was doing some research into his family history, and wondered if he could have a photo of his uncle's entry in the **Remembrance Book** in **Stradishall Church.** His uncle was in 214 Squadron, stationed in Stradishall during the Second World War. As with many of the churches in this area, there are a number of War Graves, but Sergeant P F Inman is buried in Eenrum Cemetery in the Netherlands.



In **St Margaret's Stradishall**, the Book of Remembrance is in a beautiful display cabinet which has a story of its own, one which is also linked to my house. In 1941, P/O (later Wing Commander, DSO, DFC) **Lucian B Ercolani**, also of 214 Squadron, had to ditch his Wellington bomber in the English Channel. He and his crew drifted in their dinghy for 57 hours, finally coming ashore near Ventnor, on the Isle of Wight.

Lucian's father, Mr **Ercolani** senior – who just happened to be the owner and founder of the Ercol furniture company - not only carved two 214 Squadron crests, but also designed and presented the display cabinet for the Book of Remembrance. And the connection with my house? Apparently, Lucian Ercolani was billeted here, and I even have a (somewhat blurred) photograph of my house, taken from his bomber.
To Mr Inman's delight, I was able to take a number of photographs of the cabinet and his uncle's entry in the Book of Remembrance. I



also sent him photos of the crest and the information about his uncle's fellow squadron member. Shortly after this, I received a lovely gift of a soft warm scarf. Thank you **Mr Inman**!

Carol Thompson



Stradishall Church refurbishment

The first stage of the refurbishment has one more job to do until it is ready to have the South Aisle roof repaired. We have obtained a 'faculty' to fit a gutter on the north nave roof to divert the water away from the Aisle roof
All we need then is the money.
Stradishall Support Group are



working with great enthusiasm to raise some.



First Full Year of Help….Stansfield Good Neighbours Scheme

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

Pat Barnes



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- Long Melford 1:30-4pm

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

Scary Stories in Stradishall Church

Bid goodbye to winter with an evening of Scary Stories!

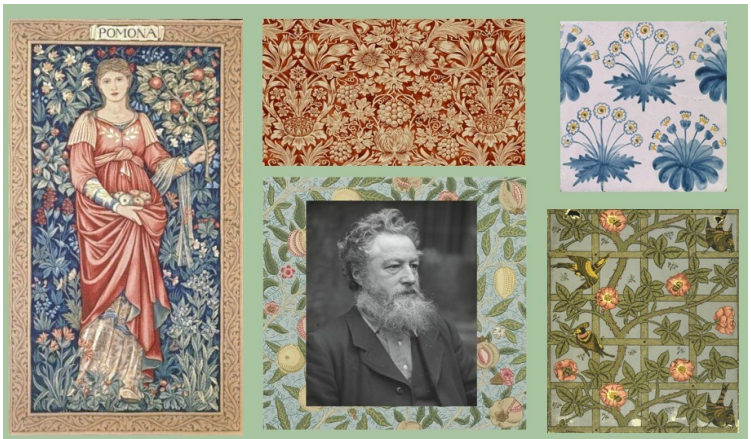
The **Stradishall Support Group** are delighted to announce that they have been fortunate in securing the services of **CB Jackson,** a storyteller and performer with a wealth of experience. He will be appearing at St Margaret's Church on Saturday 22nd March with a programme of stories to chill you! (Not suitable for under 9s) **CB** is also, with **Dan Sedgewick,** the creator of The Suffolk Young Storyteller of the Year competition, which is open to all budding authors between the ages of 7 and 18. (See https://magnificentrumours.com for details of how to enter.)
Do come and join us – if you dare!
Tickets £10 on the door, cash only please.
Mulled wine, soft drinks and biscuits will be served in the interval (free of charge, but any donations will be gratefully received!)

Doors open from 6pm.

Carol Thompson



Wickhambrook and District Gardeners' Club



In the Garden with William Morris: Flora as Art
by Fiona Rose

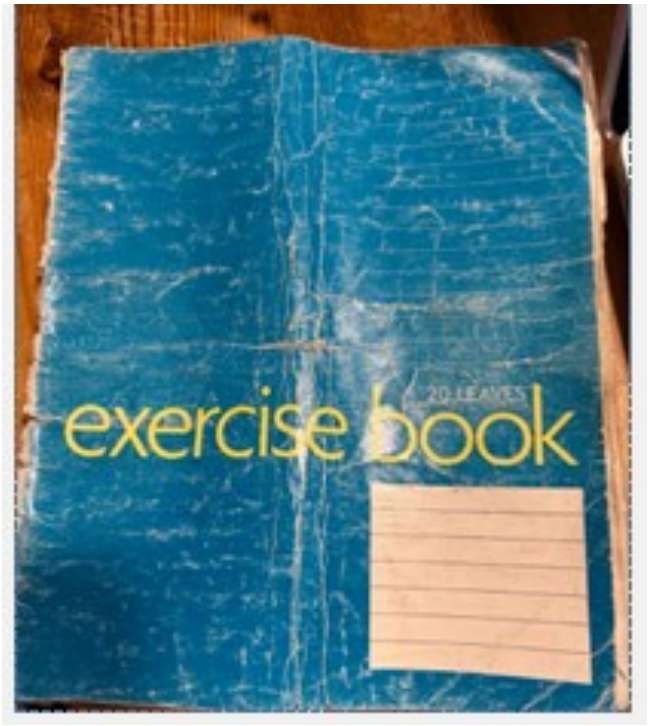
On January 27th, the society enjoyed an excellent presentation given by **Fiona Rose,** called **'In the Garden with William Morris'.**
William Morris was born 1834, into a wealthy middle-class family living in Elm House, Walthamstow. His father was a stockbroker, whose success in buying shares made him a wealthy man. He bought Woodford House in 1860, bordering Epsom Forest, where young William spent every moment possible. At the death of his father, in William's early teens, his family had to move back to Walthamstow.
His three great loves were: nature, the medieval period, and rivers. Throughout his school days and at **Oxford** he felt himself to be an outsider. He married Jane and his friend **Philip Webb** designed The Red House for them with many medieval features, set in an existing orchard with a well. For 5 years he and Jane entertained like-minded people, who included **Ford Madox Brown, Edward Burn- Jones and Dante Gabriel Rossetti,** who later lived with him and worked together. They elevated their tile, fabric and wallpaper designs to 'Fine Art'. **Philip Webb** specialised in images of birds. William said designer's work should merely recall Nature and not copy it.
In 1871 he moved to Kelmscott Manor, which was 'Heaven on Earth' and there he produced his most famous designs, the Willow Bough and The Strawberry Thieves to which **Philip Webb** contributed the birds. He loved roses and cottage garden flowers, creepers and plants on the walls of the house and areas of the garden trellised off to form rooms. He hated 'carpet planting' of flowers, and red geraniums! Many of these ideas came from his study of medieval illustrations in books and manuscripts.
In 1879 they moved to a house in Hammersmith, which they named Kelmscott House and two years later he consolidated all his business activities in Merton Abbey, which had a small river running through, essential in printing processes. There he built good, comfortable houses for his employees with a garden full of flowers and trees. He lectured all around the country on the importance of the environment:

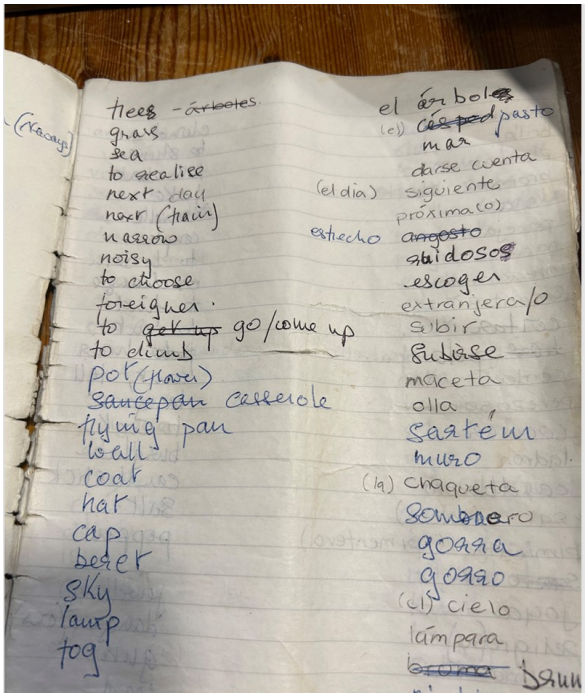
- planting trees
- poisonous fumes from burning coal
- disposal of litter
- in a civilised society, 'art' should adorn public buildings
- cities should have trees and gardens imitating nature
- houses should be built from local materials.

William Morris was a poet, designer, publisher, entrepreneur, weaver, translator, calligrapher, visionary, socialist and environmentalist.
In conclusion, in 2006, he was voted eighth out of one hundred in a list of **Green Companions,** who had contributed most to our understanding of a desirable society.

Ruth

The attached book was found in Denston Park while we were on a walk. It seems to be a Spanish vocabulary book and may be sorely missed . From Melissa. Please contact Parish Pump parish.pump @gmail .com





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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Feeling artistic?....Your village needs you!

Concerned about speeding around the local lanes and through the village, **Stansfield Parish Council** is seeking anyone willing to design posters asking drivers to slow down!
Local schools are also to be approached in the hope that children might submit designs for posters that could be put in strategic locations around **Stansfield.** But the call is for anyone who would like to send in a design that could be seen easily by drivers and remind them to take care, especially where the lanes are narrow and because walkers, cyclists and animals are likely to be present. **Please email the Parish Clerk, Anne Lines on:** stansfieldpc@outlook.com

Reminders: Anyone willing to help with ideas on how to gather **views and ideas** from residents in the community engagement project now starting, will be warmly welcomed. Please contact the Clerk as above. Any more ideas for the list of **village assets**, e.g.: the Village Hall, old water pumps, and footpaths and views? Please send any ideas to the Clerk as above.

Next meeting, Stansfield Parish Council: Wednesday 12th March 2025, 7pm Village Hall Village Coffee Morning and annual village tidy-up: Village Hall 10-1pm, Saturday 26th April.

Rex Barnes

STANSFIELD Parish Council
Working with our local community



Is Spring on its way at last? It certainly looks like it.

	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** **poslingfordd@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**



CAR AID REPORT - JANUARY 2025
CLASP Committee Meeting Thursday 13th. February 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
20 Year 2025 to date = 20 total, 20.0 average

Bookings taken as at 8th. February month to date – 16

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 at 20 trips was significantly less than the Januarys of the previous two years and was the lowest monthly demand since September 2022. It was noticeable that there were a number of trips cancelled by the medical destinations.

Despite the low January demand, it can be seen from the Statistics Summaries above that the demand for our service continues to grow significantly. However, the difficulty in finding volunteers has continued. 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 Q4 2024, as in Q2 and Q3, we used 30 drivers during each 3 months, virtually our whole available complement. This clearly confirms the need to recruit more volunteer drivers.**
The ongoing relevant CarAid Statistic - In the 82 months, since April 2018 when I took over, CarAid has helped 252 different clients, making 1,857 trips averaging 23 per month.
John Webb 8th. February 2025

The relatively low activity experienced in January continues into February. You may have heard that last week three wards in WSH were closed due to Norovirus, and also that staffing levels at WSH have reduced by 3% during the last eight months. There have been CarAid trip cancellations due to "shortage of technical staff" probably resulting from these combined situations.

You may notice that I have not included the detailed analyses covering all previous years, showing number of clients, destinations drivers and cancellations. I will continue to keep these records for reference if required.

PLEASE NOTE THAT THE CLASP AGM WILL TAKE PLACE IN THE CLARE OLD SCHOOL ON THURSDAY 22nd. MAY AT 7.30pm. This is a particularly important and critical event for CLASP this year, with more volunteers needed in ALL activity areas to ensure that CLASP can continue to exist and operate for the benefit of our community.
Thank you all for your continuing commitment
Best regards

John Webb



There is a great tit in our garden. We have heard it but haven't seen it yet.

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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

Cllr Karen Richardson
karen.richardson@westsuffolk.gov.uk

Stansfield Village Hall



Spring Working Party

Saturday 8th March
9am – 1pm

Can you spare an hour or two between the hours of 9am and 1pm to help the village hall committee spruce up the village hall and grounds?

Jobs will include painting, weeding, cleaning, tidying up etc . . .

Indoor and outdoor tasks available.



Refreshments will be provided.

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The Bansfield Benefice

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

Date	Time	Church	Details
02 Mar	10:00 am	Wickhambrook (Sunday before Lent | HC)	Celebrant: Revd Eve Bell Organist: [BT] Liturgical colour:
05 Mar	07:00 pm	Wickhambrook* (Ash Wednesday | Ashing service)	Celebrant: Revd Eve Bell Organist: [-] Liturgical colour:
09 Mar	10:00 am	Stradishall (First Sunday of Lent | HC)	Celebrant: Revd Eve Bell Organist: [CM] Liturgical colour:
16 Mar	10:00 am	Stansfield (Second Sunday of Lent | HC)	Celebrant: Revd Barbara Sherlock Organist: [DO] Liturgical colour:
23 Mar	10:00 am	Denston (Third Sunday of Lent | HC)	Celebrant: Revd Eve Bell Organist: [CM] Liturgical colour:
30 Mar	10:00 am	Cowlinge (Mothering Sunday | HC)	Celebrant: Revd Eve Bell Organist: [KI] Liturgical colour:

Please check the Benefice website for changes each week

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Children's Commissioner Calls for Removal of 'Reasonable Punishment' Defence

On 6 February 2025, the Children's Commissioner urged the removal of the 'reasonable punishment' defence in England, calling for changes to common law and the Children Act 2004 through the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill. A Briefing for MPs was also published. The Commissioner highlighted that children are the only group not fully protected from assault and battery under the law. The defence of 'reasonable punishment' allows parents and carers to justify physical discipline, creating legal uncertainty around what constitutes acceptable punishment. While serious violence remains a criminal offence, the lack of a clear legal threshold leaves parents, professionals, and children unsure of what is permissible.

The United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), which the UK has ratified, considers all physical punishment a violation of children's right to protection from violence. The Children's Commissioner shares this view, asserting that no degree of violence against children is acceptable.

The call for reform stresses the need for urgent government action to close this legal loophole and provide children with equal protection from assault. The proposed legislative change aims to ensure clarity in the law, strengthen child safeguarding, and align England with international human rights standards.

Pets and Divorce: A Changing Legal Landscape

For many, pets are not just animals but cherished members of the family. However, in legal terms, pets have traditionally been treated as **chattels**—no different from furniture or cars—when it comes to divorce settlements. A recent court ruling, however, suggests a shift in attitude towards pets in divorce cases, recognizing their welfare and role within the family.

In the case of **FI v DO**, the judge noted that while the dog was legally a chattel, discussions in court resembled a **Children Act case**, focusing on the dog's well-being and shared care arrangements. This reflects a growing trend where **pet custody and financial responsibilities** (such as vet bills and food costs) form part of divorce negotiations.

One significant detail in this case was the dog's own understanding of "home." After being taken by one spouse, the dog instinctively returned to the former family home, further highlighting the emotional and psychological role pets play within families.

Protecting Pets in Divorce

To prevent disputes over pets during a separation, couples are increasingly turning to **"petnups"**—agreements that outline who will care for the pet, cover expenses, and determine living arrangements in case of divorce. While not legally binding, courts may consider such agreements when making decisions about pet ownership.

A Step Towards Change?

Although pets remain legally classified as property, this ruling suggests a shift towards **considering their welfare in divorce cases**. Whether this leads to a legal reclassification of pets remains to be seen, but it is clear that society—and perhaps the law—is beginning to recognize that **pets are family, too**.

Mary

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Who is who in our local church benefices?

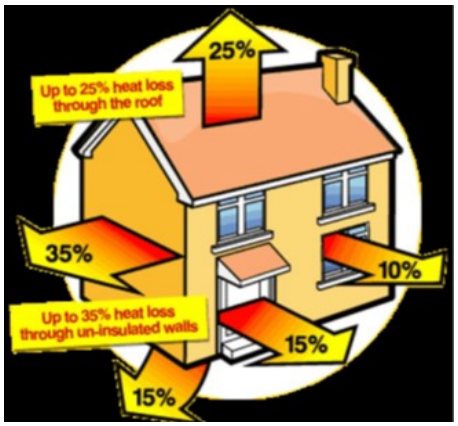
BENEFICE	CHURCH (Parish)	RECTOR	CONTACT	ELDERS AND OFFICIALS
BANSFIELD	COWLINGE	The Revd Eve Bell	07815441304	Dr Paul Bevan
	DENSTON			
	LIDGATE			
	OUSDEN			
	STANSFIELD			
	STRADISHALL			
	(Assington Green)			
	WICKHAMBROOK			
STOUR VALLEY	CLARE	The Revd Mark Woodrow	01787277515	The Revd Dr Karen Smith
	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. 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.

Our first **Volunteer Tidy** morning takes place on Wednesday 5th March between 10:30 and 1pm. We'll be meeting at the Chapel of Rest and have a couple of things planned: Cleaning down another of the memorial benches ready for another coat of teak oil; Levelling the base on which the memorial bench is normally sited;



The aim of the project is to raise awareness about insulation, and if possible, help you to improve the energy efficiency of your house.

SCAN ME

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 follow this link. To participate as a volunteer or have your property included in the survey, please contact the clerk, or scan this QR code

Planting four hawthorns at the corner of the cemetery and extending the paling fencing;
Installing new signage to explain our wildlife areas;
Setting grass seed around the children's play fort.
We may not get all of this done, but if you would like to join us, please contact me.

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 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 soon – if you are a land owner 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:
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) , 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 the New Year, keep safe and well. **Hilary**

STANSFIELD CINEMA



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

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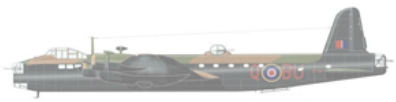
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(The former "Officers' Mess" RAF Stradishall, 3 Group, Bomber Command)

All meetings commence at 19.30 hours unless stated.

Stirling House Speaker Programme 2025

			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

Martin Kinna

HE IS BACK, THANK THE LORD!



I cannot quite believe it is three months since I set finger to keyboard for the **Parish Pump**. Where ever did time go ? Of course there was Christmas and all that entails. The Living Nativity went well at the **Depden Care Farm**; the lads who run it put such effort into the production, and locals, talented and less so, tell the Christmas Story with huge commitment. Well done all concerned. I left slightly before the end as I am allergic to some carols and especially to Little Donkey ! Actually last year's donkey was banished for misbehaviour last time out and so the Three Wise Men arrived on diminutive lamas or alpacas or something that was not recorded in the Bible. Another Christmas pleasure was the entry into our home of **Nigel Slater's** new book **A Thousand Feasts** for which he has given the beguiling by-line " Small moments of joy…. A memoir of sorts" and that is just what it is. It talks quite a lot about food of course but is definitely NOT a cook book. I was recommending it to a friend who immediately said " The one thing I do not want for Christmas is yet another cookery book!". It really is not and is, in fact, just what it says on the tin. Our Nigel takes us on many of his journeys around the world and records, sometimes in just two or three lines, the things that have made him happy. In fact little moments of pure joy. Have a look at it next time you are near a book shop: I am sure it will give you pleasure.

And as we stumble into this New Year and find politicians of all stripes behaving oddly, making unreasonable demands, getting us even more confused and depressed, we do more and more need those. joyful moments and to keep our sanity sufficiently to still appreciate the little heart lifting things. One such each year for me is to catch glimpses of the drifts of snow drops that appear as one rounds the corners of almost any country lane round here at this time of year. Beautiful harbingers of spring seemingly as delicate as a dandelion clock but strong to withstand the icy cold and the battering winds. They give hope that better times are ahead.

And another thing that amused me these past weeks was the lady on Bargain Hunt on BBC One who when her "expert "told her the vase she was holding was Terra Cotta said, ": Oh! I thought that was a kind of desert !".

If Gladiator Two has caught your imagination, you might care to know that the Hawkedon Helmet, the only gladiator's helmet of Roman origin yet to be discovered in Britain, has been on a journey to Dorset where the County Museum has been showing a gladiator themed exhibition. It is rather a spectacular thing and really heavy, in fact it would have been a definite penalty to anybody wearing it in combat. It was discovered in a field in Hawkedon and exhibited without its chin strap. Miraculously when the finder had died the chinstrap was found and given back to the British Museum where the helmet is normally displayed. It is worth a visit but not on show during the last days of the Silk Road exhibition. Incidentally **William Dalrymple** brought out his latest large tome on India at the end of last year. His by-line was "How Ancient India transformed the World". His thesis is that from the Third Century BC to around AD 1200 the Indian subcontinent had an outsized influence on the world. Its enormous trade in spices, gems and textiles was highly prized in Europe and after the collapse of the Roman Empire it had a huge trade in South East Asia. Not only that but it spread Buddhism to China and beyond. It is a heavy book but ideal to get your nose into on cold winter evenings instead of watching The One Show.

The bird feeders have been incredibly busy and our new garden is beginning to attract more and more species. Our large feeders require replenishment every two days and it does the heart good to watch these tiny creatures who soon get put right if they do not observe the pecking order. A magnificent bronze cock pheasant stands below and takes advantage of any seed spill from his toiling team above then off he goes to visit many another property in the village.

By no means a real ornithologist, I wish I was certain about a little black job that enjoyed sitting on the telegraph wire at the front of the house. I never saw it feed, instead he sang his little heart out for most of the day, songs of exceptional beauty. Having been used to annual visits from Nightingales in Southern Spain I could only hope it was a Nightingale itself, perhaps blown off course by one of these violent storms with extraordinary names we have had.

Wherever it has gone to I hope it is safe and survives somewhere more clement at the moment.

Another item that made me chuckle, in a recent book just out on the subject of certain aspects of Cambridge Colleges last century, was a tale of an eminent professor in an the English Department who was notorious for his liking for what is now known as "rough trade". On being asked what he liked to read in bed , replied "the only thing I read in bed is Tattoos ". Well it made me laugh !

So here we are in March, notoriously war like in weather and now it seems around this bellicose world. Hang on to your hats and watch the buds on your fruit trees swell and look forward to the coming flowers and maybe the changes that are inevitably going to surround us. Oh! And congratulate me on not mentioning Trump and Musk and other unpredictable specimens of God's creatures ! Enjoy this the beginning of Spring - there is nowhere better to do so.

Martin Kinna



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 am upset by something that I think you will say is trivial. But I can't get it out of my mind.

I live in a village.
There's a village event happening in the spring that I have nothing to do with.
I am arranging a baby shower for my daughter-in-law and decided to do it on the same day. The date really suits my daughter-in-law and, as it involves a completely different set of people, I thought why not.

Anyway, one person who perhaps would come to the shower is also going to the village event and she's not only been awful to me about my choosing a date that clashed, she has also got the village talking about it. So much so that a lovely lady in the village who is an organiser of the event actually spoke to me about it, telling me this person is upset.

I just feel as if it's blown out of all proportion and that I am somehow at fault.

Should I change the date?

E

Dear E,

Sadly, we cannot control what upsets us purely because our brains tell us it might not be important. If it upsets you, it is not trivial.

Having said that, it does sound as though people are getting into a tizz about something that does not really warrant it.

Your party involves different people save for one person.

In life it is often quite hard to see, let alone separate, what we are responsible for versus what is for other people. In this story E, it does sound like you have not done anything wrong at all. You could explain to the person who would like to be at both events that she will be missed and maybe invite her for a separate cup of tea with your daughter-in-law? Equally explain clearly to the lady in the village that the date is chosen to fit with the new mother and only clashes for one person. Then that is your responsibility done. Keep the date and carry on. It will be a storm in a teacup.

Enjoy the shower!
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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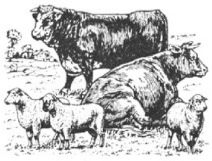
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