



The Swaffham Crier

Volume XLVIII Number 2



Editorial

Stop! DO NOT READ ANOTHER THING until you have turned back to look carefully at our cover picture. Can you spot anything odd? Now read on ... could you have told? Readers with an eye for artistic matters can also pit their wits again in this issue as our artists' Christmas Tree puzzle is still running (p. 6), get your considered answers in before February 22nd.

Read more of Steve Kent-Phillips fascinating account of *proper* beer-making in this issue. Here he tells us (amongst other things) just why beer was the healthy choice in days gone by, and (dear to the home-brewers heart) how to get rid of that give-away home-brewed taste....

Also in this issue is the first report from our County Council we have had since James Fitch retired (our County Councillor Josh Schumann kept promising but..) — many thanks to Charlotte Cane for this.

We've all been reading about the Horizon scandal recently and probably thinking like us just how lucky we are that for some reason its bugs didn't strike round here. WRONG!!! An idle enquiry at a nearby post-office revealed that they have had nothing but trouble and just kept paying up, thinking that it must be their own mistakes. So the question now is: Was anyone *not* ripped off by Horizon, and was this the source of the PO's healthy profits?

If you have family grave-stones in the cemetery, do check them, they might be on the re-inspection list (see p. 26) and the inspectors are coming round again...

The New Year Music in the Village Hall was smash success we hear. We were so sorry we couldn't attend, but we hear it was packed out and very much enjoyed by all. And our Crossword prize is back! (see p.12). Many thanks to John and Lana but be warned if you're trying to win, the crossword this month is an absolute ***! Happy Valentine's Day!

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Cover Picture: *Winter in Fenland*, AI generated image by **Jane Goodall** via Midjourney



Letters to the Editors



Dear Editors,

Crier Eds' 25th Anniversary

I do have a list of all the Crier editors and their dates which I did for a party we had at your house to celebrate I think 25 years of the Crier. Cyril Rowlinson (the shop and post office) was the first one followed by Zandra Houston (the Fencock), Dorothy Ware (Oak Cottage), Margaret Mason (Adams Road), Cliff and Betty Curtis (the White House), John Chalmers, Ron and Betty Prime, Ruth and Robin Scovil, then Pat Cunningham, John Fidoe, Hilary Mengham and Caroline and James did it jointly for a few years until Caroline and James took over in 1999.

We started the printing on the Gestetner at the school for the first few issues then moved to one of the spare bedrooms at the vicarage in Green Head Road (Rev John and Jean Byron) for many years before moving to John Chalmers'. The typing including the adverts were done on a very large heavy typewriter which we had to take each month to the typist on the rota.

I have a copy of the first edition if anyone is interested.

Ruth Stinton

Thank you for this Ruth and we certainly would be! We are planning to have a party around Midsummer Day to celebrate — all Crier contributors will be welcome!

This Month's Cover Picture

Jane regularly opens her studio in Swaffham Prior as part of the annual Cambridge Open Studios event during July. Already known for her botanical printed textiles, Jane has more recently begun exploring the new and controversial field of AI generated imagery and the creative process. She describes using the 'Midjourney' programme in the making of the February Crier cover picture:

To produce an AI generated image in Midjourney you provide word prompts. The way you order the words indicates emphasis to the 'bot' and the styling is heavily influenced by very small changes in the words you use. Each image will be unique due to the way that a seed of noise is used to initiate the process. The seed number is only known to you and no one will be able to replicate your image identically with prompts unless they have your seed number (which is one of billions).

The prompts used for this image were 'subtle woodcut style walking in January fenland with teasels buckthorn lode naive art style.'

I tried multiple prompt combinations and many variations and styles were produced. I was finally able to find an image that I could further refine using the variations tool and further prompting.

Jane Goodall

Website : www.thebeautifulleaf.co.uk

WARNING!

Last week, a young man rang me up claiming to be a policeman who had apprehended two youths who had cloned my card, and he just needed to confirm some details. He didn't sound much like a policeman, so I asked him to first confirm a few details with me. Like my *name*, or indeed any other irrelevant details on this cloned card. Needless to say, he hadn't a clue—the quality of telephone scammers is really going to pot! But the next one might do a better policeman impersonation, so do be aware. And remember, they will have temporarily taken over your line and any number you ring next will be them again, so first phone a friend and check.

Caroline Matheson



Dr Giles Yeo's knitted gut, which stretched the whole width of the village hall—the same length as an adult human gut. See WI Report on page 20.

A YEAR OF
QUIZZING!
MARCH 2024-
FEBRUARY 2025

Are you ready for the next Year of Quizzing?
One payment of £15 will bring you a year of fiendish quizzes.
Each month you will receive a quiz by email (or delivered by hand). Work out the answers, return your entry by the deadline and a monthly winner will be drawn from the correct submissions.
An overall winner will be crowned in February 2025.
Can last year's champions be defeated?
Will we have a new Champion of Champions?

Please email: admin@angleseygroupparishes.co.uk
for sign-up information; enter by end of February.
In aid of St Mary's, Swaffham Prior

From our Reporter

The Bells of St Cyriac's rang out the old and rang in the new, followed by the multiple popping of corks. And all the New Year Resolutions came into play. Sensibly I had only made two and one of these only survived two days.

It was also the time when many rethink their happiness and health. For a few weeks the papers had been full of health giving advice. Hope soon became despair as the answers involved taking a freezing cold shower at the beginning of the day, going for a gentle ten minute jog, having the last drink four hours before going to bed, and as for the "squats" - forget it.



ACRE is pushing the PC to support its proposal to distribute throughout the village a questionnaire about people's views on the need for affordable housing in our village. But they refuse to tell the PC the proposed site because it may be contentious. Because of this the PC unanimously refused to accept the ACRE housing need survey. Also it is unlikely the PC could make any objections to the village survey. Any scheme would be run as a separate Community Land Trust (CLT) and not by our existing one.

ECDC has been pressing for all local PCs to provide a Neighbourhood Plan (NP) which would look at the needs and concerns of all villages. Swaffham Prior has yet to do this.

The recent arrival of the striking houses in Bulbeck at Quarry Lane may be a sign of the future. But these were approved in January 2018 consisting of 18 houses, 4 of which are for social housing for the local community. They are not part of the Bulbeck NP which covers the years 2022 to 2037. For these years the Bulbeck NP proposes 45 houses on a site which they recommend, and they will be houses which accord with the general character of the village.

The Bulbeck NP is an impressive document, all 101 pages, which provides fascinating information on the differences between Prior and Bulbeck, the startling prediction for future Bulbeck school numbers, and is generally quite sobering reading. It was researched and produced by three organisations in the village. A Community Land Trust which was set up by the people in 2017 which is open to all adults in the village and which is a Charity. The Parish Council. And a Neighbourhood Plan Steering Committee. Plus the village Survey.

A little further away 271 new homes are being built north of Newmarket Road in Burwell. With each house having on average one and a half cars that should put another 400 cars on the road. Maybe a number will take advantage of the lavish new cycle path along the road. The one question that everyone has is what happens when the path reaches the bridge. Will the path just sit there like a little puppy dog, paws in the air asking "What do I do now?"

It is often surprising how often the national press keeps an eye on local news. In the December Crier I made some slightly unappreciative comments about the Welsh whisky Penderyn. Within a couple of days The Times of December 4th was onto it.

They announced that a great new trade deal involving Penderyn had been drawn up with Patagonia. The country has 50,000 Welsh descendents with 5,000 Welsh speakers. Then on 11th December The Times announced that in the year ending July 2023 whisky exports rose by 13%. And the only brand featured was Penderyn. So it must be good. But it needs a true Scot to make the final judgement. An obvious choice comes to mind. Step forward young man.

Alastair Everitt

ARTIST'S CHRISTMAS TREES



1..



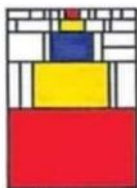
2.



3.



4.



5.



6.



7.



8.



9.



10.



11.



12.

Our New Year Quiz is still running....!

Above are depicted 12 Christmas Trees, in the style (supposedly!) of 12 famous artists. Can you identify them? Answers to the Editors (editors@swaffham-crier.co.uk) by February 22nd—we have already had a number of entries!

See them in colour at www.swaffham-crier.co.uk.

Boxing Day Hockey Match 2023

Boxing Day 2023 was a rare bright sunny day in a week of overcast uninspiring weather. Teams from Swaffham Prior and Swaffham Bulbeck gathered on the Denny for the annual hockey match, with Swaffham Bulbeck sporting new orange hats in memory of Graham Wiltshire, a lovely tribute.

Swaffham Prior welcomed several new players this year which was fantastic, and they quickly became part of the very committed team. The first two quarters were extremely evenly matched until Swaffham Bulbeck successfully fired a shot so fast that it was missed by many a spectator. The Prior team rallied courageously, employing their roll on-roll off substitutions enthusiastically until the umpire was forced to step in and send the captain off for having far too many players on the pitch at one time. Final score 1-0 to Bulbeck and the trophy made its way to the Black Horse for another year.

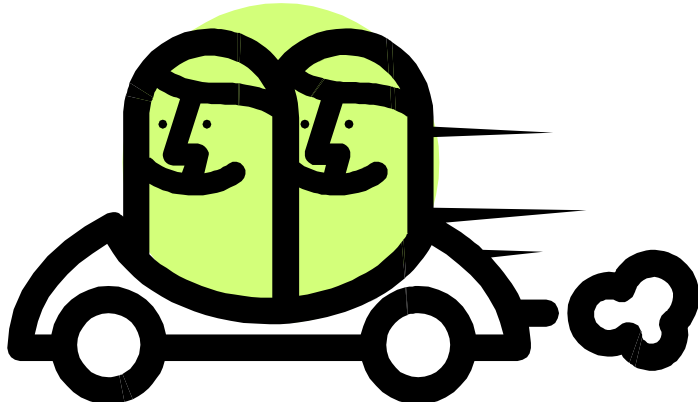
The Prior team were delighted to be able to retire to the recently opened Red Lion pub for some well-deserved refreshments.

Thank you to all those who turned out to play, and the spectators who supported the two teams; it was another memorable match; thank you also to our officials (Jo Jones umpiring and Phil Kingsmill running the touchline) who did a great job keeping everything under control as usual. Finally, many thanks to David Turner for organising the Bulbeck team, preparing the pitch and collecting for MAGPAS.

Mandy Kingsmill



Swaffham Prior Community Car Scheme (SPCCS)

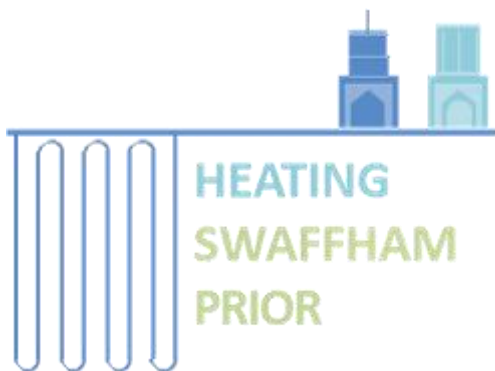


A voluntary community car scheme for residents of Swaffham Prior providing door-to-door transport for those who do not have the use of a car and are unable to use conventional public transport to cover essential trips eg medical, dental, chiropody, optician, or visits to local Day Centres

If you would like to use this service or **volunteer as a driver** please contact Janet Willmott

07833 960678

preferably between 9am-5pm, Monday to Friday
or email spccs@adventurersfarm.co.uk



NEWS FROM THE HEATING SCHEME

Cannot believe we are already in February, where has the time gone? February will be a bit longer being a leap year and having 29 days instead of 28 days.

It has been very cold in recent days and now that we are part way through a winter with a good number of homes connected to the sys-

tem, we will be looking to analyse some of the data to provide to the community with some figures of how much heat is used based on our four different house size bandings, which we will share when it is available.

Floor area of property	2024 standing charge
50-99 m ²	£313 (£298+VAT)
100-149 m ²	£389 (£370+VAT)
150-199 m ²	£471 (£448+VAT)
>199+ m ²	£553 (£527+VAT)

We are keen to continue the connection works in batches. Soon we will be starting our next marketing drive to encourage sign ups so those with Heat Supply Agreements can be connected in the next round of connections. Work has been underway on surveys to 12 properties who have expressed an interest so far, to identify where a Heat Interface Unit would be best located on properties. We are very keen to convert this interest into signed agreements, so the next exciting phase of the project can proceed.

If you are interested in connecting to the heat network, you can contact us three different ways. The first step is to have the survey undertaken, which also includes locating the best route from the heat network in the road to your home. Once we have the report, we issue you with a Heat Supply Agreement which is the contract between you and the Council to connect you to the heat network and we will programme your place in the queue to be connected.

To register your interest you can:

Fill out this form – <https://forms.office.com/e/8mg3xtEpnv>

Email us on heatingswaffhamprior@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

Call us on **0345 0455210**

Thank you from

The Heating Swaffham Prior Team

Julie's Valentines recipes

Rib-eye steak with Béarnaise sauce

2 tbsp olive oil	2 shallots, sliced
2 rib-eye steaks	1 large bunch of tarragon, stalks and leaves separated and chopped
Salt and pepper	A few peppercorns
<u>For the sauce</u>	2 free range egg yolks
250g butter	1 lemon, juice only
3 tbsp white wine vinegar	

1.To make the béarnaise sauce, melt the butter in a pan on a low heat. In a separate pan heat the vinegar, shallots, tarragon stalks and peppercorns and cook until you have a tablespoon of liquid left, then strain through a sieve.

2. Blend the eggs in a food processor with the vinegar reduction, gradually add the melted butter, until blended and then stir in the lemon juice and tarragon leaves. Set aside until the steak is ready.

3.Season the steaks and rub with olive oil. Heat a frying pan or griddle pan until hot and cook the steaks for 4 minutes on each side for medium or reduce time if you prefer more rare. Leave to rest and then serve with the béarnaise sauce.

4. An ideal accompaniment to the steak would be Garlic and rosemary potatoes and a watercress salad.

For the potatoes simply par boil some cubed potatoes for 5 minutes, drain. Heat some olive oil in a large frying pan, add the garlic and rosemary and then the potatoes and fry until golden brown, season to taste.

Chocolate and raspberry brownies

350g dark chocolate, good quality	110g plain flour, sifted
250g unsalted butter	1 tsp baking powder
3 free range eggs	Pinch of salt
250g muscovado sugar, dark	175g fresh raspberries

1.Preheat the oven to 170c, butter a 23cm square cake tin.

2.Melt the chocolate and butter together and leave to cool slightly.

3.Whisk the eggs until thick, then gradually add the sugar and beat until glossy, then gently fold in the flour, baking powder and salt.

4.Pour half of the mixture into the greased tin, scatter over the raspberries and then cover with the remaining mixture.

5.Bake in the oven for 40 minutes or until the surface is set. Use a skewer to check if its cooked inside: it's cooked if the skewer comes out just a little sticky. It is ready. Allow to stand for 20 minutes and cut into squares.

A VISIT TO HOOK NORTON

PART 2

If you remember, by this stage we have extracted the sugars from the malt and added the hops to the copper. The wort and hops are boiled to extract the goodness from the hops, which produces a lot of crud, called “*trub*”, which needs to be filtered out. This is done by transferring to another vessel called a “*hopback*”, where you



literally get the hops back. These are not wasted either – they go for fertiliser. Hook Norton use old fashioned gravity and filters, but they add some more hops (just a handful, on the surface) which adds a more intense flavour and tends to make the trub clump together, much as crushed eggshells clear consommé. This, however, only removes the larger pieces of trub, as you need some of it to help flavours in the next process. Nothing is wasted – the spent malt is recycled into animal feed or fertiliser. Modern big breweries skip this step and use a centrifuge. Boo.

The wort is still way too hot for fermentation as excessive heat will kill the yeast, so some sort of heat exchange/cooling process takes place. Hook Norton are on their third generation of heat exchanger, which recycles a lot of the heat needed, plus some more for nice hot water to clean everything with. They still have the original in their museum.

This next vessel, the “*fermenter*” introduces our final ingredient – the yeast. The biggest enemy of any Brewer is wild yeast. This is in the air all around us and can make a beer go sour overnight. When you are brewing 2,000 pints at a time like Hook Norton, this can prove very expensive. Luckily, the hops are a natural antibiotic, so by this stage there are no nasties around. It is this property that is the reason people in olden times drank beer not water – it was safer (and tasted better).

Yeast has this amazing property in that if you keep feeding it sugar, it keeps growing. Each batch of yeast produced ten times more than you started with. Some is retained for the next batch, some is frozen in case of emergencies, and some goes for animal feed. Hook Norton are still using the original 170+ year old strain of yeast, as the new buds are clones. In Burton-on-Trent, a lorry comes around and takes all the excess yeast away for free – thus providing the Marmite factory nearby with raw material.

The wort is now cool enough for the yeast, so now it is added. Fermentation now takes place, where the yeast converts most (but not all, another part of the art) of the sugars into alcohol. More crud forms on the surface, which is scraped off. Spent yeast forms clumps and goes to the bottom of the vat. The temperature is carefully controlled, and many samples taken to get the required strength and sweetness; and it is stirred at regular intervals to keep the fermentation going as paradoxically, alcohol kills yeast cells. When it is done, beer can be carefully drained off the top of the vat.

Technically, the beer is ready to drink now, but it will have that “home brew” taste, and time is needed to allow the flavours to develop. The final vessel is the “*conditioning tank*”, where the beer settles down for a few days. Here, an optional extra ingredient can be added, then removed – “*isinglass*” – this is the dried swim bladders of fish, well known as “*finings*” to home wine makers. This helps remove the smaller particles remaining, which clump together around the finings, drift down to the bottom of the tank and get filtered off.

Thus nearly all beer in the world is non-vegetarian, but these days “Vegan” beers have a form of dried seaweed added to do the same job; but it is not as good; so Vegan beers tend to be a bit cloudy. No Brewer can produce exactly clear beer, indeed the “cloudy beers” don’t want that; but your average UK Real Ale nut expects clear beer at least until towards the end of the barrel, when some harmless haze is expected.

Finally, the beer is bottled (off-site in Hook Norton’s case) or put into kegs for delivery. Some beers have a handful of even more hops added for more intense aro-



mas, making the “triple hopped” varieties. Modern kegs are aluminium, but Hook Norton also use traditional wooden casks made by their on-site Cooper; and even some postmodern “polypins” which are recyclable plastic, although recycling a wooden barrel back to the brewery is 100% reusability and much more carbon friendly if done by horse and dray.

Much of Hook Norton’s output is old fashioned “*cask conditioned*”, where a little bit of surplus yeast (and maybe a spoonful of sugar) is added back to make the beer keep working and clearing; this adds extra fizz

to the beer. Cask conditioned beers will last about four days once opened as a natural layer of CO₂ forms on top of the beer. Some barrels are sold “*bright*”, which means the brewery have done all the work and it is ready to serve immediately – you see those beers on the fizzpop taps in pubs. Bright beers have to be sold pretty much immediately, but serving them via a Nitrogen/CO₂ mix like lager can extend their shelf life as that too forms a protective blanket over the beer. All types will keep about four weeks before being opened.

However, at Hook Norton some beer is served fresh out of the barrel in the old spent yeast store, back down some 98 narrow metal steps from the top, to lucky people who go on the tours and get a proctored tasting at the end; where an expert tells you what malts, hops and yeasts went into making each variety of beer you taste, and what to look for in each type – Pale, IPA, Amber, Brown, Porter & Stout. Hook Norton produce all six types as standard and many seasonal varieties, *so it takes a while*.

Steve Kent-Phillips

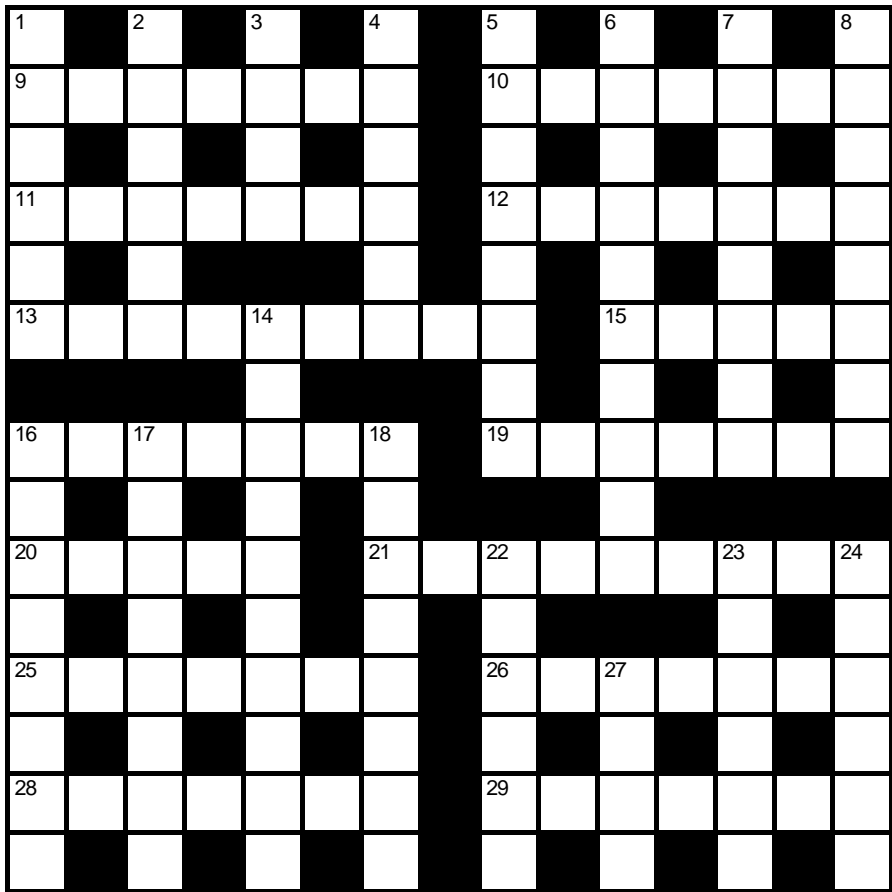
Crossword Number 213

Sponsored by *The Red Lion*

Compiled by

BYWELL

* clues contain no definition, but the solutions are of a type. Send your answers to the editors by 18th February 2024. The sender of the first correct solution out of the hat will win a free Sunday Lunch at *The Red Lion*—See the pub manager for full details. Emailed solutions are acceptable but please include “CROSSWORD” and the crossword number in the header.



Name:.....

Address:.....

.....Tel:.....

Across

- 9 On one's way from the one true conversion (2,5)
- 10 Bruising counter-measure (3,4)
- 11 Oxygen added to a molten metal makes a light greyish brown (7)
- 12 Entrance path ending in a backward Irish town (7)
- 13 * A lot of eggs (6,3)
- 15 * First chess player to go on the radio (5)
- 16 * Turn to drink with Noah, oddly (7)
- 19 * The heart of Strath Linnhe? (7)
- 20 Crafty members of the family, perhaps (5)
- 21 * Rambling intros take up part of the day (5,4)
- 25 Checks answers again about livestock transporter in a very short time (7)
- 26 Anthropoid cooking kale pie (7)
- 28 * Heading left before midday (7)
- 29 Sweet chaos in Belgian Congo, if no bongo (7)

Down

- 1 Characters in 'Measure for Measure' see the light (6)
- 2 Very cold cacti replanted around the end of winter (6)
- 3 * A blue tie is oddly missing (4)
- 4 * RAF let loose (6)
- 5 Lord - look after this sentence (4,4)
- 6 Beetle's time machine? Put out the ad first! (10)

- 7 Noted design for cross-capital railway centre (8)
- 8 Kneels to put out contents of cupboard? (8)
- 14 With a mixture of gels, Romans get fragrance (10)
- 16 Happens as mouth opens for sweets (8)
- 17 I turn up wearing beads and leaves for the kitchen (8)
- 18 One who forgets morning directions, often beginning the crossword (8)
- 22 * Redhead drivers have a chance to speak (6)
- 23 Here in France a semi-circle comes down to a point (6)
- 24 * Three-D sector features regularly (6)
- 27 * Couples go out regularly in the Cairo Gang (4)

Solution to crossword no. 212

P	O	L	Y	P	S		C	O	W	S	L	I	P	S
C		O		A		A		I					A	
P	E	C	K	O	V	E	R		C	H	O	I	R	S
A		E		E		R		K		X			A	
A	N	G	L	E	S	E	Y		E	M	B	A	L	M
							O		N		U		E	
A	U	D	L	E	Y	E	N	D			F	R	O	G
R			E								G		A	
A	B	B	E	Y			G	U	I	L	D	H	A	L
A		R		W		N								
E	N	G	I	N	E		I	C	K	W	O	R	T	H
A		N		A		F		N		P		R		
F	R	U	G	A	L		O	R	I	G	A	N	U	M
E					T		R		F		R		S	
L	A	V	E	N	H	A	M		E	S	T	A	T	E

We congratulate Robert Nunn, The winner of last month's competition, who will receive a prize certificate from the editors. Honourable mentions go to Dainin O'Dowd and Trish Whitehead.

News from Bottisham Medical Practice

Patients' Participation Group

Health Advice from Medical Staff:

Please remember homely remedies as most coughs and colds do not require medical attention. Please visit the 111 website <https://111.nhs.uk/> when you are unwell which directly takes you step by step through your symptoms and advises on the best course of action which may be a review at a local pharmacy, seeing your GP or attending A&E. If you use the 111 website out of hours it can even book you into a GP out of hours slot automatically!

If you have received a message to book for a medication review or health review please book this appointment. We are monitored regarding these reviews and your assistance would be appreciated.

We have physiotherapists available two days a week and you can book directly in to see them about any musculoskeletal problem.

New Year Tip: Walk more and drive less where possible. Better for health and the environment.

Missed Appointments: There were 31 missed appointments in December, do please inform the surgery if you are unable to keep an appointment. It is only fair for other patients who could use the slot.

The Patient Participation Group: As usual we are inviting new members to join the committee, all patients of this Practice are eligible. Please contact our chairman as below to find out more information and how you can be involved.

Next Meeting: This will be at 6.30pm Thursday 28 March 2024 in the Surgery waiting room. If you wish to join our meeting, please email our chairman s.j.gilson@btinternet.com. Or speak to reception.

BON MOT NUMBER 146

**"Mr Punch is one of those
extravagant reliefs from the realities of life
which would lose its hold ... if it
were made more moral and instructive."**

Charles Dickens (1812 - 1870)

The Reading Group Reviews...

The Books We Read in 2023

We had a very interesting evening reviewing the books we'd read in 2023. It was the first time we've done this, but feel sure we'll repeat it.

We'd read a huge variation of novels- by Graham Greene, Amor Towles, Barbara Trapido, Francis Spufford, Marianne Cronin, Ray Bradbury, Lynda la Plante, to name a few.

We agreed that it had been an enjoyable reading year and that we'd all read books we wouldn't necessarily have chosen ourselves (members take it in turn to choose books).

I think I could say there were two firm favourites: Amor Towles' *Lincoln Highway* and Marianne Cronin's *One Hundred Years of Lennie and Margot*.

In February we are reading *I Capture the Castle* by Dodie Smith (Kent House) and in March, *Still life* by Sarah Winman. If you would like to come, just contact Brenda Wilson on 01638 7443937.

Margaret Joyce

The 2023 List

Jan: meeting cancelled

Feb: *The Shack*, William Young (Ruth)

Mar: *The Midnight Library*, Matt Haig (Catie)

Apr: Kai Lung Unrolls his Mat, Ernest Bramah (Caroline)

May: *Strange Weather in Tokyo*, Hiromi Kawasaki (Alastair)

June: *Light Perpetual*, Francis Spufford (Margaret)

July: *Brother of the More Famous Jack*, Barbara Trapido (Roz)

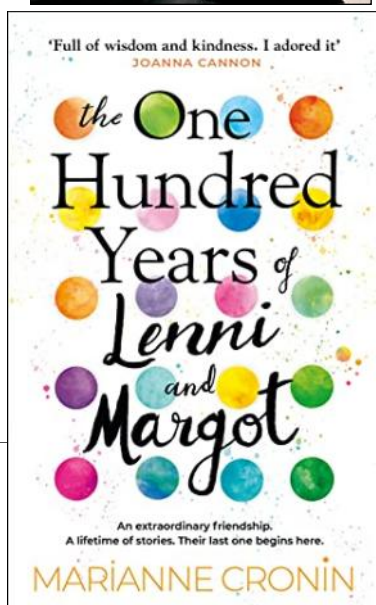
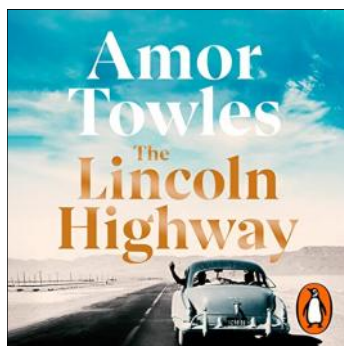
Aug: *Trial and Retribution*, Lynda la Plante (Zelda)

Sept: *The Honorary Consul*, Graham Greene (Brenda)

Oct: ***The Lincoln Highway*, Amor Towles (Roz)**

Nov: ***A Hundred Years of Lennie and Margot*, Marianne Cronin (Catie)**

Dec: *Fahrenheit 451*, Ray Bradbury (Alastair)



Above, our favourite books of the year, and left the complete list and who chose them.

The Swaffhams' WI

Our talk in January was given by Dr Giles Yeo, a Cambridge geneticist, who works at the MRC and whose special interest is Appetite, Eating, Diets and Weight.

It was fascinating, highly informative, extremely entertaining and very funny. His only 'aid' was a knitted gut, which he pulled out of a small bag, rather like a magician pulling bunting from a top hat. Now as you know, the WI gets very excited by knitting and this was really amazing, multi coloured, with additional liver and Pancreas, stretching the whole width of the village hall - the same length as an adult human gut. His "Food to Poop" tube. His words, not mine.

In very simple terms, the hormones in the gut which are controlled by our genetic make up, tell the brain, that either we are hungry and need to eat, or that we are full and need to stop. But life isn't always that straight forward - things change, there are gene mutations, which can result in weight problems, not helped in this day and age by social policy, poverty and the availability of high sugar, high fat processed food.

An interesting aside was Labradors and their renowned appetites! They originated in Labrador, working for the fishermen by dragging in the nets. They were of course rewarded by food, so the link has remained. Guide dogs, who are largely Labradors, are trained with food rewards and about 80% of Labradors chosen for Guide dog training have a gene mutation that tells them they must eat! No surprise to Labrador owners.

Our next meeting is on February 19th, when Julian Luttrell, is coming to talk to us about local and family history. All are welcome.

Margaret Joyce

Eds' Note: See page 3 for the knitted gut.



Mothers' Union

The Anglesey Group programme for 2024 began with our New Year Holy Communion Service, which again this year was combined with the weekly Thursday morning Holy Communion in St James' Church, Lode. This was led by Rev. Roger Bowen. After the service MU members provided and served a soup lunch.

Our first guest speaker of the year is Liz Butler, Licenced Lay Minister, who will be speaking to us about Christian Mission in Bihar, India. This meeting will take place on Thursday 15th February at 2.30pm in Passage Hall, Lode.

Our meetings usually take place on the third Thursday of each month, and copies of our programme for the whole year can be found in all five parish churches. You are most welcome to come and join us.



Ann Langran



VILLAGE GARDENERS

The Village Gardeners held their first meeting of the year in Swaffham Prior Village Hall on a freezing January evening. It was lovely to see some regular members as well as several new faces. Thank you to everyone

who braved the cold to join us to listen to Barry Gayton give a talk on 'A Year of Colour in the Garden'. Barry has been gardening since he was 7 years old, and by growing and selling plants to a local shop was able to buy his first aluminium greenhouse at the age of 13. Now retired, he still follows his passion in his 'Desert World' garden near Brandon, which he reclaimed from the trees and sandy soils of Thetford Forest and where his vast plant collections include many native plants and more than 13,000 species of cacti.

Barry took us on a journey of plants through the seasons, giving us plenty of ideas of how to bring colour and scent to our gardens through the year. For winter we learnt that Hellebores contain antifreeze and can survive at temperatures down to -30°C. They grow happily on all soils, even the



chalk of Swaffham Prior. In spring, many flowering bulbs have yellow flowers to attract bees that see yellow in ultra violet. But birds prefer yellow crocuses, so plant purple and white bulbs to avoid them being eaten. In summer we are spoilt for colour, but for scent, choose old rose varieties because selective breeding has meant the loss of scent in favour of colour and showiness in newer varieties. Finally in autumn, shrubs such as purple-leaved Berberis and the gradually reddening leaves and berries of Cotoneaster Horizontalis can brighten up the darkening days. We mustn't forget the impact of plant structure in the garden as we head back to winter's frostiness, so should not be too quick to cut old stems back.

The next meeting of the Village Gardeners will be held on Tuesday 20th February at 8pm in Swaffham Prior Village Hall, when Nigel Start will be giving a talk on 'A History of Gardening in England'. Nigel was born in Cambridgeshire and spent the majority of his career as a scientist at the Plant Breeding Institute near Cambridge. After leaving the organization, he started his own business in garden design and rescue. Nigel will take us on a journey through 2,500 years of British garden history, highlighting key moments in the development of gardens in Britain, providing a fresh perspective on gardening practices, design principles, and plant choices over the centuries. Everyone is welcome; visitors can come along at any time for £4 per evening, and there'll be tea, homemade cakes and the chance to meet your gardening neighbours.

Fiona Geraghty

Cambridge Open Studio's 50th Anniversary

Cambridge Open Studios, a thriving community of more than 500 artists, is celebrating its 50th anniversary with the launch of its biggest and best ever July Open Studios Art Festival.

The organisation, which is one of the oldest artist-run open studio initiatives in the country, is hosting the famous festival across every weekend in July (06 – 07, 13 – 14, 20 – 21, 27 – 28 July 2024) which it promises will be packed full of VIP events, studio tours and creative surprises.

The vast range of specialisms on display include painting, jewellery, printmaking, ceramics and pottery, glass art, digital art, drawing and illustration, woodwork and furniture, sculpture, textiles, photography, book art, lettering and calligraphy, mixed media and collage and much more.

Gabriella del Valle, Chair of the Cambridge Open Studios Management Team, said: “Over the last five decades, Cambridge Open Studios has evolved from just a handful of members in the early 1970s to a 500 plus strong membership organisation, comprising professional, amateur and hobby artists from all different backgrounds and walks of life. Throughout that time, we have welcomed more than 1,800 local artists into our community, and I am so proud to say our mission has never wavered: to make the arts accessible to all.

“We are thrilled to be celebrating our golden jubilee in the best way we know how – by delivering an extra-special addition of the July Open Studios Art Festival. The free event attracts thousands of visitors each year and this July will be no different. It offers, not only the chance to embrace, celebrate and engage with the artistic community of Cambridgeshire, but also to purchase an exclusive piece of art, hand-crafted by a local artist or artisan. We hope to see you there!”

To find out more about Cambridge Open Studios, visit: <https://camopenstudios.org/>



**At a
Cambridge
Open Studios
Event in 2023**

The District Council's Finance & Assets Committee will meet on Thursday 25 January. There will be a budget report on the agenda, though we know from past experience that this may bear no relation to the actual budget to be set on Tuesday 20 February.

At the end of November it was reported that the Council was projecting a year-end underspend of £757,000, against a budget of £16.85 million. £700,000 of this can be attributed to the Council benefiting from rises in interest rates on its deposits.



It is possible that the Finance & Assets Committee meeting on 25 January will receive the Full Business Case for the crematorium at Mepal.

The District Council's Operational Services Committee will meet on Wednesday 31 January. It will consider the improvement plan for East Cambs Street Scene, to bring it back to budget and to delivering the contracted service levels. It will also consider the grant to Newmarket Citizens Advice.

The Council held a 'behind closed doors' seminar with Sanctuary Housing on Thursday 14 December. Top of our list of questions was what is being done about the large number of empty properties—something like five per cent of Sanctuary's stock. Their response was that they were prioritising currently occupied homes in need of repair, and finding capacity to tackle empty properties in clusters. We have been following up a number of enquiries about Sanctuary repairs and long-term empty properties in local villages.

Recommendations are being finalised for presentation to February's Full Council meeting for changes to the council's constitution. These will include recommendations about the rules of procedure, responsibility for functions, the Code of Conduct for Councillors, and the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel on Councillors' allowances.

Our next surgery will take place on

Monday 26 February, 6:30-7:30PM by zoom

[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/6315424066?
pwd=YjhScGtmZm5Kb1BpRmFsNnN0Nnl2dz09&omn=82265943981](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/6315424066?pwd=YjhScGtmZm5Kb1BpRmFsNnN0Nnl2dz09&omn=82265943981)

Between surgeries, residents can continue to contact us by email or phone.

Wicken Fen News

We've been enjoying some stunning sunrises and sunsets over the winter here at the Fen. If you can visit either early morning or when the light is fading, you'll often be rewarded not only with beautiful skies, but also short-eared owls hunting, or harriers and corvids coming in to roost. The days are getting longer now, so look out for signs of spring when you next visit.

We're celebrating **World Wetlands Day on Friday 2 February** with a guided walk with one of our rangers. Find out about how important wetlands are for combating climate change and biodiversity loss. To find out more and book, please visit our website.

Our popular **Stick Trail** is back! Tons of fun for all the family – who doesn't love playing with sticks?! From 3 February onwards including half term; normal admission applies, free entry for members.

As usual, we have lots planned for **February half term**: Monday 19th - Owl Pellett Dissection, Tuesday 20th - Bird Box Workshop, and NEW on Wednesday 21st - Lino.Mono.Collage and Thursday 22nd - Sketch.Paint.Create free creative workshops for age 12 to 16. For details and booking information, see our website.

Our **Mucky Pups** sessions for pre-school children continue on 16 February. Plenty of outdoor adventures including seasonal nature activities, crafts and stories. Details on our website.

For the latest reserve information, please visit our website www.nationaltrust.org.uk/wicken-fen

Details of our events can be found on our website at <https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/wicken-fen-nature-reserve/whats-on>



Do you have breathing difficulties?

Did you know singing can help?



Singing is a great way to improve the way you breathe and get the best from your lung capacity.

The Cambridge Singing for Breathing group is meeting online, using Zoom, on Thursday afternoons 2.30 - 4.00pm and we're looking for new members!

Kay Barrett, founder of the group, says:

"You don't need any singing experience to take part - it's all about what it feels like, not what it sounds like. The camaraderie of the group, the guided relaxation, the breathing exercises and the singing are so much appreciated by everyone and the health benefits transfer over into daily life. Being online singers can join from the comfort of home, even when they are feeling unwell. We sing with microphones turned off, which can actually be very liberating! You simply sing along with the leader, learning uplifting songs often in call and response style. We also use multi-track recordings so we can enjoy singing rounds and harmonies."

Do I have to pay?

Those who can afford it are invited to give a £3.50 donation each week, but this is not essential - we want everyone to be able to come.

Do I have to come along every week?

We know that appointments, sickness, family commitments and such can get in the way! Just come along when you can.

I have Long Covid, can I join?

The gentle pace, breathing exercises and relaxation can be very beneficial, but do check with your doctor or respiratory physio, especially if your symptoms are severe.

How do I join?

Simply email singingforbreathingcambridge@gmail.com or call Mary on 07972645473 for more information and to receive the Zoom link each week.

You can find out more at www.singingforbreathing.wordpress.com or on Facebook: www.facebook.com/singingforlunghealthcambridge

Mary Denn

Notes from the Swaffham Prior Parish Council

January meeting

Cllr Covill chaired a meeting of the Parish Council on Thursday 11th January, attended by 6 parish councillors and 2 members of the public.

Report from East Cambridgeshire District Council – by Cllr Charlotte Cane.

- The planned meeting with Sanctuary housing had been postponed again.
- The Operational Services Committee meeting at the end of the month will discuss the grant to the Newmarket Citizens' Advice Bureau, which is of significance to the area.
- The Combined Authority is consulting on its budget, including looking at bus routes and fares; one proposal was a reduced bus fare for the under 25s.
- Cllr Covill reported a less than helpful encounter with reception staff of ECDC for a parishioner – Cllr Cane to report back.

Matters arising from previous minutes.

Update from GCP after the PC response to their latest proposal for the Greenway – it would appear they are looking into the option of stopping the Greenway just short of the village. The PC must now wait for further proposals.

Parish Council budget and precept for 2024-25.

Cllr Kent-Phillips presented the current figures and proposed 2024-25 budget. After discussion and agreement of the budget, the PC agreed a precept to £17000.00 for 2024-5. This amounts to an increase of £8 per household for the year, or 15p per week.

Proposed housing need survey by Cambridgeshire ACRE.

Cambridgeshire ACRE had approached the PC, asking them to support a survey of the parish looking at housing needs for a proposed exception site in the village. The location of the exception site was confidential and would involve the building of a number of affordable houses to be managed by a Community Land Trust of ACRE's choosing. Information from Cllr Charlotte Cane (ECDC) indicated that the existence of a survey showing a need/desire of a parish for affordable housing made it extremely difficult to oppose an exception site. The PC agreed the following points:

1. The site location has to remain confidential and can't be disclosed to the PC. The PC is aware of some extremely sensitive areas of the village that have recently been proposed for development. The PC must ensure that it has all the means available to attempt to have some control on behalf of the Parish, which is impossible while the site in question remains unknown.
2. The second issue is the PC's ability to control any development within the Planning Framework. As confirmed by Cllr Cane (ECDC) at the December meeting (min ref 152/23-24) "that a need for affordable housing expressed in a survey would make it very difficult to object to planning applications for exception sites".
3. Cllr Cane (ECDC) had made the PC aware of 212 empty houses in East

Cambridgeshire belonging to Sanctuary Housing alone, several of which are in Swaffham Prior.

4. Swaffham Prior already have a Community Land Trust in the village.

Cambridgeshire ACRE are proposing using a second separate CLT to build and run the affordable housing; one that is not involved or embedded in the village in the same way as the present CLT.

In light of these issues, the PC agree to write to Cambridgeshire ACRE saying that they felt unable to support a survey.

Maintenance of Cooper's Green.

Emails from a member of the public had been received pointing out that the footpath at the back of Cooper's Green was having to deviate around fallen branches and self-set vegetation and that the mature deciduous trees leaf fall produced considerable coverage of the grass that was at present only removed by a volunteer.

After discussion, the PC felt the leaf cover would be dealt with adequately by the first mowing of the spring, but that a quote should be requested to have the overgrown vegetation cut back to the fenceline.

Report on Heating Scheme.

Currently 63 properties have heat on, 36 have connections from the road ready to complete in the spring. One property will be connected once internal works are complete. Design and legal works are ongoing for further connections to the network in the spring, together with a planned push for additional sign-ups.

There have been no reported issues so far this winter and a start has been made developing Heat Maps of the network for further analysis.

The investigations and rectifications of the sound issues experienced from the Energy Centre are ongoing with stakeholders being kept updated on proposed and completed works.

A temporary reinstatement of the verge close to the Energy Centre entrance has been carried out.

Parish Councillors' Reports

Cllr Kent-Phillips noted that repairs to the fence between the church and cemetery were still being pursued.

Open Question Time.

A member of the public noted high levels of litter along Heath Road. Cllr Kent-Phillips suggested the litter-picking group could consider targeting it.

Produced from unapproved minutes and may contain errors; approved minutes can be found at <http://www.swaffham-prior.co.uk/pc/minutes.html> If anyone would like any further information on any of the above items, please contact the Clerk.

The next monthly Parish Council meeting will be on Thursday, 8th February 2024 starting at 7.30pm at the Village Hall. All are welcome to attend.

County Council Report Feb 2024

(Many thanks to our District Councillor, Charlotte Cane for this)

Five motions from councillors were debated at the Cambridgeshire County Council full council meeting on 12 December. Four were passed, one was not.

1. Noting the crisis in adult social care caused by chronic Government underfunding to councils, and asking officers to be ready to take advantage of any future change in Government policies. (Passed)

2. Asking the council's Communities, Social Mobility & Inclusion Committee to consider actions to ensure a more diverse council. (Passed)

3. Expressing concern at the lack of availability of NHS dentistry, and committing to take action to address the problem. (Passed)

4. Complaining of confusion about highways consultations, and wanting to consult all who could potentially be affected by changes to the highway. (Not passed)

5. Welcoming options for more flexible working, and committing to promote these within the council and among local employers. (Passed)

The Council is setting its 2024/5 budget, in what is being called 'the toughest year to set a balanced council budget'.

The Government's one-year Local Government Financial Settlement does not compensate for the levels of demand and inflation that the council is faced with, particularly in areas such as children's social care, home to school transport and provision for children and young people with special educational needs or disabilities. A fair funding review for local councils promised by the Government has never materialised. And all local authorities face significant financial uncertainties as a consequence.

The Strategy, Resources & Performance Committee will make a final budget recommendation at its meeting on Tuesday 30 January for Full Council to debate on Tuesday 13 February.

The draft proposals have been shaped by views gathered in the council's first Quality of Life Survey conducted over the summer. They focus on sustaining social services, continuing to provide free school meal vouchers for eligible children during holidays, progressing the council's commitment to pay the real living wage to people providing adult social care, and prioritising highways and cycleways maintenance across the county.

Potential savings have been identified to help bridge the funding gap. These include

- Moving to LED streetlights (£1M in energy savings each year)
- Rationalising office accommodation (£1.5M in the next three years)
- Reviewing the highest cost children's placement costs, and home to school transport routes (more than £2M)
- Driving down the amount of bad debt (£0.5M)
- Reviewing income from permits and parking charges (Just under £1M)

Falls and related injuries are a common and significant problem for older adults and a major public health issue. Falls are a major cause of disability and injury-

related death in people aged 75 and over, and have a large impact on quality of life—and as our population ages, this will become even more of an issue.

Cambridgeshire County Council's Adults and Health Committee has endorsed a three-year Falls Prevention Strategy and detailed delivery plan, working with a multi-agency Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Falls Prevention Strategy Group.

The strategy includes a number of interventions that have been shown to be effective at preventing some falls and fractures, and its intended outcome is a reduction in the rate of hip fracture admissions, and an improvement to the quality of life of older adults who experience a fall or fracture.

A decision on the Sunnica application for a large solar farm spanning East Cambridgeshire and West Suffolk has already been postponed from September to December. It has now been postponed again, to Thursday 7 March. This may mean no decision this side of a General Election.

An estimated 10,000 public electric vehicle charge point sockets will be needed across Cambridgeshire by 2030, as motorists choose electric vehicles over more polluting petrol and diesel cars. The sale of new petrol and diesel cars is set to be banned by government from 2035.

Using up to £5M in Local Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) funding, the council is working with the Combined Authority on how to meet this need, with fewer than 500 public charge points currently installed. Officers will develop a plan informed by technical mapping and seek public engagement to find suitable charge point locations. They will report back to the Highways and Transport committee in March, prior to a decision by the Environment and Green Investment Committee later in 2024.

FREECYCLE

Everything is free and nothing is expected in return.

If you have any offers or wants, please contact me by the 14th of each month by phone (01223 813362/07980 423210), e-mail (junthompson44@gmail.com) or drop a note through the letter box (23 Longmeadow).

Please let me know if you would like anything repeating in subsequent issues.

Offers

Sony Bravia LCD TV (37 inch screen, Model KDL37S5500, two remotes).
Chris & Judith 01223 812085

Exercise bike (the display is not working. It comes apart for transport). Mandy
07741018998

Hotpoint Fridge Door Handle 33.5cms long (New (packet unopened), Print on packet label reads "QUADT92 DOOR HANDLE HOTPOINT"). Lis, 01223 811233

Wants

2 fake chicken eggs. Jun 01223 813362/07980 423210



29th April 2024 Inspection of Category 2 Grave Markers in Swaffham Prior Cemetery

The following gravestones were found to be in need of a yearly inspection at the last checks in January 2023 and are due to be re-inspected on Monday 29th April 2024. Where contact details have been provided, owners will be contacted directly.

Plot/s	Occupant	Grave marker
433, 434	Charles Peter Hawkes, Ethel May Hawkes	Double plot curb, containing white marble chips and marble footstone/vase 'to 'Dick, pilot officer failed to return'. Central headstone,
445	Annie Palmby Hawkes	Headstone
485	Sarah Gray	Tall headstone. Footstone next to headstone.
501	Henry and Rebecca Willis	Marble headstone and curb, concrete infill
524, 525, 526	Thomas Palmer, Sarah Ann Palmer, Theodore Palmer	Triple plot curb. Tall cross on triple layer pyramid base standing central to triple plot, inside curb at the top end.
555	Emma Adams	Headstone
571	Florence Rose Adams	Headstone
663, 644	Edwin Muir	Thin double curb. Headstone
681, 682	Alice Smith, George Smith	Headstone on double layer base.
773	Harry and Beryl Sheldrick	Wide red marble headstone with 2 built-in vases on concrete plinth
876	Albert and Kitty Sizer	Headstone on base, concrete plinth. Small temporary markers stuck at foot of grave
874	Jeannette Fox-Teece	Headstone on base, concrete plinth.
333	Beatrice Margaret Sheldrick and George William Sheldrick	Headstone on base
332	Raymond Greenwood	Tall slate headstone
90	Eliza Butcher	Headstone and footstone

Swaffham Prior Village Hall

February 2024

There are plenty of activities happening in your village hall every week. Here are just some of the regular ones but for a full listing check out our online calendar in the village hall website at www.swaffhampriorvillagehall.co.uk.

WI Meeting	3rd Monday of each month 19:30 – 21:30	Contact Margaret on 01683 744390
SF-Fit Pilates	Each Tuesday 17:00 – 20:00	Contact Sarah on 075999072008
SF-Fit Pilates	Each Wednesday 10:30 – 11:30	Contact Sarah on 075999072008
PhysiOptima Pilates	Each Wednesday 09:00 – 09:50	Contact Kristin on 07799323867
Walking in your shoes – Dementia Care	Each Thursday 10:00 – 16:00	Contact Mike on 07884042590
Slimming World	Each Thursday 17:30 – 19:00 & 19:00 – 20:00	Contact Sharon on 077601925638
Tai Chi Life Academy	Each Friday 10:00 – 12:00	Contact Sharyn on 0774017917
Lok Hup	Each Friday 12:00- 13:00	Contact Sharyn on 0774017917
SF-Fit Yoga	Each Friday 17:00 – 18:00	Contact Sarah on 075999072008

If you're looking to hire the village hall for an event – maybe a party or wedding; a dance or music rehearsal or perhaps you just need more space for meetings go to our website www.swaffhampriorvillagehall.co.uk for availability, bookings & prices. For anything else contact Philip Blackburn on 07501230256

Dates for Your Diary February 2024

Fri	2	World wetlands day, Wicken Fen [20]
Wed	7	Book Club, Kent House, 9 High St, 6pm [15]
Thu	8	PC Meeting, VH, 7.30pm [23]
Thu	15	Mothers' Union, Fassage Hall, Lode, 2.30pm [16]
Fri	16	Mucky Pups, Wicken Fen [20]
Mon	19	Half-term activities at Wicken Fen, all week [20] WI, VH, 7.30 [16]
Tue	20	Village Gardeners, VH, 8pm [21]
Thu	22	Crier Copy Deadline
Mon	26	Councillors' Surgery, Zoom, 6.30-7.00pm [19]
Thu	29	

Numbers in square brackets indicate page number of an accompanying article

Club	Contact	Tel.	Date	Time	Place
FOSPS			2 nd Mon of Term	8pm	Village School
Beavers, Cubs and Scouts	Tim Doe	01223 861083	Variable		
Reading Group	Brenda Wilson	743937	1 st Weds of month	8:00pm	Kent House
Village Gardeners	Fiona Geraghty	741712	3 rd Tues of month	8:00pm	Village Hall
WI	Margaret Joyce	744390	3 rd Mon of month	7.30 pm	Village Hall