



The Swaffham Crier

Volume XLVIII Number 1

January 2024



Editorial

Oh what a glorious Christmas with our local hostelry open again, packed out and on absolutely tip-top form, just the place to retire to after a brisk walk. Polly (our dog) and house guest Otto (see p 11) went too, although instead of having a tiff at home (as is the usual convention at Christmas) only got snappy in the Pub. But good relations were speedily restored over a few tennis balls later.

Also just the place to go after a brilliant Candlelit Carol Service, the best we can remember, with our organ-scholar miller Jon Cook on the organ and a superb village choir—Clayton family, Grants and conductor Tristan Latchford, take a bow! Advent by Candlelight was also lovely this year, and you can read all about it in Anne Clayton's evocative description on p. 8.

But now it's New Year, and what better way to start it than with an in-depth article about a subject close to the heart of many—*beer*: "Proper Real Ale stuff, and not the lager Eurofizz nor craft ales...". Steve Kent-Phillips (see p. 14) begins a series of three fascinating articles centred around a visit to the brewery at Hook Norton.

Now is also the time we traditionally say a big thank-you to all those in the village who voluntarily give of their time to produce the Crier - distributors, columnists, crossword compilers, occasional contributors all and of course our advertisers. Although the Crier is a purely voluntary organisation, print costs money. This year, Clare Freeman has kindly stepped in as our new advertising manager and this edition marks her first collation — please take a look. Also, many thanks to the long-suffering Burwell Print, whose tolerance to our errant submission dates is legendary...

All change at Village Gardeners, many congratulations to Ruth Scovil, Margaret Joyce and David Whitehead who have done such sterling work over the years and welcome to Nicola, Kylie and Fiona who have evidently hit the ground running.

And the more artistically expert might like to take a look our New Year Quiz (see p. 23). Happy New Year, All!

Caroline Matheson

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Cover Picture: *January*, acrylic and ink painting by **Tegan Jepson**



Letters to the Editors



Dear Editors

Carols at the Village Hall

An enjoyable evening was spent carolling and feeling festive with mulled wine and mince pies. Special thanks to our musicians Andrew, Jeanette, Ruth and April.

There were gifts for the children and some brilliant audience participation singing the 12 days of Christmas.

Thanks from the Village Hall Committee

Jenny Brand

**Great fun
was had by
all at the
Village Hall
Carols.
Right, the
Band and
below, the
Singers**



Dear Editors,

Congratulations!

We thought you should be congratulated on your long stint as Editors of The Swaffham Crier. Not many people will realise that you have been doing it for **25 years!** We're well aware of this as we handed over the reins of editorship to you at the end of December 1997. Your first issue was in January 1998. We had been editors for the previous five years and Betty and Ron Prime had undertaken the task for the five years before that. Prior to that I have no idea how long others did the same job but Ruth Stinton will know!

The magazine has changed in its production over the years. Betty and Ron printed the articles on a Gestetner machine in John Chalmers' barn. Pat Cunningham and I said, "No thank you" to that and persuaded Mike Phillips, our treasurer, to let us have it printed at Burwell Print Centre. We still typed up the articles that were brought to our houses, Robin typeset them on the computer and printed them off. Then an enjoyable afternoon was spent by Pat and I, cutting and pasting each piece somewhere into the Crier. Then off it went to the Print Centre and came back as lots of loose pages. These we collated to create each individual magazine. The collating was done by a willing team in the Village Hall and in the Baptist Chapel side meeting room when the Hall was undergoing renovation. After this Ruth Stinton organised the delivery teams for distribution around the village.

Caroline and James have really streamlined The Swaffham Crier and brought it into the modern age. Now we even have photos, sometimes in colour too!

So, **many congratulations on your 25 years as editors!** Your hard work is much appreciated by us all, thank you.

Ruth and Robin Scovil

Eds Note: Thank you Ruth and Robin, and we are planning a big party to celebrate in the Summer — watch this space!

This Month's Cover Picture

Centre stage is the red amaryllis that flowers indoors from Christmas. Inspired by the January theme, Tegan's cover celebrates the seasonal berries and flowers we find in gardens and hedgerows as the new year begins, while against a clear blue winter sky, two birds search for food.

Tegan is a recent graduate of Anglia Ruskin University Cambridge where she studied illustration at the Anglia Ruskin School of Art. Enquiries to tegan.jepson@gmail.com, and her Website is at www.teganjepson.co.uk

Celia Tyler

Alastair's PC Extra Jan 2024

"What the Dickens!" says Shakespeare. "I don't believe it" says Victor Meldrew. and "Don't get your knickers in a twist" advised my great aunt Gracie. What made our usual level-headed PC completely lose it at their October meeting? I hope to unearth what may have been the cause. But, as Michael Limb said, the PC had dug itself into a big hole so it may take some digging out, if that is possible.

The December *Crier* should have revealed more. You can read the corrected version of the October *Notes* of the September PC meeting. Good luck with that. What it seems happened is that our excellent Clerk, Jude, made an error when recording the number of connections. It seems that David Greenfield was extremely angry at this simple error. And there followed a furious attack upon the *Crier* for not noticing the error. What astonishes me is that the Heating Scheme had made any number of misstatements. It is years behind schedule, has regularly given the village wrong information, while David has had to endure the relentless questions from two or three sceptics on the PC. But we must remember that this is a Pioneer Project, and that in spite of everything it has made great and astonishing progress.



Also over the years there have been three sort of connections and one does occasionally get them confused. So why become so upset over this one error. Even the current schedule was soon broken. We were promised that by the end of last June there would be 100 connections across private land right up to the house wall, and that 65 of these would be connected into the house. This did not happen. In fact in the middle of December I was told that one of the 65 is still to be completed. It is an engineering problem which has created an interesting and new difficulty. Quite an engineering riddle to be solved.

At the same time the PC criticised the Editors for not having checked the details of the PC's own *Notes*. So they stamped their feet and decided that no more *Notes* would be published in the *Crier*.

As I write this, it all seems to have been so unnecessary. I feel like Victor Meldrew. If anyone has wondered about the role of Esther McVey, the new Minister of Common Sense, then they now know she has a job to do in Swaffham Prior. But the story did not stop there. The whole question was to be discussed at the December meeting and our two doughty Editors turned up. James wrote a very sensitive and conciliatory report. Being a gentleman he acceded to the request by "the councillor who had raised the item last time" (presumably David) not to be named "noting their unhappiness in being named several times." So James has not named anyone. Why did David want anonymity, why the secrecy? James has provided a long and detailed report which says it all. But not quite all.

James also reports "**They** did not recognise **our version** of events". Who is "**they**" - all the PC? Just David? "**Our version**" Whose? The *Crier's*? Where was this? David could put all our minds at rest by writing his own version of events for publication in the *Crier*. That should resolve all. But the PC has raised a new difficulty by saying Jude could not add her name to the *Notes*. Why? David can

explain the reason because that given in the last *Crier* was a bit of jargon. In any case the editors have a strict rule that nothing is published anonymously unless the editors know the name of the writer. So Jude now has to submit her *Notes* with the plea that her name is not mentioned. We shall all look forward to reading David's account.

Understandably Caroline took great offence at being accused of sloppy journalism and Steve now entered the fray with his concerns about the rigour of the *Crier*. He demanded that the Editors should check all the facts of everything written in the *Crier*. What nonsense. How ridiculous. I gather it then became of sort of bar-room brawl with someone like Cat Ballou bursting into the smoky crowded saloon of Dodge City and taking on the heavyweights and powers-that-be of the town. Being a devoted Westerns man I imagined the scene and loved it. It was loud and colourful with lots of shouting. Some PC members also thought it great and cheered on one side or the other.

Anyway all ended happily, peace had been restored and from the Public Gallery Michael Limb gave an appreciative speech about the *Crier*. Everyone then repaired to Lily's Saloon, or, as it is also known, to The Red Lion to enjoy the hospitality of the welcome and welcoming John and Yana. Steve generously provided the delicious mince pies. Happy New Year.

Alastair Everitt

Eds' Note: In the words of our late Queen: "Recollections may vary"! Alastair has been mercilessly lampooning the doings of our PC for many years, but alas can no longer attend. One surprising thing that emerged from this meeting is how much they miss him.

MUSIC FOR THE NEW YEAR
A post-Christmas concert of classical, folk and film music

Mark Fawcett
guitar & vocals
Jeremy Harmer
guitar & vocals
Derek Scurll
percussion

Ad Hoc Strings
directed by
Steve Bingham

MOZART
ELGAR
MICHAEL NYMAN
plus
ORIGINAL FOLK MUSIC
and more!

Swaffham Prior Village Hall
Saturday 6th January 2024, 4.30pm
Doors open at 4pm for tea and cakes!

Tickets: £10 (under 18s £5)
Available on the door or online;
music.stevebingham.co.uk/merch

Julie's New year recipes

Slow cooked chicken Puttanesca

3 tbsp olive oil
1 onion, sliced
2 garlic cloves, crushed
½ tsp chilli flakes
1 tbsp dried oregano
2 x 400g tinned chopped tomatoes
120g pitted black olives
6 anchovy fillets, finely chopped
2 tsp capers, rinsed
8 bone in chicken thighs
Small bunch of parsley, chopped

1. Heat the oven to 150C. To make the sauce, heat 2 tbsp of oil in a hob-safe casserole dish with a lid. Add the onion and a pinch of salt and cook until soft, add the garlic, chilli flakes and oregano and cook for a further minute. Then add the tomatoes, olives, capers and anchovies. Cover and cook for 5 minutes, season well and keep warm.

2. Heat the remaining oil in a non-stick pan and fry the chicken until it is golden brown. Nestle the chicken into the sauce in the casserole. Put the lid on tightly and cook in the oven for 1 hour, then remove the lid and cook for a further 15 mins to reduce the sauce. Scatter with chopped parsley and serve with creamy mashed potatoes, cheesy polenta or spaghetti.

Serves 4

Italian sea bass with tomato sauce

400g tomatoes on the vine, quartered
200ml water
400g tinned chopped tomatoes
2 basil sprigs
2 flat leaf parsley sprigs
20ml extra virgin olive oil
4 garlic cloves, sliced
50g capers
50g black olives, pitted
1 sea bass, about 400g, gutted and scaled

1. Place the fresh tomatoes, water and tinned tomatoes in a pan and cook over a medium heat for 20 minutes. Add the basil and parsley. Remove from heat and then blend mixture into a coarse sauce. Return to saucepan and simmer on very low until it has reduced by half. Finish by adding the olive oil and a pinch of salt.

2. Place in a separate pan, the garlic, olives and capers with a glug of olive oil and fry for a few minutes, then add to the tomato sauce and continue to simmer for another 10 minutes.

3. While the tomato sauce simmers, get your grill on a high heat. Use a sharp knife to cut a slit along each fillet lengthwise, drizzle with olive oil and season with rock salt. Place the fish under the grill and cook for 6 minutes on each side until the skin has a nice colour and the fish inside is moist and just opaque.

4. Place the fish onto a platter, spoon the sauce around and on top of the fish. Don't worry if the tomato juices and oil separates, it is supposed to do that. Finally decorate with parsley sprigs.

Serves 2

Swaffham Prior Village Hall

January 2024

**Are you looking to start something new for the New Year ?
Perhaps some of our regular activities would suit.**

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 your event go to
www.swaffhampriorvillagehall.co.uk for availability; bookings &
prices. For anything else contact Philip Blackburn on 07501230256**

Advent By Candlelight Raises Almost £300 For Cambridge Homeless Shelter

For over thirty years the annual Advent by Candlelight has captivated everyone enjoying a cornucopia of music and poetry performed in St. Mary's and then moving on to St. Cyriac's. The audience joins in for two or three well-known hymns, which is not only fun but also helps warm up everyone, particularly necessary in St. Cyriac's! This year's AbC marked 37 years since Cambridge Voices was founded by organist Marie-Madeleine Duruflé-Chevalier, her husband the composer Maurice Duruflé, and Ian de Massini.

The sumptuous event on 3 December was organised by Andrew Grant and Ian de Massini, the former selecting and directing the readings, the latter choosing the music and leading Cambridge Voices in their performance of it. A full church gathered to hear a brilliant combination of music and poetry reflecting on the theme of **Heaven and Earth and All Creation**. Each piece brought the audience on a journey from the initial joy surrounding the creation of the universe to the fall of humanity, and then ultimately to the victory of truth. Such a wonderful creation by de Massini and Grant!

The entire collection of carefully selected poems created a magical, reflective experience to welcome the season leading up to Christmas. The overarching theme of Creation ran throughout the programme. *One foot in Eden still, I stand* by Swaffham Prior's own Edwin Muir was a notable feature in a landscape of works by poets as varied as John Keats, Gerard Manley Hopkins, Edward Thomas, Philip Larkin, and John Donne. Americans in the audience were treated to poetry from one of their countrywomen, Margaret Benbow, and British transplant W H Auden. The readers are not named in the programme and hard to make out in the candlelight, but keen eyes and ears noted the editors of the *Crier* beautifully reading two of William Blake's most famous poems, *The Lamb* and *The Tyger*. Every single one of the musical selections was breathtaking. De Massini's compositions and arrangements, sung by Cambridge Voices, created an atmosphere as special as the Advent season. Literary and musical works complemented each other, Larkin's *The Trees*, for example, being followed by George Butterworth's setting of *Loveliest of Trees* from Housman's *A Shropshire Lad*. The latter was made even more lovely in an arrangement by de Massini commissioned specially for the occasion by Andrew Grant.

De Massini's musical programme featured music by composers ranging in time

from the Elizabethan/Jacobean period (e.g., William Byrd, Orlando Gibbons) to contemporary composers (e.g., James MacMillan, Tamsin Jones). A chorale by Bach concluded the first part as people moved from St. Mary's to St. Cyriac's, while an American Spiritual concluded the programme. Saxophonist Matthew Richardson made a special guest appearance to play spontaneously improvised interludes to MacMillan's *Ave Maris Stella*.

Afterwards, concert goers and performers were all treated to hot mulled wine and mince pies in St. Mary's. It offered a perfect opportunity for everyone to welcome the Advent season with friends before the true Christmas rush began.

Advent by Candlelight certainly offered a beautiful evening of poetry and music, but the event also gave the village an opportunity to help those less fortunate. Remarkably, the evening raised almost £300 for a very deserving community-based charity, as profits from the concert went towards the invaluable work of the local branch of EM-MAUS, which helps to offer housing, training, and employment for the homeless and unemployed in the Cambridge area.

Anne Clayton and Family

**Saxophonist
Matthew
Richardson made
a special guest
appearance to
play
spontaneously
improvised
interludes to
MacMillan's *Ave
Maris Stella*.**

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

NEWS FROM THE HEATING SCHEME

Happy New Year, what a year it has been! We know we could not have achieved so much without the support of the community in Swaffham Prior, so we'd like to say a huge thank you to everyone in the village. Here are a few of the highlights:

We won the prestigious Edie Net Zero Award for Renewable Energy Project of the Year

We have been on ITV Anglia local news and national news including BBC Radio 4 Moneybox, BBC Morning Live, Positive News, in the Sunday Times on the cover of the Home section and most recently Reuters.

Emma Fletcher wrote a case study for RICS journal.

We had a visit from civil servants at the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero who were very impressed with what this project had achieved.

Not only that, we started the year with only five properties connected and now we are at 63 properties. Four of these are Sanctuary properties and we would like to send an extra thank you to them as the early pioneers connecting to the heat network. We are in contact with the housing association's contractor to make sure teething issues have been resolved and so they can be avoided in the next round of Sanctuary connections.

Tariff

We wanted to update you on the tariff. At the end of November we notified all customers directly of next year's tariff. The **Variable Charge** is linked to heating oil which saw a drop in prices over the past 12 months compared to the same period last year. In line with our commitment, we have reduced the tariff prices from 12.3p/kWh to 9.68p/kWh (9.22p/kWh + VAT) in 2024.

The **Standing Charge increases** by 8.296% over the last 12 months and this increase has been applied to the rate for 2024, see below.

Floor area of house	2023 charges	
50-99 m ²	£289 (£275+VAT)	
100-149 m ²	£359 (£342+VAT)	
150-199 m ²	£435 (£414+VAT)	
>199+ m ²	£511 (£487+VAT)	

We will be looking to provide some real cost analysis of the heat use over the winter period so that we can provide information on average heating costs for our customers (and potential customers). Unfortunately, we don't have enough data yet and need a full heating season.

Future connections

In December we have carried out 14 **FREE no obligation** surveys at properties around the village. We have had several more expressions of interest come in re-

cently and will be planning those surveys early in the new year. We want to batch up properties by area so we may be knocking on your door soon to see if you want to connect. Remember the survey is **FREE** and you are not obligated to connect.

If you are interested in connecting to the heat network you can contact us three different ways. We will then organise a visit that will identify where the Heat Interface Unit will be located and how the pipework will be installed from the road to your home. Once we have the report we will issue you with a Heat Supply Agreement which is the contract between you and the Council to connect you to the heat network. 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

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

Wooden students drawing desk with shelf. Matt 07788951875

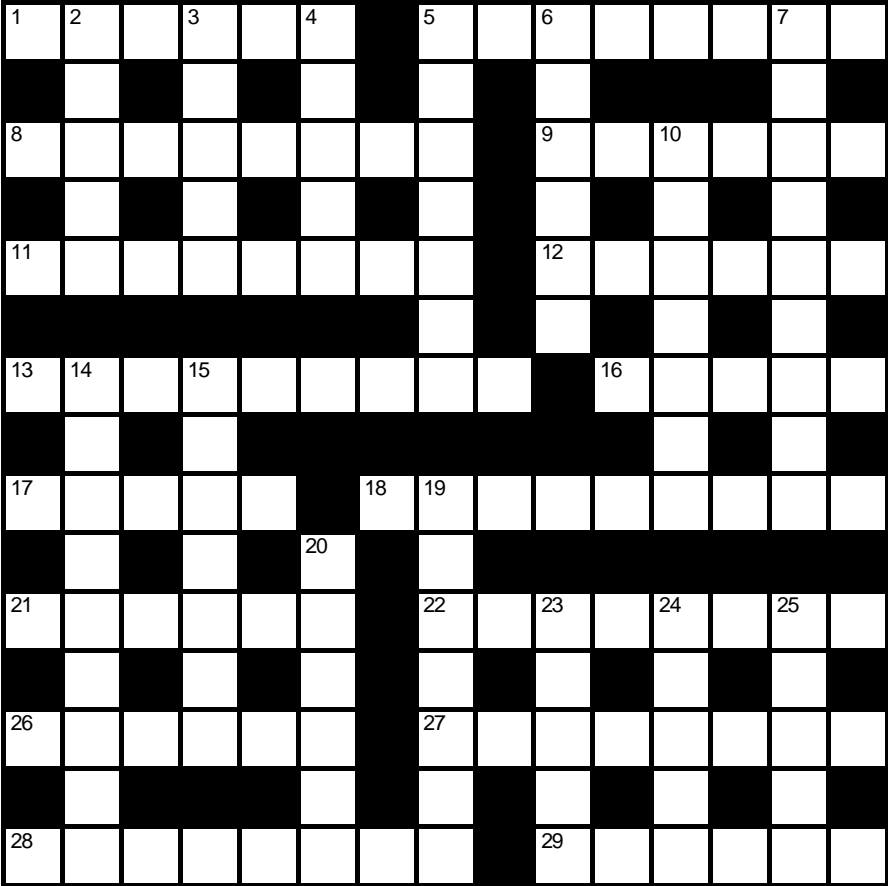


Boxing Day, and our Christmas visitor Otto prepares to drive home after last drink in the in the Dyke's End

Crossword Number 212

Compiled by OUNCE

Clues marked * are linked with N 25D or EH and have no definition. Send your answers to the editors by 18th January 2024. The sender of the first correct solution out of the hat will be awarded a *Winner's Certificate*. Emailed solutions are acceptable but please include "CROSSWORD" and the crossword number in the header.



Name:.....

Address:.....

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

Across

- 1 Growths from truncated college type? Addendum follows (6)
- 5 Flowers daunt underwear (8)
- 8 * Kiss from Bill? Done! (8)
- 9 Starting cold, hot or intermediate, really superb singing people (6)
- 11/17 * Rotten lasagne - bye-bye! (8,5)
- 12 Preserve setter and small measure reversing around graduate (6)
- 13 * Delay nude disastrously (6,3)
- 16 Amphibians fastening loops (5)
- 17 See 11
- 18 See 28
- 21 Loco no good at home in Eastern Spain (6)
- 22 * Poor work ethic without ecstasy (8)
- 26 Only half rug allowed inside? Mean! (6)
- 27 Herb gathers from shotgun marriage - disaster! (8)
- 28/18 * Developed high value mall land (8,9)
- 29 See 10 Down

Down

- 2 Canoe capsized on this? (5)
- 3 Collar left red neck without space (5)
- 4 Preserves kept in loose vase overturned (5)
- 5 Luggage-type commotion (5,2)
- 6 * 500 leave musical for North (6)
- 7 Drunk, a lager pal assists lawyer (9)

- 10/29 * Tax the brogues horribly (7,6)
- 14 Rube ran motorists' organisation ragged - into town? (5,4)
- 15 Ogling the French eye opener, O! (7)
- 19 After tango, Victor follows in standard dress (7)
- 20 Riches missing! Done badly down-at-heel (6)
- 23 Pigment turns to iron implement (5)
- 24 Geometric abstracts left wings of popular and revolutionary type (2,3)
- 25 Faith in type of Ford corrosion (5)

Solution to crossword no. 211

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

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

A VISIT TO HOOK NORTON

PART 1



A couple of months ago, I was lucky enough to visit the Hook Norton Brewery in Oxfordshire. It is one of the last Victorian Tower breweries still in existence, and I went around it and chatted to the Head Brewer. It is also one of the last 32 family owned breweries in the country (not counting the micro breweries springing up everywhere). It has been in the same family for five generations and next year is their 175th anniversary. The

brewery is arranged in five floors with the water tower on the top. The water is pumped up to the fifth floor by an old steam engine, fluids flow down the floors fed by gravity, and beer is put into barrels at the bottom. Modern breweries, including all micro and craft ale ones, use the horizontal layout where fluids are pumped from one stainless steel tank to another.

Before we started, we visited the stables where three gigantic Shire horses live. Hook Norton is one of only three remaining breweries that still deliver locally by horse drawn dray. Other breweries that appear at horse shows hire the horses in for the event. One horse is retired, but is teaching the two new youngsters “the round”.

By “beer”, I am talking the proper Real Ale stuff, and not the lager Eurofizz nor craft ales nor even the Belgian specialities; although they all share a common ancestry and method of production. Beer has been brewed since about 6,000 BC and consists of just four things – water, grain, yeast and hops. Many people think the difference between beer and ale is whether hops are involved - not true – beer has the yeast fermenting at the bottom of the vessel, typically at a lower temperature; and ale at the top.

Let’s start, not with the water as you might think, but the grain. Traditionally, in the UK we use barley grains. These are used to provide sugar, colour and taste. Straight off the fields, all the goodness is stored as starch. We need that turned into sugar for the yeast.



Malt Houses (think the Maltings in Ely and Burwell) dry the grains, spread them out on a wooden floor and sprinkle them with warm water. In 2-3 days, the grains start to germinate. Enzymes convert the starch to sugar; but left to their own devices they would sprout and start to use that sugar up; so the grains are roasted to stop development and lock the sugar in. The amount of roasting defines the colour of the grains,

which are described by their colour – Light, Brown, Chocolate (the colour of dark chocolate, not the taste), Black. These are now called “*malt*”. As you might imagine,

lighter malts produce pale ales, darker ones the porters and stouts. A part of the Brewer's art is the mixing of these colours to produce different coloured beers.

Hook Norton buys in ready roasted locally produced malts as their raw product. The problem is, roasting locks in the sugar and flavour, so the first thing they have to do is crack the grains in giant rollers, called "*milling*". They still use the original milling machine, as it works perfectly and there is no reason to use a newer one. The cracked grain is mixed with hot water in a giant vessel called a "*mash tun*" to release the sugars. What do you get when you mix grain, hot water and sugar? Quite right, it makes porridge, in this case very runny porridge.

That introduces our second ingredient, the water. The dissolved minerals in the water make all the difference to the final pint, as can readily be seen when one brewery buys out another one, moves the production using an exactly identical recipe, and ruins the taste of the beer. Breweries – *you know who you are*. The best water for brewing is in Burton-On-Trent, where the local springs contain natural gypsum. There is a process called "*Burtonisation*", where some breweries distil their local water and then add the exact quantities of minerals to match Burton water. Hook Norton do not need to do this as their water is pumped from their own bore hole on site, making the taste unique.

Back to our runny porridge. This is re-heated to make even hotter runny porridge, which releases even more sugar. When this is strained off ("*lautering*"), there is still lots of porridge sticking to the grains, so more hot water is sprayed on them to wash it off, called "*sparging*" [All of these funny words have mediaeval roots]. It all goes into the mix.

At this stage, the liquid, now sans porridge, is called "*wort*". This is drained off by gravity to another vessel called a "*copper*" (they used to be made of copper,



Hook Norton still use one, but have two more stainless steel ones). Here, our third ingredient is added – hops. These are traditionally grown in Kent, Worcestershire and Herefordshire and come in three types – raw, or green hops; dry hops, and hop extract.

Green hops are the traditional type used, fresh off the vine. These provide the best aroma to the beer; but not so much of the other benefits, bitterness (to counteract the sweetness of the malt) and antibacterial. At the other end of the scale, industrial brewers use hop extract. This is made by forcing steam through the green hops exactly like an espresso machine, which gets all the goodness out but loses the aroma. Hook Norton use the middle route, taking in dried hops, not just from the UK, but nowadays from all over the world. Each variety brings different properties to the table, for example Citrus hops are very bitter but smell fruity, Fuggles is less sweet, Goldings is more sweet. It is another part of the brewer's art to mix the varieties to produce the required flavour and aroma compounds.

Part 2 next month ...

Steve Kent-Phillips

The Reading Group Reads...

Fahrenheit 451

By Roy Bradbury

What a good evening we had. Accompanied by Margaret's 'Best in Britain' mince pies, chocolate covered cherries, fine wines, and the inevitable lightly salted crisps. We eat more crisps than the whole of Europe together, and we also happen to be the most overweight nation in all Europe.

Roy Bradbury (1920 to 2012) loved reading from an early age and he was greatly influenced by science fiction and especially H.G.Wells and Jules Verne. He wrote his first story aged 12 and in 1934 his family moved to Los Angeles to try to find work during the Depression. Here Bradbury also developed a great interest in films. At 18 he regularly wrote for fanzines and became a full time writer in 1944. For health reasons he had missed the war.

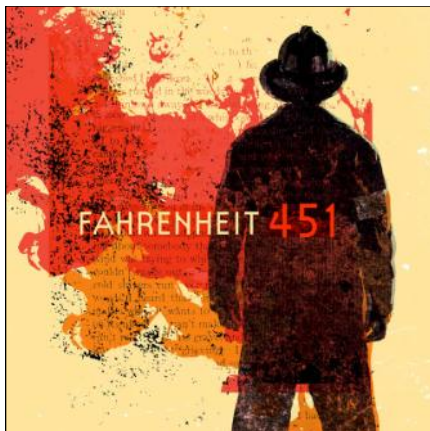
But he had very aware of the Nazi book burning, the Russian clamp down on free speech, and was particularly shocked by the McCarthy era which began in 1950. In 1951 he submitted a short story of 25,000 words called *The Fireman*, and was told to extend it to 50,000 words to be published as a novel. He wrote it in a library study room for typewriters at 10 cents for half an hour. It cost him \$9.80. The mathematician in our gathering was asked to calculate the number of hours it had taken. I am not sure of the answer which was given in between the two gulps of wine.

The book - at last! The title had been changed to *Fahrenheit 451* because he had been told that this was the temperature at which paper burnt. Published in 1953 the book was set in the distant future. All the houses were totally fireproof, people were happy, subdued and contented; all books were being destroyed as they caused disturbing thoughts and emotions. The fire service was now only used to burn books, and the houses in which they had been found.

Guy Montag is a senior fireman employed to burn the books and he enjoyed it. One night, returning from work, he meets his new neighbour Clarisse, a seventeen old teenager with free-thinking ideas and a liberating spirit. Over the following nights they meet regularly until she suddenly disappears. As does her family shortly afterwards.

From her queries and questions had begun Montag's doubts and questions about his own life and supposed contentment. He became increasingly disturbed. A short time later while the firemen were drenching with kerosene a book-filled house ready for burning, Montag steals one of the books and hides it at home. His wife, Mildred, meanwhile had overdosed on sleeping pills. Doctors were not needed and two plumber kind of men arrived who pumped out the old blood and replaced it with new untroubled blood. Problem solved.

It was all downhill now as he became increasingly aware of the horror of society.



There is an eight legged Mechanical Hound which sniffs out people or houses with any book odours. There are also large television screens, called the Family, which covered the walls of each house and the aim of everyone was to be able to afford to have screens covering all four walls. This was Mildred's dream. Mildred and her two friends sat in front of the Family screens all day - quite content.

Meanwhile Montag had been stealing more books and hiding them in the attic. One day he reveals this to Mildred and she and her two friends betray him. Montag has to make his great escape. It is now action packed with event following event, until he discovers the forest in which people are just walking around, reciting books to themselves. They have each been given a book to remember so that when man perhaps comes to his senses there will be just a few books still in existence. This does not do justice to the book.

After 1953 Bradbury became increasingly concerned about "political correctness", "censorship", and "freedom of speech" all of which have significantly increased since he died in 2012. Everyone entered the discussion with their views. These ranged from a person having watched her own house burn, fearing for her precious books, only to find they had been so tightly packed in the bookcases that they were saved from the fire. A number of the spines had suffered. Others discussed children's libraries, the increasing fire power of drones, the freedom of thought, the trigger warnings by universities about set books which may "disturb or "distress", the cancellation of 'non-woke' talks, the power of AI, and so on. As someone summed up the evening - "this book is so relevant today" and it "taught us things we hadn't thought about before".

Waterstones had noted our Book Club choice and in December a large number of copies were displayed on one of their promotion tables. It is also certainly worth seeing the 1966 film directed by Francois Truffaut and with Julie Christie. Avoid the 2018 film.

The next Book Club will be on the SECOND Wednesday in January, January 10, at Kent House, 6pm, to review the books we read last year. Then in February, we will be reading *I capture the Castle* by Dodie Smith.

Alastair Everitt

BON MOT NUMBER 145

"There was never going to be a scientific consensus - if scientists all agreed with each other about everything, you would never get any progress."

Emma Duncan (1990 ---)

The Swaffhams' WI

We were full of the Christmas spirit at our December meeting of the Swaffhams' WI. The Village Hall looked stunning decorated with our candle table decorations and set up for our Christmas party. The party kicked off with a delicious buffet, provided by our WI members, of salads, cold meats, cheese and bread. This was topped off with an amazing array of delightful desserts including ravishing roulades, sweet strawberries, perfect pavlova, terrific trifle, magnificent mince pies and

c h a r m i n g
Christmas cookies.

During the evening we completed a Christmas quiz where we were given the task of solving anagrams of Christmas carols and songs. Who knew that 'Not software hymns' was another way of saying 'Frosty the Snowman' and that 'We Three Kings' could be represented by 'Sweet gherkin'? Truly mindboggling but great fun!

At the Christmas party the competition cup is always awarded to one of our WI members and this year the cup went to Jutta for her beautiful candle table decoration. There were so many gorgeous candle decorations including one with cute knitted Christmas figures and one with foliage in beautiful firework colours. Well done to everyone,

who created their truly lovely decorations and brought them to the party.

We would love to welcome new members to join us at our next meeting in January. Just a reminder that the next meeting is on 15th January 2024 in Swaffham Prior Village Hall at 7:30pm and our guest speaker is the fabulous Dr Yeo, who will be talking to us about diet and gut health. It is going to be a thought provoking and very informative evening.

We wish everyone a very happy and healthy Christmas and all the best for 2024.

Kate Muscroft





VILLAGE GARDENERS

After a short winter break, the next meeting of the Village Gardeners will be held on Tuesday 16th January 2024 at 8pm in Swaffham Prior Village Hall, when Barry Gayton will be giving a talk on 'A Year of Colour in the Garden'. Barry is a BBC Radio Cambridgeshire gardening expert who owns Desert World gardens near Thetford. Hopefully Barry will be able to give us some tips on how to brighten up our own gardens during these grey winter months.

The Village Gardeners meet on the 3rd Tuesday of the month from January to July; October and November. Each year we host gardening related talks from external speakers, visit local open gardens, organise a summer coach trip to a larger garden and hold a quiz and AGM. Membership for the year is £20 per person or visitors can come along at any time for £4 per evening (plus the extra cost of the coach trip if taken). We would love to see some new faces at our meetings. You don't need to be a gardening expert or even to have a garden! Refreshments such as tea and homemade cakes are usually on offer, along with the chance to chat with old and new friends.

A new committee are taking over for 2024; Nicola Hames (Chair Person), Kylie Coles (Secretary) and Fiona Geraghty (Secretary). We would like to say a massive thank you to our outgoing committee David Whitehead, Margaret Joyce and Ruth Scovil for their many successful years of organising the Village Gardeners and for their help in handing over to the new committee. We are still planning the 2024 programme and will publish full details when available. In the meantime, please do check the Swaffham Crier each month for details of that month's meeting. Also, if there are any local speakers who would be interested in presenting at one of our evening meetings, we would love to hear from you.

Fiona Geraghty



Mothers' Union

Our programme for 2024 begins with Holy Communion Service, which again this year will be combined with the weekly Thursday morning Holy Communion in St James' Church, Lode. This will take place on 18th January led by Rev. Roger Bowen.

After the service Mothers' Union members will be serving a soup lunch.

Copies of our full programme of meetings for 2024 can be found in all five parish churches. Please help yourself to a copy, and you are most welcome to join us.

A Happy New Year to all readers.

Ann Langran



If you had a real Christmas tree, you can dispose of it during January by leaving it by your Green/Brown bin, cut into pieces that are not higher or wider than the bin. If you had a plastic tree, please use it for as many years as possible, give it away or take it to the recycling centre.

The district council is working on a new ‘environment chapter’ for its now very outdated Local Plan. This would at least fill some of the obvious gaps in the council’s planning framework. Consideration has begun of what the contents of this chapter might be, and also what it would exclude.

Following a local public vote on which animal residents would most want to save, the council will also be producing a supplementary planning document on hedgehogs. If you want ideas on how to help hedgehogs, there is a really useful booklet on-line -

https://www.wildaboutgardens.org.uk/sites/default/files/2021-05/16597%20WAG%20-%20Hedgehog%2016pp%20Booklet%20AW_0.pdf

We are still asking questions about the finances of East Cambs Street Scene, the Council’s waste collection and street cleaning company, which is still overspending and not meeting its key performance indicators.

At the Council’s Operational Services Committee meeting in November, it emerged that the accounts were not being reviewed in the form laid down by the Memorandum of Agreement; and that the October Management Accounts would not be considered by the Company Board until January. We expressed concern that the report to the Committee did not give reassurance that the overspending could be resolved by the year end, and at the apparent lack of urgency to resolve the situation. A strategic review of the waste and recycling service has been established.

Some months ago the Council announced that it would be moving to the use of hydro-treated vegetable oil to fuel its waste collection vehicles. It then said this would be too expensive due to the current cost of the oil. The waste fleet is the single biggest contributor to the Council’s carbon footprint. We supported a proposal that as there had been a net underspend of £33,000 on fuel by East Cambs Street Scene in the first six months of the financial year, and as a further underspend was likely for the remainder of the year, this underspend could be used to run the fleet on hydro-treated vegetable oil for the rest of the year, even at the higher price. This proposal was defeated by six votes to five.



The Council has approved new policies on Supporting Residents Experiencing Domestic Abuse, and Employee Domestic Abuse.

New postal and proxy vote regulations have come into effect as a result of the Elections Act 2022.

Electors wishing to vote by post will now need to reapply for their postal vote arrangement every three years instead of every five. The number of people a person can act as proxy for will be limited to four, of which no more than two can be 'domestic' electors (ie not overseas or service electors).

A National Insurance Number (or other relevant data) will now be required on applications for postal or proxy votes, but it will now be possible to apply online for these.

Our next Councillors' surgery will be on Wednesday 25 January 6:30-7:30PM at Westley Waterless Village Hall. Between surgeries, residents can continue to contact us by email, or phone.

NEWMARKET COMMUNITY THEATRE

January 15th - A Fish Called Wanda (15)

February 19th - The Lost King (12A)

March 18th - Local Hero (PG)

Doors open at 6.30pm with the film starting at 7.30pm. Admission is £6 which includes free refreshments. If you would like to reserve seats, please ring 07756 853714.

Richard Penney



News from Wicken Fen

Winter Wildlife Watching

You may have seen the ITV and local media coverage of the turning on of the taps to help create a winter wetland for wildlife and reduce CO2 emissions at Wicken Fen. Water from the lodes is at a higher level, so gravity enables the water to flow through pipes onto the fen without needing a pump. The water attracts wildfowl including wigeon, teal, shoveler, gadwall, geese, egrets, and most recently whooper swans. It's well worth a visit to the areas of open water on the reserve such as Burwell Fen and Baker's Fen to see the wildfowl. The process of turning on the taps also helps mitigate the effects of climate change, as re-wetting peat enables it to lock in carbon, rather than it being released into the atmosphere. You can find out more about this process on our website.

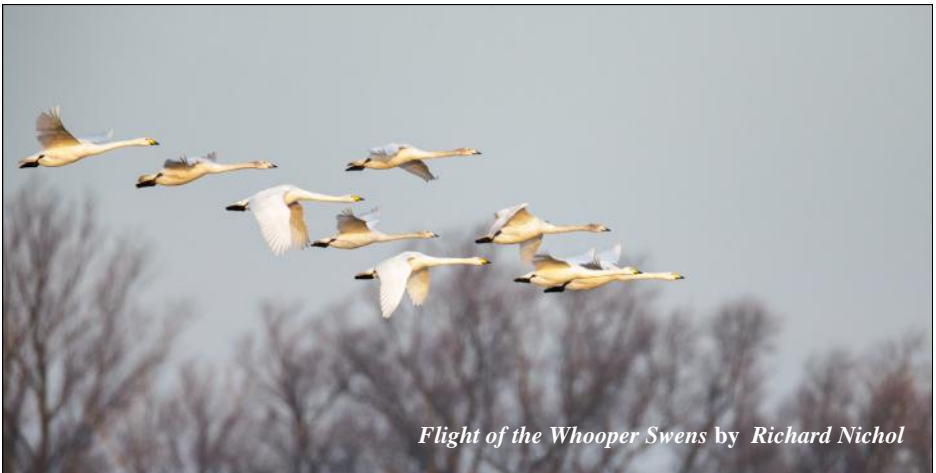
Wicken 125 and Vision 25 celebrations in 2024

Next year we celebrate 125 years since the National Trust acquired its first two acres at Wicken Fen, and 25 years of the Wicken Fen Vision project. We've got lots of exciting plans and hope our local communities will be able to join us for some of the activities. Our anniversaries are on May 1st, and we will have a public event on Saturday 4th May to celebrate. More information will be in future editions of this magazine.

Wicken 125 project: Future Artefacts ceramics exhibition

Artefacts from our ceramics workshops will be exhibited at Babylon Gallery in Ely from Saturday 6 to Sunday 28 January. You'll also be able to see artwork by local creatives that were inspired by Wicken Fen and the fen landscape. If you came to a workshop, your piece will be displayed at the gallery, and there will be the opportunity to collect your artwork on Sunday 28 January. See the Babylon Gallery website for more information about the exhibition.

Julia Hammond



Flight of the Whooper Swans by Richard Nichol

New Year Quiz!

Below 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.

ARTIST'S CHRISTMAS TREES



1..



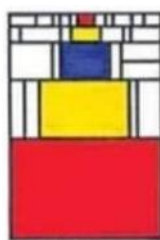
2.



3.



4.



5.



6.



7.



8.



9..



10.



11.



12.

Notes from the Swaffham Prior Parish Council meeting of Thursday 14th December 2023

Cllr John Covill chaired a meeting of the Swaffham Prior Parish Council on the evening of the 14th December, attended by 7 parish councillors and 3 members of the public.

Matters from previous minutes.

Cllr Charlotte Cane had informed the PC that a need for affordable housing expressed in a survey made it very difficult to object to planning applications for exception sites.

Correspondence.

Emails regarding damaged fence between the church and the cemetery and fallen trees/hedging on Cooper's Green were noted.

An email update from the Bus, Walking and Cycling working group at ECDC, asking for feedback was noted.

An email from CCC invitation for PCs to attend a Teams meeting on 11th January at 6.15pm to engage regarding business and finance proposals for 2024-2029 was noted.

Planning applications.

23/01330/LBC and 23/01329/FUL Changes to approved garage conversion. Changes include, internal layout, external window and door fenestration, addition of rear timber decking, changes to the existing glazed link roofs – retrospective. The Smock Tower Mill, Mill Hill. Swaffham Prior, Cambridge, CB25 0JZ.

The PC objected to the application, expressing disappointment that the application was retrospective and that the alterations to the external structures changed the appearance and outline of the building, should not have been made without planning consent and the mill should be returned to its previous condition.

Reports.

East Cambridgeshire District Council.

Cllr Cane reported on a meeting she had attended with Sanctuary Housing.

212 houses are standing empty across the district. There are 1092 families on the housing waiting list, 97 of which are in urgent need.

Sanctuary have taken on a contractor to deal purely with bringing empty properties up to spec and estimate they will complete approximately 20 houses every 10 weeks. They are averaging 45 days to complete a repair in tenanted houses.

Cllr Cane is setting up regular meetings between Sanctuary and a District Councillor and also has obtained direct contact details for the local Sanctuary officer.

Sanctuary is the biggest of several Housing Associations, offer low rent (approximately half commercial rent) and security of tenure.

Cllr Kent-Phillips asked how many houses were standing empty in Swaffham Prior? Cllr Cane said it was difficult to know but she would attempt to find out.

Accounts.

Cllr Kent-Phillips noted that the budget-setting meeting will be in January where

he anticipated that the precept would have to be raised.

Cllr Kent-Phillips also noted that although Cllr Greenfield had approached 5 companies for quotes for grass-cutting contracts, only CGM had responded offering the same deal as previously agreed, so the PC accepted the CGM quote for a 3 year contract.

A quote for providing metal edging to the cemetery path was accepted.

Policies.

An update to the Press and Media Policy was approved, covering copy for publication.

A Nature Recovery Plan was adopted.

See PC website for the full policies.

The Swaffham Greenway update.

Cllr Greenfield reported. Emails of the latest proposals for the greenways had been circulated prior to the meeting. The current preferred choice for the Greater Cambridge Partnership was the original design offered involving a build-out near the 30 mph sign by the slip way end followed by a 20mph speed limit along the High Street, having rejected suggestions from the PC.

Objections of the PC to this design were that:

It would involve removal/reduction of hedges and treelines at an environmental cost;

It was unnecessarily expensive;

It reduced the width of the road at the expense of agricultural and heavy goods vehicles and;

On past experience of cycleways, the greenway will not be well-maintained once built.

The PC agreed to write a letter, thanking all involved for their time and effort but expressing disappointment that the response sent focused on the GCP and designers preferred option, belittled the other variations and did not consider an option of stopping the greenway at the edge of the village and joining it to the current cycleway, which would be the simplest and cheapest option, especially as the High Street has a good safety record and there is no speeding problem recorded in the village. It would also mention that the PC would be seeking legal advice on the matter.

The Heating Scheme.

The sound evaluations have been completed. Significant works are required, the proposals have been made and are to be approved soon. The parishioner is being kept informed.

The Heating Scheme has continued to perform during the recent cold spell.

Clerk's Report.

The Clerk attended an SLCC meeting on 8th December at which it was suggested that .gov.uk websites and emails would become compulsory for PCs within the next few years, which needed to be considered in the PC's budget.

The operational inspections for the playground have been scheduled for every 3 months, fitting with the yearly inspection in April.

The remaining allotment plots were advertised in the Crier. PL is looking into ground cover for the new plots.

The Clerk attended an ECDC Planning Conference for PCs at the end of November, which highlighted the need of the PC to comply with the Biodiversity duty under the Environment Act 2021. It also highlighted the Local Heritage list – a list of historical buildings important locally, which offers some protection against development and demolition, although less than full Listing. The Village Sign and the Landgirls Memorial were both suggested as additions to the Local Heritage List.

Parish Councillors' Reports

Cllr Greenfield. County Broadband have surveyed, got sign-ups and moved on. Gigaclear are in Commercial End, submitted permits and will know if they have been granted in the 2nd week of January. Gigaclear plan to have completed fibre installations in Swaffham Prior in April 2024.

Cllr Kent-Phillips noted that BT aim to phase out landlines in the next 3 years.

Cllr Lambert noted that a footpath across or around Dencora Field would join Rogers Road/Allix Grove/Fosters Lane to the network of footpaths through the rest of the village. It was commented that establishing a new public right of way was extremely difficult.

Cllr Covill. The Parochial Charities have had the playground trees checked and trimmed. The board of the Parochial Charities is in need of another Trustee – Cllr Kent-Phillips volunteered.

Produced from unapproved minutes and may contain errors; approved minutes can be found at <http://www.swaffham-prior.co.uk/pc/minutes.html>

The next monthly Parish Council meeting will be on Thursday, 11th January 2023 starting at 7.30pm at the Village Hall. All are welcome to attend.



Church services: Zooming along nicely!

The Covid lockdowns were a challenge for our five village churches. We should be all about people gathering together, and suddenly we could not. However, very soon we discovered Zoom, and we were up and running pretty quickly with on-line services.

The lockdowns are gone, and the 'physical' church services are running. There is something special about being *in* church. You get to meet people in the flesh, enjoy the atmosphere of a 'holy' place, feel part of a congregation, and you can take Holy Communion.

Yet we are still running a Sunday 9 a.m. Zoom service. Why? Well, if you'll excuse the pun – we do it as a service! It's for anyone, especially those:

- who cannot get to a church, whether sometimes or at any time.
- who prefer to stay at home in bad weather, yet not miss Sunday worship.
- who need an earlier service, regularly or occasionally.

- who are away from the area, but would still like to join in our local worship.
- who find church buildings unfamiliar yet want to know more about God.

We try to emulate 'physical' church as best we can, so the services will seem familiar to churchgoers. For technical reasons we have to ask everyone to 'mute' during the service, but people can chat before and after – and they usually do!

You are welcome to join us, any Sunday 9 a.m. via your internet browser or the Zoom app. The joining link is on the weekly church notice sheets, or you can request it by emailing zoom@angleseygroupparishes.co.uk. We can also help you get started if you are not sure how.

Liz Butler & Mike Procter (Licensed Lay Ministers)

Services in January 2024

Wednesday 3 January

8pm CbyC, a contemplative service, online on Zoom

Sunday 7 January – Baptism of Christ/Epiphany

9am Online service on Zoom
 10.30am Holy Communion, Bottisham
 4pm Village Worship, Quay Village Hall

Sunday 14 January – Second Sunday of Epiphany

9am Online service on Zoom
 Holy Communion, Quay
 10.30am Family Worship, Swaffham Prior

Sunday 21 January – Third Sunday of Epiphany

9am Online service on Zoom
 Morning Prayer, Quay
 10.30am Holy Communion, Swaffham Bulbeck
 Morning Prayer, Bottisham

Sunday 28 January – Fourth Sunday of Epiphany

9am Online service on Zoom
 10.30am Holy Communion, Swaffham Prior

Each Thursday

10.30am Holy Communion, Lode

We are currently without a vicar. Please contact Brenda Wilson, Churchwarden, on prior@angleseygroupparishes.co.uk; 01638 743937

All are welcome to services in any church in the group. Please be in touch if you would like a lift to a service.

Please check <http://www.achurchnearyou.com/church/7378/benefice> for current information;

or email admin@angleseygroupparishes.co.uk, also the address to request the Zoom link.

Dates for Your Diary January 2024

Sat	6	Music for the New Year, 4.30pm VH [5]
Wed	10	Book club, 6pm Kent House [17]
Thu	11	PC Meeting, 7.30pm, VH [26]
Sun	14	Crier Copy Deadline
Mon	15	WI, 7.30pm, VH [18] A Fish Called Wanda, Newmarket Community Cinema, 6.30pm [21]
Tue	16	Village Gardeners, 8pm, VH [19]
Thu	18	Mothers' Union, St James' Church, Lode [19]
Thu	25	Councillors Surgery, 6.30-7.30pm, Westley Waterless Village Hall [21]

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