



# The Swaffham Crier

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## Editorial

Henry Brown, a much beloved long-term resident, finally met his long-anticipated imminent decease in December last year (age 102), but since he'd already had three parties to celebrate this forthcoming event, did not bother with a funeral (see Letters) — read the first instalment of his highly entertaining WW2 experiences serialised in the Crier 7 years ago by Mark Lewinski. Mark is brilliant at this sort of stuff and we hope he will do some more profiles for us this year.

But meanwhile, Mark is on the Letters page complaining that the Heating Scheme wooshed out and fixed his heating in record time — don't ask! But they are having weekly meetings at the village hall every week this January (see p. 6) — so lets see how they go and then we'll think about a User Group.

The advent windows looked glorious — many congratulation to Janet Willmott for organising this and we do hope to see them next year. Whose did you like the best? Write to [Editors@swaffham-crier.co.uk](mailto:Editors@swaffham-crier.co.uk) for the next edition. We have pictures of 12 of them (many thanks to Andrew and Dee Noyes for this!) on our centre spread to refresh your memory.

Advent by Candlelight was brilliant as well, even though St Mary's heating failed (brrrr!). Thanks to Paul Latchford for a masterly report (see page 12).

And finally fond farewells to Betty Prime (see page 20), who died last year after having celebrated her 100th birthday earlier in the year. She was a lovely lady, a very active contributor to village life and one of the original editors of this magazine, many thanks to her daughter for sending us this obituary.

Happy New Year All!

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*Caroline Matheson*

**Cover Picture:** *Blackbird*, pen and ink by **Gill Rushworth**



## Letters to the Editors



Dear Editors,

### **Advent Windows**

I just want to say how much I've enjoyed walking around the village and seeing the Advent windows. They were all so different and the children and adults had obviously put a lot of thought and effort into their display. I'm hoping that this will become an annual event!

Happy New year to everyone!

*Ruth Scovil*

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Dear Editors,

### **Henry Brown 19<sup>th</sup> October 1922 - 20<sup>th</sup> December 2024**

Dad passed away last Friday - flying off to join his Lancaster crew!

He lived at 25, Green Head Road from 1990 to 2020 (with Mum, Jean, 1990-2005) and the Crier ran his life story over a couple of editions. (*See page X, Eds*)

Dad requested a Direct Cremation, not liking any fuss, so there will be no funeral. We had big parties for him on his 100th, 101st and 102nd birthdays, which he enjoyed immensely, saying they were his wakes - only he was there to enjoy them too!!!

All the best for 2025.

*Maggie Larbey*

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Dear Editors,

### **A postscript to my December letter re the Heating Scheme**

The weekend after I sent it, our heating stopped working, as I discovered early on a Sunday morning when it didn't come on; as I said before, the system inside the house doesn't tell you there is a problem. You only know when you realise you're cold and the water's cold too. I called the helpline. Someone will call you within four hours, they said.

An hour and a half later the doorbell rang with the engineer on the doorstep.

'I thought you were going to call within four hours,' I said to him.

'That's interesting, he replied, 'we have to be there within two'.

I told him I suspected the issue might be to do with me having bled a radiator the evening before. He said he thought that was possible, and asked where our pressurisation valve was. I said I didn't know what that was. It will be a silver flexi hose with a pressure meter, he said. Last time it happened, while I was away, the engineer did something in the airing cupboard, I told him. Eventually he found it, and showed me what he needed to do: turn the little black tap handle until the valve stopped hissing and when the meter needle was between two points he marked with a sharpie. Job done.

So I now know that when you bleed a radiator in a heating scheme system you have to re-pressurise the system. I could have done it myself in a couple of min-

utes. And I will do, next time.

Instead the engineer came out on an eighty mile round trip from Thrapston on a Sunday morning for a two-minute fix and to show me how to do it for myself.

I didn't ask what the call out charge would be for a Sunday morning callout. But I suspect it would be about a month's worth of heating costs at least, and what a waste. How many other costly callouts have there been over the last year, I wonder? How many have been equally wasteful? This is not something I have seen publicised by the heating scheme, but I think it should be.

Small wonder then, and as I rather expected would happen, the heating scheme has managed to find data to justify reducing the heat units for the coming year by only just over half the drop in price of oil as I had been able to track it.

And they have then cut the reduction further by putting up the standing charge on the grounds that the CPI (Consumer Price Index) has increased. But oil doesn't increase with the CPI.

**So the reduction in costs to users for the heating scheme for 2025 looks to be about half of the drop in the market price of oil overall. By not dropping the unit price by the same as oil, the effect is to ratchet *upwards* the actual cost to users of the heating scheme relative to oil.**

We are a captive market. We can't shop around, so it needs someone to hold them to account. They should have included resident users in their management committee from the outset, and the figures they choose to use to calculate what they are charging us as users should be open to scrutiny, and to challenge.

Accordingly, I for one would be grateful if Caroline would host a user group as she has offered in the December Crier editorial, and start by asking the heating scheme for explanations for their accounting for the heating unit costs for the coming year. I will be happy to forward the emails I have from my old oil supplier showing their autumn 2023 and 2024 prices, showing a 20% price drop during those twelve months.

Also, as in my previous letter, the heating scheme should be asked to send round a weekly email to users with an update on the current operating of the scheme - including how many callouts this week and why. It is our heating system after all, collectively; we depend upon it, and we should be kept fully informed of how it is running.

***Mark Lewinski***

Eds note: This does seem a bit unfair! I think we'd have been delighted to get a two hour response to a service call and with the BTs of this world you'd probably have been charged for the cost of the call as you were unwittingly the cause of the fault.

The cost per kWh looks to have changed in line with the Heat Supply Agreement though checking it is complicated by it their price being based on the previous year's average oil price and their 2023 price having been reduced to compensate for a spike in the oil price in late 2022. We do of course lose out a bit by it being the average oil price whereas we'd have bought oil when it was cheapest.

The standing charge replaces what we would otherwise have spend on maintenance and replacement of oil-boilers, so does indeed increase with CPI.

They're now running sessions in the Village Hall (see next ) so may be able to

give more detail at one of these and indicate if they'd be supportive of the idea of a user group. And similarly other villagers (please contact the *Crier*).

*James Matheson*

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Dear Editors,

## **The Heating Scheme (from the Horses' Mouth)**

Following a recent letter in the *Crier*, we would like to take the opportunity to address some of the concerns raised and clarify key points regarding our Heat Network.

Our aim is to provide accurate information and reaffirm our commitment to delivering a reliable and sustainable networked heating solution for Swaffham Prior.

### **Heat Network capacity and reliability**

The Swaffham Prior Heat Network is designed to provide uninterrupted heat to around 300 properties, powered by Ground Source Heat Pumps, Air Source Heat Pumps, and backed-up with electric boilers.

We would like to clarify that the network does not, and never has, relied on a gas backup system, contrary to some rumours circulating. Our dedicated team is available 24/7, and all customers have access to our service centre contact information.

We are pleased to share that the recent switchover to power the heat network from the North Angle Solar Farm, was successfully completed.

### **Addressing recent social media concerns**

We are aware of recent social media posts that have raised concerns about the heating system among some residents in the village. It is important to clarify that, during the last week of November, we received several callouts (10 homes got in touch, as temperatures dipped in line with the season).

The vast majority (95%) of these issues were related to the internal heating systems within individual properties. A couple of the call outs were related to the Heat Interface Unit (HIU), which were resolved by our engineers straight away.

Common issues included with the internal system were:

- incorrect thermostat settings, or scheduling changes, within customer's homes
- a mini particle blockage in the unit's strainer, a very rare occurrence from the entire length of meters of the heat main pipes laid across the village.
- Two faulty port valves were identified and fixed with alternative parts
- Temperature setting adjustments within customer's homes

Our 24-hour call-out team responded to these issues promptly. 95% of issues were resolved within four hours. The others within 12 to 24 hours.

### **In Home displays**

In response to our customers' requests, we have introduced an in-home display which provides data on your system including your daily use rate and associated heat use costs.

We can confirm that both the consumption data - and the tariff details - are live now on the in-home display. If you experience issues with your in-home display, please email us, and we will arrange for an engineer to address the problem.

We are delighted to continue to receive positive feedback from our customers who have expressed satisfaction with our service. Their responses highlights the benefits of joining our community heat network and how these benefits are being realised by those already connected.

**2025 tariff updates**

On 28 November 2024, we communicated updates to the 2025 tariff rates via email. These changes reflect the latest Consumer Price Index (CPI) data received in late November. Both variable and standing charges are adjusted annually based on this data.

We understand the importance of being clear and open about our costs and the need to let you know about any changes with lots of notice.

**Variable charge in 2025**

The variable charge is a payment for the heat you use. The heat used is measured in kWh, by the heat meter installed in your home.

Variable Charges	2025
1 January – 31 December	8.53p/kWh (8.12p/kWh+VAT)

The price of oil has reduced by 11.93% over the last 12 months (from November 2023 to October 2024) compared to the same period last year. Using the calculations in the Heat Supply Agreement, the new tariff would reduce from 9.68 pence/kWh (9.22p + 5% VAT) to 8.53p/kWh (8.12p/kWh + VAT) in 2025.

**Standing charges**

The base standing charge was set in comparison to the lifetime costs of owning, maintaining, and replacing a boiler. The charge contributes towards the costs of installing and maintaining the heat network, as well as customer and billing services. This price is reviewed annually according to inflation.

The Consumer Prices Index has increased by 2.757% over the last 12 months (from November 2023 to October 2024) compared to the same period last year. This has been applied to the rate for the Standing Charge in 2025, see below. Details of

Floor area of house	2025 charges
50-99 m2	£322 (£307+VAT)
100-149 m2	£400 (£381+VAT)
150-199 m2	£484 (£461+VAT)
>199+ m2	£568 (£541+VAT)

the current standing charge are available on our website [Swaffham Prior Heat Network - Heat tariff and heat costs | Cambridgeshire County Council](#)

**Work in progress**

We have now successfully connected 80 properties to the Heat Network. More connections are in progress. Our external connections team is now working in Lower End and Mill Hill to complete the final properties in Tranche 2.

Tranche 3 is scheduled to begin early next year. All listed properties will be notified in advance about external connection work, contact will then follow from our sub-contractor, Huttie's, re your internal installation/s.

### **Our commitment to you**

Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC), your Local Authority, is committed to providing a reliable, sustainable, and community-focused heating solution. We value your trust and welcome your feedback to help us enhance our service. Please contact us if you have any questions or concerns and we will do our best to help.

To make it easier for you to engage with us, our team members will be available at the Village Hall every week in January. This is a great opportunity to discuss any questions, provide feedback, or raise concerns directly with our team, who will be happy to assist you. We encourage you to visit us during the following dates and times:

Thursday, 9 January 2025, from 10am to 4pm

Wednesday, 15 January 2025, from 10am to 4pm

Monday, 20 January 2025, from 10am to 4pm

Wednesday, 29 January 2025, from 10am to 4pm.

We look forward to seeing you and supporting you in making informed decisions about the project. Thank you for your continued support.

*Siddhant Malhotra*

On behalf of the Heating Swaffham Prior Team

## **This Month's Cover Picture**

The blackbird is one of our commonest birds and can be seen all year-round. They feed on a variety of insects and worms, also berries and fruit when in season. You may notice more of them about during these winter months since each autumn huge numbers from northern Europe fly south to the UK's relatively milder climes. More about blackbirds can be found on the RSPB website: [www.rspb.org.uk](http://www.rspb.org.uk).

Gill's pen & ink drawing was inspired by a picture in a magazine.

Gill lives in Commercial End and exhibits her paintings locally, including with Prior Arts Group.

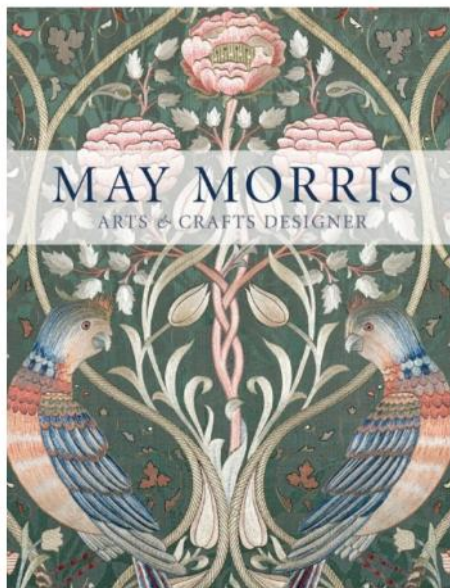
*Celia Tyler*

## **BON MOT NUMBER 156**

**"To Err is Human; To Really Foul Things Up  
Requires a Computer"**

*Bill Vaughan (1915-1977)*

**You are very welcome to join  
our open meeting**



**theWI**  
INSPIRING WOMEN



**Come along on Monday, 20th  
January where  
Fiona Rose will be talking on May  
Morris, daughter of designer  
William Morris  
£5**

**Swaffham Prior  
Village Hall at  
7:30pm**

## **NEWMARKET CINEMA**

**January - March 2025**

**The Stable, High Street, Newmarket.**

January 20th - The Ladykillers (1955) (U)

February 17th - Scrapper (12)

March 17th - One Life (12)

Doors open at 6.45pm with the film starting at 7.30pm. Admission is £6 which includes free refreshments. If you would like to reserve seats either send an email to [richardjbowler@outlook.com](mailto:richardjbowler@outlook.com) or call 01638 666810

***Richard Penny***

# POEM OF THE MONTH

Ring out, wild bells, to the wild sky,  
The flying cloud, the frosty light:  
The year is dying in the night;  
Ring out, wild bells, and let him die.

Ring out the old, ring in the new,  
Ring, happy bells, across the snow:  
The year is going, let him go;  
Ring out the false, ring in the true.

Ring out the grief that saps the mind  
For those that here we see no more;  
Ring out the feud of rich and poor,  
Ring in redress to all mankind.

Ring out a slowly dying cause,  
And ancient forms of party strife;  
Ring in the nobler modes of life,  
With sweeter manners, purer laws.

Ring out the want, the care, the sin,  
The faithless coldness of the times;  
Ring out, ring out my mournful rhymes  
But ring the fuller minstrel in.

Ring out false pride in place and blood,  
The civic slander and the spite;  
Ring in the love of truth and right,  
Ring in the common love of good.

Ring out old shapes of foul disease;  
Ring out the narrowing lust of gold;  
Ring out the thousand wars of old,  
Ring in the thousand years of peace.

Ring in the valiant man and free,  
The larger heart, the kindlier hand;  
Ring out the darkness of the land,  
Ring in the Christ that is to be.

*Alfred Lord Tennyson*

*Tennyson's famous lines on New Year, part of "In Memoriam", published in 1850, still speak eloquently for us 175 years on.*

*Andrew Grant*

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## Burwell Surgery Patient Participation Group (PPG)

### Free Health Checks

Happy New Year! Those of us who finished the last of the festive treats with a resolution to lead a healthier lifestyle in 2025 might be interested to know about the free NHS Health Check service.

*Who is eligible for a free Health Check?*

**The Health Check is for people who are aged 40 to 74** and it is targeted at those of us who do not already have a pre-existing condition (these patients are already being monitored on a regular basis).

*Why have a Health Check?*

**By having a Health Check we can lower our risk of getting conditions that affect the heart and blood vessels, such as heart disease, stroke and kidney disease. Many of the warning signs for these conditions, such as high blood pressure and high cholesterol, do not have symptoms.**

The Health Check helps us to find out if we are at risk of getting these conditions

so we can take action to improve our health. This could include making lifestyle changes or taking medicines.

The risk factors assessed during the health check are often shared by other conditions, including type 2 diabetes, preventable cancers and respiratory illness. A Health Check helps us to reduce the chance of getting these conditions too. Dementia and heart disease also share common risk factors.

*What is checked and how long does it take?*

The Health Check takes about 20 to 30 minutes and usually includes: measuring your height and weight; measuring your waist; a blood pressure test; a cholesterol test; and possibly a blood sugar level test, which is usually a finger-prick blood test. You may be asked to have a blood test at or before the Health Check. You'll also be asked some questions about your health, age and ethnicity, since these could all have a bearing on risk.

*When do I get my results?*

You'll usually be told your NHS Health Check results during the appointment. You'll be given your cardiovascular risk score of developing a heart or circulation problem, such as heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes or kidney disease, over the next 10 years. Those receiving the Health Check are then invited back for another Health Check every 5 years.

*How do I get my free Health Check?*

**If you think you are eligible for a Health Check, but have not already been invited, contact the Surgery** via AskMyGP (or by phone if that is not an option) to get booked in. The Surgery does a number of Health Checks directly, but when it is struggling for capacity it will refer you to Healthy You which undertakes free Health Checks across the county. **You can also self-refer to Healthy You at <https://healthyyou.org.uk/services/health-checks/>.**

*Next PPG meeting – all welcome – why not join us online if you can't make it in person!*

The next two meetings of the PPG will be at 6.30pm on Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> January and Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> April at Burwell Day Centre – all welcome. If you would like to attend the PPG for the first time, or if you can't attend in person but can join via Microsoft Teams, then please contact [cpicb.burwellsurgery.admin@nhs.net](mailto:cpicb.burwellsurgery.admin@nhs.net)

## **Quiz Night - Saturday 1st February**

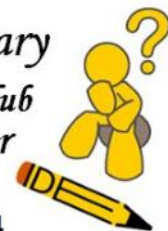
**7.00 for 7.30pm Bottisham Sports & Social Club**

**£10 per person to include a Ploughman's Supper**

**Teams of six per table**

**To book contact Sue Kempster on 01223 812194**

**or email [suekempster19@gmail.com](mailto:suekempster19@gmail.com)**



HOSTED BY LODE WI

**Long-term village resident Henry Brown died last month aged 102. Here is the first instalment of his account of his war experiences, first published in the 2017 April Crier.**

## **Henry Brown's WW2**

It was 1940 and the Battle of Britain was raging. I was 17 ½ and could register for service at this age, so I went to a recruitment centre and signed up to be a RAF pilot. I turned 18 in October and was called up for assessment. They gave me a thorough physical examination and aptitude tests. A panel interviewed me and decided I could progress to training as a pilot. I was told the courses were full and it would be about 6 months before I would be called up. In the meantime I went to work for my Uncle Harry sorting out the large backlog of food coupons in his shop!



In spring 1941 the call came to Initial Training Wing, Scarborough, where many hotels had been taken over. I was taught navigation, Morse Code, engineering, etc. The Germans knew the RAF was in town and dropped small bombs on Scarborough at regular intervals. On one evening H. Brown was posted for guard duty, and as there was also a Harry Brown in the unit we tossed for it. I won. Harry was killed that night by a bomb splinter. I, and many of my fellow trainees, was knocked out of bed by the blast moving my bedroom wall.

On completing the 3 months' course my unit of about 50 men was dispatched to Liverpool. We were to be conveyed on HMS Chitral, an armed merchant cruiser in a convoy escort on a 10-day sea journey to Halifax, Nova Scotia. We stood extra watches and made ourselves useful. Depth charges were dropped and guns fired. From Halifax we were sent to Toronto. Here we were told that we were to be trained in America, not Canada. As America was 'neutral' we could not wear our uniforms so we were kitted out with light grey flannel suits. We were billeted in the Toronto Bull Ring, which had become a transit camp; the food was excellent! Then off we went by the Chatta Nooga Chu Chu to the Alabama Institute of Aeronautics at Tuscaloosa where an RAF liaison officer briefed us.

We were the second intake of RAF cadets on a fighter pilot course in Stearsman bi-planes, with civilian instructors. Mine was an ex-crop duster, old enough to be my father, but could he fly!! The Steersman had to be flown by the 'seat of the pants, no flight instruments, just an engine rev counter. As an 18 year old, this was heaven. I learnt acrobatics, formation flying, and low, low flying. We had lessons in aviation engineering and mathematics. A local farmer gave us a taste of southern hospitality, arriving several evenings a week with a pick-up truck filled with ripe water melons – free!

There was considerable danger in flying without instruments because unless you could get the feel of an aircraft about to stall you were in trouble. My pal Bill Natrass stalled from 50 feet and hit the ground. He broke his harness traps, went

through the windscreen and hit the tarmac. I stayed with him in the sick bay until the ambulance came. The medics reckoned he was lucky to be alive, as he had broken shoulders and a fractured skull. Apart from 3-4 pupils who gave up and went back to Canada to become navigators, we all finished with top marks – USA-style simple exams.

We all caught the world's most virulent strains of foot fungus from the wooden duckboards in the showers. Alabama is very hot in summer and we had 2 showers a day. The RAF medical officers in Whitehall could have got off their backsides to check on any medical problems and even arranged for new boards, thus saving the future NHS vast sums of money; we brought it home with us. I still have my Athlete's Foot after 72 years and need to dose it regularly.

Then came a bolt from the blue. All those under 21 and over 30 years of age were to be eliminated because the next training course was run by the USAF and they only trained men between 21 and 30! What a bloomer for RAF Whitehall, who hadn't known. My instructor said I was as good as anyone on the course and not to worry. But we were sent back to Toronto. The Bull Ring was crowded so we were sent to Trenton, Ontario, whilst the military sorted things out. No, we could NOT have further training in Canada because this would annoy the USA. So we were sent to a transit camp outside Halifax to be shipped back to the UK. There were 300 of us by this time and morale was not good.

The return journey was on a horrific troopship in mid-December. We were three decks down in hammocks. The escort was American and there was a German battleship around. The convoy went north, off Greenland into mountainous seas. The liner 'France' rolled so far over its lifeboats were swept away. Our Christmas meal was soup and porridge. After 3 weeks we had run out of food, but just made it to Liverpool and were sent to Hastings where we were accommodated in hotels and found a scratch band of NCOs had been gathered to control us.

In Hastings an individual followed me around for several days. I ran up the steps from the beach, which floored him. He then introduced himself as MI5 and would I show him where I kept my messenger pigeons. I had no pigeons! I only learned 3 years later the reason for the security check, when my brother Walter, against orders, admitted taking secret radar papers to his billet to study.

We were marched pointlessly up and down Hastings promenade for several days. I suggested a small mutiny to the chaps, to hasten a decision by the Air Ministry. The Flight Sergeant said "right turn, quick march", and the right marker did not move. Flight said "it was serious", I said we *were* serious and would he report us to the Ministry? He did and within 2-3 days we were billeted in Whitehall and given individual interviews. We were then sent to RAF Desford where our flying abilities were tested on Tiger Moths. I soloed quickly, proving the quality of the US instructors. The Ministry was anxious not to upset the US so we were sent out of sight to South Africa to complete our training.

**In Hastings an individual followed me around for several days. He then introduced himself as MI5 and would I show him where I kept my messenger pigeons.**

**Henry Brown**

Edited by Mark Lewinski

**Advent by Candlelight**  
**at the Churches of St Mary and SS Cyriac and Julitta**  
**Ian de Massini and Cambridge Voices**  
**Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> December 2024**

The church was cold – something to do with Net Zero I guess – but the welcome was warm, as we sat down in St Mary’s for Swaffham Prior’s annual celebration of the beginning of Advent with Ian de Massini and the Cambridge Voices. Many familiar faces were joined by many new ones this year to sit among the Candles and Music stands. Back in the olden days, I seem to remember being given a candle to hold but this privilege was not extended this year. Indeed, candles were strategically placed around the venue for, I assume, supplementary heating, although I’m not sure of the efficiency of such a measure.

The bulging programme for the Choirs 29<sup>th</sup> outing to Swaffham Prior, was centred on the theme of Journey to renewal with 12 poems and musical pieces exploring: the search for meaning and truth, choices, nature’s indifference to suffering and – in the last six poems – the anticipation of Christ, redemption and optimism.

Starting with WH Auden’s *Atlantis* we dwelled briefly on the value of pursuit in the search for fulfilment accompanied by Josh Lynch’s remarkable improvised cello playing from beneath the tower behind our ears – a kind of acoustic immersion. This interspersed Antoine Brumel’s *Sicut Lilium* reflecting the famous ‘Officium’ album by Jan Gabarek and the Hilliard Ensemble. This most welcome backdrop to my reflections was abruptly ended by Robert Frost’s *The Road not Taken*. The author noting the possibility of regret and the illusion thrown up by memory when applied to past choices – I have no regrets, I just yearn for what I’ve missed – and then on to Auden’s *Musee des Beaux Arts* demonstrating how human suffering fades as life moves forward. These were interspersed with *King Herod and the Cock* by William Walton with solos by Helen Odell-Miller and Sam Grainger and a rousing Hymn sung by all *On Jordan’s Bank the Baptist’s Cry*.

The Hymn was followed by Robert Frost’s *Fire and Ice* that puts these forward as two routes to the world’s end – and then the song *Mysterious and Wondrous* by Jacob Gallus – a technically difficult piece remarkable in its text-painting and chromatic progression. As I listened to both, I was struck by the thought of the bubbles fading in my Elderflower wine as the yeast cultures create an environment within which they can no longer live, and I realized that there is a third way to end the world – for us at least!

That said, it is difficult to imagine how the all-consuming time in Shakespeare’s *Sonnet 69*, will not see the end of it all, as in *‘time will come and take my love away’*. However, I note only *‘my love’*....not *‘Love’* itself.

Our sixth poem by Yehuda Amichai brings me back to my wine – are the yeast not simply finding the natural and effortless *Wildpeace* of the poem’s name?

Anyway, music rang out with two *Christmas Songs* by Orlando Gibbons anglicized by Ian de Massini and *Drop down, ye heavens, from above*, a traditional Advent antiphon.

The last six readings were themed on Advent with two poems: *Mary* by Anthony Wilson and *Nativity* by John Donne anticipating and then reflecting on the birth of Christ, the physicality, joy and hope of birth and the vulnerability and weakness of a newborn spirit. Our last poem in St Mary's was Philip Larkin's 1967 poem *Days* moving on from birth and asking what days are for – turning sombre when our remaining days run short.

These were interspersed with *Drop, drop, slow tears* (Orlando Gibbons) sung by Ian from the top of the rood screen to improve the acoustic reception and *O magnum mysterium* (Ola Gjielo) arranged by Ian de Massini for this concert to deeply integrate the Cello piece and emphasized by seating Josh Lynch among the choir. Our final music for St Mary's was the hymn sung by all *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel* - a must of every liturgical year.



*Ian de Massini—director of  
Cambridge Voices*

As I left the sounds of the Organ Interlude (*Chorale Prelude on 'Sleepers, wake!' by J. S. Bach – people who've walked in darkness will see a great light*) I wondered if anyone would notice if I had an early mince pie to warm up but then I remembered that I live in a village. So, I took the well-trodden path up to the acoustic heaven that is St Cyriac's with my coat fully buttoned up.

At St Cyriac's the mood brightened, the chatter slowed and the *Ballad of the Breadman* - Charles Causley's retelling of the nativity story highlighting community mistrust of those who challenge normality – began. The final two poems *Journey of the Magi* by T S Eliot and an excerpt from *The Transfiguration* by Swaffham Prior's Edwin Muir reflected on the difficulty and transformative experience of a journey and renewal, harmony and redemption.

The final elements of music were *A Ceremony of Carols* by Benjamin Britten accompanied by Ian on Piano with *Deo gracias!* set in a manner reminiscent of the ringing of bells, and the Hymn sung by all – *Lo! He comes with clouds descending*.

So that was it apart from one last treat – Josh Lynch's Cello solo of *Cello Suite No.1 in G Major, Prélude by Bach*. This piece explores the juxtaposition of the horizontal and vertical within music so that an instrument that can only play one note at a time, can express a series of changing chords, with a defined melodic line threading its way between. Josh's performance highlighted the more sensitive elements of this melody, steering it from among its neighbours into the acoustics of the building, so that it rang cleanly and apart from its gently supportive harmonic underlay.

An excellent performance, befitting a journey, as light is brought back into the Church. Thanks to all

**PMDL**

All proceeds from the concert went to EMMAUS and the Churches Conservation Trust.

## From Our MP, Charlotte Cane



**As Christmas approaches, it has been a season of celebration and hard work, with a busy schedule in Westminster and across our constituency.**

One recent highlight was visiting the Repair Café at Littleport Village Hall. This inspiring initiative brings people together to fix household items, share skills, and reduce waste. It was heartening to see the dedication of volunteers who give their time and expertise to support others. Projects like this not only foster community spirit but also champion sustainability, reminding us of the practical ways we can care for our environment while connecting with one another.

Amid these uplifting moments, my work continues to focus on issues affecting our area. Rising employer National Insurance contributions have been a recurring theme in discussions with local businesses. I recently met GPs at Staploe Medical Centre to hear how these costs are straining surgeries, and I welcomed East Cambridgeshire farmers to Parliament to discuss their impact on agriculture. Supporting those who provide healthcare and food is vital for our community's future.

Agriculture, the backbone of our local economy, has been a focus. Joining the 'Traditional Fenland Celery' harvest near Ely and visiting a sugar beet farm in Stetchworth underscored the dedication of our farmers. They face mounting challenges, and I remain committed to advocating for the support they need to thrive.

Infrastructure is another priority. The Ely Area Capacity Enhancement scheme (the proposal to upgrade the railway to allow more trains to run through Ely) is crucial for our region's future, promising growth and improved connectivity. Its omission from the Autumn Budget was disappointing, but I've raised the issue directly with the Secretary of State for Transport and will continue to push for action.

In Parliament, I faced one of my most difficult decisions: how to vote on the Assisted Dying Bill. After listening to all sides and reflecting deeply, I chose to support it at its second reading. This decision was not taken lightly, and I will continue to engage with

constituents and experts as the bill progresses.

Closer to home, concerns about shoplifting have been prominent in conversations with shopworkers across East Cambridgeshire. I've urged the government to provide our overstretched police with the resources they need. Meanwhile, the



*Charlotte taking part in the Traditional Fenland Celery Harvest at G's near Ely.*

ever-present flood risk in our region requires urgent, long-term planning, which I emphasised in a recent parliamentary debate.

It's been a pleasure meeting so many local residents. Opening The Edmund Trust's new respite service in

Milton was a particularly meaningful moment, and thanking our hardworking posties at the Royal Mail delivery office in Ely was another highlight.

Education is the foundation of a healthy democracy, and my visits to Bottisham Village College and Robert Arkenstall Primary School in Haddenham offered an inspiring glimpse of the creativity and ambition shaping our future.

My team and I are here to help. If you need assistance or would like to attend one of my surgeries, please get in touch via [charlotte.cane.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:charlotte.cane.mp@parliament.uk).

Wishing you all a Happy New Year

***Charlotte Cane MP***

Member of Parliament for Ely and East Cambridgeshire



***Pressing the Minister on resources for our police.***



**These Christmas Reindeer were mad with special reindeer cutters — or were they? Answers to the editors for next month!**

## The Swaffhams' WI

The Swaffhams WI December meeting was our Christmas party. We had such a lovely evening with delicious food, fabulous company and festive quizzes. Thank you to everyone for making it such a fun evening and thank

you to Gill for her brilliant quiz. The table decorations were glorious and Lynda was the deserved winner of the cup for the best decoration! We wish everyone a very happy Christmas and all the best for the New Year.

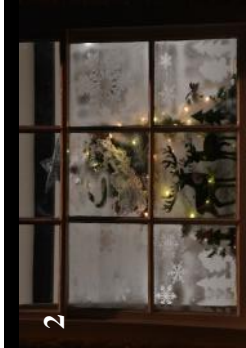
January begins our programme with Fiona Rose giving a talk on May Morris, the daughter of designer William Morris. The meeting takes place on Monday 20<sup>th</sup> January at 7:30pm in Swaffham Prior Village Hall. This is an open meeting, so do please come along and bring partners and friends too. There will be a charge of £5 for non-members of the Swaffhams WI and all visitors are very welcome. We hope to see you there.

*Kate Muscroft*

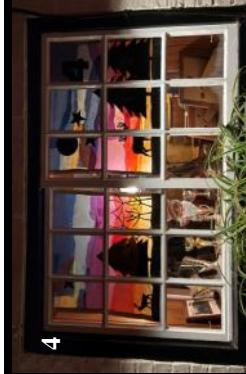




1



2



4



6



7



8



12



16

## Advent Windows 2024

Swaffham Prior was aglow during the month of December. Not all windows were available when our photographer did his rounds, but here are the ones he managed to snap.



20



22



14



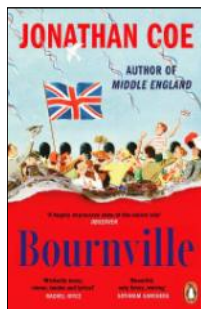
21

Photos by Andrew Noyes

## The Reading Group Reads...

### Bournville

by Jonathan Coe



*Bournville* opens in Germany just as the first waves of the coronavirus panic hit. From here, the novel spools back 70 years to VE day where we first meet Mary with her parents, Sam and Doll, who are residents of Bournville, the town built by Cadbury to house its workers. Stepping through time, we follow the family, its fortunes and interests to the Coronation in 1953, the summer of 1966 and the World Cup and on to the investiture of Prince Charles as Prince of Wales in 1969. Next comes the wedding of Charles and Diana followed by Diana's death, and finally, the pandemic. *It* is a state-of-the-nation novel.

The book had a mixed reception from our group. I thought it provocative, making me consider how British society and British society's attitudes have changed over the last 75 years. Each historical setting seemed to me to embody attitudes to sex or race or nationality and reflect how those changes affect and effect the characters of Mary's widening and growing family.

Our list for books and dates agreed so far for this year are as follows:

**Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> February: These Precious Days - Ann Patchett**

**Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> March: The Untouchables - John Banville**

**Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> April: Requiem for a Wren - Neville Shute**

**Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> May: Someone Else's Shoes - JoJo Moyes**

We are a friendly group, enjoying a glass of wine and a chat about books and other things! Currently we are meeting at 5 Lower End at 6pm. We would welcome new members. Do come and join us!

*Roz Chalmers*



## Mothers' Union

Our speaker at the meeting in November was Rob Needle, who is the Ely Diocesan Ambassador for the Children's Society. Rob also manages the Children Society Bookshop in Sawston.

Rob spoke movingly of the current day work of the Children's Society and how they aim to be there for all children in need of help and support. Did you know over 2,700 children will have run away from home over the Christmas period? A sobering thought.

The Children's Society was started by Edward Rudolf, a Sunday School Teacher, in 1881, when he found some of his pupils begging cold and hungry in the street. He set up children's homes based on a family model, where there were 'parents' who would care for a small group of children. When Local Authorities took over the running of children's homes in the 1970's, the Children Society could see that their work was not finished, and today they work to support those who are vulnerable and at risk, those living in Child Poverty and by offering services to ensure Child Wellbeing. 30% of children in the UK are living in Child Poverty, and many children report to be unhappy in school. They also work with Young Carers to provide some time for them to be just children. They run drop-in centres where children and young people can just turn up,

referrals for services are also made by teachers, police and health services.

Rob also mentioned that they are always pleased to receive books, DVDs, CDs and records at the Sawston shop if any readers are having a New Year clear out!

Our next meeting will be on Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> February at 2.30pm, when Simon Gale will be talking to us about Supporting an African community; we meet at the Passage Hall in Lode, and visitors are welcome to join us.

*Alison Martin*

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## **Julie's recipes for January**

### **Hungarian goulash**

3tbsp olive oil	2 tbsp sweet paprika
1 large onion, chopped	1 tin of chopped tomatoes
1 ¾ lb good quality stewing beef, cut into cubes	1 red bell pepper, seeded and thinly sliced
1 garlic clove, crushed	11oz potatoes, peeled and cubed
½ tsp caraway seeds	Salt and pepper

- 1.Heat the oil in a heavy pan and gently fry the onion until soft. Add the beef and saute the meat with the onions, add the garlic and caraway seeds.
2. Take the pan off the heat and add the paprika, making sure the paprika is absorbed well by the meat.
3. Add 2 and a half pints of water and simmer gently for at least 1 hour. Longer if needed.
4. Check the meat is tender, then add the tomatoes, bell pepper and potatoes.
- 5.Cook for a further 30 minutes until the potatoes are soft but firm. Season to taste and it is ready to serve with Galuska dumplings and sour cream. Serves 6

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### **Galuska Dumplings**

2 Eggs	2 tbsp vegetable oil
11oz plain flour	Salt to taste
3 tbsp finely chopped mixed herbs	Melted butter to serve
7oz bacon, cubed finely	

- 1.Beat the eggs with a little salt and 7flox of water, add a little flour to make a smooth but thick mixture, then add the remaining flour and beat with a wooden spoon until the dough is glossy and very smooth.
2. Add the herbs and mix in well, Adjust the dough with more flour if needed and knead into a ball.
- 3.Place the dough on a board, with a teaspoon, cut off noodle sized pieces about 1 inch long and the thickness of a pencil.
4. Cook the noodle shaped dumplings in a pan of boiling water and cook until the galuska rise to the top of the water and then drain through a colander.
5. Serve with Goulash or soup
6. As a individual dish it can be served with bacon, simply by saute -ing the bacon and adding to the galuska, with a knob of melted butter. Serves 6



## VILLAGE GARDENERS

The next meeting of the Village Gardeners will be held on Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> January at 8pm (doors 7.45pm) in Swaffham Prior Village Hall, when Liz Taylor, CEO of Red2Green, will be coming to speak to us about how the Community Garden at Bottisham College supports people with learning disabilities.

Everyone is very welcome; please see below for our full programme for 2025:



### Programme for 2025



## Swaffham Prior Village Gardeners

Tues 21 <sup>st</sup> January	Liz Taylor	Red2Green - Gardening
Tues 18 <sup>th</sup> February	Peter Jackson	Plants for Shade
Tues 18 <sup>th</sup> March	Dr Ian Bedford	6 of the best - Springtime Bugs
Tues 15 <sup>th</sup> April	Gwenda Kyd	Tremendous Trees
Sat 10 <sup>th</sup> May	Coach Trip	Kew Gardens
Tues 17 <sup>th</sup> June	Garden Visit	Shadworth House, SPrior
Tues 15 <sup>th</sup> July	Garden Visit	The Prospects Trust, Reach
Tues 16 <sup>th</sup> Sept	Linda Gascoigne	Going Wild in the Garden
Tues 21 <sup>th</sup> October	Gerry Daish	Garden Birds <b>+AGM</b>
Tues 18 <sup>th</sup> November	Nigel Start	Poisonous Plants

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Indoor meetings – Doors open 7:45pm for 8pm start

Venue – Swaffham Prior Village Hall

Membership £20 per year, garden entry fees and coach fees not included

Visitors welcome £4 on the door

Refreshments 50p per item, cakes are homemade

Chairperson – Nicola Hames

Joint secretaries – Fiona Geraghty (07785 971853) and Kylie Coles (07791 464401)

*Fiona Geraghty*

### **Operational Services Committee 18 November**

The collection of waste and re-cycling is improving, but still not quite on target. Street cleansing is efficient, but there was no data on how many streets have been cleaned. An operating deficit of approximately £325,000 partly due to lower numbers of planning applications and building inspections.

The Air Quality Strategy plan for the District was presented; mostly aspirational, and few concrete strategies for improving air quality. Perhaps the new Local Plan can incorporate some measures (e.g. no chimneys in new buildings) to improve air quality.



### **Finance & Assets Committee 28 November**

This was also light on startling items:

The annual review of the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme (LCTRS) for the 2025/26 year is to be unchanged for next year. LCTRS is for those residents who are on Universal Credit and Council Tax support. John argued that the Local Council Tax should be reduced to zero and not 8.5% as it is now, to help households struggling with the cost-of-living crisis, but the Administration thought that all households should pay even a minimum sum.

Changes to the exemption from Council Tax for second houses that are empty and for sale or under probate was extended from one to two years which seemed to favour those who had second dwellings or were landlords.

That this Committee has a projected year-end underspend of £746,000 when compared to its approved revenue budget of £7,016,768. Some of this underspend occurs because vacant posts are not filled quickly.

Water fountains had been installed in the public conveniences in Ely and that this would be extended to other public conveniences in the District.

### **Extraordinary Council on 11 December**

The Independent on the Council has formed a group with the Lib Dems, so that this new group and the Conservative group have an equal number of members. According to the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, there needs to be equal representation on each of the committees, and this will be resolved at this Council meeting.

**Reminder:** All ECDC Council and Committee meetings are live-streamed, and can be viewed either live or retrospectively. Details can be found on the Council website by searching for the committee of interest by date: [https://eastcambs.gov.uk/calendar-field\\_meeting\\_date](https://eastcambs.gov.uk/calendar-field_meeting_date)

**Surgery:** The next surgery will be at Swaffham Prior Village Hall on Thursday 23 January 2025 at half past six o'clock until an hour later.

## Remembering Betty

Betty Prime (my Mum) was born in Stratford, London to Fred and Ethel Savage. Fred was a travelling salesman and Ethel stayed at home. They lived in a two-roomed flat in Barnsbury, N1. There was no kitchen and Mum recalls her mother getting water from a tap on the landing and washing up in a bowl on the table. There was a basement with a large copper and her mother used to go down there on a Monday to do the washing. Mum might have had a relatively humble start in life but she was actually descended from Dutch royalty – her seven times great-grandfather was Henry Frederick Nassau, Prince of Orange.

Just before she was four years old they moved to a new house in a very long road in Palmers Green, N.13. She remembered the milkman delivering with his horse and cart and the Walls ice cream man who came round on his bicycle. They had a lodger called Miss Watson to help pay the bills.

She enjoyed school and her favourite subjects at school were music, PE and domestic science. She remembered it took the whole of a two-hour lesson to learn how to iron a blouse! When she was nearly ten years old her sister Joan was born.

Secondary school followed at age 11 and she was there until 1939 when the school was evacuated because of the war. Her parents didn't want her to go away so she stayed at home and attended Pitmans Business College to learn shorthand, typing and commerce.

Aged 15 she joined the church choir. This is where she met Dad (Ron). In 1941 they had their first date when Dad took her to see Judy Garland and Mickey Rooney in "Strike up the Band" at the local cinema. They got engaged in 1943 and were married in 1945 just after the end of the war in Europe. Mum's first job was as a shorthand typist at the Bank of Montreal in Threadneedle Street, London. She later worked at her father-in-law's office. They rented an upstairs flat and in 1949 Margaret was born, followed by Jennifer in 1951. There was only one bedroom into which was squeezed a double bed, single bed and a cot.

When we were young Mum made her own and our clothes and there were always home-made cakes for tea. Mum passed on her skills in sewing, knitting and cooking to her daughters and granddaughters. She belonged to a group at her church called the Young Wives Club (which later had to be re-named The Wives Club as most of them were no longer young!) Every year they would put on a concert for family and the Old Folks Club in the church hall. During the war Mum had acted in a pantomime which Dad had written and they later both appeared in the play "Quiet Wedding" with a Drama Group that Dad had started.



*Betty, celebrating her 100th birthday last year*

In 1953 Mum and Dad were able to buy a new semi-detached house in Oakwood, N.14 and I was born there in 1957. When I was in my late teens and I was the only one at home, Mum decided to get a part-time job and worked in a number of branches of Boots the Chemist until she was forced to retire at 60. I remember that she put some of her earnings in a special tin and saved up so that every six weeks or so we could have special treats such as a meal out or trip to the theatre.

When the three of us had all married, left home and moved to villages Mum decided that she wanted to move to a village as well. Dad took a bit of persuading but they eventually found what they were looking for in Swaffham Prior and moved to Adams Road in 1987. They decided that the best way to make new friends would be to get involved in village life. So Mum joined the WI, serving on the committee and acting as President for three years. They took over the production of the village magazine – *The Crier* – and did that for over four years. Mum joined the Phoenix Singers in Burwell and, later, the Burwell Community Choir. They also joined the Burwell Music Circle and the Village Gardeners. Mum embroidered church kneelers, cleaned the church (well into her 90's) and served endless cups of tea. For a short time she had a seasonal job in Heffers stationers selling Christmas cards and calendars. She helped serve lunches to the “old folk” at the Day Centre (she was older than most of them there!).

When Dad was ill with dementia Mum put her own life on hold to a great extent so she could care for him at home for as long as she was able.

Mum loved her garden and was especially fond of clematis. She was a talented poet and wrote rhymes for grandchildren and friends. You may remember “The Saga of Betty’s Leak” and “Willie the Scarecrow”.

Mum was grateful that she was able to visit her family in New Zealand three times. The third time, in 2018, at the age of 93, she decided to go on her own and had a wonderful time. She had six grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren. She was proud of their achievements and was always keen to hear their news. Mum wrote a daily diary, was an avid list-maker and loved sending and receiving letters. We remember Mum’s independent spirit and stubbornness – we got used to her asking for our advice and then promptly ignoring it!

When she could no longer live at home we were very fortunate in securing a place for her at Brampton Manor, close enough to Swaffham Prior that her friends could visit. After she’d settled in I asked her if she liked it there. “I’m not sure”, she said. I asked her why. She replied “Because it’s full of old people.” She explained that her friends in Swaffham Prior were all younger than her and now she was surrounded by people with the same problems as her – hearing and memory loss and mobility issues. Despite this, Mum appreciated the wonderful care she received at the home and enjoyed her visits from family and friends up until the end. We were so grateful that she could celebrate her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday with her family in April, including five who were able to make it over from New Zealand.

Family and friends – these were the most important things to Mum and they kept her “young at heart”.

## **Betty Prime and her husband Ron were Crier editors for 4 years**

*Mary Preece (nee Prime)*

## News from Wicken Fen

January is the perfect time to blow away the cobwebs on a wildlife walk at Wicken Fen. Whether its misty, frosty or beneath a fiery sky, the calls of ducks, geese and wild swans carry on the breeze. So why not wrap up warm and head out along one of the many trails across the wider nature reserve.

The Docky Hut Café has a selection of warming comfort food, hot drinks and tasty treats including luxury hot chocolates and winter bakes. In the visitor centre, dogs receive a warm welcome and a stamp in their National Trust Pooch Passport. While you can browse our selection of festive goodies in the gift shop, perfect for a bit of yuletide shopping. And don't miss the secondhand book stall, which also stocks a collection of jigsaw puzzles. Both the café and visitor centre/ gift shop are open 10am – 4.30pm daily.

Our Winter Trail around the boardwalk will be open daily until 13<sup>th</sup> January, where families can help lost Highland calf Parsnip find her way back to the herd, meeting resident and visiting animals along the way. Normal admission applies, but the trail is free.

For nature lovers, it's well worth standing by the visitor centre at dusk to look out for roosting hen harriers, Wicken's Sedge Fen is a renowned wintering ground for this rare bird of prey.

We will be sharing upcoming walks and events on our website, so keep an eye out!

[www.nationaltrust.org.uk/wicken-fen](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/wicken-fen)



# Wishing you all a baa-rilliant new year!

## From Anglesey Abbey

### Find the Flock

As we say goodbye to the beautiful bear sculptures at Anglesey Abbey that have been extremely popular over the Christmas season, we are excited to announce that Shaun the Sheep will be joining us this spring! Working in collaboration with Wild in Art and Aardman, visitors can embaa-rk on another sculpture trail around the gardens at Anglesey Abbey from 1 March to 27 April 2025. Keep an eye on our social media channels and website for more information and plans.

### Snowdrops

From mid-January to February, the gardens will be full of beautiful snowdrops. The snowdrop collection at Anglesey Abbey boasts over 500 varieties of these delicate white flowers and you can join a specialist tour to learn more about them. Tours this year will run from Monday 27 January to Friday 28 February, every Sunday to Friday (no tours on Saturdays) at 11am and 13.30pm.



Please note that there is no option to pre-book tours this year on our website, instead, please arrive early on the day and ask to join a tour when you arrive at the visitor centre. You will be given a ticket on the day at the welcome desk. We recommend arriving early to avoid disappointment as the tours are always really popular.

### House tours

We have enjoyed a wonderful Christmas at Anglesey Abbey with decorations highlighting particular treasures in each room – some of which you can see on BBC



iPlayer if you're an Antiques Roadshow fan! From the 6 January, the house will be open for accessible tours at 11am, 12.30pm and 2pm, while the team remove the Christmas decorations and complete the annual start-of-year cleaning and conservation work in January. Please head to our website for more information and opening times.

[nationaltrust.org.uk/anglesey-abbey](https://nationaltrust.org.uk/anglesey-abbey)

# **Notes from the Parish Council December 2024 Meeting**

Cllr John Covill chaired the monthly meeting of the Parish Council on Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> December, attended by 7 Parish Councillors and 2 members of the public.

East Cambridgeshire District Council. Report circulated by email, Cllr Charlotte Cane attended. Cllr Cane noted that as a result of an extraordinary meeting, all ECDC committees now had 50/50 representation between the Conservatives and the Lib Dem/Independents.

## **Matters arising from the previous minutes (for information only)**

Cllr Kent-Phillips noted that the Voneus network is still down and that more people have lost their internet access.

Cllr Greenfield had responded to the Kingsway consultation and the Hybrid meetings and proxy voting consultation as agreed.

## **Planning applications.**

24/01158/FUL Change of use from an annexe to holiday let accommodation. The Smock Tower Mill, Mill Hill, Swaffham Prior, Cambridge, CB25 0JZ.

The PC decided object strongly to this application on the grounds that it contravenes two conditions under which permission for the original conversion of the double garage to an annex was granted.

## **Village Hall application for solar panels.**

The PC agreed to support the application for funding to add solar panels to the Village Hall. The Clerk will ring the Conservation Officer at ECDC to see if solar panels would be viewed favourably in the conservation area and report back.

## **Heating Scheme.**

Cllr Greenfield reported.

Phase 2 connects continuing

Phase 3 (30 properties) to be started March 2025.

CPEN was connected on 21<sup>st</sup> November and is now fully operational.

The noise suppressors are in place and surveying to measure their effectiveness will take over the next few days.

Cllr Hart asked if the cause of current problems was known? Cllr Greenfield said that maintenance work may have caused some issues.

## **Clerk's Report**

Attended Highways Capital Programme online meeting – outlined new scoring method for prioritisation – severity of damage, number of previous temp repairs, how well used it is, if gives access to amenities, public transport etc. Budget for 25-26 £56 million, roughly half on roads, the rest split between footpaths, drainage, signage etc.

Contacted the Historic Building List and applied to add the Paper Sheds

Viv Elston will see to the gate and sign when he can.

Benstead gravestone to be made safe in the new year.

Many documents deposited at the Archive. The Archives cannot adequately store the Land Girl badges, so I contacted the address on the box they were in to see if I

can trace family; otherwise suggest they are offered to Burwell museum.

The electric speed awareness sign that doesn't work on Mill Hill will be removed by the Traffic Signals team some point before March 2025.

### **Parish Councillors' Reports.**

Cllr Greenfield noted the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough NHS survey printed in the Crier, looking at introducing a 'digital doorway' that would require people to log in digitally to be seen by GPs and at hospitals and the need to raise awareness of this.

To be discussed further at the January meeting.

### **Open Question Time**

A member of the public noted that adoption of a 'digital doorway' would not lead to equality or inclusiveness in terms of accessibility of NHS services.

The next monthly Parish Council meeting will be on Thursday, 9th January 2025 starting at 7.30pm at the Village Hall. All are welcome to attend.

*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.*

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## **Bottisham Patients' Group**

I would like to thank all of our patients for their patience whilst we have worked, and continue to work through the seasonal challenges of sickness amongst our team. We are very lucky that we have a conscientious team who strive to meet our patient's needs under challenging circumstances.

We have listened to your feedback and comments and are currently trialling a change in our appointment model. We have included an additional number of pre-bookable appointments that are available both on line and to our Reception team, this trial will be reviewed in three months' time.

Unfortunately, between 1<sup>st</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> November we had 42 appointments where the patient Did Not Attend (DNA), this equated to 10.5hrs of lost clinical time. We appreciate that circumstances and situations can change so it would be greatly appreciated if you are unable to attend an appointment, please let us know so we can reallocate this to another patient. Thanks to those patients who do cancel / move their appointments.

I would you to join me in welcoming Danielle to our Dispensary team as a Dispensary Assistant.

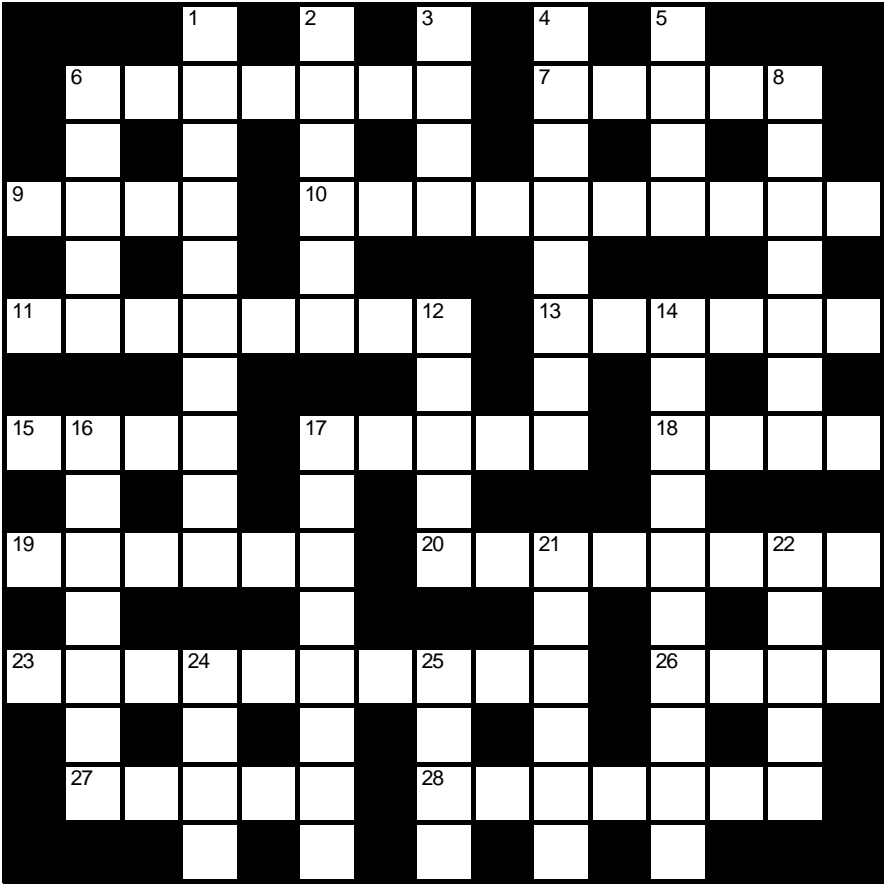
We would like to thank those of you who completed the questionnaire regarding accessing the NHS Digitally.

***Bottisham Patients Group***

Crossword Number 223

Compiled by CALVIN

This month’s puzzle is a simple cryptic crossword. Send your answers to the editors by 22nd January 2025. 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

- 6 In the middle of chocolate bar, central to wager (7)
- 7 Respond to smashed crate (5)
- 9 Any jam available readily? Check first if slightly open (4)
- 10 Any old iron, lamps, etc are shortly to be recycled (5,5)
- 11 Run toast through a blender for vegetarian alternative (3, 5)
- 13 Shun church surrounded by cardinals (6)
- 15 Originally present with presents, for a short spell (4)
- 17 An eye or a necklace, maybe? (5)
- 18 Care for Tosca's opening and finale (4)
- 19 Boss loses a trough (6)
- 20 Some of Gove's acts ethically reverse action creating legal precedent (4,4)
- 23 Pose Titian arranged by seasonal plant (10)
- 26 Ape, grey, is even missing hawk's nest (4)
- 27 Shoemaker's helpers reassemble vessel, half-heartedly (5)
- 28 Heard that solver will record festive dessert (4,3)

## Down

- 1 Cooking method, involving fiery string, but no drugs! (4,6)
- 2 Scams aimed Northwards conceal noxious fog (6)
- 3 Russian ruler, his second rising to become leading figure (4)
- 4 Divination regarding "Chopper", and an unknown assembly (8)
- 5 Mortal enemies - in that, there's a story! (4)

- 6 Big Joe, um, missing fractured gem or jewel (5)
- 8 Old car for new? Partly, with trained exchanges (5-2)
- 12 Characteristic of betrayer - gold is missing (5)
- 14 Carcase, Ltd tangled up game with string (4,6)
- 16 Sailor by himself with seafood! (7)
- 17 Hive-dweller kidnaps Christian, with application of lullaby (8)
- 21 Model, wrapped in fur, is steady (6)
- 22 Piece of mistletoe, perhaps, but the point is lost in the next season (5)
- 24 Exploding 3, with river running backwards (4)
- 25 Playthings hidden by overturned greasy Ottoman (4)

## Solution to crossword no. 222

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

We congratulate Mary Joyner, the winner of last month's competition, who will receive a prize certificate from the editors. Honourable mentions go to Martyn Clark and Robert Nunn.

# Be a Help at Home volunteer!

Be the Difference. Be an EACH volunteer.



East Anglia's  
Children's Hospices

## Have you got time to spare?

You could help a family at home with practical tasks such as cleaning, cooking, gardening, helping with homework and much more.  
Whether you can give 2 hours a week or 2 hours a month we would like to hear from you!

All training is provided.  
All you need to give is your precious time.

For more information contact:  
anne.rayner@each.org.uk  
or visit [www.each.org.uk/volunteering](http://www.each.org.uk/volunteering).



EACH Help at Home volunteers provide vital practical support in the homes of families caring for children with a life-threatening conditions

## How you can help...

Cooking • DIY and decorating • Cleaning • Shopping  
Sibling support • Gardening and much more...

For more information please visit:

**[www.each.org.uk/volunteering](http://www.each.org.uk/volunteering)**

or call 01223 800 800 selecting option four

Registered Charity No. 1069284

## Anglesey Group Benefice

Thursday Communion Services 2025

Recommence Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> January

Lode Church

10.30am

Refreshments served after the service.

Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> January a soup lunch

will be served at 12noon.

For more information or to book lunch

Please contact Julie Sale: 01223 811222.

## Services in January 2025

### Wednesday 1 January

8pm CbyC, a contemplative service, online on Zoom

### Sunday 5 January – Second Sunday of Christmas/ Epiphany

9am Online service on Zoom  
10.30am Holy Communion, Bottisham  
4pm Village Service, Quy Village Hall

### Sunday 12 January – Baptism of Christ

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

### Sunday 19 January – Second Sunday of Epiphany

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

### Sunday 26 January – Third Sunday of Epiphany

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

### Each Thursday

10.30am Holy Communion, Lode (not 2 January)

Revd Canon Max Osborne [max9@btinternet.com](mailto:max9@btinternet.com); 01223 481187 (Rest day: Tuesday)

Assistant Curate: Rev'd Rhona McEune: [rihm67h@gmail.com](mailto:rihm67h@gmail.com)

Churchwardens: Bottisham: [bottisham@angleseygroupparishes.co.uk](mailto:bottisham@angleseygroupparishes.co.uk); 01223 604019

Lode: [lode@angleseygroupparishes.co.uk](mailto:lode@angleseygroupparishes.co.uk); 01223 811222

Quy: [quy@angleseygroupparishes.co.uk](mailto:quy@angleseygroupparishes.co.uk); 01223 812652

Swaffham Bulbeck: [bulbeck@angleseygroupparishes.co.uk](mailto:bulbeck@angleseygroupparishes.co.uk); 01223 812525; 01223 811501

Swaffham Prior: [prior@angleseygroupparishes.co.uk](mailto:prior@angleseygroupparishes.co.uk); 01638 743937

For general enquiries: [admin@angleseygroupparishes.co.uk](mailto:admin@angleseygroupparishes.co.uk); [churchwardens@angleseygroupparishes.co.uk](mailto:churchwardens@angleseygroupparishes.co.uk)

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/angleseychurches](https://www.facebook.com/angleseychurches);

A Church Near You: <https://www.achurchnearyou.com/church/7380/benefice>

## FREECYCLE

If you have any offers or wants, please contact me on [jun.thompson@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:jun.thompson@tiscali.co.uk), phone on 01223 813362, or drop a note through 23 Longmeadow. Everything is free and nothing is expected in return.

HAPPY NEW YEAR ALL!



## Dates for Your Diary January 2025

Wed	1	Bookclub, 6pm, 5 Lower End [18]
Thu	9	Heating Scheme, 10am-4pm, VH [5] PC Meeting, 7.30pm VH [26]
Tue	14	Burwell Surgery PPG, 6.30pm, Burwell Surgery [8]
Wed	15	Heating Scheme, 10am-4pm, VH [5]
Mon	20	Heating Scheme, 10am-4pm, VH [5] Mothers' Union, 2.30pm, Fassage Hall Lode [18] WI's May Morris, 7.30pm, VH [7, 16] Newmarket Cinema: The Ladykillers, 7.30pm [7]
Tue	21	Village Gardeners, 8pm, VH [20]
Wed	22	<b>Crier Copy Deadline</b>
Thu	23	Councillors' Surgery, 6.30-7.30, VH [21]
Wed	29	Heating Scheme, 10am-4pm, VH [5]
Sat	1	Bottisham Quiz night, 7pm Bottisham, Sports & Social Club [9]

*Numbers in square brackets indicate page number of an accompanying article*

Club	Contact	Tel.	Date	Time	Place
FOSPS	Becky Wilkes	07827 318351	2 <sup>nd</sup> Mon of Term	8pm	Village School
Beavers, Cubs and Scouts	Tim Doe	gsl@1st Swaffhamprior scouts.org.uk	Wed (Term) Mon	5:15-6:30pm 6:30-8.00pm 7.00-8.30pm	Scout Hut
Reading Group	Brenda Wilson	743937	1 <sup>st</sup> Weds of month	6:00pm	Variable
Village Gardeners	Fiona Geraghty	07785 971853	3 <sup>rd</sup> Tues of month	8:00pm	Village Hall
WI	Kate Muscroft Kaye Lewsinski	07752011308 <a href="mailto:Kayejanelew@gmail.com">Kayejanelew@ gmail.com</a>	3 <sup>rd</sup> Mon of month	7.30 pm	Village Hall