



The Swaffham Crier

Volume L Number 1

January 2026



Editorial

HAPPY NEW YEAR ALL OUR READERS! And as you will see from our volume number, this is the 50th anniversary of the Crier, Volume L, Number 1, and we will be celebrating this year. Below is a picture of founder Rev Canon John Byrom cutting the cake at our 25th celebrations with a somewhat more youthful co-editor James Matheson. John was the Vicar when the Crier began and we're told he used to print it in his bedroom aided and abetted by a number of village ladies.

Weren't the Advent Windows something very special? Well done everyone, and many congratulations to organiser-in-chief Janet Willmott and with particular thanks to Dee and our photographer Andrew Noyes who braved the chilly weather to get snaps of every one. Now we just need to choose the best—email us with your vote. You'll find our Web edition much better for viewing because you can magnify the images (see p5).

Read Rod Clayton's joyful account of this year's Advent by Candlelight Concert, the first year in which Tristan Latchford has run it and what a success it was. As too the candlelit Carol Service which was the best ever to our ears, and we loved the choirs and the quite amazing fiddle player. Our church bell ringers have not been twiddling their thumbs either. Unlike on the continent, English bell ringers don't ring tunes but rather *changes*. HOWEVER, an exception has been made—if you listen carefully you might just hear it ... see page 18!

And don't forget our dastardly NEW YEAR QUIZ (some may remember the last one...). There will be a prize, and if anyone actually succeeds, they'll certainly deserve it! See page 12.

All the best for the New Year,

Caroline Matheson

Regulars

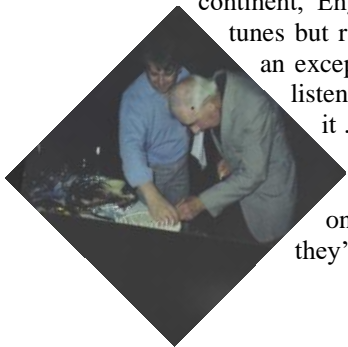
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Cover Picture: Adélie penguin leaping out of the water, pencil on paper by **Lisa E Fretwell**



Letters to the Editors



Dear Editors,

Can you help me deliver essential aid to Ukraine?

Celia and I had the privilege to visit Ukraine in 2011 with our Ukrainian friend, who later died of breast cancer.

In memory of Sveta, I am raising money to support www.convoy4ukraine.com, and I am taking part in the convoy driving to Ukraine in February, four years after the Russian invasion began.

Convoy4Ukraine is an outstanding and effective charity. It fundraises to buy 4x4s and ambulances, and fills them with medical and humanitarian aid asked for by the people in Ukraine. It drives them across Europe to deliver them to our Ukrainian partners. Since 2022 it has taken 20 convoys.

The 4x4s aren't just vehicles. In frontline villages where roads are shattered and danger ever-present, they become ambulances evacuating the wounded, mobile field hospitals reaching the isolated, and delivery trucks bringing food, water, and medical supplies.

I am personally covering my contribution to the purchase of the vehicles and travel costs. Any donation you make will go towards purchasing the medical equipment and humanitarian aid our Ukrainian partners have asked us to deliver. I would be very grateful if you would support my fundraising at <https://gofund.me/9ae11c76d>.

Many, many thanks,

Michael Hargreaves, 5 High Street

Dear Editors,

Swaffham Prior Footpaths

In Swaffham Prior our footpaths and pavements are well used by walkers, families, older residents, and visitors enjoying the village—and keeping them clear helps everyone move around safely and comfortably.

Before the growing season begins, may I kindly request villagers to take a moment to check whether any hedges, shrubs, or trees on their property are overhanging or blocking nearby footpaths or pavements. A small trim can make a big difference, ensuring paths remain accessible for pushchairs, mobility aids, and those out for a stroll.

This is very much a community effort, and every contribution—no matter how small—helps maintain the welcoming, tidy village we're all proud of. Thank you for your continued thoughtfulness and for playing your part in keeping Swaffham Prior safe and enjoyable for everyone.

With much appreciation,

Ruth Lambert
Parish Councillor
(Footpaths Officer)

Dear Editors,

Heating Scheme - less light than heat

In early December came the information from the Heating Team that the pricing for the coming year would reduce by less than 1p per unit. That is less than the 1.15p reduction of the previous year; and the standing charge has gone up again (pegged to the CPI index, which doesn't relate to oil). So less than 10% reduction for the coming year.

On 2nd January, I read in the Guardian business pages that global oil prices have 'slumped' (their word) by 20% in 2025, the biggest annual drop since 2020. While it doesn't tend to be exact, the price of heating oil tends to go with the global oil prices.

I bought into the heating scheme on being told that the scheme's prices would be pegged to oil prices for five years. That was central to my decision and I believed it would be adhered to.

Whatever the justifications for such a small reduction in the heating scheme cost for this year again, it is clear that under-reducing the unit cost and tying that with increasing the standing charge year on year has the net effect of ratcheting up the heating cost for the scheme in comparison to oil, also year on year. And now it's being part pegged to the currently high electricity prices too. It is not clear to me how that is being done and where it is being pitched in pricing, since it is comparing chalk and cheese in heating terms.

We are a captive market. We can't shop around. Someone asserted in the Crier a while ago that the heating scheme was saving them money. They either can't do the basic maths or they don't follow what's happening in the outside world. If I could have seen forward to where we are now I would not have joined the scheme.

I understand that Ofgem will be regulating heating schemes from this year. I hope they will do it properly. But I don't suppose they will be looking back at how the unregulated price under-reductions were calculated for previous years.

Mark Lewinski-Grende

THIS MONTH'S COVER PICTURE

This is just one of approximately 80 illustrations produced by Lisa for **The Penguin Book of Penguins**, written by her husband Dr Peter Fretwell, a scientist with British Antarctic Survey, and published last year. Lisa explains: *We were asked to write this book as part of the 90 Anniversary celebrations for Penguin Books, which was formed in 1935 to produce small, paperback books at a reasonable price, that were accessible to everyone.*

If you would like to know more, we are having An Evening of Penguins at Waterstones in Bury St. Edmunds on 20th January 2026 at 6.30 pm to celebrate Penguin Awareness Day. To book tickets, please visit this link, or just pop into the Waterstones bookshop.

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/an-evening-of-penguins-with-peter-and-lisa-fretwell-bury-st-edmunds-tickets-1978394516255>

We hope to see you there in the New Year!

From our Reporter at the Parish Council Meeting

A warm coming we had of it, a good time of year for a journey to the Village Hall over pavements illuminated by Christmas window decorations, and a welcome in the meeting room from those Parish Councillors who had turned up, and our CCC rep Yannifer. This slimmed-down PC matched well a similarly reduced agenda to get through everything in double-quick time.

The first bit of business was the ritual handing-over to the Treasurer of the PC's chequebook, some of which had been pre-signed by the Chairman.. Do they really still use cheques?? Apparently so.



Somehow within the next agenda item we find ourselves on the perennial subject of the proposed Kingsway development (solar farm and associated Wombling-free cabling) to confirm their objections, and awaiting a report from the fire service about risks of large-scale battery storage systems. More later... Then noting that Reach are going for a compulsory purchase order for land to extend their solar farm – I hope they have an agreement from the power people about additional contribution to the grid.

Next, inevitably, the forthcoming local government reorganisation. We are firmly in favour of Option A (go with Cambridge) rather than Option B (reluctantly with

Local government reorganisation: We are firmly in favour of Option A (go with Cambridge) rather than B (Peterborough), but someone with clout at ECDC still thinks otherwise. There seems to be nothing further we can do except (nice crazy idea) withdraw from ECDC...

Peterborough), but someone with clout at ECDC still thinks otherwise. There seems to be nothing further we can do except (nice crazy idea) withdraw from ECDC. Decisions in March. Apparently Hunts DC is proposing a new Option C but that probably won't go anywhere and Westley Waterless would like to be part of Newmarket. No chance because apparently County Boundaries Will Not Be Changed!

Skipping on to the Greenway Proposal (cycling routes etc.) there was the need to clear up a misunderstanding whereby the PC had been reported as 'not too keen' on the whole proposal whereas in practice they just had problems with the idea of closing the whole north-bound slip-road into the village from the 1102 in favour of much wider cycle lane.

Planning applications - almost all of these were to do with major works to Baldwin Manor which were enthusiastically approved, everyone only too pleased that much-needed works are now in progress.

And so to the Accounts for payment, the majority of which were due to the landscaping contractor with whom there has been much debate, now finally sorted. The Clerk reported new guidance that all negotiations with suppliers should be done by email, to preserve the history; I wonder how they have been done in the past...). The Clerk's salary will increase by £1 but I did not record if that is per week, month or year.. in any case well deserved.

The serious annual business of Budget and Precept was despatched nem con with an agreement to raise the Precept (for only the second time in 15 years) from £17,500 to £19,000, which will cost the average household nearly £5 per year extra. Last year's expenditure almost exactly matched the budget but crazy billing practices by the electricity supplier are amongst the uncertainties for the future. (Apparently we are now on electricity billing per 30-minute intervals, but part of the consumption is the 13 street lamps for which the PC is responsible – do they each have their own smart meter??).

Finally back to the Kingsway proposal; eleven PCs are involved in the consultation, some of which have been 'very slow in reacting' so a steering group is being put together to develop a collective (presumably negative) response in time for the next meeting. Our PC were much faster in reacting and found themselves propped up in a row at the bar in the Red Lion very soon afterward.

John Chalmers

Swaffham Prior Advent Windows



Photos of this year's superb advent windows in houses around the village are in order on page 26 and also on the back cover of the printed magazine to give a colour version. If you look at the web version you should be able to get enlarged versions of these images in your browser. Which do we like the best? Send your vote to the Editors (editors@swaffham-crier.co.uk) in time for next month's edition!



Join POP
(Proud of Prior)



COMMUNITY LITTER PICK

NEW YEAR FRIDAY TIDY

**Meet at the sheds by the play park
on the High Street**

Friday 9th January
10.30pm

Adult Hi Vis Jackets provided
You participate at your own risk
Your Safety is YOUR responsibility

Please bring your own gloves
All other equipment provided

**Come and join friends and
neighbours on this tidy up**

**Look forward to seeing
the results!**



POEM OF THE MONTH

The Magi

Now as at all times I can see in the mind's eye,
In their stiff, painted clothes, the pale unsatisfied ones
Appear and disappear in the blue depths of the sky
With all their ancient faces like rain-beaten stones,
And all their helms of silver hovering side by side,
And all their eyes still fixed, hoping to find once more,
Being by Calvary's turbulence unsatisfied,
The uncontrollable mystery on the bestial floor.

W B Yeats

I've always felt that, at his best, Yeats has few rivals for resonant last lines. That said, his poetry can often be, frankly, weird, leaving the reader feeling, "That was awe-inspiring, but I've no idea what it meant." It's rather how his *Magi* are feeling about their epiphany and what followed thirty-odd years later. Less well known than Eliot's *Journey of the Magi*, which pictures a very human old man reflecting on an arduous but transcendent and life-transforming journey undertaken in youth, Yeats's poem gives us Magi as undifferentiated, immortal cosmic witnesses, who might be a painted icon come to life. Aware, now, of how the story ends, baffled and disappointed, they return to its beginning, yearning to rediscover that moment of transcendence in the stable in Bethlehem.

Andrew Grant

SAVE THE DATE

FRIDAY 20th FEBRUARY
COFFEE MORNING

in aid of
ARTHUR RANK HOSPICE

at
41, CAGE HILL, SWAFFHAM PRIOR
10 till 12 midday.

Julie's Recipes - Veganuary

Roasted cauliflower dhal

1 large cauliflower, cut into bite size pieces

3 tbsp vegetable oil

1 large onion, thinly sliced

3 garlic cloves, thinly sliced

1 tbsp black mustard seeds

1 tbsp cumin seeds

30g fresh ginger, grated

400g tin chopped tomatoes

250g split red split lentils

Bunch of fresh coriander leaves, roughly chopped

Greek yoghurt and lemon wedges to serve

Serves 4

1. Heat the oven to 220c. Toss the cauliflower in 2 tbsp of the oil, season well and put in a single layer in a large roasting tin. Roast for 15-20 minutes until golden brown and tender. Set aside.

2. Meanwhile in a large saute pan, add the rest of the oil and cook the onion for 5 minutes and then add the garlic for a further 3 minutes until the onion is soft. Add the mustard and cumin seeds and ginger. Cook for 2 minutes, then add the tinned tomatoes, stir well, cook for a few minutes, then add the lentils and 500ml of water. Bring to a simmer and cook, stirring often for 20-25 minutes until the lentils soften and break down and create a thick dhal.

3. Season well, then stir in the roasted cauliflower and half the chopped coriander. Place in serving bowl, scatter with the remaining coriander. Serve with Greek yoghurt and lemon wedges on the side.

Vegan coconut curry

2 tbsp light olive oil or coconut oil

2x 280g packs of firm tofu, cut into chunks and dried on kitchen paper

4 large spring onions, white and green parts sliced separately

4 garlic cloves, crushed

1-2 chillies. Sliced

1 tbsp cumin seeds, bashed

10 fresh or dried curry leaves

400ml half-fat coconut milk

175g frozen peas

200g tender stem broccoli

1 tbsp tamarind paste plus extra to drizzle

Serves 4

1. Heat the oil in a heavy based pan over a medium heat, add the tofu and brown for 2-3 minutes on each side until golden. Remove from the pan and set aside.
 2. Add the chopped white parts of the spring onion, the garlic, half the chillies and all the cumin seeds to the pan, mix well and fry for 1 minute, then add the curry leaves and fry for a further minute.
 3. Add the coconut and 200ml water or veg stock, then simmer over a low heat for 10 minutes, being careful not to split the coconut milk. Add back the tofu and broccoli for 5 minutes until the broccoli is cooked through. Stir in the tamarind paste and cook for another 1-2 minutes.
- Serve sprinkled with the green parts of the spring onion and a extra drizzle of tamarind paste.

WISHING YOU ALL A HAPPY & HEALTHY NEW YEAR!

Stories and Smiles

Our Swaffham Prior term-time toddler group for under 5's and their carers.

Mrs Rowley, (Nursery Teacher) and Charlotte (local childminder), would love to welcome you and children in your care to be a part of our community group. Pop by for stories, crafts, play and social time at Swaffham Prior school. Whether you are a parent, grandparent, nanny, childminder, foster carer or any one who cares for a child on a Thursday, we would love to see you there!

Session Dates:

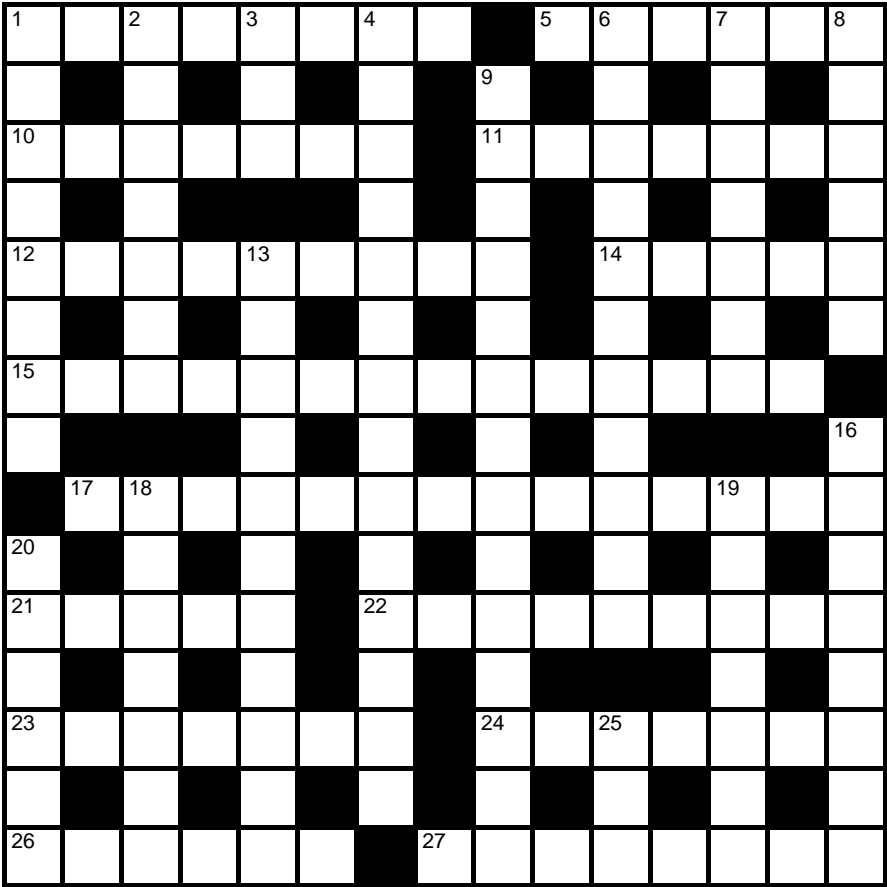
15th January, 22nd January, 29th January,
5th February, 12th February



Crossword Number 234

Compiled by NIBOR

This month’s puzzle is a simple cryptic crossword. Send your answers to the editors by 18th January 2026. 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

- 1 Old beaver and puppy with northerner hanging around youth centre (3,5)
- 5 There is nothing on the counter but the pressure is the same (6)
- 10 Asked in at six and Edward followed (7)
- 11 Allowance for French hotel (7)
- 12 Rudest elf is upset and confused (9)
- 14 Trinket found in Dutch armour (5)
- 15 composing rum in cocktail is inflexible (14)
- 17 Crow and rooster at first scribble and then do nothing (4-1-6-3)
- 21 Police point to thicket (5)
- 22 CIA scouts blended sound effects (9)
- 23 Strict auctioneers get muddled and lose coin (7)
- 24 Heavy metal originates in rock, in dance, in underground music (7)
- 26 Firstborn found in greenfield estate (6)
- 27 Stray may find street paper with gel blend (8)
- 7 Country with computer science in mind (7)
- 8 Men are ordered to change title (6)
- 9 impolite side go mad to see medical scientist (14)
- 13 Layers around me keep watches perhaps (11)
- 16 Soup for prisoner found by the river (8)
- 18 Pop out to mix dose but is confronted (7)
- 19 Melting iced gin concoction (2-5)
- 20 Scratch then discard key (6)
- 25 Initially I ran away to find terrorists (3)

Solution to crossword no. 233

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

Down

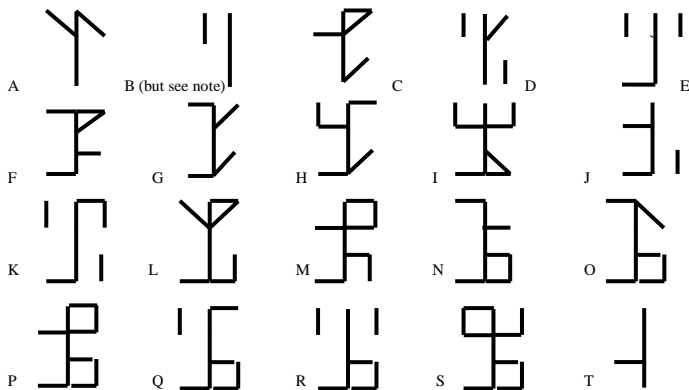
- 1 Hairdresser is firm if loud note reaches old city (8)
- 2 Campsite originally built in very open unspoiled African country (7)
- 3 Pet that may act strangely (3)
- 4 Guard sauntered out to find students (14)
- 6 Granules thrown to the French may be seen on the beach (11)




We congratulate Robert Nunn, the winner of last month's competition, who will receive a prize certificate from the editors.


NEW YEAR QUIZ



This Quiz is all about years gone by. There are 20 clues to events that happened in them, and then 20 symbols from a once widely used number system that is very convenient for recording years and very easy to translate (when you know how!) Match the clues to the symbols and send your answers to the editors (editors@swaffham-crier.co.uk) for the 22nd FEBRUARY.



1. Hercule's sidekick fighting crime?
2. This maiden came to grief after she left Cobh
3. This one did too, when she tried to stop a racehorse
4. But this one took London by storm—see her now on at the Embankment with her  daughters
5. Apparently, there was time to win the bowls match and settle Philip's lot
6. He drew inspiration from a web-designer and won a bread toasting contest
7. A great deal to see at Lincoln Castle
8. The Eagles have landed, and make themselves at home for CCCC years
9. Big holy bigwigs convention —sounds like it must be nice here!
10. And another one, but this time in a desirable Yorkshire seaside location
11. Black THURSDAY? How greatly depressing
12. Which roofer was in charge of this rising section?
13. Around the world in eighty-nine minutes — a first!
14. When Mary and Cyriac finally got it together
15. Agreeably trouble-free Friday? That's good.
16. It did come home, but it was Pickles who found it
17. Derby winner turns tail and legs it back home—what a charlie!
18. The Year of the Bug—although in the end, it didn't show up
19. They sailed the ocean to find plenty of cod, but they had forgotten their fishing rods and half of them died
20. It rocketed along at  mph, but a middling  uphill in the rain

Note: Symbol B might be  instead—this date is uncertain.

ADVENT BY CANDLELIGHT 2025

When one considers what might qualify as the Seven Wonders of Swaffham Prior, it quickly becomes clear how spoilt we are: the school, the pub, the village hall, the windmill, the *Swaffham Crier* – all of these Wonders before we even get to the churches! Depending on what else one might wish to include among the Wonders, we may choose to consider the churches either collectively or separately, but either way, there are two of them, and what magnificent adornments to the village they are.

Not only are they beautiful in themselves, they are also useful: for church services, of course, but also for art exhibitions, social events, bell-ringing, and concerts. One annual event in particular makes excellent use of both churches, and it appeals to everyone – whether they are religious, agnostic, or atheist – who loves beautiful music and wonderful literature. That event is Advent by Candlelight, and its accessible and entertaining blend of songs and poetry makes a perfect start to the festive season.

This year's concert, with music from Cambridge Voices under the baton of its new director, Tristan Latchford, and readings selected by Andrew Grant,

had the theme of peace and reconciliation. Given that Advent 2025 began on St Andrew's day, there was a strong Scottish flavour, and there was even a world premiere to enjoy.

The musical programme was built on another famous blending of songs and readings, the very first service of Nine Lessons and Carols at King's College, Cambridge, which was held in 1918, at a time when the need for peace and reconciliation was also felt keenly. The music director at King's then was Arthur Henry Mann, and it is a pleasing coincidence that Mann (who directed the music at King's from 1876 to 1929) began his musical career as a chorister at Norwich Cathedral, where the Grants' grandson is a chorister today (and, we may hope, perhaps a future Cambridge Voice).

The concert began with an entertaining introduction from Andrew Grant before James and Caroline Matheson, reading alternate verses, gave us the sonorous pleasure of Auden's 'O Where Are You Going'. After the audience sang 'Hills of the North Rejoice', Andrew Grant treated us to a poignant reading of Hardy's 'The Darkling Thrush', perfectly evoking Hardy's wonder at the aged bird's hope 'whereof he knew and I was unaware.'

The choir now sang a beautiful rendition of what Emily Dickinson's editor titled '254' but is better and more pleasingly known as 'Hope is the Thing with Feathers', set by Aditya Sharma. Swaffham Prior's own Edwin Muir was celebrated next with his 'The Combat', alternate stanzas again read by James and Caroline Matheson, now joined by Anne Clayton and Brenda Wilson, all splendid. This was followed by another hymn for all to sing, 'On Jordan's Bank', after which Tristan Latchford



(he speaks as well as sings!) subtly evoked 'The Kingdom' by R. S. Thomas. This gentle call to faith includes the touching prospect of 'mirrors in which the blind look / at themselves and love looks at them / back.'

Next, a modern Scottish song, Hamish Henderson's 'Freedom, Come All Ye', set to an older pipe tune and given with broad vowels and great gusto by the choir. The ever-splendid Hilary Grant then treated us to Liz Lochhead's 'Spoken Song', a clever poem that expresses human doubts while encouraging a leap of faith, exemplified by the three kings who, whether they truly witnessed a miracle or were just 'Wise Men on a fool's errand,' certainly demonstrated their conviction in 'a brave as well as a cold coming.' This evocation of 'the light's soul and spirit' was a perfect herald for the next musical item, the world premiere of Jennifer Bastable's beautiful setting of the Third Collect of Evensong ('Lighten Our Darkness'). Jennifer was present for the occasion, singing alto in the choir.

We are always lucky to have, all the way from Burwell, Dominic Bowers, who read with thoughtful force Yehuda Amichai's 'A Man in his Life'. The choir's next piece was the gorgeous 'Childing of a Maiden Bright' from the Cowley Carol Book. It was arranged by the Rev. G. H. Palmer, who played a major role in reviving and adapting medieval music for modern use. This piece was featured in the first King's carol service in 1918 but has been heard so rarely since that there is no published recording: a rare treat indeed.

As is traditional, everyone now moved from St Mary's to St Cyriac's. Given that there is no heating in the latter, the second half of the programme was much shorter. It opened with a real blast, however, a superb arrangement by Tristan Latchford of John Henry Hopkins Jr.'s 'We Three Kings'. Ian de Massini's contralto Caspar had to be heard to be believed, and the audience joined in the choruses with verve. Then Robin Mathieson's beguiling Scottish lilt drew us into theologian Richard Bauckham's 'First Light'. Another great musical treat followed with 'The Great O Antiphons' featuring the marvellous Anna Sands as soprano soloist, after which we heard Kate Muscroft deftly navigate a dense rhyme structure to give a gentle and touching reading of the American poet Madeleine L'Engle's 'O Sapientia'.

The final hymn of the evening was a rousing 'O Come, O Come Emmanuel' sung by all and answered by the final poem of the evening, Rowan Williams's 'Advent Calendar' whose closing line 'He will come like child' could not be more fitting. Appropriately, the last item of all was both Scottish and a fond farewell. It was not Burns's 'Auld Lang Syne', however, but rather the traditional song that preceded it in popular usage, 'The Parting Glass', arranged by the American composer and organist, Crys Ambrust. This was the cue to enjoy a few 'parting glasses' of delicious mulled wine back in St. Mary's, along with an amazing array of mince pies produced by a merry band of kind volunteers. Large though the audience was, there was plenty to go round, and the last line of 'The Parting Glass' summarised our experience: 'Good night and joy be with you all.'

Rod Clayton

Ultrafast Broadband in Swaffham Prior

This is the latest in a series of articles in Crier looking forward to the village getting Ultrafast, i.e. Fibre, Broadband. Previously articles have been titled “Broadband coming to Swaffham Prior, Fast but Slowly?” but it now looks like it has actually at last arrived with some houses in Lower End, Greenhead Road and Tothill Road having been connected by Gigaclear.

Not long after they were connected, others in the same parts of the village who were waiting to be connected by Gigaclear received an email saying “*I’m very sorry to advise that following a recent business decision, the build of our fibre network in your area has been halted. As a result, there are no plans to complete the rollout this year—or under our current strategy. We understand this may be disappointing, and we truly appreciate your interest in our services. Any future consideration for your area would fall under what we call a Network Extension plan, which is not something the business is currently pursuing. We are continually reviewing our network coverage, and should anything change in the future, we will be sure to keep you informed.*”. This is similar to the message that those of us not included in their initial roll-out, e.g. on the High Street, had received in response to our queries.

Shortly before this, I had been speaking to someone who was installing fibre-optic cables on behalf of Trooli, another Fibre Broadband provider, and he confirmed that they were including the High Street and most of the rest of the village in their plans. We have since received a leaflet from them inviting expressions of interest, to which we responded and are expecting installation next week. Unlike Gigaclear, Trooli’s business is separated into a part which deals with the infrastructure and a part providing end-user ISP services, much like BT with Openreach and their Broadband ISP service. This provides a choice of ISP and in our case means that we can continue with Zen Internet who we have used for some time and who have provided an excellent service.

Just after Gigaclear had first started looking for expressions of interest in the village, County Broadband had also started looking, in fact we initially thought that they were the same company operating under different names as there had been a period of silence from Gigaclear when County Broadband first got in touch. After about six months, County Broadband stopped responding to queries and we assumed that they had decided not to compete with Gigaclear here even when it became apparent that Gigaclear did not intend to cover anything like the whole village.

Maybe coincidentally, maybe not, County Broadband have just recently been back in touch to say “*We’re writing because we noticed an order pending in our system against your property. You have not paid us anything; you requested an installation of our broadband as soon as our network became available at your property. However, at this stage, we cannot confirm that our network expansion plans will reach you within the next few months. To avoid confusion and allow you to continue getting the best deal from your existing provider, we will cancel this pending order. There’s no need to ring us. If your property becomes less than 90 days away from being able to access the County Broadband network, we’ll get back*

in touch.” – a little late in the day but useful confirmation.

This appears to leave just Trooli offering new Fibre Broadband connections in the village for the timebeing with BT Openreach and Voneus continuing to provide previous generation and hence slower connections based on copper phone lines and radio respectively. Presumably BT Openreach will start to offer fibre at some point, in fact it is not clear why they are not already doing so as one of their engineers told me that they already have fibre in their underground ducts round here.

James Matheson

Swaffham Prior Heat Network

January 2026 Update



Hello everyone, and a very Happy New Year.

Construction update

We are currently working on ‘Tranche 5’ of our connections and program, with a total of 105 properties now connected to the heat network.

In early January, our team will begin external connection works on Mill Hill Road to connect additional properties. These works will take place tentatively from December 5 to December 12, between 8 AM and 4 PM. Excavated areas will be covered with steel plates to ensure safe access. As always, we will do our best to minimize disruption during the construction.

Internal works scheduled after winter

As we previously shared, to avoid disruption to heat supplies during the coldest months for those properties we are connecting, internal works inside homes are planned from March onwards. We will share the planned programme directly with the residents we’re connecting, so you know what to expect and when.

Customer protections: Heat Trust and Ofgem

Heat Trust has provided voluntary consumer protections for many heat networks. Nationally, heat networks are moving into a new legal regulatory regime, and Ofgem (the energy regulator for gas and electricity) has been appointed as the new regulator for heat networks in Great Britain.

From 27 January 2026, Ofgem’s rules will be introduced in phases. This is expected to strengthen standards around customer service, clear information and billing, complaints and redress, and overall network performance. Heat Trust will continue to provide support during a transition period to make sure consumer protection remain in place while regulation transfers to Ofgem

Billing Information

Bills for the period of October to December 2025 will be sent by the end of January 2026. Did you know that we offer a direct debit option to help manage bill payments and prevent any late payments that could result in penalties. Please email our team if you are interested in setting up a direct debit.

Heat Tariff Update – from 1 January 2026

From 1 January 2026, new heat tariffs will apply for connected customers. Variable charges have been reduced now compared to the previous year. Per unit variable charges for the year will be 7.24p + 5% VAT.

The standing charges will be:

Band 1 (50–99 m²): £316 + 5% VAT

Band 2 (100–149 m²): £392 + 5% VAT

Band 3 (150–199 m²): £474 + 5% VAT

Band 4 (>199 m²): £558 + 5% VAT

Our tariff information is published on the County Council website.

Customer Feedback:

“The fact that heat comes from a field across the road from my house is still completely magical to me! I love the fact that we are not supporting Putin, Lukashenko or other oil economies, and that our carbon footprint is so much reduced. It has been disruptive in the village - but people are generally stoical. Well done to all involved; we are so lucky to be Swaffham Prior pioneers!” – Mill Hill resident

Thank you very much for your feedback and support!

We'd love to hear from more customers about their heating and hot water experience. You can share your feedback using this QR code



Get in Touch or Register Your Interest

If you would like to know more about the Heat Network and the process, please contact us through contact details below. We can meet at the Village Hall, at your home, or via video call.

To be considered for next year's connection batch, please submit the Expression of Interest form using this QR code

For Questions, issues, or Open House sign-up, please contact.

Email: heatingswaffhamprior@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

Customer Service (General Queries) : 0345 0455210
24/7 Helpline for connected customers: 01782 390777



BON MOT NUMBER 166

“Now there are more overweight people in America than average-weight people. So overweight people are now average ... which means, you have met your New Year's resolution.”

Jay Leno (1950 -)

Swaffham Prior Bell Ringers - January 2026 Update

Another year of bell ringing has flown by with much progress being made by all the learners (four of whom have now been ringing for 3 years) but so much more to practice and improve on.

We rounded off the last Tuesday meeting of the year with a beautifully decorated bell tower and some festive drinks and snacks. Some sharp-eared villagers may have heard us trying something different: twinkle twinkle little star was a whole new challenge, ringing a bell just once turns out to be very difficult!

After a quick break for refreshments, we moved on to handbell ringing. The handbells sound lovely but much concentration and co-ordination is needed to chime two bells in the right place to keep the Christmas tunes going.

With many regulars away, a small band rang before the Christmas Day service. However, there was a full turnout to welcome in 2026; perhaps the celebratory champagne at midnight was an extra attraction.

We are looking forward to another busy year of ringing in 2026 and hopefully ticking off some more skills in the Learning the Ropes teaching scheme. We really appreciate the expertise and enthusiasm of our Tower Captain Gareth Davies and Steeple Keeper John Chalmers, and also the support of ringers from Swaffham Bulbeck and Bottisham towers who regularly join our weekly practices to provide the much-needed structure that helps us to improve our own ringing.



Mandy Kingsmill/Janet Willmott

Shine on Holy Star

Shine on Holy Star, was a delightful concert at Reach village hall in December- a performance of nine carols and readings for Christmas. The carols were all new, light and lyrical, written and performed by Jeremy Harmer, who introduced, led and played his guitar the entire evening - joyously supported by the Ad Hoc Strings and Mnatobi, a choral quartet from Cambridge. All string and choral arrangements were by Phil Toms, who was in the audience.

Interleaved with the carols were readings and poetry, one of which was the Journey of the Magi, by T.S.Eliot. They tied the performance together perfectly.

The audience loved it. Let's hope there is another evening like this next year.

Margaret Joyce

Swaffham Prior Village Gardeners



Programme for 2026



Tues 17 th February	Barry Gayton	Weird and Wonderful Plants
Tues 17 th March	Katherine Mann	Restoring a Manor Garden
Tues 21 st April	Jim Paine	Secret Life of Plants (tbc)
Sat 16 th May	Coach Trip	The Savill Garden, Windsor
Tues 19 th May	Liz Wright	How Good is the Good Life?
Tues 16 th June	Garden Visit	Histon Manor Gardens
Tues 18 th August	Garden Visit	Selwyn College Gardens
Tues 15 th Sept	Gwenda Kydd	Chemical Warfare (and Co-operation) in your Garden
Tues 20 th October	AGM	Quiz night and AGM
Tues 17 th November	Kit Holland	Fruit Tree Pruning

The Swaffhams' WI

We are very lucky to be living in such a beautiful part of the country and the villages look especially pretty at Christmas with the sparkling lights and the stunning window decorations. With this in mind and excited to be starting the Christmas countdown, we celebrated Christmas at our December WI meeting in true Swaffhams' WI style. The evening was full of fun, warmth and friendship. The supper was delicious and we were treated to some very indulgent desserts. As well as the excellent company, we were cerebrally challenged by an anagram quiz and then one of Gill's fabulous picture quizzes! The table decorations were stunning and Lynda had the difficult job of judging the one she felt deserved the little silver cup. Thanks to all our lovely members of The Swaffhams' WI for making the evening such a delicious and happy success.

Our thoughts are now turning to 2026 and following on from a fabulous year of talks and activities in 2025, we thought it would be a good idea to share our programme for 2026. Please find our programme tucked into this edition of The Crier. We welcome new members at any stage of the year and do please come for a visit to one of our meetings to see what we are about. We meet once a month on the third Monday evening at 7:30pm in Swaffham Prior Village Hall. We welcome members from the local area and beyond and currently have members from Swaffham Bulbeck, Swaffham Prior, Reach, Lode, Upware, Burwell and Cambridge. It would be lovely to see you there.

Kate Muscroft

katemuscroft@gmail.com



The Reading Group Reads....

Days Of Wonder

by Keith Stuart

Hannah has a life-limiting heart condition and she and Tom, her father, need to come to terms with life as it is.

Tom runs a provincial theatre and, with help from his team of volunteers, he has sought to bring magic into Hannah's life since diagnosis at the age of five. As she is now on the cusp of adulthood, Hannah is not so keen to keep up the tradition. She is also aware that there may not be much time left for her. She worries how Tom will manage without her and sets him up on a dating app. The members are close-knit and effectively a second, albeit quirky, surrogate family to Hannah, caring and understanding.

Hannah and Tom take turns in narrating the story and through their eyes we meet all those involved in the theatre who have been a quirky surrogate family for Hannah, we meet Hannah's school friends, the couple that run a comic/graphic novel shop, Hannah's first love and finally we meet her mum. And throughout, everything is coloured by the uncertainty of the future which is redeemed by those 'Days of Wonder'.

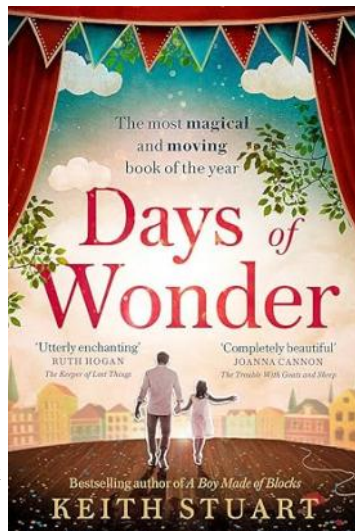
Not everyone enjoyed this book as much as I did. Some found Tom irritatingly hapless and flawed, but I found him convincing as a father, struggling to do his best and not always being successful.

Roz Chalmers

Forthcoming: (6pm at 5 Lower End, first Wednesday in month)

January 7: Review of last year's books

February 7: 1984 by George Orwell



Red2Green Events and Local Events in January

Cambridge City Council would like everybody to have access to sport and physical activity, regardless of any disability or additional needs they might have.

Here are the upcoming dates for Red2Green and other local events that you might be interested in:

National Autistic Society Carers Support Group –

Tuesday 6th January 2026, 7:30pm-9.30pm

National Autistic Cambridge Club - Sun 11th January 2026, 7:30pm-9:30pm

Newmarket Town Council Tea Dance - Fri 23rd January 2026, 1pm-3:30pm

National Autistic Cambridge Club - Sun 25th January 2026, 7:30pm-9:30pm

Ely Social – The Royal Standard – Fri 30th January 2026 7pm



Mothers' Union

Anglesey Group meeting on 20th November 2025

Our November meeting was joined by the Burwell Mother's Union. We shared an Advent Service, led by Revd Max Osbourne, where we considered the meaning of Advent and the preparations we have in the run up to Christmas. Max advised us not to rush into Christmas, but to spend time being ready; a time to consider others and how we might think about our faith. During Advent everyone has the opportunity to look at how we live our lives with God, 'opening a window to our soul' – or to shut that window firmly. Advent is a time for reflection and anticipation as we wait for the birth of Jesus and his second coming, with the word Advent coming from the Latin *adventus*, meaning 'arrival'. We know that many will be counting down the days with their little bits of chocolate from their Advent Calendars!

December is also a time when the Mother's Union prays particularly for 'RISE UP against domestic violence', and Max shared a prayer and some thoughts around this subject too.

We finished our meeting with some refreshments and another opportunity to raise funds with some more Bring and Buy.

Our next meeting is on Thursday 15th January, this time at 10.30 am in Lode Church where we will share the Communion Service and stay for a soup lunch.

Let us know if you would like to join us.

Alison Martin

News from Bottisham Medical Practice

Patients' Participation Group

New appointment booking system

Thank you for your patience as the Practice develops the new booking system. Appointment booking is now open online via Accurx triage system from 8am Monday to Friday. Each appointment request is reviewed by a GP and you will be contacted with the most appropriate appointment. This improves access to our appointments and makes the system safer as all requests are reviewed by clinicians.

Saving our time (which means more appointments for you!)

A small plea from the staff: if you request an appointment please have your phone on to receive a call or answer a text. We have a significant number each day who request an appointment and then don't respond to calls or texts to book the requested appointment. This is wasting a lot of time! We are responding rapidly to appointment requests often within minutes if it is urgent and then are left in limbo if there is no answer.

Bowel cancer screening: if you receive a screening kit in the post please complete it. This detects possible signs of bowel cancer before you have symptoms. We have on average 5 patients a week who do not complete the screening, these

then have to be processed by a GP wasting clinical time.

Missed Appointments: For full month of October 87appts DNA equates to 13.67hrs of clinical time wasted.

Christmas and New Year Holidays. Please remember to ensure you order your repeat prescriptions in good time and enough to cover you over this period.

Basic Life Support: Following our CPR training session for patients, do you know where the defibrillators are located in your village?

Next Meeting: 29th January 2026 when Dr Keith will speak. 6.30pm at the surgery. If you are interested in joining our meetings please contact our chairman Steve Gilson s.j.gilson@btinternet.com.. Or contact reception.

Charlotte Cane MP

As we welcome 2026, it's a pleasure to wish you all a very happy New Year. This moment of renewal always reminds me how fortunate we are to live in such a vibrant and caring part of the country. Across Ely and East Cambridgeshire, our communities show extraordinary kindness and resilience — supporting neighbours, celebrating local life, and stepping up when challenges arise. Whether catching up with residents at winter events or speaking with you on the doorstep, I'm continually encouraged by the ideas and experiences you share with me.



In Parliament, I recently led a debate on the long-awaited upgrade to Ely Junction. This is a rail project with clear economic, environmental, and transport benefits: increasing rail capacity, reducing delays, and removing tens of thousands of lorry journeys from our roads each year. Although the Autumn Budget again failed to provide funding, Ministers have now agreed to meet with me and key stakeholders. I will continue pressing for the clarity and investment our region deserves.

I was also disappointed that the Chancellor again refused to introduce a 5% VAT cut for hospitality. At a recent meeting of my Publicans' Network — hosted by the brilliant team at the Black Horse in Rampton — landlords shared their concerns about rising costs and the lack of targeted support. Pubs are at the heart of rural life, and I will keep campaigning for policies that allow them to thrive.

It was equally valuable to meet local farmers for a festive cuppa, where we discussed issues ranging from the impact of the Family Farm Tax and the closure of the Fruit & Veg Aid Scheme to ensuring farmers receive a fair price from supermarkets. We also talked about improving health outcomes for those working in agriculture and the importance of helping children learn where their food comes from. Our farmers are the backbone of our food security and rural economy, and I'll keep fighting for fair treatment and meaningful support in Parliament.

Engaging with young people has been another highlight this winter — from hosting Student Question Time for local schools, hosted by Soham Village College, to joining the Dullingham and Stetchworth Scouts for lively debates during the

recent UK Parliament Week. Their insight and enthusiasm give me great optimism for the future of our democracy.

Since being elected, I've now closed over 10,000 cases where residents have come to me for help or advice. Whether at surgeries, community events, or on the doorstep, I'm always here to listen and support you.

Wishing you all a peaceful start to 2026,

Charlotte

P.S. This is just a snippet – to keep up with everything I'm doing, sign up to my newsletter at bit.ly/newsfromcharlotte.

Charlotte Cane, MP for Ely & East Cambridgeshire
charlotte.cane.mp@parliament.uk | 020 7362 1601

 <p>East Cambridgeshire District Council www.eastcambs.gov.uk</p>	<p>From our District Councillors Charlotte Cane & John Trapp</p>
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Operational Services Committee resolved to approve the draft Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) to address Vehicle Related Anti-Social Behaviour (e.g. racing around car parks, or down public roads) and to approve the proposals for public consultation on the draft PSPO.

Licencing Committee agreed an increase in taxi fares of approximately 20%, following a consultation which was broadly supported by the trade, and recognising the increase in vehicle costs.

Full Council agreed to develop a new Empty Homes Strategy by July 2026, replacing the 2006 and 2022 documents, with clear targets, resourcing, and an annual public report. This strategy is to reduce long-term empty homes and return them into use, and to list the full range of fiscal levers, including council tax premium rates, published local exemptions and deferrals for active renovation.



Local Government Reorganisation

The Council voted for Option B (with East Cambs joining Fenland, Huntingdonshire and Peterborough) for the Local Government Re-organisation and this proposal and the business case will be submitted to the Minister for Local Government.

Many parishes did not want to be aligned with this Option, and have voted for Option A (with East Cambs joining Cambridge City and South Cambs), despite the exhortations of the Leader.

The Lib Dem and Independent group is sending an alternative letter to the Minister, supporting Option A. *(Should you like to see the letter, please contact*

one of us.)

The Government will be deciding on which options to pursue for the public consultation in the Spring.

Finance and Assets Committee

Approval was given to the transfer of some ECDC assets (car park, Public Conveniences, an adjoining green space) to Littleport for a nominal sum of £1 with a restrictive covenant on its future use. It was felt more appropriate to transfer these assets to the local community, rather than hand them over to the new unitary authority that may want to sell them to the highest bidder.

Other ECDC assets could similarly be transferred to Parish Councils, and we shall be compiling a list of assets in your parish that the PC might consider taking over from the District Council.

An additional CIL contribution of £190,000 was given to a community project that had gone over budget by £570,000.

The Government has withdrawn match funding for Neighbourhood Plans, and it was agreed that ECDC would fund the creation or renewal of Neighbourhood Plans by match funding of up to £5000 to Parishes.

Surgery

Thursday 15 January 2026 from half past six to half past seven o'clock at Reach Village Hall, followed by socialising at the Dyke's End in the same village.

Cllrs Charlotte Cane MP (charlotte.cane@eastcambs.gov.uk) and John Trapp (john.trapp@eastcambs.gov.uk)



Charlotte Cane MP playing the part of 'Madam Speaker' at a recent visit to the 1st Dullingham and Stetchworth Scouts during UK Parliament Week. The discussions



ADVENT WINDOWS 2026

Photography
Andrew Noyes

Notes from the Parish Council December Meeting

The Parish Council meeting of the 11th December was chaired by Cllr Covill and attended by 6 parish councillors and 3 members of the public.

Reports

Cambridge County Council – Cllr Yannifer Malinowski attended and gave a verbal report. Cllr Malinowski reported:

Submitting an objection to the Kingsway Solar Farm proposal

She is due to attend a Fire Authorities meeting next Tuesday. The Fire Chiefs are active on the subject of Battery Storage fire risk and it is now included on their risk management plan.

Confirmed that compulsory purchase of land for the solar panels had taken place.

Cllr Greenfield asked if there was anything further to be done to support option A in the Local Government Reorganisation; Cllr Malinowski said that the decision was now in the hands of ministers and the results should be announced around March 2026.

Cllr Kent-Phillips asked for confirmation that Huntingdonshire had supported an option already rejected; Cllr Malinowski said yes, Hunts were not engaging in the process.

East Cambs District Council. Report received and circulated by email. Cllrs Charlotte Cane and John Trapp were unable to attend and sent their apologies.

Parish Councillors' Reports

Cllr Greenfield. Heating scheme – the yellow lines on the High Street that were the Heating Scheme's responsibility have been repainted.

Cllr Greenfield. A-B1102 Group – The rollout of Real Time Information screens for bus stops has begun, with one at Lode, one at Bottisham and two in Burwell. The next batch will be installed in early 2026.

Cllr Greenfield. Kingsway Solar – attended a meeting on the 18th November, where it was agreed to set up a steering group to ensure that decisions and responses etc could be produced in a timely manner. The terms of reference are being written and will be given to Parish Councils for agreement. The next meeting will take place in January via Zoom.

Cllr Covill had reported 11 potholes on Station Road

Clerk's Report

The Clerk had attended an Assertion 10 webinar, which emphasised the importance of councillors using Council owned emails for Council business for the protection of and retention of data and so that it is clear in what capacity a person is emailing (e.g. as a parish councillor instead of as a private individual).

The Clerk also noted that Cllr Lambert and the clerk intended to walk the village looking for overgrown plants prior to writing to households in the new year. The Clerk suggested that a letter be written to the Crier prior to this to inform the parish what is taking place and why, and asking people to please check for plants overgrowing paths that run beside their property

Matters arising from previous minutes.

Black Drove. Restricting vehicular access would require a TTRO.

The electrician will replace the light in the phone box – no confirmed date yet.

The Clerk had spoken to the school and to Schools Out regarding play equipment left out in the playground. Both are aware of concerns raised.

Cllr Kent-Phillips had spoken to Janet Wilmott who is keen to organise a litter pick of the High Street with the school.

Correspondence.

Email regarding Cambridge City and Cambridge South draft Greater Cambridge Local Plan consultation – for information. Noted.

Email from East Cambs regarding support for Option B in Local Government reorganization. Noted.

Email from East Cambs regarding Avian Flu outbreak. Noted.

Email regarding the Greenway proposal to include Swaffhams Bulbeck and Prior. Cllr Greenfield noted that the PC had been copied into correspondence from a parishioner regarding the Greenway and felt that the PCs position had been misrepresented by others; the PC had concerns regarding the safety of the proposed use of the sliproad for the Greenway and the closure of the slipway to traffic, but were not generally hostile to the Greenway itself.

Email regarding ECDC rural settlement list consultation. Noted.

Planning applications.

25/01297/FUL External works to house, including new porch, rebuilding existing dormer, infilling doorway with new window, raising existing window level to kitchen with additional new window opening, new chimney pot to flues, underpinning corner of building and re-roofing existing kitchen/dining area roof (retaining existing rafters within new). Baldwin Manor 80 High Street Swaffham Prior Cambridge CB25 0LD.

25/01248/LBC Works to carry out internal and external repairs and refurbishments. Baldwin Manor, 80 High Street, Swaffham Prior, Cambridge, CB25 0LD

25/01237/FUL New driveway connecting to existing drive. Baldwin Manor, 80 High Street, Swaffham Prior, Cambridge, CB25 0LD

The PC responded to planning applications a) b) and c) saying Swaffham Prior Parish Council would strongly support the idea that this historic building be brought up to modern standards for a single, family dwelling; seconded SG, passed unanimously.

Approved:

25/01065/FUL Erection of fencing to enclose a vegetable garden and garden pond. Goodwin Manor Farmhouse, 1 Station Road, Swaffham Prior, CB25 0LG. Noted.

Electricity bills in September and October 2025.

The Clerk explained that due to changes in metered billing, the July-Sept electricity bill for 2024 had been first recredited to the PC in September 2025, then

charged again at the same rate in October 2025. The electricity suppliers had not forewarned the PC that this would happen, leading to confusion. Noted.

Budget and precept for 2026-27.

It was agreed that the budget for 2026-7 will increase by 8.5% from £17500, to £19,000.00, to cover potential increases in the electricity bill, general inflation and a pay increase for the Clerk for 2026-27. This is an increase of £4.55 per household for the year.

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

The next monthly Parish Council meeting will be on Thursday, 8th January 2026 starting at 7.30pm at the Village Hall. All are welcome to attend.

FREECYCLE



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

As a reminder, everything is offered for free and nothing is expected in return. Please let me know if you would like anything repeating in subsequent issues.

Offers

Lindsey Shaw-Miller, 07773 027155

IKEA 'Portis' clothes rail, dark bronze, very good condition, with generous shoe rack and side-hooks.

WOCA hardwax oil for wooden floors and work surfaces. Most of a large tin. Comes with an almost-full bottle of Method wood floor cleaner. We no longer have wooden floors, please do use if you can.

Two and a half rolls of Arthouse wallpaper, blue drawings on white background of herring gulls, fishing boats and boathouses, very attractive.

Thule 380L Kamei roofbox (with keys), Volvo roof bars (that fit a rail). Jun 07980 423210

Wants

Lift wanted/offered from Swaffham Bulbeck to Addenbrookes (usually Tues, Weds, Fri, to arrive at Addenbrookes 7am and leaving 8pm). Please contact Jane 07800 934585 for more information.

Digital projector & large screen needed for a course presentation by BALA at Bottisham Sports & Social Club. We would also consider a loan - the projector and screen are needed on Thursday mornings for September to December 2027 (actual dates to be confirmed). Contact Robert on 07785 110434

Shed to use as bike shelter for the family bikes. Ideally 7'x6' but other ideas/solutions welcome. Thanks Chris 07480 178089.

News from St Mary's Church

A brief roundup of things going on at St Mary's, Swaffham Prior in the autumn and winter of 2025...

Harvest Supper in October was a huge success – a wonderful feast and a sociable and active evening which raised c£360 to be divided between our two Tanzanian charities and a total of £700 for St Mary's. Thank you to Mandy for organising and the team catering for and running the event.



Quiz Night was again sold out! Fiendish questions, a jacket potato and chilli supper, and a raffle raised £500 for St Mary's. Thank you to Jenny and Lynn, quizmaster Andrew, and the catering and kitchen team.

Funds raised will go towards paying for major **organ works**. Mice had nibbled the keys, and electrical work was needed, so a complete overhaul took place. Works have taken place to repair the flint **churchyard walls**. One section was patched, but the back wall needs a major rebuild which will be carried out in the spring. Railings have been painted and general clearing work conducted by the Community Payback team.

Remembrance Sunday was well supported, especially by all sections of the 1st Swaffham Prior Scouts. Over 100 people attended and around £320 was sent to the Royal British Legion.

Our **Christmas Café and market** was a very festive event raising £170 for Red2Green and £330 for St Mary's.

Advent Windows have appeared at homes, businesses and public venues throughout the village.

The **Advent by Candlelight** concert in the two churches, raised money for Emmaus.

St Mary's hosted the primary school's **Carol Service**.

Christingle was well supported by families, and the Beavers and Cubs performed an excellent Nativity. Children made Christingle oranges and donations will go to the Children's Society.

As I write, we are preparing for the **Village Carols by Candlelight** service featuring church and school choirs, and **Christmas Holy Communion** on Christmas morning at 10am.

This is a busy time of year, but we have services on second and fourth Sundays every month at 10.30am and 6pm on fifth Sundays once a quarter – all details in the Crier.

Coming up in 2026 we have: **Pancake Party** at half term, **Lent Lunches**, **Spuds in Buckets**, **Year of Quizzing**, **Quiz Night**, **Village Feast**, **Strawberry Teas**, **Dog Show**, **Harvest Supper**, **Quiz Night**, **Christmas Café**...

And in 2027 we celebrate 125 years since the restoration of St Mary's with events including: **Songs of Praise**, **Afternoon Teas**, **history event**.

You are welcome to any of our services or events, and we are always delighted to welcome volunteers in any capacity – cleaning, key rota, coffee rota, flower arranging, grounds maintenance etc. We would love to find someone willing to help

out as **Verger** – please be in touch to find out more.

We are delighted to support other charities: Mara, Rehema, Red2Green, Emmaus, Royal British Legion and The Children's Society this year – but need to bolster our own funds too in order to maintain and run the church building and host services. If you are in a position to support financially in anyway please be in touch.

Thank you for all of your support – and hope to see you at a service or social event in 2026.

Dee Noyes,

Services in January 2026

Sunday 4 January – Second Sunday of Christmas

9am Online service on Zoom
10.30am Holy Communion, Bottisham

Wednesday 7 January

8pm CbyC, a contemplative service, online on Zoom

Sunday 11 January – Baptism of Christ

9am Online service on Zoom
Holy Communion, Quay
10.30am Holy Communion (BCP), Swaffham Prior

Sunday 18 January – Second Sunday of Epiphany

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

Sunday 25 January – Third Sunday of Epiphany

9am Online service on Zoom
Holy Communion (BCP), Swaffham Bulbeck
10.30am Holy Communion, Swaffham Prior

Each Thursday

10.30am Holy Communion, Lode (not 1 January)

Rev'd Canon Max Osborne max9@btinternet.com; 01223 481187 (Rest day: Tuesday)

Churchwardens: Bottisham: bottisham@angleseygroupparishes.co.uk; 01223 604019

Lode: lode@angleseygroupparishes.co.uk; 01223 811222

Quay: quay@angleseygroupparishes.co.uk; 01223 812652

Swaffham Bulbeck: bulbeck@angleseygroupparishes.co.uk; 01223 812525; 01223 811501

Swaffham Prior: prior@angleseygroupparishes.co.uk; 01638 743937

For general enquiries: admin@angleseygroupparishes.co.uk;

churchwardens@angleseygroupparishes.co.uk

Facebook: www.facebook.com/angleseychurches;

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

Dates for Your Diary January 2026

Mon	5	Peaceful Art Group, 1.30—3.30pm, St James Ch, Lode [9] & 12th
Tue	6	POP New Year Tidy, 10.30am, Play Park on Hight St [6]
Wed	7	Bookclub, 5 Lower End, 6pm [21]
Thu	8	PC Meeting, 7.30pm, VH [29]
Fri	9	Peaceful Art Group, 1.30—3.30pm, St James Ch, Lode [9] & 16th and 23rd
Wed	14	Crier Copy Deadline
Thu	15	Stories and Smiles, 10.45—11.30am, School [9] - & every Thursday Mothers' Union, 10.30am, Lode Church [22] Cllrs Surgery, 6.30—7.30pm, Reach VH, [25]
Mon	19	WI, 7.30pm, VH [20]

Numbers in square brackets indicate page number of an accompanying article

Club	Contact	Tel/Email	Date	Time	Place
FOSPS	Becky Wilkes	07827 318351	2 nd Mon of Term	8pm	Village School
Beavers, Cubs and Scouts	Tim Doe	gs1@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 st Wed of month	6:00pm	Variable
Village Gardeners	Fiona Geraghty	07785 971853	3 rd Tues of month	8:00pm	Village Hall
WI	Kate Muscroft Kaye Lewsinski	07752011308 kayejanelew@ gmail.com	3 rd Mon of month	7.30 pm	Village Hall
Bell Ringers®	Gareth Davies	07886 323686 swaffhamprior bells@gmail.com	Every Tuesday	7.30-9.00pm	St Cyriac's