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# NOTES FROM THE EDITOR

MARCH 2026

Welcome to our March edition. This year seems to be marching on at a pace.

In this edition, there is a request from the Parish council for new members, and it's worth giving it some thought.

Parish councillors play a rare and important role: they help shape the place we all live. Councils influence planning comments, green spaces, footpaths, play areas, community halls, traffic concerns, and the small but meaningful bits of local infrastructure people notice every day. They act as a bridge between residents and higher authorities, protect local character and heritage, support events, and secure grants for projects that wouldn't happen otherwise.

Having elected representatives also means decisions about shared spaces and public money are made openly and with the community's voice at the centre. Even small actions—improving a path, supporting a youth group, fixing signage—can make a real difference.

If you'd like to help shape local priorities and support what makes our area special, standing as a parish councillor is a rewarding way to do it. You can find out more in the article inside and on the Parish Council website.

There is news about the village Bowling Club inside, which is going to see changes and with it, opportunities.

A date for your diary: this year's Walkers Cup will be held on Sunday 13th September. After last year's nail biting draw, it would be wonderful to see everyone come together and go for the win. Even more importantly, every step supports the vital work of St Elizabeth Hospice. It's a fantastic day out and a chance to make a real difference, so do join in if you can. There'll be more information in future editions.



Finally, don't forget — our quarterly community quiz is coming up on **Friday, 13th March**. The date might be unlucky for some, but I'm hoping my team can finally turn our luck around and claim a win! It's always a lively, welcoming evening with plenty of laughs, so come along, bring some friends, and join in the fun. More information inside.

# DISTRICT COUNCILLORS' REPORT

FEBRUARY 2026

## **New grant funding**

A new Community Nature Recovery Grant has been launched, which offers up to £50k for projects that protect and expand wildlife corridors and habitats. This could include tree planting, wildflower meadow creation, or other environmental initiatives to safeguard natural spaces for biodiversity and for future generations.

One application can be made per project, per year, and the deadline for applications for the first round of funding is Monday, 16 March. To find out more details or submit an application, visit the Mid Suffolk District Council community funding page. <https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/community-funding>

## **Norwich to Tilbury power lines**

The date for the next drop-in surgery was brought forward from 12th February to 5th February to allow time for any questions ahead of the first week of hearings.

So the next session will now be on Thursday, 5th March at 11 am via Teams and you can join using this link:

Join the meeting now

Meeting ID: 342 374 307 126 43

Passcode: fd3iJ2FW

## **Sewage sludge regulation**

The council passed a resolution last month calling for updated and tighter regulation over the content of sewage sludge, often used by farmers. Currently, many "forever chemicals" (PFAS), microplastics, pharmaceuticals and hormone-disrupting substances are not regulated or routinely tested for, and some chemical producers and companies are not prevented from offloading commercial effluent into sewage sludge. The resolution also called for support for farmers to find alternatives to replace the sludge.

## **City of Culture**

The council also passed a resolution in January supporting the application by Ipswich for a City of Culture award, which, if won, would take effect in 2029. This award would bring funding of £10m to support the year long culture programme to the benefit not only of Ipswich but of all Suffolk residents.

## **Rural support grant**

This grant is still open for applications. There are two parts to the grant, one providing funding for the upgrade of shopfronts in villages and the other offering support for communities who want to try and save threatened village facilities, such as shops and pubs, with the aim of operating them as social enterprises. For more information, go to <https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/community-funding>.

## Locality Awards

Our locality award grants for this year are now fully taken up. The next round of grants will begin in April this year.

## Other funding for community projects

Details of Mid Suffolk Council's community funding can be found at: [www.midsuffolk.gov.uk](http://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk) – click on the 'Access community funding' button.

For advice or further information, please email the grants team at: [BMSDCgrants@babberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk](mailto:BMSDCgrants@babberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk)

## Customer access point

Anyone who prefers not to use the website links in this report can obtain information and help from the Mid Suffolk Customer Access Point at 54 Ipswich Street in Stowmarket. The Access Point will, of course, also give help and support on any other aspect of Council services.

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Cllr Agnes Watson  
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# COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

MARCH 2026

## **Local elections in May 2026 have been postponed.**

At the full council meeting on Monday, 12 January, a debate was held in the morning about the resource implications of an election in May on the delivery of Local Government Reorganisation in Suffolk. The Conservative administration unanimously voted down an amendment proposed by my group that the council was in favour of the elections going ahead, although we spoke passionately about the importance of Suffolk voters getting to have their say. A Cabinet meeting was held following the council debate, where the administration voted unanimously to write to the government outlining capacity concerns that might be felt if elections were to go ahead. On 22 January, the government announced that the elections in Suffolk, and in 28 other councils around the country, including those scheduled for Ipswich Borough, would not take place in May this year.

The elections had already been postponed once, in May 2025, so this second postponement means county councillors will be serving a seven-year term instead of four years. Reform UK have challenged the decision to postpone the May 2026 elections. If that challenge is unsuccessful, as part of the Local Government Reorganisation process, elections to unitary councils are due to be held in the county from April 2028.

## **Council budget 2026-27**

At Cabinet on Tuesday, 27 January, the budget for the 2026-27 financial year was presented for approval. The council is planning to raise council tax by the maximum 4.99% this year, reflecting the serious financial concerns it is facing. The expenditure for 2026-27 is forecast to exceed income by £5.9m, and the council will need to draw that from its reserves to balance the books. It is also planning savings of £46.5m across the council to make ends meet and is predicting a budget 'gap' of £23.4m for 2027-28 and £24.6m by 2028-29, which it will need to fund by savings.

Cost pressures for the council include care purchasing in adult social care, high-cost social care placements for children and young people and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). Regarding SEND, the council holds a 'negative reserve', a debt of education funding under the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) that the government allows it to hold until 31 March 2028. This is a national issue rather than just relating to Suffolk County Council, but the council will not be able to repay it if the government calls it in. By the end of 2027-28, it is forecast to be -£252.3m. Although the council is allowed to hold the debt, it is spending millions on interest costs to service the debt; for 2027-28, the cost of that will be £8.9m. There are also concerns about the amount of money Local Government Reorganisation will cost the council. The total cost is currently estimated as £47.8m overall, but will be divided between all Suffolk councils.

A full day's council meeting will be held on 12 February to debate the budget and agree on the level of increase in council tax.

## **Net Zero Carbon Report**

On Tuesday, 27 January Cabinet considered the annual report on the council's efforts to reach net zero carbon by 2030. In view of Local Government Reorganisation and Suffolk County Council not existing past April 2028, the target has been adjusted to a 63% reduction in emissions by 2027-28 and will only include scopes of emissions that the council is in direct control of – that is, excluding things like its supply chain and staff commuting to work. In addition, to reflect the financial position of the council, any measures taken by the council towards this will now have to create an in-year financial saving: this means that the financial benefit from it must be greater than the cost. The work undertaken so far for the net zero programme has saved the council many thousands of pounds. For example, changes to the heating controls in Endeavour House should reduce energy costs by £30k each year, and a new car park solar array and battery storage at Beacon House is expected to save more than £50k a year. The council is also involved in a heat network project in Ipswich to heat large buildings using energy from the River Gipping.

## **Suffolk Roads Rated Red by UK Government**

The government recently released RAG (Red, Amber, Green) ratings for each county based on how effectively they use the government's highways maintenance funding. Suffolk's road maintenance was rated as Red, the worst category. This has struck a chord with residents in the county, who have been clear that they agree and want the quality of Suffolk's roads to improve. Suffolk County Council's administration, however, has denied that the rating is accurate, saying that overall the condition of Suffolk's roads are rated Amber, with the overall Red rating being arrived at because the Department for Transport did not include in its assessment £10m of highways funding that it brought forward from the 2025-26 financial year and invested early in a resurfacing programme in 2024-25. The council has met with the Department for Transport to press for the Suffolk rating to be raised to Amber, pointing out that Department for Transport data shows that only 3% of the county's A roads are in poor condition, which is better than the England average. In addition, in December, the council received £2.9m from the Department for Transport's Incentive Fund, which rewards authorities with a record of good performance in highway maintenance.

## **New 20mph Policy**

At Cabinet on Friday, 9 January, a new 20mph speed limit policy was approved with the aim of making the process for communities to apply for a 20mph speed limit easier and more streamlined. From now on, any application for a new 20mph limit in an area where recorded average traffic speeds are 28mph and under is likely to be approved by the council. The local county councillor must also be in favour of the change, and there should be majority support from residents. My group pointed out that the new requirement to prove majority support for the new speed limit was likely to make the process more onerous for town and parish councils rather than less. The council states that local engagement needs to be carried out in the community, for example, a survey or consultation of residents living on the roads/in the area.

Any new 20mph limits will also still need local funding to be in place, unless the scheme aligns with a council programme as part of the Local Transport Plan. The new policy is based on recording speeds as follows:

- Below 28mph – likely to be accepted, with a speed limit sign only, although signs warning that a 20mph zone is ahead may be required
- Between 28 - 32mph - unlikely to be acceptable with signing alone. Gateway signing and traffic calming throughout the area may be required
- Above 32mph - Unlikely to be acceptable without extensive traffic calming measures such as road humps, plus night-time lighting. It would also be subject to a Road Safety Audit.

### **Gull Wing Bridge, Lowestoft**

The Scrutiny Committee will be reviewing the performance of the new bridge on 10 February, including overall construction cost and cost of repaying the loan, maintenance cost, traffic benefits and local economic benefits.

### **Local Issues**

Gipping Road flooding – I have checked the area just along from Columbyne Close, and there has been a small amount of standing water on the road, but not sufficient to hinder traffic.

A1120/B1115 proposed roundabout – I have again asked SCC Highways for a detailed design drawing and reminded them of the need to meet with the parish council to discuss taking down the Stowupland sign and plinth, and to ensure it is rebuilt as an exact replica at no cost to the parish council. I am awaiting a further response from SCC to the application for a delay in the construction of the S278 works.

A1120 in front of The Crown - SCC Highways have provided a detailed drawing of the proposal to provide a footway in front of The Crown and have requested approval of the design. This would not commit the parish council to providing full funding.

Footpaths on High School Land – I am encouraging officers to allocate staff time to review the existing Public Rights of Way on the High School site and bring forward suggested amendments and/or clear existing routes.

Keith Welham  
Keith.Welham@suffolk.gov.uk  
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# PARISH COUNCIL REPORT

FEBRUARY 2026



**Introduction:** The Parish Council convened for the February meeting on 5 February 2026 in the URC meeting room. There were 3 members of the public in attendance, alongside 6 Parish Councillors. Councillor Pearson represented Mid Suffolk District Council (MSDC), and Suffolk County Councillor (SCC), Keith Welham, were also present. Councillor Donna Bridges chaired the meeting and welcomed all to the meeting, on what was a bad night for the weather.

**Attendance and Apologies:** Apologies were received from 1 Parish Councillor, and District Councillor Watson.

**Matters of Report:** The clerk reviewed the ongoing work around the village. Footpath 32 will shortly be completed by the contractor, and a quote is being obtained to repaint the Thorney Green bus shelter. The green committee would look at the area of the green near Birch Close to review whether further earthworks are required. The clerk had inspected the cemetery since the last meeting and reported that no debris was present.

**Public Forum:** A resident reported that a number of street name signs were in need of repair; these would be identified and reported to MSDC for repairs to be carried out. A resident mentioned a number of footpath signs to be replaced on the village green, which are to be reported to SCC. Other footpath signs are ongoing with SCC.

**County Councillor's Report Cllr Keith Welham:** Cllr Welham went through the report, which is available in this edition of Telstar. There were no questions.

**Mid Suffolk District Councillor's report:** Cllr Pearson went through the report; there were no questions, and a copy of the report is available in this edition of Telstar.

**Planning Matters:** Cllr Ray Studd reported there were no new plans to look at this month, and MSDC planning had granted planning permission for Upland House, Saxham St, to carry out ongoing repairs and install front drive gates.

**Finance matters:** The clerk went through the accounts, and it was agreed to pay the bills for February 2026.

**Internal Auditor:** It was agreed to use the same firm that had completed the audit last year.

**Telstar Grant:** Supporting paperwork had been received from the Telstar Committee in respect of a grant for 2026/2027 for £2995. After the discussion, the grant was agreed upon. Telstar is our village magazine, and the Management Committee who run the magazine are all volunteers.

**Clerk's Report:** The clerk had heard from MSDC that no one had requested an election in the village, in regard to the most recent advertised council vacancy. MSDC had confirmed we now had 4 vacancies on the Parish Council, which we needed to fill and could now co-opt members - if there were volunteers from residents. Cllrs were asked to ask any residents they knew that might have an interest in joining the Council and help make a difference, and help plan for the future of the village. The clerk had advertised the vacancies on village notice boards, the village website and the Stowupland Facebook page. It was agreed there was not much more we could do at this stage.

**Neighbourhood Plan Update:** Cllr Bridges updated the meeting on a recent meeting with our advisors on the plans to update our current plan. The meeting had been positive, and we are moving forward. It was highlighted that, as more advanced work takes place, we need to look for volunteers to help with the plan, as we would have to distribute surveys to residents, with updates and questionnaires. However, it is important for the village to update its current plans to keep pace with the ever-changing world of government planning regulations. If the plan is completed, we will have a say in the way the future of the village is shaped.

**Biodiversity and Wildflower:** Cllrs had a copy of the report. It had previously been agreed that the group would order the seeds from MSDC to plant on the top of the recently dug ditches on the green, for planting in March. Repairs to the wildlife information board in the churchyard are being completed.

**Website:** The clerk had received a report on the updates needed to our current website. After discussion, it was agreed that the clerk would look for a further report on this area as the costs were high. This would be looked at again next month.

**Cllr's comments:** Cllr Voden reported that he had attended the Stowmarket Mayor's charity fundraising function in the John Peel Centre on behalf of the Parish Council. It was well attended, and the funds raised would be donated to the mayor's chosen charities for this year. He had been contacted regarding flooding in the ditches on the green, as there had been considerable rainfall in the past month. Council were aware of the situation and advised that they couldn't act on the weather conditions.

Cllr Easter reported that, sadly, the Stowupland Bowls Club had ceased operating as a village organisation. The effect on the area was still to be assessed, as this had all happened very recently. The bowls club have a long history of events in the village, and Cllrs expressed their regret that there was now no one to run the club as a viable organisation.

### **Correspondence:**

There was a request to run this year's garage sale on 7 June, which was granted.

A request and signed petition from residents of Saxham St, in respect of speeding in the area, was received. Cllrs offered their support to the issue, but the clerk would go back to the correspondent as she needed to be advised that this is a matter for SCC Highways Dept to action and it had been sent to us and MSDC instead. Cllr Welham said that he had corresponded with the writer.

A resident from Trinity Meadows had written about the placement of grit bins in Oxlip Way due to the recent snow, making it difficult at the entrance. They had volunteered to help with the gritting should this happen again. The clerk had replied that the estate had not yet been adopted by the SCC Highways dept.

Our MP, Aidrian Ramsey, is running an event in Diss on the 13th March 2026 on biodiversity matters, which was passed on to the Biodiversity group to see if any of their members would like to attend.

Several updates from the Suffolk Association of Local Councils and also updates and progress on the National Grid project.

### **Future Meetings:**

Parish Council 5 March 2026 at 7 30pm in the URC meeting room, all welcome to attend;

Wildflower and Biodiversity Group on the 30 March at 7.30 in the URC meeting room. Anyone with an interest in environmental and wildlife is invited to come along

There was no further business; Cllr Bridges closed the meeting at 20.18hrs.

# PARISH COUNCIL CHAIR REPORT

FEBRUARY 2026



Stowupland Parish Council would like to say Happy New Year to all the residents of Stowupland. As we pass into a new year, there will be new projects and works to take place around the village and with them come problems, complaints and hard work. As we all know, rising costs on everything are hitting everyone, and the parish council is no different. We need volunteers to help around the village. We already have some people who litter pick regularly and people who rotate the speed indicator devices, and we are very grateful for their hard work and support, but we need more residents willing to help on various projects/events. We have also worked on the old graves within the cemetery to remove weeds and tidy, and we will be holding more volunteer sessions for work like this. If you can spare some time and volunteer, please contact the Parish Clerk. Any help that people give us cuts the cost of paying for these jobs to be completed, which in effect will help us keep the council tax precept lower.

We are also in need of new Parish Councillors, so if you would like more details, then please contact either the Parish Clerk or one of the councillors for a chat. Our details are in the middle of the Telstar. We also said goodbye to Sandy, who has written reports for the Telstar for a long time. We have asked for a new volunteer, but no one has come forward, which is disappointing as we now have far more residents within the village than previously. Please come forward if you are interested, but obviously, all the minutes from our meetings are available on our website, Stowupland Parish Council, for everyone to read. Details about becoming a councillor can be found via the QR code.

Look forward to seeing you around the village.

Donna Bridges  
Stowupland Parish Council Chair



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# COUNTRYSIDE RAMBLER

BRIAN WARD

We are nearly at the end of February, and winter is slipping by; before we know it, spring will be upon us with longer days and more sunshine, I hope. I love dry sunny days at this time of year, but I despair when I look out of the window early in the morning and it is cloudy and raining. It never gets truly light on those days, and I think even the wildlife look fed up, with the smaller birds all fluffed up and bedraggled, the hares in their forms with ears flattened will only move if disturbed or have the urge to feed.

March is the time a few of our resident birds commence nesting. Probably one of the earliest is the crossbill, a bird that requires pine and spruce seeds as a staple diet, so is found in pine plantations most of the time. It requires the cones to be ripe to extract the seeds, so will be continually moving from one plantation to another in order to feed. The name crossbill, as its name suggests, has a unique crossed bill and has evolved in this way to enable it to extract the cone seeds with ease. It will very often snip a whole cone from the twig and grip it parrot-like with its foot and then commence to extract the seeds. Due to this very dry diet they need to drink regularly and can be found near water sources and even puddles. I normally spot these birds in the Thetford/Brandon area at various locations. The heron is another early nesting bird that nests in trees or high bushes in a loose colony. Their young are quite prehistoric looking as they peer over the nest to investigate you, as they as they will often do, and they are very vocal as the adults arrive to feed them. In the garden robins are probably one of our early nesting birds; look out for adults carrying fine grass or moss. They will often nest in ivy growing up a fence or shed. They will lay five eggs and may have two or three broods. The rooks will be attending to their nests in the local rookery although, from below, the nests appear to look like a pile of twigs high in the canopy. It is quite a well-constructed nest, lined with fine grasses and mud with a deep cup to contain the four or five eggs, which are normally blueish/green in colour covered with shades of brown blotches.



Late February and March is the time for early spring flowers; snowdrops and aconites are probably the first to emerge, along with primroses. The wood anemone will soon follow, along with celandines. The first true blossom in the hedgerow is cherry plum; this can be the native white blossom or the cultivated pink form. The flower of the hazel is very early, and I have found them in January and February, but they can be tricky to spot as they are normally further down the twigs than the catkins, and they are also tiny.

Going back to our feathered friends; I don't know if it is just me, but my bird feeders have not had the quantity of birds visit them this winter as winters gone by. I have spoken to various people and had various responses from them; some have not noticed any difference, and others have had similar findings as I have.

I think we are all looking forward to spring arriving, but in the meantime keep your wellies at the ready for a ramble in the countryside and inhale that clean, fresh air.

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# RAMBLINGS FROM THE POTTING SHED

PAULA WILLMOT

So, we've had a lot of rain. My first warning this month is that, if working on grass, try to use a board to avoid soil compaction. I'm having building work done, so I have given over any soil improving and aeration until the works are finished. Soon the sunshine will have some heat in it, I promise! I have been dreaming vicariously about spring and summer by watching Monty Don's Rhineland Gardens. A fabulous look at the gardens along the Rhine and its associated countries. I am also looking forward to Gardeners World returning and how the team tackle the real time effects of climate change going forward. Personally, I have added 2 new water butts to the garden and have invested in a 50-metre soaker hose in order to better manage the summer rains, if and when they come. Although that feels jolly ironic at the moment!

## **March jobs in the Meadow garden are as follows:**

- Some major rearranging is happening in my borders, and I am thinning and moving all the clumps of foxgloves and hollyhocks, as they have self-sown in clumps.
- Complete any final rose pruning, get rid of those cross branches and whips, and they will reward you with stronger blooms.
- Select more potatoes for chitting. If you have a small space, consider the potato sacks or large pots, always very rewarding.
- Put up new nest boxes to help the birds, especially if there is a lack of trees and hedgerows; you'll be surprised what takes up residence.
- The RSPB are encouraging us not to use bird feeders due to the transmission of so many diseases between garden birds. It's an individual choice, but I am leaving seeds on fence posts and tying fat balls to branches.
- Continue to chop back those ornamental grasses to make way for new shoots. The frosts made them look stunning, but the new growth is ready to come through.
- Catch any ivy before it starts really taking hold in unwanted places, especially between fence panels and gutters.
- My favourite job at this time of year is buying dahlia tubers for late summer colour. Start by planting the tubers in a pot indoors.

On social media this month, we are finally being advised to prune hydrangeas. Those seed heads have looked incredible in the frost, but need to be pruned to make way for the new growth, which you should already be able to see. By the time you receive this copy of the Telstar, some of our local gardens will be opening with snowdrop and daffodil displays. Taking time out to visit for a couple of hours is really good for the soul and fills us with hope of the warmth of spring. Anglesey Abbey, just along the A14, never fails to disappoint, and there is a nice café too; you know my love of a cheese scone, although Nareys is still in pole position! The Abbey has 98 acres of landscaped grounds, so plenty to see. Well, that's all for this month; enjoy the first glimmers of warmth and the longer evenings in your plots and Happy Gardening!



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## STOWUPLAND COLLECTION POINT

If any individual, school, church or business would like to become a collection point for the Eco Future Group in Stowupland please contact Stowmarket Eco Future Group directly. Contact details can be found in their article.

Please don't leave your recycling on the editor's doorstep as I'm unable to help with this.

*Ed.*

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# STOWMARKET ECO FUTURE GROUP



<https://stowmarketecofuturegroup.co.uk>  
Email: [stowmarketecofuture@gmail.com](mailto:stowmarketecofuture@gmail.com)

**Collection of hard to recycle items - see update below**

**The next market stall collection is Thursday 26th March. We also collect items at the \*Repair Café - 2nd Sunday of the month (8th March) at Red Gables 2 - 4 pm plus REPAIR CAFÉ [stowrepaircafe@gmail.com](mailto:stowrepaircafe@gmail.com)**

UPDATE ON ITEMS COLLECTED:

**Blister packs**, Coffee pods – plastic and metallic (not mixed), Pet food pouches (empty, clean & dry), Fruit nets, Tetra packs (empty, clean & flattened), Bicycle Inner Tubes, Spectacles and cases, empty make-up containers, Laptops and tablets with their charger (for parts), Batteries. (Please now take your soft plastics to Supermarket recycling points, thanks. )

BLISTER PACKS – A reminder: Some of the folk visiting our market stall were unaware that we can now take (empty) blister packs again in small quantities.

We were delighted to have a planned visit from the Eco Club at Centre Academy East Anglia in January. A good size group of young people came to see how the recycling stall works and to hear about the work being done by the Eco Future group. They are enthusiastic about taking action and encouraging environmentally friendly changes at school and at home with their families. One of the questions they asked me was why I got involved. My answer was because of my nephews. They are now in their teens and will just be leaving school around 2030 – the “deadline” for avoiding irreversible climate change. I can see them asking me, “If you knew about this, why didn’t you do anything?” and I want to be able to say to them that I have done all I can to make sure they have a habitable world to live in and enjoy seeing all the same beautiful things as me. I now have a one-year-old granddaughter, and the question is even more relevant.

I had an interesting conversation with a friend about “grown-up questions” (in that context, it was about deciding whether or not to know if a person carried the gene for an illness). It is scary, but sometimes it is best to know. Climate change is also a grown-up question. A very important government report was quietly released in January, whilst all the fuss about Greenland was occupying the news. (details below). The information in it is serious – it relates to food production and national security as the climate changes. The question again is whether or not you want to know. Scary, but better to know? To know is hard, but it is also to be able to face the difficulty, to take steps to avoid it and to take action to prepare for it. Our group offers encouragement and community to those who have decided to face reality and take action to counteract it and prepare for it.

Report: *Nature security assessment on global biodiversity loss, ecosystem collapse and national security. Available on the GOV.UK website*

*Stella Davis, Member of Stowmarket Eco Future Group since 2020*

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**My council tax bill is due in March, and I'm dreading it as it seems to rise every year. My income hasn't increased, but everything else costs more, leaving very little left over. I'm worried about how I'll cope if my payments go up again.**

Many people are feeling the same pressure as bills increase. You're not alone, and importantly, support is available.

Some people are entitled to council tax discounts depending on their circumstances. Your bill may already include an automatic reduction, or you can contact your local council to check if you qualify.

If you're the only adult living in your home, you should receive a 25% single person discount. When councils calculate how many people live in a property, certain people are not counted. These are known as "disregarded people" and include under-18s, student nurses, apprentices, and others. You can find the full list on the government website: [www.gov.uk/council-tax/who-has-to-pay](http://www.gov.uk/council-tax/who-has-to-pay).

If someone has recently moved out, it's important to tell your council, as this could change your eligibility. Any discount you're entitled to can be backdated to the date they moved out, even if you inform the council later.

If you're on a low income, you may qualify for a Council Tax Reduction. This applies whether you're working or receiving benefits, although having other adults living with you can affect how much support you get. Only one person in the household needs to apply. The council will assess your income and circumstances and issue an updated bill if you're eligible. You can apply via [www.gov.uk/apply-for-council-tax-discount](http://www.gov.uk/apply-for-council-tax-discount).

Extra support may also be available if you've reached State Pension age. The rules differ depending on whether you or your partner receive certain benefits such as Universal Credit, income-related ESA or pension credits. Details are available at [www.gov.uk/state-pension-age](http://www.gov.uk/state-pension-age).

Even if none of these apply, councils can sometimes reduce or cancel council tax through a discretionary reduction if you're experiencing severe financial hardship. This is available even if your immigration status restricts access to public funds.

Council tax is a priority bill, so it's important to stay in contact with your council if you're struggling. Citizens Advice can help you explore your options and find a way forward, without judgement, and alongside you every step of the way.

Citizens Advice Mid Suffolk can provide in depth advice on this issue and much more, including debt, finances, employment, benefits and family/relationships. You can contact them by phone on 01449 676060, visit in person at Milton House, 5 Milton Road South, Stowmarket IP14 1EZ or use the contact form at [midsuffolkcab.org.uk/contact-us](http://midsuffolkcab.org.uk/contact-us). Opening hours are Monday-Thursday 9.30am – 3.30pm and Friday 9.30am – 12.30pm.

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# **STOWUPLAND WILDFLOWER AND BIODIVERSITY GROUP**

## **Neighbourhood Plan, Identifying Green Spaces**

The parish council have asked for suggestions for areas around the village that should be recorded in the Neighbourhood Plan as areas that must be retained as green spaces if Stowupland is to retain its village appearance. This should at least include the open spaces separating Trinity Meadows homes from Gipping Lane and A1120, open space in front of Oak Meadows and the B1115, the skylark meadow, Thradstones meadow, hedgerow between Devon Road and B1115, the three areas at the junction of Trinity Walk and Gipping Road, the junction between the A1120 and Rendall Lane (outside Stowupland Hall). The grassed area on which the Stowupland sign stands will be reduced when a roundabout is installed, but hopefully, some trees and grassland will be retained. (Current trees have historical significance as marking road layout before the present junction was constructed.) We would like to hear from residents with suggestions for Green Spaces which should be protected.

## **Green Mowing Contract**

As at present it is unknown how it will be best to maintain the appearance and biodiverse nature of the mounds and ditches, for this year it was decided to adopt a wait and see approach. Mounds and ditches will probably need strimming twice a year. Advice will be sought on when best to cut the mounds.

## **Programme for planting the mounds and ditches on The Green.**

We are still awaiting delivery of seeds that were originally promised for September 2025, and a decision on ordering seeds/plants on behalf of the parish council. Mounds and ditches need to be prepared for seeds, etc., to be sown by late Spring. Work has started on The Green. Some ditches are flooding, and it was queried as to whether these are likely to be boggy areas that need different management from the rest of The Green.

## **Update on sensory garden at Barley Close.**

A member of our group has rescued some tender herbs and is caring for them. He has planted spring bulbs and is hoping to visit the garden to check on how they are looking. The herbs will be replanted in the Spring.

## **Biodiversity area on The Green – signage, etc**

The Information board will be installed as soon as possible. Residents will soon be able to see flowers and insects in the meadow. Please take a look.

## **Retreat Pond – trimming and clearing at the back of the pond**

The working party made good progress at opening up the area behind the pond, but it will need regular maintenance. Where the sludge from the bottom of the pond had been deposited in a 'grove area' along the hedgerow patches of reeds have begun to grow. Whether these will survive the summer and whether oxlips and cowslips will thrive, only time will tell.

### **2026 sunflower competition.**

You should have a packet containing a few sunflower seeds with this copy of Telstar. I know some people have already planted seeds which they saved from their sunflower heads last year; I hope we will have an excellent response to the competition, with sunflowers all around the village. We will be looking forward to receiving photos and progress reports throughout the spring and summer; please send them to keithwelham48@aol.com.

To grow your sunflowers, put a couple of seeds into a pot of compost, and place the pots on a sunny windowsill. Make sure they get plenty of water. If both the seeds come up, take out the smaller one with care so that the roots of the remaining plant are not disturbed. When the plants are about 15 cm tall, put them in a warm place outside for a week or so to harden off; then plant them in a sunny spot in the garden. You should provide support with tall bamboo canes pushed into the ground alongside each of your plants. You can feed your plants with tomato feed or similar feed from a garden centre – little and often is best. There will be a prize for the tallest sunflower and a prize for the flower head with the largest diameter.

**Work days** – Our next work day is 13 March.

**Future meetings in 2026** – 30 March, 1 June, 21 September, 23 November.

Contact us: to find out more, please telephone Keith on 01449 673185, email keithwelham48@aol.com or come along and talk to us when we are out and about in the village.



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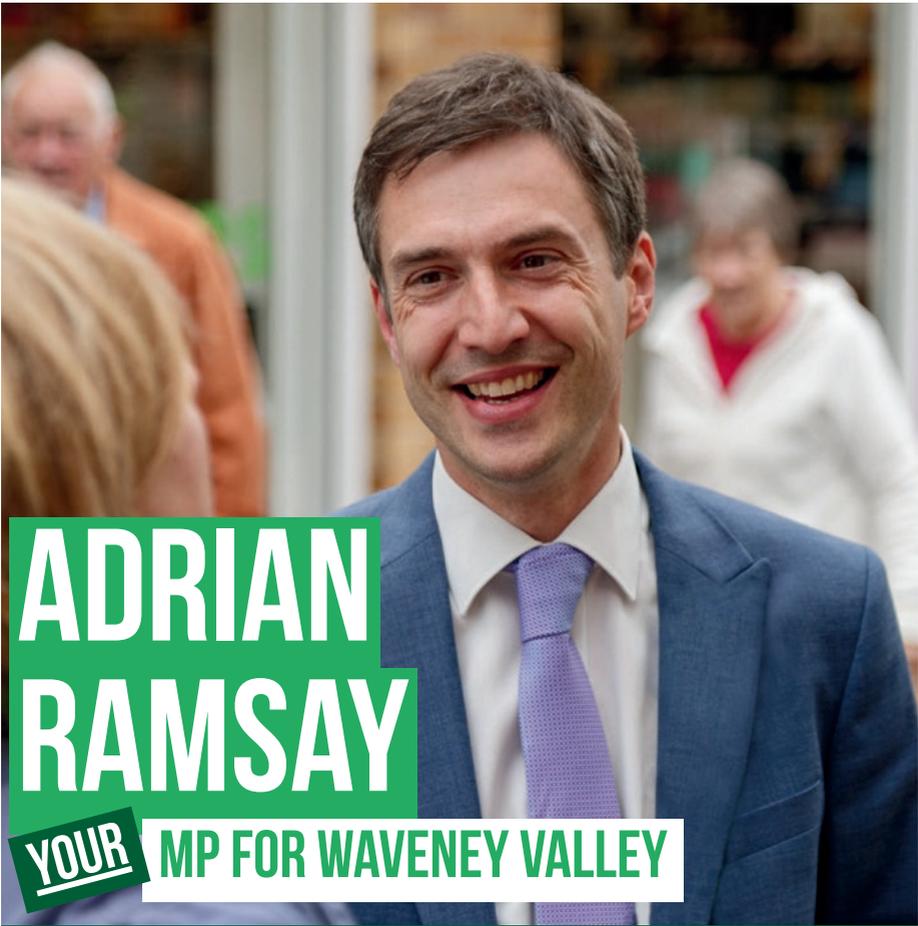
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# ADRIAN RAMSAY

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-  [waveneyvalleyoffice@parliament.uk](mailto:waveneyvalleyoffice@parliament.uk)
-  01379 830200
-  1b Navire House, Mere Street, Diss, IP22 4AG
-  [adrianramsay.org.uk](http://adrianramsay.org.uk)

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# NEWS FROM YOUR MP, ADRIAN RAMSAY



I was pleased to be in Stowupland in January, where I held one of my MP surgeries at Stowupland Village Hall and met with a number of constituents to discuss their concerns and explore how I might help.

I also met with Stowupland County Councillor Keith Welham and District Councillor Janet Pearson (pictured), to discuss a range of local issues.

It was also great to speak with some of you while knocking on doors.

I regularly hold surgeries in different market towns and villages around the constituency. If you would like to book an appointment to meet with me or to contact me about an issue, please do get in touch. My contact details are:

Phone 01379 830 200

Email [waveneyvalleyoffice@parliament.uk](mailto:waveneyvalleyoffice@parliament.uk)

Best wishes, Adrian



## JUBILEE LADIES CHOIR

We took part in a fundraising concert at St Peter's Church in Stowmarket just before Christmas and received so many positive comments. The most common remark, though, was that people didn't know we existed, so we're now on a drive to remedy that!!

As well as our concerts, we are available for fundraisers, weddings, funerals, special birthdays, etc.

Come and join us if you like to sing!! Practice Tuesdays at 7.30 p m at the United Reform Church, well used due to the excellent acoustics. We sing a variety of music, light classics, show tunes, pop and sometimes a little serious stuff.

No auditions, no age barrier, ability to read music helpful but not essential.

Our accompanist and conductor are professionals who guide us to be our best.

Any questions to Di Balaam on 01449 736374 or Avril on 07815 863514

# BOWLS IN STOWUPLAND

As you may be aware, the Bowls Club in Stowupland has folded. The Village Hall Trustees, who own the Bowls Club ground and rented it to the previous club, have decided to start a new club to try and keep this valuable facility going for the benefit of everyone in Stowupland.

As a result, a new “Stowupland Village Hall Bowls Club” is being set up and aims to start playing from Spring this year. Unlike the old club, which put a number of teams together for competing in leagues, the new club will focus on encouraging anyone to try bowls, and if they like it, to play socially. As such, we will be open to all – beginners, good or bad players, young or old, families, couples, individuals or groups of friends. So far, a handful of people have said they want to be part of the new club, and we are looking for more people to come forward and give Bowls a try. Don't worry if you don't know how to play, we will show you. Don't worry if you don't have the equipment; we have some you can borrow. All you need is some flat soled shoes or trainers and a willingness to give it a go.



Why not come along and give it a go as a family, or with a group of friends? We want to encourage as wide a range of people as possible to try Bowls and have fun together, without the pressure of competitions and leagues. We will run some free introductory sessions once we get going, so people can come along and give things a go.

The Bowls facilities include toilets and a pavilion where you can make a cup of tea or coffee. The facilities are a little tired, but the Village Hall is raising money to build a new pavilion, and in the meantime, the facilities are fine to use.



We have not yet decided exactly when the Club will be open, but the plan is to be available at a variety of times to enable people to play if they work or go to school. We also plan to operate both an annual membership scheme and a “pay to play” arrangement for those who don't want to play regularly. The club will be run by volunteers, keeping the costs of playing as low as possible, but we will need to raise some money to pay for watering the grass and maintaining the facilities.

At this stage, we are only seeking expressions of interest from people who might be interested in joining the new club or just playing on a “pay to play” basis. We will add you to our mailing list and let you know when the club gets going, and when and how you can play. There is no commitment to join the club if you go on the mailing list, and you can come off the list at any time if you want.

A small group of volunteers have agreed to run the new club and maintain the green – basically cutting the grass regularly and trimming hedges occasionally – but if you would be willing to help out, then that would be a big help. Again, no pressure, but apparently some people enjoy cutting the grass!! If you don't fancy grass cutting but would like to help with running the club – supervising when we are open and matching new players up with someone to show them the ropes – then please let us know. If you are an experienced Bowls player, even playing at another club, who would be willing to help out running sessions for new bowlers, or if you are willing to help to organise our new club, we would also love to hear from you.

If you are interested in any way in playing bowls or helping us run the new club, please email your name, email address and details of your interest to [stowuplandvillagehall@gmail.com](mailto:stowuplandvillagehall@gmail.com). Or call or text 07857547983 your details if you prefer. We will then let you know what is happening and when we are ready to start Bowling!!

*Stowupland Village Hall Trustees*

# **IMPORTANT CONTACTS**

## **Citizens Advice**

[www.midsuffolkcab.org.uk](http://www.midsuffolkcab.org.uk) - 01449 676060  
or 01449 676280 - 5 Milton Road South,  
Stowmarket, IP14 1EZ

## **Doctor**

Emergency - 999  
NHS Direct - 111  
Combs Ford - 01449 678333  
Stowhealth - 01449 776000

## **Emergency Numbers**

Power Cut - 0800 31 63 105  
Gas Leak - 0800 111 999  
Water Leak - 0800 771 881

## **Good Neighbour Scheme**

HELPLINE: 07591 539621

## **Member of Parliament**

Adrian Ramsay – Green Party  
[WaveneyValleyOffice@parliament.uk](mailto:WaveneyValleyOffice@parliament.uk)  
01379 830200

## **Mid Suffolk District Council**

[www.midsuffolk.gov.uk](http://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk)

MSDC General Contact No. 0300 1234000

Janet Pearson - [janet.pearson@midsuffolk.gov.uk](mailto:janet.pearson@midsuffolk.gov.uk)  
07928 512592

## **Police**

<http://www.suffolk.police.uk/contact-us>  
<https://www.suffolk.police.uk/advice>

**Samaritans** – 116 123

## **Stowupland Village Website**

[www.stowupland.com](http://www.stowupland.com)

## **Parish Council Website**

[www.stowupland.suffolk.cloud](http://www.stowupland.suffolk.cloud)

## **Suffolk County Council**

[www.suffolk.gov.uk](http://www.suffolk.gov.uk) SCC - General No. 0345 606 6067  
Keith Welham - [Keith.Welham@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:Keith.Welham@suffolk.gov.uk)  
01449 673185

## **Schools**

Stowupland High School -  
[www.stowuplandhighschool.co.uk](http://www.stowuplandhighschool.co.uk) - 01449 674827  
Freeman Community Primary School -  
[www.freeman.suffolk.sch.uk](http://www.freeman.suffolk.sch.uk) - 01449 612067

## **Vets**

Cedarwood - 01449 676966  
Stowe Vets - 01449 613130

# DIARY DATES

If you know of any events happening in the village that I may not have picked up on please do get in touch by 7th of the month at [stowman@stowman.plus.com](mailto:stowman@stowman.plus.com) or 07951 037749.

Please note – Diary Dates lists community events in Stowupland, for advertising all commercial events please contact Sally Wray - [adverts.telstar@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:adverts.telstar@hotmail.co.uk)

## MARCH

SUN 1	19:30 Village Hall	Country & Western music club
TUES 3	16:00 Village Hall	Young Carers Club
WED 4	14:00-16:00 Village Hall Car Pk.	Mobile Post Office
WED 4	14:30 various venues	Book Group (contact 01449 672127 for further details)
WED 4	19:30 URC Hall	Local History Group - "Stowupland Schools & Education"
WED 4	12:00 - 13:30 Church Hall	Lent Lunch
THURS 5	19:30 URC Hall	Parish Council meeting
THURS 5	19:00 Village Hall	Short mat bowls
SUN 8	19:30 Village Hall	Country & Western music club
WED 11	14:00-16:00 Village Hall Car Pk.	Mobile Post Office
WED 11	12:00 - 13:30 Church Hall	Lent Lunch
THURS 12	19:00 Village Hall	Short mat bowls
FRI 13	19:30 Village Hall	Community Quiz
SUN 15	10:00 Start near the Beacon	Stowmarket Striders Half Marathon
SUN 15	10:15 Start near Reeds Way	Stowmarket Striders 10K race

SUN 15	19:30 Village Hall	Country & Western music club
TUES 17	09:30 Jubilee Crt. 09:55 Green	Mobile Library
WED 18	10:00 Sports & Social Club	S.O.A.P
WED 18	12:00 - 13:30 Church Hall	Lent Lunch
WED 18	14:00-16:00 Village Hall Car Pk.	Mobile Post Office
THURS 19	19:00 Village Hall	Short mat bowls
SAT 21	10:00 - 12:00 Church Hall	Coffee, Cake and Chat
SUN 22	19:30 Village Hall	Country & Western music club
WED 25	14:00-16:00 Village Hall Car Pk.	Mobile Post Office
WED 25	12:00 - 13:30 Church Hall	Lent Lunch
THURS 26	19:00 Village Hall	Short mat bowls
FRI 27	10:00 - 12:00 URC Chapel	Coffee Morning
FRI 27	19:30 Village Hall	Community Bingo

**LOOKING AHEAD**

**APRIL**

WED 1	14:00-16:00 Village Hall Car Pk.	Mobile Post Office
WED 1	19:30 URC Hall	Local History Group – “Paupers Graveyard Onehouse”
THURS 2	19:00 Village Hall	Short mat bowls
SUN 5	19:30 Village Hall	Country & Western music club
SAT 25	Village Hall	Craft Fair

**JUNE**

SUN 7	Various addresses	Garage and Yard Sale
SAT 13	Playing Field	5-A-Side football tournament
SUN 14	Playing Field	5-A-Side football tournament

Cllr Agnes Watson - agnes.watson@midsuffolk.gov  
07599 828819

**Mobile Library** - 07721 879855

### **Parish Council**

Donna Bridges - Chairman - 07736 348335  
donnabridges@stowuplandpc.co.uk

Terry Easter - 07958906176

Terry.easter@stowuplandpc.co.uk

Laura Johnson - 07826 851030

laurajohnson@stowuplandpc.co.uk

Debra Melhuish -07979125904

debramelhuish@stowuplandpc.co.uk

Paula Murton - 07906 677817

paulamurton@stowuplandpc.co.uk

Hayden Power - 07716 834111

haydenpower@stowuplandpc.co.uk

Ray Studd - 01449 676606

raystudd@stowuplandpc.co.uk

Jerry Voden - 01449 703717

jerryvoden@stowuplandpc.co.uk

Clerk to the Parish Council - Rachel Belcher-Nairn  
parishclerk@stowuplandpc.co.uk - 07704 701095

*Parish Council Minutes of meetings and agendas  
are available on the Parish Council Website  
[www.stowupland.suffolk.cloud](http://www.stowupland.suffolk.cloud)*

### **Village Hall Bookings**

Lisa Tunbridge - Phone - 07515859337  
stowuplandvillagehallbookings@gmail.com

### **Village Clubs**

Book Group - Patricia Hodgkins - 01449 672127

Stowupland Bowls Club - Neil Bridges - 01359 240846

Community Events - Keith Welham - 01449 673185

Country and Western - Pat Murphy - 01449 677405

Local History Group - Jerry Voden - 07951 086383

Short Mat Bowls - Pam Fayers - 07713026696

Sports and Social Club - Mark Dye - 07799 662491

Stowupland Cricket Club -

[www.stowuplandcricketclub.co.uk/](http://www.stowuplandcricketclub.co.uk/)

Stowupland Falcons Football Club -

[stowuplandfalconsfc.co.uk](http://stowuplandfalconsfc.co.uk)

Stowupland Sports Centre -

[info@stowuplandssportscentre.co.uk](mailto:info@stowuplandssportscentre.co.uk) - 01449 672531

Stowupland Wildflower & Biodiversity Group -

Keith Welham - 01449 673185

Stowmarket Wildlife Group - Heather Salmon

-heathersalmon50@gmail.com - 07722 871205

# TRANSPORT

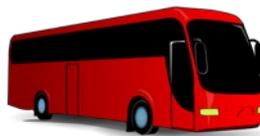
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I like to go on holiday.  
Sometimes I don't go far.  
And, if it isn't miles away,  
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### IMOGEN HOLST ~ A HYMNE TO CHRIST

With vocal selections by Rebecca Clarke, Verdi & Jenkins

Soloists: Natalie Werner, Maria Brown, Andrew O'Connor, Mark Saberton

Violinist: Hannah Mulholland

**Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> March 2026 ~ 7.00 pm**

Tickets: £20.00 ~ U19s FREE

Online: [www.stowmarketchorale.org.uk](http://www.stowmarketchorale.org.uk)

Telephone: 07733 298621

### STOWMARKET UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

Ipswich St, Stowmarket, IP14 1AD



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# **STOWMARKET CHORALE IS CELEBRATING!**

Stowmarket Chorale is celebrating 125 years of music making with an exciting season of choral concerts throughout 2026. Later in the year, there will be an archives exhibition, reflecting on the choir's 125 year journey of musical and cultural development and its contribution to the life of Stowmarket.

Our first performance of this landmark year takes place in Stowmarket United Reformed Church, Ipswich St, on Saturday 28th March at 7 pm.

The choir will sing Brahms's Ein Deutsches Requiem, specially chosen by its members to mark 125 years with an accompanying piano duet, scored by Brahms himself.

Alongside this glorious choral work, the programme includes the monumental Gloria from Dame Ethel Smyth's Mass in D and an emotive Imogen Holst anthem by the Chorale's former President from 1972 to 1984.

Solo songs by our 4 soloists will feature the beautiful meditation 'Peace is...' written by current Stowmarket Chorale President Sir Terry Waite, song settings by Rebecca Clarke with obbligato violin and some Verdi.

## **An evening not to be missed!**

Soloists: Natalie Werner (St Edmundsbury Cathedral); Maria Brown, Andrew O'Connor & Mark Saberton (Royal Opera & Ballet); Violinist Hannah Mulholland

Conductor: William Baldry (Ipswich Minster)

Accompanist: Richard Cook (St Edmundsbury Cathedral)

Pianists: Christopher Weston & Andrew Leach

Advance booking is strongly recommended, so book early to avoid disappointment.

Tickets £20.00 obtainable from [www.stowmarketchorale.org.uk](http://www.stowmarketchorale.org.uk) Free for U19s

For more information & phone ticket sales call 07733 298621

## **STOWUPLAND SOAP**

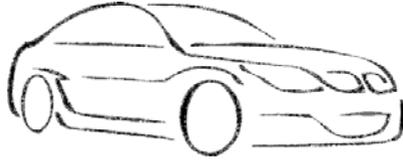
Who could resist homemade cakes, a comforting cup of tea or coffee, a chance to catch up with old friends, and a little entertainment too? If you are over 60 years of age and you've never been to a SOAP Club, this is what you've been missing. Run by the people of Stowupland for the people of Stowupland, the club is proudly supported by the Parish Council and M&M Butchers.

Meetings are held at the Sports & Social Club four times a year.

### **The 2026 dates are:**

Wed 18th March, Wed 17th June, Wed 23rd September, Wed 9th December.





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# STOWUPLAND FALCONS



The start of the 2nd half of the season has proved difficult; it started with snow and ice, and that was followed by constant rain. As I write this article, it is still raining, and the forecast is far from promising, but as I always say, it's a winter game.

But it is not all doom and gloom, our youth teams have managed to play the odd game at Stowupland or reversed the fixture if their opponents have a playable pitch. Most teams have a backlog of fixtures and will be playing well into May! The big problem is that a lot of our teams are involved in cup games that need to be played, so when we can play at home, these will need to be a priority. Our committee and all the managers are working hard to get games played.

The adult 1st team have managed to get games played but all away, starting with a 4-0 away win in the league at Haughley. They went back to Haughley the following week and recorded a 6-0 win in the League Cup. Unfortunately, we then suffered a defeat in the league at Tattingstone, disappointing, but there is still a long way to go. We have dropped to 2nd place behind Cops, who have a point more and a game in hand. But the team responded well the following week with a fine 4-2 win at Trimley to progress in the league cup.

The reserves have not played a game since December, so nothing to say about them.

The Ladies team played one league game in January, a narrow 2-1 defeat to AFC Kesgrave. The ladies are currently 5th in the league with games in hand, so hopefully they can push on and have a good end to the season.

Hopefully, by the time of the next article, we will have played more games, and I can give an update on all our youth teams and how they are doing in their various leagues.

## **March Fixtures (HOME)**

28/03/26	Haughley	2.30 pm	1st Team
07/03/26	Kesgrave	2.30 pm	Reserves
21/03/26	Laxfield	2.30 pm	Reserves
15/03/26	Kesgrave K	2.00 pm	Ladies
22/03/26	AFC Kesgrave	2.00 pm	Ladies
29/03/26	Brantham	2.00 pm	Ladies

All fixtures are subject to change.

In addition, there is boys/mixed football every Saturday morning between 9 am and 12 noon on the school field and on Sunday, our girls' team will be playing

Colin Herbert, President  
Stowupland Falcons FC

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# STOWMARKET U3A

Time on your hands since retiring, looking for a new interest or recently moved into the area? Then joining the Stowmarket U3A could be just what you are looking for to try new skills and make new friends.

For a modest fee, members can enjoy a varied and enjoyable programme of monthly presentations and outings and can choose to join over 30 different interest groups, including: book club, yarn, singing, history, geology, walking, tennis, Spanish conversation, aviation, photography and much more.

The relatively new Art and Galleries group has made several local visits, including Christchurch Mansion, The Munnings Art Museum and The Sainsbury Centre. We recently had a big day out to the Turner/Constable exhibition at Tate Britain. Visiting galleries in a sociable group leads to fun and lively discussions and comparisons.

If you want a leisurely, relaxed stroll with time to photograph and take in your surroundings, then the Stand and Stare walking group fits the bill. This month, the group did not venture far, just to Needham Market, but were rewarded by its historical buildings and interesting past. The highlight of the visit was the church with its unique, medieval hammer beam roof, decorated with the addition of several carved Victorian angels, each one unique.



Each month, we invite different speakers to inform and entertain us. These are held on the third Wednesday of each month at 2:30 pm, doors open at 2 pm, at the Salvation Army Hall, Violet Hill Road. (Note new venue). Our next 2 meetings are:

- **18 March – The Wonder of Norway, Joanne Larner**
- **15 April – The Fascinating World of The Cryptic Crossword, Angela Bell**

New members are always welcome. Visit our website: [www.u3astowmarket.org.uk](http://www.u3astowmarket.org.uk). For membership enquiries, email [membership@u3astowmarket.org.uk](mailto:membership@u3astowmarket.org.uk). Registered charity 1002987.

We look forward to seeing you!



## RECYCLING HELPS

The Village Hall has long been a recycling centre for glass and clothing. This will continue when the new recycling bins become part of our daily lives.



The Village Hall receives an income from the recycling bins, and we would very much like this to continue. The income helps with the ongoing costs of running the Village Hall and ensuring it remains a valued village community asset. Please could you help us by continuing to use the glass and clothes recycling bins at the Village Hall.

The future of the Village Hall is a work in progress, and anything and everything we as a community can do to help with this project is greatly appreciated.

Thank you.  
*Cathy Welham*

# 34TH BOMB GROUP

## **34th Bomb Group Exhibition Expansion, Spring 2026**

As the Mid-Suffolk Light Railway Museum opens its third season showcasing the 34th Bomb Group (BG), this compelling exhibition returns expanded, reinterpreted, and more impactful than ever. It serves as a powerful reminder that events of global consequence unfolded in rural Suffolk and that their legacy still resonates today.



Flying under the proud motto “*Valor to Victory,*” the men of the 34th Bomb Group undertook some of the most dangerous daylight bombing missions of the Second World War. Every sortie meant confronting intense flak, enemy fighters, and the constant uncertainty of survival. Their courage was tested daily in cramped aircraft, rigid formations, and split-second decisions made thousands of feet above occupied Europe. Many paid the ultimate price, helping to turn the tide of the war and protect freedoms still enjoyed today.

Remembering the 34th BG is not solely about military achievement, but about recognising the human cost of freedom. These were ordinary young men thrust into extraordinary circumstances, bound by duty, loyalty, and courage. Preserving their story ensures future generations understand both their sacrifice and its enduring significance.

The exhibition also broadens the narrative beyond the aircrews. It highlights the crucial role of the local community and the Mid-Suffolk Light Railway (Middy), which served as a wartime lifeline. Far more than a rural railway, it transported supplies, equipment, and munitions to RAF Mendlesham, sustaining air operations. Preserved wagons on display, including one that carried bombs, offer a tangible link to this often-overlooked contribution.

For the 2026 season, the exhibition has been significantly enhanced. New interpretations place the Middy’s wartime role at the heart of the story, supported by continuous AV presentations, expanded displays, a detailed timeline of the home front, and an authentic bomb wagon fitted with mock M-43 500 lb bombs.

You can help us preserve and share the legacy of the 34th Bomb Group and the community that supported them, to ensure that the story of Valor to Victory is never forgotten. There are lots of ways that you can help – if you are interested, please email us at [contact@mendleshamairfield.com](mailto:contact@mendleshamairfield.com) or call Mark Brennan on 07785 733287.

Don Mobleby – Chair of the Mendlesham Airfield Association.



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# FREEMAN COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL



## Teaching & Learning

As always, lots has been happening at Freeman Primary School!

In year 3 Art, the children have been learning about ancient Egyptian scrolls. They explored the materials and colours the Egyptians used and looked at real examples to inspire their work. The children experimented with creating a range of earth tones using different mediums before practising traditional Egyptian-style drawing (Did you know the Egyptians always drew people in profile?). They then made their own "papyrus" paper, planned artwork carefully, and finally recreated designs on handmade scrolls.



As well as learning how to multiply numbers, reading and answering questions about the class book, *The Girl Who Stole an Elephant*, and write an adventure story, the year 4 class have had fun in their Science and Art lessons. In Art, the children have been studying paint and mixed media, and learning about tints and shades. Children have applied their new skills to paint a simple object, mixing a range of tints and shades to create the effect of three dimensions. As you can see, the results look absolutely fantastic!

In Science, children have been learning about the digestive system and, in particular, exploring teeth. They discovered how many baby teeth children have and that adults typically have 32 teeth. They also learned about the different types of teeth and their functions. To build on this, they carried out an investigation to observe what happens to tooth enamel when exposed to different drinks such as Lucozade Sport, Dr Pepper, milkshake and water. This then linked this to a session with Mrs Pizey, one of our parents, who taught us how to take good care of our teeth and brought in tooth disclosure tablets to show the children the importance of brushing properly.



## School Council Sustainability Project

During the Autumn term, two of Freeman's School Council representatives took part in a Trust-wide Zoom call, bringing together pupil leaders from all schools within the Children's Endeavour Trust. The focus of the meeting was sustainability and exploring ways we can promote positive environmental action in individual schools. Together, the children decided to organise a **litterpicking day**, recognising it as a practical way to support sustainability and care for our community.

On Tuesday, we welcomed **Nick Elliot** from Mid Suffolk Council, who delivered an engaging assembly on the importance of not littering and looking after our environment. Following this, Year 6 headed outside in groups of eight for a 15minute litter pick around the school grounds. It was incredible to see how much they collected in such a short time - **a whole bag full!**

Moving forward, each class will be given an opportunity to take part in regular litterpicking sessions around the school to continue this important work. In addition, **Year 6 Litter Picker Monitors** will be chosen to help champion environmental efforts. Great pride is taken over the school environment, and Freeman are committed to doing their part to protect it.

Furthermore, **Grace and George** in Year 6 took part in an additional Trust Zoom meeting, where they shared their experiences of the litterpicking day with School Council representatives from other schools.

*From tiny acorns do mighty oaks grow*



Community  
**Bingo  
Night**



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# LOCAL HISTORY GROUP

As I write this, we have just enjoyed our first meeting in the URC meeting room. Space is a bit more cramped, so it might take a few sessions to get used to the change, as we were in the village hall for nearly 15 years. Jerry will write a review of Gerry's talk about orchards in a future Telstar.

As you read this, you probably have time to plan to join us for our **March 4th** meeting. If you didn't make it to our February talk, don't forget we are now in the URC Meeting Room – look out for our new banner (unless it is blowing a gale!) This will be another in our series of **Stowupland Stories** when we will be tackling the subject of **reading, 'riting and 'rithmetic** i.e., aspects of learning in Stowupland. Mainly Victorian times through to when Queen Elizabeth came to the throne, though no doubt some people will bring memories (hopefully happy ones) of their early days of the High School.

I have been writing my annual Local Recorder's Report for Suffolk Local History Council, recording things that I have been aware of that happened in Stowupland in 2025. My thanks to many people who kindly helped by sharing what was important to them last year.

As part of my preparation, I always do a quick scan through some of last year's Telstars. This year, being sensible I checked out the online copies which meant I could *cut and paste* anything that triggered a memory of what I thought future generations should know about our time here. I don't use everything from Telstar, but my thanks to the Telstar team and its contributors for producing this resource. It creates a valuable archive for future historians, and each year when I review its content, I am completely surprised as to how much information is included and how much I missed on first reading.

Now Jerry looks back to last year, with his review of our Christmas meeting's talk by Kathleen about Tudor Kitchens, which was brought to life with her fantastic examples of Tudor cooking at its best, which went well with our tea and coffee provided at the end of the talk by Liz and Annie.

Starting the talk with slides of a typical Tudor Kitchen in most houses of the day. These photos were not a very joyful example, none of the kitchens would pass a modern-day hygiene inspection and none would receive a 5-star rating. There were a number of dogs roaming around the floor eating various bits of leftover meat off the floor, and in one case a monkey sitting in the food preparation area - not a good advert for the kitchen. However, Kathleen assured us that the standard of food reaching the tables in those days was very high, with the insistence that hands were washed and cleaned to a high standard. Some of the diners would help themselves using fingers to dig into the various courses of meat on offer, these often included beef, lamb and veal. Meals could also be started with a fish course, which also included several varieties. Topped off with a sweet course such as tarts, a variety of fritters, custard jelly, fruit, plus a selection of wines and locally brewed ale.

The Tudor period is generally taken from 1485 to 1603, starting with Henry VII and finishing with Elizabeth I. During this era, trade was expanding and new worlds were being discovered, which had an effect on eating habits. Early on, vegetables were usually onions and cabbages but as time went on, tomatoes and potatoes were introduced to the menu. This made the selection available to cooks working to prepare the meals much more interesting. Kathleen had many examples of various menus from the period. You really needed to see the full talk to understand fully the preparation that went into a finished meal set out on the table.

However, the Royal banquet was always a talking point. When Henry VII was on the throne at Christmas, he would declare a 12-day Christmas break for all his staff. They would eat, drink and be merry. Kathleen had examples of the menus of the day, and they looked fantastic, however the costs for these meals must have been huge. Kathleen had done some calculations, and the same costs for those 12 days of eating and drinking would today amount to around £400,000, not a bad thank you for the King's staff over the Christmas holidays. Neil thanked Kathleen for coming and took questions from the audience.

If they are still available, Kathleen's Tudor Cookbook and Mistress Kathleen's Kitchen can be bought from M&Ms in the village. Even if you are not a cook and don't intend to try out the dishes, they are a very interesting read and all the money from the sales goes towards Mendlesham's project to caretake their Armouries Collection. Kathleen will return to give us a talk on this later in the year.

Continuing from last month's Telstar. I am extremely grateful to a neighbour who shared some of her family's history research into the Robinson family. I especially like seeing old photos. This one of Amy and William Robinson must date to the late 1800s. William died in August 1887, aged 84. Amy died age 83. They lived in The Old Meeting House; today this is still a thatched house near Stowupland Hall.

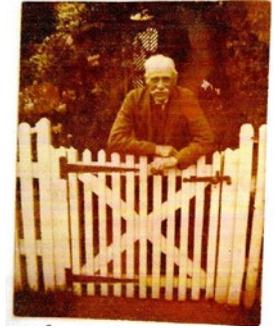
Another gentleman contacted us through the pages of our website to ask if we would be interested in some details and photos from his family history relating to the Dent family. Of course, I said, 'yes please!'



I will update our website page on the Dent family in due course. Our earliest record of Dents living in Stowupland is of a John Dent who 'encroached onto Thorney Green' in 1738 when he set up a blacksmith shop which subsequently became The Retreat. My contact was also a John Dent. He believes there are no more Dents in Stowupland. This is one of the photos he sent me of his great grandfather, Mr James Dent, leaning on the gate of his home, Oak Cottage. He was grateful to the present owners of Oak Cottage, who allowed him to look round his old house.

## Neil's Query

On November 7th, 1847, the railway line from Ipswich to Norwich and Bury St. Edmunds was opened. However, the completion of Stowmarket station (the station was actually in Stowupland before the boundary changes of the 1930s) was delayed due to the death of the contracted builder Daniel Revett, so a fresh contractor had to be appointed. Stowmarket people were determined to have a station worthy of their town and the parish authorities contributed £1000 towards the cost of a new approach road from the town and advanced a loan of £3000 to the company towards the building itself. The station was finally completed in July 1849.



At one time the large letters of **J.G.H** and **J.C.C.** could be picked out in the brickwork of the station. These were visible until around 20 or 30 years ago, but have succumbed to old age and are no longer visible. Do you recall these letters, and do you know what they meant? Answers next month.



### Our planned 2026 Calendar of events

**March 4th– Stowupland Stories (5) – Schools and Education.**

**April 1st – ‘Onehouse Paupers Graveyard Project’,** guest speaker Julie Johnson

**May 6th – ‘Medieval Pilgrimages to Woolpit’,** guest speaker Dr Shalena Klazow

**June 3rd– Stowupland Stories (6) – Thorney Green and Stowupland Parish Council**

**July 1st – The Mendlesham Armoury Through Time**

**August 5th – Saxham Street Stories**

More events will be added in due course. Please bear in mind it is occasionally necessary for a topic to be changed at the last minute.

.....  
**Do you have stories to share or prefer to listen?**

**As a SLHG member you can enjoy our talks for just £2:00 on the door:  
or we always welcome visitors to our meetings, just pay £5.00 on the door.**

**If you have any queries about joining us or about Stowupland's past:  
Please contact Jerry Voden on 01449 703717 or  
secretary@stowuplandlocalhistorygroup.org**

Or visit our website: **www.stowuplandlocalhistorygroup.org**,  
where you can listen to Jerry's Jabbas.

# **Suffolk Foot Health**

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**Corns**

**Verrucas**

**Ingrowing Nails**

**Fungal Infections**

**Athlete's Foot**

**Nail Trimming**

**Diabetic Foot Care**

**HOME VISITS**

**Jane 07916 143618**

**Jenn 07880 975725**



# U.R.C CHAPEL

## NEWS

Minister: Vacant

Secretary: Brian Hewitt 07500734113

Stowmarket URC Anniversary will be on 1 March at 10.30 am, and we will be joining them for this service. **There will not be a service at the Chapel on this day.**

The spring flowers are peeping through, and we are beginning to hear the noise of people cutting their grass. Also, the nights are pulling out, and it's not getting dark until about 5 pm, all signs showing that spring is on its way. A very special time of year as we look forward to the warmer weather.

Our next Coffee Morning is on **Friday 27 March, 10-12 noon.** Please come and join us for a cuppa, cake, and good company.

Services continue to be held at the URC Chapel, Church Road, Stowupland, each Sunday at 10.30 am, and you are cordially invited to join us in worship. A warm welcome awaits you.

### **The Speakers for March are as follows:**

01 March	Stowmarket URC Anniversary (No Service at the Chapel)
08 March	Rev Norman Tharby
15 March	Keith Scarff
22 March	William Glasse
29 March	Rev Richard Edwards

*Joyce Gardiner*

## **Elders Message**

Spring is in the air, and are you ready to spring forward? Yes, the clocks go forward on March 29th, and the hours of daylight start to lengthen. Do you make the most of this extra daylight? Perhaps you're a gardener, or DIY is your passion, or perhaps it gives you the opportunity to enjoy a visit out. Yes, our routines change, and our outlook brightens as the summer comes closer.

For one man, however, this date heralds the end of his life. March 29th this year is Palm Sunday, the beginning of Holy Week. Eight days, which will include his arrest, trial, crucifixion, and resurrection. It is a day when we remember our Lord Jesus Christ's triumphant entry into Jerusalem riding on a colt. Springing into the last days of his earthly life with the knowledge of his impending death upon a cross along a road covered with cloaks on the ground, with the joyful crowd waving palm branches and shouting 'Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest heaven!' The crowd's adoration was based on a misunderstanding, and their loyalty was fleeting.

The same people who praised him would soon call for his death, highlighting the contrast between their earthly expectation and his divine nature.

Will you spring forward and join us each Sunday as we explore more of the life of Jesus Christ? You will be most welcome.

Blessings

*John Webb (Stowmarket Elder)*

## COFFEE MORNING



Friday 27th March 2026  
Stowupland URC Chapel

10am – 12noon

**Coffee, Tea and Cakes**

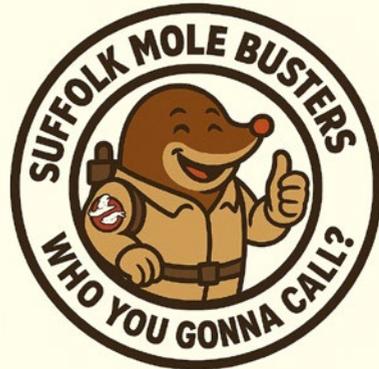
*All welcome*



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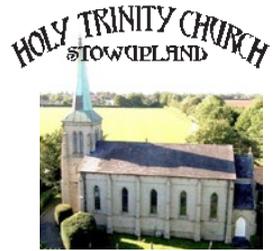
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# HOLY TRINITY CHURCH

## NEWS



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Curate: Revd. Alison Roberts Tel. 613037  
Churchwardens: Mrs Ann Doubtfire Tel. 770363  
Mrs Sue Hayter Tel. 613710

**Facebook Page:** <https://www.facebook.com/haughleybenefice>

**A Church Near You:** <https://www.achurchnearyou.com/church/2086/>

**Traitors** – the show that everyone is talking about. It is a high-stakes, reality TV series hosted by Claudia Winkleman in Ardress Castle, Scotland. Contestants split into “Traitors” and “Faithful.” The Traitors secretly “murder” a Faithful nightly, while the group tries to banish Traitors in daily votes. It’s a great watch!

But did you know that the origins of the show are Dutch, and it was to be called *The Mutineers*, set onboard a ship, with contestants forced to jump overboard upon elimination. Why a ship? Because behind the idea is a true story.

The *Batavia*, the flagship of the Dutch East India Company, had been wrecked on the Houtman Abrolhos Islands near Australia in 1629. Around 300 of the 341 people on board made it ashore. When the ship’s captain sailed off in search of help, he left in charge his deputy, Jeronimus Cornelisz.

Yet Cornelisz had been planning a mutiny, and he and his followers began murdering any remaining survivors loyal to the captain. But no one knew who was in favour of the mutiny or not. So, they all lied to each other because they didn’t trust anyone.

Oh, by the way. If you are thinking of applying for the next *Traitors* TV series, there may be almost half a million other applicants too - so good luck!

This time next month, Easter will be upon us. The Easter story is a story of a Traitor and Faithfuls. No prizes for guessing who the traitor was, but the sad thing is that the Faithfuls become less than faithful to the innocent victim who gets tortured and killed. Like the Dutch shipwreck story, it’s undoubtedly a true story and one which has reverberated around the world for centuries. You might want to have a read of it in the Bible in one of the gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke or John)?

And here’s an invitation. If you want to come along to any of our services/ activities during Lent (a 40 day period before Easter), it would be great to see you. All the details are on the list adjacent to this article. If you do come, I very much hope that no one will lie to you, you will be able to trust everyone, and no one will get “murdered”!!

Please do contact me, Alison. Ann or Sue, and we will give you more information about any of the services if you need them.

All the best, *Revd. Andy Buttress*

## PARISH CHURCH SERVICES FOR MARCH 2026

Benefice of Haughley with Wetherden and Stowupland

(For more information, please contact Revd Andy Buttress:  
email [revandybuttress@gmail.com](mailto:revandybuttress@gmail.com))

<b>Date</b>	<b>Stowupland</b>	<b>Wetherden</b>	<b>Haughley</b>
Sunday 1st	9.30 am Parish Communion	11.00 am Morning Worship	11.00 am Sunday Praise
Tuesday 3rd		9.00 pm Compline (Night Prayer)	
Sunday 8th	9.30 am Worship for All	11.00 am Morning Worship	11.00 am Parish Communion
Monday 9th	11.00 am Service at Steeple View		2.00 pm Service at Mere View
Tuesday 10th		9.00 pm Compline (Night Prayer)	5.00 pm Pizza Church
Sunday 15 <sup>th</sup> (Mothering Sunday)	9.30 am Morning Worship	11.00 am Worship for All	11.00 am URC/ Anglican Service
Tuesday 17th		9.00 pm Compline (Night Prayer)	
Sunday 22nd	6.30 pm Evening Prayer	11.00 am Parish Communion	9.30 am BCP Said Communion
Tuesday 24th		9.00 pm Compline (Night Prayer)	
Sunday 29th (Palm Sunday)	11.00 am Benefice Service		
Monday 30 <sup>th</sup> March	9.00 pm Compline (Night Prayer)		
Tuesday 31 <sup>st</sup> March		9.00 pm Compline (Night Prayer)	

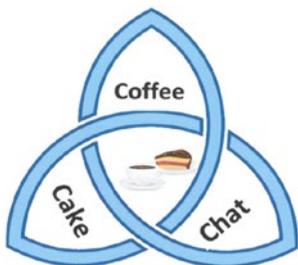
**PRAYER:** God, I am sometimes a bit up and down. But you are faithful. Help me to trust in you with all the things that I struggle with. Amen.

**LENT LUNCHESES:** Lent Lunches begin on Wednesday 25th February – a simple meal of soup, bread and cheese on Wednesdays from 12.00 – 1.30 in the Church Hall.

**LENT COMPLINE SERVICES:** Night Prayer every Tuesday at Wetherden Church from 24th February – 31st March at 9 pm. This is a short, simple, reflective service at the end of the day. Note, the one at Stowupland on March 30th.

**FOOD BANK BOX:** If you would like to donate items for the Food Bank to help those in need of a helping hand, there is a box at the back of the church for you to leave your items. The church is open during service times and on the 3rd Saturday morning of each month to accept donations. Thank you.

**CHURCH HALL HIRE:** Please remember that the well-appointed Church Hall is available for hire at reasonable rates and would be ideal for children's parties and small group/meetings. For more information, please contact Sue Hayter.



**COME AND JOIN US FOR**

**Stowupland Church Hall**

**Saturday 21st March 2026**

**10.00 – 12.00**

There will be tea/coffee, cakes  
and good company

*Everyone is welcome*

*We invite you to join us for the annual*

# Lent Lunches

*(A simple meal of  
Soup, Rolls & Cheese, plus Tea or Coffee)*

**Wednesdays**

**12 Noon - 1.30pm  
in the Church Hall**

**March 4<sup>th</sup>**

**March 11<sup>th</sup>**

**March 18<sup>th</sup>**

**March 25<sup>th</sup>**

**HOLY TRINITY CHURCH STOWUPLAND**

*There is No Charge, but your voluntary  
donations will go to a charity*

***Everyone welcome!***

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**Debenham** - 09:30 Thursdays United Reformed Church

**Stowupland** - 09:45 Fridays Stowupland Village Hall

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# THE TELSTAR TEAM

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**Business Advertising** - Sally Wray - [adverts.telstar@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:adverts.telstar@hotmail.co.uk). Businesses with a Stowupland connection can advertise at very reasonable rates.

**Diary Dates** - Neil Langridge – [stowman@stowman.plus.com](mailto:stowman@stowman.plus.com) 07951 037749. To let the village know the date and venue of your event contact Neil to be included in the diary dates.

**Distribution Co-Ordinators** - Keith and Cathy Welham – 01449 673185. Colin Vickridge and Keith Welham are our proof-readers and Jerry Voden chairs meetings of our team. The entire team are unpaid volunteers.

Telstar is distributed by a team of volunteers who deliver the magazine to over 1,250 homes in Stowupland. The magazine is produced every month, with the exception of December and January, which is a combined copy that gives our trusty team of volunteers a well-earned Christmas break!

Telstar is funded by grants from Stowupland Parish Council and Mid Suffolk District Council as well as income from business advertisers.

## **From the Telstar Committee**

Please note that the opinions expressed in letters and articles are not necessarily those of the Telstar Committee. We cannot be held responsible for the accuracy of material submitted for publication. We reserve the right to include, edit or amend as we think appropriate. Telstar is produced in good faith but errors or omissions may occur during the process of production. If this is the case, please let us know so that errors may be corrected.

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***Telstar – for the community, by the community.***

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# Quiz Night

*Friday 13<sup>th</sup> March*

**Stowupland Village Hall**

**Friday 13th March**

**Doors Open 7:00 pm**

**Quiz Starts 7:30 pm**

**£3 per person - Teams of Up to 6 People**

**Village Hall bar will be open for drinks**

**Bring your own nibbles**

**To enter a team please ring Keith on 01449**

**673185**

**A Stowupland Community Event brought to you by the Telstar Team**