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NOTES FROM THE EDITOR

FEBRUARY 23

Happy New Year everyone and welcome to our first edition of 2023. We on the Telstar team hope you were all able to enjoy the festive period, and spend time doing what makes you happiest. For me, it was a joy to have Christmas in my new home with my family, including my two lovely granddaughters. It was totally hectic, but I wouldn't have had it any other way.

And now it's time to look to the year ahead. For my husband and I, first on our agenda will be to create our garden which is currently a blank canvas. We have planted bulbs to get things started, and are in the process of planning what to plant and where. We are both keen readers of Kate's Elliott's 'Down to Earth' article, for ideas and to learn about the jobs we need to be doing to keep the garden looking lovely. It's always informative and this month continues to be so.

Since our last edition, the inaugural quiz night took place, and I am pleased to say, like the bingo nights it was a resounding success. I'm relieved that my team 'The Editors Posse' didn't disgrace themselves by coming last, although they may have been a little on the rowdy side. It was a great night, enjoyed by all, and raised money to support the ongoing publication of your village magazine. There will be more bingo and quiz nights throughout the year, with details of the next ones in this month's edition. Please come along if you can, you'll be guaranteed an enjoyable and inexpensive night out.

The Stowupland Wildflower and Biodiversity Group have their 'What can I do' event at the village hall on 18th February, and details are inside. This is everyone's chance to see what we can all do to attract more wildlife to our own gardens. My husband and I have made a start, we bought a birdbox at the Village Hall Christmas fair, but are keen to find out what more we can do. There's also cake!

As ever we welcome your contributions for the magazine, whether they be poems, recipes, interesting anecdotes, or anything else you'd like to share with your Stowupland neighbours, so keep them coming. The deadline for submission is 7th of the month.



Choir Performs at Prestigious Concert

In Aid of 'EACH' (East Anglia's Children's Hospices)

It is not often the St Edmundsbury Male Voice Choir (SEMVC) has the opportunity to perform in a venue as prestigious as Trinity College Chapel in Cambridge, so this concert was always going to be very special for them. In addition to SEMVC, the concert also included performances from a leading barbershop quartet called 'Portobello Road', a soloist – Gemma Alexander and members of the Trinity Chapel Choir.

SEMVC performed a selection of expressive and contrasting pieces to make the most of the fine acoustic at the venue, including folk, classical and popular songs. They were joined on two songs by Gemma Alexander. Gemma also performed beautifully alone, singing four popular pieces from artists including Eva Casidy and The Carpenters. Portobello Road sang a varied collection of songs and delighted the audience with their close harmonies and comic moves. Completing the bill were 7 members of the Trinity Chapel Choir who sung several festive carols.



The varied line up of performers provided a unique and memorable evening for the assembled audience and significant funds were raised for the charity 'EACH'.



Why Not Give US a Try?

We welcome anyone who feels they would like to give SEMVC a try and you can come along to three of our rehearsals to see how you get on, without any obligation to join. We do not have auditions and there is no requirement to read music. If you are interested, feel free to phone Nick Gane on 01284 700347 or email him at semvcgane@hotmail.com. You can also visit our website at www.semvc.com for more information.

We meet for rehearsals every Thursday evening, 7.30pm at Howard Community Academy, Bury St Edmunds IP32 6SA.





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COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

JANUARY 2023

Devolution of Powers from Central Government – the County Deal

Details are gradually emerging following the signing of the deal by the Chairman of SCC and a government minister. Proposals include a directly elected Leader of the County Council who could choose a Cabinet from elected councillors of any party. Potentially the Leader and Cabinet could all be from outside the political group with the greatest number of elected councillors. The Conservative Council Leader promised we wouldn't have a mayor but the deal includes an agreement to create a Mayoral Development Corporation.

December Council meeting

I proposed a motion calling on the Council to scrutinise the failed bid for bus improvement grants and make recommendations on how to improve future bids. It also called for a marketing and publicity strategy for demand responsive transport (DRT) and collection of data on use of DRT. And for the next County Local Transport Plan to aim for a modal shift away from private car use.

Members of our group spoke in favour of the motion. However, Conservative members felt that SCC is doing enough to improve public transport and, as they have the majority in Council, the motion was defeated.

The motion calling for improved recruitment, retention and pay for care workers was also defeated.

Cabinet 24 January

The 2023/24 financial budget and the 2023/24 carbon budget are expected to be the main items on the agenda. A 3.99% increase in the SCC element of Council Tax is looking likely – 1.99% for the general fund and 2.00% specifically for Social Care. Even with this increase, the funding of social care is likely to be insufficient to make up for the failure of the conservative administration to include adequate resources for many years.

New SCC Website

Suffolk County Council have launched their new website. The new site is aimed to be easier and simpler. Our Group understands that this platform is often the first point of contact for residents and so it is important the website continues to engage and adapt to the needs of the Suffolk communities.

To see the new site, visit: <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/>

Modern Slavery

Following Cabinet approval of the Council's modern slavery annual statement, SCC have released an information bulletin to assist residents to identify and report any possible signs of modern slavery within local communities.

General signs of modern slavery can include isolation, restricted movement, poor living conditions, unusual travel arrangements, and physical appearance of abuse.

If you suspect a modern slavery crime is being committed, but there is no immediate risk of harm, you can report it to the Police on 101, or the Modern Slavery and Exploitation Helpline on 0800 121 700 – if there is immediate danger, phone 999.

For further information email community.safety@suffolk.gov.uk or visit <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/community-and-safety/communities/community-safety/modern-slavery>

Support for Ukrainian Refugees

Suffolk is looking for new hosts to help support refugees. Accommodation must be available to guests for a minimum of 6 months. Hosts will be eligible to receive the £350 thank you payment for up to 6 months or more, depending on the date their guests arrived in the UK.

If you know anyone that might be interested, please encourage them sign up via the Suffolk County Council website, or by emailing refugeesupport@suffolk.gov.uk.

Trinity Walk and FP39 and FP46

Josh White, the Community Liaison Engineer, has provided information to the Clerk so that the Parish Council can discuss the way forward.

Saxham Street Road Closure

SCC Highways plan to carry out road repairs along C408 Saxham Street, Stowupland (from junction of Debenham Lane northbound to junction of Stowupland Road) between 12 and 20 January. The road will be closed for the duration to ensure the works can be carried out safely. Traffic will be diverted via Saxham Street, A1120, B1115, B1113, Church Road, Chapel Road, Gipping Road, Old Newton Road, Stowupland Road and vice versa. The 7.5 tonne weight limit on Saxham Street will be suspended for the duration of the works. These works are being carried out in advance of resurfacing planned for early summer 2023.

A14 Closures and Upgrading

The first stage of this work will be construction of temporary crossovers east of Junction 47a (the off slip towards Haughley Park) and west of Junction 50 (Stowupland junction).

In order to avoid, as far as possible, traffic using unsuitable roads, A14 will be closed from Junction 43 (near the sugar beet factory) to Junction 51 (Coddensham).

Works to replace the concrete carriageway between Junction 47a and Junction 49 (Tothill) is programmed to start in February 2023 and be completed in summer 2024. Installing the crossovers will allow a contraflow system to be put in place to avoid closure of one or other carriageway of A14.

Other Planned Roadworks and Road Closures

During January and February there will be many roads in the village affected by road closures, diverted traffic or signalised working, including B1115 (signals between Dents Corner and A14 bridge), closure of Thorney Green Road between Rendall Lane and Thorney Green, roadworks in Hawthorn Close, Rendall Lane and on A1120. Details and timings can be found on the SCC website.

Keith.Welham@suffolk.gov.uk

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DISTRICT COUNCILLORS' REPORT

JANUARY 2022

Solar Car Ports

70 solar carports have been erected within the car park at Mid Suffolk Leisure Centre in Stowmarket; they should provide around 20% of the centre's annual electricity demand. The scheme includes battery storage, so excess energy produced during sunnier periods can be saved for later, and electric vehicle charging points, including one rapid charger.

Cabinet Meeting 9 January

Cabinet approved a Council Tax Reduction (Working Age) Scheme 2022/23 which will allow council tax rebates of up to 100% to be given to Council tax payers in receipt of Universal Credit. Cabinet also agreed revised Fees and Charges – including garden waste bin charges, Licencing Fees etc. A new Council House Tenancy Policy was agreed, as were a number of Risk Management Improvements.

Suffolk Housing Board

Councils across Suffolk are working as the Suffolk Housing Board reviewing available housing (empty homes, second homes, homes available for rent and sale) and trying to match it with demand. This is to attempt to reduce the number of households in temporary or unsuitable accommodation.

Refuse Collection Vehicles

Babergh and Mid Suffolk asked residents to suggest names for their new environmentally friendly bin lorries. Amongst the winning names are Ed Sheerbin, Gary Bineker and Bindiana Jones.

Gateway 14

The spine road connecting A1120 through the site to Mill Lane, Creeting St Peter, opened to traffic just before Christmas; landscape planting has commenced and will continue through to March 2023.

Parish Liaison Meeting

Mid Suffolk District Council will be holding a Parish Liaison Meeting on Tuesday 7 February, 1.30 to 3.30pm, at The Mix in Stowmarket. This will be an opportunity for MSDC Officers to share current thinking on Mid Suffolk budget setting, and update parishes on progress with the Joint Local Plan and plans for the 2023 elections. Parishes will be encouraged to share plans for Coronation celebrations. Recently appointed Locality Officers will be on hand to explain their role.

Local Planning Issues

DC/22/03761 – reserved matters application for the erection of 18 dwellings on land opposite the church. This application was not on the list for determination by committee on 21 December and no new date has been set. Rachel and representatives of the Parish Council met with Vincent Pearce (MSDC Planning Officer) to discuss concerns about the development and these concerns have been passed on to the agent acting on behalf of the developer. This application is on the provisional agenda for the Planning Committee meeting to be held on 1 February.

DC/22/03911 and 03895 – applications to modify S106 obligations, including removal of obligation to provide car park for the school and church, in respect of the site mentioned above.

DC/22/02091 – application for 14 new dwellings to the rear of site mentioned above. This application may now be determined by officer delegation, rather than by committee.

Locality Funding

We still have funds available and would welcome applications from any local club or organisation in need of funding towards the cost of a local project.

Councillor Keith Welham
keith.welham@midsuffolk.gov.uk
Telephone: 01449 673185

Councillor Rachel Eburne
rachel.eburne@midsuffolk.gov.uk
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PARISH COUNCIL REPORT

DEC 22 / JAN 23



The December meeting opened with 2 members of the public, 6 Parish Councillors and 3 members of the public. January saw 8 Parish Councillors. Councillors Eburne and Welham were present at both meetings.

Councillors' Reports: The full County and District Council reports for January can be found elsewhere in Telstar.

December - MSDC Cllr Eburne wished everybody a Happy Christmas and thanked all members of the PC for their hard work throughout the year. She checked that the PC were aware of the CIL Briefings and talked briefly about the recent Wayfinding Stowmarket meeting held by MSDC at the John Peel Centre. It was noted that the PC had known nothing about the meeting, which could well be the reason for the poor attendance. There were 10 tables laid out with various interactive equipment for attendees to use but there were only 8 people there. The Cllrs await feedback of the outcome of it. She also advised Parish Cllrs to make their comments on the Boundary Commission intentions to put Stowupland in the same constituency as parts of South Norfolk but Elmswell in Bury St Edmunds constituency and neither of them in the same constituency as Stowmarket. Nothing has been heard back from Bloor Homes about their landscaping commitments or about the number of trees on the site which have already died. Cllr Welham asked if any residents could keep him informed if Bloor Homes start using Gipping Road to access or exit the site whilst the roads are being re-surfaced. Cllr Reeves asked if the large underspend by the District Council is due to lack of staff because it is very difficult to get any replies from them.

SCC Cllr Welham advised that the Conservatives on SCC rejected his motion calling for improved public transport; their response was that they are not prepared to provide further funding for buses as they have everything in hand. He believes that all Care Agency employees should have the same terms and conditions as Council run care staff such as being paid for travelling between client visits. SCC itself could have had an extra 3.7 thousand pounds of Government money last year ring fenced to Social Care, but they did not take it up. He also advised that a lot of staff from various departments have been seconded onto big capital applications such as Sizewell C, the new West Suffolk Hospital etc. leaving their own departments so short of staff that it is difficult to get any response from them. The Council are also refusing to scrutinise their own failed bid with the Government for help with bus provision. Cllr Reeves asked if the Council will be liaising with the care sector in designing the new forms for the Social Care Reform.

January – Cllr Eburne reported that the District Council are starting up the Parish Council Liaison Meetings again. The Gateway 14 spine road did not open before Christmas as expected.

Cllr Welham advised that the county council budget is planned to result in an increase of 1.99% for the general fund and 2% for the Adult Social Care element. He explained that such increase may not be sufficient as SCC have not in the past taken up the full increase permitted by the Government for Social Care. He also reported that in a survey of all Local Authorities, SCC have one of the highest cash reserves which are not allocated to any particular expenditure. Parish Council members raised concerns about the lack of buses and taxis for residents to get to Stowmarket and the general information on the availability of community transport. He agreed to ask for signs to be provided advising of the unsuitability of Gipping Back Lane as an alternative route when Saxham Street is closed for repairs. There was also concern from the PC about press coverage of SCC signing up for a Mayoral system without the Councillors being consulted about it or approval given.

Matters of Report:

December - The new footpaths along The Green have been completed, as have the repairs to the noticeboards. Other works completed include the purchase of new litter bins, a dog bin for Saxham Street, the fence at Columbyne Close ditch and the replacement barriers also at Columbyne Close. The trees for the Queen's Canopy have been planted. The Church Charity Commission have agreed that one of the plots at the allotments can be used as a community space for the erection of a building. The transfer of Thradstones Meadow from Bloor Homes to the PC should take place before the 60th property is occupied. A traffic survey of Gipping Road was arranged for week beginning 7th December. A report has been made to the SNT regarding the graffiti in the Play Park but in order to gain evidence the team requires any witnesses to contact them on www.suffolk.police.uk/contact-us for them to then target the area.

January – A meeting was arranged for 10th January with Mr Charvonia in respect of Green View. Work has been completed on the new reflectors on the posts on the Green and the traffic survey in Gipping Road has also been completed. It is hoped that some progress can be made with the footpath at the primary school once the new rights of way officer takes up their post. The remaining items are ongoing or awaiting action.

Public Forum:

A member of the public asked permission to level off the molehills which had sprung up on the 5 a side pitch and place the soil alongside the new path.

A resident reported the amount of litter that is left to accumulate on the Bloors temporary car park. Another resident, a member of the Trim Trail Working Group advised that the equipment for the trim trail should be ordered as soon as Bloors had put in the bridge and footpath linking phase 2 with Trinity Walk. He also wondered when the 5 a side goal posts on The Green would be repaired as youngsters and adults are using them to hang off as a form of exercise. He was advised that the PC are putting together a number of jobs to make it viable for a contractor to undertake.

King's Coronation:

Cllrs agreed a budget of up to £2,500 for the event to be funded from the Community Events reserves. 2 new members have joined the group who are also willing to help out on the day.

Village Walk Leaflet:

Cllrs agreed the revised contents of the leaflet, how it's to be distributed to residents, the design and printing of the leaflet and to agree a budget funded from the Parish CIL over the £300 locality grant from MSDC. It was agreed that printed copies should be distributed around the village, and in various businesses willing to display them. Residents who have access could download and print them themselves using a QR code.

Retreat Pond Project:

Cllrs agreed the specification for which quotes can be sought and that this should be funded from the Parish CIL.

Village Hall:

Cllr Voden was asked to keep the PC informed of all progress on the village hall rebuilding, as the site is likely to be closed for between 9 months and a year.

Gipping Road Traffic Survey:

The traffic speed survey in Gipping Road has come back with some relatively low speeds of 32mph and high volumes of traffic movements around school run times. The PC view is to recommend to SCC that the 30mph speed limit be extended.

Sub-Committee/Working Group Reports:

Biodiversity and Wildlife – Cllrs agreed to requests to create a section on the PC website and Facebook pages for matters relating to biodiversity, the design of information signs to be placed around the wildflower meadow, the location of barn and tawny owl boxes and the planting of yellow rattle plugs in the wildflower meadow. It was noted that the tawny owl boxes need to be in a completely separate location to the barn owl boxes and that they will require specialised help to clean them out every 2 years.

Cemetery and Churchyard – Cllrs did not agree to the PCC request to plant a tree in the churchyard as they felt it was already too crowded but they could plant one in the cemetery. They did agree to accept quotes of £470 to have the gates and returns painted at the cemetery and £1000 to repair the trip hazard by the entrance to the church hall.

It was also agreed to contact the relatives, where they have contact details, for the memorials which have been laid flat following the topple test, to arrange for their repairs.

Planning:

December - There were no new planning applications this month. MSDC have granted permission for previous applications at Birch Close, Columbyne Close, Mill Street and Saxham Street.

January - New application for a severance of garden and planning for erection of new dwelling and access in Saxham Street. There were concerns as there is no height shown and it was felt important that it should only be a single storey building so will object as the current proposal stands. MSDC have granted permission for car parking and dog walking area at Park Farm and the erection of an extension in Oak Road.

A meeting is to be arranged between the agents for the proposed development in Church Road and representatives from the PC to iron out a few issues. Cllr Studd will formulate a response to the District Council Suffolk Planning Local Validation List.

Finance and Policy:

December – Cllrs approved the following CIL applications: £750 for the Stowupland History Group to purchase computer equipment, Freeman Primary School and Mighty Oaks Pre-School the sum of £14,800 to fund an all-weather track around the school field and £30,000 to Stowupland Cricket and Sports and Social Club to fund a replacement mower and cricket site screens.

January – Recommendations for changes to the cemetery policy document for provision for up to 6 sets of cremated remains to be added to any adult grave provided there is sufficient room and for ashes to be scattered in any adult grave and for turf to be removed and then replaced after scattering. It was also recommended that a fee of £50 be made for the scattering of ashes. This was agreed.

It was also agreed to sign the licence to occupy storage at the village hall for a fee of £10. Other points need to be addressed by the Village Hall committee in respect of the play area before this licence agreement is signed off.

It was agreed to make a donation of £350 to Mid Suffolk Citizens Advice. The recommendation of a budget of £775 be made available to the Biodiversity Group for the 2023 -24 year was agreed. It was also agreed to provide a grant of £4915 to Telstar and £264 to Good Neighbours.

The recommendation to set the precept for the forthcoming year at £55.79 giving a 2% increase with a total precept of £50,564 for the year was also agreed. The final recommendation was to agree the cost of £95 to Work Place Pensions Direct for the re-enrolment and re-declaration for the Pension Regulator for the PC.

Councillors' Reports:

December – Cllr Bridges advised that she had picked up a piece of the Birch Close bus shelter and would be getting it replaced as soon as possible.

Cllr Voden advised that the Landlord of the Retreat would like to become involved with the arrangements for the King's coronation. A resident had reported that he was concerned about the state of the commonwealth graves which he feels need to be cleaned. He also wished to voice his thanks to the contractors who had refurbished the village noticeboards.

Cllr Hayward reported that a resident did not agree that the gas contractors had cleaned up after themselves in the Oak Road area, however, it is believed that this has now been done. Cllr Studd advised that someone was trying to run down the new trim trail path on The Green but some spectators watching the football match on the Green had refused to move off the path to let the runner through.

January – Cllr Bridges reported that the 30mph repeater signs had not been replaced in Thorney Green Road but, according to SCC, they are not required as the street lighting indicates to drivers that they are in a 30mph area. She also advised that the allotment inspection had taken place.

Cllr Studd advised that contractors had removed 2 of the recently upgraded streetlights in Thorney Green Road and also, despite Linden Homes piping the new ditch, the drains that run under the road were either not linked in or blocked, as road is still flooding in wet weather. The road has also sunk in Columbyne Close opposite Trinity Walk. Cllr Murton reported that the SOAP get together went very well in December despite the very cold weather and having to put sand down on the slippery path as there are no gritting facilities at the Village Hall.

Cllr Johnson reported the reappearance of moles on The Green by Birch Close.

Cllr Voden offered his thanks on behalf of the Local History Group for the grant to purchase new computer equipment.

Cllr Hayward requested a grit bin for Chestnut Close which can get very icy in inclement weather.

Chairman's Report:

December – The Parish Council Chairman proposed that the PC should ask the primary school if they would like to design a poster for the noticeboards highlighting the dog fouling issues in the village. She is waiting for a demonstration on outdoor sound systems. She was pleased to report that all the trees for the Queen's Canopy had been planted with some invaluable help from residents, including a tree expert who advised not to replace the pink flowered chestnut for a while due to a disease amongst the species.

January – Cllr Reeves thanked all Councillors who had replied to the boundary commission survey. She also asked that Councillors arrange all the dates for their various committees and working groups ready for the forthcoming year starting in May. They were also asked to note that the PC Meeting in May will be held on the second Thursday in the month and the venue has yet to be arranged.

Clerk's Report: The Clerk advised that the manhole cover on The Green which is no longer in use can be covered over with soil and re-seeded. There is no liaison between the primary and academy schools about the Safer Route to School which has just stalled. Cllr Welham reported that he had received a number of emails from what he believed to be members of the School Council about the path through the school and referred them back to the School Principal. It was decided that he would try and get a meeting set up between the schools, the public rights of way department, the Village Hall, Parish Council and Julia Proctor of Suffolk Highways.

The Neighbourhood Plan review consultant has advised that the grant application has been done and proposal is ready to go to the working group.

Correspondence: Among correspondence received was information from SCC outlining the increases in electricity costs and the likely impact this could have on the village, one from the Pension Regulator in respect of the re-enrolment declaration, one from Stowmarket Citizens Advice requesting a donation, one from Stowmarket Church Charity regarding the request for a community building on the allotments and one from a resident offering their thanks to contractors working on the new footpath for repairing damage to The Green.

Bruno Peek has advised that there will be no national beacon lighting for the King's Coronation but there will be for the 80th anniversary of the D-Day Landing on 6th June 2024. There was a note from SCC Highways regarding the forthcoming road works in Saxham Street and a resident reporting the volumes of traffic on the A1120.

CHAIRMAN'S COLUMN

Welcome to 2023! I hope you all enjoyed the holiday and are now ready for the year ahead. I know I was certainly glad of a week-long break from Parish Council business as it had been a very busy year for the council. We had hoped for a quieter start to the year but the diary is filling up very quickly with council business.

Last year I wrote about the graffiti that has appeared around the village and we have now met with head teachers of both schools and asked for their help to try to curb this desire to deface property. We will give it a little while to see if it has any effect and then the council will have to get costings to remove it from the playpark and bus shelters. This will be a costly operation so again I ask if anyone sees the graffiti being perpetrated, please report it immediately to the Parish Clerk with photos or a description of the culprit.

We have asked pupils at the Primary School to design posters for us to put up around the village to try to curb the instances of dog fouling. There are plenty of dog poo bins around the village to dispose of what your dog leaves behind or failing that owners could take it home for disposal in their own MSDC bins. Walking around the village it soon becomes obvious there is an upsurge in owners allowing their dogs to foul pavements and Public Footpaths, even in the middle of footpaths leading to schools. Sadly, some owners pick up after their dogs and then leave the bag either on the side of the path or hanging from a hedge. I understand that with more houses comes more dogs but all we ask is that owners take responsibility for their dog and clear up behind them and dispose of it in the right place please.

Every year the Parish Council must check the stability of the headstones/memorials in the churchyard and cemetery. Visitors to the cemetery may notice some of the book style memorials are lying on the ground rather than on their plinths. There seems to be a particular problem with this style of memorial. The setting agent used to fix the book to the backing plinth fails after time and the memorial then is in danger of falling onto visitors' toes. Those affected have been laid on the ground for safety whilst the council try to contact a family member to arrange to have them professionally repaired. The maintenance of any headstone/memorial is the responsibility of the family not the Parish Council.

At the January Parish Council meeting councillors agreed the precept figure for the year 2023/24. Like everyone else the council is at the mercy of fast rising costs and like everyone else will have to tighten our belts with day to day running costs. This precept is the element of your Council Tax bill that goes to the Parish Council and pays for all the running costs of the village. We have tried to balance prospective increasing costs with the desire not to add too heavily to resident's bills. To that end we have managed to keep the increase down to just 2% on last year's precept. One of the largest unknown costs for the council is street lighting.

Your council owns and pays for the lighting of some 60 streetlights around the village and soaring electricity costs make it difficult to budget but hopefully having just had the streetlights changed to LED, this will help offset rising costs. The ownership of these streetlights is historical and nowadays the council do not take ownership of any new streetlights.

Over the years, via this column, I have tried to keep you up to date with what is going on within the council and some of the responsibilities it has within our village. I know from various social media sites that what we do does not always please everyone so here is your chance to influence the future of your village. 2023 is an election year for your Parish Council so between now and May I will be encouraging you to get involved and stand for election to the council. Currently there is a vacancy on the council and there will be at least one more vacancy come May as I am standing down from the council at the end of April. I have loved my time on the council but always told my partner that I would stop when I was 70...guess what I'm there. Please think about giving some time to your village and help guide its future. If you think you may be interested, give me a ring or drop me an email if you want to find out more. I am going to keep on at you till May in the hope some of you will come forward.

Stay safe and flu and Covid free

Sally Reeves



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DOWN TO EARTH

KATE ELLIOTT

Until the end of January, I always wake to an absolute dark silence. But as we go into February there is a faint but distinct chattering of birds just before dawn. Minute by minute, the days lengthen and hope creeps back into my world. Many people I know find February the hardest month, finding that after the New Year the winter stretches ahead of them. But if you are a gardener then the next few weeks are an exciting, increasingly busy time. The garden starts to peek its head up from below the ground. Snowdrops, aconites, hellebores and winter honeysuckle are all pushing into flower.

An ill wind blows no plant any good, but snowdrops do not mind in the least. The essence of snowdrops is that they are wild flowers and garden plants. Yet no one seems to know whether snowdrops are native or not. They certainly grow freely in the wild but equally nearly all 'wild' snowdrops are garden escapees. They spring up in midwinter, regardless of the weather, with a freedom and abundance of bluebells and yet they can be cultivated and treasured both individually in pots and as part of mixed planting in a border. They will go on reliably reappearing year after year for generations. Each year they spread a little more by seed, and the clumps increase as they create new bulbs so that in time, they form great white carpets. There are more than 350 different species and cultivars, and galanthophiles (collectors of snowdrops - I am one) are obsessive about the variations between them. *Galanthus nivalis* is the common snowdrop which I adore and I also love the double 'Flore Pleno'. It is sterile but increases well from offsets and because it does not produce seed, the flowers last an extra-long time.

The pollination of snowdrop seeds depends on two things: some sunny, mild weather and some insects to spread the pollen. When the temperature rises to about 10 degrees, the three outer petals react by lifting to the horizontal and acting as a funnel to attract pollinators like bumblebees that you see buzzing around in the winter sun. But you can speed this process up - lift a clump, divide it into three or four, replace one of the clumps in the hole you have dug and then plant the rest further afield. The ideal time to do this is now just after the flowers have faded but before the leaves begin to die back. Most of the snowdrops here at Columbine have been spread this way.

Buddleia or the butterfly bush can be pruned right back now to a couple of healthy buds. This will mean removing 90 per cent of all growth to a knuckly framework that will support the new shoots.

Always use really sharp tools for pruning. Not only does it make life so much easier but it also makes for cleaner cuts and therefore causes less damage to the plants. Sharpen your secateurs as you would sharpen your kitchen knife. Loppers are also important. Go for a good quality pair but never strain them - if it cannot be cut easily it should not be cut at all. Use a saw instead. Nowadays there are superb pruning saws on the market ranging from small folding ones to really large ones and with extendable poles. They all work on a pulling action and are very easy to control.

Here are some jobs you can be doing this month:

- Prune late-summer clematis, cutting stems back to healthy buds about 30cm from the base.
- Give winter heathers a light trim after flowering.
- Sprinkle slow-release fertiliser around the base of roses and other flowering shrubs.
- Chit first-early potatoes.
- Sow cress in a small tray on a sunny windowsill.
- Sow sweet-peas in deep pots and keep frost-free.
- Clean and service mowers and other power tools ready for spring.
- Remove any faded or yellowing leaves from overwintering plants.
- Plant rhubarb.
- Cut off amaryllis flower heads once they fade but leave the stalk to die down naturally.

Relish the flowers that are increasing by the day - regardless of the weather - spring is coming.



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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COUNTRYSIDE RAMBLER

BRIAN WARD

May I start with wishing you all a HAPPY NEW YEAR, and hope you all enjoyed the Christmas festivities. It was quite a prolonged cold snap we had before Christmas and some of my tender plants that were under cover still suffered from the sub-zero temperatures, but that's all part of gardening. I have recently increased my water butts from one to four as I suspect our summers will be much hotter in the future and I hope to be self-sufficient and not use the hosepipe in the garden.

There is a distinct drop in numbers of birds visiting our feeders since the avian flu outbreak, especially goldfinches and greenfinches. House sparrows and starlings along with the big fat lumbering wood pigeons seem to be in good numbers and their cousins, the collared dove.

I have noticed hares doing their boxing antics on the local fields that surround the village, and spotted small groups of roe deer on the outer fringes of the village, the largest group to date is eight, which is good for our area. The little owl is still in residence and can often be seen sitting above its box on the remains of the old tree stump; I hope it will find a mate for the forthcoming breeding season. Listen out for tawny owls as they nest in March and can be quite vocal leading up to nesting. We are fortunate to have several pairs nesting locally along with a fewer number of barn owls.



I have been out and about over the last few weeks visiting nature reserves and one of my favourite places is north Norfolk. The seals at Horsey are always an attraction, but the thousands of pink footed geese that fly to us for the winter, all the way from Iceland and Greenland are a spectacular site as they take flight in their thousands from Holkham wet meadows to fly inland to feed on old arable crops. If you are in this area in the next few months walk to the beach as there are snow bunting and shore lark to be seen and, on the sea itself, scan the waves for merganser, scoters, divers and auks.

Please keep feeding our local birds but make sure the feeders are kept clean to avoid spreading any disease. Look out for early snowdrops in the hedgerows and be careful on the footpaths as they can be quite slippery at this time of year.

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STOWUPLAND WILDFLOWER AND BIODIVERSITY GROUP

February 18th sees the group welcoming residents to our 'What Can I Do' Day at the Village Hall. We will have lots of activities and information available for you to learn more about biodiversity and our group. Members will be building bird boxes, making seed bombs or showing you how a beehive works. Have a chat with us over a cuppa and a piece of cake and make sure you bring your phone to photograph our information sheets. There will be a display of posters created by local children (elements of which are on our own poster). You can paint a pebble or plant some wildflower seeds.

Many people think that we live in a rural area so our biodiversity must be great. Unfortunately, that is not the case. There are many species that are becoming rare because their habitat has been destroyed. There's lots that can be done within our own gardens or in the village. We have started with some bulb planting – planting native species that will provide food for pollinating insects; leaving a log pile where trees have been trimmed to ensure their longevity. We plan to help the Parish Council do necessary work at the Retreat Pond, a superb resource for our local wildlife. The Green that runs from the Retreat Pond to the School kissing gate is to be left uncut and planted to encourage more wildflowers that will support all manner of wildlife. Owl boxes are being erected to encourage Barn Owls and Tawny Owls to make our village their home.

There's lots more that can be done, even if you just plant a corner of your garden to be more wildlife friendly.

It cannot have escaped anyone's notice that we have recently seen major weather disasters such as the excessive snow in North America. The floods in Pakistan; even avalanches in Scotland. It doesn't all happen somewhere else; it can happen here. We are not immune just because we are a small island in the Northern Hemisphere. The UK average temperature has risen to over 10C, the highest since records began. Last summer was the hottest on record and our water supplies are running low. We live in an area that is a major route to the rest of the country which means we see a lot of heavy traffic along the A14, lots of freight trains from the Port of Felixstowe, and coming soon, a major development that is Gateway 14 that will bring even more heavy traffic into our proximity. It is happening here, and we need to do more to protect our environment. There is no point in burying our heads in the sand and thinking it doesn't affect us, because it will. And if it's not us it will be our children and their children who see the impact of simply doing nothing.

Everyone is welcome, come along on February 18th and see what you can do.



What can I Do?



Stowupland Wildflower And Biodiversity
Activities, Information, Drinks & Cakes for All
at
Stowupland Village Hall
on
Saturday, February 18th - 10:00 until 13:00

Free Event

(Donations welcome)



Build a Bird Box or Bug House (subject to availability!).

Information on creating a simple wildlife area in your garden.

Presentations about Biodiversity, past and present.

Sow wildflower seeds to grow on at home.



Paint a pebble for posterity (kids only).

Taste local honey, see inside a beehive (sorry, no bees), learn about pollinators.

See artwork created by local children on biodiversity.

Photograph our worksheets, chat with friends, and help improve the diversity of our local flora and fauna.

THE FESTIVE WELLIE WALK

Thank you to all those who contributed to our wellie walk on December the 27th. The walk wasn't around the fields as hoped due to the wet conditions, but a good time was had by 19 walkers around the growing village.

Coffee and festive fare were welcome on their return and £132.40 was raised for East Anglian Children's Hospices.

Thank you, *Jane and Dan Gurney*



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M.Chiro

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IMPORTANT CONTACTS

Citizens Advice

www.midsuffolkecb.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

Jo Churchill - jo.churchill.mp@parliament.uk -
Constituency Office, 10 Hatter Street,
Bury St Edmunds, IP33 1LZ - 01284 752311
House of Commons - 02072 198487
<https://www.jochurchill.org.uk/>

Mid Suffolk District Council

www.midsuffolk.gov.uk
Keith Welham - keith.welham@midsuffolk.gov.uk -
01449 673185
Rachel Eburne - rachel.eburne@midsuffolk.gov.uk -
01449 673311

Police

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

Police Safer Neighbourhood Team

PC 14443 Stefan Henriksen - Police Station,
Violet Hill Road, Stowmarket, IP14 1NJ
stefan.henriksen@suffolk.pnn.police.uk - Phone: 101

Samaritans – 116 123

Stowupland Village Website

www.stowupland.com

Parish Council Website

www.stowupland.suffolk.cloud

Suffolk County Council

www.suffolk.gov.uk 01449 673185
Keith Welham - Keith.Welham@suffolk.gov.uk
SCC - General Contact No. 0345 606 6067

Schools

Stowupland High School -
www.stowuplandhighschool.co.uk - 01449 674827
Freeman Community Primary School -
www.freeman.suffolk.sch.uk - 01449 612067

Vets

Cedarwood - 01449 676966
Stowe Vets - 01449 613130

DIARY DATES

FEBRUARY

WED 1	2 - 4 pm Village Hall car park	Mobile post office
WED 1	9.30 am Village Hall	Mother and Toddler Group
WED 1	2 - 4 pm Village Hall car park	Mobile post office
WED 1	7.30 Village Hall	Local History Group – “Stowmarket Market Disputes”
THURS 2	2 - 4 pm Village Hall car park	Choose Refills mobile shop
THURS 2	7.30 pm Village Hall	Short mat bowls
THURS 2	7.30 pm URC Hall	Parish Council Meeting
FRI 3	7.30 pm Cricket Club	Quiz Night – Sports and Social Club
SUN 5	7.30 pm Village Hall	Country & Western music club
MON 6	7.30 pm Village Hall	Dance Club
WED 8	9.30 am Village Hall	Mother and Toddler Group
WED 8	2 - 4 pm Village Hall car park	Mobile post office
THURS 9	7.30 pm Village Hall	Short mat bowls
MON 13	evening Village Hall	Dance Club
MON 13	7.30 Village Hall	Village hall trustees meeting
TUES 14	4 pm Village Hall	Young Carers Club
WED 15	9.30 am Village Hall	Mother & toddler group
WED 15	2 - 4 pm Village Hall car park	Mobile post office
THURS 16	7.30 pm Village Hall	Short mat bowls
SAT 18	10 am - 1 pm Village Hall	Biodiversity Group event

SAT 18	10.00 - 12.00 Church Hall	Coffee, Cake and Chat
SUN 19	7.30 pm Village Hall	Country and Western Music Club
MON 20	evening Village Hall	Dance Club
TUES 21	9.30 Jubilee Crt. 9.55 Green	Mobile Library
WED 22	9.30 am Village Hall	Mother & toddler group
WED 22	2 - 4 pm Village Hall car park	Mobile post office
THURS 23	7.30 pm Village Hall	Short mat bowls
FRI 24	10 - 12 URC chapel	Coffee morning
FRI 24	7.30 pm Village Hall	Community Bingo
SUN 26	7.30 pm Village Hall	Country & Western music club
MON 27	7.30 pm Village Hall	Dance Club

LOOKING AHEAD

WED 1	9.30 am Village Hall	Mother & toddler group
WED 1	2 - 4 pm Village Hall car park	Mobile post office
WED 1	7.30 Village Hall	Local History Group – "Titanic Survivor"
THURS 2	2 - 4 pm Village Hall car park	Choose Refills mobile shop
THURS 2	7.30 pm Village Hall	Short mat bowls
THURS 2	7.30 pm URC Hall	Parish Council Meeting
Mar 3	7:30 Cricket Club	Quiz Night – Sports and Social Club
Mar 10	7.30 pm till late	Bavarian Beer Night – Stowmarket Concert Band
Mar 17	7.30 pm Village Hall	Community Quiz
Mar 31	7.30 pm Village Hall	Community Bingo

MSDC General Contact No. 0300 1234000

Mobile Library - 07721 879855

Parish Council

Sally Reeves - Chairman - 01449 745739

sallyreeves@stowuplandpc.co.uk

Laura Beeson - 07918 808387

laurabeeson@stowuplandpc.co.uk

Donna Bridges - 07736 348335

donnabridges@stowuplandpc.co.uk

John Hayward - 01449 674717

johnhayward@stowuplandpc.co.uk

Laura Johnson - 07826 851030

laurajohnson@stowuplandpc.co.uk

Debra Melhuish - 07979125904

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Kevin Stevens - 07747 605042

kevinstevens@stowuplandpc.co.uk

Ray Studd - 01449 676606

raystudd@stowuplandpc.co.uk

Jerry Voden - 01449 703717

jerryvoden@stowuplandpc.co.uk

Clerk to the Parish Council - Claire Pizzev

parishclerk@stowuplandpc.co.uk - 01449 677005

2 Broomspath Road, IP14 4DB

Parish Council Minutes of meetings and agendas are available on the Parish Council Website

www.stowupland.suffolk.cloud

Village Hall Bookings

Lisa Tunbridge - Phone - 07862740830

stowuplandvillagehallbookings@gmail.com

Village Clubs

Baby and Toddler Group -

Kelly Woolnough - 01449 678550

Book Group - Patricia Hodgkins - 01449 672127

Stowupland Bowls Club - Graham Newman -

01359 240846

Community Events - Keith Welham - 01449 673185

Country and Western - Pat Murphy - 01449 677405

Dance Club - Mary Durham - 01449 672601

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/

Stowupland Falcons Football Club -

stowuplandfalconsfc.co.uk

Stowupland Sports Centre -

info@stowuplandsportscentre.co.uk - 01449 672531

Stowupland Wildflower & Biodiversity Group -

Keith Welham - 01449 673185

Stowmarket Wildlife Group - John Thompson -

swtstowmarket@gmail.com - 01449 676471

STOWMARKET ECO FUTURE GROUP

Greetings from Stowmarket Eco Future Group.

Email: stowmarketecofuture@gmail.com

Website: <https://stowmarketecofuturegroup.co.uk>

(Please do look at our website – there is too much going on to say it all here!)



Collection of hard to recycle items (*coffee pods, pet food pouches, medicine blister packs, pens, toothpaste tubes and brushes, tetrapaks, make up – see website for details*)

2nd Sunday each month (12th February) at Red Gables 2-4 pm plus REPAIR CAFÉ stowrepaircafe@gmail.com

4th Thursday each month (23 February) on Market place 9:30 to 11.30 am

Bah Humbug! A good friend reminded me about Dickens' famous story, so I wonder... Have you watched "A Christmas Carol" over the festive season? In his sleep, Ebenezer Scrooge is shown the hopes he had as a young man, what he has become in the present and the choice that he needs to make about the future. Could Charles Dickens ever have predicted what important questions those are for us today? Many of us enjoyed a childhood **PAST** free from questions about environmental behaviour – we could use what we liked, whenever we liked, go where we wanted and enjoyed the constant succession of manufactured items from around the world.



Although those questions were always there, we did not address them and so we are now being shown a very undesirable **FUTURE** where the planet and all life on it faces the distinct possibility of extinction – we could easily lose everything. Scrooge was shown the life of others – the Cratchett family and Tiny Tim. Life and livelihood had been lost. We know that many people around the world have already experienced disaster in the form of floods, drought, wildfires where homes and livings have vanished quickly. It was in Scrooge's power to change the future if he changed himself. He woke up to the things that were wrong in time to be able to put them right and make a difference. **That time for us is NOW!** I hope you were able to watch the "Earthshot" Prize led by the Prince of Wales which made awards to some brilliant global initiatives and offered encouragement to us all. The keyword here is **ALL**, caring for the planet cannot be left to others – it needs millions and billions of us each "waking up" to make choices that help our planet to recover instead of making it more unwell. SEFG is here to help. We know that there is a huge groundswell of people wanting to do the right things, but maybe not quite sure what those things are. We have arranged an "Environmental Cinema" month at John Peel Centre in March – Watch this space for further details of films and talks, and we are working with the town council to enhance information and understanding for all. Scrooge became an altogether happier person once he changed his ways – it's the confidence that comes from being on a good track. **OUR CHALLENGE FOR FEBRUARY** is to have a conversation with at least one other person to share ideas for **REDUCING** earth-damaging items that we use, and then to make **A GOOD CHANGE**. If you belong to a group, can this be a group activity?



Suffolk
Wildlife Trust

Stowmarket Wildlife Group – Suffolk Wildlife Trust

The meetings will be held at the Village Hall, Stowupland, IP14 4BQ

Admission £3.00.

APRIL 2023

**Wednesday 26 April, 7.30pm – ADDERS AT MINSMERE
With Steve Everett**

Adders are the UK's only venomous snake and receive plenty of hysterical publicity in the press, despite the fact that many people have never even seen one. Yet they are fascinating creatures and deserve our understanding and respect rather than fear. In this illustrated talk we will look at the lives of the Adders at RSPB Minsmere, one of the best places to look for them in Suffolk.

JUNE 2023

Wednesday 28 June, 7.30pm – to be confirmed

SEPTEMBER 2023

**Wednesday 27 September, 7.30pm – HOGGING IN HEDGEROWS
With Paula Baker from the Suffolk Prickles Hedgehog Rescue**

The importance of hedgerows to hedgehogs and wildlife.

NOVEMBER 2023

**Wednesday 29 November, 7.30pm – BATS IN SUFFOLK
With Anne and Dennis Kell**

Anne and Dennis are retired teachers with a lifelong interest in wildlife. They have been members of the Suffolk Bat Group since the 1980s and have also been licensed bat workers with Natural England. Their presentation will introduce the audience to the world of bats and talk a little more about their ecology and life styles in the UK, especially in Suffolk.

They will also try to show some of the activities in which the Suffolk Bat Group has been involved, including surveys that anyone can join in.

Arrangements may change.

Please check the Suffolk Wildlife Trust website at www.suffolkwildlifetrust.org/events for updated information about these events.

CONTACT

Heather Salmon - 07722 871205 heathersalmon50@gmail.com

NEW NATURE RESERVE – MARTLESHAM WILDS

We are pleased to share news of a brand-new nature reserve for Suffolk.

The farmland, riverside marshes and saltings, adjacent to Martlesham and Woodbridge have been bought by Suffolk Wildlife Trust to be managed for wildlife, as a nature reserve, which will be called Martlesham Wilds.

Our nature reserves are fragments of the wilder landscape Suffolk once had and so, alongside protecting places that are already special, we also want to bring nature back where it has been lost. This is our ambition for Martlesham Wilds. The combination of internationally important habitat alongside the Deben and the chance to allow nature to reclaim the arable fields is what makes this such an exciting prospect for us - and for nature.

Wilds is an old Suffolk term for a rougher, wildlife-rich landscape. It echoes our vision for the new nature reserve. The patchwork of hedge-lined fields that roll gently down to the river will gradually 'wild' into an intricate mosaic of natural habitats, with thickets of thorny scrub, maintained by grazing. The emergence of this new pastoral landscape will be thrilling to watch.

An organic farm for over 30 years, the land is already home to a wonderful array of plants, animals and invertebrates. Nature is poised to return and the new habitats will be seeded by the fabulous network of mature hedges, ancient oaks and grass margins which frame the fields.

We had to act quickly to secure the land and thanks to a substantial legacy gift from Pam and George Ford we were able to do so. The purchase was completed with a loan of £1million, which we now need to pay back within a year, and we will be seeking help from the Suffolk community to achieve this fundraising target.

More information can be found at www.suffolkwildlifetrust.org/martlesham-wilds.

We are very excited about the opportunity to protect this beautiful piece of Suffolk and give nature more space to thrive.

HOLY TRINITY CHURCH

NEWS

HOLY TRINITY CHURCH
STOWUPLAND



Vicar: Vacancy

Churchwardens: Mrs Ann Doubtfire Tel. 770363
Mrs Sue Hayter Tel. 613710

Email: www.achurchnearyou.com/church/2082/benefice/

Dear All

We do hope that you had an enjoyable Christmas and are now settled into the New Year.

Our search for a new vicar has started, we will be advertising soon and hope to interview in the Spring. We as a church are praying for the right person to lead our Benefice in worship, praise and prayer. We will update you in next month's Telstar

A Church Near You

Have you discovered the 'A Church Near You' website yet? This is a website supported by the Church of England to provide a platform for information about churches locally to where you are. Stowupland has its own page that you can discover, see link below

www.achurchnearyou.com/church/2086/

By looking at this page you will see all the services at Holy Trinity plus any social events that are coming up and other news events and information. There is also a page for prayers, and you can get in contact with YOUR local church via the link on the website if you want to.

There are pages for so many churches all around the county on A Church Near You, it's well worth looking at if you are on holiday or visiting a different area

We pray for you as you journey though 2023

Blessings from the Ministry Team and Church Wardens of Holy Trinity

Please Note: - During the vacancy the type of service may need to be changed but the times of the service will be as stated.

Services in February 2023

5th Feb	11.00am	Parish Communion
8th Feb	9.30am	Worship for All
15th Feb	9.30am	Morning Prayer
22nd Feb	6.30pm	Evensong
28th Feb Tue	9.00pm	Compline at Wetherden

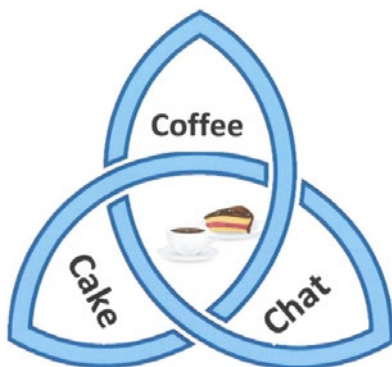
A PRAYER: We thank you, our father, for all the varied talents you have given to us your children: Above all we thank you for the greater gifts of understanding, sympathy and friendship, which can bring help and happiness to others.

Show each of us what are your special gifts to us, and enable us to use them for your glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

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. 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 groups/meetings. For more information, please contact Sue Hayter on 01449 613710. Thank you.

Come and join us for



Stowupland Church Hall

Saturday 18th February

10:00 to 12:00

**There will be tea/coffee, cakes, raffle
and good company**

Everyone is welcome



U.R.C CHAPEL

NEWS

Minister: Revd Robert Sheard
Telephone 01449 678173

Our coffee morning in November was well attended and we look forward to the next one on Friday 24 February 2023.

It is the beginning of a new year, and we reassess our commitments and where we are on our faith journey. In this current crisis we must just take one day at a time, much like it says in the well-known song sung by Meriam Bellina.

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

The Speakers for February are as follows:

05 February Revd Robert Sheard

12 February Stephen Horrex

19 February Jim Spencer

26 February Nichola Glasse

Joyce Gardiner

Minister's Message

Revelation 21: 1-2

¹Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth. The first heaven and the first earth disappeared, and the sea vanished. ²And I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared and ready, like a bride dressed to meet her husband.

Back at the beginning of January did you make a New Year's resolution? Have you kept to it? I have to admit that it's a long time since I made a New Year's resolution, but it is the only one I have kept and that was not to make any more New Year's resolutions!

New Year's resolutions are usually about making our life better, a new beginning, it could be to lose weight, not to eat so much chocolate, to do more exercise, to get a better job..... but usually after a couple of weeks we give up, we give in to temptation and feel that we cannot restart what we were doing and fall back into our old ways.

I think that one reason we try New Year's resolutions is that at the beginning of a New Year we should start something new, the old year may not have been the best, so, the New Year should be something better, but how easily we can give up things when they stop being easy.

As Christians, we are always being called to begin again; if things don't go right, we can start again and make a new beginning, because we are called to be part of the kingdom of God. It is God who brings about the new beginnings so whatever time of year it is we must put our trust and faith in God.

Robert

Reverend Robert Sheard Minister of the Stowmarket group of Churches. The group consists of Stowmarket, Debenham, Mendlesham, Haughley & Stowupland)

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FREEMAN COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL



Although Christmas may seem a while ago at time of reading, we were just approaching the festive season in our last article.

Christmas Performances

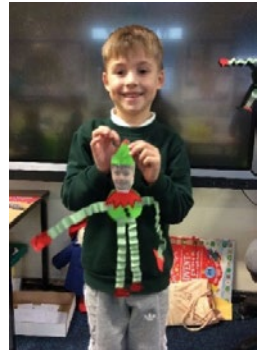
The Reception and Year 2 children performed their Nativities to parents and carers, which was the first time parents and carers had been able to attend in person since the pandemic. We were not sure who was excited the most – the children or the parents!



The children from Years 4, 5 and 6 who are currently taking music lessons with County Music also performed to their parents and carers. The Year 5s have been learning how to play the guitar as a class, and some of the Year 6s who learnt last year, chose to continue with their lessons this year. Children from all three years have the opportunity to learn the flute and clarinet. The parents and carers thoroughly enjoyed the performance and were very impressed with how well they played, especially those who have only started lessons this term.

Carol Singing at Steeple View

The Year 1 and 5 children visited the residents of Steeple View before Christmas. They sang Christmas songs and some of the residents enjoyed singing along with them. After some refreshments the children had a little chat with the residents who commented on how well the children had remembered the words and how happy they looked singing. It was lovely to be able to visit Steeple View again and spread some Christmas cheer!



Festive Maths

Cherry Tree, our Year 1 class, learnt about 2D and 3D shapes before Christmas, linking their learning to Christmas crafts. They had a carousel of activities to choose from including making a cylinder snowman, triangle Christmas trees, twig stars, sphere reindeers and a 2D Santa. What a creative way to learn maths!

They also had fun turning themselves into elves. They cut out all the shapes to make the elves and then stuck a photo of their face on them.





Christmas Forest School

Beech, our Year 3 class, made Christmas trees in Forest

School by finding sticks of different lengths and laying them on the field in size order.

They also used their Forest School skills to whittle sticks which they then turned into Santas.



Road Safety Officers

We have recently appointed Junior Road Safety Officers (JRSOs). We received 22 applications for the posts from pupils across Years 5 and 6. The four successful applicants introduced themselves to the rest of the school during assembly last term and talked to them about the importance of wearing bright, fluorescent coats and/or accessories when walking in the dark. Their message was **BE BRIGHT BE SEEN**. The children were then all given reflectors to clip onto their back packs or coats.

Latiah, who is one of our JSROs, put together this article for the Telstar.

"Hello. We are Millie, Lily, Esme and Latiah, the newly appointed Junior Road Safety Officers at Freeman Community Primary School. It is our job to promote road safety issues in school and the local community, to help keep everyone safe.

During the past few months, we have organised a competition to design a new logo. Look out for Nancy's winning design around the village!



We have to keep a scrap book of everything we do and also have a JRSO Board in school, where we post road safety messages. We have lots planned for this term, including before and after school patrols!"

We look forward to finding out about what the JSROs have been up to in future articles.



Thank you!

Central England Co-op kindly donated £200 worth of gift vouchers for the school to use to purchase supplies for the Breakfast Club we provide for parents and carers. Tami Evans, the Members and Community Events Coordinator for Norfolk and Suffolk, and Dan Nielson from Stowupland Co-op visited the school just before Christmas and have also offered us lots of support for any future projects, including raffles and school-based workshops for the children in class. A big thank you to Central England Co-op – all assistance is definitely appreciated in the current financial climate.

We also had two lovely patchwork blankets donated earlier in the year by Project Linus UK for use in our well-being area. Project Linus is a 100% volunteer non-profit Community Interest Company whose mission is to provide love, a sense of security, warmth and comfort to children, by donating gifts of new, homemade, washable quilts and blankets, lovingly made by UK volunteer knitters and quilters. The quilts were fantastic and have really brightened up the area.



Our final thank you is to Asda Stowmarket, who contacted us in January to see if we would like any tulip, snowdrop or anemone bulbs which were past their expiry date. We gratefully received the bulbs and look forward to planting them around the school grounds.

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STOWUPLAND HIGH SCHOOL

Mock Elections - Ben Jolly, Year 12, a representative of the Liberal Democrats

On Friday 2nd December, Stowupland High School held a mock election. For this election, the Year 12 Politics students had to choose a party and campaign as politicians for that party. Students from across the school would then be able to vote for their favourite party to win the election. The politicians had to write speeches, create posters, and campaign in assembly. There were representatives from the Conservative, Labour, Green and Liberal Democrat parties. On the week leading up to the election, each party had to campaign in assemblies of each year group, encouraging people to vote for their chosen representative. We had to display posters around the school, and campaign to the various students during that time. This was also amusing when each party was slandering the other politicians during this time: trying to recreate local elections!

This general election in our school showed us, and the school, how a real general election would work. It was really useful as some of the Year 12 students would like to run in politics - this was a great trial run for any future careers. We also saw some attempts at coalitions, as well as tactical voting, which linked to our political course. It was also beneficial for the school, as it allowed the lower school to partake in politics and have their say. This showed them how they can vote and participate in elections in the future.

On election day, we had a polling station open before school, at break and at lunch. Hundreds of students flocked to participate and we ensured that they were able to vote democratically in booths with no observers. It was tense when counting the votes to decide the winner. After a week of hard-fought campaigning, the representative of the Green Party won. Our thanks must go to everyone who helped this happen – we really enjoyed it and can't wait for next year!



Life as a Year 7 student – Fern Taylor, Year 7

As a Year 6 student thinking about joining Secondary School, it seemed daunting for me to join the school. When I first joined Stowupland, I was very worried I would be bullied and would not make any friends. However, now I've settled in, it's really nice here and I love every lesson I have.

In primary school, I felt very settled and was happy every day; now I think back it was pretty boring sitting in the same classroom all day! The years flew by and, in Year Six, I had to say goodbye to many of my closest friends.

On my first proper day, I was really excited to see so many more people in school. It was hectic! The lessons were even more fun and there are a variety of activities to participate at lunch and after school; there really is something for everyone. It has helped me to develop my learning and my hobbies.

One of my friends has said they like High School too - it can be quite exhausting but, when you get into the flow of it, it becomes a lot easier. Someone else has said it is better than primary school as you are free. Also, you have different teachers for each lesson and equipment is better. It's so great to be here, and I really enjoy it!

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STOWMARKET VOLLEYBALL CLUB

- IN STOWUPLAND

Stowmarket Volleyball Club has three sections. Two of these are based at Stowupland Sports Centre! Over the last year the third section has been developed to allow them to introduce younger players and their parents to the third most popular sport in the world. This Volley2s session now has a good mix of primary-aged children (age 7+), secondary and adults.

It has been possible to introduce this session thanks to support from Mid Suffolk District Council's Community Restart Fund, Community Action Suffolk and Ron Ames Memorial Sports Fund. Together these helped get the volleyball equipment at Stowupland High upgraded to make the hall suitable for a wide range of ages to play at the same time.

The club is keen to give more local families the opportunity to enjoy this sport and welcome them to their Wednesday evening 5:50-7:10pm Volley2s sessions.

Full details are available at <http://stowmarket-volleyball.org.uk/volley2s>.

The club also runs open sessions for adults of all abilities and juniors aged 12 and above on Sundays from 6-8pm at Mid Suffolk Leisure Centre and a Wednesday 8-10pm session at Stowupland High for competitive men. Those attending this form the squad which competes in the National Volleyball League and local competitions. Anyone wanting to watch NVL action can go along when Stowupland hosts Wapping Wildcats and Spelthorne Lions on Sunday 19th March from 11:30am.

For more information on the club see <https://stowmarket-volleyball.org.uk/>.



STOWUPLAND BOWLS CLUB

I know it is a cliché, but the New Year is here and the club is able to look forward to an exciting season.

The AGM was well attended and the committee was completed with a new treasurer. Members were very appreciative of the work of the committee members as are the team captains.

A number of those players who were new to the game have progressed to a level enabling them to play in cup and league games. The club is going from strength to strength.

Like many clubs the work on the green and surroundings continue throughout the winter so, if you are able to help, please contact the secretary who will put you in contact with the people in charge.

New members are always very welcome. During March /April come along and give it a go. Help is available. More details of days and times will be published in the coming months.

Very best wishes to all for the New Year and we look forward to seeing you soon.

John Mollett

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You've nothing sharp to take.
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Before you find your gate.
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It's time to catch your plane.

You board the plane quite leisurely,
And settle in your place.
You elected for economy,
There's not a lot of space.

The pilot gets the all clear,
Your muscles they go taut.
The engines roar, the plane takes off,
Have you still got your passport?



LOCAL HISTORY GROUP

We are now well into 2023 and Christmas 2022 is history. Here's hoping for a healthy and, if not prosperous, then at least a happy year. Membership renewals are now due with annual subscriptions being held at £15.00 for new and existing members, but we have had to increase the monthly admission fees, so members will pay £2.00 whilst for visitors it will be £4.00.

We look forward to meeting up again on Wednesday February 1st when members who handed over their gold coins for the Christmas Quiz will be able to pick up an answer sheet. We will also hear Hannah Salmon talk about **Medieval Stowmarket's Market Disputes.**

If February still seems too cold and dark to venture out in the evening maybe you will join us on March 1st when Elspeth Rushbrooke will talk to us about the life of a lady from Great Ashfield who survived the sinking of The Titanic.

Neil now looks back to November 2022 when we were delighted to welcome John Day as speaker at our November Meeting. John runs the East Anglian Traditional Art Centre in Wickham Market which is open to the public and holds a large collection of works by East Anglian Artists. John's interest in art is inherited from his father Harold who while a farmer in Essex would take pigs to Colchester Market and would often visit the castle museum there, becoming interested in the collection of paintings by East Anglian artists. From here he went on to build a collection of artworks himself by local artists finding that he could often pick up a good painting for the price of a pig - £6!

Harold and his family eventually moved to Eastbourne on the south coast where he opened an art gallery and John grew up working there, learning the trade and became an experienced art restorer.

We were taken through examples of his collection, John talking about the painting and telling us a little about the artist. We naturally think of Constable and Gainsborough when we think about East Anglian artists but we learnt that Norfolk and Suffolk could claim a great many more talented artists such as Thomas Churchyard of Woodbridge, Crome of Norwich, Smythe and Frost in the 19th century and in the 20th century Munnings, Harry Becker and G.T. Rope. John has examples of most of these artists but would still like to add a Munnings to the collection. We also heard how John was involved with an episode of the BBC programme "Fake or Fortune" that involved the authenticity of a work by Gainsborough. He often loans paintings out to exhibitions including at The Food Museum in Stowmarket.

Anyone interested in visiting the East Anglian Traditional Art Centre can find details of opening times at <https://www.eatac.co.uk>.

If you have any comments or questions please contact our secretary, Jerry Voden on 01449 703717 or voden@btinternet.com.

DOWN MEMORY LANE

We are running out of photos for **Down Memory Lane** so I thought I would throw in the occasional quiz. This one is relevant to Neil's article last month on the Amundevilles and you will have read the answer in last year's February Telstar (no 349) when he explored some of the old woodlands that we have lost.

The question is, where was the area known as Badegryn Woods?

Was it where Trinity Meadows now stands?

Did Mill Lane run through it?

Was it to the east of Saxham Street and Grange farmland and Earl Stonham.

The answer will be in next month's Telstar.



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December was an expensive month, with presents to buy and heating bills going up, and now I'm really struggling financially. I've seen offers for 'Buy Now Pay Later' when I'm doing online shopping. It seems like a good way to spread the cost of some of the things I need but how can I make sure I don't get into debt?

With everything getting more expensive, it's sensible to be thinking about how you can manage. There are lots of things you can do to try and stay in control of your money.

Before you start spending, work out exactly what money you have coming in and going out each month. Be realistic about what you need for essentials like food and travel. Take a look at the budgeting tool on the Citizens Advice website citizensadvice.org.uk/debt-and-money/budgeting. This can help you set a budget you can stick to.

You'll also be able to find tips on how to reduce your regular living costs, which might be helpful if you're struggling to keep within your budget. While it can be tempting to split payments with schemes like Buy Now Pay Later (BNPL), you'll need a plan to pay the money back. If you're using something like that repeatedly, you might be managing for now, but it could also be a sign that it's unaffordable in the long run. Keep a record of how much you owe in total.

Always make sure you understand what you're signing up for, how you'll make the repayments and what will happen if you can't pay on time.

It's important to check the returns process for both the retailer and credit provider. Paying through BNPL may also affect the cost of postage returns if you've ordered online. The riskiest thing about it is that you're not guaranteed to be protected if something goes wrong. For example, you can't go to the Financial Ombudsman Service if you have a complaint.

If you find yourself turning to credit cards, your overdraft, or store cards for your spending, keep track of what you owe. You should prioritise paying your rent or mortgage, plus energy bills and Council Tax first, because not paying these has the most serious consequences. On the Citizens Advice website, you can find information on what bills to prioritise and how to manage debts. There's also information on the support available for paying these and other bills.

If, like many during this crisis, you find you can't afford to reduce your debts after paying your priority bills and essentials, seek advice as soon as possible. If you need specific support or don't feel able to manage your situation alone, contact Citizens Advice Mid Suffolk so they can help you find a way forward.

Everyone's circumstances are different, particularly when it comes to managing personal finances, so it's important to get support that's correct for you.

As the weather has turned colder, I've noticed mould and damp in our flat. It's mainly in our bedroom, including some black mould on the carpet. I've been chasing our letting agency, who say they'll speak to our landlord. I'm really worried about how this might affect our health. Our tenancy agreement isn't up for eight months, what can I do?

It's good that you've already raised the issue with your letting agency. Unfortunately, it isn't always easy to work out the cause of mould or damp this can make it difficult to work out if your landlord is responsible, unless there's an obvious cause, like a leaking roof.

There are many causes of damp that properties can get. The most common are rising, penetrating, construction and condensation damp. On our website there is information that may help you work out what type of damp you have, who is responsible and what you can do. Check your tenancy agreement too for mentions of repairs and damp, and reach out to Citizens Advice on anything you're unsure about.

A landlord will have to act in relation to damp if it makes the property unsafe for someone to live in. This could be for example, if it is making the tenant or a member of their family ill. The landlord will also be responsible if the damp is related to repairs they should have carried out, like if heaters are broken. If the damp has damaged items that the landlord is responsible for, such as carpets and window frames, they'll likely have to cover the cost of repairs.

One of the most common causes of damp is condensation. To prevent this, it's important to keep homes well-heated and well-ventilated, but for a lot of people this will be trickier to do given the colder weather and higher heating costs. You may be eligible for help to insulate and heat your home, and should visit our website to find out more.

On our website we also have advice on things that can make damp worse and may impact the landlord taking responsibility for repairs. These include drying clothes on heaters or blocking air vents.

If your landlord is responsible for the damp in your property but doesn't act, there are steps you can take, such as reporting them to the local authority. If you're in social housing you might also be able to use the landlord's formal complaints procedure. There is more information about this on our website. If it reaches the point where you want to get out of a fixed term tenancy agreement early, speak to Citizens Advice Mid Suffolk first, as there might be better ways to approach the issue. You may also find helpful information on <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/housing/renting-privately/during-your-tenancy/dealing-with-repairs/>

Citizens Advice Mid Suffolk can provide advice on this and other issues, including debt, employment, benefits and family law. You can contact them on 01449 676060 or use the contact form at midsuffolkcab.org.uk/contact-us . More information and our opening hours can also be found at midsuffolkcab.org.uk/contact-us .

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Telstar – for the community, by the community.

From the Telstar Committee

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