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NOTES FROM THE EDITOR

FEBRUARY 2026

Although it may now be considered a little late to extend New Year wishes, I would still like to take this opportunity to wish everyone a very happy and healthy 2026.

A heartfelt thank you goes out to all the teams who participated in the Telstar community quiz held in December. The event was very well attended and proved to be a great success. Congratulations are in order for 'The Night Before Christmas', who emerged victorious after a tense tiebreaker against my own team, 'The Posse'. This marks the second occasion our team has unfortunately lost in a tiebreaker, so we clearly need to up our game next time!

Special mention must also go to the winners of the editor's prize for the most festive team. This accolade was awarded to the Ho Ho Ho's, who truly went above and beyond, presenting themselves in fantastic festive style.



The next quiz night will be next month. Details are inside, and it'd be great to see as many of you there as possible. It is a good night out.

With the festive season now behind us, I suspect that, like me, some of you might be keen to shed a few extra pounds. If so, you'll be pleased to hear that Stowmarket Striders are organising both a 10k run and a half-marathon in March. Both events will start and finish at Stowupland Beacon, with further details provided inside.

Lastly, I note the parish council have a vacancy, so are you interested in joining? It can be a rewarding experience and allows contributing and making a difference to village life. Further details are in the report on the January Parish Council meeting.

Councillor Surgery

Meet your councillors

District Councillors Janet Pearson and Agnes Watson

County Councillors Keith Welham and Andrew Stringer

Saturday February 28th at Stowupland Village Hall meeting room 10am to 12pm.

Please come and talk to us about any issues concerning you in our area



No appointment necessary



DISTRICT COUNCILLORS' REPORT

JANUARY 2026

Norwich to Tilbury power lines

The drop in surgery with officers will continue, although now on a monthly basis. The meeting time is 11 am to midday as a drop-in session, and this will repeat monthly on Thursdays for a while. If the surgery sessions are helpful, officers will look to continue to offer them throughout the examination and beyond, but the regularity of sessions may change depending on officer availability. Questions can be emailed in advance to planningpink@aberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk, but this is not essential.

The next session will be on Thursday, 12th February 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

New grant funding

A new Gateway 14 Community Benefit Fund has been launched to support community groups to deliver activities that make a meaningful difference in their area. The fund will run for three years, with £30,000 available each year.

Organisations based within a five-mile radius of Gateway 14 can apply for up to £5,000 to cover either revenue or capital costs, with these grants able to fund up to 100% of total project expenditure. Applications can be submitted via <https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/community-funding>.

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 – click on the 'Access community funding' button.

For advice or further information, please email the grants team at: BMSDCgrants@aberghmidsuffolk.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.

Cllr Janet Pearson

Janet.Pearson@midsuffolk.gov.uk
07928 512592

Cllr Agnes Watson

Agnes.Watson@midsuffolk.gov.uk
07599 828819

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COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

FEBRUARY 2026

Protecting Suffolk's Rivers

At council on Thursday, 11th December, my group proposed a motion to strengthen protection for rivers in the county via the Universal Declaration of the Rights of Rivers, which includes the right to flow naturally, be free from pollution or contamination and the right to recover from environmental harm. Councillors in the group and those from other groups at the council spoke passionately about rivers and the harm being done to them by sewage, agricultural and highways run off. Unfortunately, the Conservative group opted to vote against the motion, and it was not carried.

Other Motions

Other motions tabled at the December meeting included a request that the council write to the government to protest against the recent budget announcements – this was agreed. A motion criticising the council's record on Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and a fourth motion relating to the importance of local Post Offices failed as the majority of the Conservative members voted against.

Suffolk Minerals and Waste Plan

At Cabinet on Tuesday, 2nd December, preparation arrangements were agreed for the county's Minerals and Waste plan, which is now five years old and due for renewal. The plan looks at the county's needs and decides what planning measures need to be taken to meet them – for example, aggregates such as sand and gravel, which are necessary for housebuilding. As the government has announced high targets for housing in Suffolk, the amount of these materials needed will be higher than before. As the Local Government Reorganisation process means that Suffolk County Council will likely not exist by the time the plan is due to be adopted, the decision made by Cabinet was to undertake all the preparatory work and gather evidence so that the new authority/ies who have to complete and publish the plan will be well-placed to do so once established.

Review of SEND progress

On Thursday, 4th December, the council's Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Committee convened to scrutinise progress on the action plan for improvement to Suffolk's Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) services. The action plan was developed following a poor inspection report from Ofsted and CQC in November 2023. Council officers and Cabinet members for children's services joined the meeting and acknowledged that although progress had been made to clear the backlog of Education and Health Care Plans (EHCPs) and improve the waiting times to produce them and review them annually, many families had not yet felt the benefit of improvements the council and health partners were trying to embed. The Cabinet member for Education and SEND apologised at the meeting for this. It was noted that some issues, like the shortage of speech and language therapists, were a national issue rather than specific to Suffolk. The council is also working closely with the Department for Education and in partnership with Bedford Borough Council on best practice and support with strategy.

The government's Schools white paper, which is expected to include an overhaul of the SEND system nationally, is expected soon in 2026. Members of the committee included education professionals and parents of children with special educational needs who expressed their concern that the council was still not providing a good enough service to Suffolk families.

Cabinet Meeting 9th January 2026

Cabinet met on 9th January to consider a report on the implementation of a process for the introduction of 20 mph limits and zones. The process was agreed and sets out the steps which need to be taken to put forward a proposal for a 20 mph limit.

Cabinet also discussed responses to Government queries on the two unitary council proposals for Suffolk to replace the existing two-tier system of local government with either a single unitary authority (proposed by the Conservative Administration at Suffolk County Council) or three separate unitary councils (proposed by the District and Borough Councils). Opposition members are not permitted to take part in Cabinet debates; the debate was therefore very one-sided, listing what were considered to be the financial advantages, without any mention of the advantages, which include the benefits to residents of having a more locally elected council.

Extraordinary Council and Cabinet Meetings 12th January 2026

Another extraordinary meeting of Suffolk County Council was held on the morning of Monday, 12th January, to discuss the government's suggestion to postpone the county council elections for the second year running. The original delay was agreed to allow for the mayoral election to take place at the same time as the county elections; the mayoral election was then postponed by the government, but some of the funding attached to the mayoral office is due to be given to the interim authorities next financial year and in future years. If this further delay is agreed, it would mean that new strategic funding would be given to Suffolk County Council in years 2026/27 and 2027/28.

Decisions on how this funding should be spent will be taken by a Council elected in 2021 to serve for four years. Our group is lobbying the county council not to ask the government for any further delays in elections. The Council meeting was followed by an extraordinary meeting of Cabinet, as it is Cabinet, not full Council, who would decide whether or not to ask Government to cancel the elections due to be held in May 2026 – already postponed from May 2025.

Not a single conservative backbencher nor Labour member spoke in the debate and Cabinet members refused to give their views on whether or not to support postponement. Members of the Green, Liberal Democrat and Independent Group spoke against any further postponement and put forward an amendment to the main motion seeking a commitment from the Council that the Government Minister be informed that the elections should not be further delayed. This amendment was lost because all Conservative members voted against, whereas all opposition members voted in favour of elections going ahead in May 2026.

At the Cabinet meeting held later on the same day, Cabinet members reiterated their concerns for the future reorganisation, but not one of them gave a view in support of holding the planned elections.

My group remains concerned that councillors elected in 2021 to serve until 2025 will be expected to continue until 2027 or 2028 without any democratic mandate to do so. Cabinet members voted unanimously to write to the government outlining capacity concerns that might be felt if elections were to go ahead. Following this letter, the Minister for Local Government, Alison McGovern, is expected to decide within the first couple of weeks of February on whether elections will go ahead in the county.

SCC Budget Process

The Scrutiny Committee met on 13 January to scrutinise the 2026/27 draft revenue budget and the 2026/30 capital programme. Cabinet will discuss the budget and programme on 27 January; final decisions, including agreeing the precept, will be taken at full council on 12 February. Central Government have already stated that they expect every authority to increase council tax by 4.99%, 2.99% general fund and 2.00% for adult social care.

New Funding for Buses and Sustainable Travel

Suffolk has been awarded £27m of funding for bus services from the government's Local Authority Bus Grant (LABG), which can be used for routes, ticketing or improving infrastructure like bus stops and shelters. Previously known as the Bus Services Improvement Grant, communities in Suffolk will be able to suggest improvements in their area and 'bid' for funding via the Suffolk on Board website: <https://www.suffolkonboard.com/>

The council has also been awarded just over £12m from Active Travel England to promote sustainable travel in the county. This can be used to invest in footpaths, cycle lanes and other infrastructure. Examples of how this funding has been used recently include pedestrian crossings in Bridge Street and College Road by Ipswich waterfront and improved cycle routes, including from Ipswich Hospital to the waterfront area, Nacton Road in Ipswich, Main Road in Martlesham, and within Woodbridge as part of the town's current active travel project. Cllr Chris Chambers, the Cabinet Member for Transport Strategy at the council, said it was important for the council to develop a network of measures to encourage people out of the car wherever possible in order to reduce congestion and pollution.

Warm Homes in Suffolk

At the end of November 2025, Suffolk County Council secured £1.38 million from the government's Warm Homes Local Grant Fund, which means Suffolk residents living in properties which are not energy efficient could be eligible for funding to make their homes warmer and reduce their energy bills.

Residents and landlords are urged to apply quickly, as the funding must be allocated by the end of March 2026.

The fund aims to provide free energy saving improvements to energy inefficient homes if residents are on a low income, receive certain benefits or live in a certain postcode area. This could be wall and loft insulation, solar panels or air source heat pumps. To be eligible, Suffolk homes must be privately owned (either by you or your landlord) and have an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) of D, E, F or G (you can find this out when you apply). Household income must usually be £36,000 a year or less - but if you earn more than that, you might still be eligible if either:

- you live in a certain postcode area (certain areas of Beccles, Felixstowe, Ipswich, Lowestoft and Stowmarket)
- someone in your household is getting certain benefits
- you have a severe or long-term health condition, which is adversely affected by living in a cold home

Once these conditions have been approved, an assessment of your home will identify which measures are best suited to your property. These will then be installed by trusted contractors, for free. You can find out more and apply using this link: <https://www.warmhomessuffolk.org/>

In addition, Suffolk County Council and East Suffolk Council have teamed up to provide Winter Warmth Packs to help vulnerable residents stay warm and healthy at home, even if they are struggling with rising living costs. Referrals are via community groups, food banks, GP surgeries or hospitals, and each pack includes items such as thermal hats, gloves, blankets and gilets, tailored as necessary – for example, children's winter coats can be included. Although the Warm Homes Healthy People programme is delivered by East Suffolk Council, it is a county-wide programme.

Keith Welham
Keith.Welham@suffolk.gov.uk
Tel: 07831 705 714



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PARISH COUNCIL REPORT

DECEMBER 2025



Attendance and Apologies - The Parish Council meeting for December 2025 commenced with one member of the public in attendance, alongside five Parish Councillors and Councillor Watson from Mid Suffolk District Council (MSDC). Councillor Ray Studd chaired the meeting. Apologies were received from two Parish Councillors, Suffolk County Council (SCC) Councillor Keith Welham, and MSDC Councillor Janet Pearson.

Councillors' Reports - Councillor Studd confirmed that the reports from Suffolk County Council and Mid Suffolk District Council had been distributed to all Parish Councillors, and their receipt was acknowledged. There were no questions regarding the SCC report. Councillor Watson reviewed the MSDC report, highlighting the ongoing consultation regarding Local Government Reorganisation in Suffolk. Residents were encouraged to submit their comments by 11 January 2026, when the consultation closes. Both reports are available elsewhere in Telstar, with details on how to comment also provided. No questions were raised on either report.

Matters of Report - The Clerk presented her report, noting that a significant amount of ongoing work was in progress. A meeting was scheduled at Footpath 32 to discuss the continuing repairs, with updates required by 5 December 2025. Members from Suffolk County Council, who are responsible for the repairs, would be present. It was also noted that MSDC had decided not to distribute seeds for planting on the mounds on the green at this time; planting will now take place in the spring.

Public Forum - There were no questions raised during the Public Forum.

Planning - One new planning application was received this month for a bungalow at Windy Ridge, Mill Street, Stowupland (IP14 5BL). The Planning Officer provided a report, and after discussion, it was agreed to support the application. Additionally, an application for new advertising at the Co-op, requesting a variation to allow eight hours of display time, was approved by the MSDC planning department. An application for the erection of new factory buildings on land southwest of Rendall Lane, Stowupland, was also discussed; Councillors were informed that the appeal had been cancelled.

Finance - The Council reviewed and acknowledged the payments and receipts recorded since the previous month. It was agreed to pay the bills for December 2025. The Council also approved the transfer of funds between accounts to comply with recommended changes under the Financial Services Compensation Scheme (FSCS) protection limits.

Budget and Precept - Councillors expressed their gratitude to the Clerk for her work on preparing this year's precept figures. The Council unanimously approved the budget and precept request to be submitted to MSDC. Grants were awarded to several village organisations: £2,995 to the Telstar Management Committee towards the production of the magazine for 2026/27, and £303 to the Stowupland Good Neighbour Scheme for their 2026/27 costs. The Citizens' Advice Bureau, based in Stowmarket, requested a donation due to an increase in local residents using the service. The Council agreed to donate £500 for 2026/27.

It was also agreed to apply for a "Pride in Your Place" wildflower grant project, with the Clerk tasked to investigate the application process.

Parish Infrastructure and Improvement Plan (PIIP) / CIL - The Council noted the committee's endorsement of the working group's report. A grant of £2,000 was awarded to Stowupland Cricket Club for the purchase of a new lawn mower for maintaining the cricket square. Other current projects under the Parish Infrastructure and Improvement Plan remain ongoing.

Cemetery and Churchyard - The Clerk reported on a meeting with a member of the Parochial Church Council (PCC) and plans for a further meeting with the grass cutting contractor. Several works were discussed, and a report detailing these was circulated to Councillors. The Council agreed to accept the report and the associated costs, totalling £2,790, for the various jobs requiring completion. The possibility of a full resurfacing of the paths in the churchyard was debated. It was decided to await the outcome of the current works and for the Clerk to obtain quotes for the potential resurfacing. Councillors agreed that more research was necessary before committing funds to what would be a significant project.

Clerk's Report - Several outstanding tasks were identified for completion, with Councillors agreeing to engage a handyman for the work. The Clerk also noted that some jobs could be carried out by a volunteer working party. Parish Council vacancies have been advertised in Telstar, and interested residents are encouraged to contact the Clerk or speak to any serving Parish Councillor to become involved.

Councillor Reports - Councillor Voden expressed thanks to everyone who participated in the Remembrance Day service at Holy Trinity, reporting that it went well. He also confirmed his intention to attend the Mayor of Stowmarket's fundraising afternoon tea on 18 January 2026. Councillor Murton thanked all who attended the recent SOAP event at the Sports and Social Club, noting it was very well attended. The visit from Police Officer PC Gedney, part of the Community Policing team for Mid Suffolk North and East, was also welcomed.

Correspondence - Correspondence was received from the Suffolk Association of Local Councils regarding Local Government Reorganisation, and from MP Adrian Ramsay about the Pylon projects in Suffolk, including parliamentary correspondence. A resident enquired about the progress of the transfer of Thradstone Meadow. The Clerk responded that the matter was still with the Parish Council's lawyers and would follow up accordingly. The Council also agreed that lights would be left on during Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve.

A resident present at the meeting suggested the Parish Council consider purchasing bleed kits to be located at various points in the village, with costings and seven suggested locations provided. Councillors agreed in principle but wished to examine security and access arrangements, especially outside of normal hours. The Council resolved to investigate the costs of suitable storage boxes. The Clerk will work with the resident between meetings, and this matter will be included on the agenda for the January 2026 meeting.

Next Meeting and Other Business - The Chair announced that the next Parish Council meeting will be held on Thursday, 8 January 2026, at 19:30 in the United Reformed Church (URC). All are welcome to attend. Additionally, a Biodiversity meeting is scheduled for 26 January 2026. With no further business to discuss, Councillor Studd closed the meeting at 20:21.

PARISH COUNCIL REPORT

JANUARY 2026



Introduction - The Parish Council convened its January 2026 meeting with two members of the public in attendance, alongside six Parish Councillors. Councillor Watson and Councillor Pearson represented Mid Suffolk District Council (MSDC), and Suffolk County Councillor Welham was also present. Councillor Donna Bridges chaired the meeting, extending New Year greetings and expressing gratitude to all for attending despite the inclement weather.

Attendance and Apologies - Apologies were received from one Parish Councillor who was unable to attend the meeting.

Councillors' Reports - Cllr Bridges provided updates on several ongoing village projects. A new safety sign was installed at the Retreat pond, and additional dog bins have been sited. Undertakers were notified of new graves at the cemetery and informed about the need to level the new plots, with work scheduled to commence imminently.

Matters of Report - The Clerk reviewed the latest report. MSDC has decided to delay the distribution of seeds for planting on the mounds on the green until spring. A "Pride in Your Place" grant application has been submitted to assist with costs related to the planned mound planting.

Public Forum - A member of the public raised concerns regarding dog fouling in the cemetery near a relative's grave. Although difficult to monitor, residents are requested to keep dogs under control and ensure all mess is cleared and disposed of properly during cemetery visits. The member also noted that tree cuttings in the cemetery had not been cleared; the Clerk will investigate and ensure the rubbish is removed. Another attendee enquired about acquiring bleed kits for the village. PC Gedney attended and reported on police activities over Christmas, noting several thefts in the area and advising residents to remain vigilant and secure valuables. Updates on ongoing theft investigations will be provided in due course.

County Councillor's Report - Cllr Welham delivered his report to the meeting, with full details available in the current edition of Telstar. There were no questions.

Mid Suffolk District Councillors' Report - Cllr Watson presented the district councillors' report, also published in this edition of Telstar. No questions were raised.

Planning Matters - Cllr Ray Studd led the discussion on planning applications. The council considered amendments to the new village hall plans, specifically a proposed external storage area, and unanimously supported the application. Since the December meeting, planning permission was granted for new driveway gates at Columbine Hall, while permission for a single-storey workshop at Stowupland Hall was refused.

Finance - The council reviewed and approved all payments and receipts recorded since last month and agreed to settle the bills for January 2026. A quotation for upgrading Parish Council email facilities was accepted.

Cemetery and Churchyard - Work is ongoing in both the cemetery and churchyard. Councillors were asked to reassess cemetery charges, last reviewed in January 2024. Following discussion, a 10% increase across all charges was agreed, effective from 01/01/2026. The Clerk will update the charges accordingly. A review of the cemetery policy was agreed, with proposed changes to be presented at the next meeting.

Clerk's Report - The Clerk reported several outstanding tasks, including obtaining a quote for repainting the bus shelter at Thorney Green Rd, which is still pending. After consultation with the contractor regarding FP32, it was proposed that crushed gravel stones be used for repairs and that tree stumps be removed, which the council approved. Regarding FP19, the Clerk met with the Suffolk County Council footpath officer and acknowledged ongoing signage confusion. Further options will be discussed at the next Parish Council meeting. The council accepted a contractor's quote for various works on the village green, including clearance of several dead trees and ditch maintenance.

Neighbourhood Plan Update - Councillors plan to meet later in January to discuss the future direction of the Neighbourhood Plan, with a report to be provided at the next meeting.

Bleed Kits Proposal - A resident present at the meeting proposed the installation of bleed kits in the village. PC Gedney commented that such kits are less commonly needed in rural areas. The resident suggested the Village Hall Management Committee consider installing a kit at the hall, given the frequency of sporting activities. Grant funding from a locality budget may be available for this initiative. Should the Village Hall support the proposal, the Parish Council will revisit the matter as an agenda item.

Councillors' Comments - Councillors agreed that January had been a quiet month, with no further remarks. Cllr Bridges announced the resignation of Cllr Power and stated that the Clerk would advertise the vacancy in Telstar and on parish noticeboards. Residents are encouraged to consider joining the Parish Council; further information is available from the Clerk or current councillors. Dates for the Annual Parish Meeting and volunteer days for village maintenance will be published in Telstar, on noticeboards, and on the village web site.

Correspondence - This month's correspondence included information from the Suffolk Association of Local Councils regarding Local Government Reorganisation. Residents are invited to comment via a survey open until 11/01/2026. Updates were also received on the Pylon project and related meetings.

Future Meetings - The Chair announced the next Parish Council meeting will take place on Thursday, 5 February 2026 at 19:30 in the URC, and everyone is welcome to attend. There will also be a Biodiversity meeting on 26 January 2026 in the URC.

Closure

With no further business, Cllr Bridges closed the meeting at 20:26.

COUNTRYSIDE RAMBLER

BRIAN WARD

I am writing this article on 5th Jan 2026. Looking out of my window, there is a fresh blanket of snow. I watch the dog walkers with their four-legged companions stroll past, adorned in sensible winter attire. A few minutes ago, a family passed by pulling a sledge with one of the offspring enjoying the ride. In that moment, I reflected back to my childhood and what fun we had, sledging, snowball fights and general mischief in the snow. I recall, when my children were young, I built a sledge for them, and it survived several winters. One winter, we built an igloo in the garden. It wasn't exactly perfectly shaped or designed, but the local children loved every moment of it. Eventually, it melted into a pile of slush, yet I still have photos tucked away that lets me revisit those memories and reminisce. I can remember the winter of 1962/63 that went on forever, not only snow, of which I have not witnessed since, but bitter cold for weeks on end. I can remember watching the wildlife suffer terribly. On one occasion, I came across a dead kingfisher. The poor thing had clumps of ice on its feet, so it was unable to perch, let alone feed. Many of our small birds are unable to survive lengthy spells of severe winter weather. Wrens, goldcrests, and Dartford warblers, as well as many other insect-eating birds, simply cannot find sufficient food and lack the body mass to keep warm, especially at night. One chilly evening, I watched thirteen wrens cram into one nest box to survive the harsh winter night.

After a fresh fall of snow, get yourself out early, and you will be surprised by what animal tracks you can find. It is surprising how many animals are active during the hours of darkness. Fox tracks are often seen as they normally sustain paw prints in a straight line as they walk; hares and rabbits are obvious as they leave a long print with their hind legs. Otter tracks can be found near rivers and lakes. They are often in pairs of prints as they bound across the snow and will often leave a long mark as their tail hits the snow. Also, they will often slide and roll in the snow, leaving distinctive signs.

I may not enjoy the cold of winter as I did in my youth, but the scenery in a snow-clad countryside is a sight to wonder at.

Another winter favourite of mine is a hoar frost - when the frost builds up on plants and gives them a truly wintery appearance. At this time of year we can have some magical sunrises and sunsets. If you enjoy taking photographs with your mobile phone or camera, look out for a lone tree on the horizon or a church with good architecture on the spire; make a note to return at sunrise or sunset and get the sun as it sets just behind or near the subject.

The full moon is also good on a clear evening.



I hope you all keep safe and warm during the winter months and discreetly check on any elderly neighbours. Last but not least, please feed the wild birds as they are now entering their hardest times of winter with very little natural seed left in the wild.

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RAMBLINGS FROM THE POTTING SHED

PAULA WILLMOT

2026 brings gardeners a year of uncertainty. Are we going to experience another drought ridden summer, or will it be a soggy wet one? How do we plant and maintain our plots so we can flex to the climates ever changing whims? Having feasted on back to back Gardeners' World over the seasonal break, I remain inspired and hopeful, but the gathering and storing of rainwater is emerging as a key factor for this year. Pots would sensibly be a good option in greater quantities, but I know when water is in short supply, a light water saving 'tinkle' into a pot doesn't cut the mustard and stresses the plant. I used big trays last year and filled those with water so the pots could draw hydration when needed. This worked and may be my personal way forward. Anyway, let's get going with this month's advice and guidance!

February jobs in the garden are as follows:

- Locate the rhubarb that has died down from last year and cover with a large pot and a brick. The reward will be forced sweet rhubarb or 'pudding' crop, as it's called.
- Check through the dahlias and bulbs that were dug up in Autumn. Some will be rotten (I lost half last year). Check they are not exposed to moisture and have enough air circulating around them.
- It's time to take the secateurs to overgrown honeysuckle. Cut the stems back to 60 cm and tie to the main supports. Thin whips can be cut to ground level. The plant will respond with strong growth in the Spring.
- Hippeastrums are not everyone's favourite plant, but if yours are still flowering, move them to a cool, well-lit spot to prolong flowering. Water sparingly and they may well last into Feb.
- If you can easily reach the garage and ground floor guttering, now is the time to clear out the dead leaves and twigs. I am next to a very mature hedgerow, so I know my gutters will be full. Throw onto the grass and the nesting birds will rifle through this abundance of good nesting material; it will soon disappear!
- Elephant garlic is a fun crop to sow if you have a spare pot or bag. It's far milder than shop bought garlic and looks very impressive when harvested, either coming up as one huge single bulb or a crop of smaller ones.
- Hardwood cuttings are a warm winter day job. Dogwood, willow, roses, figs and buddlejas are all prime candidates. I'll pen a detailed 'how to' next month.

Finally, start keeping an eye out in the supermarkets for early small plants like honeysuckle, passion fruit and climbers. They will have been greenhouse grown and won't survive a frost. But if you have a cold frame or greenhouse, purchase a few, transplant into good soil and watch the plants grow and become hardy. Last year, Asda had shelves of these, 3 for 2 and I bulk bought. They lived in my greenhouse for 2 months and were then planted out as stronger plants. Simpsons of Soham will also be selling some early perennials, again go carefully as you don't want to lose to a late frost, but these will be hardy as they are grown outdoors. Also, pop into their huge 'pot' barn for some unusual designs and outsized pots. Well, that's all for this month, enjoy the first glimmers of warmth 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



Collection of hard to recycle items - see update below

The next market stall collection is Thursday, 26th February. We also collect items at the *Repair Café - 2nd Sunday of the month (8th February) at Red Gables 2-4 pm, plus REPAIR CAFÉ stowrepaircafe@gmail.com
8th Feb is also the last date for collecting plastic sweet tubs.

UPDATE ON ITEMS COLLECTED:

Blister packs, Coffee pods, 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.)

A story that has really impressed me over Christmas and New Year (This is written in early January) is the sorry tale of the Canal bank that breached in Whitchurch, taking several narrowboats with it and leaving them at the bottom of a deep, muddy hole. The impressive bit is the way that the narrow boating community rallied round to offer support and replace items for those who were worst affected. A wider appeal for funds to help has generated over £100,000 from well-wishers. The point of this is to illustrate how community works – and there are many more examples of people supporting those in need, climate issues or otherwise. There is something deep in our psyche that responds to other people in difficulty.

This is not to suggest that the Whitchurch incident was caused by climate change. However, it is no longer a reasonable argument to say that change is not happening; science knows that the frequency of floods, fires and droughts (although they seem a long way off in February) has increased. It is increasingly likely that we will know people impacted by Climate-induced troubles, and our collective actions are now about adapting to the reality of what is taking place. Community is a vital part of how we adapt and cope, and climate experts* are now encouraging the building up of all kinds of community groups. It does not have to be environmentally based – sports clubs, friendship groups, churches, etc., all build local social connections that will be important if or when any kind of trouble comes. It's good for general wellbeing too, so what's not to like?

*The Climate Majority Project and a regular podcast, "The Way Forward Regenerative Conversations", are both available online and offer further thoughts about the importance of growing local community networks.

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A friend's sudden illness has made me reflect on getting my own affairs in order. I've heard about lasting powers of attorney (LPAs), but I'm not sure where to start or whether I really need one at my age.



Mid Suffolk

The key point is that any adult can make an LPA; it isn't only for older people. An LPA lets you appoint a trusted person, such as a friend or family member, to make decisions on your behalf if you ever lose the ability to do so yourself. This might happen due to an illness, accident, or condition that affects your mental capacity.

Conditions that can prevent someone from making decisions include dementia, brain injuries, mental health problems, substance misuse, or side effects from medical treatment. Setting up an LPA doesn't mean you expect these things to happen, just that you want to be prepared.

There are two types of LPA:

1. Property and financial affairs LPA – This allows someone to manage your finances, such as buying or selling property, handling bank accounts, dealing with benefits, or paying debts. You can grant broad authority or limit it to specific tasks. If you choose a limited arrangement, the document must be drafted very carefully.
2. Health and welfare LPA – This covers decisions about where you live, your daily care, and medical treatment. Unlike the financial LPA, it can only be used once you have lost mental capacity.

You don't need to set up both types at once, but you must make each LPA while you still have mental capacity. Whatever you choose, it's crucial to select your attorney or attorneys with care, as they may one day have significant control over your wellbeing or finances.

To create an LPA, you can either complete the forms online at [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) or download them. Each type, property and financial affairs, and health and welfare, requires its own separate form.

Once the forms are filled in, they must be registered with the Office of the Public Guardian (OPG), and you may need to pay a registration fee. If everything has been completed correctly and no one raises objections after being notified, the OPG will register the LPA. This process can take around 20 weeks.

When registration is complete, the OPG will notify both you and your chosen attorneys, and the LPA can then be used if needed.

For more guidance on LPAs and other types of power of attorney, the Citizens Advice website offers clear and helpful information. <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/family/looking-after-people/managing-affairs-for-someone-else/>

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. Opening hours are Monday-Thursday 9.30 am – 3.30 pm and Friday 9.30 am – 12.30 pm.

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Email: jo@josfit4all.co.uk

Website: josfit4all.co.uk or paracise.com



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STOWUPLAND WILDFLOWER AND BIODIVERSITY GROUP



Wildflower Meadow and Retreat Pond

We spent some time in December tidying up at the back of the pond, clearing branches and brambles to make the area more accessible. The branches were stacked to provide shelter for insects and small mammals through the winter.

We are planning to erect an information board on the edge of the meadow area to encourage people to take more interest in the area and search for flora and insects during the warmer months.

Ditches and Mounds

We have made a start on clearing stones and tree roots from the mounds and ditches around The Green. We planned to sow trial lengths of the mounds with a wildflower and grass mix in November, but MSDC did not provide the seeds in time. Sowing should take place in March; meantime we are carrying out preparatory work.

Future work and meetings:

Our next meeting is at 7.30 on Monday, 26th January, in the URC Meeting Room. Everyone with an interest in wildflowers and biodiversity is welcome to come along.

Our next work party is on Friday, 13th February; meet on the track near Corner Farm at 1.30, weather permitting. We welcome anyone to come along and join in.

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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There is one large room suitable for 140-260 people depending on the event. A small one seats up to 20 people. There is a well equipped kitchen, and a licensed bar, plus an audio-visual system and Wi-Fi. There is ample car parking and an outdoor children's play area.

Interested? Look on our website at <https://hallbookingonline.com/Stowupland>

Or contact Lisa Tunbridge our booking secretary

Tel: 07515 859337 email: stowuplandvillagehallbookings@gmail.com



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IMPORTANT CONTACTS

Citizens Advice

www.midsuffolkcab.org.uk - 01449 676060
Or 01449 676280 - 5 Milton Road South,
Stowmarket, IP14 1EZ

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Combs Ford - 01449 678333
Stowhealth - 01449 776000

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Gas Leak - 0800 111 999
Water Leak - 0800 771 881

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HELPLINE: 07591 539621

Member of Parliament

Adrian Ramsay – Green Party
WaveneyValleyOffice@parliament.uk
01379 830200

Mid Suffolk District Council

www.midsuffolk.gov.uk

MSDC General Contact No. 0300 1234000

Janet Pearson - 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

Parish Council Website

www.stowupland.suffolk.cloud

Suffolk County Council

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

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

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 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

FEBRUARY

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 - "Orchards in East Anglia"
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
THURS 12	19:00 Village Hall	Short mat bowls
SUN 15	19:30 Village Hall	Country & Western music club
TUES 17	09:30 Jubilee Crt. 09:55 Green	Mobile Library

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	12.00 Holy Trinity Church Hall	Lent Lunch
WED 25	14:00-16:00 Village Hall Car Pk.	Mobile Post Office
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
SAT 28	10:00 – 12.00 Village Hall	Councillor Surgery

LOOKING AHEAD

MARCH

SUN 1	19:30 Village Hall	Country and Western Music Club
TUES 3	16:00 Village Hall	Young Carers Club
WED 4	17:30 URC Hall	Local History Group – Stowupland Stories – Schools
FRI 13	19:30 Village Hall	Community Quiz
FRI 27	19:30 Village Hall	Community Bingo

APRIL

SAT 25	Village Hall	Craft Fair
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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

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/

Stowupland Falcons Football Club -
stowuplandfalconfc.co.uk

Stowupland Sports Centre -
info@stowuplandsportscentre.co.uk - 01449 672531

Stowupland Wildflower & Biodiversity Group -
Keith Welham - 01449 673185

Stowmarket Wildlife Group - Heather Salmon
-heathersalmon50@gmail.com - 07722 871205

EDUCATION --- FOND MEMORIES OR NOT?

People sometimes tell us,
Not everyone agrees,
That school was very good for us.
But some just went to please.



You may remember school folk.
Company you enjoyed.
There were those that misbehaved .
Teachers were annoyed.



You may have liked some classmates
Friends that you adored.
Some that merely were O.K.
And others you ignored.



How about your attitude?
In class were you a swat?
Or did you just not listen?
And learning you did not.



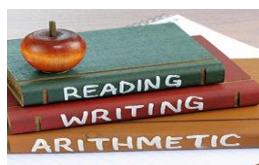
How about your teachers?
Some may have shown concern.
Many trod that extra mile,
To make sure you would learn.



You may have been inspired.
In an interesting lesson.
The contents of the subject,
Left a positive impression.

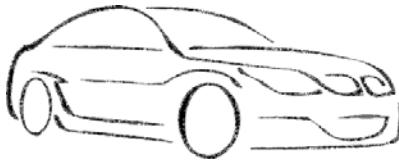


Many have reunions,
With some they keep in touch.
Some students turn up every year,
Others, not so much.



Teachers taught us many things,
Three Rs that would stick.
The clues were in the spellings,
Read, Write, Arithmetic.

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STOWUPLAND FALCONS



As we move into 2026, it is pleasing to report that our adult first team sits at the top of the SIL Premier League with a 2 point advantage over our nearest rivals, Cops. Cops have a game in hand. The first half of the season has been excellent, with 15 wins, 1 draw and 1 defeat, but no one is getting carried away; there is a long way to go. Unfortunately, due to the freezing weather, the first game of 2026 was postponed. Our adult reserve team is moving along nicely and sits mid table in their league, under new management and with quite a few new players. This is an excellent performance.

The Ladies are progressing well and are currently fourth in a very competitive league. We would be delighted to see more people from the village coming to the games. Your support would be much appreciated. On match days, the Sports & Social Club is open, so if you fancy a drink after the game, the bar will be available. Not only would you be supporting the football club, but you would also be supporting the Social Club. The youth section has had a 2-week break over the Christmas/New Year period; this is now a 3-week break with the freezing weather preventing a restart to the season.

We go into 2026 in a very healthy position both on and off the pitch, but none of this would be possible without our hard-working volunteers and the support of Stowupland High School and the Village Hall Committee. The club is now in its 51st year, and we are very proud of our Stowupland roots.

By the time the next article is due, we will hopefully have played some football, and I will be able to give you an update on how all the teams are doing.

Happy New Year

Colin Herbert
President
Stowupland Falcons FC

The logo for Stowupland Good Neighbours. It features a stylized illustration of four colorful human figures (yellow, green, blue, purple) standing behind a row of small houses in orange, green, and pink. To the right of the illustration, the text 'STOWUPLAND GOOD NEIGHBOURS' is written in a large, bold, red font. Below this, in a smaller green font, is the text 'A volunteer service run by residents for residents'. At the bottom, the helpline number '07591 539 621' is displayed in a black font.

JUBILEE LADIES CHOIR

Happy New Year.

We had a busy lead-up to Christmas, so we're looking forward to our post-Christmas meal. Back to practice on January 13th with a new list of songs to enjoy singing.

We have welcomed some new members recently and are always pleased to welcome more. No auditions; ability to read music is helpful but not essential, as many of us don't, including me. Practice is during school term time at 7.30 p m Tuesdays at the United Reform Church, Stowmarket, which we, and other choirs, use due to the excellent acoustics.

We are a friendly group of around 40 women who just like to sing and socialise. Singing is therapeutic and a good way to meet people if you are new to the area. Our members come from surrounding villages, including several from here in Stowupland.

Further information from Di Balaam on 01449 736374 or Avril, on 07815 863514. Or just turn up to a practice!



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STOWMARKET U3A

U3A is a local organisation for people no longer in full time employment and focuses on learning for pleasure, sharing skills, and enjoying activities that are friendly and fun in good company. It is run entirely by volunteers and open to everyone. There are no assessments, tests or exams, and no qualifications to be gained.

For a modest fee, members can choose from and enjoy a wide variety of over 30 interest groups that meet on a regular basis. This includes aviation, singing, photography, walking, play reading, patchwork and much more. Members who have an enthusiasm they would like to share with others can start their own group.



In December, over 80 members joined together for a very enjoyable and successful seasonal celebration, starting with festive songs led by the U3A singing group, followed by a buffet and quiz. Leaving plenty of time for members to chat to friends, old and new.

In addition, every month we invite different speakers to entertain and inform us. Meetings are held on the third Wednesday of each month at the United Reform Church, Stowmarket, at 2:30 pm, doors open at 2 pm. The next 2 talks will be:

- February 18 - 'The life of the Hon Mrs Victor Bruce'. The first person to fly solo from the UK to Japan...and much more, by Paul Smiddy
- March 18 - 'The Wonder of Norway', by Joanne Larner

New members are always welcome. For further information, visit our website: www.u3astowmarket.org.uk.

For membership enquiries, email membership@u3astowmarket.org.uk.
Registered charity 1002987.

We look forward to seeing you!



STOWMARKET STRIDERS



Notification of Stowmarket Striders Half Marathon and 10K event

Stowmarket Striders' Running Club will be hosting our half-marathon running race on 15 March 2026, 10 am, starting and finishing at Thorney Green, Stowupland, near the beacon. Also, to celebrate our 40 years as a running club, we have added a 10K race, which will start near Reeds Way at 10.15 am, and will also finish at Thorney Green.

The races will be limited to a total of 500 runners, with race marshals at key road junctions and other key locations.

We will muster the runners on the green before each race starts. For the runners' safety at the start, we will be temporarily stopping traffic for no more than 25 minutes on Thorney Green, Thorney Green Road and Gipping Way.

Runners will then run up to Rendall Lane before turning left towards Old Newton. By this time, we would expect the runners to be well spread out. To minimise the disruption to motorists, we ask runners to run on the left-hand side of the road at all times. If possible, if you could avoid parking on the road on the day of the race, that would be greatly appreciated.

At the finish line there will be a refreshment stall selling food and hot and cold drinks.

Stowmarket Striders is a community running club, affiliated with England Athletics, with about 200 members. The club supports local charities during the year from its activities.

For more information, visit: <https://stowmarketstriders.org.uk/club-races/stowhalfmarathon/> or scan the QR code.



SOAP

Calling all over 60's

Come along to meet old friends, new friends and enjoy a morning of company, activities & good cake in a welcoming social environment.



Our next event is

Wednesday 18th March, 10:00 - 12:00

at Stowupland Sports and Social Club.

Please do join us.



If you would like any further information, please do email paulamurton@stowuplandpc.co.uk or call 07704 701095



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FREEMAN COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL



Teaching & Learning

So much has been happening at Freeman!

Year 6 have explored the fascinating world of volcanoes, earthquakes, and physical processes. This captivating topic truly ignited the children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning. They delved into the science behind tectonic plates, how they form and how their movement leads to dramatic natural events such as volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, and tsunamis. To bring their learning to life, the children designed and constructed their own volcano models, choosing from four distinct types: stratovolcano, shield volcano, fissure volcano, or caldera volcano. Each child carefully crafted their volcano to showcase the unique features of their chosen type.



Year 5s are loving their new class book, 'The Explorer', by Katherine Rundell. A thrilling story of adventure, friendship and survival in the Amazon. The children are excited to use some of the survival skills in Forest School this term and are delighted to learn about the incredible species the survivors keep encountering in the rainforest. In English, the children wrote their own Greek myths and thoroughly enjoyed reading them to the Year 3 Class.

In PSHE, democracy has been a key feature of the topic and the impact of working together for a common goal. The children worked in groups to win a challenge, and they had to design and construct the tallest tower using only paper and Sellotape.



Year 4 have been busy learning about multiplication and the relationship between different times tables. They have discovered that we can use lots of other facts to help us learn new times tables and how we can identify whether a number is a multiple or not. In English, the children have been learning the features of a diary entry, the grammar that is used, such as informal language and first-person pronouns and how to plan and write a first-person diary entry.



In Science, children have explored the different states of matter through hands-on experiments, investigating which temperature melts ice the fastest and compared how quickly white, milk, and dark chocolate melt. They made lots of predictions and completed fun experiments.

In DT, the children have been learning how to make a basic biscuit. They all followed the recipe, and they all enjoyed tasting them!

'From tiny acorns do mighty oaks grow'

Suffolk County Music Service Assembly

Freeman welcomed the Suffolk County Music Service for a fantastic assembly all about music and instruments. The session was wonderful - captivating, uplifting, and truly inspiring for many pupils. Children had the opportunity to listen to a variety of instruments being played and even recognised and sang along to some familiar tunes!



Year 6 Trip to Duxford – A Day to Remember!

The pupils had an amazing day exploring the Imperial War Museum at Duxford! The trip brought their history topic on World War II to life, giving them the chance to see real aircraft, military vehicles, and exhibits that tell the stories of those who lived through the war. The children were fascinated by the Battle of Britain hangar and enjoyed learning how these events shaped the world we live in today.

This hands-on experience helped deepen their understanding of the key themes they've been studying in class, from evacuation and rationing to the role of the RAF.



Forest School

The children in year 5 have loved being back in Forest School and adore the mud! In the log circle, the children shared their Forest School names from when they were younger and played a memory game. The children requested playing 'Sticky Weed' as an old favourite warm up game. The rain certainly added to the fun all afternoon. In a sensory game, the children said it felt refreshing and cold on their faces and the wet added to the knee slide event in the Forest Olympics.

Great teamwork was used in several games of a tug of war and some amazing rope swings were engineered for all to enjoy. The climbing trees were popular, and some children enjoyed relaxing in the branches. Groups improvised tarp shelters and built lean-to dens, collecting long sticks and children used problem-solving skills to transfer the rainwater inside the tyres into the mud kitchen area. A wonderful afternoon was enjoyed by all!



CHILDRENS SOCIETY REPORT

2025 REPORT FROM THE CHILDREN'S SOCIETY HAUGHLEY, WETHERDEN AND STOWUPLAND

Thank you so much to everyone who helped to raise £1575 for the Children's Society through activities over the Christmas period. This is the most our Benefice has ever raised! The details are:

£255 - November Coffee Morning

£385 - Christingle Services

£768 - Collections from Home Boxes

£147 - Sale of Christmas Cards

£20 - Single Donations

Across the country, many children today face abuse, exploitation or mental health problems, and they don't know where to turn for help and support. At the Children's Society, we provide a range of support for children and their families who are struggling. We challenge the government to deliver policies that will protect children. The Society works tirelessly to enable all children, regardless of nationality or faith, to enjoy their childhood. The Society stands alongside vulnerable young people, helping them to a future they can look forward to.

If you would like to know more about the work of the Society or would like to support its activities, perhaps by having a home box, even a handful of small change (the cost of a cup of coffee) every week, can make a difference, then please do get in touch with me.

On behalf of all the children who were helped last year by the Society to get their lives back on track, and from all those who will be helped in 2025, a very, very big "Thank You".

I add my own heartfelt thanks to all of you in the benefice who have so generously supported the Society.

Elizabeth Elbourne

Hon. Local Secretary of the Children's Society

Tel: 01359 245118 E mail: lizhel44@gmail.com

WELLY WALK - THANK YOU!

A very big "thank you" to all those who supported our Welly Walk on December 30th. It was a glorious sunny morning and a sizeable number were able to join us for the walk and refreshments. £172.00 was given in donations for EACH.

Jane and Dan Gurney.



Quiz Night

Friday 13th 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

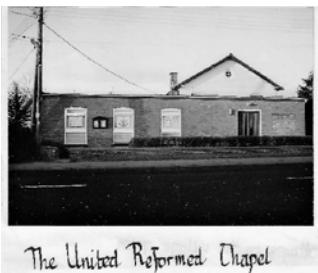
Bring your own nibbles

**To enter a team please ring Keith on 01449
673185**

A Stowupland Community Event brought to you by the Telstar Team



Our first meeting in 2026 is on **Wednesday, 4th February**. Please remember our new meeting venue is the URC Hall, car parking is available across the road, and a torch may be useful. We still start at 7.30 and refreshments will be available.



The United Reformed Chapel



Congregational Chapel as it looked in the 1930s.

URC as it appeared at the end of the 20th century.

Our February topic is the **Orchards of Suffolk** with Gerry Barnes. Today's orchards are but a shadow of their former selves. The mid 19th century tithe records remind us that, across Stowupland, there were many areas of orchards. Some small, others larger, but their loss in the 20th century had impacts on our village's biodiversity; the trees and their fruit were vital to the life cycles of so much wildlife, be it large or small.

Then on **March 4th**, we continue our Stowupland Stories examining **Our Spaces for Learning**. Most of us know that our village school dates from the 1860s but, prior to that, many people learnt to read and write in Sunday Schools.

Neil came across these **Reminiscences of Stowupland in the 9th of December 1917, Stowmarket Weekly Post**. It gives us insight into what life was like for ordinary folk in the 19th century. (I have added a few notes to help put things into context.)

In a thatched cottage on the left of the highway, a short distance away from Stowupland Parish Church resides two of Stowupland's oldest inhabitants, Mr and Mrs Edmund Robinson. The father of Edmund was William Robinson, who was a horseman for a great many years for the late Charles Rayner Freeman, of Stowupland Hall (around the 1840s), and when he died, he was 84 years of age. Mrs Robinson lived to the good old age of 83 years.

Edmund Robinson is one of a family of thirteen - seven sons and six daughters. *William Robinson was born in the early 1800s. He married Amy in 1830. By the age of 67, he was recorded in the census as being disabled but still an agricultural labourer. In 1871, their youngest child, Emily, is recorded as a scholar. In addition to Edmund, there is a son named Thomas, who lives at Ipswich, and four daughters living. One of the daughters is Mrs Emily Abbott, of Union Street, Stowmarket. Another daughter is Mrs Sarah Brame, of Earl Stonham, and two other daughters are Mrs Allard, of Bildeston, and Mrs Rose Lockwood, of Saxon Street (Saxham Street), Stowupland.*

Edmund Robinson was born in 1834, in the thatched cottage in which he now lives. As soon as he was old enough, he was sent to Stowupland Hall and assisted Mr Charles Rayner Freeman, who was deaf, and for whom he acted as interpreter, and also made his business journeys in his horse and gig to the different farmhouses in the village.

There was a cottage school in the house now occupied by Mr Hitchcock, and the teacher was the wife of a ploughman. For only one week did Edmund attend school, which was the only secular education he received (*our local school opened in the mid-1860s*). There was a Congregational Sunday School held in the two cottages that adjoin his home. Mr George Stevens, a brewer of Stowmarket, was the superintendent of the Sunday School. There was a little pulpit, and Mr Stevens would preach on a Sunday evening, and there were good congregations, and the building was often filled with worshippers. The Sunday School was lit with candles, and they employed a "candle snuffer." Stands were fixed in the wall to hold the candles. In the Sunday School, the work was confined to Scripture lessons and singing of hymns. Mr John Stevens, a brother of Mr George Stevens, came and preached. The Sunday School had at that time been established many years before.

Through the efforts of Mr Thomas Prentice, of Stowmarket, the present Congregational Chapel was erected. The Sunday School continued for some time after the chapel was built, and was afterwards moved there. The old cottages in which the Sunday school was held were purchased by Mr F. Harwood, of Tuddenham Hall, and they were converted into cottages. The old windows were taken out only about two years ago.

As a horseman, his father was paid 12s. a week, and he had the rent to pay. The labourers were paid 10s., and the stockmen 9s. a week. Five or six boys were running about the farm, and each boy was paid 2d. a day. They swept the yards, fed the cattle, and worked on the land. He well remembered the Crimean War. Flour was 4s. a stone. There was plenty of butter and milk, and eggs were 16 a shilling. Tea was 4d. an ounce. There was nothing much else but dry bread. They started work in the spring and summer months at 6 a.m. and worked till 6 p.m. He often goes without any food, because he could not buy it. There was no money to buy food, and people would not trust them. Matches were scarce. In those days, the tinder box was in vogue. He thought that the tinder box would be brought into use again.

He remembers the Parish Church being opened. The Bishop was present, and there were coaches and carriages in large numbers from many miles around. At Christmas, the men employed at Stowupland Hall were given a dinner. There were few holidays, but once a year, the villagers went to

Stowmarket Fair. It opened on July 10th and lasted three days. The fair was held on Capt. Longe's land. There were stalls galore, shows, giants and fat women, dancing girls, boxing booths, and other attractions on the meadow behind Messrs. Preston Bros. establishment. The first day was a great day. The second day was "Women's Day", and earthenware covered the ground. The fair was a great event for the farmers and farm workers, who rode in their carts to Stowmarket. There were many fights, and a good deal of blood was shed in the streets.

He had been outdoors in all kinds of weather. The weather in his younger days was more severe than it is today. He had known the time when the horses were waiting at the drinking trough at Stowupland Hall, and they had to fetch hatchets to break in the ice for the animals to drink.

He has three sons - Councillor David Robinson, who is employed by the Stowmarket Timber Co., and Councillor Nathan Robinson, another son, employed on Government work. Prvt. George Robinson is another son, and is in the Army as a driver in the Royal Engineers, and joined the Army on November 20, 1915. He was employed by Mr F. Gammer, butcher, of Stowmarket, for 14 yrs. Since he left for the Army, he has not been home.

Mr Edmund Robinson attributes his long life to his robust constitution but admits that he has had plain food and plenty of fresh air, which have been conducive to his vitality. Stowupland, he said, was a healthy resort. Mr William Prentice, of Ipswich, former schoolmaster in the village, told him that no one had any need to go out of Stowupland for the benefit of his or her health. Edmund Robinson worked for Mr C. R. Freeman for about twenty years, then he worked for Mr Pyman, of Park Farm. From there, he went to Creeting Hall for about a year, the only time he went to work outside his native village. For about 15 years, he was with Mr Robert Boby, of Columbine Hall, and for 23 years, he was employed by Mr John Stearn of Crown Farm. He took in his first harvest when he was 19 years of age, and his last when he was over sixty. He continued at work until he was 65, and only gave up about twelve years ago because of an attack of rheumatism in his leg. Even at the age of 77 years, he looks after two plots of garden land, one of 14 rods, and another of 13 rods, his son, Councillor Nathan Robinson, helping occasionally. Wet or fine, his son, Councillor George Robinson, pays him a visit on Sundays. There were as many as ten harvestmen taken on. The pay was £5 for the harvest and 2 and a half bushels of malt; boys were allowed two pecks of malt.

Mr and Mrs Edmund Robinson celebrated the 51st year of their married life on Nov. 15th last. They were married at the Stowupland Congregational Chapel. It may seem strange to many that Mr Edmund Robinson remembers having been christened. That day is one he well recalls. He was a boy worker on the land when he was christened. Dod Girle, when asked "What are we made in baptism?" replied "Disagreeably wet." There were six christened on the same day at Stowupland as the boy Edmund. Well, does he remember taking his position on his knees on a chair, his head just above the upright. Six of them sat in that position and faced the minister. Then the reverend, a gentleman of the cloth, came forward, and Edmond's turn came to be sprinkled. "What did you think of it?" asked our representative of the old gentleman "I wasn't very sweet on it," he replied.

Active with a clear brain and wonderful memory, Mr Edmund Robinson looked well and maybe he and his pleasant, mannered wife have many happy days below the thatched roof cottage with its gardens and pleasant surroundings.

Jerry's review of November's "Stowupland Stories", which was given by Sandra Walker and Neil Langridge. They gave us an insight into "Crime and Punishment" in the village and surrounding area.

As you will be reading this in the February 2026 Telstar, may I wish all our readers a happy New Year. For those of you who saw the Christmas edition of Telstar, you will have seen that Sandra wrote about some of the nefarious activities of past residents of "Myrtle Cottages". To use Sandra's words, a contemporary press report of the mid-19th century arrest of a pair of poultry thieves read like 'an episode of the modern-day police drama'.

However, I will follow up as there were one or two other incidents which I can highlight in the crime part of this. Please note this was the third in our popular series of Stowupland village talks. Both Sandra and Neil have put a lot of research into being able to complete these sessions, so thank you to both of you. So what else was happening around and about as we took a step back in time.

Neil started off the evening with some punishments that were handed down in the fourteenth century, when the Lord of the Manor ruled his lands and had the power to hand out punishments to those folk who lived on his land. Neil had uncovered evidence that there may have been a gallows site somewhere around the area of Stowupland.

Stealing from the Lord of the Manor was certainly unwise if caught out.

After an interval for refreshments, thanks to Liz and Annie, Sandra brought us more up to date with some 19th century crimes.

Where was it all happening in the village? Some things don't change much, as the area around the village green was a site for various criminal activities, for instance, in August 1900, there was a press report that four people were fined for the following offences:

- John Steadman, a local farmer was fined for allowing two horses to stray onto the highway,
- Joseph Berry, a labourer, for allowing a horse to stray.
- Harry Neale, a baker, had unfortunately allowed a horse to stray on the highway.
- Ann Allard was also in the frame and got nicked for allowing her donkey to stray on the highway.

Each was fined 2 shillings and 6 pence (half a crown in old money), which to all concerned would have been a lot of money in those days. Today's modern-day equivalent may be speeding, which is always a conversation stopper. It is to be noted that in these days our green would have had farm animals on it as the local farmers had grazing rights, as some still do today.

Also of note was a case brought against John Robinson of the Parish of Stowupland, in the county of Suffolk. John was a labourer and is said to have made use of some expressions tending to injure the character of a Mr William Cooper (then of Sheepcote Hall), of Stowupland aforesaid, farmer; however, he denied making the accusation, and denied these reports which he said had been fabricated by some evil-disposed persons and attributed to him.

Thomas Race stole two pieces of applewood belonging to a Lord of the Manor (Mr C. R. Rayner of Stowupland Hall). He was sentenced to six months' hard labour. George Southgate was sentenced to seven years for stealing flour and the keys to the mill. These are just a few examples shared with the group, but they certainly suggested how hard life was in those days and looking at some of the sentences handed down for the crimes, it certainly seemed that crimes did not pay.

Neil and Sandra answered questions from our audience and were thanked for their efforts in giving the talk, and there was a lot more content in this talk than I can record here.

We are now asking members to renew their membership for 2026. Annual membership is just £15.00, then £2.00 per meeting. Whilst we welcome visitors at any of our sessions, why not make a regular commitment? What is stopping you?

Do you have stories to share or prefer to listen?

SLHG welcomes visitors to our meetings, just pay £5.00 on the door.

If you have any queries about joining us or Stowupland's past:

**Please contact Jerry Voden on 01449 703717 or
secretary@stowuplandlocalhistorygroup.org**

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



U.R.C CHAPEL

NEWS

Minister: Vacant
Secretary: Brian Hewitt 07500734113

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

Our coffee morning in November was well attended, and we look forward to the next one on Friday, **27 February 2026. We will be holding a draw at this event.**

On 18th January, we joined Holy Trinity Church for a United Service, for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.

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 February are as follows:

01 February	Jim Spencer
08 February	Keith Scarff
15 February	Bruce Thorn
22 February	The Worship Group
Joyce Gardiner	

Greetings

Jane Goodall, born 1934 - 2025

Dame Jane Goodall was an anthropologist best known for her expertise on chimpanzees. She learned they share the same key traits with humans, using tools, having complex emotions and forming long lasting social bonds, passing on skills and knowledge across the generations.

She believed that all living beings should cherish all living things and have a deep love for the Earth, and every action we do, no matter how small, makes a difference.

So Jane Goodall writes, "What kind of difference do you want to make? What you do makes a difference, and you must decide what kind of difference you want to make.

The quote isn't whether we will make a difference. It just asks what kind of difference we want to make.

In Micah, it says, "Be fair and just and merciful and walk humbly with your God."

So, in this month of February, I would ask you to make a difference. Just be aware of what kind of difference you would like to make.

A very happy February to you all

Jan Webb (Elder Stowmarket URC)

COFFEE MORNING



Friday 27th February 2026

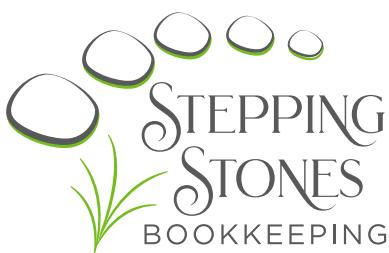
Stowupland URC Chapel

10am – 12noon

Coffee, Tea and Cakes

All welcome

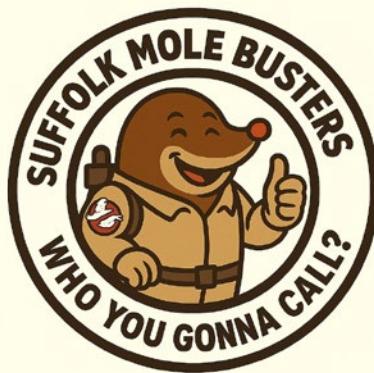
There will be a prize drawer!



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HOLY TRINITY CHURCH

NEWS

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

HOLY TRINITY CHURCH
STOWUPLAND



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

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

I went for a walk the other day with a local farmer in a field somewhere between Stowupland and Haughley. Bizarrely, I saw a lot of rabbits hopping backwards. 'That's strange, I said to the farmer. 'What's going on?' And the farmer replied, 'Oh, that's a receding hare-line!'

In some ways, the Church of England, nationally, has been a receding hairline for several decades. Numbers have been dwindling, and there have been fewer bums on seats (or pews) on Sundays. Reasons for that include there being lots of other things to do on Sunday mornings, services are often perceived as irrelevant or boring and going to church has become less of a routine for many people.

It might, therefore, be a surprise to some folks to learn that Church of England attendance in Suffolk actually went up by 6% in 2023/4 (latest available figures) – well above the national average.

For my birthday, one of my sons bought me the book *Dear England: Lessons in Leadership* by Gareth Southgate. When Gareth took over the England Football Manager's job, the team were a bit of a receding hare-line. He realised it would take time to turn it around and make the country proud again. Whether he managed that by getting to semi-finals and a final of the major tournaments, but not actually winning any of them, is for you to decide. A year later, of course, the women showed the men how to do it (again) – but that's another story! What Gareth did do, undoubtedly, was improve the structure, environment and record of the men's team.

He did this by establishing values he believed in and creating a positive culture where everyone felt safe to be themselves, where there was a real sense of purpose, and the team enjoyed being together. Creating a good culture – simply defined as 'the way we do things around here' – is so important. Church, for me, is less about counting heads anyway and far more about providing a space and a culture which enhances well-being, builds community and gives opportunity for people to explore faith in Jesus.

Establishing a positive culture, building community and exploring faith is something we will be developing at Holy Trinity, Stowupland, in 2026. You are welcome to become part of it.

Oh yes, and it's not long until Easter! Lent – that forty day period of preparation before Easter – will soon be here. If you would like to join a Lent lunch or a Lent study group, or know more about what is coming up over the Easter period, do contact me, Alison, Ann or Sue and we will give you more information.

All the best, Revd Andy Buttress

PARISH CHURCH SERVICES FOR FEBRUARY 2026

Benefice of Haughley with Wetherden and Stowupland

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

Date	Stowupland	Wetherden	Haughley
Sunday 1st	9.30 am Parish Communion	11.00 am Morning Worship	11.00 am Sunday Praise
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
Sunday 15th	9.30 am Morning Worship	11.00 am Worship for All	11.00 am URC/ Anglican Service
Wednesday 18th		7.00 pm Ash Wednesday Service	
Saturday 21st		2.00 – 4.00 pm Vigil for World Peace (marking anniversary of Russian invasion of Ukraine)	
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)	

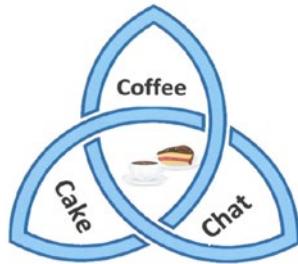
PRAYER: God, I am here. If you are there, please help me and let me sense your presence with me today and in the weeks to come. Amen.

LENT LUNCHES: Lent Lunches begin on Wednesday 25th February – a simple meal of soup bread and cheese at Stowupland on Wednesdays from 12-2 in the Church Hall.

LENT COMPLINE SERVICES: Compline at Wetherden from 24th February – 31st March on each Tuesday at 9pm in church, this is a short, simple, quiet, reflective service at the end of the day.

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 February 2026

10-12

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

Everyone is welcome

HOLY TRINITY CHURCH STOWUPLAND

Lent Lunches



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

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

February	25 th
March	4 th
March	11 th
March	18 th
March	25 th

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



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 Stowupland - 09:45 Fridays Stowupland Village Hall

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THE TELSTAR TEAM

Editor - Sarah McManus – 07849 506898 - The editor welcomes contributors. Please send all articles and contents to articles4telstar@hotmail.com or write c/o 4 Oak Apple Drive, Oak Farm Meadow, Stowupland, IP14 4FH.

Business Advertising - Sally Wray - adverts.telstar@hotmail.co.uk. Businesses with a Stowupland connection can advertise at very reasonable rates.

Diary Dates - Neil Langridge – 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

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Telstar – for the community, by the community.

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Community *Bingo* *Night*



All cash prizes



**FRIDAY 27TH FEBRUARY 2026
STOWUPLAND VILLAGE HALL
DOORS OPEN 7PM
EYES DOWN 7:30 PM**

**EVERYONE WELCOME
(OVER 18'S ONLY)**

**BRING YOUR OWN DRINK AND
NIBBLES**

A STOWUPLAND COMMUNITY EVENT BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE TELSTAR TEAM