



**January 2024**  
Issue 425

# Quartet

**The Parish Magazine**

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**For Higham, Stratford St Mary, Raydon and Holton St Mary**

# Quartet Diary

Nothing to see here this month! - well, Christmas probaby got in the way.

Remember, this space is for you to place small ads for free - maybe you want to sell something secondhand, or you need some help with something.

Just email [quarteteditor@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:quarteteditor@hotmail.co.uk) and we'll insert your ad for one month free of charge. (Rates apply for commercial adverts)

## Help us with our campaign!

If you know any merchant or service provider living in one of our four villages, please let us know by emailing [quarteteditor@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:quarteteditor@hotmail.co.uk). We will contact them and see if they would like a **free listing** in the Quartet



## Small Ads Pin Board

No charge for non-commercial ads placed for one month only, space permitting. Email [quarteteditor@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:quarteteditor@hotmail.co.uk)

Details of events can be found within the magazine. **It would be advisable to check with organisers if regular events are happening, we may not have been informed of last minute changes**

### January

- 2 SSM Chapel Coffee Morning
- 3 Raydon Social Club  
SSM Mums and Tots
- 5 Holton Lunch Club  
SSM Youth Clubs  
Holton Social Club
- 6 Holton Green Gym
- 8 SSM Parish Council Meeting
- 9 SSM Chapel Coffee Morning
- 10 HSM Parish Council Meeting  
Raydon Social Club  
SSM Mums and Tots
- 12 SSM Youth Clubs  
Holton Social Club
- 14 HSM Social Drinks and Nibbles
- 16 SSM Chapel Coffee Morning
- 17 Raydon Social Club  
SSM Mums and Tots
- 18 HSM Slow Stitch
- 19 SSM Youth Clubs  
Holton Social Club
- 23 SSM Chapel Coffee Morning  
Raydon Fair Trade Coffee Morning

- 24 Raydon Social Club  
SSM Mums and Tots
- 26 SSM Youth Clubs  
Holton Social Club
- 30 SSM Chapel Coffee Morning
- 31 Raydon Social Club  
SSM Mums and Tots

### February

- 2 Holton Lunch Club  
SSM Youth Clubs  
Holton Social Club
- 3 Holton Green Gym
- 6 SSM Chapel Coffee Morning
- 7 Raydon Social Club  
SSM Mums and Tots
- 9 SSM Youth Clubs  
Holton Social Club
- 13 SSM Chapel Coffee Morning
- 14 Raydon Social Club  
SSM Mums and Tots
- 15 HSM Slow Stitch
- 16 SSM Youth Clubs  
Holton Social Club
- 20 SSM Chapel Coffee Morning  
Raydon Fair Trade Coffee Morning
- 21 Raydon Social Club  
SSM Mums and Tots
- 22 RDGC Meeting

# Editors Corner

It's the start of a new year! I keep having conversations with people who say the years seem to fly past these days. I suspect it's a consequence of getting older! Anyway, one way to look at it would be that now, we need to make the most of every moment!

We've been able to bring you lots to do once again with ongoing events and specials planned throughout the year in different villages. We do hope you read through the pages and can find things that interest you in the coming year.

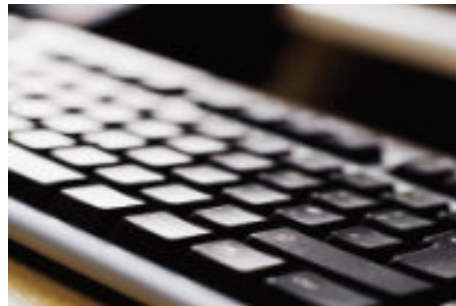
We would also like to say a big thank you to all our regular contributors to the magazine. Those who write reports and send in updates on events and those who write articles for us on various topics (you'll find a couple towards the end of the villages section this month). Thank you all, we couldn't do without you!

We also need all you readers - than you for supporting us and giving us a reason to continue. It's sometimes easy to think in this digital age, it would be better to go 'online', but I think there's still a place for a real life magazine, so here we go on another year and the Quartet's 425<sup>th</sup> edition!

Happy reading, and happy New Year!

Anne and Jane.

Articles for the Quartet are included if we have room, and if, in the opinion of the editors, they are of general interest to our readers. Please remember all articles will be subject to editing. We prefer you to contact us via email where possible.



Copy deadline for next edition:  
**19<sup>th</sup> January 2024**

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# Rev'd Manette Writes

Dear friends,

Christmas has come and gone and we find ourselves at the beginning of 2024. When we look at our new calendars or the blank crisp pages of our new diaries, we may wonder what lies in store for the coming year. Some of us may have exciting events to look forward to, but I am well aware that for many others there is worry and fear about what may lie ahead. Do get in touch and let me know if there is anything we as your local parish church can help with, or if you would like to be added to our prayer list. Anything personal you share with me will remain confidential.

In our churches, we are already planning the services and events for the next few months.

Our first service of 2024 will be at **10am on 7<sup>th</sup> January in Stratford St Mary** and we will commemorate Plough Sunday. This may not be a familiar custom for some of you, but in several of my previous churches it was a regular and much-loved festival. In one of the parishes, the church had a beautiful big old plough which had been lovingly restored. During the year it lived behind the church, wrapped up in tarpaulin, but for Plough Sunday it was cleaned up, brought into the church and placed in the centre aisle. I have always wondered about the Health & Safety aspect of it! During the service we would gather round the plough for prayers and a blessing. In one of the other churches, a local farmer would come and bring a big tractor and plough to the churchyard. We

then gathered outside for part of the service to give thanks for our farming community and ask for God's blessing on the work of the land. Churches celebrate Plough Sunday in different ways. In Thaxted, Essex, for example, Morris Men perform a traditional dance on Plough Sunday and farmers bring their tractors to be blessed. Join me for our Plough Sunday service on 7<sup>th</sup> January in Stratford and bring along a gardening tool and a small amount of soil from your garden to be blessed.

This coming year our Bishops seek to strengthen our longstanding relationship with our link-diocese in Kagera in Tanzania. Our Lent appeal this year will again be raising funds to support projects in Kagera. Bishop Mike will be visiting the diocese with a group from St Edmundsbury & Ipswich and Rev'd Nicola will be joining them. You can read more in her letter which you will find on p.12 of this edition of the Quartet.

At the beginning of this new year, I hope and pray that 2024 will be a good year for us all, that it will be better and more peaceful than the last, and that we may look forward with hope to what it may bring.

I wish you and your families good health, happiness, and peace.

Yours in Christ,  
Rev'd Manette

# Stratford St Mary



## In Stratford

Hall Farm Shop Cafe and Restaurant  
[www.hallfarmshop.com](http://www.hallfarmshop.com)

Anchor Inn [www.stratford.pub](http://www.stratford.pub)  
01206 322143

The mobile pizza co - 07982 427483

ABC Preschool - 01206 322466

Kate Baines, Virtual Assistant - 07799 391343

Orwell Electrical - 01206 322969

Andy Smith Roofing - 01206 322882

Jackson Plumbing and Heating -  
01206 322063

Nigel Bruce Electrician - 01206 322751

Penrose and Partners - Vets. 01206 323414

Finest Gardens - 07756 364560

John Burrell Bespoke Bedrooms -  
07734700507

Nexus Creative Print Production -  
[gill@nexuscpp.co.uk](mailto:gill@nexuscpp.co.uk)

tim germain - furniture designer-  
maker. [www.germain.co.uk](http://www.germain.co.uk)

Gary Moye, plasterer - 07807 314911

Baker Vet physio - 07905 657895

Katrina Wade, Physiotherapist  
07968 964826

## Save the Date

# SSM

# May Ball

## *Back at the Talbooth*

## 24<sup>th</sup> May 2024

Further details to follow  
shortly

## STRATFORD ST MARY INSTITUTE HALL

Please note that requests should be made through the bookings email address: [ssminstitute.bookings@gmail.com](mailto:ssminstitute.bookings@gmail.com) Information supplied to book should include a name with contact details and the nature of the event.

This results in a natural queuing system which ensures that first come is first served. I check this address every day and will respond accordingly.

Steve Kite  
42 Strickmere  
Stratford St Mary, CO7 6YG

### Parish Councillor needed

Stratford St Mary Parish Council currently have 1 vacancy for a Councillor

If anyone is interested or would like more information then please contact the Clerk -

email address  
[parishcouncil@stratfordstmary.org.uk](mailto:parishcouncil@stratfordstmary.org.uk)



### Winners of SSM 100 Club

The winners of the 100 club draw are

£50 Brenda Such (no 93)  
£10 Lorry Shead (no 9)

For just £1 per month be in with a chance of winning £50.

All surplus funds go towards the upkeep of the Institute Hall. Each member can hire the hall once a year at a reduced rate.

Contact either Norman Woodard on [Norman.woodard@fatbloaters.com](mailto:Norman.woodard@fatbloaters.com) or Phil Brown on [philipbrown123@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:philipbrown123@hotmail.co.uk) for details



## Stratford St Mary Parish Council Meeting Dates 2023

8<sup>th</sup> January 2024  
11<sup>th</sup> March 2024  
22<sup>nd</sup> April 2024 (Annual Parish Meeting)

Stratford St Mary Parish Council currently have 1 vacancy for a Councillor – If anyone is interested or would like more information then please contact the Clerk - email [parishcouncil@stratfordstmary.org.uk](mailto:parishcouncil@stratfordstmary.org.uk) address



Did you know Stratford St Mary Parish Council has a Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/stratfordstmaryparishcouncil>



### DEDHAM ALLOTMENT ASSOCIATION.

SSM RESIDENTS - WOULD YOU LIKE TO GROW YOUR OWN FRUIT AND VEGETABLES?

PLOTS AVAILABLE - RESERVE YOUR PLOT NOW

CONTACT [dedhamaa@btinternet.com](mailto:dedhamaa@btinternet.com)



### STRATFORD ST. MARY CHAPEL COFFEE MORNINGS

We are pleased to announce that the Coffee Mornings will re-commence on Tuesdays between 10am – 11 am beginning on Tuesday 12th September. Beverages and Cakes will be served (free .of charge)

This will form part of our warm space scheme for the Winter months. Everyone is welcome

### Stratford St Mary Parish Room

Our comfortable, well-equipped hall in the centre of the village is open and available for hire.

Please contact our new bookings clerk for more information or to make your booking by emailing

[ssmparishroom.bookings@gmail.com](mailto:ssmparishroom.bookings@gmail.com)

or contact Paul Ranson on 01206 322156  
or  
07870 388184

# QUIZ

**Stratford St Mary**  
**Back by popular request!**  
**Join us for the big 'Quiz of the Year'!**

**Do join us for our next Village Quiz Night to be held at The Institute Hall on Friday 12th January at 7.30pm.**

**Book your place / or table by contacting Dave Pooley on:  
[davepooley53@gmail.com](mailto:davepooley53@gmail.com)**

**Tables of 6 (or come along and we will allocate you to a team)**

**£5 per head. Bring your own drinks / glasses / nibbles.**

**Village  
Life**







## Verna Castle

Eddie, Simon and Helen would like to thank everybody for their sympathy and generosity. To date, the collection for "Help for Heroes" stands at over £800.



## Can you help?

Mark and Sophie would love to gain a little insight into the History of The Swan as they update their new website.

Does anyone have any factual information that they might be willing to share about the life and times of this historic inn?

They would love to produce as detailed a record as possible

Mark & Sophie Dorber

The Swan, Lower Street, Stratford St Mary CO7 6JR.



## Stratford St Mary Community Trust

The Trust's function is to manage certain properties bequeathed to the Parish, with the objective that any surplus income be used to provide short term financial help to Parish residents who may find themselves in temporary financial difficulty for whatever reason. This remit includes a particular focus on situations where individuals might require assistance to get into paid employment or transition to new skills.

**If you are resident in the Parish of Stratford St Mary and find yourself in such difficulty, or you become aware of someone else who is, remember the Trust and contact us on:**

**Telephone: 07850668064**

**E-mail: [trust@stratford-st-mary.org](mailto:trust@stratford-st-mary.org)**

**We may be able to help.**

All such contact will be in strictest confidence.

Board of Trustees  
Stratford St Mary Community Trust (SsMCT)



## Future events underway:

We are asked for feedback about ideas for the 2024 so thought we would provide a quick update:

- May Ball – following the success of last year's event, the next ball will take place on 24<sup>th</sup> May at the Talbooth, ticket information will be available in the New Year.
- *Other suggestions where we would welcome your input*
- Barn Dance
- Open Gardens (June)
- Summer Fete / Picnic at the Institute field
- Village pram Race (*possibly as part of the above*)
- Wattisham MWC

Register your interest at [villagelife@stratford-st-mary.org](mailto:villagelife@stratford-st-mary.org)

**particularly if you would like to attend the May Ball or will open your garden in June** and let us know if you have any thoughts on the above or other suggestions for future events.

**email us at: [villagelife@stratford-st-mary.org](mailto:villagelife@stratford-st-mary.org) or phone Sandy on 0770 660 2749 or Julie on 07989 639583**

## Stratford Chapel

Upper Street, Stratford St. Mary

**Leaders:** Phil Wyncoll & Bill Richardson

**Youth and Children's Pastors:** Jamie & Beckie Wyncoll

We are an independent mainstream Evangelical Church of around 60 people encompassing and providing for all age groups. We particularly specialise in the areas of Children's and Youth work, Bible Teaching and Evangelism.

## Services and Groups:

### **Every Sunday:**

10.30am Morning Worship and Junior Church

6.30pm Church Prayer Meeting

8.00pm Bible Teaching Group (currently on Zoom)

**Monday:** 8.00pm House Group (on Zoom)

**Tuesday:** 7.30pm Discipleship Group (at the Chapel)

8.00pm House Group (on Zoom)

Wednesday 9-11am Mums and Tots

**Friday:** 5.00pm "Sparks" Children's Club for ages 7 – 11 (at the Chapel)

7.30pm "Ignition" Youth Club for ages 12 – 16 (at the Chapel).

Web-site: [stratfordstmarychapel.com](http://stratfordstmarychapel.com)

Enquiries: Children's & Youth: Jamie & Beckie (01206 323095) email: [Beckie.w@live.com](mailto:Beckie.w@live.com)

General enquiries: Maggie Chapman (01473 311436)

## Stratford St Mary Christmas Tree Festival

A huge thank you to everyone who supported the Tree Festival over the weekend of 15-17th December. The Church looked wonderful, thanks to the innovative and creative efforts of the many organisations and individuals associated with our village. THANK YOU EVERYONE.

Of course, all of this could not have taken place without the detailed planning and preparation - and sheer hard work by the extended Cousins' family and team.

We hope you enjoyed visiting the church and viewing the wonderful trees - everyone had the opportunity to 'vote' for their particular favourite and unsurprisingly, every single tree received votes from our visitors. The trees voted the most popular were:

1. Christmas Past and Present - Sue Ablitt
2. The First Christmas - the 'Family Hour' team
3. For we all like Figgy Pudding - Higham PCC

It was lovely to welcome so many visitors over the three days and we look forward to seeing you all again soon.


We were also able to raise a very generous amount in proceeds from the weekend, to support our church and help us to maintain our beautiful, ancient building.

Thank you everyone.

Sandy Ranson  
Churchwarden.



# Higham



## In Higham

Karl Chisnal - mower repairs.  
07557771721

Brett Valley Installations 07896 054439

## Plans for Kagera visit February 2024

Dear Friends

As most of you know I am planning to visit Kagera, our link diocese in Tanzania, at the beginning of February. The trip could loosely be described as a fact-finding mission though I have been warned that I will be transformed! I am funding the trip through my own contribution and Diocesan grants. However, there are some areas where I would be grateful for your practical support.

During the trip we will be attending fairly lengthy Sunday services when visitors are asked to make financial donations to the collection (rather than the customary two chickens or a dozen eggs!) What I am

hoping is that I can take with me some photos from this Benefice of our worshipping communities and churches, together with generous gifts of money. I am hoping that each of the PCC's will be kindly donating on your behalf but if any of you would like to make a personal contribution to the collection basket in Kagera, please send an email to [revnictv@gmail.com](mailto:revnictv@gmail.com) and I can forward you the relevant details. I know these gifts will make a huge difference to the lives of our brothers and sisters 6,000 miles away.

Prior to both this trip and Bishops Martin's and Mike's Lent Appeal, I will be introducing the Benefice to Kagera during two of the services in January (14<sup>th</sup> Higham and 21<sup>st</sup> Holton St Mary). I look forward to seeing you then.

May I thank you in advance for your generosity and please do pray for me and my travelling companions. I shall look forward to sharing my experiences with you all on my return.

In God's love

Revd Nicola



# Raydon



## In Raydon

Blackwell Barn Holiday Let -  
www.cottages.com

Phil Avery Electrician 01473 311261

Ashley Short Carpentry 01473 311226

Gordon Short Decorator 01473 313053

SW Stiff Builders - 07811 005241

Earth&Turf Garden Services -  
07922078241

DIY Livery - 07710 540926

Chef Neil - 07584 573474

Swift Garden Services - 07947 322429

Rheal Coatings - 07539 377740

Franklyn Nevard - Architect 07515  
351894

Fresh Eggs - Roadside stall Fox Farm

Katie's Little Beauty Box - 07802  
847628

Tarbins Bakes and Cakes - 07922  
129825



## Fair Trade coffee morning

What a wonderful Fair Trade coffee morning we had on November 28th. This was the last one for 2023 as the December date would have been 26th and I don't think many (if any) of us will be around for that. It was practically a full house with most of our usual friends but some new faces as well, Rachel was pleased that more of us are using the library van now, so keep it up! We had a special delivery of sausage rolls and cheese scones from the "Frinton" baker and a first for us of the traditional German stollen cake. This got the approval of many of our friends and it will now be a Christmas tradition each year. It has also become a Christmas tradition to give gifts to myself and two others who look after the stall all year. This is really kind and much appreciated by us, but as we enjoy doing it then the reward is knowing that we are raising much needed funds to keep our Church in good repair. But a big "thank you" from us.

Our Fair Trade coffee mornings start again in 2024 and here are the dates for your diary:

January 23rd, February 20th, March 19th, April 16th, May 14th, June 11th, July 9th, August 6th, September 3rd, October 1st, October 29th, November 26th. All from 10.15 -11.30 am. (There's a cut out and keep section on page 20)

I do hope to see you all again in 2024 and thank you very much supporting us.

Have a very happy Christmas and good health for the new year.

Wendy Mumford 01473 312123

# Raydon and District Garden Club

It's January 2024 so firstly may I, on behalf of your committee, wish you all a Happy New Gardening Year as we head into our 44<sup>th</sup> year of your garden club.. So what does the New Year prospects look like ? Who knows but one thing is for certain it will depend on the weather which will come our way this year. The year just passed was fairly reasonable for us here in Suffolk, plenty of sunshine, especially hot in May so I thought here we go is this going to repeat 2022 but fortunately it didn't and necessary rainfall at times meant the watering cans were not so busy and the gardens were spectacular once again, not all dried up and struggling. Talking of rainfall we certainly have had plenty since the end of last September and this has prevented me from getting my veggie garden dug as our heavy clay soils are just so wet and sticky. This is the first year I can remember (and I remember several) that I haven't been able to complete this task before Christmas which is a shame as it needs to be dug before the winter frosts arrive, this of course helps to break down the clay soil ready for a nice tilth in Springtime when hopefully planting starts over again. If we don't get frosts, then it will be all cobbled and difficult to work down and produce a nice seed bed which the small seeds especially need to get good germination.

Hope you are all enjoying a well-earned rest like your gardens. Not so many more weeks and Spring will be coming around once again and us gardeners will be getting busy again. Have you noticed the crocus and daffodil bulbs are poking through the ground and Snowdrops will be showing colour by mid-January. Also whilst the mornings are still dark to eight o'clock or so in mid-winter, the evenings are starting to pull out which is always

encouraging even though it brings to mind **the old saying** "As the days lengthen, the cold strengthens", and in most years that's true.. Just think it's only 9 weeks to our first meeting of 2024 on February 22<sup>nd</sup>, and only 15 weeks to our "Spring Show" on 6<sup>th</sup> April. In between that it's Easter so plenty to look forward to, oh of course almost forgot it will be time to cut your lawns once again. This task seems to get earlier each year. Another sign of spring the fresh smell of cut grass, "Booutiful". Also the early birds like blackbirds & robins will be pairing up and starting to nest build.

Watch out for the February Quartet to see the list of guest speakers and subjects to look forward too.

Your committee will look forward to meeting all you members once again at our February meeting in KG5th pavilion.

Geoff Horrex. 01473 310422 / 07810086143







### Ideal for your special event

The Raydon Pavilion is for hire  
Fully carpeted room for up to 80 people  
Kitchen and preparation room  
Easy parking  
Available morning, afternoon and evening

For details, contact Mark Smout  
Tel 07748 842750 or email  
marksmout@gmail.com

**RAYDON NEW YEARS EVE PARTY!**

31<sup>st</sup> December 7:30pm til Late  
At The Pavilion  
Disco, Raffle, Cold Buffet and a glass of fizz at Midnight

Tickets £10 - Available at the bar, from committee members or raydonisc@gmail.com

## RAYDON PARISH COUNCIL

Parish Clerk - Stacey Lowe 07944 968011 [clerk@raydonparishcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@raydonparishcouncil.gov.uk)

Chairman Councillor Keith Lovering 07939 075143  
Councillor Jayne Tann 01473 828283 or 07887 767478  
Councillor Jo Brothers 07875 329901  
Councillor Martyn Cranfield 07727 100988  
Councillor Lorraine May

We have a new website <https://www.raydonparishcouncil.gov.uk/>

### RAYDON PARISH COUNCIL

**SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS 2024**  
(all at 7.30pm in the KGF Pavilion)

**NB: if you would like to see copies of the minutes of any Raydon Parish Council meetings, please visit [www.raydonparishcouncil.gov.uk](http://www.raydonparishcouncil.gov.uk), or contact the Parish Clerk.**



### Raydon Club

is open to residents of this parish.  
Wednesday evenings each week from 7.30 till 11.30 p.m. And Sunday 12.30 to 3pm  
At the Pavillion

Licensed bar, pool, darts etc.  
Look forward to seeing you!

# Holton St Mary



**In Holton**

Ann Mason Care - 01206 233372  
Hazelton Plumbing and Heating - 07448 152693  
Love refills - at Church square every fourth Tuesday

### Holton St Mary Millennium Green Trust

Century Club subscriptions for 2024 will be due in January. Once again we would like as many people as possible to pay by bank transfer and your collector will shortly be putting a note through your door giving the necessary details.

Thank you all for your support this year, income from the Century Club pays for the ongoing running costs of the Green.

If you are new to the village, would like to take part and have not been contacted by the end of the month, please give Bob Holmes a call on 07966 266293 and he will make the necessary arrangements. The cost is £1.25 a month in one £15 payment for the year, to be paid by the end of February.

Prizes are dependant on the number of participants and are currently £35, £20 and 2 x £10 each month.

Marjorie Haste, Secretary



The First Friday of the Month Lunch runs in the Village Hall of Holton St Mary on the first Friday of every month except August from 12:30 until 2ish. It is a community light lunch for £5 and is all about getting together, having a chat with others in our community, over a tasty lunch, prepared by a variety of wonderful volunteer cooks and supporters. Although primarily for Holton St Mary residents, we welcome anyone with an association with the Village, so former residents, friends and relatives of those attending, and those working from home, if you are able to take a break.

So we break even and don't over or under cater, please let Sally or Frances know if you would like to attend. And if you have to pull out at the last minute we can often bring you a takeaway meal that will beat any ready-meal!

Sal Thurlow 07721 625313 or messenger via FB, WhatsApp or email [salthurlow@gmail.com](mailto:salthurlow@gmail.com)  
Frances Torrington - via FB or email [familytorrington@btinternet.com](mailto:familytorrington@btinternet.com)

## Holton St Mary Village Hall

The Hall is back in use and taking bookings again. Please contact Tanya Kunz on 01473 311570

## Holton St Mary Parish Council

Scheduled meeting dates:

January 10th 2024  
March 13th 2024  
April 10th 2024 Annual Parish Meeting  
May 8th 2024 Annual General Meeting

### Parish Council Vacancies

Holton St Mary Parish Council currently have 2 vacancies for Councillors – If anyone is interested or would like more information then please contact the Clerk - email address [hsmparishclerk@gmail.com](mailto:hsmparishclerk@gmail.com)



## Green Gym

There will be no Green Gym sessions in January 2024 and we will therefore next on Saturday, 3 February at 10.30.

The Green Gym Team

## Holton St Mary Social Club (HSMSC) Update

From all of the HSMSC committee members, we wish you a happy and health new year. We would also like to thank you for your continued support for all of the events that have been run in 2023, it was a very busy year, and they wouldn't have been the success they were without all of you.

We will be starting the events on 14 January with a new year drink and nibbles from 12pm until 3pm. The first drink will be on us and we will also have members of the village hall committee there to share their thoughts and ideas for the refurbishments of the village hall. Please come along and take the opportunity for the committee to engage with the village community as they welcome your thoughts and ideas.

### FUTURE EVENTS

#### 14 January - New Year drinks and nibbles Sunday

Please join the HSMSC committee on 14 January to welcome in the new year.

#### 11 February - Sunday opening

The HSMSC committee will be opening the bar from 12pm until 3pm to anyone that would like to pop along and chat to friends and neighbours.

#### 17 March – Sunday opening and live music from Lee Rose

Lee Rose of Bacons Green will be entertaining us all with a live set as the HSMSC committee open the bar from 12pm until 3pm to anyone that would like to pop along and chat to friends and neighbours.

#### 6 April – Quiz night

The first quiz night of 2024 will be held on 6 April, further details will be announced in the coming months, but please let Lee Barton know if you would like to reserve a team.

## WOULD YOU LIKE TO GET INVOLVED

The HSMSC are looking for new members to join the committee and also to volunteer for the Friday bar rota. Please do get in touch with a committee member if you would like to know more.

### FREE MEMBERSHIP

If you aren't a current member of the HSMSC and would like to be, it is free to join, just contact Bob Holmes on 07966 266293/ [bobholmes55@icloud.com](mailto:bobholmes55@icloud.com) to sign up.

As always, we welcome suggestions for what HSMSC members would like us to arrange in terms of events, so please feel free to get in touch.

### THE HOLTON ST MARY SOCIAL COMMITTEE

Bob Holmes, Lee Barton, Kevin O'Connor, Suzie O'Connor, James Lancaster, Steve Sleigh, Sally Longmate, Vaughan Vanniekerk and Lou Dolan.



## Fuel Support from Babergh

### Help to heat your home:

- Prepayment meters – if you are unable to top up your prepayment meter, Citizens Advice can offer you advice and may be able to refer you for charitable support. You can also contact Warm Homes Healthy People Suffolk for support, advice and an in home survey from a Pre Pay Coordinator. Call 07769 365796 or email [prepay@eastssuffolk.gov.uk](mailto:prepay@eastssuffolk.gov.uk).
- Local Welfare Assistance Scheme – This hardship grant offers payments up to £300 towards the cost of essentials, including energy. Visit the Suffolk County Council website for more information and to apply.
- Surviving Winter - offers help, such as fuel vouchers or support for alternative fuels like oil and LPG, to help you heat your home. Apply online via the Citizens Advice Ipswich website or call 01473 298634 to find out if you are eligible.
- Emergency Heating – if your home currently has no heating, Warm Homes Healthy People can provide free emergency heaters and help you find longer term support. Call 03456 037 686 or email [whhp@eastssuffolk.gov.uk](mailto:whhp@eastssuffolk.gov.uk). Subject to availability.

### Bringing down your bills:

- Warm Homes Healthy People Suffolk - offers free efficiency surveys and advice to help you use less energy. If you are a private tenant or homeowner, they can also tell you if you are eligible for energy efficiency grants. For more information visit [www.warmhomessuffolk.org](http://www.warmhomessuffolk.org) or call 03456 037 686.
- National Energy Action - runs a Warm and Safe Homes helpline which advises on ways to reduce energy use and improve efficiency. It also offers support to switch suppliers and advice if you get behind on payments. Call 0800 304 7159 or visit [www.nea.org.uk](http://www.nea.org.uk).

### Help for off-gas homes:

- Oil loans - Eastern Savings and Loan Credit Union offer interest-free loans of £500 to help spread the upfront cost of oil and LPG. To become a member and apply visit [www.eslcu.co.uk](http://www.eslcu.co.uk) or call 03336 000690. Subject to a manual decision process, affordability and a credit check.
- Oil buying clubs – Bulk buying reduces the cost of your heating oil. Find out if your community has an oil buying club by visiting [www.oil-club.co.uk](http://www.oil-club.co.uk), you can also check the Community Action Suffolk website for details of their scheme [www.communityactionsuffolk.org.uk](http://www.communityactionsuffolk.org.uk) or call 01603 881 888.

### Dealing with energy debt:

- Supplier grants - many energy suppliers have grants to reduce or clear debt if you meet their criteria. Speak to your energy supplier to see what help you can get.
- Citizens Advice - offers advice for energy, debt and more. They can support you to create a budget, negotiate with your supplier and boost your income.
- Benefit entitlement – payments such as Warm Homes Discount, Cold Weather Payments, and extra Winter Fuel Payments can add up to hundreds of pounds to help you pay your energy bills – but you'll need to be claiming certain benefits to get them. Benefit checks can be done online at [www.gov.uk/benefits-calculators](http://www.gov.uk/benefits-calculators), or by contacting your local Citizens Advice.

### More information

Visit [www.babergh.gov.uk/energy-fuel-and-utilities](http://www.babergh.gov.uk/energy-fuel-and-utilities) for more resources to help you keep fuel and utility costs down.

If you would like help to access the internet, or to use a computer, phone or tablet, you can contact Babergh's Digital Skills team 0300 123 4 000, option 7, who can help you find support in your area.

## Cut out and keep the dates Raydon Fair Trade coffee mornings 2024

January 24th,  
February 20th  
March 19th  
April 16th  
May 14th  
June 11th  
July 9th,  
August 6th,  
September 3rd,  
October 1st,  
October 29th,  
November 26th.  
All on Tuesdays 10.15-11.30,  
to coincide with the library van



## BERGHOLT BRIDGE CLUB

We are a friendly relaxed club and are looking for new members.

No need to bring a playing partner we can provide you with one!

We meet at  
THE LAMBE SCHOOL  
Gaston Street  
EAST BERGHOLT.

Monday evening at 7pm.

Want to know more?  
Call Jean : 07887767478.

## A win win for electricity bills and wildlife

As we face rising utility bills, we might all be taking a serious look at how we can reduce our use of lights in and around the home. As light pollution is known to have a devastating effect on wildlife, there's no better time to be doing this and it could bring a win win situation for all.

Evidence suggests that all artificial lighting can impact wildlife negatively: affecting navigation, physiology, breeding and general health.

Nocturnal insects, including many moths, for example, navigate in part by natural light sources, such as the moon, and can become disorientated by artificial light, wasting energy, increasing their risk of predation and reducing their efficiency as nocturnal pollinators. It may not just be nocturnal species that are affected by light pollution. Artificial light at night disrupts circadian rhythms, in much the same way as looking at a computer late at night disrupts ours and causes us to lose sleep!

Our precious garden birds have been found to be disturbed from sleep by lighting and can begin singing before dawn. Robins seem especially sensitive and will extend their feeding into the night where artificial light is present.

Bright security lights can temporarily blind some animals or can attract them to what is not an ideal location, as appears to be the case with frogs. Lighting can also act as a barrier, causing the fragmentation of habitats. Owls may find hunting more difficult and birds that prefer to start migration flights at night can become disorientated. Particularly sadly for female glowworms, who emit low, greenish light to attract mates, even low level 'skyglow' can lessen their breeding success.

So, taking a moment to turn off our outside lights can have a vital beneficial impact on

the wonderful wildlife in and around our villages as well as our bank balances.

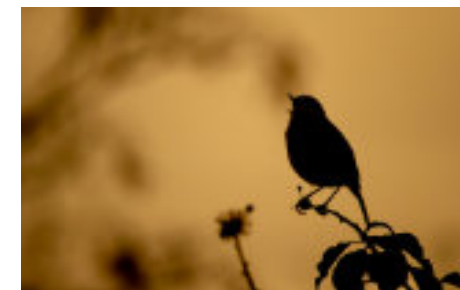
Turning lights off entirely helps, but there are other solutions. As a general rule, insects are more sensitive or attracted to short-wavelength (UV, blue and green) than long-wavelength (orange, red and infra-red) light. So dim lights, such as warm white solar powered lights, are less likely to affect wildlife - another win win.

Positioning lights as low as possible and aiming them downwards or to where they're specifically needed can help. This and low intensity lighting can bring additional benefits to your neighbours as well as passing motorists for whom glaring lights are not ideal. Other solutions include fitting hoods over a light to reduce light pollution; turning garden lights off when not in use or using motion sensors or timers for essential or security lighting.

In Suffolk, councils such as Babergh and Mid Suffolk have already agreed to lower the intensity of outdoor lights in appropriate locations, or turn street lights off entirely where they are not wanted (<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-suffolk-58965490>).

So, with further developments planned for our beautiful area and electricity bills rising, the time is ripe for us all to cut those lights. [Claire.rowan@suffolkwildlifetrust.org](mailto:Claire.rowan@suffolkwildlifetrust.org)

Photo courtesy of Kevin Sawford  
([www.kevinsawford.com](http://www.kevinsawford.com))





## 'Do something more in '24...'

Irrespective of our opinion on New Year resolutions, it is inevitable that we will reflect on the previous year's events, relationships and communities, whether local and global (our planet). This is likely to include thoughts about what we might have said and done differently and what more we could have said and done. For example, I wonder how many of us ... 'planted a tree in 23'. Well, we now have the opportunity to do 'something more in 24'. For starters, it might be to plant that tree that we didn't in 2023. In so doing, it will benefit our community, country and planet and its wildlife; it will also be a joyful adventure to watch trees grow and achieve their amazing creative potential. There are so many 'mores' we could do in 2024... The following suggestions scratch the surface; going deeper will be as, if not more rewarding and that is for us all to explore.

We can all perform 'acts of random kindness (ARK)' which should not be 'one-offs' but ongoing. Ideally, these should be proactive rather than reactive; look and listen to those who might need an ARK. Let somebody who is in a hurry go ahead of you in a queue; buy a homeless person a hot drink and muffin; interrogate your wardrobe and cupboards and give all those items you have never worn or used (for that 'just in case' or for that 'perfect' event, that will probably never happen) to charities or food and clothing banks. Someone else will inevitably need and use these far more than we will in the current economic climate and social pandemic of 'self-entitlement'. Do it in joy and love and not for recognition or status. The process of joyful and not reluctant giving is physiologically far healthier for the human body and spirit.

If we do or say something wrong, either accidentally or in an emotionally-motivated or dis-inhibited moment when our frontal lobes have shut their eyes, we should admit our transgression(s) and say 'sorry' (and mean it). Physiologically, this is great for our cardio- and cerebrovascular system (less cortisol screaming through our body, less cholesterol attacking our arteries, lower blood pressure etc.) and also for nurturing our social and spiritual health, however we define the latter.

Listening is a skill which is receding into the archives of human behaviour and for many reasons. One is through self-entitlement with the desire that our voices and opinions are not only to be heard, but heard first. Another reason is the Tower-of-Babel cacophony of social media which encourages both self-entitlement and disinhibition. This leads to the characteristic pathological cycle of all of its communications: 'Read...; reply...; reflect...; reconsider...; regret...; redact (rarely possible)...; and repeat ... the entire process with often damaging and harmful consequences. If we do not listen (and really listen), we will not understand; if we do not understand, we will not learn; if we do not learn we cannot grow – in ourselves and in our relationships. Whatever our spirituality and/or faith, the meaning of life is about relationships; even the Greek stoics and 21<sup>st</sup> century humanists regarded this as important and of course for Christians and other faiths, our relationships with God and our 'neighbour' are central to our lives.

In contrast, bullying is an increasing human behaviour which now typically manifests subtly, including by a 'passively aggressive' approach and based on what its perpetrators perceive as a superior intellect, status or religious high ground.

Such behaviour intimidates, silences and harms people and should be neither accepted nor tolerated. Bullying must be challenged and this is likely to be successful as most bullies are also cowards.

And finally, if you are aware that 'something more' needs doing ... and providing that it will benefit others and is within accepted legal and moral boundaries ... just do it!

Richard Appleton

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## SESAW NEWS

Have you made any resolutions as you hang the new calendar, flip through the seed catalogues and holiday brochures or search for evening classes? Maybe you want to turn over a new leaf, eat less, exercise more – or how about volunteering once a week?

A few hours of your time can make a huge difference to charitable organisations struggling to provide much needed support in the community. Charity shops, food banks, befriending services, hospitals need help, or if you happen to love animals, the rescued dogs, cats and rabbits at SESA W need you too. Volunteering is a two-way street, your gift is more than compensated by the feelgood factor. Our human carers go home tired, sometimes dirty but happy to have spent time with the animals. They are happiest of all when they see people or families going home with their new pets.

If you would like to volunteer at SESA W, please contact me at: [sesawken@gmail.com](mailto:sesawken@gmail.com) I'll ask one of my

humans to call you to discuss how we could help each other.

If you plan to share your life with a new pet, do visit SESA W. At the time of writing, we still have kittens in need of new homes. We are open by appointment only due to our annual Winter shutdown so please email or leave a message on the answerphone and someone will get back to you.

Mum's new diary is open on the desk, ready to take your calls but she'll find her pen is missing. A nice, crunchy biro is too tempting to a little dog like me, Kenny (the Boss) Chihuahua!

Suffolk & Essex Small Animal Welfare, Registered Charity  
No.1124029, Stoke Road, Leavenheath, CO6 4PP. Tel: 01787  
210888, email: [info@sesaw.co.uk](mailto:info@sesaw.co.uk) website: [www.sesaw.co.uk](http://www.sesaw.co.uk)





## St. Mark's Roman Catholic Parish

St. Mark's, Hawthorn Drive, Ipswich IP2 0QQ

Holy Family Church, Ipswich Road, Branham CO11 1TB

Parish Priest: Rev Fr Luke Goymour  
The Presbytery, 180 Hawthorn Drive, Ipswich IP2 0QQ

Tel: 01473 684963

revgoymour@googlemail.com

### Pope Francis' New Year Resolutions

**1. Don't gossip.** "When we gossip, we are doing what Judas did," and "begin to tear the other person to pieces. Every time we judge people in our hearts, or worse when we speak badly of them with others, we are murdering them. There is no such thing as innocent slander."

**2. Choose the 'more humble' purchase.** The Pope preaches against materialism. "Certainly, possessions, money, and power can give a momentary thrill, the illusion of being happy, but they end up possessing us and making us always want to have more, never satisfied. 'Put on Christ' in your life, place your trust in Him and you will never be disappointed."

**3. Finish your meals.** No leftovers, please. Named after a 12th-century saint who lived in poverty, Francis slams a "culture of waste" that neglects the plight of the hungry. The Pope says: "We should all remember... that throwing food away is like stealing from the tables of the poor, the hungry! I encourage everyone to reflect on the problem of thrown away and wasted food to identify ways and means that, by seriously addressing this issue, are a vehicle of solidarity and sharing with the needy."

### Weekday and Sunday Masses and devotions

All are very welcome to attend services. The following are the usual mass times but please check the parish website for updates in case of changes:

[www.stmarksparish.org.uk](http://www.stmarksparish.org.uk) or the noticeboards outside the churches.

**Saturday** 17.30 St. Mark's vigil mass with confessions from 17.00

**Sunday** 09.00 Holy Family Branham 11.00 St. Mark's

**Tuesday** 10.00 Holy Family mass with Eucharistic Adoration from 09.20

**Wednesday** 09.30 St. Mark's

**Friday** 12.15 St. Mark's mass with Eucharistic Adoration from 11.40

**Father Luke's Sunday sermons are available at [anchor.fm/fr-luke-goymour](http://anchor.fm/fr-luke-goymour)**

**Bring & Buy Coffee Morning** at Viv Szitasi's home, Paddock Gate, Whitehorse Road, East Bergholt CO7 6TR will take place on **Thursday January 25th** 10.30 to 12. All welcome.

### The Sick & Housebound

Please let Fr Luke know of anyone who is ill at home, housebound or in hospital, so that they may receive appropriate pastoral care, he can be contacted on 01473 684963.



### A note for Everyone

Just a reminder for house names/numbers to be visible. If an emergency vehicle needs to find your house at night, will it find it easily?

Lots of names/numbers are hidden behind bushes - it would only take a few minutes to clear it but those few minutes might make a huge difference if the emergency vehicle finds your house first time.



## Manningtree & District Photographic Society

We ended the first half of our season with a very enjoyable Christmas meal and, as we start 2024, we wish everyone a very happy, healthy and safe new year.

In January we are looking forward to a field trip to Flatford and also:

11<sup>th</sup> January – Prints Competition – 'Minimalism', Judge: Roy Essery MPAGB  
25<sup>th</sup> January – Zoom Presentation – 'Colours, Tones and Textures' by Ruth Grindrod.

Please visit our website for full details of our varied programme together with competition results, photo albums and further club information.

The club continues to have fun with our monthly Facebook Challenge and our public Manningtree Photographic Club Facebook page also features various club news and activities.

This month's featured image is 'Lady Maria's Bath' by Steve Pharez, which won a recent PDI mono competition.

We are a small group of photography enthusiasts with a wide range of photographic experience and knowledge. The club aims to provide a friendly environment for members to enjoy the development of their photographic skills through a variety of activities in the company of like-minded individuals.

If you have an interest in photography, at whatever level, you would be most welcome at M&DPS and we would like to invite you to come along to a free club meeting. We meet at Mistley Village Hall, on the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Thursdays of the month between September and May at 7.30pm.

For further information please contact our Secretary Pat Ainger on 01206 231242 or email: [madps@post.com](mailto:madps@post.com)

Website: <https://e-voice.org.uk/manningtreeanddistrictphotographicsociety/>



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We have over 40 interest groups including walking – from strollers to 5+ milers – theatre trips, garden visits, art appreciation, curry club, science group, languages, keep fit, pickleball, overseas travel ..... there's something for everyone.

Monthly coffee mornings are held on the first Friday of the month 10am – 12pm at the Lambe School, East Bergholt. Come along, meet some members, hear more about us and decide whether you'd like to join. Monthly lectures are held on the second Wednesday at 2pm in the Constable Hall, East Bergholt. Guests are welcome for a charge of £4.

Please take a look at our website [www.u3asites.org.uk/stourvalley](http://www.u3asites.org.uk/stourvalley) for more information and contact details.

# Bin collections

Week Commencing		
	1 <sup>st</sup> January	Refuse Week - Collections two days later than usual except Friday 5 <sup>th</sup> Jan collection will be on Monday 8 <sup>th</sup> .
	8 <sup>th</sup> January	Recycling Week
	15 <sup>th</sup> January	Refuse week
	22 <sup>nd</sup> January	Recycling week
	29 <sup>th</sup> January	Refuse week
Waste Services 0300 1234 000 (option 4) Email: <a href="mailto:recycling@babergmidsuffolk.gov.uk">recycling@babergmidsuffolk.gov.uk</a> Visit <a href="http://www.recyclenow.com">www.recyclenow.com</a> to find your nearest recycling banks		



Do you want a recommendation?

Tell us your favourite local service - could be a pub or restaurant or takeaway, or other service you think would benefit getting a recommendation...If we agree, we'll print it here

**The Layham Queen** take out service on Fridays & Sunday Roasts - Steve and Tannith are very community minded and give a very good service

**Simply Thai** Manningtree - It was simply delicious! Freshly cooked, and arrived within the quoted time frame. 01206 396060. Delivers to Holton St Mary

**Zaynab** and **Mother Indian** at Capel. Really good and highly recommend. They don't deliver, but it's made quickly for pick-up.

**Brantham Bull** 01473 328248

**Lucca Enoteca** Manningtree 01206 390044

**Oranges & Lemons** East Bergholt 01206 299000

**the florist in East Bergholt** does lovely flowers:- [www.gayedrummond.com](http://www.gayedrummond.com)

**Sam Pritchard** [sam@samselectrics.co.uk](mailto:sam@samselectrics.co.uk) 07940031776 - Sam can certify safety for insurance and landlord work too. Anyway, he's great.

**The Runway Cafe** situated Acacia Road, Notley Enterprise Park, Raydon CO7 6QD on the old airfield! Also do lunches and teas.

**Chef Neil** is back! Does the best takeaways ever. Changing menu Thursday Friday and Sunday 07584 573474

There's room for more - and don't forget to keep us updated...let us know...!

# Local Services

## The Constable Country Medical Practice

Heath Road, East Bergholt, Colchester CO7 6RT

### Surgey opening hours

8.00am – 6.30pm Monday to Friday  
Telephone 01206 298272

36 The Street, Capel St Mary, Ipswich IP9 2EE

### Surgey opening hours

8.00am – 6.30pm Monday to Friday

Dispensary 8.30am – 6.15pm  
(closed between 1-2pm)  
Telephone 01473 310203  
Fax 01473 311722

## Crime prevention

<http://www.suffolk.police.uk/safetyadvice/reportacrime/tellthepolice.aspx>

PC 1347 Gilkes Pcco 3041 Cooper  
[babergeast@suffolk.pnn.police.uk](mailto:babergeast@suffolk.pnn.police.uk)  
Telephone...101

## Your District and County Councillors

### District Councillor: John Ward

Leader, Babergh District Council  
Phone: 07802 414981  
Email: [john.ward@babergh.gov.uk](mailto:john.ward@babergh.gov.uk)

### County Councillor: Georgia Hall

Email: [georgia.hall@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:georgia.hall@suffolk.gov.uk)  
Phone: 07955 434445  
Both have correspondence addresses at Endeavour House, 8 Russell Road Ipswich IP1 2BX.

## MOBILE LIBRARY

### Stratford St Mary - Route 11

The bus stops every 4 weeks on Wednesdays, subject to current restrictions

17 January, 14 February, 13 March, 10 April

Black Horse - 11.05am - 11.20am  
Tally Ho! Corner - 11.25am - 11.45am  
Strickmere (School Lane end) - 11.50am - 12.10pm

### Route 14

The bus stops every 4 weeks on Tuesdays

23 January, 20 February, 19 March, 16 April

### Holton St Mary

Church Square - 9.30-9.45am

### Raydon

St Mary's Raydon - 9.50-10.30am

### Lower Raydon

Sulleys Hill - 11.30 - 11.45am

### Higham

The Green - 11.55am to 12.10pm

The **customer service line 01473 283838** is staffed 9am to 5pm from Monday to Friday and can handle any library customer queries renewals and reservations to any general library queries. An answer phone is available outside of operating hours and people can also email [help@suffolklibraries.co.uk](mailto:help@suffolklibraries.co.uk)

# Local Directory

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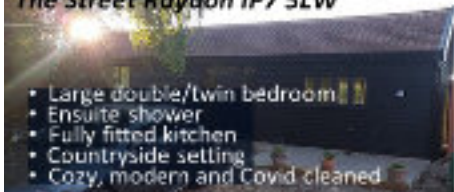
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Farm Shop Open: Mon to Sat 9am to 5pm / Sun 10am till 4pm



Shop: 01206 322572, [shop@hallfarmshop.co.uk](mailto:shop@hallfarmshop.co.uk) | Restaurant: 01206 323600, [cafe@hallfarmshop.co.uk](mailto:cafe@hallfarmshop.co.uk)  
Hall Farm, Stratford St Mary, Colchester, Essex CO7 6LS | [www.hallfarmshop.com](http://www.hallfarmshop.com)





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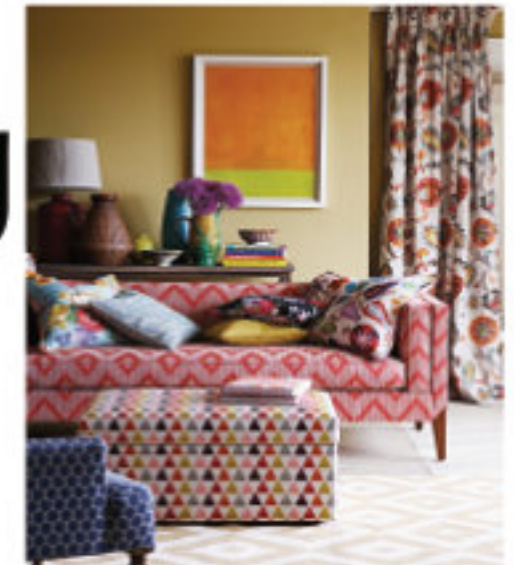
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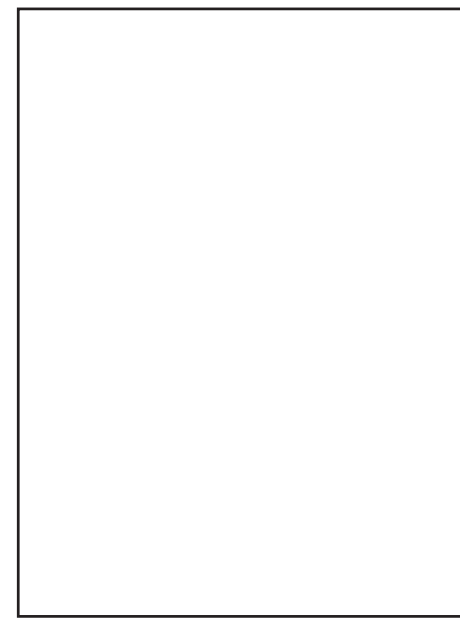
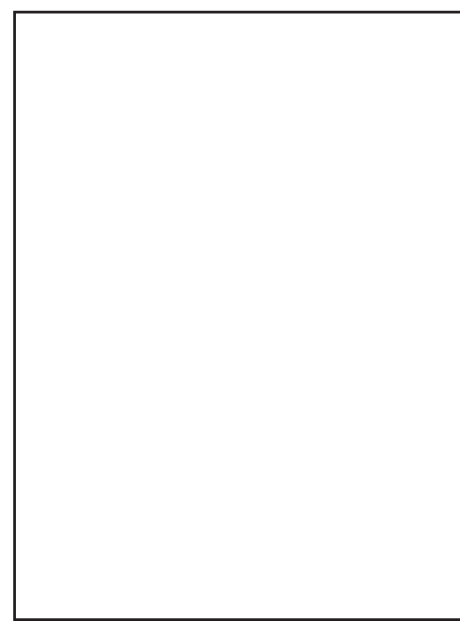
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Email: [revmcrossman@gmail.com](mailto:revmcrossman@gmail.com)

**Assistant Priest:** Rev'd Nicola Tindall: Tel 01787 212340

Email: [revnictv@outlook.com](mailto:revnictv@outlook.com)

**Lay Elder:** Sandy Ranson 01206 322156

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**Please contact Rev'd Manette if you or your children would like to be baptized, if you would like to get married in one of our churches, or if you need to arrange a loved one's funeral.**

**Home Communion for the housebound can also be arranged.**

**If anyone would be interested in Confirmation in 2024, Rev'd Manette would be happy to hear from you and we can have an informal conversation about what is involved.**



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## Church Services for January 2024

### **7th January: 10am Stratford A service for Plough Sunday** *Epiphany / Baptism of Christ*

Plough Sunday is thought to be a very ancient festival which was traditionally celebrated on the first Sunday after Epiphany, which falls on 6 January.

Come and find out more about the ancient custom of blessing the plough and asking for God's blessing on the land. Bring along one of your gardening tools and a small amount of soil.

### **14th January: 10am Higham Holy Communion** *2nd Sunday of Epiphany*

Rev'd Nicola will be leading a Kagera-themed service. Come and learn more about the Diocese of Kagera / Tanzania with which our Diocese has had links since 1994.

### **21st January: 10am Holton Holy Communion** *3rd Sunday of Epiphany*

### **28th January: 10am Raydon Holy Communion** *4th Sunday of Epiphany*

**9.30am Stratford St Mary: Family Hour**  
in the Parish Room

#### **Looking ahead to February:**

- 4th February: 10am in Stratford St Mary
- 11th February: 10am in Higham
- 18th February: 10am in Holton St Mary
- 25th February: 10am in Raydon – 9.30am Family Hour

#### ***It's the season of colds and coughs ....***

*If you have a cold, a cough, a sore throat or you feel in any way unwell, please be sensible and stay in the warm until you are fully recovered. Some people are vulnerable because of underlying health conditions and they may be at risk if they catch any of the seasonal viruses which are doing the rounds. Thank you.*

## Family Hour in Stratford St Mary at 10am

This month we will be meeting on 28th January. when we will be making and learning about Christingles. Do come and join in the fun.. Our usual breakfast of bacon rolls etc will be served from 9.30 am. Do join us for our informal half-hour service, bible story and kids craft activity.

We very much look forward to seeing you.

The Family Hour Team.



## 5th Sundays in the Benefice

In 2024 the 5th Sundays fall on 31st March (Easter Day), 30th June, 29th September & 29th December and we will be meeting in our churches around the benefice.

## Chat, Prayer & Coffee every 3rd Wednesday at 10am Stratford St Mary Parish Room,

This month we will be meeting on **17th January**. Join us as we put the world to rights over coffee, and we usually have biscuits or cake, too. We reflect on a short Bible reading and we pray for the world and for those in need.

**We look forward to seeing you!**

## Benefice Bible Study / House Group

The next meeting of the Bible Study Group will on **25th January** at 2.30pm at the home of Mrs Judith Shanks, 34 Strickmere, Stratford St Mary.

## **Prayer pointers for the Benefice**

We pray for all those who are ill, in pain or in any way unwell, for those personally known to us and also for: Nicky Bull, Steve Meech, Amanda Berry, Penny Watkins and Annie Marshall.

We pray for those whose needs we know and for those whose needs are known to God alone.

We remember all those who have recently died, among them Verna Castle and Betty Cooper (formerly from Raydon) . May they rest in peace and rise in glory. And we pray for all who mourn. May they be held in God's love and comforted in their grief.

### **Prayers**

Heavenly Father, as an old year passes and a new one comes,  
full of promise, hope and potential,  
we pray that your Holy Light will shine on all nations,  
all people and all of creation, leading us in love, peace and joy.  
We ask You to bless all who look to the future  
not with peace but with anxiety. Amen.

As we step into the unknown of 2024, we pray for hope to lighten  
our way. May this year be filled with renewal and rejuvenation,  
allowing us to leave behind the burdens of the past.  
Grant us the strength to face challenges with unwavering faith  
and the belief that each day brings new opportunities. Amen.

God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change,  
the courage to change the things I can,  
and the wisdom to know the difference.

*Reinhold Niebuhr*

### **Benefice Churches Open**

All the beautiful churches in our benefice are open for visiting every  
day during daylight hours.