The Messenger



Issue 172
July
2026

Serving Gislingham, Mellis, Yaxley and the Thornhams

THE MESSENGER TEAM



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News, features and advertised events in the Messenger magazine are added daily to the Messenger Facebook page at:
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E-mailed or hand-written submissions always welcome.

The editor reserves the right to edit, amend or omit submitted items at his discretion.

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Disclaimer: The articles published herein do not necessarily represent the views of The Messenger. They are the opinions of individual contributors and are published with a view that free expression promotes discussion and interests.

WELCOME TO THE MESSENGER



Welcome to the July issue!

In this edition, we feature The Hidden Gardens of Mellis, which took place on 13th and 14th June. The event is showcased both on our front cover and in the centre pages. My sincere thanks go to Penny Morgan for providing the beautiful photographs that capture some of the wonderful gardens on display.

Unfortunately, speeding traffic remains a concern for many rural communities across Suffolk. On page 9, I would like to draw your attention to a fundraising initiative being organised by the Thornham Estate to help raise the £10,000 required to reduce the speed limit from 60mph to 40mph along the Gislingham Road in Thornham. Particularly important near to the often-busy entrances to Thornham Walks.

Continuing the theme of road safety, I am always pleased to highlight the excellent work being carried out by the Gislingham Primary School Junior Road Safety Officers and the Gislingham Speedwatch team. Their commitment to improving safety within our community is greatly appreciated.

There are also several events to look forward to over the coming weeks. On Saturday 11th July, the Gislingham Summer Fete will take place at Gislingham Village Hall. The committee has worked hard to organise a wonderful programme of attractions, including a barbecue, teas and cakes, ice cream, a variety of stalls, pocket-money games, and much more. As always, there will be a grand draw with some excellent prizes donated by local businesses, and members of the Gislingham Variety Club will entertain visitors with a selection of songs. Other attractions include a football target shoot, ping-pong ball games, ski-ball, and plenty of activities to keep children entertained throughout the afternoon. As always, there will also be the ever-popular wheelbarrow of booze raffle.

Events such as these require a great deal of organisation and community support. The Gislingham Fete Committee is looking for volunteers to help run some of the activities on the day. If you can spare an hour or two, your assistance would be greatly appreciated. Please contact Robbie Walker at: walker473@sky.com if you are able to offer help.

Your support will help ensure that the fete is a great success and can be enjoyed by residents and visitors alike.

A full list of local events in our villages can be found on page 5.

Finally, please note that our August issue has an early submission deadline of Saturday 11th July.

Until next month,



Jeff Norman, Editor e) themessengereditorial@gmail.com

Cover photo: Taken at 'The Hidden Gardens of Mellis' by Penny Morgan

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DIARY & LOCAL EVENTS



JULY:

Saturday 4th July:
Coffee morning & Book sale
- Gislingham Village Hall: 10.00am to 12 noon.

Tuesday 7th July:
Rural Coffee Caravan
- Mellis Memorial Hall: 10.00am to 12.00 noon.

Saturday 11th July:
Gislingham Village Fete
- Gislingham Village Hall: 1.00pm to 4.00pm – see page 25.

Wednesday 15th July:
Gislingham WI meeting. Strawberry Tea and 80th anniversary celebrations.
- Gislingham Village Hall. 2.30pm

Saturday 25th July:
Summer Fayre
- Thornham Walled Garden, Thornham Walks. 12.30pm to 3.00pm. – see page 22 for details.

Saturday 25th July:
Quiz Night
- Gislingham Village Hall: 7.30pm. See page 12 for details.

Please note, any event changes after the magazine goes to print are updated on our Facebook page at: https://www.facebook.com/themessengergismeltho

SAVE THE DATES:

- **Saturday 8th August:**
Gislingham Garden, Arts and Produce Show - See page 29 for details.

- **Sat 29th, Sun 30th, Mon 31st:**
St. Mary's Church Gislingham Annual Flower Festival
- See page 47 for details.

Our next issue is August 2026. The "What's On" Diary deadline is: Saturday 11th July

CLUBS, CLASSES & REGULAR EVENTS

GISLINGHAM

Chat & Craft Club: Gislingham Village Hall. 1st Wednesday of every month. 12.00-2.00pm. Contact: Elspeth Tranter on 07473 131841.

Baby and Tots Group for the Under 2's: Primary School (School Term time only)**.** Every Wednesday 9.45am – 11.00am. Contact Debbie Nicholls: 07762 116 335

Carpet Bowls Club: Village Hall. Every Monday 2.15pm to 4.15pm. £3.00 per session. All equipment provided.

Pilates Classes: Village Hall. Wednesdays 9.15am and 10.15am and also Thursdays 7.10pm. Becky Cruickshank: 07734 414151

Total Fitness: Village Hall. Every Thursday 6.15pm - 7.00pm. A cardio fitness class that can be adapted to all abilities. Becky Cruickshank: 07734 414151

Gislingham WI: Village Hall. Meet the third Wednesday of every month at 7.30pm. New members welcome. For more details contact Margaret: 01379 783903 or Terrie: 01379 788521.

Gislingham Silver Band: Band Hut. Tuesdays 7.30pm - 9.30pm. Contact Iris Debock: 01379 788066 or debock.iris@gmail.com

Yoga Classes: Gislingham Village Hall. Tuesdays 7.00pm - 8.30pm
And via zoom on Thursdays 7.00pm – 8.00pm. Both term time only
Contact Clare Hall on 07704 570877 or email: thornhamyoga@yahoo.com

Gislingham Variety Club:
A local multi-talented group who perform twice a year in the Village Hall. If you are interested to join us, please contact by email: gislinghamvariety@gmail.com

THORNHAM

parkrun: Thornham Walks
Every Saturday at 9.00am. 5k. www.parkrun.org.uk/thornhamwalks/

Pilates Classes: Parish Hall every Tuesday.
Sit to Stand Pilates – 10.00am.
Pilates – Strong, Stretch, Relax – 11.30am
For information please contact: Michelle 07572 500465 or via email: hello@yapl.co.uk.

Thornham Bowls Club: Thornham Road. New Members welcome.
For more details contact Keith: 01379 871881

Bellringing: Thornham Magna Church. Mondays 7.30pm – 9.00pm. For details contact Sylvie: 01379 788130

Mellis Cricket Club plays at Thornham Estate
Saturdays and Sundays (May to Sept.) New Players phone: James on 07789 111165 or email: jameshkw@icloud.com

MELLIS

Circuit Training Fitness Class: Memorial Hall. Mondays 7.30pm – 8.30pm
Gus: T: 01379 788506 or 07716 118235 / anguswilkinson@btinternet.com

Scentwork for Dogs
Meetings on Tuesdays 2.00pm – 3.00pm at Mellis Memorial Hall
Further details: 07725 567110 or email: info@trailingtails.co.uk

YAXLEY

The Art Club
Meetings on Tuesdays 10.00am to 12 noon once weekly at Yaxley Village Hall
Dates: 7th, 14th 21st & 28th July. All abilities are welcome. £4.00 per session. Come and create something artistic in your own style. Further details: Glyn Owens 07768 026065 or email: gavowens@aol.com

The Garden Club
Thursday 2nd July: Garden Party at Willow Lodge – 6pm start
More details: Abby Brett: 01379 783984 or email: tony1andabby2@hotmail.com

Yaxley Needlework & Craft Group
Meetings on alternate Wednesdays. 8th July ordinary meeting and 22nd July a talk by Joy Evitt on Needlework Tools and Chatelaines (open meeting). From 2 to 4pm at Yaxley Village Hall - £2.50 per session. Finish old projects or start a new one – enjoy a chat and a cuppa! Further details: Celia Armstrong 01379 788754 or email: celiaarmstrong@hotmail.co.uk

Gislingham Parish Council Meetings are held at Gislingham Village Hall and start at 7.00pm

GISLINGHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Meeting dates for the next 12 months are:

20th July 2026

17th August 2026

21st September 2026

19th October 2026

16th November 2026

21st December 2026

18th January 2027

15th February 2027

15th March 2027

For more information email: clerk@gislinghamparishcouncil.gov.uk

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SPEED LIMIT ALONG THE GISLINGHAM ROAD BY THORNHAM WALKS



After more than two decades of lobbying, we can finally announce that Suffolk Highways have heard our pleas to reduce the speed limit along the Gislingham Road. Currently, there is no speed limit in place, and so the national limit of 60mph applies. As we are sure many of you know, our car parks straddle both sides of the road on a bend and it is a somewhat hair-raising proposition to cross it at times.

Mid Suffolk District Council began petitioning for a reduced speed limit back in the early 2000s. Since then, we have been in constant dialogue with our Suffolk County Councillor, Jessica Fleming, and last year she was delighted to announce that our petition had finally met with a positive response. Although it wasn't exactly what we were hoping for – we have always strongly advocated for a 30mph limit, and suitable additional traffic calming measures – we have been granted a 40mph limit, with the potential of some additional traffic calming measures. Recent elections have seen a new councillor elected for our area, Paul Bains, and we look forward to working with Paul and Suffolk Highways to implement this long-needed safety measure.

We need to raise funding to implement the speed limit change (which costs circa £10,000), and with this in mind, we are partnering with the Blossom Charity in Eye to put on a sponsored Fire-walk at Thornham Walks on October 9th. A 15-foot walk across red-hot embers burning at over 100 degrees… Considered to be the shortest and possibly most challenging walk you will ever take! The fire-walk will cost £25 to register, and you are asked to try and raise £100 in sponsorship for completing the challenge. Training will be given on the evening, and participants must be 16+. The funds raised will be split 50/50 between the Friends of Thornham Walks and the Blossom Charity. Please get in touch if you are interested in participating!

Email: thewalks@thornhamestate.com tel: 01379 831242

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TEAM GISLINGHAM JRSO UPDATE



ROAD SAFETY TRAINING ACROSS THE SCHOOL

Back in March we were very lucky to be joined by Holly from Suffolk Roadsafe to help deliver road safety awareness and training across the school. We launched a competition to encourage everyone to dress up brightly. Our overall winner was Alyssa Prescott (reception) and Mrs Lawrence (staff.)

Key learning included:

- How to cross the road safely: "Stop! Look! Listen! Think!" and safe use of crossings.
- The importance of wearing helmet protection when cycling/ scooting. We learnt that it is not law that adults wear a helmet, or insist that our children do, but, if there is an accident, helmets provide potentially life saving protection.
- We discussed the dangers of mobile phones as a pedestrian and when driving as they can be very distracting. We learned it is illegal to hold and use a phone, satnav, tablet, or any handheld device that can send and receive data, while driving or riding a motorcycle.
- Were you aware that it is illegal for someone under the age of 18 to use an electric scooter on public roads, public paths, or public property?
- Smoking can be a distraction when driving a vehicle. It is illegal to smoke or vape in a private vehicle with someone under 18 in the car.
- We discussed the importance of wearing a seatbelt fitted safely and properly when traveling in a car (it is illegal to not wear one).
- It is the law that a booster seat is used for people under 12 years and/or under 135cm tall because the seat belt needs to be in the correct position (across the top shoulder/ breastbone, and both hips) to protect us if an accident happens.

WORKING WITH COMMUNITY PROFESSIONALS AND GROUPS

We have also been working with the District Council, Parish Council and our local MP who are being really supportive in helping us to be part of trying to improve safety and signage around our school and village.

GISLINGHAM COMMUNITY SPEEDWATCH



Last week we completed another Speedwatch with the Gislingham Community Speedwatch team. We were really pleased to see so many cars driving with care. We hope that our presence as children at a community Speedwatch will continue to encourage drivers to drive safely in and around our school and village.

JRSO COUNTY AWARDS DAY

On 26th June we are going to Ipswich to take part in the JRSO county awards presentation. It is a wonderful opportunity for all schools that are part of the JRSO scheme to celebrate our achievements, share our hard work and successes, and learn from one another.

Many thanks to the Messenger and our whole community for your continued support.

Riley, Phoebe, Cory & Eva - Team Gislingham JRSOS



SATURDAY 25TH JULY 2026

QUIZ NIGHT

AT GISLINGHAM VILLAGE HALL

£5.00 PER TICKET

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gislinghamvillagehall@gmail.com

NEWS FROM GISLINGHAM VILLAGE HALL

There appears to have been some confusion over parking at the Village Hall Car Park. The Car Park is a private car park, not a public one. It is for use by hirers of the hall and those attending their event along with authorised users. Parents parking their vehicles for a short time, to drop off/pick up their children from the school are authorised users.

FUTURE EVENTS

Saturday 25th July: Quiz Night
- Doors open at 7.00 pm. Bring your own food and drinks. £5.00 entry. Tickets available from Terry Williams at gislinghamvillagehall@gmail.com or 01379 83903

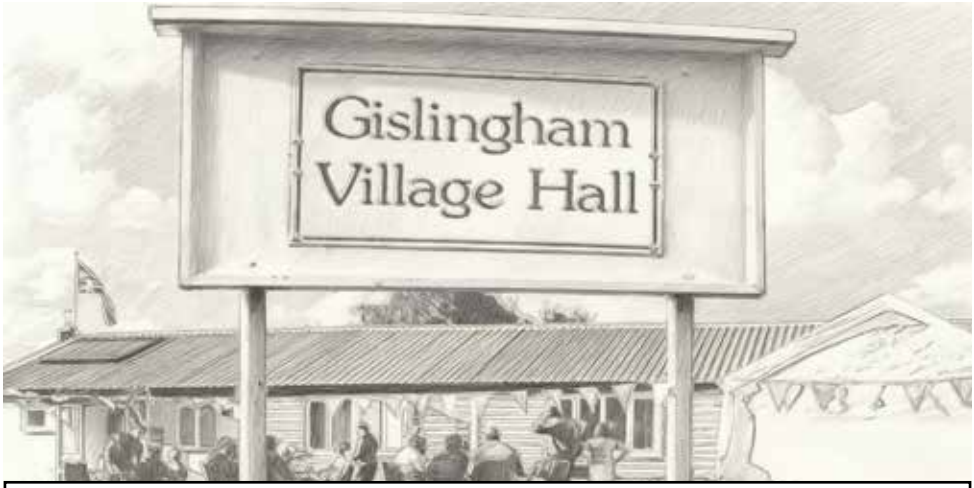
Saturday 22nd August: Jumble Sale - Watch this space for details.

Saturday 12th September: Quiz Night
- Doors open at 7.00 pm. Bring your own food and drinks. £5.00 entry. Tickets available from Terry Williams at gislinghamvillagehall@gmail.com or 01379 83903

Saturday 17th October: Bingo Night - Watch this space for details.

Saturday 14th November: Music Night – watch this space for details

Saturday 12th December: Quiz Night
- Doors open at 7.00 pm. Bring your own food and drinks. £5.00 entry. Tickets available from Terry Williams at gislinghamvillagehall@gmail.com or 01379 83903



The Hall is available for hire at a cost of £10 per hour, which includes tables, chairs, lighting, heating, water etc. There are also village hall assets available for hire at an additional cost. These include, a sound system and a large screen television. Additionally, there are tables and chairs and a marquee which can be used outside of the hall.

Follow us at www.facebook.com/GislinghamVillageHall/
PLEASE SUPPORT YOUR VILLAGE HALL

YAXLEY PARISH COUNCIL NEWS



The arid months of April and May which both featured heat that would have pleased Lawrence of Arabia have given way to a June where many ventures outside have felt like a walk across the deck of a North Sea trawler. Meanwhile village life carries on and as usual I shall highlight the issues that have faced Yaxley and its Parish Council since I last wrote.

Consultation with Adrian Ramsey, MP

On 22nd May along with representatives of other potentially affected local villages I attended a consultation meeting with Adrian Ramsey MP in Brome and Oakley Village Hall during the consultation phase of the proposed Eco Power Project.

Readers may remember that I referred to this project in my March article as a solar farm with Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) with a connection to the existing National Grid electricity substation at Leys Lane, Yaxley, Suffolk. Its proposed development site covers approximately 600 hectares (731 full size football pitches) in size, predominantly across five solar array areas situated around the Yaxley substation (on separate land parcels to the southwest of Stuston, northeast of Eye, north of Gislingham, north of Occold, and southwest of Thrandeston). The proposed development would also include cable route corridors to connect the solar array and battery areas and new associated substation to the Yaxley substation and thereby to feed into the National Grid. This project is designated a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project and as such granting or refusal of planning permission would be out of the hands of Suffolk's District and County Council, resting in the hands only of the Secretary of State after possible referral to the Planning Inspectorate. – a national body!

The purpose of the meeting was to inform Adrian Ramsey MP of local feeling concerning this project in order to inform his response to the official consultation and provide him with points to raise in his imminent scheduled meeting with representatives of the Eco Power Project

The overwhelming feeling from the representatives of each village present was one of opposition or extreme reservations about both the construction phase and the completed project itself. It quickly became clear that the consultation process itself was severely flawed since so much of the information before us from Eco Power was both vague and constantly changing. For example, the cable corridors shown were extremely broad and far wider than any cables would actually need. This meant that we were being asked to comment without being aware of the exact route cables would take. Similarly, the land allocated for the siting of solar panels, battery storage and another substation was subject to constant change as land pockets were added to or subtracted from the total area. Also, the plan seemed to be constantly evolving as new designs were being considered. The original plans showed a concentration of BESS (Battery Energy Storage Systems) in one or more fields but now dispersal of these placing one or two in each solar panel field was being considered. Which is it to be? How can we comment as both have pros and cons.

- Other points made to Mr Ramsey were:
- Who would pay for removal of panels/batteries when redundant?
- How could such vast construction be managed using narrow B roads and single tracked roads without considerable danger and serious inconvenience to villagers?
- How could sites remote from current roads be accessed?
- How would footpaths be protected?
- How well would the solar fields be concealed, if at all?
- With an admitted policy of 'let burn' how could these BESS sites be safe? Any fire would

spread toxic fumes and according to an engineer representing one of the villages the lithium from the batteries would sink into the soil causing permanent pollution.
- How can our part-time fire stations be expected to manage a fire risk of this complexity and potential scale?
- Why is there no strategic plan for siting of these projects? The disproportionate effect on the A140 corridor and villages to the west of that road seems grossly unjust and unfair.

Mr Ramsey did listen intently, and his PA noted our concerns in detail. How he will use our information and whether any intervention on his part will have any effect remains to be seen but his presence was welcome, nonetheless and somebody seemed to be listening.

New County Councillor

Yaxley Parish Council was very pleased to welcome our new county councillor, Mr Paul Bains to our Annual Parish Meeting and subsequent Parish Council Meeting held on the same evening. We congratulated Cllr Bains on his election victory and are looking forward to working with him to further the interests of the Parish of Yaxley as our elected County Councillor. Despite being so recently elected he provided a written report, attended our meeting and, subsequent to the meeting, has helped us gain vital information on a planning application. A strong start.

We have also asked him if he can shed some light on the reason for the large number of traffic monitoring devices which have appeared on so many local roads lately. No contact has been made to the Parish Council by Suffolk Highways regarding the reason for the siting of one such device in our village and we wonder which body has sited these devices and if this could possibly be connected to monitoring traffic numbers for a strategic purpose.

Yaxley Bottle Banks

Over many years the revenue generated for the Parish Council from the bottle banks situated on Eye Road, Yaxley has been donated to village organisations. When Suffolk County Council decided to implement its new recycling system MSDC made a one-off donation of £1453 to the Parish Council in recognition that the decision to allow people to put glass into the new blue bins would probably lead to a reduction in use of local bottle banks and therefore a loss of revenue to Parish Councils. The Parish Council split this lump sum in the usual way. To date there has been no final decision as to whether the bottle bank in Yaxley will be removed since its collection bins are owned by a private company. I would like to make it clear that if people decide to continue to use the bottle banks as long as they remain the Parish Council will continue to donate the money to the same village organisations.

Parish Council

Unfortunately, we have lost another parish councillor following Councillor Sutton's decision to step down owing to pressure of work. We will miss her contribution greatly and thank her for her contribution over the years.

We now need two parish councillors. The work is important if not exciting, and I do promise that if working people come forward, I will not give them specific tasks to do, but we need a breadth of opinion to make the Council function effectively. Do come forward. Young people over 18 are particularly welcome and I know for certain that many employers would look favourably on such public service in any job interview.

Speedwatch

We now have two volunteers! Unfortunately, we need six to form a viable group. Again, I call on public spirited individuals to come forward.

Both prospective councillors or speedwatchers are invited to contact our clerk on philip.c.freeman@btinternet.com

Ian Luff (Chairman Yaxley Parish Council)



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YAXLEY VILLAGE HALL HISTORY

Yaxley Village Hall was opened on Tuesday 26th November 1926 by Lord Henniker (the local landowner). The original building was a 60-foot-long army hut as used in the First World War. Mr A B Sutton a local resident was the driving force behind the venture in providing a meeting place for all ages. The total cost, including associated ground works was £310, an amount that could have purchased two reasonably sized cottages at the time, and remembering a labourer's wage would have been £1 a week.

Initially the hall was a great success but by 1929 there was a decline in receipts. However, the hard work put in by the villagers arranging many events and fetes saved the hall's continuation.

In September 1932 a treasure hunt organised by the hall committee and run in conjunction with the newly formed athletics club, caused uproar. The event was cancelled by order of the police after the local vicar, the Rev. R.C. Magee had said the event would distract parishioners from attending morning service as it had been organised on a Sunday.

The Women's Institute met on a regular basis in 1933 and a full-sized billiard table added to the popularity of the hall and provided a steady income.

During the Second World War the hall continued as a centre point of the village. Yaxley's children enjoyed a Christmas party in 1940. In 1953 a Christmas Fayre and jumble realised the princely sum of £13-14s-5d.



Many of the events and various clubs have continued over the years. Covid curtailed these for two years, but the hall will continue to be a focal point for the people of Yaxley.

Yaxley Village Hall Centenary Programme of Events

Friday 4th September - The hall will open at 3pm. Visitors will be able to view a display of photographs and memorabilia on the history of the hall and village Bar will be open for refreshments throughout. **7.00pm JUKE BOX MEMORIES**: An evening of music across the years for you to enjoy relax have a drink and even a dance

Saturday 5th September - The hall will be open from midday to view the display. **2.30pm: The Family Magic Show for young and old.** Followed by Balloon Modelling for all. Tea/cake and soft drinks available. (The bar will be open for the adults) **7.30pm: The Village Brought to Life.** A presentation by Mr John Hawes and Dr Ian Luff. Cheese and wine included. (The bar will be open throughout.)

Sunday 6th September - The hall will be open from midday to view the display. **3.00pm: Traditional Morris Dancing and music**. Refreshments available. (The bar will be open throughout.)

HIRE OF YAXLEY VILLAGE HALL
To book or enquire, please contact Celia Armstrong on 01379 788754 or by email: celiaarmstrong@hotmail.co.uk

THE RAILWAY TAVERN

MELLIS

Thursday 2nd July 7.30pm QUIZ NIGHT

Fun general knowledge quiz with FREE snacks and a CASH PRIZE

Saturday 11th July 8.00pm WACKY MUSIC BINGO

A fantastic sing-a-long, dance-along night of music bingo with over £500 in prize money

Thursday 16th July 7.30pm QUIZ NIGHT

Fun general knowledge quiz with FREE snacks and a CASH PRIZE

Sunday 19th July 5.00pm THE RUM DOGS

An afternoon of acoustic Irish & Folk music with the highly entertaining Rum Dogs

Thursday 23rd July 7.30pm BINGO NIGHT

Our monthly bingo night with BIG CASH PRIZES

Saturday 25th July 2pm MELLIS MINI MUSIC FEST

2pm THE DIVIDERS *Rock & Pop Covers* ***4pm JOHNNY PASQUE*** *Acoustic*

5pm BIG BLACK CADILLAC *Rock-A-Billy & Rock & Roll*

HARRIS' HOG ROAST FROM 2PM

Sunday 26th July 2pm MELLIS MINI MUSIC FEST

2pm REMEDY *Blues, Rock & Funk* ***4pm SANE REVOLUTION*** *Sing along Rock*

5pm BEERGUT 100 *Rock & Pop Covers*

BBQ FROM 2PM

FRIDAY NIGHT FISH FRY *every Friday from 6pm*

BURGER KITCHEN *every Friday from 6pm & Sundays from 1pm*

MELLIS, MEET YOUR LOCAL... PUBLICAN FRANK HILL

Born and bred in North London, in good ole Camden Town, Frank had a very successful 25-year career as a DJ around the capital and South East before arriving in Mellis in 2001, with its very different vibe from the hustle & bustle he was familiar with.



Frank switched from mash-ups & decks to footings and bricks and continued in the building game locally until 2008 before travelling to the Middle East to rebuild the British Embassy and Al Rashid hotel in Baghdad and British Consulate in Basra. No small feat as there were daily sirens warning of incoming artillery and regular shelling and mortar attacks landing within 20m.



If that wasn't hair raising enough, on Frank's return to Mellis, his local, The Railway Tavern, was under threat of closure after Bob decided to depart in 2011. Frank couldn't bear to see the pub close so of course Frank embarked on another new career, first leasing and then buying the pub, fully renovating it with the music-based theme and then in 2018 the railway theme was embraced.

There are around 35 regulars (you know who you are), enjoying a band on the 1st Saturday of the month, Karaoke or music bingo on the 2nd Saturday and an acoustic set on the 3rd Saturday. There will often be sports events shown on the large TVs. Frank and of course the lovely Jo offer food Friday, Saturday, Sunday. – See the diary of events for July on the opposite page.

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The Railway Tavern

A ROMAN ROAD CALLED PYE STREET, THE PRESENT DAY A140

DOWN Memory LANE

It's fair to say, the A140 is now more than a 'lane', however I'm guessing there are many memories of it before it was improved? There have been a few changes, especially since the Covid era when two new roundabouts were constructed. One, allowing easier access across the A140 towards Eye from the villages covered by the Messenger. The other, situated adjacent to the Roy Humphrey Group industrial area, is managing the flow of traffic around Thrandeston and Brome.

I'm amazed by the increase in vehicle movement in just five years. At peak times, thinking of Friday early evenings in particular, the traffic almost comes to a bumper-to-bumper standstill between the two roundabouts, a distance of one mile. Imagine trying to exit Yaxley heading towards Eye today without the roundabout.

Yaxley has two notable double bends along the original main road. One situated close to the church, village hall and the old Red Lion pub, the other passing the Cherry Tree and heading on north. Pubs situated on a double bend prior to drink, driving regulations, perhaps not the best of ideas. A newspaper report published on 3rd July 1824 mentioned; "On Saturday last, as four carts belonging to jobbers (haulage contractors) were proceeding along the Ipswich Road at a very rapid pace. The first in the line stopped against the Red Lion, for lunch and no doubt a beer or two. It necessarily stopped those behind, and the horse of the last coming into contact with the back part of the third cart, the concussion was so violent that the horse fell down dead on the spot."



*Left – The Red Lion public house. The church is behind, out of sight. *Notice the cart parked on the right on the bend.*

Some years later, traffic around Yaxley was still raising a comment in the newspapers. Yaxley's vicar, William Henry Sewell, wrote to the authorities during March 1886 stating, "In many parts of Suffolk, the traffic has largely been diverted from the old turnpike roads and has caused certain highways, which are maintained out of the parish rates and without assistance from government, local or Imperial, to be as much used by the public as were formally the turnpikes."

In can be said, some road accidents, although all equally life threatening on occasions do stand out, take this example. "A collision between a lorry laden with six tons of wheat and a 'Flying Fortress' on the main road between the Brome Swan and the Yaxley Cherry Tree on the 7th May 1945 had its sequel at Eye Borough Court on Thursday week when John Brown, a lorry driver, of Cowgate Farm, Bunwell, was summoned for driving his vehicle with inefficient brakes and his employers, G. Easton & Son of Bunwell were also summoned for "permitting the vehicle to be used."

The 'Flying Fortress was an American heavy bomber, a large number of which were parked safely in Yaxley away from the runway opposite on purpose-built hardstands nicknamed 'spectacles' (due to their perceived shape when viewed from above) during the latter part of the Second World War. The accident occurred when the aircraft in question was taxiing across the A140 to the main airfield runway. The collision could have been far worse; up until the day prior to the accident; the lorry was regularly used to transport bombs!

*One concrete 'spectacle' remains to this day under the ownership of Yaxley Parish Council. It is the area Identified by the 'Work-Wear' and Siemens Energy advertising boards. It's currently used for access to the National Grid sub-station and Synchronous Condenser, as well as for the storage of road construction materials.



Left – One of the worst bends along the A140, just past the Cherry Tree public house.

The A140 continued to be a troublesome highway, increasingly so with the volume of traffic on the increase as Britain recovered from the War and headed towards the 'swinging sixties'. During March 1972 it was announced in the press, "A £230,000 bypass for Yaxley; where there are some of the worst bends along the A140 between Norwich and Ipswich, could be started within two years (1974) it was confirmed yesterday. The scheme has been approved by the East Suffolk County Council, and the Department of the Environment has recently made an order for stopping up part of the A140 and Hall Lane, when the bypass has been built. P.E. Oxbrow is in charge of negotiations for the purchase of the land for the substantial work. The present road crosses a railway bridge, and due to the ever-increasing volume of traffic using the A140 the road improvements are now considered to be urgent."

Right – the A140 under construction

The bypass was opened on 22nd October 1975, a little over 50 years ago. As with so many national infrastructure projects the final cost had risen to £360,000.



John Hawes


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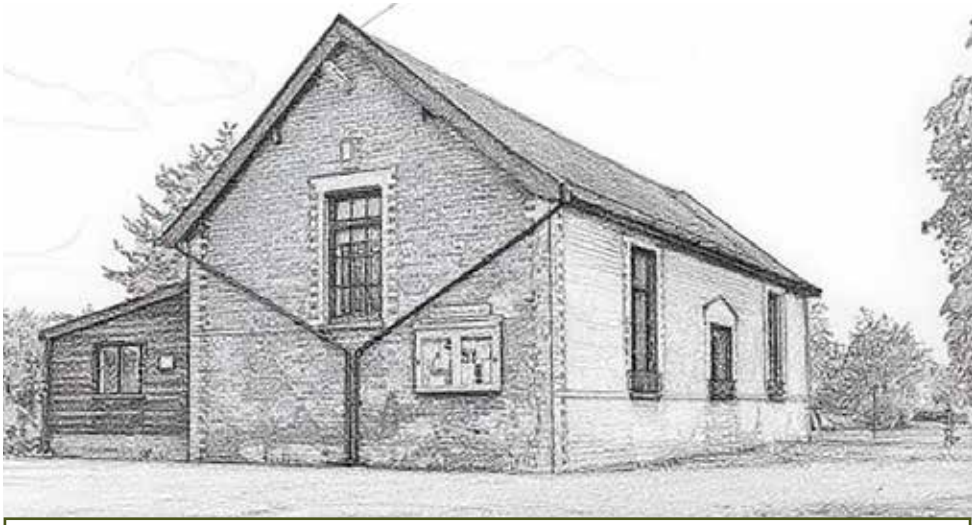
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Sunday 4th October:
Coffee Morning – details to follow.

Sunday 15th November:
Winter Fair: – details to follow.

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CHARLOTTE'S BOOK BLOG



MND: The Club You Don't Want To Join

by Sam Hayden-Harler



Hello Bookworms! This month I have something a little different from my usual style of book review. Rather than reviewing a piece of fiction, I shall be raising the awareness of a really important book about a really important subject matter. As I am writing this, it is just 7 days until Global MND Awareness Day 2026 - so I thought that this was the right time to be sharing with you all a book that I finished not too long ago.

Back in 2020, Sam (known on social media as @samandthebucketlist) was living his best life and couldn't have been happier: he'd fallen in love, married, travelled and became a father by way of adoption. However, this fairytale came to an abrupt ending in 2022. At just 35 he was diagnosed with the life limiting illness, Motor Neurone Disease (MND), also known as ALS. He has since approached life with an immensely positive mindset, accomplishing all that he sets his mind to.

In January 2025, after living with a life-limiting illness for 3 years, Sam started writing his memoir (that was one to cross off of the bucket list!). However, now unable to physically type, Sam used a head-controlled mouse and on-screen keyboard to type using his eyes and facial expressions. MND: The Club You Don't Want To Join is a funny, emotional and incredibly honest account of Sam's experience navigating his way from being able-bodied to disabled. Starting with a brilliant foreword by my cousin Claire, this book quite literally takes us through Sam's life, he writes about his early life from child to adulthood with an open heart, sharing the unimaginable news of receiving a terminal diagnosis and how, when life handed him lemons, he made lemonade! And then ends with some letters from his friends and family.

As someone who watches Coronation Street (specifically referencing the MND storyline they ran in 2023 and 2024), I felt like I was pretty clued up on what MND was. They did a really good job with this storyline and clearly a lot of research went into it. The 2 key actors involved (Peter Ash and Daniel Brocklebank) met with Sam and others diagnosed with MND to gain further insights into living life with it to ensure that they were telling the story as accurately as possible to people's real-life experiences. However, one thing Sam's book talks about that wasn't a main focus in Corrie's storyline, are the additional struggles that come with aspects such as funding for care and care equipment and housing arrangements and technology.

Reading about some of the technology that Sam uses in his day-to-day life now was

extremely eye-opening. Who knew you could take photos and videos through a pair of glasses? Or that you can own a plate with an arm that can be controlled by pedals to feed you? Incredible! However, reading about how inaccessible some places still are today for wheelchair users - not incredible, and in fact was really shocking to read some of the experiences Sam has had regarding this. During the book, Sam provides lots of valuable suggestions to help others living with a life-limiting condition from things he has learnt over the last few years.

This book is a real eye-opener into life with MND, balancing truth with moments of humour and warmth and is one that I seriously urge people to go and read. It will bring a whole new perspective on life as you know it. Sam is such an inspiration and has so far done an incredible job in raising awareness of MND, so I would like to encourage anyone reading this to grab a copy of the book - you can find it on Amazon!

Charlotte

P.S - *Raising £50,000 to go towards MND research is item number 21 out of 100 on Sam's buck-et list, if you would like to help him reach his target, you can donate via his GoFundMe at https://www.gofundme.com/f/help-sam-fight-motor-neurone-disease-mnd. Let's help him reach his goal!*

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THE HIDDEN GARDENS OF MELLIS 2026





From drought to deluge, heatwave to hail, it was all thrown at us in the buildup to The Hidden Gardens of Mellis on 13th and 14th June. A mighty challenge for the 12 owners opening their gardens, some for the first time. All rose to it however, and the weather turned in our favour for a fabulous weekend, enjoying the sharing of our spaces along with our stunning Common, community garden and churchyard.

Whilst those of us opening our gardens could finally relax a little and chat to visitors, sharing ideas and inspiration, an army of volunteers did a sterling job of putting up signs and gazebos, selling tickets, baking cakes and scones, serving refreshments, providing parking and sponsorship, the list goes on and on…

We welcomed over 300 visitors in total, many of whom also enjoyed freshly baked cakes and scones at the Memorial Hall and ice creams in a couple of the gardens. Fabulous plants were purchased and the Hall used its recently installed projector to show photos of gardens and the common. Thanks must go to the staff and pupils of Mellis Primary School for providing beautiful art work inspired by the impressionist painters.

The feedback received from visitors was heartwarming with comments such as this being one of the best open gardens events they had attended and others saying they had sat in almost every seat in the garden (which came to about 30 when counted!). Photographs were taken and ideas swapped; friendships initiated and reinforced.

There was a true feeling of community and positivity around the village whilst raising much needed funds for the Memorial Hall and St Mary's Church. Now to relax and start thinking about the next Hidden Gardens of Mellis…

Rebecca Clark

The colour photos on pages 33-35 were all taken by Penny Morgan.

THE HIDDEN GARDENS OF MELLIS 2026







THE HIDDEN GARDENS OF MELLIS 2026













THE HIDDEN GARDENS OF MELLIS 2026











NATURE NOTES by Darrel Charles



Hello everyone, welcome back to Nature Notes



Little Owl



Painted Lady Butterfly on Valerian





A Singing Wren





Great Crested Grebe

It has been several years since I saw a Little Owl in Gislingham. Back then they were quite a common sight around the remains of a nearby fallen oak tree but sadly they moved on. Earlier this year I did hear what I thought was a Little Owl at dusk on several occasions and that was confirmed by the Merlin Bird ID app. that I reviewed in these pages some months ago. There's no substitute for actually seeing the bird, though, and that is what James in Gislingham has been lucky to be doing. In fact James has been watching a nest with three chicks in it - marvellous. As their name suggests, these owls are relatively small, being some 22 cm tall. They feed on beetles and worms but will also take small birds and mammals. Many thanks to James for sending in this photo of one of the proud parents - here's hoping the chicks do well!

From a Little Owl to one of our very smallest birds, the Wren. This is often thought of as being our smallest bird but that title belongs to the Goldcrest and Firecrest. The Wren is undoubtedly small, though, and has a beautiful and loud song, as I heard recently during a visit to Lackford Lakes. After an excellent coffee in the cafe there, I had a good walk around this Suffolk Wildlife Trust reserve. Several of the pools have been fitted out with perches in the hope of attracting Kingfishers but I had no luck during my visit. However, there were plenty of water birds to be seen on the lakes including this splendid Great Crested Grebe.

There's been much to see in the garden these past few weeks as many flowers are now in full bloom and have been attracting all sorts of wildlife. I have read several reports of large numbers of Painted Lady butterflies being seen across Suffolk and I was pleased when a couple visited my garden. This beautiful butterfly undertakes the longest migration trail of any butterfly, it being some 9,000 km from Africa to the Arctic. This is achieved not by a single butterfly but in relays involving 6 to 10 generations. For more on this extraordinary feat see York University's report: *www.york.ac.uk/news-and-events/features/painted-lady-migration*

Common poppies are now appearing in hedgerows and our surrounding fields and make a fine sight. They've also been springing up in my garden, which adds a welcome splash of colour to the borders. Last year I planted some Foxglove plants and these are now in flower and attracting Bumble Bees, busily taking nectar and pollen.

Still in the garden, there's been much action on the bird feeders with Greater Spotted Woodpeckers in attendance several times a day feeding their young - I plan to include a photo of this in the next issue. There have also been many juvenile Blue Tits and Goldfinches providing lots of entertainment. A job I must do in the next few days is to clean all the feeders - ideally this should be done every couple of weeks. It is important to do this to avoid disease and parasites being transmitted from one bird to another. Another job is to keep the bird bath clean. In my case, this really needs to be done daily because it is often visited by pigeons and the like that do not, shall we say, use it properly. I see that the RSPB do not recommend some stone bird baths because their rough surfaces make them hard to keep clean. Instead, ones made of smooth stone or resin are preferable. Another point to remember with bird baths is where to place them. A very sunny spot can result in the shallow water becoming excessively hot for the birds.

Until next time, happy wildlife watching!

See these and other photos at my Flickr site: flickr.com/photos/darrelphoto/

See Tony Clarke's monthly list of local bird sightings at The Messenger on Facebook.

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BEVERLEY KNIGHT AT THE IPSWICH REGENT

MUSIC NOTES



Beverley Knight's 'Born To Perform' tour arrived at the Ipswich Regent Theatre on 2nd June and proved exactly why she is one of Britain's most respected live performers.

From the moment she stepped onto the stage, Knight had the audience in the palm of her hand. Combining powerhouse vocals with warmth, humour and genuine storytelling, she took us on a journey through her remarkable career in both music and musical theatre.



The evening felt far more personal than a conventional concert. Between songs, Knight shared memories and reflections from her life on stage, creating an intimate atmosphere. Her connection with the audience was effortless, and every story added context and meaning to the music that followed.

Vocally, she was exceptional. Whether delivering soulful classics or musical theatre numbers, her voice remained powerful and emotionally engaging throughout. The backing singers and musicians provided excellent support, allowing Knight's talent and charisma to shine while maintaining an energetic and polished sound.

One of the most memorable moments of the evening came when Beverley Knight performed "Memory" from Cats. It is a song that has been associated with some of musical theatre's greatest voices, and I have long felt that Elaine Paige's iconic rendition could not be bettered. However, Knight's performance challenged that belief. Delivering the song with both power and vulnerability, she brought a fresh emotional depth to the piece while remaining true to its timeless appeal. The theatre fell silent as she sang, and the enthusiastic response from the audience that followed reflected just how deeply her performance had resonated.

What stood out most was Knight's joy in performing. The tour's title, 'Born To Perform', could not have been more appropriate. Every song, story and interaction demonstrated her passion for entertaining and her appreciation for the audience who have supported her throughout her career.

As the final notes rang out and the audience rose for a well-deserved standing ovation, there was a sense that we had witnessed not just a concert but a celebration of an extraordinary performer. Beverley Knight delivered an evening of soul, inspiration and first-class entertainment that will live long in the memory of everyone fortunate enough to have witnessed it.

JAN Author's Rating: ★★★★★

Live photo: by Charlotte Norman

A CIRCULAR WALK FROM GISLINGHAM VIA THORNHAM

O/S Map: 230. Distance: 7.5kms/4.7 miles

As I reported on Help & Support and the Messenger, the railway crossing on FP22 has now been closed, however, a new diversion footpath has been opened, so I took the opportunity to walk this new footpath.

The starting point is FP30 at the bottom of Coldham Lane. If you are new to the village or from another village, park in the Village Hall car park, go up the High Street and, opposite the shop, turn left into Coldham Lane. Walk down to the last house and, on the right, is the start of the walk.





Continue along the footpath until you come to the opening on the left for FP29 in a gap in the hedge. Cross the small bridge and walk across the field. You go over another wooden bridge and turn right along the track. Go over the railway bridge and continue through a small wood. At the end of the wood you will see the map displaying the diversion and new footpath.



Turn right and continue along this path with the wood on your right. You will arrive at a new wooden bridge. Cross over and turn left. Continue along the path with the hedge on your left until you reach another map, an opening and bridge on your left. Go over and turn right. Continue until you get to the end of footpath and bear left and go through the avenue of old farm machinery and past Starhouse Farm. When you reach the road, turn right and walk along Clay Street.



Check out the first house, no. 187, this house has been empty for several years, however the barns are starting to fall down. It looks like some clearance work has started, so hopefully the house will be a home again. Continue along Clay St. When you get to the main road, turn left and head for the Four Horseshoes. A very popular thatched old pub with rooms. It is always busy, especially on a Sunday with good food. A lovely secluded back garden, if you don't wish to sit at the front. If you prefer to have a non-alcoholic drink and snack, visit the Forge Cafe, details to below.

Leave the pub and turn left up the High Street. At the first



railings on the right, join the footpath that runs adjacent to the road, much safer. When you get to the last house, go over the concrete bridge and walk past the Street Forge. This charity helps people with physical and mental conditions. They have a shop where they sell items that are made by the clients. At the beginning of December, they have a wonderful open day. More information visit the website at: https://streetforgeworkshop.uk/

Take the footpath on the left just past the Street Forge and continue until you reach the car park. Turn right and cross the road and enter Thornham Walks. You will see the Forge Cafe on the left, which serves a good range of food and drinks. At the top of the road, to the left are various small independent businesses, namely a Gallery, Studios and Bagel & Baegel (amazing bagels baked and sold in local food markets). Continue on the path and you will see a sign on the left that informs you that the path has been constructed by 5262 old vehicle tyres. Go past the eco toilets and at the end of the wooden fence, turn left and continue along the footpath, crossing the farmyard. This footpath is marked with posts with green and white markers. At the end the path bear left over a small bridge and follow the footpath as it goes over a large sleeper bridge and through the woods running adjacent to the road. Please be aware there are many exposed tree roots. You will arrive at a path on the left, which will take you to the main road. If you miss this, you will come to a path which turns into an open field, in which case, you have gone too far, so turn back.



Turn right onto the road and you can either cross over and go up the track to Little Swattisfield turning right after the house and continue along the track, back to where the new path starts, this will be a slightly longer way back. Otherwise continue along the road, going past Swattisfield campsite on your right. By following the highway code, walk on the right-hand side except when the road bends right, so cross over for a short distance to see the traffic coming. Cross back over and go under the railway bridge and arrive back in Gislingham.

Emma & Martyn Bryant



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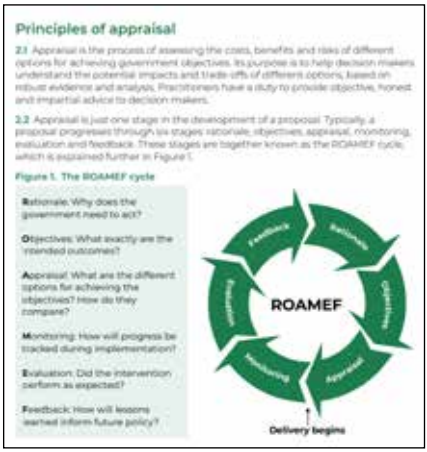
I find it interesting that the incoming administration at the County Council is going to challenge the previous administration's spending on environmental investments.

Firstly, all councils, district, county and unitary will have a Section 151 Officer. An officer appointed to be responsible for the proper and legal administration of the council's financial affairs.

They ensure the council sets a lawful budget, spends money legally and follows proper accounting rules. They ensure financial stability advising councillors and senior officers on whether decisions are affordable, sustainable and financially prudent.

A sound business plan must accompany any proposed council spending, risks must be identified, and above all it must represent good value before spending public money.

HM Government regularly updates "The Green Book" which contains the UK government's guidance on spending public money. It provides a structured framework for developing evidence-based, objective and impartial advice for decision makers. If a council bids for funding from central government, their bids must be compliant with the guidance in "the Green Book" and offer genuine benefit to society.



Just under 15% of Mid Suffolk's overall spend for 2026/7 is funded by central government matching the 15% funded by council tax. The balance is made up from fees and charge, business rates and in the case of Mid Suffolk investments. The District Council receives 8% of your total council tax bill.

There is a great deal of legislation that mandates a statutory duty on councils to reduce carbon emissions and enhance biodiversity. This includes: The Climate Change Act 2008 that mandates councils to align their transport and environmental policies to help meet the national target. The Environment Act of 2021 requires councils to develop Local nature Recovery strategies and mandates Biodiversity Net Gain in planning, forcing councils and developers to spend on ecological enhancements. The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act of 2004 requires planning authorities to include policies in their Local Plans that are designed to secure that both the development and use of land contribute to the mitigation of and adaptation to climate change.

To scrap a climate emergency declaration is itself performative. Any spending on environmental measures has been scrutinised, matches government legislation and has tremendous social value, it will not pause or reverse climate change and could undermine our preparedness for it. My suggestion: they should "Ask a farmer," first.

Rowland Warboys Cllr. Mid Suffolk District Council

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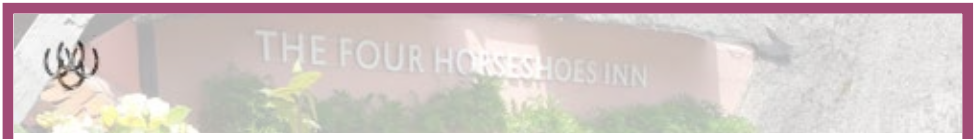
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TIP OFF, RIP OFF!



Once again, Suffolk Police are urging families, friends and neighbours to make their elderly relatives or vulnerable members of the community aware of courier fraud after recent incidents were reported across the County.

In total there have been at least 14 incidents reported in Suffolk between February and May, with around £160,000 stolen. The incidents have occurred across the county, with recent incidents in the Ipswich and Babergh areas. One recent victim is believed to have had around £80,000 stolen after a fake company called 'FCA' contacted them. They stole from the victim via the online transfer of money, loans being taken out in the victim's name and the collection of gold.

Other methods of theft included credit cards being collected from victims with amounts then spent using these, as well as the handing over large amounts of cash. Some tactics include being contacted by fake companies, pretending to be a police officer or pretending to be an official investigating fraudulent foreign currency.

Top tips:

- The police, banks/building societies (or their fraud investigation teams) and other professionals will never ask you to withdraw cash, provide your credit card and PIN or disclose personal information about your banking details.
- If someone calls you to claiming to be police or the bank, advise that you will need to check their identity. A genuine caller will not mind. Hang up and use another phone or wait at least 10 minutes and then call police on 999. Alternatively call your bank using a number on a statement or other official documentation.
- The fraudsters rely on isolating victims and creating fear. If you are not sure about a situation, talk to a trusted family member or friend. If the bank staff warn you about a potential scam, take notice as they are trained to be alert to them.
- Call blocking services and registering with the Telephone Preference Service may help.
- Report all fraud to Report Fraud on 0300 123 2040
- Advise elderly or vulnerable members of your family, neighbours or members of your community to help increase awareness of these crimes.

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Gislingham United Charity continues to welcome applications for short term support from **Gislingham residents** who find themselves in hardship or need. We also consider requests for educational purposes, for **Gislingham residents** of all ages, whether at School, in further or higher education, or undertaking vocational training.

All applications are treated in the strictest confidence and in accordance with GDPR Data Protection Regulations.

GUC Trustees meeting dates for 2026 are: 10 July, 11 September, 13 November.
Dates for 2027 are: 8 January, 5 March, 7 May, 2 July, 3 September, 5 November.

Applications, together with the necessary supporting documentation, should be received **seven working days before the meetings** to allow Trustees time to consider applications and request additional information if required. In the event of emergency applications, Trustees will consider an application when received and, if necessary, will call a special meeting to review the application.

Application forms can be obtained from: The Clerk, Lilac Cottage, Mill Street, Gislingham, IP23 8JR
Tel: 01379 783380, Email: gislinghamunitedcharity@gmail.com
Or can be downloaded from the "Organisations" page on the Parish Council Website:
https://gislinghamparishcouncil.com/organisations/gislingham-united-charity/

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WHERE AM I? QUIZ

Below are seven clues as to where I am this month..

1. Originally called "Thorney" (meaning isle of thorns), it became known as by its current name after a 12th-century market license.
2. In 1871, explosions at Prentice's Gun Cotton factory killed 28 people. This disaster is sometimes cited as influencing the development of early forensic science.
3. During World War I, the town was considered a prime German Zeppelin target due to its massive explosive production
4. In 1929, pollution from the local river became so severe that residents were forced to leave their homes and sleep in nearby fields.
5. A 1939 flood was among the worst in the town's history, making the road to Ipswich impassable.
6. The population has seen significant growth, rising from roughly 6,000 in 1981 to over 21,000 by 2021 and still growing!
7. The local malt plant produces the malt used for the honeycomb centres of Maltesers.

The answer appears at the foot of page 63.

SUDOKU CHALLENGE

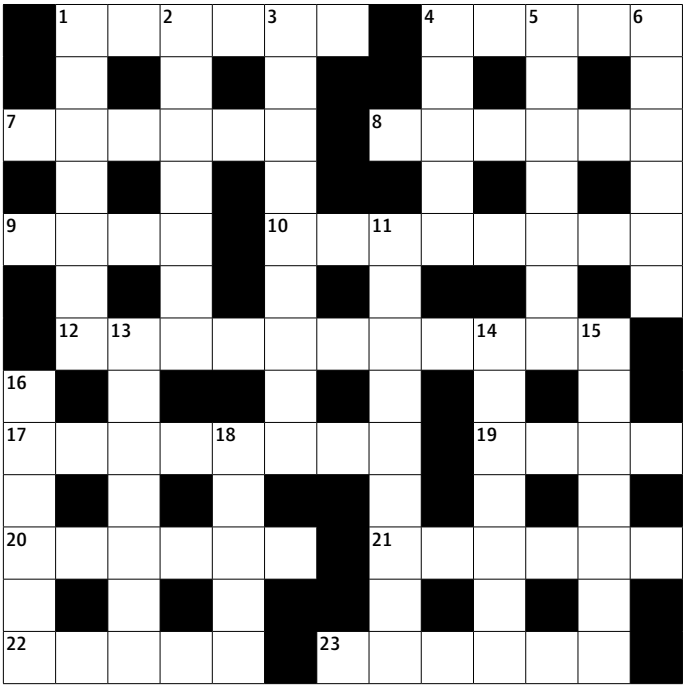
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	7				6	2		
	4	8		5			6	

Each 3 x 3 box, each row and each column must contain all the numbers 1 to 9

Last issue solution

8	1	4	9	7	2	5	6	3
2	3	6	4	1	5	9	8	7
7	5	9	8	6	3	1	2	4
9	4	2	5	8	1	3	7	6
5	6	7	3	2	4	8	1	9
3	8	1	6	9	7	2	4	5
4	9	8	2	3	6	7	5	1
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CROSSWORD CHALLENGE



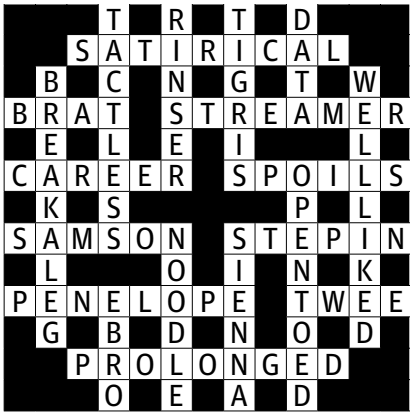
Across

1 It's a sign of something (6)
4 Quantity of paper (5)
7 (Have a) little sleep (6)
8 Tax on imports (6)
9 Alcohol intake – idler (4)
10 Official record (8)
12 1970 film starring Mick Jagger & James Fox (11)
17 Posters, flyers, postcards etc (8)
19 Evergreen flowering shrub – daughter of Zeus (4)
20 Exceptional ability (6)
21 Mischievous (6)
22 Rough woollen material (5)
23 Ingratiating (6)

Down

1 Traffic jam (5-2)
2 Football boss (7)
3 Deliberately (2,7)
4 Almost (but not quite) (5)
5 Silly (7)
6 Try hard to make one of these? (6)
11 Fitness centre (9)
13 Boost (7)
14 Useless individual (2-5)
15 Diplomatic HQ (7)
16 Influence (6)
18 Silbury Hill, for instance (5)

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REACH, can provide trusted, practical advice on:

- Reducing energy use and household costs
- Keeping homes warmer and healthier
- Retrofit options such as insulation, draught-proofing, ventilation, heating upgrades and renewable technologies
- Available funding and support schemes, including Mid Suffolk Cosy Homes and other regional and national initiatives

As part of their outreach work, they are keen to engage directly with local communities and would welcome opportunities to attend parish events from August onwards. They can support through:

- Pop-up information events
- Community roadshows
- Informal advice sessions
- Attendance at local fairs, markets or community events

They would be very interested to hear about any upcoming parish events, community gatherings or local groups where REACH could attend or provide information. They are particularly keen to connect with residents who may benefit from energy advice or want to improve the efficiency of their homes or community buildings. Early notice of events later in the summer and autumn would be particularly helpful for their planning.

If this is of interest, please feel free to share any upcoming dates, opportunities or contact them at REACH.team@midsuffolk.gov.uk if you would like further information.

1970S THEMED MUSIC EVENINGS OR AFTERNOONS

I have a playlist of over 1300 original vinyl singles from the 1970s which can be requested 'juke box style'. People may like to come in 1970s attire and either dance to, or just listen to the fabulous sounds from 50 or more years ago and evoke some fond memories of their younger days! Also, 1950s/1960s Rock 'n' Roll era themed music evenings or afternoons.

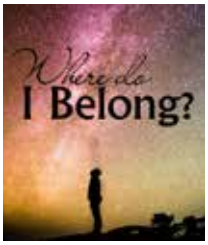
I can also provide music from the 1920s, 1930s & 1940s..... which can provide the perfect musical setting for war time themed events, ballroom dances and tea dances.

If there is anyone interested to organise any of the above themed musical events in their local village halls or community centres in the villages of mid Suffolk and south Norfolk, please do get in touch with me! I'm based in Eye and can be contacted on 07484 690516. I am retired and this is a free service I offer.

Patrick Burnside

Answers to the Where Am I? Quiz on page 60. *Stowmarket.*

SOUTH HARTISMERE BENEFICE



"Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ."
1 Corinthians 12.

AI-generated content may be incorrect. Recently I enjoyed a recent visit to Bristol, a city closely associated with Isambard Kingdom Brunel. Brunel was a genius of the Industrial Revolution. He designed incredible things — including the SS Great Britain and the Clifton Suspension Bridge. Even today, they leave people in awe. But as I walked around the SS Great Britain, I found myself wondering… who remembers the people who built it? The ones who placed the 100,000 rivets. The ones who shaped and fixed the 1,000 iron plates that formed the hull. We don't know their names and never will. And later, walking across the Clifton Suspension Bridge, I had the same thought… Who remembers the workers who forged and fitted the 4,200 wrought iron chain links that still hold it up today? Again — we don't know their names. But here's the thing: their work mattered. Every rivet. Every plate. Every link. If even a small part had failed, the consequences would have been serious. They may not be remembered. They may never have been celebrated. But what they did was essential. And I think there's something deeply true in that for us. Because the Kingdom of God is a bit like that.

At one of our recent Sunday morning reflections, we considered our church and community as being a place where we belong. Our church is not a private members club; it is open to those who have faith and those who have none. But at the heart of the church is a simple truth — that every one of us matters. Every one of us has a place. Every one of us has a part to play. Not because of how visible we are, or how important others think we are, but because God knows us. He knows our thoughts, our actions, our words… and, most importantly, our worth.

Not all of us are called to be a Brunel, visible, celebrated, remembered. But all of us are called to be faithful in the part we're given. Some roles are seen, many are unseen, but none are insignificant. Think of the quiet acts of kindness, the faithful prayers no one else hears, the small jobs that keep things going, the encouragement offered at just the right moment. In every village these are the "rivets" and "links" and without them, things don't hold together.

"A place to belong" doesn't mean just being present or indeed feel that we need to be seen in church on a Sunday, it means knowing that you matter, and that what you do matters. Most of what happens in the church, happens faithfully every day of the week, the cleaning, the flowers, the preparation for TPlus, the cooking and baking, the pastoral visits, the silent prayers, as well as the administrative tasks. Even if no one else notices. Even if no one remembers your name. God does. He sees. He knows. And He uses every part and every person to build something far greater than we can see. So, the question isn't "Will I be remembered?" The question is "Am I being faithful in the part I've been given?" Because in God's hands, nothing offered in faith is ever wasted.

So, if you are looking for somewhere to belong on a Sunday morning, our doors are always open for you. If you have a particular skill in drinking tea and eating biscuits, I assure you, you will fit right in!

Tim, Church Warden and Lay Elder

JULY 2026

SUNDAY 5TH JULY	Thorndon	10.00am	Together @ 10
5th Sunday after Trinity	Gislingham	10.30am	Holy Communion
SUNDAY 12TH JULY	Mellis	10.30am	Holy Communion
6th Sunday after Trinity	Stoke Ash	10.30am	Worship for All
SUNDAY 19TH JULY	Thorndon	10.30am	Holy Communion
7th Sunday after Trinity	Thornham Parva	10.30am	Holy Communion
	Gislingham Village Hall	4.00pm	God and Play
SUNDAY 26TH JULY	Thornham Magna	10.30am	Holy Communion
8th Sunday after Trinity	Wetheringsett	10.30am	Welcome to Holy Communion
	Yaxley	10.30am	Worship for All

Telephone Church BCP Holy Communion is on Thursdays at 11.00am



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GISLINGHAM AND THORNHAM BUS TIMETABLE

Route No. VC0001: Gislingham to Stowmarket (Mondays, Wednesdays & Fridays)
Leaves Gislingham 09.45 / Arrives Stowmarket, Bury Street 10.26. **Returns** from Stowmarket, Bury Street 13.00 / Arrives Gislingham 13.41

Fareline Bus 460 (Thursday only) from Eye to Stowmarket
Leaves Thornham Magna (Four Horseshoes) 09.25 / Gislingham (Shop) 09.31 / Stowmarket (Argos) 10.02. **Returns** from Stowmarket (Argos) 12.15 / Gislingham (Shop) 12.45 / Thornham Magna (Four Horseshoes) 12.52.

Simonds Bus 72 (Fridays only) Gislingham (via Thornham) to Diss
Leaves Gislingham Village Hall 09.30 / Thornham Magna Four Horseshoes 09.41 / Diss Bus Station 10.05. **Returns** from Diss Bus Station 13.00 / Thornham Magna Four Horseshoes 13.30 / Gislingham Village Hall 13.35.

MELLIS BUS TIMETABLE - https://www.simonds.co.uk/local-bus-times)
110 – Eye to Diss
Eye – Diss (Monday to Friday) – **leaves** Mellis, opp. Railway Tavern: 10.46
Diss – Eye (Monday to Friday) – **leaves** Diss, adj. Bus Station: 13.30



Post Van:
Yaxley
Fridays in the layby on Eye Road:
9.00am to 10.00am

Gislingham
Fridays at Village Hall:
12.15 – 14.15



Mobile Library: Gislingham
2026 visits will be on the following Wednesdays: 15 July, 12 Aug, 9 Sept, 7 Oct, 4 Nov, 2 Dec, 30 Dec.

Times: Broadfields Rd: 15.10-15.45

Mill St.: 15.50-6.05

IMPORTANT CONTACTS

Anglian Water Emergency	0800 145145
Botesdale Health Centre	01379 898295
Citizens Advice Bureau Diss	0800 8127 138
Connecting Communities = Suffolk Passenger Transport	01449 614271
Crime Stoppers	0800 555111
District Council - Cllr. Rowland Warboys rowland.warboys@midsuffolk.gov.uk	01379 783412
Electricity Emergency	08007 838838
Essex & Suffolk Water Emergency	08457 820999
Eye Health Centre	01379 870689
Hall Bookings:	
Gislingham - Terry Williams: gislinghamvillagehall@gmail.com	01379 783903
Mellis - Helen Timmons: bookmellishall@gmail.com	01379 783449
Yaxley - Celia Armstrong: celiaarmstrong@hotmail.co.uk	01379 788754
Thornham - Beth Fredrikssen-Jones: hallhire@thornhams.org	
Mendlesham Health Centre	01449 767722
Member of Parliament - Adrian Ramsey adrian.ramsay.mp@parliament.uk	07534 933356
Mind's support line - a safe place to talk about your mental health	0300 102 1234
NHS Direct	111
Parish Councils:	
Gislingham (Clerk): clerk@gislinghamparishcouncil.gov.uk	07833 705915
Mellis (Chairperson - Lawrie Read): mellisparishcouncil@gmail.com	01379 788248
Yaxley (Clerk): Philip.c.freeman@btinternet.com	01379 783203 / 07958 623897
Thornham Parva (Clerk - Christine Moore):	01379 783226
Rev'd Debbie Nicholls, Rector of South Hartismere Benefice rev.d.nicholls@gmail.com	07762 116 335
Suffolk Police (non-emergency)	101
Suffolk Doctors On Call	03001 303066
Suffolk Fire Service & Community Fire Safety	01473 260586
Suffolk County Council - Cllr Paul Bains Paul.Bains@suffolk.gov.uk	
Samaritans – for everyone:	116 123

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