The Messenger



Issue 168
March
2026

Serving Gislingham, Mellis, Yaxley and the Thornhams

THE MESSENGER TEAM



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E-mailed or hand-written submissions always welcome.

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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 March issue!

By the time this issue is published, I am sure everyone will be aware that the Gislingham shop has new owners! Nevertheless, I have published a short article on page 9 as way of an introducing Varinder Arora to the village. The shop is a valuable asset to the village and it is not only vital for some living in Gislingham who have difficulty getting to towns for shopping. It is also a great convenience for a lot of people, so it is therefore important that we support this valuable community asset.

There are also a couple of interesting human interest stories included. I would like to congratulate Martyn Bryant on being awarded one of the highest awards in Scouting, the 'Silver Acorn'. (Page 9).

Then on page 27, we feature John Wells, who is launching a year long fund-raising campaign in memory of Kathryn Wells. I know only too well the training required to complete a marathon; not to mention a sometimes-lengthy recovery period. To take on three marathons in a ten-week period (four in twelve months) plus an endurance event in between will be an enormous challenge!

Hopefully, John will have time to keep us posted on his progress through the year.

This issue not only has details of the local events in March, but details of a number of events right up to August. To name a few, the new Gislingham Variety Club production in April, a Movie Night at Mellis Memorial Hall, also in April. The Hidden Gardens of Mellis (Open Gardens) is now confirmed for June (but looking for more people to open their gardens etc), Gisfest is now confirmed for June (and looking for local musicians who would like to perform at the event), and the Gislingham Garden, Arts and Produce Show, scheduled for August is looking for more children to take part.

Also, Gislingham Parish Council are looking for nominations for the 'Watson Bowl' and 'Volunteer of the year' awards on page 13.

Finally, I would like to thank our twelve new distributors who cover Yaxley for their help in distributing the magazine. Our distribution team now totals 33 and your efforts in distributing 1200 copies every month are very much appreciated by the committee.

I hope you enjoy this issue!



Jeff Norman, Editor e) themessengereditorial@gmail.com

Cover photo: Taken in Thornham Parva



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DIARY & LOCAL EVENTS



MARCH:

Tuesday 3rd March: Rural Coffee Caravan
- Mellis Memorial Hall: 10.00am-12.00 mid-day.

Saturday 7th March: Easter themed Coffee morning & Book sale
- Gislingham Village Hall: 10.00am – 12 noon. See page 7 for more details.

Wednesday 18th March: Gislingham WI meeting – Speaker, Elene Marsden 'The truth about our clothing - the environmental impact with upcycling and second-hand solution.'
- 7.30pm Gislingham Village Hall.

Friday 20th February: Film Night – 'Dead of Winter'
- Thornhams Parish Hall: Tickets £6 pay on the door. See page 45 for more details.

Sunday 22nd March: Gislingham Litter Pick
- Gislingham Village Hall: 10.00am – 11.15am: See page 20 for details.

Friday 27th March: Quiz Night
- Thornham Parish Hall: 7.00pm. See page 24 for more details.

Sunday 29th March: Sunday Breakfast Club
- Thornhams Parish Hall.

SAVE THE DATES:

- **Saturday 11th April:** Gislingham Coffee Morning & Book Sale
- **Thurs 16th, Fri 17th, Sat 18th April:** GVC Production at Gislingham Village Hall
- **Friday 24th April:** Movie Night at Mellis Memorial Hall
- **Saturday 13th & Sunday 14th June:** The Hidden Gardens of Mellis
- **Saturday 27th June:** Gisfest at Gislingham Village Hall
- **Saturday 8th August:** Gislingham Garden, Arts and Produce Show

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

Our next issue is April 2026. The "What's On" Diary deadline is: Saturday 14th March.

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. Tuesdays: 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

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

YAXLEY

Pilates Classes: Village Hall. Mondays 9.30am. Becky Cruickshank: 07734 414151

The Art Club
Meets on Tuesdays at Yaxley Village Hall: 10.00am – 12 noon. Dates: 3 rd , 10 th , 17 th , 24 th and 31 st
March. All abilities welcome £4.00 per session.
Contact: Glyn Owens: 07768 026065 or email: gavowens@aol.com

The Garden Club
Thursday 5th March at Yaxley Village Hall from 7.30pm
"It's Not All About Cacti!" – Jan Michalak
More details: Abby Brett: 01379 783984 or email: tony1andabby2@hotmail.com

The Yaxley Needlework and Craft Group
Meetings on alternate Wednesdays (4 th & 18 th March) from 1.30pm to 3.30pm 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



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Easter Themed Coffee Morning



Saturday 7th March 2026

10am – 12noon

Gislingham Village Hall



Pre-loved books for sale ● Craft items to buy ● Easter Raffle

This is a popular event and a great way to catch up with everyone. Come and join us for a cup of coffee or tea and some delicious cake.

Please support us. We look forward to seeing you there!

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ALL CHANGE AT GISLINGHAM VILLAGE SHOP



On January 2nd , the Gislingham village shop changed ownership. Varinder Arora, along with his wife Simmi and daughter Rihana, who also own the Premier convenience store in Walsham-le-Willows are the new owners.

Varinder brings twenty years' experience in the hospitality industry and four years in banking with Barclays Bank, where customer service was always a top priority.

He told The Messenger; "Delivering excellent customer service is extremely important to me and this will be clearly reflected in how we run the shop going forwards."

Since taking over, Varinder is implementing a number of positive changes, however he was keen point out that some of these changes will take a few weeks: "Everyday we have been filling the shelves with a lot of new stock including chilled and frozen foods, wine, beers, and anything customers ask us to stock, we will try to stock it! We will also be stocking newspapers again. We are just waiting on confirmation of when our deliveries will re-commence. We also provide a number of services such as the ATM machine, Lottery tickets, postage stamps and the EVRI parcel collection and drop-off services is back up and running again."

Varinder was keep to assure everyone they can expect reliability in terms of stock and opening times, going forward. The shop will also be re-branded as a 'Premier' store as soon as possible.

The shop opening hours are now: Monday to Saturday: 7.00am to 7.30pm and Sunday 8.00am to 6.30pm.

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MARTYN BRYANT'S SPECIAL AWARD

Gislingham resident, Martyn Bryant has been awarded one of the highest awards in Scouting, the 'Silver Acorn'. The criteria being, 'at least 20 years' service, which should be specially distinguished and appreciably better than outstanding'.



Martyn was presented with his award at a special event joined by the Beavers and Cubs from 1st Mendlesham, by the District Lead Volunteer.

Martyn's volunteering roles don't just involve his contribution to Scouting. His volunteering roles, which were taken into consideration, include Gislingham Footpath Warden, Botesdale Ramblers Wellbeing Walkers Lead, and his help at the Stowmarket Covid Vaccination Centre for 18 months.

Looking back on his association with Scouting, Martyn said: "It all started when I was about 8 years old. I joined my local Cub Pack, the 103rd Pen Park, Bristol. My Dad then became Scout Master at 204th St Gregory's, so I moved up to Scouts with him and left when I started college at 16. My son joined the Necton Beaver Colony in Norfolk and I subsequently became the Group Secretary. I was then asked if I would like to help with the catering for NORJAM in 1994. I was then asked if I would like to help out at Scouts so, the following year, I was introduced to the Scouts as their 'new Scout Leader'!"

Martyn left Necton to re-locate to Mendlesham in 2006, and he received his 'Wood Badge & Beads' on the successful completion of his Leader's training. Upon arrival in Mendlesham he replied to an advert in the Mendlesham Newsletter for a Scout Leader, and he was quickly snapped up!

So now, in 2026, Martyn will have been involved in Scouts for 30 years.

Martyn continued; "I've had a really fun time over the years; attending a camp in Cyprus with Necton and attending every NORJAM since 1994. I've taken my Scouts to Brownsea Island, off Poole Harbour, where our first Chief Scout, Lord Robert Baden Powell started the movement. My role has changed over the years and, apart from running the Scout Troop, I also became the 'Deputy Group Scout Leader' before taking on the role of 'Group Scout Leader.' I am also a 'County and District Training Advisor' and the 'Booking Coordinator/Camp Warden' for Haughley Park where the Stowmarket District are able to use the park for events and camping. We have a building called 'The Cabin' on the park where, over the past few years, I have been organising improvements to the facilities."

And Martyn's voluntary work still doesn't end there! He also organises the Gislingham Litter Pick twice a year and has contributed his 'Walking for Health' walking article to this magazine for several years.

Needless to say, he is immensely proud and honoured to have received this award. He is also looking forward to hopefully attending a special event at Windsor Castle on St Georges Day to join other recipients of awards.

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GISLINGHAM PARISH COUNCIL NOTES



WATSON BOWL – NOMINATIONS NOW OPEN

We are now inviting nominations for the **2025 Watson Bowl** and **Volunteer of the Year** awards. These recognise exceptional dedication and a positive impact within our community and celebrate individuals who consistently go above and beyond—those who show initiative, support others, and embody the values we're proud to uphold.

Who can be nominated?

- Anyone who has made a meaningful contribution over the past year
- Volunteers, organisers, committee members, coaches, or behind the scenes champions
- Those whose actions have strengthened community life, improved services, or inspired others

Please send your nomination (with a reason) to: clerk@gislinghamparishcouncil.gov.uk

GISLINGHAM

GISLINGHAM PARISH COUNCIL

LOCAL COUNCIL AWARD SCHEME QUALITY

Working for our Community

Clerk: Mrs S Budd

Email:
clerk@gislinghamparishcouncil.gov.uk

The Play Area will be **closed from mid-March to mid-April** to enable contractors to install new play equipment and undertake essential upgrade works.

For safety reasons, the site will be fenced off during this period and **public access will not be permitted**.

The Parish Council appreciates residents' understanding and cooperation while these improvements are carried out.

We look forward to reopening the enhanced play area for community use upon completion of the works.

YAXLEY PARISH COUNCIL NEWS



Hello All,

Yaxley Parish Council hasn't had its February meeting at the time of writing, but I can highlight that one of the main matters to be considered there will be the Parish Council's response to the consultation on the Eco Power Energy Project which as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project is due to go before the National Planning Inspectorate in due course. A decision on this will be made by the Secretary of State. This project impacts mainly on the village of Thrandeston but the cables from there connecting its panels and batteries with the Yaxley sub-station will cross Yaxley farmland. As always, the Parish Council will discuss its response carefully and will mention the impacts on neighbouring villages and the whole area as well as on our own village of Yaxley. At present Yaxley Parish Council laments the absence of any Energy strategic plan for the area which is resulting in a disproportionate impact in some places. Thrandeston is also simultaneously being looked at by Essex and Suffolk Water as a site for a large reservoir and of course, Gislingham too is under multiple pressures and there may well be schemes affecting other villages of which I know nothing. I think we all have more than enough meetings but there might be something to be said for the Chairs of the Parish Councils of the villages in the distribution area of this publication communicating occasionally and informally on issues before them that affect the area as a whole?

Yaxley Parish Council will also be discussing the completion of the Conrad Energy Synchronous Condenser project down Leys Lane and the intention of Regener8 to take over the access to the site across the Bomber Hard Stand as construction access to their site (subject to planning permission), also on Leys Lane. The Synchronous Condenser is a method of smoothing out the peaks and troughs of solar and wind energy delivery to the grid. The whole vast building has been landscaped properly according to the submitted plans which is a welcome change to some other projects that have been built in Yaxley, and we thank the developer for this. The Synchronous Condenser is currently 'mothballed' pending suitable connection to the National Grid.



The Yaxley Synchronous Condenser

This is not the case with the Synchronous Condenser but if a project is suspected of not meeting its planning commitments - including tree cover or landscaping - any complainant must liaise with Mid Suffolk Planning Enforcement to seek a resolution of the issue. A Parish Council has no enforcement powers of its own.

We are still looking for a person to come forward to fill the one

vacancy on Yaxley Parish Council and I would appeal to any residents of, or business owners in Yaxley who might have a glimmer of interest to come forward. I do realise that people have very busy lives, and I can honestly promise that we are seeking extra opinions and inputs to our six-weekly meetings more than anything else. If somebody came forward, particularly if working full time, I can promise them that the regular tasks voluntarily undertaken by some councillors such as monitoring the Defibrillator, Play Area or Bottle Bank would not be put their way unless they wished to volunteer for them. If you are interested in becoming a Parish Councillor, please do contact our Clerk on the email address on page 63 of this publication and I will happily talk you through honestly what the role really does entail.

A councillor's role might not be a laugh a minute (and is unpaid), but it can be very satisfying when projects such as the refurbishment of the Village Hall and of the Play Area come to fruition.

At our meeting on 14thJanuary we agreed as a council (among other smaller issues):

- to pay 50% of the cost for two horse warning signs to be sited in the village. Despite the help of our county councillor, Jessica Fleming - who has borne the other 50% of the cost from her budget - it has taken a frustrating amount of time to get Suffolk County Council Highways Department to agree first to our request for signs and then to agree suitable sites for these signs but I am pleased to say that two have now been erected in Yaxley. Most drivers were very considerate to the many horse riders who use Mellis Road but unfortunately a few were less so or were oblivious to the danger. Please pass horses wide and slowly.
- to facilitate discussion between Mid Suffolk District Council and Cranswick Country Foods about tree cover for their site as had been promised. Please report any odours apparently or certainly emanating from this site direct to the company.
- to put our grass cutting contracts out to tender. The Parish Council has undertaken to pay for grass cutting not only of sites for which we are responsible, such as the Village Hall Playing Field and Parish Cemetery, but also other locations where we feel public safety would be compromised if we didn't step in. Such sites include grass areas near the Castleton Way/A140 roundabout which can obscure visibility of traffic approaching on the main road, the vegetation on the bend opposite the Cherry Tree Bar and Tandoor, and the edging of the narrow footpath from Maple Close up to Mellis school. If you are interested in tendering for this work, please look on our website, contact our Clerk or look at the notices placed on our three noticeboards in the village: at the junction of Eye Road and The Street; on the wall of the Cherry Tree; at the entrance to Burns Close.
- to ask for help and support from our District Councillor Tim Weller and from Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Council in dealing with the multiple and highly technical applications for planning permission that are increasingly coming our way from energy infrastructure projects and from industrial developments on the Airfield, the majority of which lay within Yaxley's Parish Boundary.

One last appeal. I live near our Mellis Road Speed Indicator Device and therefore see fairly quickly when the battery expires. Unfortunately, this is not the case for the equivalent device at the southern end of the village on Old Ipswich Road. If anybody drives past at 26mph or more the device will light up. If you notice it doesn't do so, please report this to our Clerk.

Thanks to all who have taken time to read this. Enjoy March. Not long until Easter!

Ian Luff (Chairman, Yaxley Parish Council)


MOVIE NIGHT
at
Mellis Memorial Hall
A COMPLETE UNKNOWN
Friday 24th April 2026
Location
Mellis Memorial Hall
Free parking available
Tickets
£5 Adults | £3 Children
Available on the door
*Cash & card accepted
Refreshments
Tea, coffee & snacks available.
Feel free to bring cushions.
Bring your own Booze.
All proceeds help support and maintain
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Established 1920
MELLIS MEMORIAL HALL
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MELLIS PARISH COUNCIL NOTES



110 SUMMARY TIMETABLE

Diss > Palgrave > Wortham > Yaxley > Eye

MONDAY TO FRIDAY | Except Bank Holidays

Buses towards Eye	110
Diss, Bus Station	13:30
Diss, Waveney Road	13:33
Palgrave, Church	13:35
Wortham, Bus Shelter	13:38
Mellis Old Station	13:42
Yaxley, Post Office	13:45
Eye, Town Hall	13:49

Buses towards Diss	110
Eye, Town Hall	10:40
Yaxley, Post Office	10:43
Mellis, Old Station	10:46
Wortham, Bus Shelter	10:50
Palgrave, Church	10:53
Diss, Rose Lane	10:55
Diss, Bus Station	10:58

Mellis Bus Service Feedback Request

The Parish Council would like residents' feedback on the current bus service, which is operated by Simonds with financial support from Suffolk County Council.

Route 110 runs Monday to Friday (excluding bank holidays) between Eye Town Hall and Diss Bus Station. It departs Mellis at 10:46am, arriving in Diss at 10:58am, and leaves Diss at 1:30pm, arriving back in Mellis at 1:42pm.

As part of Suffolk County Council's new Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP), we would like your feedback on this service. Do you use it? If not, what are your reasons? Would you like to see increased frequency or later running times? All feedback whether positive or negative is welcomed, and will help us to take any necessary steps to improve the service, and support the community. Please email your feedback to the Clerk: ***clerk@mellisparishcouncil.gov.uk or call 07796 410694.***

2026 Mellis Community Litter Picks are on:

Sunday 19th April at 10.00am & Sunday 18th October at 10.00am

We meet outside the Memorial Hall and we will provide hi-vis vests, bags and grabbers. We really appreciate your support by spending 1 hour in our village to keep it looking wonderful, so please join us. ***Contact: lorrainefarley@mellisparishcouncil.gov.uk***

Battery recycling

Please DO NOT put any batteries or equipment with inbuilt batteries into your household waste as they can and do cause fires. Batteries can be disposed of at certain supermarkets or taken to your local recycling centre, but please put leaking batteries in a sealed plastic bag or wrap in cling film. Electrical items with non-removable batteries including VAPES, E-CIGARETTES, TOOTHBRUSHES can go in the small appliances container at a Suffolk Recycling Centre. Go to the Suffolk recycling website for more info: -
www.suffolkrecycling.org.uk/what-to-do-with-a-z/b/batteries



THE WHITE HORSE, STOKE ASH

DOWN Memory LANE

The White Horse at Stoke Ash, Suffolk, is a historic 17th-century coaching inn, built around 1647 during Charles I's reign, serving travellers on the busy A140 between Ipswich and Norwich. Its specific origins link to a site where an earlier house, "Mount Pleasant," stood, with parts of its history tied to ancient Roman settlements nearby. In later years the inn was central to village life, offering food, accommodation, and a place for locals, railway workers and travellers. Local legend tells of a tunnel running from here to The Four Horseshoes inn at Thornham Magna nearby.



c.1910

The Romans established Villa Faustini at nearby Thornham, and had created a burial ground opposite to the site on which The White Horse was built some centuries later. Not that the villagers at the time were aware of this, for the Roman vessels containing calcined bones were not discovered until 1892.

Historically, the most interesting thing about Stoke White Horse is that it was the scene of the annual Petty Sessions for the Hiring and Retaining of Servants. These 'Hirings' were held in each Hundred of Suffolk every Michaelmas. The custom originated in certain old Acts of Parliament, which prescribed that ploughmen and other agricultural workers should be hired to serve for a full year and not merely from day to day. It appears, however, to have gradually embraced servants of all kinds, and by the middle of the 18th century the custom was generally observed throughout the country.

The day, time and place of each 'Hiring' were fixed by the Chief Constable, and the date invariably chosen for the Hartismere Sessions was 11th October. On that day, therefore, the servants would assemble at The White Horse, and stand in a row whilst the formality of Hiring was observed. The whole business was probably little more than an almost farcical formality, and most of the servants would merely be re-engaged by their old masters. Some of them who were open to fresh engagement stood with a straw in their mouths. A servant's hiring having been duly observed and completed, he was handed a small sum of money which was supposed to make the contract binding, but this again was merely a polite formality.

The legal ceremony over, the serious business of the day began. First, the assembled servants sat down to dinner, after which 'The lads brought in the lasses when the amusement began, and it is acknowledged that coarseness, if not something worse prevailed.'

Interestingly, the pub is sometimes (almost) erroneously listed as being in Thornham Magna. The parish boundary runs along the bar, so drinks are dispensed in one parish and drunk in the other. (Stoke Ash).



The original structure has seen modifications over the years including the replacement of thatch after fires and later extensions, creating the modern inn with its classic feel.

This independent inn has been run by the same family for over 20 years. Annie, Shane and The White Horse Inn team offer you a warm welcome, offering homemade quality food in a friendly and comfortable environment.



Photos: top: 1964 / above: c.1930's / below left: c.1950's / below right: c. 1960's





Source material: *The White Horse Inn website & The New Suffolk Garland, compiled by John Glyde, Junior. (1866)*

GISLINGHAM SPRING LITTER PICK SUNDAY 22nd MARCH



10.00am start – for approx 1 hour
Please meet at the village hall
Hi-viz, grabbers and bags provided
Refreshments afterwards supplied

We are asking for your continued support on the day, so as to cover all the areas of the village to pick up the litter.

If you do require further information, please contact
Martyn Bryant on:
07900 147912

NEWS FROM GISLINGHAM VILLAGE HALL

We are nearing the end of the kitchen and toilet refurbishment. Many thanks to everyone for their patience during the project.

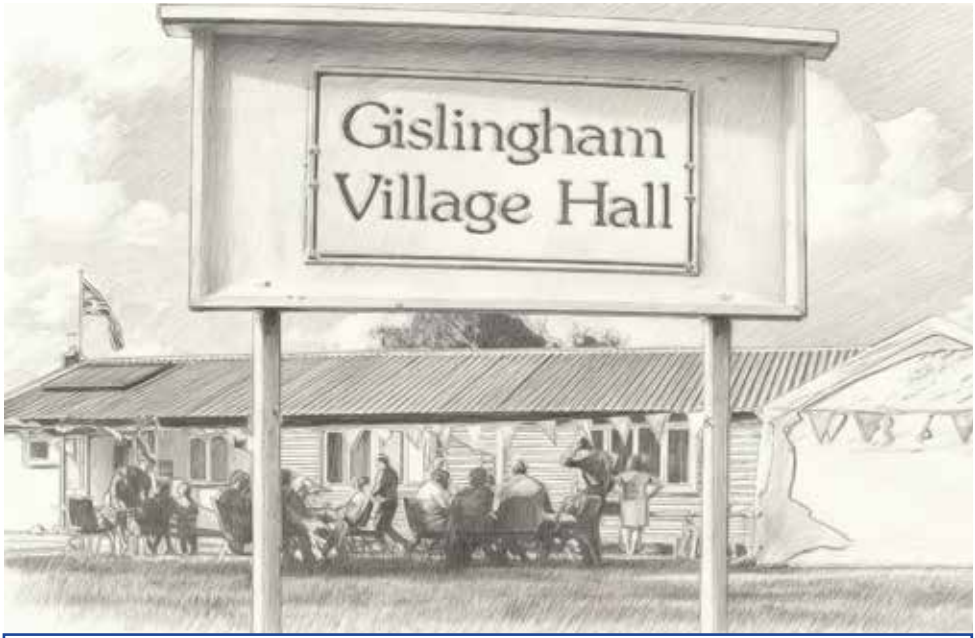
A very successful Jumble Sale was held on Saturday 14th February 2026. One of the best attended.

FUTURE EVENTS

Saturday 28th March: Music Quiz Night - Unfortunately, this event is already sold out!

Saturday 25th April 2026: Bingo Night - Details to follow

Saturday 27th June 2026: Gisfest - Details to follow



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.

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YAXLEY VILLAGE HALL CENTENARY
1926 TO 2026



This year we will be celebrating our centenary and to mark the event we will be holding a weekend of information, fun and merriment over the weekend of 4th to 6th September 2026.

There will be a display of historical pictures and information open to the public to visit and peruse. This display will remain open over the weekend and in addition there will be a talk and presentation about the hall and village life over the years. A Magic Show for all is planned along with an afternoon of dancing and an evening of music.

All of this is supported by a bar, a cheese & wine evening and a raffle to raise funds. Watch this space, details to follow.



The Children's play area on a fine summer's day



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QUIZ
NIGHT
27 MARCH
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TO BOOK EMAIL:
events@thornhams.org

NEWS FROM THORNHAM PARISH HALL



FORTHCOMING EVENTS:

Friday 20th March: Film Night – 'Dead of Winter'
Bookings: films@thornhams.org Tickets £6 pay on the door.

Friday 27th March: Quiz Night - Teams of up to 6. To book email: events@thornhams.org

Sunday 29th March: Sunday Breakfast Club - details tbc

8th, 9th & 10th May: Spring Arts & Craft Show - details to follow

Friday 15th May: Film Night - details tbc

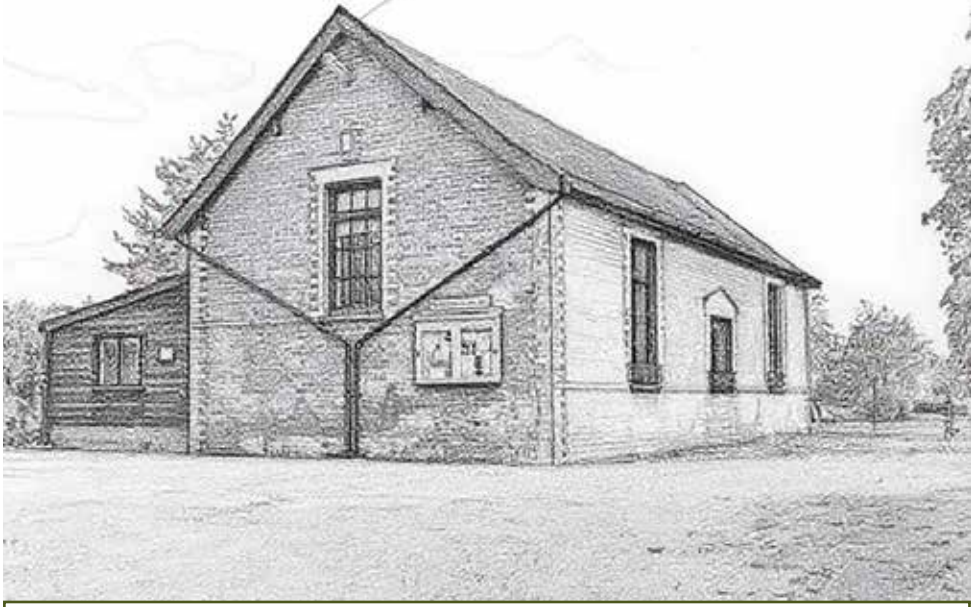
Friday 19th June: Film Night - details tbc

Saturday 27th June: Live screening Royal Ascot - details tbc

Sunday 5th July: Sunday Breakfast Club - details tbc

REGULAR WEEKLY EVENTS:

Tuesdays:
Sit to Stand Pilates – 10.00am.
Pilates – Strong, Stretch, Relax – 11.30am
For information please contact: Michelle 07572 500465



To book please contact Beth Fredrikssen-Jones, the Booking Clerk, using hallhire@thornhams.org

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THE KATHRYN WELLS FUNDRAISER

This is first and foremost in memory of Kathryn — our wonderful mother, and a cherished wife to Kit.



Above all, Mum was a loving, caring person who brought joy and friendship to everyone who knew her. In reflection of that, we want to support those who helped her. First and foremost, she was cared for by the oncology team on the Woolverstone Ward at Ipswich Hospital, supported by Macmillan, and we wish to recognise the vital role they played in looking after her.

In her last few days, Mum was brilliantly cared for by the staff at St Elizabeth's Hospice, who made her time there comfortable and peaceful. We were so grateful for the care they showed and will always remain grateful for what they did. We are very conscious of how great their need for support is, and we want to help in any way we can.

The third charity we are supporting is The Astro Brain Charity, for two important reasons. Firstly, Mum developed brain tumours during her illness and was looked after by the neurology team at Addenbrookes. But also, very close to her heart was the fact that both her nephew, Archie Goodburn, and her sister, Trish Gordon, are being treated for very rare types of brain tumours, and The Astro Brain Charity is supporting research into these.

However, it does not stop there!

In 2026, I plan to carry out a number of fundraising activities for these charities. Over the course of the year, I will be taking part in four marathons — Barcelona on March 15th, Paris on April 12th, Edinburgh on May 25th and Amsterdam on October 19th (The one-year anniversary of Mum's passing

In addition, I, along with a team of friends, will also be taking part in the 'Leeds Endure 24 endurance' event in June, with additional events happening throughout the year.

We would be delighted if anyone would like to support these wonderful charities in memory of Kathryn and therefore, we have started an online fund-raising page at:

https://www.givewheel.com/fundraising/11526/kathryn-wells-fundraiser/

We will keep this page open for the year as we try to raise as much money as possible for these three charities in memory of Kathryn, and in gratitude for everything they did and continue to do for our family.

John Wells


The Gislingham Variety Club Presents:
SUFFEN' FOLKY
"A rum noight owt!"
16th, 17th & 18th April
Email: gislinghamvariety@gmail.com for tickets
Adults: £10
Under 16s: £8
GVC

SUN, SAND & SIN: A MURDER MYSTERY

Written by Leah Durrant & Michelle Norris

The sun lovers of Gislingham had a dose of Summer at Gislingham Variety Club's fun Murder Mystery back in November.

Set in the Mediterranean, in a cockroach-infested hotel, with a crazy Mariachi band, hopeless hotel staff, and a host of strange and suspicious guests. Whodunnit? Who murdered evil cosmetics magnate Raven De Vere; washed up in the lagoon, floating on her lilo and devoured by piranhas!?

She had caused the lovely young ladies on their first foreign holiday to have bad reactions to her adulterated potions; insulted all the staff; gone to war with a German tourist over the solitary sun lounger and patronised her hapless assistant. But PC Destiny Durrant and her granny worked it all out – and Del Boyle, Raven's opportunistic business partner, was outed as the culprit!!



The audience enjoyed the three-course meal, well-priced bar and, of course, taking part in getting to the bottom of this with their insightful (and sometimes rather naughty) questions! A great time had by all!





If this sounds fun to you – do let us know.

Contact GVC and take part in our next production – 'Suffen' Folky: A rum Noight Out' (16th, 17th & 18th April 2026) – onstage, backstage or front of house; all talents welcome!

Email us at:
gislinghamvariety@gmail.com

MC



A GENTLE, SHORT CIRCULAR WALK AROUND KENNINGHALL, NORFOLK

Distance: 4.5km/2.8 miles O/S Map: 210
What3 Words: ///picked.clocking.abode

Kenninghall is home to the kings of East Anglia, after the Norman invasion of 1066, William the Conqueror granted the estate to William of Albany and his heirs as a residence for the Chief Butler of England.

It has been claimed that the name Kenninghall comes from the Saxon word Cyning (king) and Halla (palace), but this is debated, with other writers deriving it from the personal name "Cyna" and the Old English "hala", a clearing in the woods. In maps of the Elizabethan period the house is shown as 'Keningal'.

We parked in the Market Place, Kenninghall, outside the White Horse, which is closed for refurbishment, which looks like this has been going on for years. We have started using what3words (a suggestion from a friend) to make it easier to find the start location. This walk is mainly off road, with short sections on country lanes. This is shorter walk than normal. (Another request from a friend).



With the White Horse behind you, walk along the road to your right and turn left into School Close. At the end of the road, the school is ahead, turn left and follow the sign for Powell Close, which goes through a small housing estate. You will pass an impressive Memorial Hall. At the end, the road bears right, use the footpath ahead which is next to the bottle bank. At the footpath crossroads continue ahead. You will arrive at an orchard with a couple of information signs. This is Kenninghall Heritage Orchard, all the trees are indigenous of East Anglia and each tree has a person's name next to it, so maybe they sponsored the trees. The other information sign is for Kenninghall Wood, which is 5.5 acres of woodland, planted by the residents in 1999.

Continue along the right-handed footpath and after a short distance, you will see a 10-metre length of a living hazel hedge. Continue up the steps to an open area with a sign stating it was provided by the National Lottery funding.



Ahead is a small sign signifying that the footpath is the 'Oliver Way', so continue along this path. At the second bench dedicated in the memory of Catherine Seager and her husband James, bear left and follow the hedge around the corner. Keep to the wide space with the electricity cables above. You will see some interesting copsing on the right.

Go through the metal gate and turn left onto the road. At the T-junction, bear left along East Church Street.

After a short distance, at the track to your right, sign posted 'Woodview' and other named cottages. The very old slightly hidden footpath post is a sign for the continuation of 'Olivers Way'. Continue along this track, at the split in the track, keep to the left-hand side. At the end of the track which is next to a house on the left and a green barn on the right, continue along the footpath between the two.

After about a ¾ km take the footpath to your left after the hedge ends, not going straight ahead towards the farm buildings. Check out the tree with several toys and models, not sure what this represents though. Follow the track around the house. On the left is Marsham Barn, continue past the house keeping to the track. You will see a selection of old wooden chairs on the left, continue down the avenue of trees. At the T-junction, there is a plaque with the details about the planting of oaks and hornbeams along the avenue which was in 1996. Turn right and follow the footpath. You will see a fridge door next to a tree, so continue straight. Go past the house with a long wooden fence and at the end bear left and continue to the road. Check out the large house to your right, which is the Old Rectory. As you reach the road, turn right, opposite is the Red Lion pub (more later). Head to St Mary's church which is open. The church is a grade 1 listed dated to the 13c. It is reported that in 1906, Virginia Wolf was trying to find a Saxon burial ground, but ended up at St Mary's.

Leave the church and turn right down the road back to the Market Place. On your way down you will pass a small chapel with some unique grave stones in the front. You will find the 'Market Place' cafe, a shop and post office. We drove back up to the Red Lion which is dated 1722. A really friendly pub with a good selection of cask beers, food and a lovely interior. They have regular events like murder mysteries and quiz nights.

Emma & Martyn Bryant







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Saturday 14th March 2.10pm SIX NATIONS FINALE

The final three games shown live on three BIG SCREENS

Thursday 19th March 7.30pm QUIZ NIGHT

Cash Prize & Free Snacks. Booking is Essential.

Saturday 21st March 7.30pm WACKY MUSIC BINGO

Happy times with singing and dancing and BIG CASH PRIZES.

Sunday 22nd March 5.00pm RONAN WILLIAMS

Award winning pop artist, singer & songwriter. "The Voice of an Angel". FREE ENTRY

Thursday 26th March 7.30pm BINGO NIGHT

Eye's down for a fun night of Bingo with CASH PRIZES.

Saturday 28th March 8.30pm COUNTRY & WESTERN

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NATURE NOTES by Darrel Charles



Hello everyone, welcome back to Nature Notes

Weather wise, January was rather a gloomy month with many cold and wet days and so when some sunshine did come along it felt important to seize the day and get out there! One such day was in the middle of the month when I decided to visit the RSPB's place at Minsmere. Driving from Gislingham to Minsmere in the winter months on a bright day can be problematic because of the low position of the sun, which appears to conspire to be in your eyes on the way there and again on the return home - a good pair of sunglasses is indispensable. On arrival at the Centre my first stop was the cafe where I enjoyed an excellent bacon bap and cup of coffee. Then it was time to strike out and explore the way-marked paths around the reserve and visit the numerous strategically placed hides. Against expectations, I didn't see much wildlife until I entered the Island Mere Hide, which overlooks one of several pools at the reserve. After just a few moments, a Marsh Harrier swooped into view and then a fellow observer spotted a Kingfisher perched amongst nearby reeds at the edge of the pool. This bird kept us entertained for some 10 minutes as he scrutinised the water beneath him before diving in to catch a fish, which he did on 4 occasions before flying away. This was my first sighting of a Kingfisher for a few years, the last time being at Lackford Lakes. I hope I don't have to wait so long to see another of these brightly coloured marvels.







In late January I read reports that Snow Buntings had been spotted on the beach south of Lowestoft at Kessingland. These are quite small birds, about the size of a Sparrow, that migrate to mostly coastal regions of the UK in winter from within the Arctic circle. I think that they are very attractive with their creamy-mottled plumage, which blends in very well with beach shingle making them hard to spot until they move. Sadly for me, I didn't see any Snow Buntings on this trip to Kessingland - on entering the beach I turned right when I should ave turned left! I took this photo some years ago on the North Norfolk Coast near Weybourne. Still, there's plenty of time left this winter to return for another attempt. Here's hoping for better luck next time.





The 28th January turned out to be a red letter day, or rather a Red Kite day. I awoke in the morning, drew back the curtains and saw this magnificent Red Kite looking straight back at me from a tree at the bottom of my garden. Surprisingly, he remained there for some 3 hrs, just gazing around and preening his feathers! When he did fly away his size became fully apparent. The wingspan of these birds is quoted as being up to nearly 2 m and this one must have been every bit of that. Red Kites do seem to be becoming quite a common sight over our villages. Indeed, as this one was resting in the tree, another was sometimes circling overhead.

I mentioned last month that Daffodil flowers had started to appear and they have now been joined by yellow Winter Aconites (St Mary's churchyard) and Snowdrops (Thornham Road by Thornham Walks). Looking forward, we have Bluebells (flowering late March to April) and Wild Garlic (April to June). There are many places locally where these can be seen but a favourite place of mine is Bradfield Woods (IP30 0AQ, free parking and admission), which are managed by the Suffolk Wildlife Trust. Here the flowers grow in great numbers beneath the canopy of the trees and make a magical sight.

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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WALTER TROUT – SIGN OF THE TIMES



Walter Trout's career started in the late 1960's, when he became a sideman guitarist for John Lee Hooker, no less! Between 1981 and 1984, he was lead guitarist in Canned Heat and then between 1984 to 1989, he was lead guitarist with John Mayall's Bluebreakers, which is how I first stumbled across him. Trout left the Bluesbreakers in 1989 and formed the 'Walter Trout Band'.

His latest album, 'Sign of the Times' which was released in September, is his seventh studio recording and last month it was named by 'Classic Rock magazine as the "No. 1 Blues album of 2025".

It took me a few plays to fully appreciate how good it is. As always, he lays down his signature impassioned vocals and blistering guitar playing on ten new tracks, recorded with his band in a Los Angeles studio.

It is certainly an uncompromising rock album with a bluesy heart; full of energy that reverts from raw and loud to sleepy intense blues. As usual, he delivers powerful blues-rockers, but is equally capable of slow, melancholic and heartfelt ballads that Trout and his band have seasoned to perfection over the years, driven by his blazing guitar and a trusted rhythm section. But there's plenty of light and shade on this album, especially on 'Mona Lisa Smile' which features piano, squeezebox and violin. (A warm and tender acoustic number).

There's also an interesting ballad with a very catchy melodic riff and southern rock sounding solo called "I remember". Heavy rock, Blues rock, Southern rock, and Blues ballads are all on this album!

This is Walter's third album in as many years and he seems incapable of making a bad record in this remarkable renaissance that began after his liver transplant in 2014.

JAN

Author's Rating: ★★★★★ 4/5





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DI'S BOOK BLOG



"The Bandit Queens" by Parini Shroff (2023)



This novel was suggested as my reading group's book choice. I'd never heard of the story before but apparently it was listed for the women's prize for Fiction 2023. And also, as the BBC Radio 2 Book Club Pick.

The story is set in a rural village in modern day India. It is about a group of women bonded together through community, need and tenuous friendship. Despite the modern setting, they are all caught in a strong patriarchal environment which has very little consideration for the rights of females. Included in the writing are some very dark themes where discrimination, abuse, poverty, childlessness and treatment of different castes are covered.

The main character is a widow called Geeta. Her husband disappeared 5 years previously. No one, least of all Geeta, knows how and why he went. In her village she is the centre of constant gossip and speculation. Her female counterparts all assume that Geeta has murdered her husband. So, one by one they go to her, wanting her help in "dealing" with their own husbands.

It took me a while to get into the story - I found it a little slow to start with. There are some disturbing descriptions of the life of the women. But thankfully, there are plenty of funny and clever moments too. About a third into the book, the pace picked up and I raced to the end to read the very satisfying conclusion.



The dark twists reveal that the women are actually a lot stronger than the men. Despite being forced to be subservient to their men, they are survivors. And because of their ties to the other women, alongside willingness (and sometimes unwillingness), to help each other out, these women are very powerful.

The story is a nod to a true person called Phoolan Devi (1963 - 2001). To put it mildly, Phoolan had an extremely harrowing life. She was the original Bandit Queen.

Di Herbert

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Gisfest 2026

Calling all musicians and performers!

Gisfest 2026 (our annual village festival) is fast approaching

It's on Saturday 27 June from mid-afternoon until late evening at Gislingham Village Hall

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Squirrels

Mendlesham Scout Group are delighted to announce that we are starting a new Squirrels Drey as of the 23rd February.

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Thornhams Film Night
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VOLUNTEERS WANTED



VOLUNTEER NEEDED: GISLINGHAM VILLAGE RECORDER

We are looking for a Village Recorder to help preserve the story of our community. This rewarding volunteer role involves keeping a simple record of village life throughout the year — events, changes, achievements, and moments that matter. Your notes, photos and observations will form part of our local history archive, ensuring future generations can understand how our village has grown and changed. Email: clerk@gislinghamparishcouncil.gov.uk or Leigh Smith via email: arkenpoint@outlook.com

VOLUNTEER NEEDED: GISLINGHAM BUS SERVICE CO-ORDINATOR

We are looking for a Volunteer Bus Service Co ordinator to help support the smooth running of our community bus services. This role is ideal for someone who cares about keeping our village connected and wants to make a real difference to residents who rely on public transport for work, healthcare, shopping, and social independence. If anyone is interested in either of the roles, please contact by email: clerk@gislinghamparishcouncil.gov.uk

GISINGHAM PARISH COUNCILLORS

If you feel that becoming a Parish Councillor is something you would like to do or if you would be willing to take on any role to help the community, please contact our clerk and we can give greater insight into what is involved in any role.
Email: clerk@gislinghamparishcouncil.gov.uk or Tel: 07833 705915.

GISLINGHAM COMMUNITY SPEEDWATCH

If you're passionate about road safety and want to connect with your neighbours, consider becoming a Community Speed Watch volunteer in Gislingham. It's a rewarding experience that can have a lasting impact. To get involved, contact Steve Critchley at: s.j.critchley@btinternet.com

YAXLEY PARISH COUNCILLOR

We are looking for a person to come forward to fill the one vacancy on Yaxley Parish Council. If you are interested in becoming a Parish Councillor, please contact our Clerk to find out what the role entails. To express an interest, or request further information, please contact the Clerk via email: Philip.c.freeman@btinternet.com

YAXLEY VILLAGE HALL

The Village Hall committee are local for more committee members. If you feel you have something to offer, please contact us. For further information, please email Ian Muir at: riumnai@gmail.com

MELLIS PARISH COUNCIL

There are currently three councillor vacancies, so if you would like to be involved to improve the local community, and can commit to attending the monthly meetings, we would be very pleased to hear from you. To express an interest, or request further information, please contact the Clerk via email: clerk@mellisparishcouncil.gov.uk, or by calling 07796 410694.

If your group or organisation is looking for volunteers and you would like us to publish the details in a future issue, please email: themessengereditorial@gmail.com

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Gislingham Village Hall	Thursdays	7:10pm

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Westhorpe Village Hall	Fridays	10:00am

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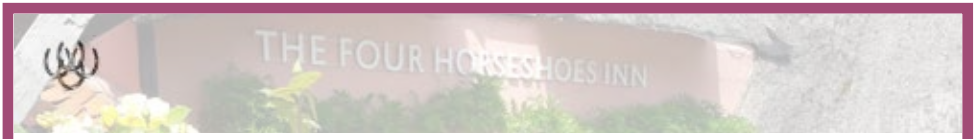
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Gislingham United Charity

Registered charity: No. 208340 • Trustees are Volunteers

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 as follows: 13 March, 8 May, 10 July, 11 September, 13 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/

Gislingham United Charity. Registered Charity No. 208340. Registered address: Lilac Cottage, Mill Street, Gislingham, Eye, Suffolk IP23 8JR



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TERRAPIN NEWS





On March 4th Mid Suffolk will launch its new Catchment and Landscape Nature Recovery Grant in Stowmarket. This grant is to support projects operating at landscape scale, in particular focussing on river catchments, addressing biodiversity loss, flood management, water quality and community engagement. It will support nature-based solutions, land purchase and other activities targeting these goals.

This joins a range of grants available to communities; they are collected together with a brief description here link: https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/community-funding.

Some are administered by the District Council and are as a result of infrastructure developments for example the Eye Turbines Section 106 Fund and include my Locality Budget - closed at the moment but open to new requests from charities and community groups etc. in April.

The District Council Leader Andrew Mellen has recently presented a paper championing local food production with the aim of helping small primary food producers to get started, established and expand. Officers will be gathering information and building on present knowledge of the existing large-scale farming and food production enterprises.

Locally there is the High Suffolk Farm Cluster set up by Patrick Barker in 2022, a 4,000-hectare partnership of 12 farms with the aim of creating a balanced landscape of wildlife corridors and environmental gains alongside productive farms. Recognising that abundant biodiversity underpins a functioning farm ecosystem.

These gains locally must sadly be seen in the report of the Office for Environmental Protection published in January that the Government will fail to meet seven out of the 10 targets set in the Environment Act of 2021 by 2030. Dame Glenys Stacey, Chair of the OEP, said: “Our report comes at a time when government is focused on economic growth. Nature has a role to play here, an important role. It is not a blocker to growth, but it enables, drives and protects economic growth.”

The government has been forced to publish a redacted report by the National Security Services, The Times has published the full version, obtained by a Freedom of Information Request.

Presented to a COBRA meeting in October 2025 the report goes into detail of how global ecosystem degradation and collapse threaten UK national security and prosperity – we import about 40% of our food and also 60% of fertiliser used. Animal farming at current levels is unsustainable without imports. The National Security Assessment concludes: “Countries best placed to adapt are those that invest in ecosystem protection and restoration, and resilient and efficient food systems

Alongside the increase in global food insecurity risks are significant societal risks arising from global competition, conflict, economic insecurity, migration, political polarisation, organised crime and terrorism. Scientific consensus is that increasing the amount of greenhouse gases by burning fossil fuels drives global temperatures upwards, thus accelerating climate change so intensifying extreme weather and making food production less predictable.

We cannot say we haven’t been warned nor can we claim that there is nothing we can do about it. Supporting local markets and producers is something we can all do.

Rowland Warboys Cllr. Mid Suffolk District Council

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DOOR-TO-DOOR SKY TV SCAMS

In January we learned of scam Sky TV salesmen going door-to-door in Old Norwich Road, Yaxley. Fortunately, the resident who reported this was not fooled. However, this is not an isolated incident. Sky TV scams have been reported across Suffolk and the UK, with scammers often impersonating representatives to gain personal information, order expensive items in your name, or gain entry to your home. Sky does not currently use door-to-door sales representatives.

Common Tactics of Sky TV Scams



Scammers use various tactics, both in person and over the phone, to defraud residents:

- Impersonating Representatives: Individuals show up at the door claiming to be from Sky, sometimes with fake ID badges and uniform offering "upgrades" or "discounts".
- Requesting Personal/Financial Information: Scammers ask for security questions, bank details, or passwords to "set up a new direct debit" or "verify your account".
- Ordering Expensive Items: Involves ordering high-value electronics (like iPhones or iPads) on your existing Sky account and then contacting you to say it was a "mistake" and asking you to return the package to an unofficial address or courier.
- Creating Urgency: They may claim your service will be cut off, you will be fined, or you need to act immediately to get a special deal, to pressure you into making a quick decision.
- Gaining Entry: In some cases, the "Sky rep" may attempt to gain entry to your home, which could be a cover for a burglary.

How to Protect Yourself

Suffolk Constabulary and Trading Standards advise taking the following precautions against cold callers and scams:

- Display a "No Cold Callers" Sign: These signs are often available from your local council or can be printed online and help deter unsolicited visitors.
- Do Not Buy at the Door: Genuine companies will be happy for you to call back later using an official number to think about an offer. Never sign anything on the spot.
- Verify Identity: Genuine utility providers will have a password set up with you, which any visiting representative should know.
- Use Trusted Contact Information: If you want to check an offer, use the contact details from your official bill or the official Sky website, not any number or link provided by the caller.
- Never Hand Over Valuables or Cards: Do not give your bank cards, cash, or other valuable items to anyone at the door, even if they claim to be from the police or bank.
- Report Suspicious Activity: If you receive an unexpected delivery of a high-value item you didn't order, contact Sky's official fraud team immediately through the official website. Do not return it to an address provided by the caller.

Reporting a Scam

If you believe you have been targeted by a scam in Suffolk:

- Report it to Suffolk Trading Standards using their reporting tool through the Suffolk County Council website or by calling the Citizens Advice consumer service.
- Report the fraud to Suffolk Constabulary online or by calling 101.
- You can also report scams to the national fraud reporting service Action Fraud online or by calling 0300 123 2040.

WHAT AM I? QUIZ

Below are six clues to my identity.

- I was first sold in the 1830s as coming 'from the recipe of a nobleman', who encountered it in India.
- The story told that two chemists mixed my ingredients but found me inedibly strong, so abandoned the barrel in the basement. They stumbled across me years later, by which time I had fermented and become palatable.
- In South Africa and Brazil, I'm known as 'English Sauce'
- I am a key ingredient in the Bloody Mary cocktail.
- I am named after the county where I was first made.
- In 1876 the High Court ruled that John Lea & William Perrins could not own a trademark for the name of a county, so other companies can call their sauce by the same name.

The answer appears at the foot of page 63.

SUDOKU CHALLENGE

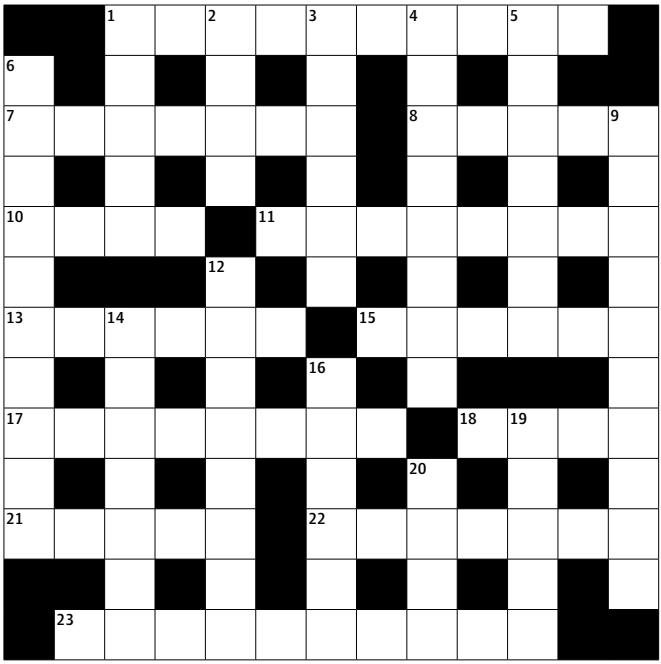
1	6					5	9	
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8			5		9			
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	4	2					1	3

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

Last issue solution

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

CROSSWORD CHALLENGE



Across

1 Winters (10)
7 SPECTRE (anag) – Otis Redding song (7)
8 Dobbins' straps (5)
10 Look (backward and forward) (4)
11 Least adorned (8)
13 Piece of pasta – military decoration (6)
15 Dining discs (6)
17 Unceremonious (8)
18 Corset bone – Shakespears Sister song (4)
21 Milky concoction – Otis Redding song (5)
22 Joy, e.g. (7)
23 Pear type, or the event for which it was named (10)

Down

1 It makes waste, they say (5)
2 Birds' counterparts (4)
3 Retina (anag) (6)
4 Without so much as a by-yourleave (8)
5 Incontrovertible (7)
6 Subjects of A Place in the Sun (10)
9 Imparting contentment (10)
12 DIY's Y (8)
14 Wings, grass or mozzarella (7)
16 Rush – job (6)
19 Clan (5)
20 It may be interlibrary (4)

Last issue solution

	A	N	S	W	E	R	B	A	C	K		
	D		P		X		A		U		O	
R	E	L	E	V	A	N	T		T	A	R	T
	P		C		M		H		I		A	
	T	H	I	N		G	R	A	T	I	N	G
			A		S		O				G	
	C	O	L	L	A	B	O	R	A	T	E	
	O				R		M		B			
O	U	R	L	A	D	Y		C	O	N	S	
	P		A		O		P		L		T	
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NOTICES



EASTER THEMED COFFEE MORNING & BOOK SALE

Please note, as the first Saturday in April is Easter, we have moved our April coffee morning to Saturday 11th April 2026. Therefore, we are holding our 'Easter Themed Coffee Morning' on Saturday 7th March from 10.00am to 12 noon. (Gislingham Village Hall) ***Friends of St. Mary's Church, Gislingham***

BULK LPG COMMUNITY BUYING GROUP/CHAT GROUP

12 months ago, after discovering an elderly neighbour was paying 79p per litre for bulk LPG when I was paying 48p for the identical product, I decided to form a local community bulk LPG buying group.

The LPG market is controlled by the big three; Flogas, Avanti and Calor, supported by a small number of independents. The market is not subject to price controls, either high or low, as is the case with the general gas market. Therefore, it is in the suppliers' interest to sell at the highest price possible with their sales staff incentivised to do so.

Attempting to establish a 'going rate' for bulk LPG via social media when negotiating a two-year supply is extremely difficult. Suppliers when contacted are unwilling to quote a price unless they know what the customer is currently paying or have been offered. Customers are regarded as a profit opportunity.

The bulk LPG community chat group, what we have evolved into, provides a forum via WhatsApp to share and exchange information on gas price, tank rental and customer service, giving members a stronger base to negotiate on as opposed to 'going it alone'.

To date three of the group have achieved a saving of £1830 when renewing their contracts. A very positive outcome.

The group operates as a local community service, I live in Finningham, the other members in surrounding villages. It is free to join, absolutely no fees, charges or hidden commission.

If you are paying more than 45p per litre and more than £110 p.a in tank rental and would like to make a saving please contact me via email at: grahamdavie@mail.com or on: 07765 863200 or glenda.shepherd2@btinternet.com for a chat. We look forward to hearing from you.

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Answers to the What Am I? Quiz on page 60. *Worcestershire sauce*

SOUTH HARTISMERE BENEFICE



For as long as I can remember I have loved animals and donkeys, with their shaggy coats and discordant braying, are no exception. Afternoon trips down to Weston Super Mare and a ride along the sands on a donkey were a feature of my early childhood. I don't know whether you are familiar with Robert Louis Stevenson's autobiographical book 'Travels with a Donkey' in which he recounts his journey across the Cevennes in South Central France with his donkey, Modestine. So wilful, so recalcitrant and so stubborn is this donkey, that he gets a whole book out of this 12 day journey. Even though he wasn't trying to ride on his donkey - just to get her to carry his luggage - there were times when RLS could barely persuade Modestine to move despite much coaxing and cajoling.

The most famous donkey ride in history takes place at the end of this month and just a matter of days before Jesus's death and resurrection and this is Jesus's triumphal entry into Jerusalem. What was Jesus's motivation in choosing a creature best known for its stubbornness for this most momentous of journeys?

One answer lies with what a donkey symbolises – choosing to ride on a donkey is the complete antithesis of what any Roman Emperor would have done. What would be your animal of choice if you wanted to advertise your greatness? As large a black charger as you could find - a war horse, the bigger and glossier the better and you'd have decked it out in full battle regalia. So, what does Jesus do? The complete opposite and the symbolism of the donkey would not have been lost on the crowds, used as they would have been to Roman victory parades. When Ian and I were visiting the Holy Land, one of the memorable comments which our Arab Christian guide made was 'many men think they're God but God actually did become a man'. We know that the Roman Emperors claimed to be Gods to enhance their power and prestige but this is no victory parade in the style of Augustus Caesar even though Jesus is being greeted by a tidal wave of adulation and worship. So, Jesus comes in humility and peace on the foal of a donkey, fulfilling the prophetic words of Zechariah made 500 years earlier - 'Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem, See, your King comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, the colt, the foal of a donkey'.

And my final point about our donkey is that this donkey is a colt so it would never have been ridden before or have been broken in. So how is it that, unlike Robert Louis Stevenson, Jesus has no problems with his donkey which allows him to ride on its back without bucking and rearing and the stamping of hooves? The answer lies in the fact that Jesus is our donkey's creator – the one without whom nothing was made that has been made - so of course the colt responds to his touch and does his bidding. It's just another example, like the calming of the storm on Lake Galilee, where the elements respond instantaneously to their creator's command – 'Quiet! Be still!'. So, like the awe struck disciples on Lake Galilee, who ask themselves who is this man that even the winds and the waves obey him, we need to be similarly awe struck and to spend time pondering who Jesus is because he's as much present with us today, through the power of the Holy Spirit, as he was when he rode into Jerusalem on a donkey two thousand years ago.

Alison Williamson, Lay Elder

MARCH 2026

SUNDAY 1ST MARCH	Thorndon	10.00am	Together @ 10
2nd Sunday of Lent	Gislingham	10.30am	Holy Communion
SUNDAY 8H MARCH	Mellis	10.30am	Holy Communion
3rd Sunday of Lent	Stoke Ash	10.30am	Worship for All
SUNDAY 15TH MARCH	Thorndon	10.30am	Holy Communion
4th Sunday of Lent	Thornham Parva	10.30am	Holy Communion
Mothering Sunday	Gislingham ***Village Hall***	3.00pm	God and Play
SUNDAY 22ND MARCH	Thornham Magna	10.30am	Holy Communion
5th Sunday of Lent	Wetheringsett	10.30am	Welcome to Holy Communion
	Yaxley	10.30am	Worship for All
SUNDAY 29TH MARCH	Stoke Ash	10.30am	Benefice Holy Communion
Palm Sunday			
MONDAY 30TH MARCH	Thornham Parva	7.00pm	Sung Compline
TUESDAY 31ST MARCH	Thornham Parva	7.00pm	Said Compline

Telephone Church BCP Holy Communion is on Thursdays at 11.00am



Reverend Debbie Nicholls – Rector
rev.d.nicholls@gmail.com ✆ 07762 116 335

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LOCAL INFORMATION

BUS TIMETABLES

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: 25 Mar, 22 Apr, 20 May, 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	01379 640530
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 Jessica Fleming jessica.fleming@suffolk.gov.uk	01449 711065
Samaritans – for everyone:	116 123

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