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**February 2026**  
Issue 450

# Quartet

**The Parish Magazine**



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



Severe weather can cause power cuts and the following advice comes from The Met Office for vulnerable people for whom a power cut could cause them health problems:

Sign up for the Priority Services Register (0800 111 999) in case of power cuts - this is a free service provided by water and power suppliers for older and disabled people, or if you depend on electricity to keep medical or mobility equipment running.

For the general public who are experiencing a power cut a call to 105 will give you details of your local network operator who can offer details about how long the power cut is likely to last, is it in the local area or is it just your property, safety advice, etc

### All Saints' Church, Shelley seeks organist

Our two dedicated organists at Sunday morning 09:15 a.m. Eucharist would welcome another player to share the load occasionally. If you are familiar with playing for morning worship and would like to join our friendly parish services and coffee, please get in touch. For more information contact Diana Gibbs, PCC secretary 07976 292565

### Help us with our campaign!

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



## Small Ads Pin Board

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

# Quartet Diary

Details of events can be found within the magazine. **It would be advisable to check with organisers if regular events are happening. We may not have been informed of last minute changes - especially close to the New Year!**

### February

- 3 Chapel Coffee morning - SSM Community Garden Holton
- 4 SSM Mums and Tots Stitch Sewcial SSM Raydon Social Club
- 6 SSM Youth Clubs Holton Social Club FFOTMLC - Holton SSM Village Life Wine & Cheese Night
- 7 Green Gym Holton
- 9 SSM Parish Council Meeting, Parish Room
- 10 Chapel Coffee morning - SSM Community Garden Holton
- 11 SSM Mums and Tots Stitch Sewcial SSM Raydon Social Club
- 13 SSM Youth Clubs Holton Social Club
- 17 Chapel Coffee morning - SSM Community Garden Holton
- 18 SSM Mums and Tots Stitch Sewcial SSM Raydon Social Club

- 19 Slow Stitch Holton
- 20 SSM Youth Clubs Holton Social Club
- 26 R&DGC Meeting Night
- 27 HSM Chinese New Year

### March

- 3 Chapel Coffee morning - SSM Community Garden Holton
- 4 SSM Mums and Tots Stitch Sewcial SSM Raydon Social Club
- 6 SSM Youth Clubs Holton Social Club FFOTMLC - Holton
- 7 Green Gym Holton
- 10 Chapel Coffee morning - SSM Community Garden Holton
- 11 SSM Mums and Tots Stitch Sewcial SSM Raydon Social Club HSM Parish Council Meeting
- 13 SSM Youth Clubs Holton Social Club
- 17 Chapel Coffee morning - SSM Community Garden Holton
- 18 SSM Mums and Tots Stitch Sewcial SSM Raydon Social Club
- 19 Slow Stitch Holton

# Editors Corner

Thanks to Alan Moran from Manningtree and District Photographic Society for his beautiful picture of Early morning in West Mersea that we have featured on the front cover this month.

February is the month where everything seems to stir out of winter just a little bit more. The snowdrops are out, the daffodils are beginning to poke their heads out of the soil and the days are getting longer at last. It's a good time to be thinking positively about what to do and where to go this year. We hope that whatever you decide, you will have a successful and happy time!

There are a lot of local organisations having their AGMs over the coming months and many of them would love to see some new faces to come and help with the planning (there's adverts for some throughout the magazine). Do spare a thought for your local hardworking representatives and if you have the time, maybe think about joining a local group that you have an interest in? It all goes a long way to making our four parishes a great place to live and work.

Happy reading!

Anne and Jane.

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



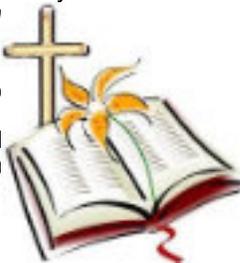
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# Rev'd Manette Writes

Dear friends,

The following reflection was aired on Radio 2 'Good Morning Sunday' a few years ago and I heard about it via a friend who thought it was worth passing on. It was written and read out by Tim Jupp who is the keyboard player in a Christian rock band called 'Delirious'.

Reflection: I AM THANKFUL ...

"For the wife  
Who says it's hot dogs tonight,  
Because she is home with me,  
And not out with someone else.  
For the husband  
Who is on the sofa  
Being a couch potato,  
Because he is home with me  
And not out at the bars.  
For the teenager  
Who is complaining about doing dishes  
Because it means she is at home,  
Not on the streets.  
For the taxes I pay  
Because it means I am employed.  
For the mess to clean after a party  
because it means I have  
Been surrounded by friends.  
For the clothes that fit a little too snug  
because it means  
I have enough to eat.  
For my shadow that watches me work  
because it means  
I am out in the sunshine  
For a lawn that needs mowing,

windows that need cleaning,  
and gutters that need fixing  
because it means I have a home.  
For all the complaining  
I hear about the government  
Because it means we have freedom of  
speech.  
For the parking spot I find at the far end of  
the parking lot because it means I am  
capable of walking  
and I have been blessed with  
transportation.  
For my huge heating bill  
Because it means I am warm.  
For the lady behind me in church  
who sings off key because it means  
I can hear.  
For the pile of laundry and ironing,  
because it means I have clothes to wear.  
For weariness and aching muscles at the  
end of the day because it means I have  
been capable of working hard.  
For the alarm that goes off  
in the early morning hours because it  
means I am alive.  
And finally, for too much e-mail  
Because it means I have friends who are  
thinking of me.  
Live well, laugh often, & love with all of  
your heart!"

I hope that this give you some food for  
thought because we are often quick to  
complain and forget to count our blessings.  
Yours in Christ,  
Rev'd Manette

# Stratford St Mary



## In Stratford

Hall Farm Shop Cafe and Restaurant  
www.halfarmshop.com

Anchor Inn [www.stratford.pub](http://www.stratford.pub) 01206 322143  
The mobile pizza co - 07982 427483

Kate Baines, Virtual Assistant - 07799 391343

Andy Smith Roofing - 01206 322882

Jackson Plumbing and Heating - 01206 322063

Nigel Bruce Electrician - 01206 322751

John Burrell Bespoke Bedrooms - 07734700507

Print, Marketing, Design - gill@nexuscpp.co.uk

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

Gary Moye, plasterer - 07807 314911

Katrina Wade, Physiotherapist 07968 964826

Pampered Village Paws - Tel 07747482313

KSB Home Improvements - Tel 07736 944 474

R .Crick & Co Ltd, roofing and scaffolding servs Tel 07759714854

Alexander Painting and Decorating - 07729178182

Kevin. Pet and House Sitting services 07753 539393

## DEFIBRILLATORS

For your information, there are now two defibrillators in Stratford St Mary. One is located at Hall Farm and the other on the side of The Chapel on Upper Street.



## Community First Responders

SSM First Responders AGM will be held at 7.30pm in the Parish Rooms on Tuesday April 14th. Everyone is welcome to come along and hear how we have got on over the last year and about the upcoming year



## Stratford Chapel

Upper Street, Stratford St. Mary

**Leaders:** Phil Wyncoll & Bill Richardson

**Youth Leaders:** Jamie & Beckie Wyncoll

We are an Independent Evangelical Church encompassing and providing for all age groups. We particularly specialise in the areas of Children's and Youth work, Bible teaching and Evangelism. All are welcome, and we look forward to seeing you!

### Services and Groups:

Every Sunday

10:30 - Morning Worship and Junior Church

18:30 - Church Pray Meeting (Currently on Zoom)

Mondays (Every two weeks)

20:00 - Bible Study on Zoom

Tuesdays (Every two weeks)

19:30 - Discipleship group at the Chapel

20:00 - Bible Study on Zoom

Every Tuesday

10:00 - Coffee Morning at the Chapel

Every Thursday (term time)

09:00 to 11:00 - 'Little Sparks' Stay and play group for under 5's

Every Friday (term time)

17:00 - 'Sparks' Youth group for Years 3 to 6 (Please register by contacting Beckie on the email below)

19:30 - 'Ignition' Youth group for Years 7 to 11

**Website** (currently under construction)  
[stratfordstmarychapel.com](http://stratfordstmarychapel.com)

**General Enquiries:** Margaret Chapman (01473 311436 or [stratfordstmarychapel@gmail.com](mailto:stratfordstmarychapel@gmail.com))

**Youth and Children Ministry Enquiries:** Jamie and Beckie Wyncoll ([sparksandignition@gmail.com](mailto:sparksandignition@gmail.com))

## WHAT'S ON

WHEN	ALL WELCOME
every MONDAY 2.00pm	SILVER SWANS ADULT BALLET £9.00 <a href="mailto:itschoicoflance23@gmail.com">itschoicoflance23@gmail.com</a>
*TUESDAY 8.00pm	DANCE MOVEMENT £8.00 <a href="mailto:barefootascalmovement@gmail.com">barefootascalmovement@gmail.com</a>
*TUESDAY 8.00pm	BOOY BALANCE £10.00 <a href="mailto:Becky@bcalm.co.uk">Becky@bcalm.co.uk</a>
every WEDNESDAY 10.30 am	STITCH SEWICAL MINDFUL CRAFTING £2.00 <a href="mailto:stitchsewical@gmail.com">stitchsewical@gmail.com</a>
WEDNESDAY 7.30pm	DANCE TO 50'S/60S MUSIC £7.00 <a href="mailto:estheresewing@gmail.com">estheresewing@gmail.com</a>
*THURSDAY 7.15PM	HYGGE COMMUNITY CHOIR £8.00 <a href="mailto:jaquie.choir@btinternet.com">jaquie.choir@btinternet.com</a>
THURSDAY 9th 9.30am	THE MAZE COFFEE MORNING FREE <a href="mailto:amanda.townsend@themaszgroup.co.uk">amanda.townsend@themaszgroup.co.uk</a>
*FRIDAY 3.45 - 4.45pm	FOOTBALL FUN £7.00 <a href="mailto:info@footballfunday.co.uk">info@footballfunday.co.uk</a> 07585 959529
FRIDAY 5th 7.00pm	BREATHING WORKSHOP £25 <a href="mailto:laura@baselinebreathing.com">laura@baselinebreathing.com</a> 07710467254
SATURDAY 29th 7.30pm	50S/60S DANCE £7 <a href="mailto:estheresewing@gmail.com">estheresewing@gmail.com</a>

Classes marked \* operate term time only  
TO HIRE email: [ssminstitute.bookings@gmail.com](mailto:ssminstitute.bookings@gmail.com)

# WINE AND CHEESE NIGHT

Join us for a delightful evening of Tapas, Cheese & Wine!



Date : 6th Feb 2026

Time : 7PM - 11PM

Venue : The Parish Room

- Live music from **Fiddler's Elbow** to set the mood
- Come along and make this a party!!



**£10 \***

INCLUDES SAMPLES OF SPANISH WINES & TAPAS BITES

Tickets available from Julie Alexander  
07989639583 or julie@jj-associates.co.uk

Licensed bar also available

## PARISH ROOM

## WHATS ON

EVERY MONDAY 10.00AM	MOBILITY FITNESS CLASS £5.00  Mark Thompson 07708 856925
EVERY MONDAY & WEDNESDAY	TABLE TENNIS COACHING EPOA  Rik James 07900 154579
EVERY 2ND MONDAY 7.00PM	CRAFT EVENING £3.50  Rachel Brown 07989 579227
EVERY TUESDAY & THURSDAY 2.00PM	CARPET BOWLS £2.00  Eileen Plattford 01206 323463
EVERY TUESDAY 6.00PM	YOGA MIXED ABILITY £7.50  Sarah Brazington 07891 290193
FRIDAY MONTHLY 12.30PM DATES TBC	LUNCHEON CLUB £10  Christine Cousins cousinc303@gmail.com
FRIDAY 6TH FEBRUARY 7.00PM	A VILLAGE LIFE EVENT £10  WINE & CHEESE SOCIAL with music from FIDDLER'S ELBOW  Tickets available from Julie Alexander 07989639583 or julie@jj-associates.co.uk

TO HIRE contact Paul Ranson  
email: [ssmparishroom.bookings@gmail.com](mailto:ssmparishroom.bookings@gmail.com)

## Stratford St Mary Parish Room

Our comfortable, well-equipped hall in the centre of the village is open and available for hire. Please contact our new bookings clerk for more information or to make your booking by emailing [ssmparishroom.bookings@gmail.com](mailto:ssmparishroom.bookings@gmail.com) or contact Paul Ranson on 01206 322156 or 07870 388184



Stratford St Mary Parish Council future meeting dates:

Monday 9th February 2026 - Parish Room

Monday 9th March 2026 - Village Institute

Monday 13th April 2026 - Parish Room

Monday 27th April 2026 - APM Parish Room

Monday 11th May 2026 - AGM Village Institute

Monday 8th June 2026 - Parish Room

Monday 13th July 2026 - Village Institute

Monday 14th September 2026 - Village Institute

Monday 12th October 2026 - Parish Room

Monday 9th November 2026 - Village Institute

Please find below some information from the Stratford St Mary Parish Council meeting held on the 12th of January 2026:

- The village sign has been refurbished by the expertise of Harry Stebbing Workshop who have done an excellent job.
- All Expenditure was agreed and signed off .
- The Parish Council agreed and set the budget for 2026-2027.
- Planning Application DC/25/05618 – Constable Country Childcare have submitted a new planning application for the former Abc nursery site. The PC have written to Babergh planning expressing their concerns with this application.
- Councillor Gill Robinson is organising a meeting of a 'supergroup' to meet once or twice a year - to brainstorm and outline community events, objective is for events to be co-ordinated and supported/ promoted by all. The Church, Village Life, the Primary school, the Village Institute, and the Community Trust have all confirmed that they would like to be involved and an initial meeting is scheduled to take place in January 2026.
- The ANPR camera is scheduled to come to Stratford St Mary on the 11.05.26 to 18.05.26.
- Suffolk Bus Service Improvement plan calls for proposals – the PC would like to hear from residents if they have any proposals for improvements to bus services.
- Neighbourhood Plan – the PC are looking into the option of creating a joint Neighbourhood Plan with the surrounding villages of Holton St Mary, Raydon and Higham.

The Parish Council currently have a Councillor vacancy – if anyone is interested or would like to find out more then please email the Clerk – Parishcouncil@stratfordstmary.org.uk

The minutes of this can be found on the Stratford St Mary Parish Council website <https://stratfordstmary.onesuffolk.net/>.

## Living, learning, loving

Living with differences brought on by age or disability involves learning. One has to adjust and one needs to acknowledge the love and care of others. Being on the "Prayer List" leads to thankfulness that others in their turning to our Father God are giving thought to another's needs. There are valuable lessons to be learnt in this. God's love is being bestowed in this relationship of care. Loving thus, enriches living, both for those who are "The Sick" and for those giving aid and support. Faith becomes real in love. May God so bless us all as we go forward.

Peter Snelling

**Working from home feeling too quiet?**  
We have space to focus, company if you want it.

**Stratford St Mary Work & Connect**  
Flexible shared working space in the Village Institute  
Starting 31 March 2026, then fortnightly on Tuesdays

- Open Plan Office
- Great WiFi
- £55 per Day
- Quiet rooms available
- Free Desk, Chair
- Subscriptions @ Shared Times
- Monitor @ Cable
- Pre-bookable for convenience

**BOOK HERE!**

## QiGong and Forest Bathing

The perfect blend of ancient holistic self-care practices

Have you ever wondered if there is a gentler, more natural, and holistic approach to self-care - one that can boost vitality, improve health, and help you feel good day to day?

Have you ever or are you looking for something simple and enjoyable, that is easy to fit into your daily routine, and will help you manage life's challenges with less stress?

During your search, you may have found methods that addressed some needs but not all. Perhaps you settled for something less than ideal or gave up looking altogether. If this sounds familiar, you're not alone! But there is an ancient practice that addresses these needs holistically - QiGong.

QiGong is a traditional Chinese practice that combines gentle movement, breathwork, meditation, and so much more to enhance physical and mental well-being.

For thousands of years, QiGong has been recognised for its amazing benefits and is continually studied by researchers and scientists to verify what our ancestors have claimed it can do in terms of:

- increasing physical health, fitness, flexibility, and strength
- stabilising blood pressure and blood sugar levels
- reducing stress, pain, and recovery time
- supporting cardiovascular, metabolic, and immune system function
- improving mental focus, memory, sleep quality, and overall vitality
- balancing emotional challenges

**In Higham**



Karl Chisnal - mower repairs.  
07557771721

Brett Valley Installations 07896 054439

- balancing emotional challenges as in depression, sadness, grief, anger, anxiety, and other such emotions, and
  - it is a fun practice
- Hi I'm Janet Drake, I formed Flow is Life because I truly believe self-care is essential.

It was during the pandemic that I discovered and trained to teach QiGong, soon followed by becoming a certified Forest Bathing leader. To me, QiGong beautifully weaves together everything I've learned about nurturing the body, mind and spirit. Adding Forest Bathing brings a new dimension to holistic self-care that is suitable for everyone, regardless of age or ability.

When people join me in a QiGong class or a Forest Bathing session I feel so much joy to see how easily the practices help people to move from stress and disconnection into relaxation and peace. I hold regular weekly QiGong classes in Raydon, Burstall, Sproughton and Capel St Mary, and monthly Forest Bathing sessions in a beautiful private wood near Hadleigh.

To find out more about QiGong & Forest Bathing, and myself, please visit my website at [www.flowislife.co.uk](http://www.flowislife.co.uk) where you can book a class or session and sign up for my monthly eNewsletter.

Take Care – Janet

# Raydon

## In Raydon



Blackwell Barn Holiday Let - [www.cottages.com](http://www.cottages.com)

Phil Avery Electrician 01473 311261

Ashley Short Carpentry 01473 311226

SW Stiff Builders - 07811 005241

Earth&Turf Garden Services -  
07922078241

DIY Livery - 07710 540926

Chef Neil - 07584 573474

Swift Garden Services - 07947 322429

Franklyn Nevard - Architect 07515  
351894

Fresh Eggs - Roadside stall Fox Farm

MS Surveys Chartered Surveyors -  
01473 249020

Lotus Bloom Yoga - 07788660893



Lift available from Raydon to any Sunday church service in the Benefice, please phone 07703 498508.

Look forward to some company

Wendy Mumford

## NOTICE OF INTENT TO CARRY OUT TREE REDUCTION AT KING GEORGE'S FIELD RAYDON

Raydon Parish Council & King George's Field Trustees give notice of their intention to carry out tree reduction affecting two oak trees on the western boundary of the field as follows:

**Veteran Oak** – a recent PICOS Ultra-Sound survey has revealed that approximately 57% of the main stem at 30cm above ground has significant decay. Whilst the tree is in good overall health the survey suggests that, due to the multi stem nature of the tree there is potential for limb failure. To reduce this risk & preserve the tree the crown should be reduced. Following this recommendation & further advice given by our preferred contractor a 35% reduction of all sides, thinning of the crown & removal of a large amount of deadwood will be undertaken.

**The oak tree** to the rear of the play area will be reduced by approximately 3m to remove the branches overhanging the play area & a similar amount will be removed from the rear to balance the tree.

It is anticipated all works will be completed in February 2026



## KING GEORGE'S FIELD, RAYDON



**NEEDS YOU!**

The "King George's Field, Raydon" charity is working hard to deliver a new pavilion in the village and is looking to expand the Board by recruiting new Trustees to help spread the workload involved with taking this exciting project forward. We are looking for volunteers, based in Raydon or in any of the surrounding villages, who can bring additional skills and expertise to complement those of the existing Trustees. In particular we need people with a background in:

- secretarial work
- administration
- Finance
- accounting
- legal

If you are interested in becoming a Trustee, can offer expertise in one of the above areas, and are willing to give your time on a voluntary basis please contact Rex Coleman (07930 622966 or [rexcoleman@outlook.com](mailto:rexcoleman@outlook.com)) for further details.



## Raydon Village Coffee Morning

The Tuesday coffee mornings, once a month at the Pavilion, will be taking a break during January and February.

The library van will continue to come, as usual, on Tuesdays during these months. (dates will be in the Quartet)

We would like to wish everyone a Happy and Healthy New Year.

The Coffee Team

## RAYDON PARISH COUNCIL

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

Chairman: Keith Lovering  
Jayne Tann Theresa Halloran  
Lorraine May Chris Chambers  
John Smith

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

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



Raydon & District Garden Club



Presented by Imogen Morsman

Thursday 26th Feb - 7.30 pm

KGV Pavilion, Raydon

Raffle & Refreshments

New members welcome

# Raydon and District Garden Club

As I write these notes on a wet dreary 15th January, we are almost half way through the winter period already. Hope you are all enjoying, like the gardens, a well-deserved rest and getting ready for the start of Spring ahead just as nature all around is. The daylight is increasing especially the afternoons having gained at least 35 mins already. Be at least a couple more weeks before mornings do like wise. The first early signs of spring are happening already with the first early snowdrops showing in a very sheltered spot, Hazel catkins starting to grow longer and soon to be flowering with daffodils shooting up through the ground ready to give us that unmistakable burst of colour in February and March and onwards. Have you noticed the wild birds are starting to pair up ready for the breeding / nesting season soon to be upon us once again. In the veggie plot early rhubarb is growing under the straw covering (needed to protect from frost) and should be ready to pull by end of February/March, along with sprouting broccoli and kale.

Mid-February/March is of course a good time for a visit if you wish to see some of the large National Trust gardens or other specialist gardens which are open for visitors to view their winter gardens which normally have an abundance of snowdrop displays and well worth a visit, more so especially if a lovely sunny day which really sets the gardens off to their best.

Our first monthly meeting this year starts once again this month with Thursday 26th Feb at 7.30pm in the KGF pavilion. Imogen our guest speaker will give us a slide presentation and talk on her subject "Small Trees" for the garden. It should be an interesting and helpful informative evening as I guess many of us gardeners over the years have possibly planted a tree (s) not realising just how large, upwards and width wide they grow to. Ok so they can be reduced by say 25% or

worse taken down if completely in wrong place but this of course can cost a considerable amount of money if you're unable to do it yourself.

Thank you to all members who have re-joined for 2026, your support as always is fantastic, and those members still to pay subs, and or guests who would like to join may do so on the night. Any new people recently moved into the village who would like to join the garden club just turn up on the meeting night, our treasurer Ann Laverock will be on hand to book you in. Membership fees £20.00 pp for the year.

The following meeting will be on the fourth Thursday 26th March starting at 7.30pm and it will be daylight !!

## ADVANCE NOTICE.

Easter week starts on 30th March – to 6th April, so our "Spring Show" will take place on Saturday 18th April.

Your committee looks forward to meeting all members & guests again this month, and hopefully all events throughout the gardening year to come.

Geoff Horrex, 07810086143.



## Raydon Sports and Social Club

Welcome to our February edition – the month of Romance and Romantic memories.

The non-stop run away time machine is rapidly approaching mid February, but by putting on the handbrake briefly we can take a few moments to recall the events we held in December and January.

Our Members' "Bring a Dish" night held in December was another winner – an odds on favourite! Members all brought a wonderful variety of dishes to share with one another whilst enjoying the festive spirit resulting in lots of chatter and laughter.

Our Christmas opening hours at the Pavilion also proved to be successful in tempting Members to venture out for a breath of fresh air and to wear their Christmas jumpers for a few hours. Keep them safe!

And so we moved onto January, a month renowned for New Year resolutions. Having finished all the chocolate and some deciding to do dry January, our members were able to enjoy a good choice of zero alcohol drinks along with our usual bar stock.

On 25th January we held another "first" for us, as Lee Rose, fresh from his sell out performance at Holton St. Mary village hall, entertained us by singing live in the Pavilion. Lee will definitely be on our radar for another visit during the coming months.

On 28th February we are holding our "Thank you" night for all our members. This is our way of saying thank you for their support throughout 2025. A simple buffet will also be provided. So we look forward to enjoying this night with our members and friends to catch up on village news – current, old and new.

New membership forms are held at the Pavilion, so please do not hesitate to ask for one to either update your details or join our club.

One last thing for our sports enthusiasts, we are screening the Six Nations Rugby between 5th February and 14th March, well the England matches anyway. So come along, shout at the screen, jump and celebrate and curse the ref for being so observant!

As the Pavilion is available to hire, it is an asset to all of our community, including the Raydon Gardening Club, Coffee mornings organised by valued members of our Church, Brett Vale womens football teams, and QiGong for health and wellness, special events such as our forever popular Bonfire Night and the more recent vintage car show, we would hope this year will see all of our community come together for another year to raise funds for our new village hall. Please join us.

As the old saying goes "Rome wasn't built in a day"

# Holton St Mary

**SHOP LOCAL** In Holton

Ann Mason Care - 01206 233372  
 Therapy Gyms Ltd - 01206 692524  
 Hazelton Plumbing and Heating - 07448152693



The First Friday of the Month Lunch runs in the Village Hall of Holton St Mary on the first Friday of every month from 12:30 until 2ish.

It is a community light lunch for £5 and is all about getting together, having a chat with others in our community, over a tasty lunch, prepared by a variety of wonderful volunteer cooks and supporters. .

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

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



**CHINESE NEW YEAR**  
 YEAR OF THE HORSE

Friday - 27th February - 6 PM  
 HSM Village Hall

Celebrations include traditional Lion Dance followed by a Chinese meal (set menu) supplied by Dynasty Restaurant, Hadleigh

LIMITED TICKETS available from January 2026 - £25 per person from

Janice Cheng - 07906 052380 or  
 James Lancaster - 07391 421201

please advise of any allergies when ordering tickets

## Holton St Mary Village Hall

To book the Village Hall for your event or regular club or class, please contact. Tanya Kunz on 01473 311570

## Holton St Mary Millennium Green Trust

Just a reminder that we are now collecting subscriptions for the Century Club Draw. The sub is £15 for the year, bank details for BACS payments are on the slip you should have received. The first draw will be made in early March so please pay your subscription before then. Any queries please contact me.

Marjorie Haste 07855 691674



**EVENTS 2026**  
 HOLTON ST MARY SOCIAL CLUB

- 27 FEBRUARY** - Chinese New Year
- 28 MARCH** - GAMES AFTERNOON in village hall (save the date, details to follows)
- 11 APRIL** - QUIZ NIGHT (save the date, details to follows)
- 25 APRIL** - VINTAGE VIBES, VILLAGE STYLE - "table top sale"

To register your interest in this event please complete our online form using the QR code or



or email [secretaryholtonsmssc@gmail.com](mailto:secretaryholtonsmssc@gmail.com)

The Holton St. Mary Club bar is open EVERY Friday from 5.30 pm

## Green Gym

Our next session is on 7<sup>th</sup> February and we meet in Church Square. The tasks will include a general tidy-up and the clearing the footways. We work from 10.30 to 12.00 on the first Saturday of each month. Do come along along and join if you would like to. Thank you.



## The Village Hall

Holton St Mary Village Hall remains a valued facility in our Village and we are looking for more people to help us continue to run it as a charitable trust and to contribute to how we raise money to refurbish it. Without a viable committee our Village Hall could struggle to stay open.

If you have skills around fundraising or applying for grant funding, and a little bit of time and could help, we need you. If you wanted to contribute your time and skills only to the refurbishment, we could co-opt you on to that sub-committee. Meanwhile, our management committee meets twice a year, with representatives from our community, The Parish Council and the Social Club, and we have two vacancies on this group, either as Trustees or as management committee members.

Please consider volunteering to contribute in our community

Contact Sally Thurlow [salthurlow@gmail.com](mailto:salthurlow@gmail.com) or Jan Cheng [jan.cheng@gmail.com](mailto:jan.cheng@gmail.com)



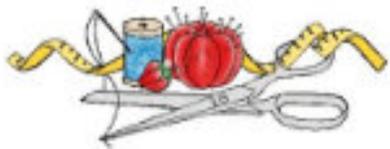


Winter still has its grip over the gardening year and although there's plenty of time for planning, actually doing anything still seems like a distant dream.

That being said, we've kept busy so far this year with a seed swap, willow cutting and first attempts at weaving and the AGM - all washed down with a good quality coffee and lots of biscuits.

You can also get involved, or find out what's happening, by joining the Whatsapp group here:

(Scan with the camera in Whatsapp)



## SLOW STITCH

Slow Stitch group will be meeting as usual on the third Thursday of the month, from 2-4pm, in the village hall.

Newcomers and beginners are always welcome.



Please find below some information from the **Holton St Mary Parish Council meeting held on the 14th of January 2026:**

The Parish Council are delighted with the new railings that have been installed on the border between the Church and Church Square thanks to Amour Engineering. Thanks also given to the PCC for their donation towards the railings.

All Expenditure was agreed and signed off.

Budget and precept for 2026/2027 was agreed.

The slow down downs designed by the children of Stratford St Mary Primary School and sponsored by Kingsleigh Estate Agents have now been placed around the village, the PC hopes that this will make drivers think about slowing down when driving through the village.

The PC would like to welcome any applications for CIL money.

Cllr Hay met with Suffolk County Council and arranged for missing footpath/right of way signs to be replaced.

Work to refurbish the signpost on Bacons Green will commence in March.

Community First Responders will be holding a basic first aid course in East Bergholt on Saturday March the 7th at 1430hrs.

The PC agreed expenditure for the replacement of the wooden flower tub near the pump.

The minutes of the meeting can be found on the Parish Councils website - <https://holtonstmary-pc.gov.uk/parish-council/>

Holton St Mary Parish Council still has 1 vacancy for a Councillor - if anyone is interested then please contact the Clerk for more information [clerk@holtonstmary-pc.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@holtonstmary-pc.gov.uk).



## Manningtree & District Photographic Society

Last month club members enjoyed 2 competitions the Built Environment and Open Mono, a Field Trip to Colchester Zoo, and a talk by Scott Hurd on living and working as a photographer in Namibia.

Our programme for February is as follows;  
Saturday 7th February – Field Trip Flatford Sunrise

Thursday 12th February – Talk by Kevin Pigney on Seascapes, Landscapes and Long Exposure Photography

Monday 23rd February – Harwich and Manningtree Interclub Competition

Thursday 26th February – Open Colour Print Competition

Our club website has information about membership and activities together with competition results, photo albums and further club information. Our 2025/2026 programme is also on the website. Our public Manningtree Photographic Club Facebook page also features various club news and activities.

This month's featured image by Alan Moran was the winning image from our recent Open Colour PDI Competition..

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

If you have an interest in photography, at whatever level, you would be most welcome at M&DPS. We meet at Mistley Village Hall, on the 2nd, 4th and 5th

Thursdays of the month between September and May at 7.30pm.

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

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



Come and learn with a free session on March 7th, starting at 2.30pm in the Constable Hall, Gandish Rd, East Bergholt. Several people have asked us to put on an informal session to learn or practise life saving skills including how to use a defibrillator. This session is open to everyone including teenage children and it will last for about 90 minutes. It would be really helpful if you can let us know that you plan to come so that we can ensure that we have enough equipment for everyone but please, also, feel free just to come along at 2.30pm.

Meanwhile, a big thank you to everyone who has been part of East Bergholt Heartwatch Community First Responders over the last year and to our wider family of supporters who make it all possible. Carol Moss (Team Leader, East Bergholt Heartwatch Community First Responders)

For more information please contact Carol Moss on [ecarol.moss@gmail.com](mailto:ecarol.moss@gmail.com)

## Have You Made A Will?

Many of us mean to make a will, but it often slips down our list of priorities. If you've been putting it off, here's an opportunity that might help.

The next Free Wills Month in the UK runs throughout March 2026, starting on the 2nd. It offers people aged 55 and over the chance to have a simple will made or updated at no cost through participating solicitors. The campaign runs twice a year, with sessions typically in March and October.

You can find participating solicitors on the Free Wills Month website ([freewillsmoonth.org.uk](http://freewillsmoonth.org.uk)) and book an appointment on a first-come, first-served basis. If you don't want to wait until March, charities such as Macmillan and Mind offer free will services year-round for people of various ages.



### St. Mark's Roman Catholic Parish

**St. Mark's, Hawthorn Drive, Ipswich Holy Family Church, Ipswich Road, Branham CO11 1TB**

Parish Priest: Rev Fr Luke Goymour  
The Presbytery, 180 Hawthorn Drive,  
Ipswich IP2 0QQ  
Tel: 01473 84963 [revgoymour@gmail.com](mailto:revgoymour@gmail.com)

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

**Waiting for an answer to prayers**

It can be hard to know why prayers aren't answered immediately or in the way in which we've asked. Sometimes, looking back on our lives, we may understand why God has not answered prayer in the way we expected. We can't limit God or put Him in a box of our own imagination. The basis of all prayer should be trust – and that can be very hard at times, especially when we are in the depths of grief, having lost a loved one. When life seems very difficult the Surrender Prayer can be a very powerful way of handing over our problems to God: "Jesus, I surrender myself to you. Take care of everything." Repeat it 10 times – or more, if necessary! It's especially helpful when you're worrying about something, or someone, in the middle of the night. You can also find online the Surrender Novena, which you can pray over 9 days. Jesus I trust in You.

Weekday and Sunday Masses and devotions

Please consult noticeboards and the parish website in case of weekday mass changes:

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

Sunday Holy Family, Branham 8am and St. Mark's, Ipswich 11.15am.

Tuesday Holy Family 10.00 mass, with Eucharistic Adoration from 9.20.

Wednesday St. Mark's 09.30 mass Friday St. Mark's 12.15 mass, with Eucharistic Adoration from 11.40.

### The Sick & Housebound

Please let Fr Luke know of anyone who is ill at home, housebound or in hospital, so that they may receive appropriate pastoral care, he can be contacted on 01473 684963. If you or a family member is in hospital you can also contact the Catholic Lay Chaplain to Ipswich hospital: [hospitalchaplain@stmarksparish.org.uk](mailto:hospitalchaplain@stmarksparish.org.uk)

## Stour Valley U3A

We have over 40 interest groups including walking (from strollers to 5+ milers), theatre trips, garden visits, art appreciation, curry club, international dining, science group, languages, keep fit, pickleball, overseas travel ..... there's something for everyone. If we don't have a group you are interested in, you are welcome to start one up. Membership costs only £15 a year.

Monthly coffee mornings are held on the first Friday of the month 10am – 12pm at the Lambe School, Gaston Street, East Bergholt. Come along, meet some members, hear more about us and decide whether you'd like to join.

Monthly lectures are held on the second Wednesday at 2.15pm in the Constable Hall, Gandish Road, East Bergholt, CO7 6TP. Guests are welcome for a charge of £4.

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



## BERGHOLT BRIDGE CLUB

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

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

We meet at  
THE LAMBE SCHOOL  
Gaston Street  
EAST BERGHOLT.

Monday evening at 7pm.

Want to know more?  
Call Jayne : 07887767478.



## THE SHELLEY CENTRE FOR THERAPEUTIC RIDING

(Riding for the Disabled)

New Year, New Start? We need you!

The Shelley Centre is a purpose-built centre offering riding therapy to children and adults living with a wide range of disabilities.

We are a charity that relies entirely on volunteers, so if you have a spare hour or two during the week, we would love to meet you. Riding lessons take place during term time, five days a week.

You don't need experience with horses or the disabled to join us. The volunteers all bring different skills – the common factor is empathy, a commitment to give a little bit of time and a desire to help others.

There are a variety of roles available: helping with the horses, supporting the riders, undertaking repairs/maintenance or assisting with paperwork and correspondence.

We are a friendly group, so if you fancy learning more about this opportunity, give the Centre a call and arrange a visit to see us and our work. The Shelley Centre changes lives – of both the riders and the volunteers - introduces new friends and for many gives life a new purpose. Maybe it could do the same for you?

T: 01473 824172 E: [shelleyrda@gmail.com](mailto:shelleyrda@gmail.com)  
[www.shelleyrda.com](http://www.shelleyrda.com)

# Bin collections

February 2026						
Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	

 Refuse Week

 Recycling week

From Monday 5 January 2026, garden waste collections will resume from the Xmas break, returning to normal schedule.

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

*Do you want a recommendation?*



**The Layham Queen** take out service on Fridays & Sunday Roasts - Steve and Tannith are very community minded and give a very good service  
**Simply Thai** Manningtree - It was simply delicious! Freshly cooked, and arrived within the quoted time frame. 01206 396060. Delivers to Holton St Mary  
**Zaynab** and **Mother Indian** at Capel. Really good and highly recommend. They don't deliver, but it's made quickly.  
**Brantham Bull** 01473 328248  
**Lucca Enoteca** Manningtree 01206 390044  
**Oranges & Lemons** East Bergholt 01206 299000  
**the florist in East Bergholt** does lovely flowers:- [www.gayedrummond.com](http://www.gayedrummond.com)

**Sam Pritchard** [sam@samselectrics.co.uk](mailto:sam@samselectrics.co.uk)  
 07940031776 - Sam can certify safety for insurance and landlord work too. Anyway, he's great.  
**Chef Neil** Does the best takeaways ever. Changing menu Friday and Saturday 07584 573474  
**The Crown at Manningtree** had breakfast there, could not fault anything. They are dog friendly as well.  
**Capel Garden centre** tearoom lovely cakes. Also **Fields farm shop** edge of East Bergholt also lovely food. Both dog friendly and child friendly. Cake and **Crumbs Cake Shed**  
 35 Snowcroft, Capel St Mary. Delicious cakes, cookies, all home baked. Friday, Saturday and Sunday 10am to 7pm

# Local Services

## MOBILE LIBRARY

### Stratford St Mary - Route 11

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

February 11, March 11, April 8, May 6, June 3, July 1

Tally Ho! Corner - 10.15 am - 10.30 am  
 Strickmere (School Lane end) - 10.35 am - 10.50 am

### Route 14

The bus stops every 4 weeks on Tuesdays

February 17, March 17, April 14, May 12, June 9, July 7

### Holton St Mary

Church Square - 9.30-9.45 a.m.

### Raydon

King George's Field car park - 9.50-10.30 a.m.

### Lower Raydon

Sulleys Hill - 11.30 - 11.45 a.m.

### Higham

The Green - 11.55 a.m. to 12.10 p.m.

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

## The Constable Country Medical Practice

Heath Road, East Bergholt, Colchester CO7 6RT

### Surgery opening hours

8.00 a.m. – 6.30 p.m. Monday to Friday  
 Telephone 01206 298272

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

### Surgery opening hours

8.00am – 6.30pm Monday to Friday

Dispensary 8.30 a.m. – 6.15 p.m.  
 (closed between 1-2pm)  
 Telephone 01473 310203  
 Fax 01473 311722

## Crime prevention

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

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

## Your District and County Councillors

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

**County Councillor: Georgia Hall**  
 Email: [georgia.hall@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:georgia.hall@suffolk.gov.uk)  
 Phone: 07955 434445

Both have correspondence addresses at Endeavour House, 8 Russell Road Ipswich IP1 2BX.

# Local Directory

THE GATTINETTS

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Email - [k.chisnall@kchisnall.com](mailto:k.chisnall@kchisnall.com)

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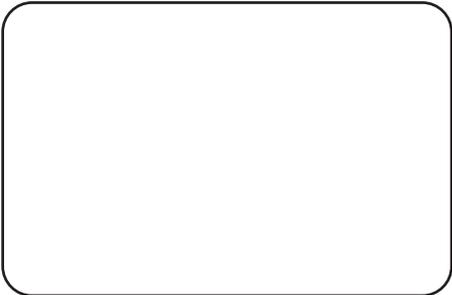
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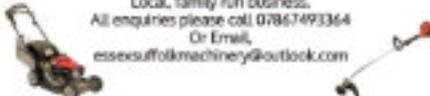
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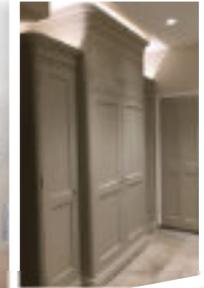
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## BENEFICE CONTACTS, SERVICES AND EVENTS

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

**Lay Elder:** Sandy Ranson 01206 322156 - Email: [sandyranson29@gmail.com](mailto:sandyranson29@gmail.com)

Your Parish Churches are here for you. If you have recently moved into one of the villages, do get in touch. We would love to meet you, and it doesn't matter whether you are a regular or occasional churchgoer or don't really attend church. If you live in the benefice or have links to one of the villages, we are here to help you with Weddings, Baptisms or Funerals. Please get in touch with Rev'd Manette or one of church wardens.

We have an active prayer ministry in our benefice. If you would like us to pray for you or for someone you know, or if you would like to add someone to our prayer list (do check with them first), please let Rev'd Manette know.

For Home Communion, please get in touch with Rev'd Manette who will be happy to arrange this for you.



Regular updates about our parishes can be found on Facebook  
<https://www.facebook.com/4-Marys-Benefice-111433503828636>

**Benefice website:** [www.4marys.org.uk](http://www.4marys.org.uk)

### Churchwardens:

**Higham** Churchwarden Hugo Parker 01206 337234  
Assistant warden Martyn Carr

**Holton** Churchwarden Richard Noel 01206 298276  
Churchwarden Paul Torrington 01473 312046

**Raydon** Churchwarden Geoff Horrex 07810 086143  
Assistant warden Simon Tennent 01473 310320

**Stratford** Churchwarden Sandy Ranson 01206 322156  
Assistant warden Christine Cousins 01206 322530

### Benefice Safeguarding Officer:

Martin O'Brien Tel. 07964 543718 - Email: [martinobrien@orwellpark.org](mailto:martinobrien@orwellpark.org)

## Church Services for February

**Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> February:** 10am Stratford SM Parish Communion  
*Candlemas*

**Sunday, 8<sup>h</sup> February:** 10am Higham Parish Communion  
*2<sup>nd</sup> S before Lent*

**Sunday, 15<sup>th</sup> February:** 10am Holton Parish Communion  
*Sunday next before Lent*  
9.30am Stratford St Mary Café Church  
in the Parish Room

**Wednesday, 18<sup>th</sup> February:** 10am Higham  
*Ash Wednesday* Ash Wednesday Service  
A service with Communion and imposition of ashes  
for the beginning of Lent

**Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> February:** 10am Raydon Parish Communion  
*1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Lent*

## Looking ahead to March

**Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> March:** 10am Stratford Morning Worship  
*2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Lent*

**Sunday, 8<sup>th</sup> March:** 10am Higham Parish Communion  
*3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Lent*

*All our services are followed by coffee & cake / biscuits.  
Do stay for fellowship and a chat. It's a good way to  
meet people if you are new to one of the villages.*

*If you have any questions, please get in touch  
with Rev'd Manette or one of the churchwardens –  
contact details elsewhere in the Quartet.*

## Café Church every 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday

Café Church will be meeting in the Parish Room on Sunday,  
**15<sup>th</sup> February 2026, beginning with breakfast at 9.30am.**

Join us for an informal breakfast of pastries, cafetière coffee / tea and  
orange juice, and sometimes we have cake as well!

Café Church is an informal friendly gathering for all generations. If you  
are on your own, come and enjoy breakfast in a family setting.  
We look forward to seeing you!



## **Benefice Bible Study / House Group**

The next House Group session will be on  
**Thursday, 26<sup>th</sup> February at 2.30pm.**

These are the dates for subsequent meetings for your diaries:  
**26<sup>th</sup> March & 23<sup>rd</sup> April**

Please get in touch with Judith, Sandy, Christine  
if you would like to know more.

## **Sunday Services in the Benefice**

Our regular Sunday service pattern usually looks as follows:

1<sup>st</sup> Sunday: Stratford - 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday: Higham  
3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday: Holton - 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday: Raydon

**5<sup>th</sup> Sunday services move around the benefice, dates for 2026  
are as follows:**

29<sup>th</sup> March Palm Sunday with Communion in Stratford St Mary  
31<sup>st</sup> May Trinity Sunday in Raydon  
30<sup>th</sup> August 13<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Trinity in Higham  
29<sup>th</sup> November Advent Sunday in Holton St Mary

## **Prayer pointers for the Benefice**

Please pray for all the couples who are preparing to get married in our churches this year.

We pray for all those who are ill, unwell or struggling, among them Nicky Bull, Amanda Berry, Peter Snelling and Vivienne Wilkinson, and any others known to us who need God's healing and wholeness.

We remember all those who have died. May they rest in peace and rise in glory. And we pray for all who mourn, may they be held in God's love and comforted in their grief.

### **Prayer for Christian Unity**

Loving God,  
You have called us to unity.  
May our response to your call  
lead us to actively seek justice and reconciliation  
and share Your light with the world. Amen.

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### **A few housekeeping rules**

The four beautiful churches in our benefice are open for visiting every day during daylight hours.

If you are visiting our churches and churchyards, please treat these ancient places with respect. Children and dogs are very welcome, but children are the responsibility of their accompanying adults.

Grave monuments belong to the families whose loved ones are buried there, don't allow your children to walk on graves or climb on gravestones. This is dangerous and disrespectful and hurtful for the families involved.

And last but not least, we welcome dogs in our churches and some churchyards provide water bowls, too. But please clean up after your dogs and place any waste in the bins.

Our volunteers work very hard looking after our churches and churchyards, please help us to keep them tidy and in good condition.  
Thank you!.