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January 2026
Issue 449

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



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. 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

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!**

January

- 2 SSM Youth Clubs
Holton Social Club
- 3 Holton Green Gym
- 6 Chapel Coffee morning - SSM
Community Garden Holton
- 7 SSM Mums and Tots
Stitch Sewcial SSM
Raydon Social Club
- 9 SSM Youth Clubs
Holton Social Club
FFOTMLC - Holton
- 11 HSM Social Club informal gathering
- 13 Coffee morning - SSM
Community Garden Holton
- 14 SSM Mums and Tots
Stitch Sewcial SSM
Raydon Social Club
- 15 Slow Stitch Holton
- 16 SSM Youth Clubs
Holton Social Club
- 20 Chapel Coffee morning - SSM
Community Garden Holton
- 21 SSM Mums and Tots
Stitch Sewcial SSM
Raydon Social Club

- 23 SSM Youth Clubs
Holton Social Club
- 27 Chapel Coffee morning - SSM
Community Garden Holton
- 28 SSM Mums and Tots
Stitch Sewcial SSM
Raydon Social Club
- 30 SSM Youth Clubs
Holton Social Club

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
- 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

Editors Corner

Apologies for errors on the Bin schedule again last month. In an attempt to get it right consistently, we are now going to reproduce the online grid. Bin collections are going to change significantly for everybody in June, so we are keen to keep you abreast of what's going on and give you a reliable source of information.

January is usually a quiet month for us. With the deadline just before Christmas and most events happening in December, we are able to devote a bit more space to other articles. You can see in the page this month we have a great account of what it's like to be a working woman in a traditionally male dominated job - tree surgery. See page 20 for Jess' story.

There is a large plea from the King George's Field, Raydon, Trustees on page 13. There's so much going on there and the trustees need to spread the workload to ensure it all gets done - maybe you can help?

Our annual meeting is also on the horizon. We meet to look at finances and if we need to do anything differently in the coming year. Do let us know if you have any ideas of how the Quartet can be more useful in the future, we need to keep evolving to stay relevant. We look forward to your email!

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.



Copy deadline for next edition:
19th January 2026

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Rev'd Manette Writes

Dear friends,

Because of the early deadline of the Quartet, I am writing this during the week before Christmas and I am surrounded by lists, piles of service sheets and stacks of cards yet to be written (or not, if time runs out!), and a long list of printing jobs to be completed by the end of the week. The parish printer is definitely working overtime and it keeps beeping at me and telling me 'your printer has run out of paper!'

It somehow strikes a chord as many of us feel that we are running out of time and energy as we are trying to get everything done before Christmas.

By the time you read this, we will have had carol services in all our churches as well as Holy Communion on Christmas Eve and two family communion services on Christmas Day. During these busy times I am always hugely grateful for the help and support of other clergy and very able lay leaders who enable us to have services in all our churches on the days that work best for each of the villages.

Looking ahead to January, we will be holding Plough Sunday for the third year running. I still get responses like "We've never done this" or "We don't need this", but the parishes which have celebrated Plough Sunday have enjoyed it and asked to host it again. Perhaps it's not a bad thing to try something new for the churches who haven't done so yet.

This year's Plough Sunday will be in Holton on the 11th January, beginning at 10am. We have again been promised a tractor to bless which is always a lovely sight outside our rural village churches. We look forward

to showing our support for our farming communities and to welcoming the Lay Agricultural Chaplain Graham Miles who will be sharing this service with me. Graham supports our farmers 24/7 and you can find his details on the contacts page in the Quartet.

Café Church will be restarting on the third Sunday, 18th January at 9.30am in the Parish Room in Stratford St Mary. If you like more informal worship, starting with a shared breakfast for all ages, do come along and see what it's like. We are a mixed group of all ages and have welcomed all ages from babes in arms to some of our regulars who are in their 80s or 90s. It's a true family-like setting and young families as well as those who live on their own appreciate the fellowship.

I hope and pray that 2026 may bring you happiness and good health, and that there may be an end to wars and violence in the world.

Looking forward to seeing you over Christmas and in the New Year.

With all good wishes,

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 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

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

Have you ever thought about becoming a Community First Responder?

Why not find out what it is about? Look at the CFR link on the East of England Ambulance Services website. You can even apply on line! If you watch the training video - do not be alarmed - you are never expected to do mouth to mouth.

For further information, please contact your local co-ordinator.

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

General Enquiries: Margaret Chapman
(01473 311436 or stratfordstmarychapel@gmail.com)

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

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 cousincc303@gmail.com
COMING SOON FRIDAY 6TH FEBRUARY 7.00PM	A VILLAGE LIFE EVENT £10 WINE & CHEESE SOCIAL with music from FIDDLER'S ELBOW Tickets available from Julie Alexander 07989639563 or julie@j-associates.co.uk

TO HIRE contact Paul Ranson
email: ssmparishroom.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

WHAT'S ON INSTITUTE HALL

WHEN	ALL WELCOME
every MONDAY 2.00pm	SILVER SWANS ADULT BALLET £9.00 Itchasofdance23@gmail.com
*TUESDAY 6.00pm	DANCE MOVEMENT £8.00 barefootbascalmovement@gmail.com
*TUESDAY 8.00pm	BODY BALANCE £10.00 Becky@bcalm.co.uk
every WEDNESDAY 10.30 am	STITCH SEWCIAL MINDFUL CRAFTING £2.00 stitchsewcial@gmail.com
*THURSDAY 7.15PM	HYGGE COMMUNITY CHOIR £8.00 jaguar.choir@btinternet.com
THURSDAY 8th 9.30am	THE MAZE COFFEE MORNING FREE amanda.towne@themazegroup.co.uk
*FRIDAY 3.45 - 4.45pm	FOOTBALL FUN £7.00 info@footballfunday.co.uk 07585 959529
FRIDAY 9th 7.00pm	BREATHING WORKSHOP £25 laura@baselinebreathing.com 07710467254
SATURDAY 10th 7.30pm	50S/60S DANCE £7 esthereswing@gmail.com
FROM 21st JANUARY	DANCE TO 50S/60S MUSIC £7.00 esthereswing@gmail.com every WEDNESDAY 7.30pm
FRIDAY 23rd 7.00pm	SIP N PAINT £30 info@sunflowerartstry.co.uk
FRIDAY 30th 7.00pm	WINE & CANAPÉS PAIRING WORKSHOP £35 msg Gareth Francis 07970 667960
SATURDAY 31st 10.00am	FAMILY COOKING WORKSHOPS £15 for family of 4 jess@labontecatering.com

Classes marked * operate term time only
TO HIRE email: sminstute.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 or contact Paul Ranson on 01206 322156 or 07870 388184



Stratford St Mary Parish Council website has now been updated. Please pop over to www.stratfordstmary.onesuffolk.net and let us know what you think. If you would like your event advertised on the website as well as in the Quartet, whatever it may be, please let the parish clerk know on parishcouncil@stratfordstmary.org.uk

Need to email
Stratford St Mary Parish Council?

You will need to use
parishcouncil@stratfordstmary.org.uk

Are you thinking of Higher Education,
worried that you cannot afford it?

**WE'RE OFFERING A GRANT
TO HELP WITH GEAR!**

We are the Stratford St Mary Community Trust, set up nearly
100 years ago to help residents, young & old, further their
education, be it college, university or apprenticeship.

We have single grants available for buying gear like laptops,
tablets or other specific equipment to help you on your way.



**SEND US BRIEF DETAILS
OF YOUR PLANS AND
WHAT YOU NEED, WE
WILL SEE WHAT WE
CAN DO TO HELP!**

email
rhbarrell@gmail.com

The Christmas and New Year period often brings families together, and it's during these gatherings that relatives may notice an older loved one could benefit from care support in the coming year.

As a home care provider with over 45 years of experience, our key advice is this: whether you're considering a care home, hourly care support, or live-in care, research your options before care becomes urgently needed. Having information empowers families to make informed choices that truly suit their loved one's needs, rather than accepting whatever is available during a crisis.

What to Look for When Exploring Care Options

Here are some helpful steps to guide your research:

Request brochures from providers you're interested in

Speak with your GP's local nursing team for recommendations on trusted local providers

Arrange visits to providers' homes or offices to get a feel for their service

Ask important questions about staffing levels, carer training, and continuity of care (especially for home care arrangements)

Understand the costs involved and what carers are paid

Find out how the provider keeps families informed and involved in care decisions

These considerations will give you a broader perspective and help you make the right choice for your family.

About Able Community Care - Able Community Care is a specialist live-in care provider established in 1980, offering support throughout the UK and offshore islands. For our information pack, please call 01603 764567 or visit our website at www.ablecommunitycare.com.

In Higham



Karl Chisnal - mower repairs.
07557771721

Brett Valley Installations 07896 054439



An average empty Council wheelie bin weighs 20–33 lbs (9–15 kg). For many older or disabled people, once the bin is filled, moving it to the collection point, whether at the end of a path or to the pavement, can be difficult.

Most councils offer an assisted collection service for those unable to move their bins to the collection place. To request this for yourself or someone else, contact your local council, either by website or by phone and explain why the help is needed.

Most councils offer the service for all standard household waste streams, including general waste (rubbish) and various recycling bins/containers.

Raydon

In Raydon



Blackwell Barn Holiday Let - 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 GEORGES FIELD RAYDON

Raydon Parish Council & King Georges 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 (07930622966 or rexcoleman@outlook.com) for further details.

Raydon and District Garden Club

Firstly may I on behalf of your committee members duly elected once again at last November's AGM a very Happy, and Peaceful New Year. So we are in the winter period of our calendar year and, like myself, work outside slows down to almost nothing, but, of course, it's time to look ahead and order seeds, seed potatoes and spend time on planning your garden amongst other things. By the time you read these notes, the early shoots of snowdrops will be showing and within 2 or 3 weeks they will be flowering once again. Always a sign that Spring will be fast approaching. The weather doesn't always play ball and, in the past, the snowdrops have been covered in snow but, once the winter sun comes out, they soon become noticeable and what a joy to behold. Of course late January early February the winter gardens of several large estates, country house and parklands plus the National Trust gardens open up for viewing and if you're lucky with the weather they are well worth a visit to view on mass all snowdrops, very early daffodils and crocus etc coming out in full bloom.

If, like me, you grow rhubarb then it should now be cleaned around the crown area, given a good dollop of manure around but not covering crown, then a good layer of straw or equivalent to protect the new shoots from frost. As they grow through add more straw etc until late spring. Another job is to purchase your seed potatoes, lay them out in chicken egg trays, keep cool and dark in frost free shed or garage. (Most houses are too warm with central heating these days) This should allow for the new shoots to grow slowly but should be ready by planting time which is of course variable depending on soil types.

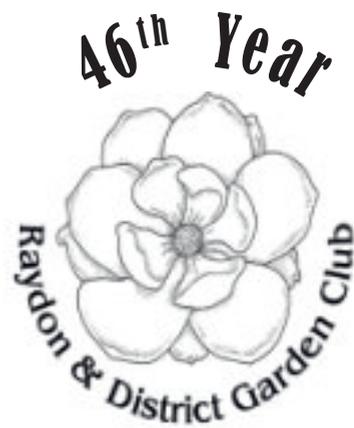
If you haven't already delt with it now is the time to get lawnmower out, cleaned especially under the cutting deck, get it serviced including a good blade sharpen so you are all ready to start the first lawn cut which seems to get earlier every year.

Just think it's only 8 weeks away to our first meeting in 2026 as we start our 46th year. The daylight will be increasing noticeably by then. The advance date for your diaries is Thursday 26th February, followed by Thursday 26th March.

Sincerely hope you have all had a decent rest through winter and will by the meeting be full of anticipation and enthusiasm for the start of what will be another challenging garden year as they all are.

Your committee looks forward to your continued support with many more enjoyable times to follow as gardeners together.

Geoff Horrex. 07810086143



Useful advice and food for thought, from "Evergreen" magazine from a reader in Zimbabwe found in Church Newsletter.

Gardening Guide. !!!

First plant five rows of Peas: Prayer, Perseverance, Politeness, Promptness, Purity.

Next plant three rows of Squash, Squash gossip, Squash criticism, Squash indifference.

Next plant five rows of lettuce, Let us be faithful to duty, Let us be unselfish, Let us be truthful, Let us follow Christ, Let us love one another.

Raydon Sports ad Social Club

WELCOME TO 2026

As we begin the New Year it is always a good time for reflection of the year gone by, looking at what we enjoyed and not so. For ourselves, as a club, we have organised some very successful events. Quiz nights for our members, and for the St Marys Church Fabric Trust, supported our national teams' triumphs on the big screen, and held our first wine tasting evening. Our Bar crew were on hand to support the KGF Trustees who organised the Vintage car rally and bonfire night. Both very successful events. We also supported the Paint and Plonk night supplying the artists with a drink or two to get their creative influences on to the canvas.

Now being a member of the RSSC Committee I can now understand first hand what is involved in organising these events. We are always endeavouring to plan events for the coming months. – one month leads on to the next extremely quickly! We have quiet months where people pop down and just catch up and have a chat about various things that matter to them. To just have a little down

time and unwind. However, it is during these quieter months the RSSC continue to make plans for future events in 2026.

Which leads me nicely to Sunday 25th January. We have been able to secure our first "LIVE SINGER" spot at the Pavilion - Lee who has previously sang at Holton St Mary Social Club.

This will be held during our normal opening hours of 12:30 to 15:00 hours, and the doors of the Pavilion will be open to everyone, so please pop in to support this new event for RSSC. Don't forget Sunday roasties will be on the menu as well.

Planning is still underway for February and March – so please watch this space or if you have an idea for an event then just get in touch



Another happy festive start to the Christmas Season by the Phoenix Brass. Lovely music, great hospitality in the Church and just the way to get us in the mood!

Thanks everyone who contributed.



Lower Raydon Leisure Area

Plans are coming to fruition at the newly established rest and picnic area on Sulley's Hill. So far we have cleared the area opposite the view across the valley and placed two benches and a picnic table for all to enjoy. Rough vegetation has been reduced to make way for the planting of spring and summer bulbs and new trees. We can look forward to a colourful display through the year and for this to develop over the coming years.

Keith



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

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, or contact the Parish Clerk.

Holton St Mary



In Holton

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



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



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.

This month it is on Friday 9th to save being too close to New Year

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!

Congratulations to Bill and Anne Priestley who have won a local Community Champions award for the work they have done setting up the Well Piece Community Garden!

Bill and Anne say - Thank you to all our lovely volunteers and supporters. We've been overwhelmed by the enthusiasm and commitment shown by so many. The Garden is going nicely!



Holton St Mary Millennium Green Trust

Winners of the Century Club Draw are:

October

1st £35 Janet Cracknell No. 73, 2nd £20 Jane Ensten No. 123, 3rd £10 Jacqui Lester No. 50

November

1st £35 Steve Sleigh No. 17, 2nd £20 Oliver Greene No. 43, 3rd £10 Roger Shipley No. 105

December

1st £35 Vaughan Vanniekerk No. 15, 2nd £20 Frank Swallow No. 104, 3rd £10 Jacqui Lester No. 50

Many thanks for all your support this year, this is our only fundraising for the upkeep of the Green. Subscriptions for 2026 are now due and a Trustee will be in contact shortly. Subs are £15 for the whole year, preferably payable by BACS. We welcome new members so if you haven't taken part before look out for more information.

Marjorie Haste, Secretary



Green Gym

Our next session is on January 3rd 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. Thank you.



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.




Happy New Year **EVENTS 2026**
HOLTON ST MARY SOCIAL CLUB

11 JANUARY - join us from 12.30 pm for an informal post-christmas gathering - first drink is free and a few nibbles to enjoy

27 FEBRUARY - Chinese New Year "Year of the Horse"
Tickets £25 pp available from 5th Jan.
Contact: Janice Cheng - 07906 052380 or James Lancaster 07391 421201

Celebrations include traditional Lion Dance followed by a Chinese meal. This is a collaborative event between the Social Club and Village Hall Management Committee to raise money for the refurbishment fund.

The Holton St. Mary Club bar is open EVERY Friday from 5.30 pm - an opportunity to catch up with village life, low-priced drinks, pool table and darts.



Well, we had thought, as there isn't much going on in the gardening calendar in January, the Well Piece might be closed for the winter. However, there has been such a strong call to keep the cabin open on a Tuesday, that's exactly what we will do.

There might not be much to do in the garden, but why waste a good meeting space and free coffee?

Everyone is welcome to come and join us - it's a good excuse to get out when there's not much happening elsewhere. The cabin is warm and cosy, thanks to the church who have let us borrow their electricity supply!

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



(Scan with the camera in Whatsapp)



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.

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

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 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.

A Day in the Life of a Female Arborist

The day starts early, often before the sun has even tipped above the horizon.

Tree work is not a nine-to-five desk job. It's physical, unpredictable, and enriching.

It is also a male-dominated industry, which gives young female arborists, such as Jess Riches, a chance to carve themselves a trailblazing role, breaking down stereotypes and paving the way for others.

From Farm Work to Tree Work

Jess's path to arboriculture wasn't a straight line. She's worked on banana farms, driven buses, and spent years in the tough FIFO construction industry in Australia. "I've always preferred manual labour roles," she explains. "When I came back from Australia, I knew I wanted to continue doing a manual job." When she returned to the UK, she remembered her brother's positive experience with Blake Tree Care. "It seemed perfect. I could learn new skills while using my previous experience in operating machinery."

No Two Days the Same

Ask her what a typical day looks like, and she laughs... because there isn't one.

If she's with the 'willows' team, she might spend the day operating machines, using chainsaws, and handling large-scale clean-up. On domestic jobs, she could be hedge cutting in the morning, chipping in the afternoon, and chainsawing in between. Her favourite part? "Definitely domestic work. It's like being a kid again climbing trees, but this time you don't get in trouble!"

The Best & The Toughest Parts

The joy of the job lies in the variety. Every tree is different, and every site is unique. Climbing and chainsawing bring an adrenaline rush and a childlike sense of freedom. And working outdoors in the Essex and Suffolk countryside is a privilege in itself. But tree work isn't always sunshine and fresh air. "The toughest part can be working in all weathers," she admits. "There have been days in torrential rain that are mentally challenging. But it's never been too bad, you just push through."

Teamwork and Support

Tree surgery is rarely a solo job. The work is demanding, and safety relies on teamwork. For her, that's one of the highlights: "The team all get on well and support me. As I'm new to the industry, they've been keen to teach me anything I don't know." Being the only woman in the crew could feel

daunting, but she's never let it hold her back. "From day one, I've never said no to anything. I wanted to do everything the men can do – and I believe I have."

Breaking Misconceptions

People are often surprised to see a woman in tree surgery. It's still rare in the UK, but her experience has been overwhelmingly positive.

Her advice to other women? Simple: "Absolutely try it. It's an amazing industry with so many skills to learn. Don't be put off by it being male-dominated. If you put the work in, you'll be just as valued as anyone else."

And as for the public's view of arborists: "One misconception is that we just cut down trees and ruin the environment. That couldn't be further from the truth. Blake Tree Care plants thousands of trees to replace those that have to be removed. Arborists love trees more than most."

What We Can All Learn from Jess

Jess's story proves that arboriculture is about passion, grit, and teamwork. Not gender.

At Blake Tree Care, we're proud to have a team that supports one another and values growth. If Jess's journey has inspired you, why not learn more about what we do, or even explore a career in arboriculture with us?

If you've ever thought about a career in tree care, follow Jess's lead. The industry needs more people who love trees and want to protect them for the future.



Manningtree & District Photographic Society

Last month club members enjoyed a field trip to London for some evening photography and our Christmas Dinner.

Here is our January programme;
8th January – Print Competition – "The Built environment"
18th January – Field Trip to Colchester Zoo
22nd January – Talk by Scott Hurd on Living and working as a photographer in Namibia (Via videocall)
29th January – PDI Competition – Open Mono

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 Ian Parker was a joint winning image from our recent Open Mono Print 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

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



A note for Everyone

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

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

St. Mark's Roman Catholic Parish

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

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

Tel: 01473 84963 revgoymour@gmail.com

Father Luke's Sunday sermons are available at anchor.fm/fr-luke-goymour

Should Christians make New Year resolutions?

The Bible is silent on New Year resolutions, but the beginning of a new year is surely a good time to think about areas of our lives where we'd like to make changes and deepen our faith? As Christians we could start by asking ourselves how much does our faith mean to us? How much time do we spend on improving our relationship with God? How often do we pray and/or read the Bible? There are so many resources online these days to help us. For example, the "Bible in a Year" podcast with Father Mike Schmitz is available free on various platforms, including YouTube and it's a great way to improve our understanding of Bible passages. Central to our faith is love of God and neighbour – perhaps we should start by just working on that? In John 13 vs 34-35 Jesus says "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

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 new mass times at Holy Family, Brantham 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

Connecting Communities

Connecting Communities is a transport service provided by Suffolk County Council designed to help people travel around the county of Suffolk who might not have access to a regular bus service.

Do you find it difficult to get to college, to the shops, medical appointments, work or to visit your friends and family in the county?

Suffolk County Council is working in partnership with Suffolk Community Transport Operators to bring you Connecting Communities.

When you need to make a journey and there's no public transport available to you locally, we'll collect you and connect you to an appropriate bus route or train link for onward travel so you can reach your destination quickly and easily.

For journeys where connecting to other services is inappropriate, end to end journeys may be possible.

The poster for 'Connecting Communities rural transport' features a central image of a white van with a 'Book Now' button. Above the van is a network diagram with icons for 'Work', 'Meeting friends and family', 'Shopping', 'Library', 'School or college', 'Endeavour Card accepted', 'Medical appointments', and 'Transport Connections'. The Suffolk County Council logo is in the top right. Below the van are four key features: 'Affordable' (Fares are based on what a normal bus journey would cost), 'Flexible' (Journeys can be booked online or by phone the day before travel), 'Convenient' (Pick-up and drop-off from your door or a convenient location), and 'Modern' (Clean, comfortable and well maintained vehicles). The website www.suffolkboard.com/CC is listed at the bottom.

So, how do you use it?

Call your local area operator up to a week before you'd like to travel – they'll be able to answer any questions you might have.

Book your journey (visit the 'my area' page to request a journey via our online form)

Travel to your destination

How much will it cost?

Connecting Communities fares are based on average bus fare costs for journeys of the same or equivalent distance.

Glass recycling

Please remember that glass should not be put into household blue or black bins, but should be recycled.

There are glass recycling bins in Hadleigh (Magdalen Road car park and Crockett Road recycling centre), and there is also one at the Playing Field in Upper Layham (entrance on Brett Green).



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

www.shelleyrda.com

Bin collections

January 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	29	30	31	

Refuse Week

Recycling week

From Monday 12 January 2026, refuse and recycling collections will return to the normal schedule.

	Usual collection date	Amended collection date	Change
Recycling	Monday 22 December 2025	No Change	None
	Tuesday 23 December 2025	No Change	None
	Wednesday 24 December 2025	No Change	None
	Thursday 25 December 2025	Saturday 27 December 2025	2 days later
Refuse	Friday 26 December 2025	Monday 29 December 2025	3 days later
	Monday 29 December 2025	Tuesday 30 December 2025	1 day later
	Tuesday 30 December 2025	Wednesday 31 December 2025	1 day later
	Wednesday 31 December 2025	Friday 2 January 2026	2 days later
Recycling	Thursday 1 January 2026	Saturday 3 January 2026	2 days later
	Friday 2 January 2026	Monday 5 January 2026	3 days later
	Monday 5 January 2026	Tuesday 6 January 2026	1 day later
	Tuesday 6 January 2026	Wednesday 7 January 2026	1 day later
	Wednesday 7 January 2026	Thursday 8 January 2026	1 day later
	Thursday 8 January 2026	Friday 9 January 2026	1 day later
	Friday 9 January 2026	Saturday 10 January 2026	1 day later

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

Sam Pritchard 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

December 17, January 14, February 11, March 11

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

December 23, January 20, February 17, March 17

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

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

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

PC 1347 Gilkes Pcco 3041 Cooper
babergeast@suffolk.pnn.police.uk
 Telephone...101

Your District and County Councillors

District Councillor: John Ward
 Leader, Babergh District Council
 Phone: 07802 414981
 Email: john.ward@babergh.gov.uk

County Councillor: Georgia Hall
 Email: georgia.hall@suffolk.gov.uk
 Phone: 07955 434445

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

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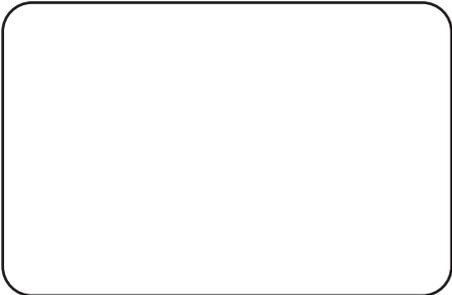
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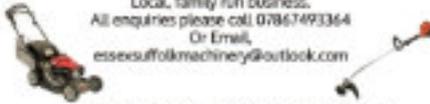
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BENEFICE CONTACTS, SERVICES AND EVENTS

Rector: Rev'd Manette Crossman: Tel. 07947 737789
 Email: revmccrossman@gmail.com

Lay Elder: Sandy Ranson 01206 322156 - Email: 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

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

Lay Agricultural Chaplain for the diocese: Graham Miles
 Tel. 07413 683368 or Email graham.miles@cofesuffolk.org

Church Services for January

Sunday, 4th January: 10am Stratford Morning Praise
Epiphany

Sunday, 11th January: 10am Holton Plough Sunday

Join us for the traditional festival of Plough Sunday with blessing of a tractor. Please note this month we'll be in Holton for the second Sunday and in Higham next week!

Sunday, 18th January: 10am Higham Parish Communion

9.30am Stratford Café Church in the Parish Room

Sunday, 25th January: 10am Raydon Parish Communion

Looking ahead to February

Sunday 1st February: 10am Stratford SM Parish Communion
Candlemas

*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 3rd Sunday

Café Church will be meeting in the Parish Room on Sunday, **18th January 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 House Group had a break in December and our first meeting in 2026 will be on **Thursday, 22nd January at 2.30pm.**

These are the dates for subsequent meetings for your diaries:
26th February, 26th March & 23rd 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:

1st Sunday: Stratford - 2nd Sunday: Higham
3rd Sunday: Holton - 4th Sunday: Raydon

**5th Sunday services move around the benefice, dates for 2026
are as follows, venues tbc:**

29th March Palm Sunday
31st May Trinity Sunday
30th August 13th Sunday after Trinity
29th November Advent Sunday

Prayer pointers for the Benefice

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 the New Year

When the song of the angels is stilled,
when the star in the sky is gone,
when the kings and princes are home,
when the shepherds are back with their flocks,
the work of Christmas begins:
to find the lost,
to heal the broken,
to feed the hungry,
to release the prisoner,
to rebuild the nations,
to bring peace among the people,
to make music in the heart.

By Howard Thurman

From 'The Mood of Christmas and Other Celebrations'

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, 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!.