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October 2026
Issue 458

Quartet

The Parish Magazine

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

SALE OF BOOKS

BRIC A BRAC

and other interesting items

SAT OCT 3RD

10am-12noon

Inside Raydon Church

In aid of St Mary's Church fabric fund.

FREE
Upright piano, free to a good home. It has been well maintained and regularly tuned and played but is now surplus to requirements.
Contact Sandy on 07706602749 or Christine on 07791648806

Notice of consultation by Babergh District Council on the 'Quartet Villages Neighbourhood Plan' area designation proposal

On behalf of our communities, the Quartet Villages have decided to prepare a Neighbourhood Development Plan (or Neighbourhood Plan for short). It is intended that this plan will set out a shared vision for our parishes, including guidance on where new homes may be built, and offer protection for our important local green spaces, etc.

To start the process, we have submitted an application to Babergh District Council. This asks that the combined parishes be designated as our 'plan area'. Before the District Council can make a decision on this, they must first consult on the proposal. This exercise will run from Tuesday 1st September until Friday 16th October. At this stage, the Council are only interested in receiving comments on whether our proposed plan area is geographically appropriate or not. They will not be inviting comments on any other planning related matters. More information, including a copy of our application, and a map of the proposed plan area will be published on a webpage created by Babergh District Council. The page also explains how and where to submit comments.
Go to ... <https://www.babergh.gov.uk/w/quartet-villages-neighbourhood-plan>



We will also be putting up copies of their Consultation Notice in appropriate places around our four villages.

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!**
October

- 2 SSM Youth Clubs
Holton Social Club
FFOTHMC - Holton
- 3 Green Gym - Holton
Book Sale, Raydon
HSM quiz Night
- 4 SSM Harvest Lunch
- 6 Chapel Coffee morning - SSM
Community Garden Holton
Raydon Parish Council Meeting
- 7 SSM Mums and Tots
Stitch Sewcial SSM
Raydon Social Club
- 9 SSM Youth Clubs
Holton Social Club
FFOTMLC - Holton
- 10 Higham Church Clean Up
HSM Pop Up Shop
- 11 Higham Harvest Lunch
- 12 SSM Parish Council Meeting, Parish Room
- 13 Chapel 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
 - 24 Raydon - Games nite
 - 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
- ## November
- 3 Raydon Parish Council Meeting
Chapel Coffee morning - SSM
Community Garden Holton
 - 4 SSM Mums and Tots
Stitch Sewcial SSM
Raydon Social Club
 - 6 SSM Youth Clubs
Holton Bonfire Night
FFOTMLC - Holton
 - 9 SSM Parish Council Meeting, Village Institute
 - 10 Chapel Coffee morning - SSM
Community Garden Holton

Editors Corner

It's quite an action packed (relatively speaking) edition for you this month!

As well as the new Quartet NDP page, found on page 6, we have a new point of interest for you all on pages 16 and 17. It's our first in a series from The Raydon Traveller. I won't say any more - flick through the pages and have a read for yourself.

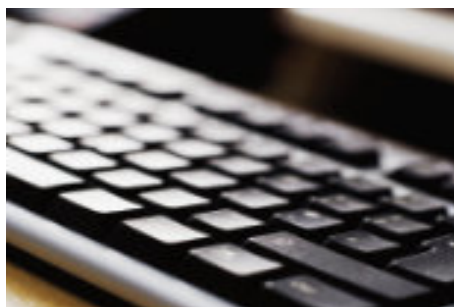
It's always lovely when folk chip in and help to make the magazine something special for our villages, so thank you to all our new and regular contributors that email us faithfully every month to help keep the magazine full of useful and interesting things to read.

So whether you're off to the village Harvest Supper or wondering where your nearest firework display is, we've got a good selection for you this October. We always try and put in as many events as we're notified about, so please do email us to let us know if you are organising anything, it's a good way of getting the word out there. We charge for companies and commercial events, but if you are a village 'not for profit' your article goes in for free. Just email us at the address in the next column.

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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Church Writes

Harvest: More than we see.

By the time you read this, the golden fields of summer will hopefully have given way to the rich colours of autumn, and the harvest will be well underway. We have enjoyed some wonderfully warm or very hot weather this year, but behind the sunshine and long summer evenings it has been a very different story for many of our farmers. Too little rain, intense heat, rising costs and the constant uncertainty of working at the mercy of the weather have made this a challenging season.

Farming is one of those things we can easily take for granted. We drive past the fields, watch the crops grow and then find the finished produce neatly packaged in our shops. Yet between the seed and being planted and food arriving on our tables lies an enormous amount of hard work, skill, worry and patience. Perhaps this is why programmes such as Jeremy Clarkson's 'Clarkson's Farm' have struck such a chord. Alongside the comedy, the broken machinery and Kaleb's increasingly exasperated attempts to keep Jeremy on the straight and narrow, we have been given a glimpse of just how difficult modern farming can be. What makes us laugh has also made many of us stop and think.

Harvest is a wonderful reminder of our dependence on things we cannot control. Farmers can prepare, plan and work incredibly hard, but ultimately they still have to look to the heavens and hope. Perhaps that is something worth reflecting on beyond farming where we like to think

we can organise everything, control everything and have everything instantly. Harvest gently reminds us that some things require patience, trust and faith.

So, as we give thanks for the harvest this October, let us remember not only the food on our tables, but the people who worked so hard to produce it. Let us give thanks for our local farmers, for the seasons and for all the blessings- large and small- that we so often overlook.

After all, even Jeremy Clarkson has discovered when it comes to farming, you can plan almost everything.....except the weather!

Do come and join us at one of our harvest festival services this October or join us at one of our Harvest lunches. We would love to see you.

With every blessing

Christine Cousins
Churchwarden Stratford St Mary.



Quartet Villages Neighbourhood Plan

Thank you to everyone who has shown an interest in finding out more about a Quartet Villages Neighbourhood Development Plan to include Higham, Holton St Mary, Raydon and Stratford St Mary.

While we await the feedback from the district council consultation on the designated area (have your say at: <https://www.babergh.gov.uk/w/quartet-villages-neighbourhood-plan> - deadline Oct 16), we are delighted to confirm that Babergh District Council has generously agreed to contribute £8,000 of funding to get the plan started.

New housing is required to satisfy government targets and, as the 'call for sites' data is being assessed, it is imperative that communities state what growth they need or accept - and where.

A Neighbourhood Development Plan gives us as residents the power to influence the decisions about housing in our community; plus have our say about village amenity, sustainability, biodiversity or the natural world, greenspaces, kids play areas, transport, historical assets, farmland and more...

Please send any questions, suggestions or offers of help to your village contact:

Higham - Helena Gurney highamparishmeeting@gmail.com	Raydon - Chris Chambers clerk@raydonparishcouncil.gov.uk cllr.christopherchambers@raydonparishcouncil.gov.uk
Holton St Mary - Claire Rowan clairerowan@holtonstmary-pc.gov.uk clerk@holtonstmary-pc.gov.uk	Stratford St Mary - Roger Barrell parishcouncil@stratfordstmary.org.uk

and look out for a date in November, when we can all come together to discuss the next steps!

Your village needs you!
Thank you for your support

Stratford St Mary

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

Alexander Painting and Decorating - 07729178182

Kevin. Pet and House Sitting services 07753 539393

Bright Stars Nursery - 07498 185916

Effie Burrell, Executive Coach - effie@synergea.co.uk

Nikki Davis - Play Therapy and Creative Supervision - 07970 626499



POPPY DAY APPEAL – 2026

British Legion Poppies will be available at the following locations in Stratford St Mary for 2 weeks prior to Remembrance Day.

*Hall Farm Shop and Restaurant
Swan Public House/Restaurant
Anchor Public House/Restaurant
Garage/Village Shop/PO
Primary School
Rosebank, Lower Street*

Hopefully you will support this worthy cause in respect of injured servicemen and women who need your continuing help and support.

Thank you, David Isaac

In Stratford



Hall Farm Shop Cafe and Restaurant
www.hallfarmshop.com

Anchor Inn www.stratford.pub 01206 322143

The mobile pizza co - 07982 427483

Kate Baines, Virtual Assistant - 07799 391343

Andy Smith Roofing - 07754 368693

Jackson Plumbing and Heating - 01206 322063

Nigel Bruce Electrician - 01206 322751 or 07711 225653

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

WHAT'S ON

INSTITUTE HALL

WHEN	ALL WELCOME
every MONDAY 2.00pm	SILVER SWANS ADULT BALLET £9.00 itschoolofdance23@gmail.com
*TUESDAY 6.00pm	DANCE MOVEMENT £8.00 barefootrascalmovement@gmail.com
*TUESDAY 8.00pm	BODY BALANCE £10.00 becky@bcalm.co.uk
every WEDNESDAY 10.30am	STITCH SEW CIAL MINDFUL CRAFTING £2.00 stitchsewcial@gmail.com
*THURSDAY 7.15pm	HYGGE COMMUNITY CHOIR £6.00 jaquie.choir@btinternet.com
SATURDAY 17th 7.30pm	DANCE TO 50'S/60'S MUSIC £7.50 esthersewing@gmail.com
SUNDAY 1 st NOVEMBER	SAMHAIN GATHERING To mark the end of harvest with Cacao, breath work & soundbath joe@samattereficeandbreath.co.uk

Classes marked * operate term time only
TO HIRE email: csmstitute.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

A Night at the Movies

Save the Date...

Step into the enchanting world of the silver screen for a very special evening at **Stratford St Mary Church**.

On **Saturday 28th November at 7.30pm**, join us for A Night at the Movies — an atmospheric evening of much-loved music from some of your favourite movies.

Sit back, relax and let the music transport you through some of cinema's most memorable moments, performed by candlelight within the beautiful setting of our historic church.

Guests will be welcomed with **sparkling wine and elegant canapés**, making this a truly special evening to share with friends and loved ones.

Details and booking information to follow.

Make a note in your diary — this is one evening you won't want to miss.

PARISH ROOM

WHAT'S 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 1ST MONDAY 7.00PM	CRAFT EVENING £3.50 Maddy Kaye maddykaye1@protonmail.com
EVERY TUESDAY & THURSDAY 2.00PM	CARPET BOWLS £2.00 Eileen Platford 01206 323463
EVERY 1ST FRIDAY 12.30PM	LUNCH CLUB £10 Christine Cousins cousinac303@gmail.com
EVERY TUESDAY 6.00PM	new! YOGA Emma Bloom hello@thelotusbloomyoga.com company.co.uk
TUESDAY 6TH 7.30PM	SUMMER FETE 2027 KICKOFF MEETUP ALL WELCOME Gill Robinson gkrobinson@mac.com
FRIDAY 9TH 7.30PM	QUIZ NIGHT £5 davepooley53 @googlemail.com
MONDAY 12TH 7.30PM	PARISH COUNCIL ALL WELCOME

TO HIRE contact Paul Ranson
email: ssmparishroom.bookings@gmail.com

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)

Got ideas? Good at organising?
Happy to lend a hand?
We're putting together a team to plan
Stratford St Mary Summer Fete 2027
and we'd love more local people to get involved.

HELP US MAKE SUMMER FETE 2027 HAPPEN

No experience needed.
No huge commitment.
Just ideas, enthusiasm
& a willingness to help.

COME AND FIND OUT MORE
Tuesday 6 October 2026: 7.30pm
Parish Room, Stratford St Mary

Come along, meet the team
and see how you could get involved.

SUMMER FETE 2027
A village event, planned by the village.
Interested? We'd love to see you there.



Stratford St Mary Church

**Churchyard clean-up day Saturday 17th
October from 9am**

Do you have a spare couple of hours?

If so do come and join us to do an Autumn
tidy up in the Churchyard, in exchange we
will provide you with some tasty
refreshments. We look forward to seeing
you.

Please bring your own gardening tools

Stratford St Mary Parish Council

Please find below some information from
the Stratford St Mary Parish Council
meeting held on the 14th of September
2026:

· All Expenditure was agreed and
signed off.

· Neighbourhood Plan – the PC are
looking at creating a joint Neighbourhood
Plan with the surrounding villages of
Holton St Mary, Raydon and Higham.
Babergh have given a grant of £8,000
towards a NHP and have commenced a
Quartet villages NHP consultation.

· A memorial plaque for the
appreciation of Brian Such who was a
former Parish Councillor for many years
will be placed on the village sign.

· Drainage issues on Higham Road –
the PC have asked County Council Laws
for assistance with this issue.

· Refurbishment of the 2 brick bus
shelters in the village – District Cllr Ward
has kindly offered £500 from his locality
grant towards the refurbishment.

The next meeting of Stratford St Mary
Parish Council will be held on the 12th of
October at the Parish Room.

Future meeting dates:

Monday 12th October 2026 - Parish Room
Monday 9th Nov 2026 - Village Institute



Harvest Festival and Harvest Lunch

We warmly invite you to join us for our
Harvest Festival at 11.00am on
Sunday 4th October at Stratford
Church.

The service will be a wonderful
opportunity to celebrate the harvest
and give thanks for the abundance of
food and blessings we enjoy. We
would be delighted to receive
donations of non-perishable food and
other suitable produce, which will be
donated to Colchester Foodbank to
support local people and families in
need.

Following the service, please join us
for a delicious Harvest Lunch at
1.00pm in the Parish Rooms. Come
along and enjoy good food, friendship
and fellowship as we celebrate this
special time of year together.

We will also be collecting donations for
The Farming Community Network
(FCN). FCN is a voluntary
organisation and registered charity
that supports farmers, farming families
and people living in rural communities
through difficult times and periods of
change. Founded on Christian
principles, FCN offers support to
people of all faiths and none.

We look forward to welcoming you to
what promises to be a very special
celebration of harvest, community and
giving.

To book your place for lunch please
contact Christine Cousins on
0791648806.

Higham Church Maintenance Morning – Saturday 10th October

We are planning an Autumn cleaning and maintenance day at the church for **Saturday 10th October between 9.30am and 1pm.**

There are a variety of indoor and outdoor jobs to be done and we would be very grateful for some help from anyone who can spare a bit of time on Saturday morning. Refreshments will be provided

Many Thanks.



Harvest Festival and Lunch – Sunday 11th October

We will be holding our biannual Harvest Festival and Lunch in the Church on **Sunday 11th October at 11am.**

Lunch and refreshments will be in a marquee in the churchyard after the service. This is an informal occasion which provides an opportunity for old and new families to the village to meet.

Everyone is welcome to the service, or just to join us for the lunch which will begin a bit after 12 noon. A £10 donation for adults for the lunch will be gratefully received and any children will be free of charge. Please let Caroline Parker 01206 337234/07939 899336, know in advance if you would like to come to the lunch.



Come and join us for the Raydon Litter Pick



**Meet at the Pavillion
Saturday 17th October
10 to 12 noon
*Treats for the children!***

I would like to say a huge THANK YOU to everyone who took part in the Ride Stride and Drive here in Raydon. Also another huge THANK YOU to all who sponsored us all.

It was an incredible day with lots of very enthusiastic visitors coming to have their sponsorship forms signed, and once again the classic cars were directed to Raydon Church as part of their treasure hunt.

We were aiming high this year with the hope that we might reach a total of £1,000 which will be divided between our Church and the Trust. With the generosity of our sponsors I think we might be very near that total, so watch this space next month when we should have the grand total.

It is a very enjoyable way of fundraising, so if you've never taken part before then put the date of Saturday September 11th 2027 in your diary ready for next year.

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

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

FOR HIRE

The Pavilion

King George's Playing Field,
Raydon IP7 5QQ

TO ENQUIRE FOR AVAILABILITY
Email: pavilionhire.kgf@gmail.com

Raydon and District Garden Club

October, of course, is when the season is into Autumn proper as the day light hours decrease and temperatures drop, and the most notable and eye catching is the changing colour of leaves from green to yellow, orange, red, purple, and even brown before dropping off completely. If we don't get too many gales or even frost, we can expect to enjoy this wonderful colour palette for a few weeks, even into early November. It can be a very relaxing month especially when able to get out and about in the countryside for say a nice drive, walk, or just sitting enjoying a break with a coffee or cuppa tea. For brief while forgetting about all the jobs back home that need doing. However, the old saying goes like this:- What you don't do today do tomorrow, if tomorrow don't come it don't matter!! Have you noticed the Robin has changed his singing tune to his winter song. During last month, we saw the hummingbird hawk moth feeding off mostly the Salvias. Assume because of higher temperatures and drier for longer than the odd day it has moved into UK. Something different and so fascinating to watch especially if you get up close.

Isn't nature wonderful, after all those hot or very hot weeks, and months with no rainfall registered rain gauge the garden is returning back to a fresher feel and starting to look more (OUR) normal that we are used too. Just take the grass, which has looked like dead straw colour within a matter of 10 days with some rainfall it has rejuvenated back to a lovely colour green and it's growing again, so it's time to get the lawn mower out once again.

Talking of grass I hope many of you came to our garden club meeting in September as the subject was all about "What's working in the Soil" under our feet and of course its importance to all things around us. SOIL (or DIRT) is of course highly underrated by many especially when

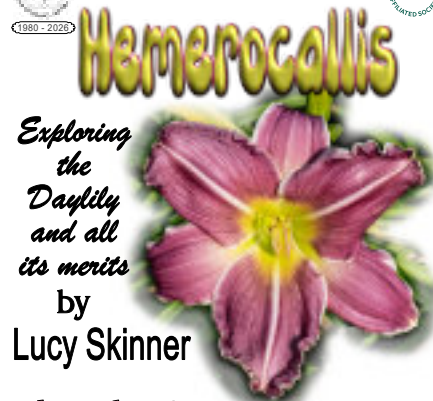
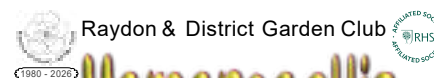
carted indoors off muddy, dirty boots or our four legged friends after rummaging about outside on wet ground, don't we just love them.

Now as we head towards the back end of another gardening year our October meeting night has a subject "Hemerocallis", exploring the "Day Lilly" and all its merits, with our guest speaker Luci Skinner for what should be another interesting subject. It's always nice to spend a evening with a specialist who studies a particular plant species and who is prepared to pass on information which in turn helps us understand the plants better. Looking forward to another well supported meeting night.

As always your committee will start to consider our program for the year ahead so if any member has a particular subject (preferably garden related) that they would like to be considered please contact any committee member and pass on your request, so when we sit down in earnest end of this month, we can start a plan.

Looking ahead to 26th November is our social evening including AGM and quizzes etc. It's also a reminder that the new membership for 2027 is due. Enjoy the Autumn days and remember to help nature by not being too tidy, allowing nature to have shelter during our winter months. Look forward to seeing you all soon.

Geoff Horrex. 07810086143



Thursday Oct 22nd ~7.30 p.m.~
KGV Pavilion Raydon Raffle Refreshments

Raydon Sports and Social Club

Cool days and colder nights somehow conjours up images of winter events, despite the joys of autumn in between. So when the autumn sun shines, get out the house, if you can, for a walk and enjoy meeting and catching up with your neighbours. Just a short walk and chat lifts the spirits no end – as you expect I will get back to that later!

Well as promised in our September edition I would revisit our second annual Raydon Wheels. To say it was successful is an understatement – it was a fantastic success. More exhibitors than we have had before who rightly shared their enthusiasm with so many attendees. The hard work of all the Volunteers paid off - starting with perfect weather (someone was listening – thank you). We all worked steadfastly with our jobs - from erecting the marquee to prepping the BBQ, the Pimm's

bar, the ice cream bar, the Pavilion Bar and arranging parking. I am sure each of us had a funny story to tell – from trying to sell a burger to a customer who looked to say something was missing – his burger! Hopefully most of you would have paid us a visit and enjoyed the successful summer vibes and would like to thank everyone who visited to help create another successful event for the village of Raydon and to raise funds for building our new Community Village Hall.

And finally on the coattails of Raydon Wheels 2026 we have already fixed the date for Raydon Wheels 2027 - Sunday 22nd August – a date for your new diary!

So moving onto our Autumn events. I hope you received prior notification from our events manager, Mick Hampton, (mick.hampton@btopenworld.com) and perhaps also noticed our advertisements for the music bingo night held on 26th September. Again, I will revisit this in next month's edition.

On Saturday 24th October we are focusing on enjoying an old fashioned traditional Games Night, with teams of 4 pitted against each other. Games will include pool, darts, beer pong (I had to look that one up!), trivial pursuit, uno and pick up sticks. Fun will start at 18.30 for 19.00 and will be a ticketed event. More on this event to follow.

And to complete our events calendar we are holding our own Saturday Night Special. We are pleased to announce that the very popular CHELSEA will be returning to sing on Saturday 14 November. We will be open from 18:30 until late.

If you notice any typos in this edition I apologise – but due to an unfortunate accident I am presently unable to type with both hands – but I couldn't just leave a blank page in the Quartet!

Enjoy October and of course look forward to meeting you for a chat at the Pavilion

Janet

The Raydon Traveller

Episode One, Saudi Arabia

A Suffolk local who spends much of his working life travelling far and wide. From airports, taxis and distant corners of the world, The Raydon Traveller reflects on the places, people and cultures he encounters, and how they often make him appreciate home, family and life in our little corner of Suffolk that bit more.

It is funny how quickly life can change in the space of one sleep. Only one sleep ago I was sitting in a rowing boat at Flatford with my kids, drifting slowly down the river, enjoying the Suffolk countryside, dodging paddle boarders and watching the odd couple attempting to row in tandem. There is something quite entertaining about watching two people in a rowing boat who clearly have very different ideas about which direction they should be going.

Now I am sitting in the back of a taxi in Saudi Arabia, heading towards the Red Sea. The driver is focused on the road. We have not spoken for a while. I look at him and wonder what he is thinking about. His family perhaps. What he is having for dinner. Maybe he is wondering why the English bloke in the back keeps staring out of the window. I decide to stop looking at him.

Instead I look outside. Everything is flat. Completely flat. Sand, road, more sand, and then some more road. There is not a spec of green anywhere. The road is incredible. Brand new black tarmac disappearing into the distance. It is so straight that I am fairly certain if the driver fell asleep we could probably continue for another twenty miles without anybody noticing. Everything seems to be black, yellow or orange. I find myself fascinated by it.

I travel quite a lot with work, and one thing I have learnt is that travelling gives you a lot of time to think. Airports, planes, taxis and hotel rooms provide an enormous amount of time where there really is not

much else to do. Sometimes that is a good thing. Sometimes probably not.

My mind wanders back home. I wonder what the weather is doing in Raydon. Rain perhaps. Maybe sunshine. Possibly both within ten minutes. I wonder what the kids are doing, hope my wife is ok. I think about home, the fields, the village, the pub, and for some reason I start thinking about my cozy bed. I look at the dashboard of the car. 43 degrees. I look at my watch. It is 11 in the morning. Good grief.

We continue along this incredibly straight road when I notice a sign appearing in the distance. As we get closer I realise it is displaying our speed. Then a smiley face appears. I actually laugh out loud. The driver looks at me. He has the slightly concerned expression of a man who has just realised he may have several more hours in a car with a strange Englishman.

I immediately recognise the sign. It is almost exactly like the speed awareness sign as you enter Raydon. For a few seconds I am not in Saudi Arabia anymore. I am driving into the village. I try to explain this to the driver. Raydon. Suffolk. Village. Speed sign. Smiley face. Home. He looks even more confused than before. I decide it is probably best that I keep quiet.

We carry on. Eventually something starts appearing on the horizon. Buildings. Lots of them. Then I notice something else. Green. Actual green. After miles of sand it almost looks unnatural. As we get closer there are trees, grass, flowers, pink ones, purple ones, yellow ones. The place suddenly changes completely. Workers are standing beside the road watering everything. And I mean watering everything. Plants, grass, trees. Water everywhere. My boy mind immediately starts working. Where on earth do they get all this water from. We had a hosepipe ban back home this summer. I spent half the summer feeling guilty about using too much water. I felt guilty running a bath. These guys are standing in the middle of the desert spraying the stuff around like it is going out of fashion.

I smile again. Different worlds. A few hours earlier I had been worrying about whether the lawn back home was going brown. Here they appear to have decided to build a garden in the middle of one of the hottest places on earth. Fair play to them.

We finally reach my destination. The taxi pulls up outside the hotel. I get out and the heat hits me. It is difficult to explain 43 degrees until you stand in it. It is not really air. It feels more like somebody has opened an enormous oven door. I grab my bags. The driver gets out, gives me a nod, and we say goodbye. I am not sure he ever understood why the speed sign made me laugh. Perhaps he will tell his family later about the strange English passenger who became incredibly excited by a smiley face.

Bags dropped at reception. Check in complete. Up to the room. The air conditioning is on. Wonderful. For approximately thirty seconds I consider never leaving the room again. Unfortunately, I have a meeting. Quick change into cooler clothing and back outside. The heat hits me again. How do people cope with this. I have been here less than an hour and already I am thinking about rain.

That is something I never thought I would say. At home we complain about it constantly. Too wet. Too cold. Too windy. Not enough sunshine. Then we get sunshine and within three days we complain that it is too hot. We really are very difficult people to please.

But that is the strange thing about travelling. You notice things. Not necessarily the big things. It is normally the small things. A road sign. Somebody watering the grass. A temperature on a dashboard. A duvet. Things that would mean absolutely nothing at home suddenly make you think about home. For now though, I have a meeting to get to. It is still 43 degrees outside. I am already sweating. And I have only just realised that I packed far too many trousers.

Until next time... where will I be?

RAYDON PARISH COUNCIL

Chairman: Keith Lovering
Councillors: Jayne Tann, Lorraine May, Chris Chambers, John Smith

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.

Raydon Council needs you.

Raydon Parish Council can have up to nine councillors and currently we have five. We would like at least two more residents to get involved in the running of the village affairs. The councillors can get as involved as their time and commitment allows. The minimum set up for Raydon is to attend ten monthly meetings. There are lots of initiatives individuals can take working as part of the Council.

To be able to work on these and other great improvements to village life in both Raydon and Lower Raydon we need hands on support to make things happen.

Please either email the Parish clerk, Stacey Lowe on Clerk@raydonparishcouncil.gov.uk or phone on 07944968011 Or phone the chair 07939 075143 or email Clr.keithlovering@raydonparishcouncil.gov.uk

We are happy to have a chat about the role and the great feeling of involvement and accomplishment it can bring you.

Remaining Raydon Parish Council Meeting Dates of 2026:
Meetings take place at 7.30pm in the KGF Pavilion. 6th October, 3rd November.

Holton St Mary



In Holton

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October looks to be a quieter month than the busy-ness of September. We now look forward to the falling leaves of autumn and the time of year to do the tidying and make preparations for next year. There's always something going on at the Well Piece on Tuesdays and you're welcome to pop down and join us for a coffee and chat.

Why not get involved, or find out what's happening, by joining the Whatsapp group here:

(Scan with the camera in Whatsapp)



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

Green Gym

See you all in Church Square at 10.30 on 3rd October for another chance to keep our village tidy and well kept. We have bulbs to plant! New volunteers always welcome



The First Friday of the Month Lunch Club.

Normally running 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. Any profit made on the lunch will be split between the Church and the Village Hall Refurbishment fund. So we 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 salthurlo@gmail.com
Frances Torrington - via FB or email familytorrynton@btinternet.com

GREYHOUND AND WHIPPET POP UP SHOP

Holton St Mary Village Hall
CO7 6NW

Saturday 10th October
11am till 1pm

Christmas bandanas and bow ties available for all breeds

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Adventures (Dress maker - made to order)

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Hygiene
Waterproof coats

A Mabel's Mummy promotion only

Bandanas £3
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Coats etc from £20

FIREWORKS DISPLAY AND BONFIRE

Holton St Mary Millennium Green

Friday 6th November

Best Guy Competition 6.15pm
Bonfire Lighting 6.30pm
Fireworks 7pm

BBQ & Bar before and after at the Village Hall

Holton St Mary Parish Council has 2 vacancies for Councillors - if anyone is interested then please contact the Clerk for more information clerk@holtonstmary-pc.gov.uk.

Please find below some information from the Holton St Mary Annual Parish Council meeting held on the 9th of September 2026:

All Expenditure was agreed and signed off.

Neighbourhood plan - the PC are looking to develop a joint Neighbourhood plan with Higham, Raydon and Stratford St Mary. Babergh District Council have issued a formal consultation for all the Quartet villages.

National Grid - planning permission for the initial works is due to be submitted to Babergh District Council. The Parish Council would like to urge residents to express their views once commenting has opened.

If anyone is interested in joining the Parish Councils communications list please email the Clerk.

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

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.

HSM Social Club event

Quiz Night

Sat 3rd October

£25 per person, including fish and chip supper
Doors open 20.00 pm
Sarah Julets, our Quiz Master for the evening
To book email - xmissnewty@aol.com



Craft Fair

Sunday 11th October
at Whatfield Village Hall

Rectory Road, SAT NAV IP7 6QU

10am - 4pm

HOT & COLD REFRESHMENTS
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Lots of stalls selling a wide variety of crafts
Come along, bring your friends and family
Shop for Christmas, birthdays or just treat yourself

BUMPER RAFFLE - lots of great prizes!

All proceeds to - **Success After Stroke**



Manningtree & District Photographic Society

Last month members shared images they took over the summer as part of the summer challenge, took part in a field trip and a competition - Animals mammals,

October sessions are as follows;
8th October – Talk by Derek Howes on about his work in Central and South America
10th October- Field Trip – To be confirmed (see website)
22nd October – Print Competition – Open Mono
29th October – Talk by Stephen Harper on Mach Loop and Photographing Lynx in Spain

Our club website has information about membership and activities together with competition results, photo albums and further club information. Our full 2026/2027 programme can be found on the Website. Our public Manningtree Photographic Club Facebook page also features various club news and activities.

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

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Holy Family Church, Ipswich Road, Branham CO11 1TB

Parish Priest: Rev Fr Luke Goymour
The Presbytery, 180 Hawthorn Drive, Ipswich IP2 0QQ
Tel: 01473 684963 revgoymour@gmail.com
website: stmarksparish.org.uk

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

Who's in the driving seat?

In his letter to the Romans St. Paul says: "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your minds, so that you will be able to discern the will of God and to know what is good and acceptable and perfect." (Romans 12:2)

In the busyness of our lives, it's so easy to forget about God. We fail to ask Him to be with us and to guide us through each day. We get absorbed in work and family duties - and that great time waster - social media - is designed to keep us scrolling instead of doing something useful! It takes a conscious decision to stop and spend time with the Lord instead. Regularly spending quiet time in prayer and reading the Bible helps us to refocus and stay calm. And in the midst of a busy day, we can still ask the Lord for guidance and wisdom.

You may have heard that saying "If Jesus is your co-pilot, change seats." Can we let God set the destination each day on our spiritual SatNav and let Him drive?

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 Adoration from 9.20

Wednesday St. Mark's 09.30 mass
Friday St. Mark's 12.15 mass, with 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



Bin collections

From June 2026, you will be able to put the following additional items into the blue-lidded recycling bin:

glass bottles and jars
cartons (Tetra Pak), such as milk and drink cartons
plastic carrier bags
plastic wrappings, including those used around multipacks
plastic films, for example those found on the top of fruit punnets and meat trays
food bags, such as ones used for cereal, pasta, mixed salad, frozen chips and frozen peas
bubble wrap

Scan QR code for more information

Week comencing:



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?



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. Once a month from Branham Leisure Centre. 07584 573474. Also does catering for events.

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 and Saturday 10am to 7pm

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.
Branham 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

Local Services

MOBILE LIBRARY

Stratford St Mary - Route 11

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

Oct 21, Nov 18, Dec 16

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

Oct 27, Nov 24, Dec 22

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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Crime prevention

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

PC 1347 Gilkes Pcs0 3041 Cooper
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

County Councillor: Darius Laws

Email: Darius.laws@suffolk.gov.uk

Phone: 07786 007560

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

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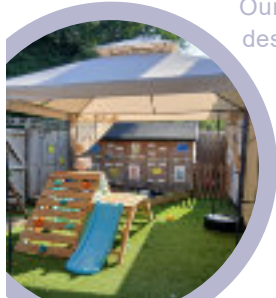
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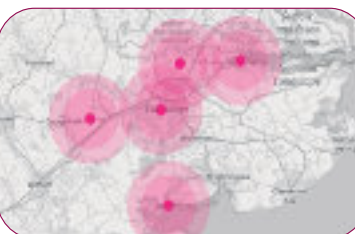
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BENEFICE CONTACTS, SERVICES AND EVENTS

Rector: The Benefice is currently in a vacancy - for any enquiries please contact the church wardens.

Lay Elder: Currently pending.

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 one of church wardens if you would like more information.

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 Sandy Ranson know.

For Home Communion, please get in touch with Christine Cousins 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

Contact numbers for Churchwardens:

Higham	Churchwarden Hugo Parker 01206 337234 Assistant warden Martyn Carr 07768 012588
Holton	Churchwarden Richard Noel 01206 298276 Churchwarden Paul Torrington 01473 312046
Raydon	Churchwarden Geoff Horrex 07810 086143 Assistant warden – currently vacant
Stratford	Churchwarden Sandy Ranson 01206 322156 Churchwarden Christine Cousins 07791648806

Benefice Safeguarding Officer:

Martin O'Brien Tel. 07964 543718 - Email: martinobrien@orwellpark.org

Church Services for October

Sunday, 4th October: 11am Stratford SM Parish Harvest Festival with Communion – please note later start!

Followed by pre-booked Harvest Lunch

(18th Sunday after Trinity)

Sunday, 11th October: 11am Higham Parish Harvest Festival with Communion – please note later start!

Followed by pre-booked Village Harvest Lunch

(19th Sunday after Trinity)

5.30pm Evensong in Raydon

Sunday, 18th October: 10am Holton SM Parish Harvest Festival with Communion

(20th Sunday after Trinity)

9.30am Stratford SM Café Church in the Parish Room

Sunday, 25th October: 10am Raydon Parish Communion

(21st Sunday after Trinity)

Looking ahead to November

Sunday, 1st November: 10am Stratford SM Parish Communion

(22nd Sunday after Trinity)

*All of 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 one of the churchwardens –
contact details in the Quartet and on the benefice website.*

Café Church every 3rd Sunday

Café Church meets in the Stratford St Mary Parish Room,

Next date October 18th

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. Even 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, 22nd October, at 2.30pm.

These are the dates of subsequent meetings for your diaries:

Thursday 26th November

There will not be any meeting in December

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,
the remaining dates for 2026 are as follows:**

29th November in Holton St Mary

Prayer pointers for the Benefice

Please pray for our Churchwardens and PCCs as we continue through the vacancy in post, and seek to appoint a new minister for our benefice.

We pray for all those who are ill, among them Peter Snelling, Nicky Bull, Vivienne Wilkinson, Martin Favell and Simon Tennant and any others who need God's healing and wholeness at this time.

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

As we celebrate Harvest in our churches – a prayer to remind us of the Lord's bounty:

We bless you, God of Seed and Harvest,
And we bless each other, that the beauty of this world,
and the love that created it, might be expressed through our lives
and be a blessing to others, now and always
Amen.

Our Churches and Churchyards - 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. 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. If you bring dogs into the churchyard, please ensure they are kept on a lead at all times and please clear up any mess they may make; this has become an issue in some of our churchyards which is unfortunate. Your help would be appreciated in keeping our churchyards clean and tidy and places of quiet sanctuary for visitors.

If you would like to know more about burials, interments of ashes, grave reservations or permitted memorials, please contact one of the churchwardens.

Please look out for our church 'clean-up' days when we invite volunteers to give up a small amount of time to help keep our churchyards open and well cared for. Thank you.