

Church & Village News

Baconsthorpe • Barningham Winter • Edgefield • Hempstead
Matlaske • Plumstead • Saxthorpe with Corpusty

February 2024



Plough Sunday Saxthorpe Church

Photograph by Darren Matthews

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What's On

FEBRUARY

Fri 2	10.30am	Hempstead Coffee + Catch-Up	Village Hall
Fri 2	7.00pm	Corpusty & Saxthorpe Film Night	Village Hall
Mon 5	2.00pm	Hempstead Crafty Creations	Village Hall
Tues 6	10.00am	Baconsthorpe Church Clean	St Mary's Church
Fri 9	7.00pm	High Kelling Toad Patrol @ The Pop-Up Pub	Village Hall
Thur 15	10.00am	Hempstead Crafty Creations	Village Hall
Sat 17	10.00am	Saxthorpe Snow Drops	The Old Rectory
Sun 18	11.00am	West Beckham Snowdrops	Chestnut Farm
Tues 20	10.00am	Edgefield Children's Activities & Crafts	Church
Fri 23	6.00pm	Baconsthorpe Pop-Up Pub	Village Hall
Sat 24	2.00pm	Hempstead Crafty Creations	Village Hall
Sun 25	11.00am	West Beckham Snow Drops	Chestnut Farm
Wed 28	6.30pm	Plumstead Parish Council	St Michael's Church

Clash Diary To add an event contact
Corinne Youngs 577263 corinne@ayyoungs.com

March 1	Corpusty + Saxthorpe Film Night	July 7	Hempstead Open Gardens
March 2	Corpusty + Saxthorpe Film Afternoon	July 13	Baconsthorpe Fete
March 11	Annual Parochial Church Meeting	Oct 16	Baconsthorpe Murder Mystery
March 16	Edgefield Quiz Night	Nov 16	Baconsthorpe Craft Fair
March 23	Baconsthorpe Craft Fair	Dec 6	Baconsthorpe Quiz Night
July 6	Hempstead Open Gardens		

Post Offices

Baconsthorpe Mobile Post Office Van	Wednesdays 10.45am – 11.30am	Village Hall
Corpusty Stores	Monday-Friday 9.00am – 12.00noon	587726
Itteringham Shop	Monday + Thursday 9.00am-1.00pm	587325

Local MP

Duncan Baker MP
Tudor House, Grammar School Lane
North Walsham, NR28 9JH
duncan@duncanbaker.org.uk www.duncanbaker.org.uk
Monday - Friday 9am – 5pm 01692 557140

County Councillor

Steffan Aqarone
steffan.aqarone.cllr@norfolk.gov.uk / 01603 327827

Mobile Library Van

21 Dec / 18 Jan / 15 Feb / 14 March

Matlaske	12:40	NR11 7AQ	Old Post Office
Plumstead	13:00	NR11 7LG	Walnut Farm
Baconsthorpe	14:30	NR25 6LJ	Council Bungalows
	14:55	NR25 6LE	Hare & Hounds
Hempstead	15:05	NR25 6TL	Telephone kiosk
Edgefield	15:45	NR24 2AL	The Memorial
	16:10	NR24 2AX	The Street
Corpusty	16:35	NR11 7BU	Great Farm Cott

Times and dates sourced from Norfolk County website: <https://bit.ly/2AJdSGA> Tel: 01603 222303

Holt Library

9 Church Street, Holt NR25 6BB 712202
Tues 10am-7pm / Wed 2pm-7pm
Fri 10am-7pm / Sat 1pm-4pm

Disclaimer: The views expressed in this publication are not necessarily the views of the Church & Village News. Apologies if contributed material is not published due to space constraints. All facts are believed to be correct at the time of going to press.

Letter from the Rector - Reverend Canon David Longe

577252 / 07881 950294 / rector@matlaske.org.uk

“Love your neighbour as yourself” is one of the most famous phrases in scripture – it is found in the Hebrew Scriptures (Lev 19.18) and is said by Jesus when he is asked “who is my neighbour?”. Jesus explains the commandment with the story of the Good Samaritan:

A man was travelling from Jerusalem to Jericho when robbers fell upon him and left him half dead. Now a priest was going down that road, and when he saw him he passed by on the other side, a Levite was passing he likewise passed him by. But a Samaritan saw him and moved with compassion, bandaged and treated his wounds. He took him to an inn, gave the inn-keeper money saying: ‘Look after him, and when I return I will repay anything extra you spend.’ Jesus asked ‘Who was the was a neighbour to the man?’ He answered, ‘The one who showed him mercy.’ Jesus said, ‘Go and do likewise.’ (adapted: Luke 10.30-37)



Recently I heard a similar story: at a supper party an argument broke out. All left very upset. The host was devastated and tried to bring the arguing parties into reconciliation. It was not to be: one moved away and the other, also hurt, shunned the host’s attempt to reach out.

Loving our neighbour as ourselves is the hardest of all the commandments – yet along with loving God with all our heart, mind and soul – it the most central commandment. Sometimes we miss a vital element as we are called not just to love our neighbour, but also ourselves. This is because we are all precious in the sight of God: we are uniquely made with God-given gifts and equally loved by the Creator.

Our equality is too easily forgotten: money, power, celebrity and, as in the supper party, pain and finding it difficult to forgive divide us. Was this the issue with the priest and Levite? The injured man was not one of them and only the Samaritan – who was seen as “different” – was able to respond with compassion.

At the end of the month Lent begins, with its focus on stripping back all that stops us loving God and our neighbour, as we journey to the beauty and hope of Easter. Lent reminds us that we are equally and uniquely loved by God.

Over Christmas I was fortunate, as for years I’d wanted to visit the Catacombs in Paris. Descending below Paris we entered a different world with neat, preciously stacked, bones gathered from the Paris cemeteries lining the walls. As we emerged from our haunting journey, we read a phrase written in the 19th century – this, the visitor wrote is le temple de l’égalité (the temple of equality).

We may see differences around us, but God views us differently – God sees beyond our bones to our souls which are beautiful and wonderful. God sees us, and remarkably, loves us, forgives us and asks us to do the same.

With my prayers as Lent begins,

David

The Benefice of Matlaske Church Services for February



4th

Candlemas

8.30am	Eucharist	Matlaske
10.30am	Eucharist	Barningham Winter

14th Ash Wednesday

6.00pm		Barningham Winter
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11th Sunday Before Lent

8.30am	Eucharist	
10.30am	Eucharist with Baptism	Baconsthorpe Saxthorpe

18th Lent I

8.30am	Eucharist	Saxthorpe
10.30am	Eucharist	Hempstead

25th Lent II

8.30am	Eucharist	Plumstead
10.30am	Eucharist	Matlaske
4.00pm	Family Service	Edgefield

3rd March Lent III

8.30am	Eucharist	Barningham Winter
10.30am	Eucharist	Plumstead

Childrens Activity Morning Edgefield Church, Tuesday 20th February 10.30am-12noon

Coffee: Plumstead Church, Mondays 10.30am

Coffee Cake & Chat: Saxthorpe Church, Wednesdays 10-11am

Country Mice Toddler Group: Baconsthorpe Village Hall, Tuesdays 10.30-12noon

Lent Course



Come and watch the Ken Loach film
'The Old Oak'

in three instalments

followed by refreshments and discussion
(no charge)

Tuesday 5th, 12th, 19th March 7:30 - 9pm

Corpusty Village Hall

Contact administrator@matlaske.org.uk

for further details

Baconsthorpe

200 Club

£50 H Martin, £25 J Benton, £10 D Fiddian, £5 P Mara, M Rowe, R Youngs
£50 H Steel, £25 R Hall, £10 L Rix, £5 R Hall, R Bone, R Hall

As we embark on a brand-new year, I want to wish all Baconsthorpe residents a happy and very prosperous new year. A flurry of snow briefly made an appearance this morning but it's always cheering to know that the days are getting longer (apparently by 2.6 minutes each day, so I am told) so all good things to look forward to.



Hazel Martin
07879 414577

Church News

Carol Service On December 22 it was so lovely to see 85 people gathered together in St Mary's Church to listen to the Christmas Story. We began with Adam and Eve and traced events through to the presentation of gifts by the Magi. What a delight! Carols were sung by the congregation, interspersed with singing by the choir led by James Deveson. These were followed at each stage in the story by readings performed by members of the community whose ages ranged from seven to seventy. My thanks go to all who took part and to those who helped decorate the church.

Good News Coffee, tea and biscuits are now offered to all at the end of each church service. It is so nice to stop and have a chat with everyone rather than rushing away. Sometimes the urn does pick an awkward moment to boil rather noisily during the service – but a small price to pay, I think! The church is also quite warm with the help of the three new heaters and the heated pews.

Time For a Clean If anyone is free on Tuesday February 6th at 10am please do come along to the church and we can give it a good 'going over'. The bats are now safely tucked up asleep so we have a chance to make a difference. Refreshments will be available.

Country Mice Is a parent and toddler group that has run for some years in the village hall on Tuesday mornings. It has recently been successful in obtaining grants and has therefore been able to replace the furniture/toys as well as subsidising the hall rent and providing healthy snacks.

A New Year's Resolution

If anyone in the village has any news they would be willing to share I would be so grateful. For example, an amusing event, a landmark birthday, an addition to the family, a new pet, an achievement award... We are a village community. Let's make it a new year's resolution to share news. You can ring/text me – 07879 414577. Or email me: hazel.merlin1@gmail.com

Village Hall News

Christmas Quiz was a great success with a full house and a brilliant quiz run by Emma Youngs, which even included dressing people up as Christmas Trees! Emma and Jane Warner also produced a delicious supper and a good night was had by all.

Pop Up Pub Friday 23rd with Stew + Dumpling served from 6.30pm, bar opens 6pm

Craft Fair Saturday 23rd March, 10am – 1pm Lots of stalls of lovely hand-crafted items, great for gifts

200 Club We have recently tried to boost the numbers for the 200 Club but are still just breaking even. So, we have decided to reduce the prize pot slightly to ensure we are generating a modest income. Therefore, the three prizes of £5 will be withdrawn, leaving the top prizes of £50, £25 and £10 in place. We do still have numbers available, so please check the Baconsthorpe website for details or call Piers on 07493 227591 for details.

Piers Warner

Barningham Winter

A very Happy New Year to you all!

We send Mr Colin Gallon our very best wishes for a speedy recovery after his recent spell in hospital over Christmas. We are so pleased to see you back home Colin.

We also send our best wishes to Mr and Mrs Richard Seaman who have moved to Suffield, we hope they will be very happy in their new home.

Thank you to all those who came to the Barningham wreath making day early in December. Beautiful Christmas wreaths were made and then everyone enjoyed a soup lunch in the lovely warm kitchen in the hall. Huge thanks to Mr and Mrs Thomas Courtauld for hosting this event and to all those that helped into making this into a successful event. We raised over £400.00 for the little church. Thankyou also to Mrs Tessa Papworth who instructed us on the day.

Advent Carols at St Peter, North Barningham in November 2023

There was considerable apprehension in North Barningham on the eve of the service. The forecast was dire and the weather unusually chilly, not to say bleak. We wondered to ourselves how many people would brave the adverse conditions to turn out for a service in a church with neither heating nor lighting! In the event, only two of our readers were foiled by the icy conditions and others stepped up to take their places. And as the time for the service approached, all the familiar faces were there once again, for what turned out to be an exceptionally happy occasion.

Perhaps it was the effect of the intense cold? The now-familiar hymns were sung with exceptional zeal (amid clouds of steam) and the little keyboard, manned by Richard Peaver, prudently wrapped up to the eyebrows, struggled to hold its own. Sadly, the weather conditions were such that Derek and Pamela Palgrave and their daughter Cathy were unable to attend. We look forward to seeing you all again in a year's time!



Sara Buxton
577207

Edgefield

Church News

Amanda Watson from New Zealand, the great-great-granddaughter of Canon Marcon, will be paying a further visit to Edgefield from 7–27 September to do more painting, before travelling to Scotland to deliver a lecture on her work in a theological context to the Institute for Theology, Imagination, & The Arts at the University of St Andrews. We look forward very much to her return visit later in the year.



Richard Peaver
587486

Children, Youth and Families (From Edgefield Children's Team) We are engaging with more children and families than before. For the past 16 months we have arranged events and activities, hoping to interest children and their parents/carers. We regularly have a very good turnout at our monthly Sunday afternoon gatherings, which culminated in a Christmas carol service and children's nativity combined (51 adults and 26 children). It was great fun and everyone socialised and enjoyed refreshments afterwards.

Although it was an awfully wet day, all our 'baby Jesus stones' were collected from around the village at the beginning of December. The hot chocolate and cakes were very welcome in the church that day.

At the Christmas morning service, 21 children enjoyed a craft and chalking on the church floor, while the 114 adults sang Christmas hymns. We were thrilled to have the bagpipes played as we left the church.

From now on, all children's, youth and family events will be advertised on a dedicated page within this magazine. Edgefield is part of a wider group of six other churches. Everyone is very welcome, regardless of background, belief, or upbringing; we aim to be a safe space to explore life together. We have some great stories from adults who were dragged to church as children and are surprised that their children skip into the building willingly, and don't want to leave. We have a children's area in the church open every day and during services for small children to play in. Please do give us your feedback on the usefulness of this: youth@matlaske.org.uk

Kay Harvey

Future Events

Tuesday Parent and Toddler group 10am held in Baconsthorpe Village Hall £2 per family

(Half term) Tuesday February 20th 10.30-12 Activity and craft morning, focusing on spring.

Family Service Sunday 25th February 4pm Crafts, worship & tea together. Theme: miracles.

Mothering Sunday March 10th 10.30am Service open for all who nurture and care.

Village Hall News

Our Christmas evening was as usual a fun packed, happy occasion and during the event the December 200 Club draw was made, with young Vincent picking the numbers. The winners were: 1st Dawn Hulbert (£50), 2nd Ellie Frost (£30) and 3rd Claire Reeves (£20). Our next event is a quiz night on Saturday, 16th March, at 7pm. Tickets are £10 for a team of 4. This is usually a very popular event, so book early. Tickets from any committee member.

Jim Frost

Edgefield Toad Patrol – Come and join us!

During late February and early March the amphibians make their annual migration to the village pond from the surrounding gardens and countryside. The toad patrols successfully placed over 670 toads, newts and frogs from the danger of the road and lane to the safety of the pond last year. A group of enthusiastic patrollers made this success story possible. Do you want to be part of saving our local wildlife? We would very much welcome additional volunteers to join the teams and help in Spring 2024. The migration normally starts around mid-February, if mild and wet, through to beginning of March, dusk until 9pm. Volunteers are normally only required a couple of hours, two evenings a week which means that the amphibians of Edgefield continue to thrive in our wonderful pond. If you are interested, please contact Simon Gooding and Wendy Middleton on wmsg@btinternet.com or 01263 585065.

Hempstead

Hempstead 200 Club

Dec: £50 A Sewell, £25 C Feilden, £10 B Harmer, £5 J Loach, I Bassett, A Young
Jan: £50 N Tyabji, £25 J Wood, £10 G Harris, £5 A Inglis, M Keen, D Brooks

Coffee & Catchup Friday 2nd 10.30am - midday all welcome

Crafty Creations Crafty Creations will be one year old on 11th February!
Monday 5th 2-4pm / Thursday 15th 10am-12noon / Saturday 24th 2-4pm

Hempstead Village Christmas Party

Around forty villagers and helpers came to the Christmas Party on 9 December to enjoy a lovely variety of soups, cheeses, desserts and mince pies in a warm and happy atmosphere. Heartfelt thanks go to the organisers, providers and supporters.

Hempstead Toad Patrols - volunteers needed!

Toads will start to migrate to Rookery Pond, near Green Farm west, of Hempstead village, sometime in February, depending on the weather. Each year local volunteers help thousands of toads to get across the road next to the pond. Volunteer patrollers don't need to be available every evening. They work in pairs and usually do one or two 90 minute shifts a week on a rota, between dusk and the first couple of hours of darkness, when the weather is suitable for toads to move (relatively mild and damp). See the article elsewhere in the magazine for more information, including details of a meeting. If you might be interested in becoming a local toad patroller at Hempstead, please contact Tim Venes timvenes01@gmail.com tel. 07876 322406 to find out more.



Robin Carver

It is with great sadness that Robin Carver's family have reported that Robin died peacefully at his home at Hole Farm, on Sunday January 7th. He leaves his wife Rose and children Airlie, Tom and Sam and eight grandchildren. He was a much-loved supporter of the village and especially the church where he was on the PCC for thirty years. There will be a private family funeral, followed by a Memorial Service at St Mary's Church, Baconsthorpe at 11.30am on Saturday 16th March to which all are very welcome. If you would like to attend, please could you let the family know so they have some idea of numbers - airlie@inglis.uk.com.

Diana Spalton Memorial Bench

An appeal was launched on the Hempstead website and in this magazine for donations to provide a wooden bench for the village in memory of Diana Spalton. The appeal proved successful among several who valued her friendship, along with her own family members. The bench is now with Mike Thody, who is using his carving expertise to inscribe Diana's name and dates prior to the bench being installed in her memory.

Hempstead Open Gardens - 6th and 7th July 2024

We did this very successfully for the first time in 2020 making £4000 for the Church & Village Hall. Please make a note of the date because there will be lots to do that weekend! We are still



Jonathan Neville
07836 675369

looking for more gardens - both holiday cottage ones, bigger ones and vegetable ones. Please give Jill Roy a ring on 715851 or email gillian.roy@hotmail.co.uk if you might be prepared to open your garden.

Advent Service

Nearly forty people gathered for coffee and croissants on Sunday 17th December in the village hall for a wonderful community event put on by the Church and PCC. A reading and some prayers were intertwined with much chat and laughter for our very relaxed Advent Service.

Discussion with a Q&A on the Situation in the Holy Land

On November 29th 70 people gathered in the village hall for a talk by Revd Canon David Longe and Colonel Tom Fitzalan Howard CBE. This was an opportunity for everyone to ask questions about the current situation in the Holy Land. Hempstead PCC invited Tom and David to speak following a conversation after the Remembrance Sunday Service at Hempstead, when several of the congregation mentioned that they didn't understand enough about the historical situation in the Middle East and therefore were struggling to comprehend what is currently going on. Tom was a soldier for 36 years and served all over the world including Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories. He lived in The Holy Land from 2000-2003 during the Palestinian 2nd Intifada (Uprising) working with both the Palestinian Authority and the Israeli Defence Force (IDF). He has visited Israel and Palestine several times and has extensive knowledge of the region. Our own vicar, The Reverend Canon David Longe was chaplain to the Anglican Archbishop in Jerusalem from 2015-2018 before becoming Rector of the Matlaske Benefice. He has recently visited the region including the Anglican Hospital in Gaza. He is a trustee of three charities involved with the Holy Land, including, Friends of the Holy Land for which a retiring collection raised £400. This money will go towards the work of the Anglican Al Ahli Hospital and financial aid on the ground. The illustrated talk was extremely interesting with slides and maps, many personal anecdotes and stories. There were so many questions that they had to be stopped at 8pm after two hours! People came away feeling better informed - it was a very happy social and educational evening.

Matlaske

Carol singing in Matlaske in 2023 proved revolutionary. Instead of going from house to house waking up sleeping dogs, cats and babies, and being threatened with buckets of water, we decided to have a carolling party in the entrance to Barningham Park on 21st December. This proved to be a great success. The Lord himself joined in by telling the high winds that had plagued us all day to clear off, which they did. Twenty-odd people (note the hyphen) plus dogs (but alas no cats) then had great fun singing their favourite carols around Thomas and Amelia's fire pit. Whether the singing was improved or not by the copious draughts of mulled wine most of us enjoyed is an issue local historians will debate for centuries to come, but Karen's beautiful contralto voice at least gave us a good start. The fire kept us all warm and after we had exhausted our vocal cords, we toasted marshmallows on sticks (thank you, Mandy). Such a lovely caramel flavour (the marshmallows I mean, not Mandy). There was a lot of chat and laughter, as befits Christmas, and it felt really good to gather the village together for this season of goodwill. A definite improvement on touring, so thank you to Thomas for proposing and hosting this. A light shower of rain was the signal to go home, and yours truly dried off the carol sheets ready for next year!



Duncan Wood
570293

Plumstead

A very Happy New Year to all, despite the sudden drop in temperature I hope everyone had a good Christmas break.

Plumstead Parish Council

Plumstead Parish Council meets on Wednesday 28th February at 6.30pm in Plumstead Parish Church. All members of the public are warmly invited to attend. Any item requested for inclusion in the meeting's agenda please send details to our clerk at clerkplumsteadpc@gmail.com at least a week prior to the meeting.

Parochial Church Meeting

The Annual Parochial Church Meeting will be held on Monday 11th March at 6pm in Baconsthorpe Village Hall. This is an open meeting.

John Durdin 13 April 1926 – 20 December 2023



In December we very sadly lost one of our longest standing members of the Plumstead community. At the age of 97, after a short illness, John completed his mission on earth and passed away peacefully at home. A celebration of his life was held at Baconsthorpe Church on 15 January and the church was full. This in itself says a great deal about John and how well known and well liked he was.

John was a long-time resident of Plumstead, having purchased The Old Post Office as a holiday home in the seventies, and then becoming a permanent resident in his retirement. He was involved in the community in so many ways, as a villager, parishioner, church warden and member of the Rotary Club and a Freemason. He was also a strong supporter of local and national wildlife charities. All these involvements meant that he was known far and wide, but aside from these activities he was well-known and well-liked for being the kind, generous, knowledgeable, and thoroughly decent person that he was.

He had many passions in life, in particular for gardening, wildlife and music, about all of which he had a deep and thorough understanding and knowledge.

He was always warm and welcoming, greeting visitors, neighbours, and anyone he came across with a big smile. He was genuinely interested in people and treated all with the same level of respect no matter who they were, making them feel valued.

John had a very strong sense of community and was involved in hundreds of village events and committees over the years, including open garden events and hosting the village fete.

He also had a deep connection to the Church and dedicated nearly 30 years of his life to being churchwarden of St Michael and all Angels. In the words of our current churchwarden Eleanor:

"He served the church in so many ways, and for 30 years, in the role of Churchwarden, alongside Thomas Wormald. However, he has left his mark on the building and the church's life in so many ways. Throughout that time, he prepared the church for all the services, oversaw its maintenance



Harriet Rossi
577239

and repair, raised £16,000 through high quality plant sales, organised the making of beautiful hassocks, produced the two fine paintings of St Michael and St George and their respective dragons and brought the two wonderful brass candelabra back into use. The latter two will ensure that he is remembered whenever we enter the church, as will the spring bulbs he planted on either side of the church path and through the village.”

Much more could be said about John and his life; however, the overwhelming feeling is that we have lost a truly good man, whom many of us were privileged and blessed to have known. He lived a long and rewarding life and whilst he will be sorely missed by his friends and family, we can all be grateful for his impact on our lives as we wish him on to eternal rest. God bless you John, may you rest in peace.

Saxthorpe with Corpusty

Drop in to the Snowdrops!

The glorious carpet of snowdrops at the Old Rectory, Saxthorpe, will be open for viewing again this year - along with croissants, coffee and cake across the road in St Andrew’s Church, where you can park. Saturday 17th February, 10am to 12 noon. Some of the paths may be slippery, so stout shoes or boots recommended.



John Birchall
584290

Silver Screen comes to Village Hall

The silver screen comes to the village hall in February with three cracking films, opening on Friday 2nd, 7pm, when Michael Caine and Glenda Jackson star in *The Great Escaper*. This will be followed on Friday 1st March at 7pm with *Barbie* and the next day a matinee showing at 3pm of *Wonka*.

A Merry Dance for Plough Sunday!

Holt Ridge Morris Dancers led the revival of Plough Sunday celebrations, joining a procession from the plough on Corpusty Green to St Andrew’s Church - and then back again to dance outside the Dukes Head pub. The Rev Canon David Longe blessed the ploughs, both ancient and modern (and very large), and a few garden tools before the service. The ceremony marked that start of the agricultural year, looking forward to Spring while recognising that even in the best of years much work lies ahead for all who work the land before harvest.

Community Spirit Pays Dividends

If 2023 is worth remembering for anything, it is the strengthening of community spirit across Corpusty & Saxthorpe. The thread running through this has been Coffee, Cake & Chat at St Andrews, and during the weeks of winter a grant from the Norfolk Community Foundation allowed St A’s to continue to offer a warm welcome every Wednesday (10.00 to 11.00). Not only have these been enjoyable social occasions for young and old, they have also been essential in developing a parish network that has supported well-established community events and new endeavours. Most recently, the Christmas Tree Festival was a great success, while it was standing room only at the Christmas Eve Candlelit Service. As a result of these and other events, St Andrew’s finances are in better shape than a year ago - but the pressures don’t go away and the challenge is to come up with fresh ideas for 2024. What’s more, the need to re-cover the south aisle and south side of the main roof was underlined by leaks during recent rainstorms. The PCC has asked for a specialist view on what needs to be done and the likely cost.

Bottle bank income available

Recycling glass through the Village Green bottle banks raises money that the Parish Council passes on to local charities. An allocation has already been made to Holt Youth Project but the council still has around £400 available. Applications on behalf of local charities should be made by contacting the Parish Council clerk on 07894 061571, email c.sparishclerk@gmail.com.

Allotments Available

The Parish Council has at least two large allotments available at Little London for £20 a year. One has been vacant for some time and has become overgrown but this will be cleared to make it easier to return to cultivation. Anyone interested should contact the Parish Clerk on 07894 061571, email c.sparishclerk@gmail.com.

A Matlaske Benefice Wall Calendar – Your Help Needed!

Plans are afoot to make a wall calendar for the Matlaske Benefice. The first one would be for 2025. It would promote a Christian spirituality of the land: appreciating it as God’s gift for our livelihoods, food, and enjoyment, and promoting our care of its beauty and fruitfulness.

We would like people in the Benefice to offer content such as:

- Your photographs of countryside and country life that celebrate God’s blessings through nature and natural cycles, the beauty of the agricultural and pastoral landscape, and human care for the countryside.
- Your favourite Bible texts bearing on God’s care, the beauty of nature, stewardship of the land, the lives of those who live and work in the countryside.
- Short lines of your favourite poetry, sacred or secular, on the same themes.

Please send your suggestions (and any questions) to matlaske_benefice_calendar@cantab.net. We can discuss any copyright issues. Thank you. Duncan Wood & the team.

COMMUNITY CONNECTORS AT NORTH NORFOLK DISTRICT COUNCIL

Do you want to find out about local community groups and services?

Do you need financial or emotional assistance?

Would you like some more information about food hubs and warm spaces?

Are you new to the area and would like to meet people or maybe volunteer?

Do you run a group and would like help with promotion and support with funding?

If so, please get in touch with your local community connector.



North Norfolk
**Health &
Wellbeing
Partnership**

www.north-norfolk.gov.uk/communityconnectors

communityconnectors@north-norfolk.gov.uk

01263 513811

The Village Gardener - To Plant a Garden is to Believe in Tomorrow



Firstly, a delayed Happy New Year to you all! As this New Year stands at the moment, I think we have had easier starts, but gardening is all about working with what you do have, with a nice side order of aspirational daydreaming. So, what do we have? Well, now we still have a very waterlogged garden, the temperatures have dipped and combined with a persistent North Easterly the garden is starting to dry out, but it's a slow process just because of the sheer volume of water. So, what can be done this month? Because we have had quite strong winds this winter then some tidying and checking on fencing supports etc. is a good start, keeping to hard paths where possible. If you haven't done so already and if those North Easterlies are being particularly testing then a proper sort out of your tool sheds and potting sheds could be a good start. Not only a cathartic experience, I consider it a more wholesome outdoorsy version of decluttering... It does mean when the better weather gets here you will be all set to crack on.

February might be the shortest of months but as it notoriously can be a real brute of a month, those 28 days can be testing! The best thing we can do is focus on the glimmers of hope, this is where gardening comes into its own. There is something completely joyful about setting seeds in a nice snug potting shed when it's thoroughly inhospitable outside. This is where your best friend is a heated propagator. A nice steady gentle heat that will help get your fussier seeds going – by fussy, I mean aubergines and chillies and peppers. As all three need a very long growing season they really do need the cosy head start that a heated propagator provides. It's also a promise to yourself and a sign of easier times to come. The year will turn and the days will get longer.

So, looking forward to better chirpier days, February is a great month for planning when it's too horrid to be outside, so finishing that seed order if you haven't already, working out how much compost you need to get in ditto mulch woodchip and such like. So, whilst not as a therapeutic as being outside you are still taking steps towards easier times and that's the whole point of gardening... Hope!

No question this month, instead a rather good gardening quote which when I am wading through our super water logged, I will do well to remember...

“If you would be happy all your life, plant a garden” Nan Fairbrother (1913-71)

Do keep the questions coming in! Email us at redmaple@btinternet.com as ever the most interesting question will be published next month.

Michelle and Mick McCarter

Our Local Toads Need Your Help



North Norfolk is fortunate in still having a good number of ponds that are used by amphibians – toads, frogs and newts – for spawning in February-March each year. Most ponds, including newly installed garden ponds, are likely to be used by frogs and newts but only a few are used by toads, who are faithful to their birth pond. There are several ponds in our group of parishes that have been used by generations of toads, to which they migrate up to a mile or more at night to breed, then back again to their 'home patch'.

Toads are not fast movers, and this can make them particularly vulnerable to road traffic on

migration to and from their pond – as well as crossing roads, they often use stretches of roads and tracks as it's easier for them to crawl along these than through thick vegetation. Also, male toads will often sit in roads where they can see around them, waiting for a female to grab and hitch a lift to the pond, where they are in 'pole position' for fertilising her eggs.

There are organised toad patrols by local volunteers to help toads and other amphibians get safely across roads near breeding ponds at Hempstead and Edgefield. If you'd like to help with these, please see the information under these parishes.

If you'd like to find out more about toads and helping with patrols, there is a meeting at the 'pop-up pub' at 7pm on Friday 9th February at High Kelling village hall – just turn up. You can also help by:

- Being aware of where toad patrols take place during February and March, watch out for warning signs, and drive carefully near these, to help both the toads and the patrollers (there are also patrols nearby at Selbrigg Pond and North Barningham).
- Develop 'toad awareness' if you are driving on rural roads at night, especially in February and March, but also any time over the spring and summer, as toads still come out to hunt at night when migration is over. They're most likely to be out in mild and wet or damp weather. If you drive reasonably slowly and watch the road carefully, you can see them on the road in the car headlights and hopefully avoid them with your wheels.

Not all local ponds with breeding toads have a patrol – please also be especially careful in early spring near Pond Hills, Hempstead, and Plumstead Hall Farm up to Baconsthorpe.

Thank you for helping our local toads!

Tim Venes



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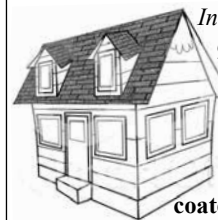
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