



Is This The Tallest Sunflower In Watton?



Dale Edwards of Merton Road, Watton, sent in this cracking shot of his homegrown sunflower, which blasted past expectations in early August to hit a towering 13 feet 2 inches. A blazing tribute to 2026's Summer of sun!! Surely this has to be a Watton record - if not a district one? . . . *Unless you know better . . .*



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Water, Water Everywhere, and not a drop to drink

I received the following email from David Cairns on 22nd July:

"I have read the newspaper since moving to Watton 2 years ago and very informative reading about the town. Read with interest about the steps taken about the flood prevention that have taken place. Now we have a shortage of water and it seems a complete reversal of this very important commodity.

Like the majority of people we are doing our best to conform with the steps asked of us in preserving the water supply, but am getting very annoyed that our water authority seems to have a cavalier attitude to preserving every little drop of the stuff.

Point in hand a water leak outside #3 Frost Close that my wife reported on Tuesday of last week. Think she was told that it had been reported already. Still leaking today and running down both gutters.

Apparently there is a map of leaks with a spanner showing that it is in hand, but still leaking. Not an engineer but assume that there is a triage for the degree of leak and that is not a bad one.

But you if my neighbour reported me for

using my hosepipe for flower watering they would be round within hours and fine me for "wasting" water. Funny old world isn't it."

After visiting the leak myself the next morning, I was quite surprised to see that this was, as we say in Norfolk, a fair old leak. Observing one drain, I conservatively estimated the flow at around one litre per minute, although it could easily have been twice that. It sounded very much like a small stream. As two drains were receiving the water, the total flow was around two litres per minute - roughly 2,880 litres per day. I checked the leak map and could see the leak was first logged by Anglian Water on Monday 15th June.



An Anglian Water spokesperson responded to my raising the issue with them:

"During periods of hot weather, the high temperatures can cause ground movement that results in an increase of burst water mains or leaks. Our teams continue working hard through the hot weather to prioritise repairs that are having the greatest impact on customers' water supplies and those resulting in the highest water loss. We'd like to thank our customers for their patience while we respond to the challenges created by this period of exceptionally warm weather."

On the 30th July, now around six weeks after the leak was first reported, Dave

emailed again to say that contractors had arrived around 7pm the previous evening and the leak had been capped by the morning. In total, somewhere in the region of 126,720 litres of water went down the drains. Research suggests that this would supply the average family of four for seven to nine months.

I understand that Anglian Water are busy, and felt able to disregard a leak that must have been regarded as minor, given the priority it received. But this seems extraordinary to my simple mind.

We are, at the time of writing, officially in a drought. We are constantly being told the weather is changing, and that we will face these conditions more and more going forward. And as David pointed out, we are actively planning locally for regular flooding problems. Perhaps we — and Anglian Water — should be planning for regular droughts as well.

At the very least, Anglian Water should have more teams ready to respond to leaks promptly and efficiently. I have no doubt they will tell us that this would raise the cost of water neither do I doubt that they are working hard with what they have.

Perhaps the real question is whether life's essentials - energy and water - should ever be in private hands. And if not, what other foundations of daily life deserve the same scrutiny? Because if we want to shape our own destiny, we must be willing to question the systems that shape it now - not simply accept what shareholders and stock markets decide for us.

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The View from Westminster

With Terry Jermy, Member of Parliament for South West Norfolk

Over the past few weeks, I have been thrilled to hold my annual summer listening tour, where I travel to as many of South West Norfolk's 72 villages over the summer to meet with local residents. This complements my year-round work holding surgeries and engagement events in Swaffham, Downham Market and Thetford. I am always pleased to be able to meet with constituents in their local community to discuss issues of concern and talk about how I can provide support, and also share details of the work I have been doing as your MP. When I stood for election, I made clear my commitment to being a constituency MP. Being accessible is a key part of my work and is something I am acutely aware has not always been afforded to us by my predecessor. This was one of my motivations for standing to be your MP and was also front of mind when building my constituency team.

I regularly share details about the meetings I have with South West Norfolk residents, charities, community groups and businesses, and the work I do in Parliament, but a huge part of my work and that of my team relates to casework and direct support for local residents. Casework is when residents get in touch, either in person at one of my constituency advice surgeries, at a local coffee morning or via email with a matter that needs the support of my office. It can range from providing support to residents in need of housing repairs, to pushing Norfolk County Council to reconsider a Blue Badge application,

to support farmers in accessing Government schemes, to securing appointments with local health services, to discussing my stance on a particular policy issue.

Much of this isn't shareable publicly but can be life-changing for the people involved.

Casework is a crucial part of my role, and the issues and matters my team and I help to support and address often highlight not only the rural inequalities our area faces, but the impact and interconnectedness between the difficulties facing our services and situation today, and the decisions and policies implemented going back years and even decades.

Over the past few weeks, I have held surgeries in Narborough, Marham, North Pickenham, Ashill, Great Cressingham, Ashill, Great Cressingham, Hilgay, Southery, Wereham, Stoke Ferry, South Lopham, Kenninghall, East Harling, Foulden, Watlington, Stow Bardolph, Shouldham, Wigganham, St Mary Magdalen, Marshland St James, Tilney St Lawrence, Weeting, Felthwell, Methwold, Northwold, Emneth, Outwell, Upwell and Welney.

As is so often the case, many of the conversations cantered on how our local services continue to cause concern, particularly at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, which serves the north of the constituency. These concerns and constituency casework formed a large part of my recent meeting with Jo Segasby, the Deputy Group Chief Executive and Chief Delivery Officer of the Norfolk and Waveney University Hospitals Group, which the QEH is part of. Some of the challenges

relate to the building itself, which is why I was delighted to attend the recent ground-breaking ceremony for the new multi-storey car park. This represented a significant step forward for healthcare in West Norfolk as it will free up the land needed to allow the construction of the new £1.4 billion hospital to take place.

Other key discussion points included local planning issues and how we can create the communities we need for the future, the environment and climate change, adult social care, immigration and asylum, support for Palestine, business rates, anti-social behaviour, and perhaps unsurprisingly, given the national news, plenty of residents were praising the positive start made by our new Prime Minister, Andy Burnham.

Should you or someone you know need support, please do email me:

terry.jermy.mp@parliament.uk



Hare and Seek - the Answer, the Winner & the Next Clue

Last month's clue read: *"Attention! Harry's responsibilities are beginning to weigh heavily on his shoulders (if hares have shoulders?) and he has been trying to find a way to relieve the stress on him. He decided the best way was to get some fresh air and go for a long walk."*

The word "Attention!" is of course, a command used in the armed forces - Army, Navy and Air Force. We do not have anything relating to the Navy so that leaves Army and Air Force. The last part said he was going on a long walk - and page 11 there was an article about Watton Army Cadets doing the 'Caterham Yomp' (a Yomp being a long march) to raise money for the Army Benevolent Fund. And he can be seen on the shoulders of one of the cadets. In fact one of the other cadets was pointing at Harry and laughing!! Too easy???

Watton Army Cadets Help Raise £5,812



The winner drawn last month was: J Morrice. well done to you! A £10 voucher to spend at Watton Bakery prize is yours! There was also a secret Editor's Special Prize, for beating so many grown ups at this game and that went to 10 years old Emelia RB. Emelia's entry was the first received when the paper was on general release. Well done young lady!

If you took part, call into Adcocks and you can collect a small Fridge Magnet for your trouble if I haven't seen you already. Now I wonder where Harry is hiding this month.

How to Play Hare & Seek and a clue to help

Each month, a tiny black hare will be hiding somewhere in the pages of the Watton & Wayland Times. Your job is simple: spot him. He could be tucked into an advert, peeking from a photograph, or lurking in a puzzle grid or somewhere else, but he won't make it easy for you, he is quite good at staying unseen. Once you've found him, just let me know where he is. Pop your answer over to me by email or message, and you'll be entered into the winners' draw. One correct finder will be crowned that month's winner, and win a £10 Watton Bakery Voucher.

Sharpen your eyes . . .

Well, if you want my onion, I think Harry has been Showing off too much lately. That's my First thought.

Memory Corner - Where are you now?

Maureen Stebbings, sent in this picture of the Guides Easter Bonnet Challenge from 1979, and she wonders where you all are now. The names, as recorded in the photo-mount are as listed here so apologies for spelling! Can you fill in the blanks and correct me?

Back row to front, and left to right . . .

Susan Laydd, N Cullum, Debbie Egbon, Lucy Brentnall, Julie Reeve.
Sarah Ellis, Tara Thomas, Karen Godfrey, Susan Buckle, Marie Garner.
Allison Quantil, Claire Nykinnon, Stella Egbon, Karan Andrew



Watton Rotary Club Supports Crucial Crew Event

Many challenges await Year 6 children (aged 10-11) as they move from Primary to Secondary School. Besides bullying, both physical and online, there are many other dangers such as substance abuse and online grooming, which they need to be aware of. But where can they go for guidance on such issues?

This is where Norfolk Crucial Crew comes in. Led by Norfolk Fire and Rescue Services, Crucial Crew is a multi-agency project, engaging with year 6 students across the county delivering safety messages in a fun and interactive way through hazards presented in a safe controlled environment. The programme involves the Fire Service working alongside partners including Norfolk Constabulary, NHS, Road Safety, RNLI, East Anglia Air Ambulance, St Johns Ambulance and HM Coast Guard.

The latest Crucial Crew event took place in July, over 5 days at City College Norwich and was attended by almost 900 pupils from across Norfolk (including from our area) and 84 teachers. All have now been educated with skills and knowledge which will help prepare them for risks and dangers they may experience as they approach their teenage years.

A day spent at Crucial Crew enables the different services and organisations, impart important

information on how to stay safe in various places and situations which children may encounter in day-to-day life. Pupils are separated into groups and move around the site visiting short workshops run by each partner organisation. The Rotary Club's role on the day is to ensure that all pupils move safely between the different rooms.

The children experience and participate in a range of realistic scenarios which may be potentially life threatening to raise their awareness of what they can do to increase their own and others' safety. The scheme's realism is particularly appealing to the children.

Keith Thomas, President of Watton Rotary Club, said 'We think Crucial Crew is a valuable resource in preparing children for some of the dangers they may face as they grow older, and we are delighted to offer our services to help make the day a success'.



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In Your Garden With Lotta Potts

Welcome to September. Usually it's been a nice gentle month taking us from hot summer to autumn. Goodness only knows what this year's will bring as writing this just before the deadline the temperature is hitting 30deg and will be for a few more days. After that who knows? Anyway the usual dates of note:

1st the start of Meteorological Autumn

1st Feast Day of St Fiacre, patron saint of gardeners if not celebrated 31st August. Moveable feast!

29th Michaelmas Day. Feast of St Michael the Archangel, triumph of good over evil – St Michael slew the devil in the form of a dragon. I'm confused here. What about our patron St George?

Michaelmas daisies will be in flower in its many forms, most modern varieties aren't so susceptible to powdery mildew as the older ones. Eat your blackberries before this day as they are said to have been interfered with by said devil and will taste foul. Surely that's the wrong way round? Ah well on we go.

To get rid of my heatwave misery I had a look round the garden briefly and was surprised to find the following all in growth/flower or surviving:

Salvia hotlips, buddleja, peony plants, clematis, wisteria, rhubarb, verbenabonariensis, verbenashrub, geranium, holly, trachleospermum jasminioides, bindweed, ground elder. Perovskia, self-sown cosmos and marigolds, asparagus, geraniums, lupins, some roses, artemisia 'lads love' (scented evergreen shrub if you're not familiar), myrtle, ceanothus, a couple of ornamental grasses. Nothing in this list has been watered. At all for years. I have to say that they have all been in the ground for some time so I would think it best to plant in autumn rather than spring, hope we get another wet winter without the floods but with apologies to the sellers of plants put off buying plants until next month.

In the meantime here's suggestions for what would be a normal September, mists and mellow fruitfulness etc.

Bizarrely autumn and spring flowering bulbs are for planting now. Autumn crocus and colchicums with large crocus-like flowers are on sale late summer to early autumn and have to be planted right away as they will commence flowering. Their real party-piece is that they can just get on with it if left on a window-sill. They have to be planted afterwards but look stunning, even magical. How does anything grow and produce large flowers without compost or water? Plant spring flowering bulbs except tulips. The narcissus family need an amazingly long time to establish roots before the leaves appear in early spring but tulips are best left until later - November to the end of December is ideal. Add new winter-flowering and spring-flowering plants to the border. Divide herbaceous perennials while the soil is still warm. There's always a debate as to whether this should be done in autumn or spring so we have to assume that either season will do. Tall examples should be staked or tied in before autumnal gales.

A lot of pruning can still be done - anything out of place and the usual dead, weak or diseased branches. Prune late-summer flowering shrubs and give evergreen hedges and conifers a final trim to make sure they are in shape for winter. However, this is a generalisation and it's as well to check the

labels. If the weather is already autumnal, you can now plant and move shrubs and trees without having to worry excessively about their survival and establishment. Shrubs planted now will get off to a flying start next spring, as they will have had all winter to settle in.

Climbing roses can be pruned once they have finished flowering; sideshoots from the main branches can be cut back to a couple of buds. Any dead, diseased or spindly growth should be cut out and new young shoots tied in to the supports, from the base. If there is an old, thick and woody, unproductive stem, it can be removed from the base to stimulate more vigorous growth. Don't do this to roses you have grown for hips!

Take semi-ripe cuttings of evergreen shrubs. Take hardwood cuttings of roses, choosing well-ripened, healthy shoots. These should be about 12" (or 30cm in new money), make a slit in the ground with a spade and put in the cuttings right way up about 9" (22cm) apart. Leave them alone for a year. Some of them will root and it's as well to plant them somewhere out of the way so they don't get disturbed.

Bulbs and tubers that have finished flowering and are not winter-hardy should be removed from the ground. This tends to depend on whether or not there's a frost as many of the more tender plants, such as dahlias and cannas, will carry on. It's a shame to waste any flowers and some people leave them in with a bit of protection. If lifting them, store in trays of compost or sand. There's always disagreement as to whether the storage medium should be kept moist or dry. Frost-free is always a good idea.

With all the harvesting going on at this time of year, you'll be producing a lot of 'waste'. Potato haulm, sweetcorn stalks and brassica stems. Of course, to the gardener, there is no waste, just compost material. If you have the use of a shredder, it's well worth shredding the more woody materials. It's amazing how quickly shredded materials rot down compared with normal. The shredded pile is heating up before you have even got it to the heap. If you don't have a shredder, try bashing thick brassica stalks with a large hammer. It will break them up enough to get them rotted down in one go.

Collect and sow seed from perennials and hardy annuals. Alternatively just let them get on with it and seed about where they will. The results are interesting to say the least and the self-sown survivors always do much better than fresh out of the packet ones. I now have an interesting selection of sunflowers and cosmos. I can't remember when I sowed seeds of either. They really are tough, even though they're only supposed to be half-hardy. Violas do well. I did try seeds once but they weren't a great success so I usually buy plants to put in pots and baskets in late spring. Dead-heading is not my favourite occupation so their seeds escape and they do like a crack in paving! It cheers up an otherwise dull path.

Lawns need a lot of attention at this time of year. Starting with new ones – now is the time to sow seed as long as the area has been well prepared. This takes the form of clearing weeds and stones, levelling, treading firm, raking and sowing then raking again to cover at least some of the seed. Watering will be needed unless it rains nicely. If it's a monsoon cross your fingers! On the other hand wait until October and plant turf. Either way keep off it until next year.

Established lawns should be raked over to remove thatch – the combination of moss and mowings that have accumulated. This is a good workout for you and the lawn. It then

should be spiked every couple of years on our sandy soil. Clay needs it more often. A bit more exercise for the gardener as it means poking the tines of the fork into the lawn, wiggling about and doing this every few inches. Machines will do both tasks and (I believe) can be hired. Feed with low-nitrogen formula to toughen up the grass for winter. Then top-dress with about quarter of an inch of fine soil or a compost mix and spread it with a yard brush. Some of it will go into the holes that you created with the spiking and the worms will do the rest. Now you are exhausted but you don't have to do it all at once – spread it out over the month or until October or better still pay someone else to do it.

If you're looking at something that resembles the Sahara during September just keep this copy and use it in October.

Last but not at all least - keep on weeding!

Free gaming bus coming to Watton 28th August

A gaming party van coming to Wayland House, Watton, on 28th August, offering young people to the chance to play Mario Kart, FIFA, or Minecraft on the latest consoles in a safe, social environment.

This event form part of a new year-long programme of events organised and funded by Breckland Council and designed to celebrate the district's historic market towns. The project aims support local businesses, increase footfall to the five local towns, and bring communities together through a calendar of free activities and events for people of all ages to enjoy.

New Apprenticeship Funding and Incentives for Employers in Breckland

Recent government apprenticeship funding changes have introduced additional support for employers looking to recruit new apprentices or develop existing young employees.

From 1 August 2026, apprenticeship training and assessment costs for eligible 16–24-year-old apprentices can now be fully funded for employers, up to the funding band maximum. This gives businesses a valuable opportunity to invest in future talent, build skills around real workplace needs and create career opportunities for young people.

Employers may also be able to access a range of additional incentives and savings, depending on eligibility:

- £1,000 Young Apprentice Incentive Available for employers taking on an apprentice aged 16–18, or aged 19–24 with an Education, Health and Care plan or who is a care leaver.
- £3,000 Youth Jobs Grant Available for employers hiring an individual aged 18–24 who has been receiving Universal Credit and looking for work for six months or more.

National Insurance Savings Employers may be exempt from paying Class 1 National Insurance Contributions for apprentices under 25 earning less than £967 per week.

- £2,000 Non-Levy Apprenticeship Hiring Incentive From October 2026, employers that do not pay the apprenticeship levy could receive up to £2,000 for hiring an apprentice aged 16–24.

No soft soap By Miss Mardle

Mum turned off the TV the other night By 'eck, she didn't half give us a fright "There's nowt worth watching" she did implore and hid the remote in her secret drawer.

We sat and stared at the big black screen. We even watched the budgie preen. We sat in silence lost for words, at school we'd be called TV-less nerds.

Mum made our dinner, but we couldn't eat we desperately missed Coronation Street. Just how to school could our mum send us when we hadn't seen tonight's Eastenders.

Mum turned the TV back on just now after we'd had a blazing row on how to spell a word in scrabble She screamed "You are a Goggle eyed rabble"

She knew the only way to get some calm was to sit us in front of Emmerdale Farm we watched in silence, nowt was said then we took the High Road up to bed.

Afternoon Teas at All Saints Threxton

All Saints Church at Threxton will be open serving afternoon teas on Sunday 20th September from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. Come along and see our village Church and enjoy a cup of tea / coffee and homemade cakes. Browse our books, along with cakes to take home. Plenty of free parking. Make a note of the date . . . Sunday 20th September 2 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Apprenticeships are a practical way for employers to address skills gaps, support workforce planning and develop people who understand the needs of the business. They can be used to recruit someone new into the organisation or to upskill an existing employee who is ready to progress, while creating valuable career opportunities for people to learn, earn and build their future.

Poultec Training supports employers with apprenticeship training across a range of sectors, including business administration, customer service, leadership and management, dental, healthcare, food and drink manufacturing, and poultry. Our team provides apprentice recruitment support, funding guidance, flexible training delivery and ongoing learner support, helping businesses understand eligibility and identifying suitable apprenticeship routes for new recruits or existing employees.

With new funding and incentives available, now is a strong time for employers to explore how apprenticeships could support their future workforce.

To find out more about recruiting an apprentice or developing an existing employee, contact Poultec Training:

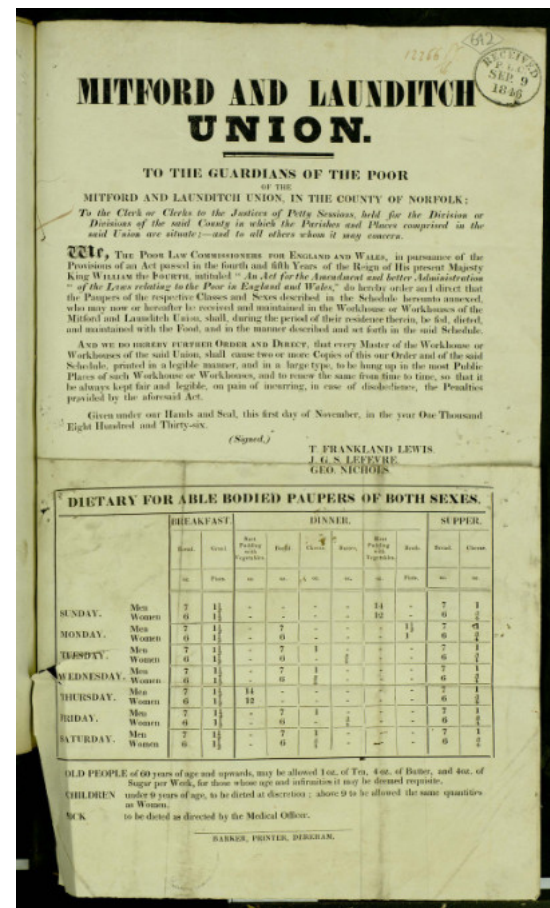
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The Norfolk woman who fought the system - and survived against the odds

She was a workhouse child, a prisoner, a psychiatric patient and a mother. But Harriet Kettle's extraordinary life tells a very different story about Victorian Norfolk. More than 150 years ago, a young Norfolk woman stood accused of trying to burn down the institution that had been her home. Her name was Harriet Kettle – and her story is now being brought back to life in a fascinating book by historian Andy Reid (pictured). Born into poverty in Cranworth around the time Queen Victoria came to the throne, Harriet experienced hardship from childhood. Her mother died when she was young, while her father was frequently

absent and spent periods in prison. With no relatives able or willing to take responsibility for her, Harriet was eventually brought up in Gressenhall Workhouse. She was not a child who quietly accepted the harsh regime of Victorian poor relief. Before the age of twenty, Harriet repeatedly found herself in conflict with authority. Her turbulent young life took her from Gressenhall to Norwich, Walsingham House of Correction (pictured below today by Andy) and Wymondham House of Correction. When these institutions could not handle her, she was admitted to the Norfolk County Lunatic Asylum at Thorpe and to Bethlem Hospital in London before being sent back to Gressenhall. Then came one of the most dramatic episodes of her life. In 1858, Harriet was accused of attempting to set fire to the Gressenhall Workhouse. The records reveal a young woman who had already experienced poverty, punishment and institutionalisation, but who continued to resist the authorities controlling almost every aspect of her existence. Her story might have ended there. Instead,

Harriet survived. In 1865, aged about 27, she married William Head, an agricultural labourer, who lived in Shipdham Road, Toftwood Common on the south side of East Dereham. Despite continuing financial difficulties, the marriage marked the beginning of a new chapter. Harriet became a mother and eventually a grandmother. Family life was not without tragedy. In 1892, Harriet's eldest daughter Matilda died following a difficult childbirth, leaving Harriet to help care for her grandson. For Andy Reid, Harriet's significance lies precisely in the fact that she was not famous. Her life allows us to see Victorian Norfolk from the perspective of someone at the bottom of society – a woman whose experiences would otherwise have been easily forgotten. Drawing on records from the Norfolk Record Office, National Archives, newspapers and institutions including Bethlem, Reid reconstructs Harriet's life from the fragments left behind. And there is a final twist to her remarkable story. Harriet survived into old age and grandmotherhood, only to die in 1916 at Gressenhall Workhouse – the very institution where her difficult journey had begun. Harriet Kettle: Pauper, Prisoner, Patient and Parent in Victorian Norfolk offers a compelling glimpse into a forgotten Norfolk life – and a powerful reminder that behind the records of workhouses, prisons and asylums were real people, with stories of their own. **Harriet Kettle: Pauper, Prisoner, Patient and Parent in Victorian Norfolk (ISBN: 978 1 909796 84 3, £13.95) is available locally from The Norfolk Gift Company, 11 High Street, Watton, Thetford, IP25 6AB, Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse Museum of Rural Life and online from the Poppyland Publishing:- poppyland.co.uk.**



Love Where You Live? Help Lead It Forward!

Do you like where you live? If the answer is yes, Merton Parish Council would like to ask you a few more questions. Do you live in or near Merton? If you consider yourself “near”, that means within three miles. Are you over the age of eighteen? Are you listed on the Electoral Roll? Have you lived in the area for more than a year, or run a business locally for more than a year? Do you have an interest in the place you call home, and would you like to help improve it? Merton Parish Council is currently seeking two new councillors to join the team. Parish Council meetings take place five times a year and last no more than two hours, making the role accessible for those who want to contribute without a heavy time commitment. If any of the above resonates with you and you feel you could play a part in shaping the future of the parish, the Parish Clerk would be delighted to hear from you. You can get in touch by email at clerk@mertonparishcouncil.gov.uk or by phone on 01953 884082.

Exercise Classes at the Watton & Wayland Memory Cafe

Yes, there's no stopping us now we have our Exercise trainer, Jack, on board! We need to acquire some better music so we can exercise to the beat, but we are working on that. A very pleasant way to spend a morning, (even if it is warm!). If you or someone you know is a carer for a family member with dementia and would like to join us in a variety of activities, support, friendship and laughter, as well as separate carers' meetings, then why not pop along to see what we do? **We meet every FIRST and THIRD TUESDAY of each MONTH from 0930 - 12 noon** in the Methodist Centre in Watton High Street. We look forward to meeting you. **Forthcoming dates: Tuesday 1st September and 15th September**

Swaffham & District u3a

Over 100 Nature enthusiastic members enjoyed an inspiring talk by David Horsley from the Norfolk Wildlife Trust on 6th August. The Trust is the oldest one in the country. Established in 1926 it now manages over 60 nature reserves and other protected sites in Norfolk, including ten kilometres of coastline, nine Norfolk Broads, nine National Nature Reserves and five ancient woodlands. They protect and restore Norfolk's wild spaces by managing the reserves and working in partnership with other organisation throughout the county. Through their various projects, events, campaigns and education activities, they hope to inspire others to take care of and enjoy the wildlife in Norfolk. 30th Anniversary Celebration On 3rd September we are celebrating the 30th Anniversary of the Swaffham & District u3a, formerly called Wissey u3a. A

fun morning with entertainment from some of the groups and a cake to be cut. The talk in October will be about the work of 'Nelson's Journey, the charity that supports children who are bereaved through loss of a loved one. The monthly meetings afford an opportunity for members to join together, have a cup of tea/coffee and socialise before being entertained by excellent speakers. Members can join one of over thirty groups on offer such as Archery, Music appreciation, both classical and rock, French, and Walking. See the website for more information. Anyone is welcome to join the u3a. The only criterion to join is that you are no longer in full-time employment and have the time to take part in the activities on offer. We meet at Holme Hale Village Hall on the first Thursday of each month. Doors open at 9.45am for socialising and the meeting starts promptly at 10.30am finishing by 12 noon. Further details on all the activities covered by Swaffham & District u3a are available on our website: <https://swaffham.u3asite.uk/>



Town Council updates:

Sgt Peter Fuller of the Watton Safer Neighbourhood Team attended on July 28th to speak with the Council prior to the meeting start, he attended with PC Jade Blanchflower who was introduced as the new Beat Manager for Watton. Jade plans to be seen out and about in Watton and said she will focus on anti-social drivers along Norwich Road, street drinking, and ongoing reported urinating around the High Street area. The Team is keen to engage with the community and where possible be present at events within the Town. Message was given for members of the public to continue reporting any concerns as the Police cannot act on matters they are unaware of.

It was felt that the Town Council should keep the remaining eight wooden hares purchased for the Hares Trail to be used to promote the town. The Events and Marketing officer will be putting together a full proposal for 25/08 full town council meeting on how to use the remaining hares as part of a project for this years Love Your Market Town grant.

It was resolved that Jacqueline White and Cathy Halfacre will be reserve members of the Town Council finance committee and it was suggested that the new member of the Town Council could be asked to act as reserve member for the HR Committee.

Quotes for building maintenance work to the Clock Tower were presented in the agenda pack for the meeting. It was agreed that the Finance Committee should be tasked with considering the quotes and matching them against the surveyors report before bringing a recommendation back to Full Council.

It was resolved to sign the Deed of Novation relating to Kittell Close Car Park and the TR5 form to transfer ownership of the car parks off Kittell Close, Thetford Road, and the South Side of the High Street.

Following concern with the difficulty obtaining correct bus timetables for bus services in Watton, County Councillor Jack White has raised the issues with both Norfolk County Council Highways and the service provider. He will share any updates received with the Town Council.

To mark the 40th anniversary of Watton Twinning Association the Council has purchased two framed copies of the emblems of Watton and Weeze. One to be kept at Wayland Hall and one to be presented to Weeze on the Twinning visit to Watton in 2027.

It was resolved that the Town Council will support the request from the Twinning Association to facilitate a celebratory event on Sunday 16th May 2027 to mark 40 years of Twinning. A beer-fest style town-wide event was suggested and the Events and Marketing Officer will be tasked with liaising with the Twinning Association to plan this event. It was also stated that former trees planted to acknowledge the twinning of the two towns have been lost and it would be an appropriate time to re-plant two replacement trees during the 2027 40th anniversary Twinning visit. The Council was also asked to stage a reception in the Council Chamber on the morning of May 15th for the visitors from Weeze.

On 12/08 the men's public toilets were set alight, the Town Council would just like to thank those members of the public that called both the Town Council office to

inform the clerk, and called the emergency services. Thankfully the emergency services turned up and got the fire under control before the entire block was alight. The men's toilets will be closed for the foreseeable future whilst the damage is assessed and they are repaired, the women's toilets will remain open.

The Town Council interviewed and co-opted a new Town Council member on 11/08 - we would like to welcome Paul Toombs to the Council.

A Word from the Mayor

For generations, the market has been one of the defining features of the British High Street. Long before online shopping, retail parks and supermarket chains changed the way people bought goods, the market was where communities gathered, traders built livelihoods and towns expressed their identity. It was not simply a place to buy fruit, vegetables, clothing or household goods. It was a place to meet friends and neighbours and catch up on town news. Our market is our strongest link to our past and the town's market tradition can be traced to a charter in 1204. Today, as many High Streets face pressure from changing shopping habits, vacant shops, rising costs and reduced footfall, the role of the market is more important than ever. A successful market can help bring people back into town centres, support independent businesses, provide affordable goods, create opportunities for new traders and restore the sense that the High Street belongs to the whole community. In an age when many town centres are searching for a new purpose, markets offer something both old and new, offering local economic and social renewal. The traditional High Street has undergone a major transformation. For much of the twentieth century, town centres were dominated by retail with national chains, banks, post offices and independent shops. In recent years, however, online retail, out-of-town shopping, the effects of the pandemic and changing consumer expectations have weakened that model.

Markets are retail, but they are also more than that. They are events, meeting places, and opportunities for small businesses. Unlike a fixed shopfront, a market can change from week to week, respond quickly to demand and offer variety without requiring large premises or long leases. This flexibility makes markets especially valuable at a time when towns need adaptable solutions to try and increase footfall to benefit the whole of the High Street and footfall is one of the strongest indicators of High Street vitality. A town High Street that attracts people feels safer, more active and more appealing. It also gives surrounding shops, cafés and services a better chance of trading successfully. Markets are particularly effective at generating footfall because they create a reason to visit at a specific time. A weekly, monthly or seasonal market gives people an occasion to plan around, whether they are shopping for fresh produce and household items, browsing craft stalls, meeting friends or simply enjoying the atmosphere. This knock on effect benefits more than the stallholders themselves. Visitors who come



**FOOD FESTIVAL & FUN FAIR
WITH FIREWORKS**

31ST OCTOBER 2026 - FREE ENTRY AND PARKING

GATES OPEN FROM 4PM-8PM @ WAYLAND SHOWGROUND,
BRANDON ROAD, WATTON

FAIRGROUND RIDES AND FOOD STALLS
FROM 4PM, FIREWORK DISPLAY AT 7PM.

DONATIONS ON THE NIGHT ARE GREATLY APPRECIATED

for the market may also visit nearby cafés, pharmacies, libraries and museums, hairdressers, pubs or independent shops. In this way, the market acts as an anchor for the wider High Street economy. It can help turn a quiet town centre into a destination, especially when combined with good signage, accessible transport, seating, public toilets, attractive public spaces and coordinated events. Many towns grew around markets, and that history still shapes their streets, squares and public spaces. Protecting and renewing the market is therefore also a way of protecting local heritage. Market charters, traditional trading days, local produce and distinctive stalls all help tell the story of a place. They remind residents that the High Street is a shared civic inheritance. With all of this in mind, Watton Town Council is passionate about keeping our market alive and is currently investigating ways to help rejuvenate our market. We will, over the coming few weeks, be actively seeking new traders to ensure that we have a market which our town can be proud of. I spoke earlier of heritage. However, this should not mean nostalgia alone. The strongest markets combine tradition with innovation, for example farmers markets, street food evenings, craft fairs, enterprise stalls, cultural festivals, festive markets and specialist events which we hope can all sit alongside our traders. To summarise, the market remains one of the most important

assets a High Street can have. It brings people together, supports local enterprise, strengthens identity, encourages footfall and offers affordable access to goods and experiences. In a time when town centres must adapt to survive, we hope our market will provide a way to make our High Streets more distinctive and an enhancement to our town.

Other Matters

Since the last publication I have been busy with our various Council Committee meetings. However there have been fun things to attend with some of my colleagues where we have volunteered at the Fun Days for the children of our town on Tuesdays during the summer holidays. It was fantastic to see so many children enjoying the activities from bouncy castles, arts and crafts and sports at the Community Centre and on one of the weeks we had in excess of 200 children who attended with their families. The staff, volunteers and charities who attend these events do a marvellous job and I would like to extend the Council's thanks for all that they do.

Last week I judged the allotments on Thetford Road and Church Road in readiness for presenting the winning gardeners with their Certificates on Thursday 13th August at afternoon tea so I will report on the event in the next publication!

WATTON FOOD HUB CALENDAR

SEPTEMBER 2026

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
	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				

TUESDAYS - Food Hub Open 12:30-14:30 **2 SEPTEMBER** - Food Hub Open 16:30-18:30
THURSDAYS - Food Hub Open 09:30-12:00 **16 SEPTEMBER** - Food Hub Open 16:30-18:30

Watton Town Crier

I am Mike Wabe, and I am your Town Crier. If you don't know me, you may well have heard me!

With the coming of modern communications such as radio, television and the Internet, you might think that the Town Crier would become extinct. Not so, and today there are about 250 Town Criers around the country, and we are in great demand for civic ceremonies, charity functions, tourism events, weddings and commercial advertising, where our colourful livery, imposing presence and historical significance are greatly valued.

I do the job because I enjoy keeping an ancient tradition alive and consider it an honour and a privilege to serve Watton and the surrounding community.

I was proud and privileged to be one of just 9 Criers accorded the honour of delivering the Accession Proclamation of King Charles III, which I delivered in a ceremony outside the Town Hall.

If you need an unusual, colourful and LOUD way to promote and event, add a little extra "oomph" to your wedding or provide an unusual surprise to someone on a special day, then I can do all these things and more. You can be sure that I will attract attention!

If you have a shop openings or product launches, I will attract the media as well as the public. My presence will provide a splash of colour and noise.

Do you have a son or daughter who is getting married? I can provide a "wake-up" cry to a bride or a bridegroom. No one sleeps when I'm about! I can also deliver a proclamation at the church as the happy couple exit and/or when they arrive at their Reception venue. I can

announce a betrothal and/or imminent wedding, much like the reading of the banns, but with way more pizzazz!

On a special day, receiving a card and flowers is very nice of course, but why not surprise someone with something very different on their special day? I will write and deliver a special proclamation and provide it printed on parchment-type paper as a memento.

Do you have a new addition to the family? The birth and/or christening of a new baby is always a very special occasion, so why not make it even more memorable? I will compose a specially written proclamation for you and deliver it at a time and place of your choosing. I will provide you with the proclamation printed on parchment-type paper as a memento.

This is something that I REALLY enjoy! Historically, Town Criers checked the quality of the ale sold in inns, and may even have acted as a sort of early Weights and Measures Inspector. An ale tasting event is a colourful and intriguing magnet to attract attention for that opening of a new/refurbished pub or the unveiling of a new beer, or even the launch of a beer festival. Having a Town Crier to "officially" kick the event off by sampling the brew always makes for good photographs.

All that said, it is vitally important to support charity and fund raising events. I am always willing to help, but unless you tell me about it, I can't.

Every event is different, and every proclamation is different. It can take me anything from an hour or two, to a day or so to compose a proclamation that best suits your event. Writing a proclamation is a skilled task and, no matter how good your believe that your copywriting skills are, writing a proclamation is most definitely best left to me.

Have a look at my website – www.towncriermike.co.uk. You can email me either via the Contact Me page on the website, or directly at towncriermike@gmail.com.



Tesco Blue Tokens

The Charlotte Harvey Trust - Watton Community Centre is very pleased to have been chosen to be part of the new Tesco Fruit and Veg Grants - you will be able to vote for the Charlotte Harvey Trust with your Blue Tokens when you shop at Tesco.

The project title is: Watton Food Hub - Feeding Our Future - and we'll be using any funds to increase the amount of free fruit and veg that the Food Hub is able to give away to families using the Hub and at community events run at the Centre! Every token counts!



Summer Fun Tuesdays

This summer we've seen the return of the much loved 'Summer Fun Tuesdays' down at the Watton Community Centre on Harvey Street. The Charlotte Harvey Trust events are supported by the Town Council and it's the third year we've run these events. This summer we had a plethora of sports activities, petting farm, bouncy castles, bubbles workshop, circus skills, crafts, outdoor games, various community groups have joined us, scavenger hunts, refreshments and a visit from the ice cream man! Putting on these events free of charge for the public is something that's very important to us, with the cost of living and trying to keep children entertained over the summer its felt that this is something the Town Council can give back to the community. The staff and volunteers are taking a well deserved break after the summer and we'll be looking forward to seeing all of the children back for the October half term fun day! If any local businesses would like to support these community events by sponsoring an event please do get in touch with the Council Office.



Allotment Open Afternoon

Started in 2002, National Allotments Week is an annual initiative that aims to raise awareness of allotments and their role in helping people live healthier lifestyles, grow their own food, develop friendships, and bolster communities.

National Allotment Week 2026 ran from 10-16th August and here at Watton Town Council we wanted to celebrate our allotments and allotment holders by holding an open afternoon at the Thetford Road Allotments for allotment holders and neighbouring houses to the allotments.

The Mayor, Sarah, went around both allotment sites prior to the open afternoon to pick the winners for best allotment on both sites - on Thetford Road allotment site the best allotment was awarded to plot 19 and the runner up was plot 6. And then at the Church Road allotment site, the best allotment was awarded to plot 1 and the runner up was plot 5.

We were joined at the allotment afternoon by representatives of HMP Wayland, who brought some fantastic bug hotels to be given out to allotment holders and neighbours. Despite the hot weather, we had some allotment holders join us for the event and fantastic afternoon tea was enjoyed by those in attendance.

If you want to join the waiting list for an allotment at either of our allotment sites please pop into the office, give us a call, or email admin@wattontowncouncil.gov.uk.



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Days by Coach 2026

Wednesday 2nd September **Ryan's Birthday Mystery With Lunch**
Adult £45 Child £25

Sat. 12th Sept. **Great Yarmouth & Lowestoft** Adult £25 Child £15

Saturday 3rd Oct. **Springfields Outlet Shopping** Adult £25 Child £15

Saturday 31st October **Boundary Mill & Downtown Garden Centre**
Adult £35 Child £20

Saturday 7th November **Birmingham Shopping & Food Festival**
Adult £40 Child £25

Saturday 21st November **Bury at Christmas** Adult £20 Child £10

Thurs 3rd December **Fakenham Christmas Trees** Adult £15 Child £10

Sunday 13th December **Christmas Lunch** Adult £50

Saturday 19th December **Christmas Lights Tour & Chip Supper**
Adult £30 Child £15

Holidays 2026

Turkey & Tinsel Bournemouth 27th – 30th November

Shows 2026

Cromer Pier Summer Show 5th August 2.30pm Show Adult £50

ABBA Voyage 26th September 3pm Show £125

Knitting & Stitching at Alexandra Palace 10th October Adult £50

Thursford Christmas Spectacular December 2pm Show £65

Cromer Pier Christmas Show 15th Dec. 2.30pm Show Adult £50

NEW 2026 BROCHURE OUT NOW!

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Cash Withdrawals: Convenient access to your money whenever you need it.

Cheque Deposits: Simply use the designated cheque envelopes.

Balance Enquiries: Quickly check your account balance.

Mobile Phone Top-Ups: Keep connected with easy top-ups.

Bill Payments: Pay your household utility bills. (Please note: All bills require a barcode for processing.)

Gas & Electricity Top-Ups: Use your key or card to top up your energy supply.

Face-to-face meetings with these high street banking providers are available on:

	AM	PM
Monday		
Tuesday		
Wednesday		
Thursday		
Friday		



Watton Twinning Association



On Sunday 9th August we held a Beetle Drive Afternoon. This is a FREE Event that we have every year just to get our members and others together for an enjoyable afternoon. It was a very hot day but we managed to fit everyone under the shaded sitoutery (which is a proper word, in Scotland they call it a Sitoooootery) which was great.

It was a well attended event we played three games then had a break for Tea/Coffee nibbles and to draw the Raffle then we resumed for a further three games the overall winner gets a prize.

For anyone who has never been to a Beetle Drive

they are a lot of fun with a lot of hilarity and very competitive some people get very excited when they get close to getting a beetle.

Our next event is on Sunday 13th September when we shall be having our Annual Cream Tea and Quiz afternoon.

If you are interested in knowing more about Watton Twinning Association, please contact me on 07450793916 or by e mail on magsdevine44@gmail.com I will be very happy to tell you about it and give you any information you need.

Margaret Devine (Chair)

Community Art Clubs: Creativity, Company and a Cuppa

If you wander into a village hall in Bunwell, Thompson or Kenninghall on the right day, you'll likely find a cheerful mix of paint pots, pencils, biscuits and laughter. That's the unmistakable atmosphere of Community Art Clubs, the grassroots project that's been quietly transforming weekends and evenings for people across the south and west of the county since 2024.

What began as a simple idea - giving rural residents a friendly place to make art and meet people has grown into a proper lifeline for many. Running on donations, crowdfunding and the generosity of locals clearing out cupboards of unused art materials, the clubs now welcome everyone from teenagers to centenarians. Around fifty people a month take part, proving that creativity really does thrive when it's brought to your doorstep.

Founder and tutor Rachel Duffield says the recent funding award has changed everything. "This award is everything to us," she explains. "Having venue hire covered for two years means we can relax and enjoy exploring a bigger range of art materials, and even go on trips to see other artists' work. Being able to set up another club in a new area is a total game changer."

Rachel's first club launched in Bunwell in 2024 with a simple mission: reduce isolation, boost wellbeing and bring people together through art. Since then, the group has clocked up more than 160 hours of hands-on art tuition, plus countless moments of friendship, fun and quiet concentration.

A second club followed in 2025, starting with a trial at Watton's Dragonfly Gallery before settling into its permanent home in Thompson Community Centre earlier this year. A third group meets monthly at Kenninghall's Marketplace Bistro, adding an evening option for those who prefer a relaxed, sociable creative night out.

The clubs are now part of Community Art Clubs CIC, Rachel's not-for-profit social enterprise dedicated to making art accessible in rural areas. The ethos is simple: turn up, have a go, enjoy yourself. No pressure, no experience needed - just a warm welcome and a table full of materials.

When & Where Thompson Community Centre – Alternate Mondays, 10am–12. No need to book, just drop in and a suggested donation £5 or Pay What You Can. All materials are provided, with a different theme each time Tea, coffee and biscuits included along with a genuinely warm welcome

For more information on this or the other Community Art Clubs email: rachelduffieldart@gmail.com, WhatsApp 07943476788 or

www.facebook.com/communityartclubs/





WAYLAND
AGRICULTURAL SHOW
150TH ANNIVERSARY
2026

A Glorious Celebration of Country Life: From Prize Livestock to Main Ring Excitement, a Spectacular Day to Remember and as The Young Man's Tee Shirt Above Says . . . #No Farmers #No Food #No Future

September - What's On at The Queens Hall, Norwich Road, Watton

Regular Events

Bingo Monday 7th, 14th and 28th. Doors open 19.00, eyes down 20.00

CLMFitness Dance Classes Tuesday 1st, 8th, 29th. 18.45 - 19.45

Carpet Bowls Wednesday 2nd, 9th, 16th and 30th at 13:30

Line Dancing Wednesday 2th, 9th, 30th. 18.00-21.00

Pilates Thursday 10th 18:15 - 19:30

Other events:

Blood Donors – 3rd September - book your appointment online. No walk-ins.

Ju Jitsu – 4th Sept. 18:00 - 20:00

Ballroom Dance 5th Sept. 19.30- 22.30

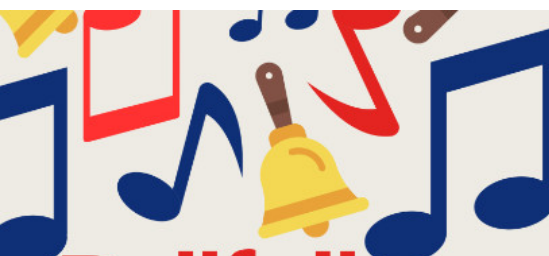
Trading Card Show – 6th Sept. 10:00 – 17:00

Medium – 11th September, 19:00

NHS Diabetes Cafe – 11th Sept. 9:30 - 12:30

Mind, Body Soul – 12th Sept. 10:00-16:00

For further information check out the Queens Hall website at queenshall-watton.co.uk



Bellfolk Handbell Ringers

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Messy Church

at St Mary's

Sat 12th Sept
10am – 12

CRAFTS
 for primary age but all families welcome

STORIES

FOOD/DRINK

FREE!

St Mary's Church, Church Rd, Watton, IP25 6DQ
 01953 881252 | wattonchurch@gmail.com | stmaryswatton.org

Great Hockham Gardening Club

If we are gardeners there is surely only one topic of conversation: rain – the lack of it. A few weeks ago, one of our neighbours had some turf laid. After about a month it was giving up the ghost. When they were doing it, I thought, don't do it! And now it's brown. We don't have a lawn; we have a range of flattish green tufts. Currently they are also brown, although for some reason the weeds manage to stay green and produce blooms. We certainly don't water it, but when we get some rain, it will probably come back to something that needs relentless toil to keep it cut. The only thing we really keep going is the veg. A reasonable number of folks nearby also seem to be doing fairly well on that front as the desperate opening gambit to any conservation seems to be, "Would you like a couple of cucumbers?"

Passing the compost heap a few weeks ago we saw something growing on it. It looked interesting so we replanted it and gave it a bit of TLC. We didn't try too hard to make an identification, but just waited and watched. Well, it now has a flower like a courgette attached to a round yellow fruit the size of an orange. It doesn't look like anything we have eaten in the past, so how its seeds ended up on the compost is anyone's guess. Curiouser and curiouser.

On a rather hot, dry July day we found ourselves at Dale Farm near East Dereham. We were hosted by the hard-working Graham and Sally (top right). "Have you been here before," asked Graham. Many of us had, which prompted him to suggest that perhaps he could let one of us do the introduction.

Graham started by saying that they were into their 19th year at the farm. Rather than describe their journey over the years he referred us to two picture boards showing the development of the garden. There are few more impressive things than 'before and after' images, and these pictures were very impressive.

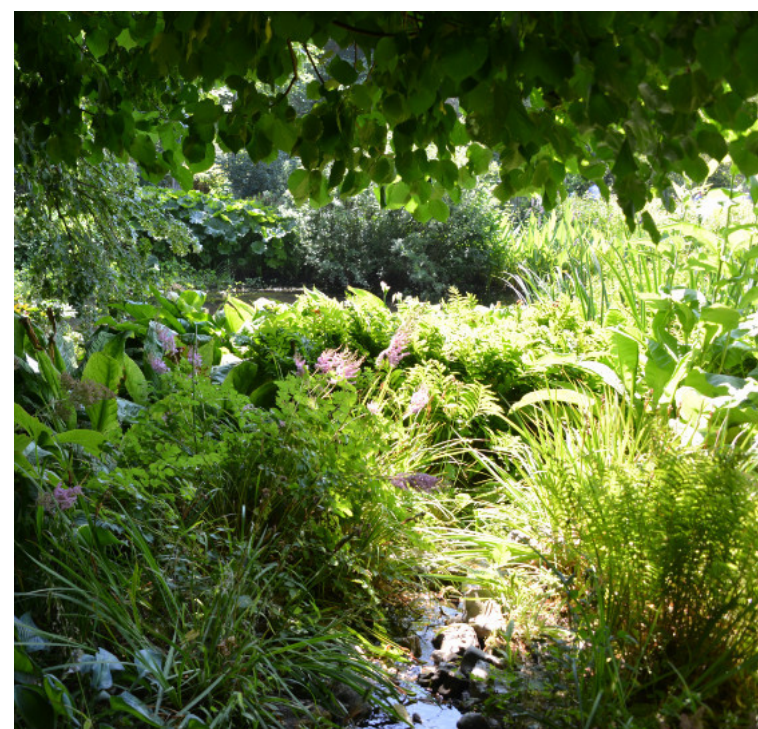
Graham told us that had trained as a parks apprentice in the days when there were such things as apprenticeships in public parks. "Unfortunately, Margaret Thatcher ended all that, but there we are, there's another story." But he was not for turning; he then went on to Kew Gardens to train in mainly parks management and various other botanical subjects. He then worked in public parks. He started in North London, worked his way into Essex, and then up to Cambridge. He felt that that was as far north as he wanted to go.

Sally trained as a florist at the Welsh College of Horticulture, then worked as a florist before running a nursery. She started there with six men, and by being an iron lady, doing as much work as all of them, managed "To see them all off." She is now the propagator at Dale Farm while Graham manages the pond. "I'm the only one that can swim. So, if I get into trouble... too bad." Graham thinks that the garden now has about 1,200 species. Asked about their favourites, "We quite like our hydrangeas... we also like phlox... salvias are nice... penstemon; pretty good, nice, nice. Anyway, there's lots of stuff. A lot of them have black labels because the pheasant doesn't recognise them. If it's white, it seems to think, 'No, no, no!' and chucks it out. It just seems to take umbrage."

As to walking round: "We've only got one step for those that have got walking wounded. It's one step going down for the pontoon off the main lawn. The rest of it is grass, cast stone path, and wooden walkways. We'll try and be with you, it's sort of higgledy-piggledy. Then we'll have tea and cake. This is where the men's eyes light up. And then, Sally's plants... she has a card machine. This is where the men go pale."

With that we ventured forth into what Prue described as "The best garden I have ever seen." Well, yes. She said that the 'planting' was wonderful. I'm not sure I know what that means, but yes, I couldn't think of a better garden except for the one we left when we moved house because we couldn't do the work anymore. I asked if they had any help. They have someone to cut the grass, otherwise, no.

Our September meeting is to 'Green Pastures Garden Centre, Mill Road, Bergh Apton, NR15 1BQ.



Ashill, Holme Hale & District Garden Club



Email.
ashillholmehalegardenclub@gmail.com



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WATTON RFC

THE RED & BLACK ARMY

NEW PLAYERS WANTED

JOIN THE RED & BLACK ARMY

WHETHER YOU'RE
FRESH OUT OF COLTS
 BRAND NEW TO RUGBY
 OR AN EXPERIENCED PLAYER
 LOOKING FOR A NEW CLUB...

THERE'S A PLACE FOR
 YOU AT **WATTON RFC.**

WHAT THE CLUB PROVIDES

-  FULL COACHING TEAM
-  FIRST AID & PHYSIO SUPPORT
-  CLUB STASH & SHOP
-  SOCIAL EVENTS & CLUB CULTURE

WHAT WE'RE LOOKING FOR

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- ✓ NEW PLAYERS WANTING TO START RUGBY
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Wayland Men's Shed Goes to the Dogs



Having been involved with the local Men's Shed since 2016, I have seen how it has evolved. From the beginning it was stated that the purpose of the shed was to combat loneliness, share practical skills and improve mental health. This still remains our mantra to this day and I would say that we are also much more besides. We have had many acknowledgements over the years including a Group Vocational Award by the Watton & District Rotary Club in 2023. In that same year we were one of four finalists for the award of "Shed of the Year", which is a national award. One of our members (not me or anyone on the committee) nominated us earlier this year for the BBC "Make a Difference" award in the community group category. We had a preliminary phone call where we explained exactly what we do and

how it benefits members and their families. Recently we were notified that we have been selected as one of four finalists in this category. A journalist from BBC radio Norfolk visited us last week and recorded interviews with some of the committee. This will be broadcast in the next few weeks together with the other three finalists on the lead up to the announcement of the winner in September. So, keep a listen out on radio Norfolk and keep your fingers crossed for us.

Social Reports

"Shutterists" Outing

On Wednesday 22nd July a group of intrepid photographers went to Flatford Mill in Suffolk. Apart from visiting the place where John Constable painted his famous "Hay Wain", we had a trip along the river Stour

looking at the countryside that Constable would have seen and painted. As always, we ended the day with a meal and drink in a local hostelry.

Cromer End of Pier Show Matinee

on Friday 17th July, 43 members and partners spent a day at Cromer. After a stroll around town and the promenade, enjoying our fish & chips and ice creams, at 2.30pm we went to the end of pier show. As always this was a great afternoon's entertainment and a good end to a lovely day out.

Greyhound Racing at Yarmouth Stadium

23 members and partners had an outing to the dogs on Wednesday 29th July. We had an excellent meal in the Raceview restaurant and without leaving our table we were able to make a bet or two on the races, watching on large TV monitors. There were

one or two members who had success, although no fortunes made.

Shanty Group

The members of the group are busy rehearsing for a performance at the Queen's Hall on Wednesday 19th August. This "Gig", is to help raise funds for the maintenance of the Queen's Hall and our shed funds.

That is all for this edition but I hope to report further in the next one. If you want any further information on Wayland Men's Shed please visit our Website www.waylandmensshed.co.uk or contact : Malcolm Trayhorn, Trustee, Chairman & Social Secretary Tel: 07729993163

Hockham History Group

Is holding a large historical exhibition on Saturday October 10th and Sunday October 11th in Holy Trinity Church, Great Hockham, IP24 1NZ.

It promises to be one of the largest exhibitions the parish has ever had and refreshments will be provided by the Church volunteers. Entry is free and is 10am to 4pm both days.

HISTORY OF HOCKHAM
Exhibition weekend

October 10th & 11th
10am-4pm

At Holy Trinity Church
Great Hockham

Free entry

Food & Drink will
be available

Macmillan Coffee Morning

Now we have downsized we have to hold our annual Macmillan Coffee morning in our garden so we hold it during the summer when we hope the weather will be kinder to us than leaving it till the end of September when the majority are held. This year, the weather wasn't a great concern as we've got used to waking up to sunshine for so long, so when it started to rain the evening before the event we couldn't believe it! All the gazebos were getting wet but no damage was done as, although it filled our barrels up nicely, everything was dry by morning and it was all systems go. Everyone enjoyed a cooler but sunny morning with plenty of chat and laughter. Our helpers, Beryl Brannan, Brenda Davis, Sue Bunce, Stella Leonard and Pam and Roy Challand, our usual gang, were all kept busy and our thanks go to them for their invaluable help every year. Unfortunately we are all getting older and have decided this will have been the last we can hold at our home and would like to thank everyone who has supported us over the nearly 30 years we have been holding a coffee morning. Many thanks to all our generous friends who have helped make this one the best yet with a magnificent total of £770.50 which includes a large donation from friends who decided to give an unexpected windfall to the charity. We really couldn't have done it without you all. Thank you. Jenny and Dave Simons.

Watton Evening WI

Many thanks to Anita Maslin for standing in for Gill Sands who is the co-ordinator for the Wayland Shoe Box Project and was unable to attend due to a fall. Members have been making and donating items for the shoe boxes and we all made Donation Cards that will be inserted into the boxes that are given to women and families in refuges over the Christmas period.

Our August meeting sees us having a meal at the Waggon and Horses followed by a visit to Griston Church. Bridget and Syvlla will be giving us a talk about the church and providing refreshments. This will be followed by the Churchyard Trail Quiz, it really is amazing what some people have on their gravestones. On Thursday September 10th at 7.30pm it is back to the Watton Methodist Centre, High St, Watton for a talk by the Norfolk Fire Safety Officer, Joanne Lockwood on preventing fires in our homes. As always we are pleased to welcome visitors and new members. If you would like any further information please contact Ruth Stapleton on 01953 883190.

Wymondham Ukulele Group at Griston Church

Wymondham Ukulele Group will be performing at Saint Peter and Saint Paul Church, Griston on Saturday 12th September at 7.30pm. Tickets are £12.50 including refreshments and are available from Bridget Park 07919 097239 or Rebecca Canham 07584 247505. This promises to be a fun evening with audience participation expected. The group plays for fun and to raise funds via their fee for Motor Neurone Disease Association. The proceeds of the evening will be for Griston Church Funds so your attendance will be supporting two charities.



Museum4Watton

Missing piece of history found in David's accidental Norfolk letter discovery.

As a Norfolk boy I have always been interested in local and world history. One way of learning about a country's political and social development is to become a philatelist and collect elements of philately. Philately is the collection, study, and appreciation of postage stamps, postmarks, envelopes, and other items related to postal history. Philately isn't just stamp collecting but can provide a deeper focus into a country's geographical, political and social history proving an invaluable source of primary evidence to the historian.

A Short History of the British Postal System. The Romans were the first people in Britain to have a functioning postal service. The 'cursus publicus' was designed to convey letters across the empire with speed. Set up by Emperor Augustus it was used for official government and military mail only. It used relay stations with fresh horses at each station enabling travel of up to 250 km (155 miles) in a single day. Private citizens relied on friends, slaves and merchants to carry their personnel messages which were written on papyrus, wood, or wax tablets. Examples of these forms of letters have been found at Roman sites all over the former empire, including Britain. In Britain before the 16th century, letter-sending was restricted to the monarch, royal court, and high nobility, and was carried by private state messengers. It was king Henry VIII who formally created the national postal network by appointing Sir Brian Tuke as 'Master of the Posts'. However, the service was strictly restricted to the royal court. In his thirty years as Postmaster, Tuke was able to establish the beginnings of a postal system. Tuke was to

introduce post stations in key towns across England, but it wasn't until the reign of Charles I that the postal service was made available to the general public. Charles I was rather short of money as a result of conflicts at home and abroad, and charging citizens to carry private letters created a new stream of income. Previously restricted to the King and his court, this new state postal system established regular post roads radiating out from London, this allowed the Crown to better monitor communications and maintain a monopoly over the network.

Before the universal Penny Post in January 1840 all mail was paid by the mile and number of sheets of paper. Sheets were carefully folded and sealed with wax to prevent tampering. Addresses were very basic, sometimes consisting of little more than the recipient's name and the town or village they resided in. The receiver paid for the delivery of their letter with the sum due being written in black. If the sender had paid, the cost was written in red. The first envelopes appeared on the 6th May 1840, along with the world's first gummed stamps, the iconic Penny Black and 2d blue. As Britain was the first country to use gummed stamps, we are the only country not to have our name on the stamps, just the reigning monarch's head.

Information in White's Directory for Norfolk, 1836, tells us that the post office is at Mrs Sarah Blades. The mail gig from Thetford to Blakeney calls at Watton at half past seven in the morning and returns at quarter before six in the evening. In 1845 the Post Office was at Mr Edmund Blades where letters were received and dispatched at 7.30 am and 6pm by the Thetford to Holt mail gig.

The advent of trains saw the last mail coach run in 1850.

The Nathaniel Bacon Letter

I primarily collected stamps dating from between 1694 and 1902, and postal history was a side line. I then decided to try to collect a letter with local Norfolk interest from each century from 16th to 21st century and present the collection to Museum4Watton. I had managed to

source correspondence from the 17th century to now, but a letter from the sixteenth century was proving to be a little more elusive. It was whilst browsing the Grosvenor Catalogue that I saw lot 13251. It was a letter dated June 1st, 1579 from Judge Francis Wyndham in London, addressed "To my very good brother Nathaniel Bacon Esquire at Stiffkey with speed". Nathaniel Bacon came from a prominent family, who held influential positions at the courts of Elizabeth 1st and her successor James 1st. His father Nicholas Bacon was Lord Keeper of the Great Seal, and his half brother Francis was a philosopher and Lord High Chancellor. The letter, as I understand it, refers to his late father's will and an upset half brother, Anthony. The matter seems to have involved William Cecil (Lord Burghley) Elizabeth 1st Lord High Treasurer and most trusted adviser, who as a member of the extended Bacon family, seems to be urging Bacon to get on and resolve the issue. At first I was unaware of the importance of the letter. The letter had been on public display for some



time at M4W when quite by chance a member of the Norfolk Record Society visited the museum. They knew without hesitation the historical importance of the document. Unbeknown to me the letter I had discovered at auction was the missing link and final letter from the Bacon collection. A copy of the letter was made and the final letter in the collection made it into the eighth and final volume of Bacon's letters.

The original is now in the safe keeping of the Norfolk Record Office and is pictured with the monument to Francis Wyndham who wrote it. The monument is at St Peter Mancroft, Church, Norwich David Leathart

A copy of the letter is on permanent display at the museum along with other postal history exhibits you may find of interest. Museum 4 Watton Wednesday – Saturday 10am-4pm Free Entry

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The Original Thompson/Griston Second-hand Book Fair Thank you

We would like to thank everyone who supported our last book fair on July 18th at Thompson community Hall. It was wonderful to see so many faces, old and new, all enjoying their day with us; and what an incredibly busy day we had. Our refreshments, and cake and bakes stalls were even busier than usual, and we broke all previous sales totals; a big thank you to all those people who manned the kitchens and baked cakes and savouries. A big thank you also to all those people who volunteer behind the scenes and on the day to make this community event the success it is, and to you our wonderful customers, for supporting Thompson and Griston churches and Thompson Community Hall, we couldn't do it without you, thank you.

If you have books to donate you can contact Thompson Community Hall at info@thompsoncommunityhall.co.uk or 01953 488508 or j.baileytufts@gmail.com If there is a particular genre or author you are looking for we are happy to keep an eye out for you. Please use the above contact details, or speak to one of our volunteers on the day of the sale, who may be busy but happy to help.

Our next book fair is on November 21st 2026 10 am-3.30 pm (details to follow), we look forward to seeing you there.

Thompson 10k run and 5k fun-run on 4th October

It's not long now until the popular Thompson Run. If you haven't taken part before, how about giving it a go? It's a friendly event with a mix of super-fast and super-leisurely runners and everyone in between. It takes place along quiet roads, bridleways and footpaths. For those of you who keep coming back, we are ready to cheer you along again. Our legendary refreshments will be on sale at the Community Hall. We look forward to welcoming you. For full details and to book go to: <https://totalracetiming.co.uk/race/678> or scan the QR Code.

To use a QR code, open your smartphone's camera app and point it at the code like you are taking a photo. Hold it steady for a second without pressing the shutter. A link or notification box will pop up on your screen; tap it to open the website, menu, or information.



CODEWORD

Blast me! There is £25 to spend at that there Norfolk Gift Company That could come in right handy just before Christmas or if you want a scented candle or some of the hundreds of other gifts that they sell there

CODEWORD

Each number in the Codeword grid represents a different letter of the alphabet. In the lower 'control' grid I have given you two letters to start with. Copy each of those letters to all the matching numbered squares on the big puzzle grid. Now, using your knowledge of the English language, work out which letters should go in the missing squares. As you discover the letters, fill in other squares with the same number in the main grid and the control grid. Consecutive squares are not necessarily just one word. Finally, when you have all the numbers in the control grid, decode the following codeword(s):

25, 17, 24, 15, 17, 9, 11, 24, 15, 19, 6, 24, 6, 6, 22, 6, 22

Send the Codeword you think is the answer, along with your name and contact details in an email to me at wattontimes@gmail.com Or, if you don't do email, in an envelope marked 'Competition' to Julian, Care of Adcocks, 32 High Street, Watton. All correct entries received BEFORE midnight on the 12th of the month of the paper, will be put into a draw, and the first entry drawn will win the prize detailed above. There will also be a Mug & Coaster set for the Runner Up Last month's winner's name and the solution to last month's Codeword are on a page in the paper somewhere. Entry is open to everyone, but in relation to all aspects of the competition's conduct and results, the Editor's decision shall be final.

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St Mary's Church, Watton

Church Road, Watton, IP25 6DQ

www.stmaryswatton.org

Weekly Wednesday Services at 10am

Worship in August

Sun 6 th	10am	Holy Communion & Confirmation Service, & after a Bring & Share lunch
Sun 13 th	8am	BCP Holy Communion
	10am	2nd Sunday
Sun 20 th	10am	Holy Communion
Sun 27 th	8am	BCP Holy Communion
	10am	4th Sunday

Polish Catholic Community

St Mary's Church, Watton, IP25 6DQ Every Thursday and Saturday at 6pm – 8pm

St. Peter & St Paul's Church,

3 Church Street, Carbrooke, IP25 6SW

www.carbrookechurch.co.uk

Sun 6 th	10am	Joining Confirmation service at St Mary's.
Sun 13 th	10.30am	Holy Communion
Sun 20 th	10.30am	Morning Worship
Sun 27 th	10.30am	Holy Communion

Are you not used to visiting a church service and wondering for a reason to make a visit?

One reason: Jesus said "I am the way, the truth, and the life."

You are welcome to visit Purpose Church

The Watton Sports Centre, Dereham Road, Watton, Norfolk IP25 6EZ.

Service every Sunday 10.30am

More information contact Nick

07940049933 or nicknundy@gmail.com

Ashill Group Services In September

Sunday 6, Feast of Creation in Christ, 10.30 am, St John the Evangelist's, Ovington, Holy Communion. (This is a special Group service to mark this new festival. It is the only service in the Ashill Group this morning.)

6.30 pm, Hymns for a Summer's Evening (a singalong, some prayers, but no sermon!), St George's, Saham Toney

Sunday 13, Trinity 15,

9.30 am, St Nicholas' Ashill, Holy Communion

10.30 am, St George's Saham Toney, Holy Communion

10.30 am, St John the Evangelist's, Ovington, Morning Praise

Sunday 20, St Matthew,

9.30 am, St Nicholas' Ashill, Lay-led service

9.30 am, St Peter's Merton, Holy Communion

10.30 am, St George's Saham Toney, Holy Communion

10.30 am, St John the Evangelist's, Ovington, All-Age Service

Sunday 27, Trinity 17,

9.30 am, St Nicholas' Ashill, Holy Communion

10.30 am, St John the Evangelist's, Ovington, Book of Common Prayer: Morning Prayer

(No service at St George's Saham Toney)

There are normally lay-led services on Sundays when there is not Holy Communion: 9.30am at Ashill; 10.30am at Saham Toney; 10.30am at Ovington

Watton Methodist Church

57 High Street, Watton IP25 6AB

wattonmethodist.chessck.co.uk

Minister: Rev Neil Vels

Sunday Service Times

10.30am in Church;
6.30pm in the Large Vestry
2nd, 4th & 5th Sundays

Harvest Festival

10.30am Sunday 20th September

Wednesday Coffee Morning in The Methodist Centre

Weekly from 9:30am to 11.30am

Alongside the Country Market

Tuesdays@2 in The Methodist Centre

Tuesday 8th September at 2pm

Making a Harvest Wreath - suitable for all abilities. Followed as usual by refreshments - all welcome

The Methodist Centre has 2 halls available to hire either on a regular basis or one-offs. Hire includes WiFi, hearing loops, facilities for the disabled, kitchen for light catering. For details of very moderate rates and availability phone 01953 881451

All Saints Church, Threxton

Sunday 6th September 10.30 a.m

A Warm Welcome to All

Swaffham and Watton Roman Catholic Community

Mass held at the Watton Methodist Church at 5.00pm on Saturdays.

Watton Methodist Church
57 High Street, Watton IP25 6AB

The Wayland Group of Parishes

Worship in September

Sunday 6th September

St Botolph's, Stow Bedon
10.30am United Holy Communion

Sunday 13th September

St Martin's, Thompson
10.30am United Holy Communion

Sunday 20th September

St Margaret's, Breckles
10.30am Harvest Festival & Family Holy Communion

Sunday 27th September

Holy Cross, Caston
10.30am United Holy Communion

Sunday 27th September

Holy Cross, Caston
6.30pm Harvest Festival

Wayland Group Parish Churches

St Margaret's, Breckles; Holy Cross, Caston, Holy Trinity, Gt Hockham; St Peter & St Paul, Griston St Botolph's, Stow Bedon;

Dance Away Queens Hall,

Watton IP25 6DA

Ballroom, Latin & Sequence.

Bar & Raffle

September 5th, October 3rd, November 7th

There Is Hope Beneath The Surface

As I write, the dry earth of August waits for rain, and our farming communities face a heavy burden. Wildfires and drought are testing our strength, our patience, and our land, because summer has left our fields thirsty and tired. The crops struggle under a relentless sun, and the threat of fire hangs heavy in the dry air. We look at the brown pastures and feel the weight of worry. But farming is a life of hope despite that hope being hard to find when the land is dry. For even in these parched and anxious days, we are bound together by faith, resilience, and the deep roots we share in the soil. It is true that one tiny spark can change everything in a minute, that we watch the horizon with tired eyes, realising that every missing drop of rain means hard choices for feed, water, and livelihoods. And yet, the relentless work goes on from dawn to dark, often in lonely and stressful conditions. But there is hope. During hard times we can stand together. Our greatest tool is each

other. When the fences break or the worry grows too large, the power of a neighbour's hand can reach out when the load is heavy. They check on the farm down the road, share a word of comfort, a cup of tea, or a spare set of hands. Even a short phone call or visit can lift a heavy spirit.

So, be assured that there is hope beneath the surface of soil which may seem dead, because life waits underneath it. Just as the earth holds seeds through the harshest dry spell, our community holds a deep and quiet strength. We have weathered hard seasons before. We will weather this one, too. Let us pray for the rain that heals the land, but let us also thank God for the steady hands and brave hearts we find in one another today. May the peace of the quiet evening watch over our homesteads, and may the autumn rains soon bring new life to our thirsty fields.

With love and many blessings, Vanessa. X
Reverend Vanessa is the rector for the Wayland benefice of Breckles, Caston, Great Hockham, Griston, Thompson, and Stow Bedon, and is available for Weddings, Funerals and Baptisms. You can contact her on 07984 318885 or by email at vanessadlayfield@gmail.com

What's On! at St Mary's Church, Watton in September

Church Road, Watton, IP25 6DQ

www.stmaryswatton.org

wattonchurch@gmail.com

01953 881252

Tuesday 1st 5pm – 6pm. Prayer & Praise: Sing your favourite worship songs & pray with & for the community. 1st Tues of month.

Wednesday 2nd 1.30pm – 4pm. (location in Watton) Bereavement Group: Contact Linda Benton on 07803 017340 or linbenton2978@gmail.com for details. 1st Wed of month.

Sat 5th 10am – 12noon. Saturday Chat: Join us on the 1st Sat of month for our coffee morning. Come with friends or alone and make new ones!

Tuesday 8th 9.30am. Wellbeing Walking Group: Short, social walk around Watton making new friends. Meet at St Mary's Church, walk followed by refreshments in church rooms.

Thursday 10th 2pm – 2.30pm. Prayer Gathering: Led by Rev Dave Cossey. Come join us as God's people to lift up both our community & the wider world in a time of informal prayer. 2nd & 4th Thurs of month.

Friday 11th 2pm – 4pm. Community Cinema: Film TBC. Doors open at 1:15pm for 2pm start. £5 ticket on the door inc. hot drink & cake.

Saturday 12th 10am – 12noon. Messy Church: Kids, bring your adult for a FREE morning of fun, stories, play and craft activities (aimed at primary age, but all ages and families welcome). PLUS! Food and drinks served too!

Tuesday 15th 2pm – 4pm. Tuesday Club: Join us for a social afternoon of games & laughter here at St Mary's. Confectionary prizes to be won! Donations gratefully received for refreshments. All welcome!

Friday 18th 2pm – 4pm. Craft Group: Enjoy refreshments & company whilst crafting. £1 donation. In the church rooms.
Tuesday 22nd 9.30am Wellbeing Walking Group: Short, social walk around Watton making new friends. Meet at St Mary's Church, walk followed by refreshments in church rooms.

Thursday 24th 10am – 3pm Open Church: St Mary's open to all to visit, pray, explore, and discover what we offer the community. Friendly volunteers on hand to help with any enquiries.

2pm – 2.30pm Prayer Gathering: Led by Rev Dave Cossey. Come join us as God's people to lift up both our community & the wider world in a time of informal prayer. 2nd & 4th Thurs of month.

Saturday 26th 2pm – 4pm Bellfolk Handbell Concert: An afternoon of musical medleys performed by The Bellfolk Handbell Ringers. Free entry. Refreshments available. Donations go towards the upkeep of St Mary's Church.

August's Winners of the 200 Club!

1st prize £50: Eileen Kittell, No. 15

2nd prizes £25 each: Eleanor Nethaway, No. 24, Carol & Tim Southers, No. 190

Making Poppies for Remembrance Day

After last year's successful display of knitted poppies at Watton Methodist Church, we are planning to repeat this event. We will be decorating the outside of the church with poppies again. If you would like to knit or crochet poppies for us, patterns are available at the Wednesday Methodist church coffee mornings from 9.30am – 11.30am.

The Breckland Birder

AKA Paul Newport

Bird fortunes are always changing and sadly, most changes are for the worse given the unprecedented house building we are seeing along with so-called green initiatives i.e. solar farms, which are taking valuable farmland out of production, this is not such a green initiative given the habitat destroyed to make way for solar panels. Personally, I feel the way forward is to construct large water reservoirs so that winter rains can be conserved for our increasingly hot and dry summers, this must be the way forward instead of solar farms, also water reservoirs are very beneficial to ourselves and of course to wildlife.

So, following on from that, it goes without saying that July this year was very hot, however, I bet most of us were pleased to wake up on the morning of 31 July to find it had been raining with some decent sized puddles on the road.

As far as birding went in July, I began with an exciting record of 16+ Ravens on the 2 July at Hardingham, for me this is an incredible record of a species which just over a decade ago was not heard of in Norfolk.

On the morning of the 6 July I walked the road alongside the Clermont estate when a male Goshawk appeared directly overhead and then soared back and forth above woodland, at one point the Goshawk got into a bit of a tussle with a Buzzard. I stopped by a field corner where a patch of bramble scrub was bathed in warm sunshine, here I observed a good range of Lepidoptera, species seen included Large Skipper, Brimstone, Small White, Small Copper, Common Blue, Red Admiral, Coppa, and a Hummingbird Hawk Moth feeding from Vipers bugloss.



Hummingbird Hawk Moth

On the morning of 7 July I had a walk around the ponds on the Wayland Fields site, here was many House Martins taking a drink from the waters surface, also, some birds were watched taking pellets of mud from the shore for the nest. As I was about to leave the site the House Martins began alarm calling and climbing high overhead, my suspicions for the cause of this behaviour was confirmed when a Hobby passed through, this falcon includes House Martins as a prey item.

On 15 July I met a birding friend of mine, Caroline Falvey, at Thompson Water for a couple of hours birding. The highlights for this visit included 100+ Mallard on the water, Sparrowhawk, Great Crested Grebe, and at least 2 Sand Martins. We stopped by

a patch of Hemp Agrimony where earlier we detected some movement, this was a family party of Reed Warblers which included adult birds giving contact calls and a number of juvenile birds, one tail-less bird showed itself well for a few seconds. Caroline and I stood so still that the birds approached within just a few feet as they moved through the Hemp Agrimony.

On the 20 July I returned to Thompson, but on this occasion walked a section of the Peddars at Shaker's Common. I stopped at a woodland glade bathed in warm sunshine where at the woodland edge and adjoining scrub at least 4 Willow Warblers were seen in what was undoubtedly breeding habitat. A few Blackcaps were noted, also 3 Marsh Tits were also present.

I had a very exciting morning on 29 July on a friends farm at Breckles where evidence of successful breeding was seen with a family party of Reed Warblers seen which included an adult carrying food for its young, also Whitethroats were noted along with Blackcap. A juvenile Great Spotted Woodpecker was seen, this bird was aged by its red cap, this plumage feature will eventually develop into a wholly black cap in females whilst males also have a red cap but with a red nape patch. 4 Bullfinches were present along with a number of Greenfinches, it was also good to see 4 Siskins, of which two birds were juveniles, an indication of local breeding. Very interestingly, as well as the birds seen, insect species featured well with one Clouded Yellow butterfly seen, Painted Lady, and Red Admiral too. I also found two Mimic Hornet Hoverflies, this is the largest Hoverfly in Europe and the untrained eye would be forgiven for thinking this was in fact a Hornet.



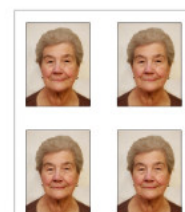
Mimic Hornet Hoverfly

On the morning of 30 July I walked the Watton Brook valley at Little Cressingham. This is the time of the month I expect to see signs of early migration by Warbler species, I did locate 2 Reed Warblers, one of which approached from the north and briefly alighted on fencing. Several Whitethroats were present which included juveniles begging for food. At least 6 Stonechats were seen, this included at least 4 juveniles, and on grassland a flock of 30+ Goldfinches fed from Creeping Thistle. At least 20 House Martins were overhead, these birds began climbing and alarm calling, I immediately searched the sky for a Hobby, whilst doing so I heard a lot of clatter in riverside vegetation, I approached slowly and a Sparrowhawk flew up with prey, but not one of the House Martins



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Plastic Fantastic - A Fascinating Factory Tour for Care Home Residents

A day in the life of a tradesman came to life for Buckingham Lodge care home residents Esme Potter, Arthur Hazelwood and Maureen Walker, who enjoyed a guided tour of the Bowles and Walker Ltd unit in Watton.

The visit offered a rare glimpse into the fascinating world of plastic manufacturing. Residents learned that everyday items — from parts for toys, fish tanks and surgical equipment to handles for fire hoses — are all likely to have been produced inside the Watton factory.

They were particularly impressed to discover that the company generates as little as 5% waste, thanks to its strong ethical and sustainable commitment to recycling wherever possible. As Dr Michael Barwood, Quality and Marketing Director, explained during the tour, the team works hard to ensure materials are reused and repurposed.

“These are all things that you see every day but don’t think about how it’s made,” said Maureen Walker. “I’ve never been in a factory before – it was so interesting.”

The group also met “Herbert”, affectionately known as one of the unit’s oldest working machines. Remarkably, Herbert has only ever

needed one part replaced since being put into service during the Second World War.

With the decline of British steel, Bowles and Walker — established in 1969 — now sources its steel from China, but still prides itself on offering a personal touch, with 450 different plates available to meet customers’ needs.

“I should have studied Trigonometry in school,” said Marcia Hughes, Kingsley Healthcare Regional Community Engagement Coordinator, who organised the tour. “Now I understand why it would have come in useful. It’s a fascinating process and something that we all take for granted.”

Pictured: Terri Breen, Esme Potter, Maureen Walker, Dr Micheal Barwood, Arthur Hazelwood





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2nd Wayland Cubs Mark 110 Years of Cub Adventures

Mayor, local firms and charities join celebrations with 2nd Wayland Cub Scout Group

The 2nd Wayland Cub Scout Group celebrated a remarkable milestone — 110 years since Cubs was founded — with a community evening and BBQ that drew support from across the town.

Current and former members, along with their families, gathered at the group's base, The Community Hub Carbrooke, for an evening of meeting young people, volunteers and memorabilia. The Cubs enjoyed discussing the changes in past badges and uniform to their modern-day alternatives.



from 4 to 18 years of age, run by volunteers.

The anniversary also coincided with the launch of the group's involvement in Scouts UK's new national strategy, A Place to Belong, which aims to ensure every young person has access to friendship, adventure and a trusted community of support. A spokesperson for the 2nd Wayland Cub Scout Group said the strategy reflects exactly what the group has always tried to offer.

"For 110 years, Cubs has given young people somewhere to feel welcome, supported and part of something bigger than themselves," they said. "That's really at the heart of what A

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It ended with the lighting of 110 matches lit by the group's longest-serving supporter, John who was the previous Watton Scout Leader, to mark the occasion.

The Mayor of Watton Sarah Humphries and Cllr. Helen Crane attended along with local groups, businesses and charities, such as the Wayland Lodge of Freemasonry and Friends of Carbrooke and Watton, who support the 2nd Wayland Scouting Group.

"A big thank you to everyone who supports our Cubs and scouting community. Without the support of local people and businesses and the help of our volunteers, we wouldn't be able to support and create this community for our young people", expressed 'Akela' Laura Fox.

2nd Wayland Scout Group is the first in the area in a decade and is still in its infancy, only being set up in April 2025. The group now has roughly 75 young people in sections of Squirrels, Beavers, Cubs, Scouts and Explorers that range



Place to Belong is about, and we're proud to be carrying that forward for the next generation in Wayland."

Cubs was established in 1916 by Robert Baden-Powell, founder of the wider Scouting movement, as a section for younger boys eager to take part in Scouting activities. Reflecting on the need for the new section back in 1916, Baden-Powell himself wrote that the need for the development of the Wolf Cub Movement was becoming more urgent every day.

More than a century on, that same spirit of adventure and



belonging was on full display in Watton, with leaders saying the day was as much about looking to the future as celebrating the past.

The group is now inviting new members, young people and volunteers alike, to join them as they begin the next chapter of Cubs in Wayland. Anyone interested in getting involved is encouraged to get in touch with the group directly either by applying through the Norfolk Scouts website or by emailing 2ndwaylandcubs@gmail.com



Wymondham Ukulele Group

St Peter and St Paul Church
 Griston

Saturday 12th September 7.30pm

Tickets £12.50 inc refreshments

available from:
 Bridget Park 07919 097239
 Rebecca Canham 07584 247505

Proceeds for St Peter and St Paul Church Funds





Richmond Park Golf Club Ladies Section

It has been an interesting season so far at Richmond Park, non-stop rain to start with followed by searing heat. The good thing about the latter is that the fairways are like grease lightening and the balls travel so much further, not always straight of course so a lot of balls get lost in the wispy rough. It didn't seem to deter our winner Ann Bayes though who won the Handicap Trophy at our recent Championships with Sandy McCormack capturing the Alison Sheard Trophy. Our congratulations and commiserations must go to Julie Ellis and Hilary Sutton who progressed through many rounds of the Daily Mail Competition to finally play at Toft GC, in South Lincolnshire where sadly, but on a difficult course, succumbed to the opposition.

The Club wish good luck to Claire Carney and Hilary Sutton who are playing in the next round of the Coronation Foursomes at St. Ives, Cambridgeshire.

If you are interested in playing please contact Rosie on 07765421320.

Pictured Ann Bayes receiving the Handicap Trophy from Rosie Sutterby, and Sandy McCormack receiving the Alison Sheard Trophy.



Charity Valuation Day with Keys Auctioneers at St Andrews in Hingham

Saturday 19 September from 10am to 3pm (last entry 2.30pm)

Do you enjoy watching Antiques Roadshow? Bring your items in for a valuation with the team of specialists from Keys Auction House on hand throughout the day.

From Jewellery, Fashion & Textiles and Wines & Spirits to Ceramics, Asian art, Books, Paintings etc..... What is in your loft, at the back of the cupboard or on your sideboard? Dig it out, dust it down and bring it along.

Valuations will cost £2 for one item or 3 items for £5 and proceeds will go towards the St Andrews Ringing Floor Project, which aims to bring back bell ringing for all levels, including beginners, to Hingham.

The valuations are kindly being done by valuers from Keys Auctioneers and Valuers from the well-known auction house in Aylsham.

Tea, Coffee & Cake (including gluten free) will be available.

Hingham was, in the past, a well-known ringing tower, both for the quality of the bells and the standard of its ringing. The tower has 8 bells with the oldest dating from 1450! Most of the bells date from the 17th and 18th century. Bell ringing is an ancient traditional skill and includes people from all or no religious backgrounds.

St Andrew's Church Hingham is a Grade 1 listed, 14th Century Church. The Tower is probably the oldest dating from about 1330. We need to re-instate the original ringing-floor. Unfortunately, as with all ancient buildings, it is not just replacing the floor. There is some work to do at that level on the tower itself and the masonry supporting the floor-timbers needs work to make it secure for the next 100 years. Aspiring bell ringers will no doubt agree the latter is particularly desirable.

Once the

Ringing Floor/Tower wall has been repaired, and with the help of our existing ringers, we will once again be able to teach a new generation of ringers. We are aiming, in the course of time, to re-establish St Andrew's Hingham as a Tower of some repute, where ringers want to visit. Also, once again, we hope to be able to field our own band of ringers for weddings and special occasion services.

St Andrews is a large church blessed with superb acoustics and this year has already seen performances by Norwich Sinfonietta and the Wayland Shantymen among others. We would like everyone to love this ancient building and to feel part of its history and its community - whether that is at Messy church, Music concerts, Sunday services, weddings and other events - not forgetting Paws for coffee (dog-friendly cafe), Charity Valuation day and - hopefully soon - bell ringing! Charity number 267241

Watton & Wayland Times

Deadline is 4pm on the 12th of the month preceding publication and that is the last date and time that copy will be considered for inclusion. Arrival of your copy before deadline does not guarantee inclusion.

You can contact Julian by telephone on 01953 571990 or 07864720480 or by email to: wattontimes@gmail.com

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Mid-Norfolk Stroke Club



Left to right, Flo, Jane, Debbie and Kathy from the Mid Norfolk Stroke Club

Hello, we just wanted to say we are very grateful to everyone who sponsored us on our recent 7 mile walk to help raise funds for the Mid Norfolk Stroke Group. Our walk which was held on the 24th July started at Great Hockham picnic site and finished at the Watton Community Centre in time for our monthly group meeting. We would like to thank Flo and Kathy from Watton Surgery for their help and support over the last few months. Our target was to raise £500, but this has been exceeded with donations still coming in. This will enable us to take the group on an outing and towards

a Christmas meal.

Anyone wishing to donate to the fund can do so via the link below.

The Mid Norfolk Stroke Group is held on the 4th Friday of every month at the Community Centre, Harvey Street, Watton, from 1 - 3 pm. We meet up for a cuppa and a chat and welcome anyone that has suffered a stroke and their family members/carers are welcome to come also.

Link: <https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/midnorfolkstrokegroup-watton>

Watton & Wayland Memory Cafe's Exciting News!

Aside from our new Exercise Class with Jack, we had some wonderful news on Tuesday - a friend's son, Jamie Weaver, is going to run the London Marathon on Saturday 24th April 2027.... to help with our fundraising! Of course we shall be supporting him but quite how is the next big thing, T shirts? Hats? Caps? Colours? Where? Lots of things to mull over in

the coming weeks. Jamie, who lives in Norwich, will be popping in to see us at our first meeting in September, that's on Tuesday 1st September from 9.30am to 12 Noon in the Methodist Centre in Watton and I'm sure we shall manage a photo opportunity! More information to follow . . .



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