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A WORD FROM

The Team



Well done if you have stuck to your resolutions, keep going. If you haven't then start again this month you will get there, we in the office are calling them February Fun Goals.

February brings us National Storytelling week (1st-9th), Valentines Day... who will be asking that very important question? The first school holiday of the year and on the 17th you can give someone a random act of Kindness!

We hope you have a lovely month and remember to get in touch with any community news or if you want to promote your business!

The In Touch Team



A gentle reminder that the deadline for the March edition is the 5 February.

While every effort has been made to include all editorial supplied to us, unfortunately due to rising material and print costs we can't always guarantee your edit will feature in the printed version of our magazine. We will endeavour to include everything on our website which doesn't feature in the magazine.

More local stories can be found on our website: www.intouchnews.co.uk/kesgrave

ADVERTORIAL

Has Your Double Glazing Steamed Up?

Established for over a decade Cloudy2Clear windows have become a leading company for glass replacement. Issues with double glazing can often be gradual and may only be noticed during a clear sunny day or during the winter. A failed glass unit may no longer provide you with the protection you need or be energy efficient. Why not spend a few minutes checking your home to see if you have any failed

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Rushmere St Andrew Parish Council

2025/26 Parish Council Budget: Balancing Services and Costs

Setting the budget for the coming financial year posed significant challenges for the Parish Council. We worked hard to balance the need to maintain essential services while addressing rising costs. This year, our responsibilities have grown, as East Suffolk Council transferred additional paths and open spaces to the parish. We also face the demands of managing aging assets, expanding street furniture, enhancing play areas, and improving public open spaces. Compounding these challenges are reductions in local government services, which have required increased spending at the parish level.

A Sustainable Approach to Funding

From 2020 to 2024, the Parish Council kept precept increases at 0%, cutting costs and relying on reserves to cover budget gaps. Last year, we used reserves again to balance the budget, enabling only a modest precept increase. However, this approach is not sustainable over the long term.

To ensure financial stability and protect essential services, the Parish Council has made the difficult decision to increase the precept by 6.8% for the coming year. While this sounds significant, it translates to an additional £3.28 per Band D property per year—bringing the total average precept to £51.52 per Band D property annually.

Prioritising Service Delivery

We've taken steps to minimise overall expenditure wherever possible, but further cuts would jeopardise key services, including the maintenance of play areas, nature reserves, and public spaces. These are vital assets that enrich our community and support residents' quality of life. By adopting this budget, the Parish Council aims to responsibly manage our resources while maintaining the high standard of services our community relies on.

What We Do at a Parish Level

The Parish Council takes a proactive approach to securing funding and implementing various projects that enhance our community. Between April 2024 and December 2024, the Council has successfully secured £28,870 in funding for initiatives such as:

- Installation of Gateway Signs: Enhancing visibility and identity at parish entrances.
- Doggie Bin Upgrades: Replacing outdated bins and adding new ones for community convenience.
- Play Equipment Replacement: Modernising and improving facilities for local children.
- Bee Café Projects: Supporting pollinator-friendly environments.
- Community Hut at Allotments: Creating a hub for allotment users and the wider community.
- Community Events: Hosting activities like 30 Days Wild and Remembrance Commemorations.

In addition, we've secured £66,000 in grant funding from various organisations for upcoming projects, including footpath improvements and the development of a sensory garden. Many of these initiatives align with priorities identified in our Neighbourhood Plan.

The Parish Council also manages:

- Five Play Areas: Ensuring safe and enjoyable spaces for families.
- Allotments and a Cemetery: Providing essential community amenities.
- Ponds, Open Spaces, and Wildlife Areas: Maintaining natural habitats and biodiversity.
- Various Assets: Including seats, bins, noticeboards, grit bins, defibrillators, and a war memorial.

We employ a Parish Handyman who conducts weekly litter picks and safety checks across these areas, ensuring they remain clean and well-maintained. The Council also works in close partnership with East Suffolk Council; and contributes financially to the upkeep of the Sandlings and Mill Stream Nature Reserves in our parish. The Parish Council also reviews and provides input on planning applications and other consultations that impact on residents; since January 2024 we have commented on 80 applications.

Additionally, we operate Community Speedwatch and manage Speed Indicator Devices to address speeding concerns on our main roads, enhancing road safety for all parish residents.

Exciting News: Funding Secured for Sensory Garden at Kelvedon Play Area!

We are thrilled to announce that Kelvedon Play Area will soon be home to a brand-new sensory garden, thanks to the recently secured funding from East Suffolk Council. This project represents a major step forward in our commitment to creating inclusive, engaging, and enriching outdoor spaces for the entire community.

The sensory garden will be designed to stimulate and engage the senses through a combination of thoughtfully selected plants, textures, sounds, and interactive elements. It will provide a tranquil retreat for residents of all ages and abilities, fostering mindfulness, relaxation, and connection with nature.

Why a Sensory Garden?

A sensory garden is not just a beautiful addition to the parish; it's a space that brings people together, promotes mental well-being, and encourages exploration. It will create a unique experience for families, children, and individuals seeking a peaceful outdoor environment.

What's Next?

With funding in place, the project will soon move from the planning and design phase to the implementation phase. Stay tuned for updates and how you can get involved, including consultation events and volunteer opportunities. Together, we're creating a space that the entire parish can be proud of.

Upwardly mobile!

Look out for the mobile library in Rushmere St Andrew. Did you know that the mobile library, run by Suffolk Libraries, visits every four weeks? You may have seen it passing through but may not realise how easy it is to access and use the service.

The mobile library stops at Dumbarton Road 11-11.30am, Chestnut Close 11.35-12.05pm and Meadowside Gardens 12.10-12.30pm every fourth Thursday and will next be visiting on the following dates: 13 February, 13 March, 10 April, 8 May, 5 June, 3 July, 31 July, 28 August, 25 September, 23 October, 20 November and 18 December 2025.

If you've not already got a library card it's free and easy to get one and you can join Suffolk Libraries next time it visits. You can borrow 20 items for eight weeks at a time (is that right?) and if you're worried you won't find something you like on board, the mobile library driver can help you reserve something from the entire Suffolk Libraries catalogue to collect next time it visits! So you can pick from nearly a million items and you're not restricted to what's on board! The mobile vehicles also have lifts to help those with mobility issues to get on board.

For more information go to suffolklibraries.co.uk and check out the Visit pages or contact our customer service team at: help@suffolklibraries.co.uk or by calling: 01473 351249 between 9am-5pm from Monday to Friday. Please do check us out and come aboard next time we're in your area!

The Parish Office: Please phone or email the Parish Office to make an appointment before visiting.

Parish Clerk: clerk@rushmere-st-andrew.org.uk or 07568 632110

Assistant Parish Clerk: assistantclerk@rushmere-st-andrew.org.uk or 07897 340917

Parish Office telephone: 01473 711509

Website: www.rushmerestandrew.onesuffolk.net

Instagram: [rsaparishcouncil](https://www.instagram.com/rsaparishcouncil)

Facebook: Rushmere St-Andrew Parish Council

Address: Rushmere St Andrew Parish Council Office, Tower Hall, 5 Broadlands Way, Ipswich IP4 5SU.

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Rushmere Common News

Lowland Heath is a fascinating globally rare habitat, rarer than rain forest. The UK is host to 20% of this habitat and is mainly found in Dorset and Suffolk. It's characterised by open landscapes dominated by heathers, gorse, and grasses, thriving on poor, acidic soils. These heaths are home to a variety of wildlife, including rare birds like the nightjar and Dartford warbler, as well as reptiles such as the sand lizard and smooth snake.

Historically, lowland heathland covered a much larger area, but it has declined significantly since the 1800s due to agricultural expansion and development. Today, only about 16% of the original heathland remains, making it a priority for conservation efforts.

Heathlands are not just important for wildlife; they also play a role in carbon sequestration, helping to combat climate change. Efforts to restore and manage these habitats are crucial for preserving their unique biodiversity and ecological functions

Please enjoy the common and help us preserve this wonderful habitat

Each year the Committee receives requests for memorials, requesting benches, tree planting etc. We are sympathetic to the requests and are pleased so many people love the common that they want to be remembered this way. There are a number of benches on the Common and we are actively managing the tree population so neither of these requests are suitable. We have allowed bird boxes and bat boxes and would encourage donations to the Rushmere Commoners charity so we can continue the work in maintaining this acid grass and heathland environment. Please contact the clerk for more details.

Under no circumstances should any household plants be planted on the common as they can become invasive and destroy the habitat we are trying to encourage and protect. Please remember this time of year is our active time for maintenance so please respect the contractors and be aware areas may be closed for safety reasons.

Please also be aware of other users, with the low light and low sun height, it is often difficult to see down fairways and on to tees. Golfers and Walkers need to be extra vigilant in these conditions.

Please enjoy and respect the common, its surrounding areas and the nature they support so generations to come can experience it too. If you would like to be involved in the management of the common then please contact the clerk.

Email: clerkrushcommoners@gmail.com

Website: <http://rushmerecommonerstrustees.onesuffolk.net/>

Citizens Advice East Suffolk

Our next free advice session in Kesgrave is on Tuesday, 18 February.

The cost-of-living crisis has driven unprecedented demand for our services. We've continued to adapt how we deliver advice to help as many people as possible, while speaking out on behalf of those most affected by the crisis.

We are seeing more people with urgent and complex problems, and it is getting harder for us to find solutions for people. Our volunteers and staff are working flat out to make sure people have access to the support they need, and we are still here to help millions of people find a way forward, whoever they are and whatever their problem.

If you need help and advice on any problem, contact Citizens Advice for further help. Our free drop-in service is there for you. We are in the Kesgrave War Memorial "Community Centre, Twelve Acre Approach, Kesgrave, IP5 1JF on the third Tuesday of every month between 9am-12noon. No appointment is necessary and there is plenty of free parking at the centre.

For further information about the advice session or about volunteering, call Citizens Advice East Suffolk on 0808 278 7866

East Suffolk National Trust Association

East Suffolk National Trust Association invite you to their February meeting at Ropes Hall Kesgrave War Memorial Community Centre, Twelve Acre Approach, Kesgrave, Ipswich, IP5 1JF. The start time is 7.15pm.

After the winter break we return on 18 February with a talk by Hawk Honey entitled "Forgotten Bees". Hawk is a naturalist who works for the Suffolk Wildlife Trust, and has a particular interest in bees. It promises to be a fascinating talk, giving us an insight into the lives and habits of insects we see in our daily lives, but without giving them a second thought.

The following month, on 18 March Paul Forecast, National Trust Regional Director, will be updating us on the work currently being carried out in our region. This meeting will be preceded by a short Annual General Meeting.

Visitors are welcome, entrance fee £3 each. The annual subscription is £8 per year (£12 for two people at the same address). We publish three newsletters a year for members and enjoy interesting day outings and other events.

For more information, including details of future events and outings, contact our membership secretary at: membershipsnta@gmail.com or phone: 01473 723761. Alternatively visit our website: <https://sites.google.com/view/eastsuffolknta>

RSPB Ipswich Local Group



Ipswich Local Group's programme of Indoor Meetings continue throughout the winter with a full programme of interesting talks. In February Dick Houghton, a leading authority on Gulls and Kittiwakes, will be speaking on Lowestoft Kittiwakes. In March Paul Taylor, who manages his Suffolk Farm with wildlife in mind, will be telling us why he is Wild About Suffolk. We finish our winter season in April with our AGM followed by a talk on Mid-Yare Reserves – the Wildlife of Strumpshaw Fen, by Drew Lyness, development and engagement co-ordinator with the British Trust for Ornithology.

All indoor meetings take place on the second Thursday of the month at 7.30pm in Rushmere St. Andrews Church Hall, The Street, Rushmere, IP5 1DH between September and April (inclusive). Charges, which include refreshments, are £5 for non-members and £3 and £2.80 (concessions) for members of the local group. Young people under 18 (who must be accompanied by an adult) are free. All outdoor meetings, unless specifically stated, are free.

Outdoor meetings will continue throughout the autumn and winter are will and include: Bourne Park, RSPB Hollesley Marsh, RSPB Boyton Spring Wood and Thorington Hall, Levington, Bramford and Kiln Meadow.

Walks are expertly led and there is always someone willing to help those less experienced with bird identification. Details of all walks including date, time, distance covered, and meeting place can be found by contacting us in any of the ways set out below. Suitable clothing and footwear should be worn, and refreshments carried if needed.

All are welcome at our meetings. Membership of the RSPB, either local or national, is not a requirement.

Further information for both indoor and outdoor meetings can be found on: www.rspb.org.uk/groups/ipswich or find us on X: @IpswichRSPB and on Facebook: RSPB Ipswich Local Group or telephone: 01394 809236.



KWMCC

February at KWMCC is packed with exciting events and opportunities to connect with the community. Here's what's coming up over this next month:

Free Time Together Tuesdays Return!

We're delighted to bring back our Free Time Together Tuesday events. Join us for the first session of the year on Tuesday, 18 February during half term, and enjoy a free morning of crafts, games and quality time with family and friends.

The Centre of Networking

Our Centre of Networking event is back on Tuesday, 11 February, from 10-11.30am. This is a great chance to meet local professionals, share ideas, and grow your network. The event is free, with a £2 donation to Icen charity welcomed.

The Big Community Quiz

Test your trivia skills at the Big Community Quiz on Friday, 28 February. Bring your team for an evening of fun and friendly competition as we crown this year's quiz champions!

Makers Market

Join us on Sunday, 9th March, from 10am-1pm, for our Makers Market. It's the perfect time to find unique, individual gifts ahead of Mother's Day.

A Tribute to Carole King

Looking ahead, please join us for an unforgettable night of live music on Friday, 28 March, celebrating Carole King's iconic Tapestry album with hits like "You Make Me Feel" and "You've Got a Friend."

For more information on tickets for events, please visit: www.kwmcc.co.uk/community-events/. For bookings, please email: reservations@kwmcc.co.uk, or call: 01473 612648. Address: KWMCC, Twelve Acre Approach, IP5 1JF. Charity No: 1186279.

Kesgrave Community Chinwag

Whether you're looking to make new friends or reconnect with old ones, Kesgrave Community Chinwag is the perfect place to do so – and it's free! Fiona and her fabulous team of volunteers are ready to welcome those aged over 60 years and over to join us for an afternoon filled with friendship, music, refreshments, and fun!

Prepare for an afternoon of fabulous music from The Shotley Wailers on Friday, 21 February – spirited melodies of Sea Shanties and Singalong Songs. The band will create a lively ambiance, encouraging everyone to join in the fun and disperse any lingering winter blues.

To book your seat(s) please call Kesgrave Community Centre on: 01473 612648, or email Fiona: chinwag@kwmcc.co.uk. Please note: you must book in advance. We have a maximum of 150 seats, still allowing a little space for dancing if anyone feels so inclined!

We run a big, very popular Raffle at the session each month which costs £1/strip to enter.

We keep our Facebook page updated with goings on; for more information visit: Kesgrave Community Chinwag. KWMCC registered charity number 1186279

Kesgrave Women's Co-op Guild

At our first meeting back after the Christmas break on the 7 January we had a social afternoon browsing through old photographs taken over the years at our various social events. On the 21 January our speaker was Elaine Marsden telling us about her life in Bali followed by our AGM. For the 4 February we have Tim Pennick giving us a talk entitled Talking Paper for the Blind and on the 18 February Carl Chittock is coming along from the St Elizabeth Hospice.

We welcome new members who can visit for two meetings before joining. The annual membership is £15 and we charge £4 per meeting which includes refreshments and raffle tickets. Meetings start at 2pm in the community centre.

For more information please contact Barbara Noble: 01473 635117.

Suffolk author Virginia Betts Launches Her First Novel at Dial Lane Books

Suffolk author Virginia Betts released her first full-length novel, *Burnt Lungs and Bitter Sweets*, on 15 December with a launch party at Dial Lane Books on 20 December.

The book started as a poem inspired by a photograph of an old shopping trolley in the River Gipping. The poem became a short story and has now turned into Virginia's debut novel, where she has drawn on stories of the Ipswich punk scene from the late 1970s and some characters and events are influenced by real people.

Set initially in 1976, Hoagie, Toad, Toggie and Jonesy love the Sex Pistols, shopping trolleys and getting wasted. When boredom is a crime and sedation is the solution, it will never end well. Cue the music and roll back the decades through misadventures in Amsterdam, disorder on the dance floor, a dodgy portaloos at Millennium and a couple of dead rats.

The book is published by Urban Pigs Press, an Ipswich-based not-for-profit publisher that aims to give a platform to new indie writers.

Virginia said about the book: "Those who have pre-read it have commented that they laughed out loud and then felt a little bit bad about laughing! Perhaps *Trainspotting* is the closest comparison I could make. It's certainly 'no-holds-barred' and quite 'brutally realistic' in places. The genre was hard to pinpoint – its 'Urban Grit' for sure – I would say 'Tragic-comedy'."

With music playing such a huge part in the story as we chart the friend's lives from punk to the present day the book also has its own Spotify playlist to bring back the memories of pogoing in the back rooms of sweaty pubs to illegal raves in remote fields.

The book launch on 20 December was a real collaboration between local independent businesses, who all wanted to support local arts by sponsoring the event.

Dial Lane Books, Ipswich's only independent bookshop, provided the location for the launch, with drinks, food and an exclusive giveaway gift on the night for an invited audience all sponsored by Two Sisters Arts Centre, Geek Retreat Ipswich, Orwell Lady Cruises and Colourplan Printers.

Andrew at Dial Lane Books is a huge champion of people shopping locally with independent businesses. Emma Lightfoot from Orwell Lady Cruises said they were "More than happy to help. Anything for authors - and Ipswich!"

Burnt Lungs and Bitter Sweets published by Urban Pigs Press is available to buy from Dial Lane Books or as a Kindle version from Amazon.

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Bury St Edmunds Postcard Club

Postcards?? Boring?? Absolutely not! There's so much more to postcards than you think. Come along and see for yourself. It could be the start of a new hobby.

We are currently the only Postcard Club in the East Anglian region and have members who travel from Ipswich, Newmarket, Diss and North Norfolk for our meetings. Not all of our members are postcard collectors, but they enjoy the topics covered and the friendly group atmosphere, so joined after their first visit.

Our 2025 programme is shown below and offers another varied and entertaining year of speakers and talks – all postcard related (visiting speakers marked *):

18 February	UK Railway Stations and Quiz
18 March	Ascension Island and Charity Stock
15 April	AGM & Club Displays
20 May	The Suffolk Regiment*
17 June	WW1 Theme (tbc)*
15 July	Comic Policemen*
19 August	Social History Research*
16 September	Brentwood on Postcards*
21 October	Lee Entertains and Stock
18 November	Picture Postcard Posers
9 December	Christmas Get Together

We meet on the third Tuesday of the month (except December), and we would love you to come along as a guest to The Crypt, St Edmunds Church, 21 Westgate Street, Bury St Edmunds, IP33 1QG, where you will be made very welcome. Doors open at 7pm for a 7.15pm start. We have free parking, and a coffee/tea break during the evening.

For more information about the club/events please contact Sue Rawles on: 01284 769480, email: burystedmundspostcardclub@gmail.com or find us on Facebook: Bury St Edmunds Postcard Club.

Suffolk Book League

On Thursday, 13 February we welcome Emma Healey. She will be talking to us about her new novel, Sweat. Emma grew up in London but now lives in Norwich. Her first degree was in bookbinding which led to work in libraries, bookshops, art galleries and universities.



She gained an MA in Creative Writing from UEA. Elizabeth is Missing won the Costa First Novel Award in 2014 and sold more than a million copies.

It was adapted for television with BAFTA and EMMY award-winning Glenda Jackson as Maud, the missing protagonist with dementia. Long listed for the Women's Prize for Fiction, Whistle in the Dark focuses on a teenager who is lost for four inexplicable days.

Emma volunteers for Vision Norfolk, working with visually impaired writers.

This event will be taking place at the Ipswich Institute Reading

Room and Library, 15 Tavern Street, IP1 3AA. Doors open at 7pm with the event starting at 7.30pm. Tickets, £5 for Suffolk Book League members or £10 for non-members and £2.50 for students can be obtained via the website: www.suffolkbookleague.org/

Martlesham Brass

'Making Music Fun in East Anglia'

Martlesham Brass would like to thank all those who contributed to our carolling collections over the Christmas period. In total we raised almost £1300 which will be shared amongst this year's nominated charities EACH, Ipswich Hospital Butterfly Appeal & Music in our Bones.

Our Main band are performing in a joint concert with St. Elizabeth Hospice Choir on Saturday, 8 February at 7pm in St Michael's Church Centre, Martlesham Heath. Tickets cost £5 each and are available by calling: 07544 962205.

Our Intermediate band will be performing in a concert on Sunday, 2 March at 2pm also in St. Michael's Church Centre. Tickets cost £4 each and are available by calling: 07544 962205 or on the door.

If you feel you would like to learn to play a brass instrument, or if you already play and would be interested in joining us, please email: join@martleshambrass.co.uk - please note we operate a waiting list for our beginners band.

Liz Howard (Publicity Officer): publicity@martleshambrass.co.uk
T: 07544 962205. Registered Charity No.1100922.
Visit our website: www.martleshambrass.co.uk

Spring Term news from Suffolk County Music Service

It's great to be back in the swing of things at the start of this new term. All our activities resume around the county – plus we have loads more to offer with some exciting new groups starting in February.

Following the success of Suffolk Young Voices, a choir for young people up to age 12, we have created a new choir for older teens called Fusion Voices. Joining a choir is nationally very popular again, so we'll be pleased to see teens from 13-18 at this new choir, who meet at Northgate Arts Centre, Ipswich on Wednesday Evenings from 5.45-6.45pm during term-times from 5 February.

Do you have your own harp? We have a new Harp Meet on Friday, 28 February 6-8pm, again at Northgate Arts Centre and is for young harp players aged from 12-18 years and is a great opportunity for them to play together, share ideas and pick up tips, meet other harpists and talk harp and work with a great harp teacher. We do have a harp or two to loan too!

Please register your interest for either by emailing us at: county.musicservice@suffolk.gov.uk or visiting our website www.suffolkcountymusicservice.co.uk, where you can learn more about the wide range of activities we offer your children and young people at different locations across the county.

We're also holding various activities for our St Elizabeth Hospice Leveret – either helping to design and decorate our beautiful baby hare or furthering our fund-raising! Keep a look out for the various activities we'll be holding over the next few months to inspire our children & young people and we'll continue to update you on the leveret's musical journey of creativity, including a workshop later this month to paint and decorate our sculpture. These events will also include our fundraising to help raise vital funds for St Elizabeth Hospice, an independent Suffolk charity delivering essential care to over 4,000 patients and their families throughout East Suffolk, Great Yarmouth and Waveney, who are living with a progressive or life-limiting illness. These services cost the hospice around £12m to facilitate each year, with the charity raising 70% of funds via revenue streams and the generosity of the community through support of its retail shops and fundraising activities, so it is great to be able help by joining the Art Trail.

Donations can be made on the Suffolk County Music Service Enthuse Page by scanning the QR Code below, or visit: <https://shorturl.at/feHtz>

Follow us on our Social media pages for more updates and find out how you can join in!

Twitter: @SCMusicS_SCC
Facebook: @suffolkcountymusicserviceSCC
Instagram: @suffolkcountymusicservice

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Cafe 66



Do you have a celebration coming up this spring? We can bake you a sponge cake, or provide a full buffet for your event. Get in touch via Facebook: Cafe 66 Community Cafe – or pop in during opening hours to discuss your requirements.

Find us at Kesgrave Scout Hall Tuesday to Friday 10am-1.30pm. We support adults with learning difficulties and disabilities. Full menu of light lunches, daily specials,

cakes, scones, sausage rolls. Table service and takeaway.

Portal Woodlands Conservation Group



In December, our Volunteers were back on the southern Bronze Age burial mound (tumulus), this time clearing up a tree that had fallen on to it, as well as removing the brambles and bracken. They ended the morning enjoying festive food and drink to thank them for their hard work during 2024.

Our next work morning is Sunday, 16 February, from 10am-12noon, meeting at the Education Area. New volunteers of all ages and abilities are always welcome; no experience is needed. For further information, please contact us at: pwcg.martlesham@gmail.com, phone: 01473 612632, visit our website: pwcg.onesuffolk.net, or join our members' Facebook Group by messaging Duncan Sweeting.

Stephen Corley, Chairman



Felixstowe Garden Club

Our next meeting is on Tuesday, 11 February 2025 at 7pm with Ruth Goudy speaking about 125 years in Horticulture. We meet at Old Felixstowe Community Centre, Ferry Road, Felixstowe IP11 9NB. Visitors are welcome, £5 cash on the door (refunded if you decide to join our membership). Free refreshments available from 6.30pm. For more details, contact Val White: 01394 671290, visit our Facebook page, or find us on <http://felixstowedistricths.onesuffolk.net>

Felixstowe Art Group

Currently I am reorganising my art studio, I know I am extremely lucky to have a dedicated space. Yet if you are looking to take up art all you need to start is a pencil and paper, plus a little inspiration. But beware, it's an addictive hobby, the art being one part and the collection of materials another. If drawing is not your thing, then there is so many other forms of art. The excellent thing about joining the art group is you can watch and learn from our many events and workshops. Feeding lots of ideas and seeing what supplies and forms of art might interest you before you buy. Other members are always there to help with advice, with some offering additional lessons. It is extremely affordable with membership per year remains at just £20.

Our Tuesday evening events this month are for members only which include life drawing and then our yearly Drawing Challenge. Our drawing challenge is open to all members with the favourite of each category voted by members that evening, then receiving a trophy and prize (a prize for runners up). Members please check your recent Newsletter for full details.

Our next Tuesday evening demonstration for members and also non-members (a good opportunity to see what the group has to offer) is 11 March 7-9pm Broadway House, with sky and clouds in acrylic.

We also like to announce our new Felixstowe art Group Facebook page set up by our new member Ruth (thank you). Another platform to keep you updated on upcoming activities. So please take a look and follow us there so you do not miss anything. For those not on Facebook you can go to our website for further detail: www.felixstoweartgroup.org

Janet Woodard

Find the right yoga for you in 2025!

If you are looking to join a yoga class, it's important to find one which gives you what you need. Some classes have a faster pace than others, some follow routines which you get to know over time, some are more suited to those who prefer to practise their yoga slowly and in more detail.

Our daytime classes at Melton and Martlesham Heath are always popular and Linda James and Izzy Ixer offer encouragement to help you get the most from your practice. By breaking down the postures into manageable stages, group members feel they are progressing and developing a good balance of strength and flexibility.

One of our regulars said recently: "Thank you for the wonderful yoga teaching, as ever!" and we often receive positive feedback about the support we give. We both believe that building strength and improving balance are key building blocks in yoga and with regular practice, flexibility improves too.

So if you want to get back to yoga or have some experience of yoga and would like to develop your practice then do get in touch – we have a few spaces left for our January classes on Tuesdays at the Burness Parish Rooms in Melton and on Wednesdays at the Richards room in Martlesham Heath. Both classes are from 1.30-3pm and include yoga postures, breathing practices and relaxation.

Your first group session is free and if you'd like to find out more about the classes and whether they are right for you, Izzy is available for a free, private consultation at the Woodbridge Complementary Health Centre in Sandy Lane – book here: www.whch.info.

Izzy offers one to one yoga sessions at the Woodbridge Complementary Health Centre, at the Natural Health Centre in Woodbridge and online via zoom:

- posture masterclasses
- rehabilitation after surgery
- kick-start your home yoga practice
- managing anxiety through simple movement and breathing
- return to yoga
- get ready for yoga classes
- chair yoga

For more information visit: www.izzyyoga.co.uk or call: 01473 625115 and leave me a message.

Izzy Ixer

Patrick Spencer MP

As we step into the New Year, I find myself reflecting on the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead for our communities across Central Suffolk and North Ipswich. The turn of the year is not just a calendar change, but a moment to reset, refocus, and renew our ambitions – both personal and collective.



This year, I remain fully committed to continuing the hard work that underpins the heart of our constituency – strengthening our public services, supporting our communities across Central Suffolk and North Ipswich, and addressing the local concerns that matter most to fellow residents here in Suffolk. In many ways, 2024 has been a stark reminder of the resilience and character that define our towns and villages. From local residents and businesses still grappling with the after effects of the flooding caused by Storm Babet, to small businesses navigating economic pressures, the determination of our communities has been inspiring.

In 2025, I will focus on three key areas that local residents consistently raise with me – healthcare, infrastructure, and the environment. Our NHS remains a pillar of strength, but I know the strain it faces, especially during the winter months. I will continue pressing for greater investment in frontline services, but especially for urgent and much needed investment in primary care, allowing better access to GPs and local clinics. Likewise, improving rural transport links and broadband infrastructure will remain priorities – we must ensure that no village or town is left behind as we move further into the digital age.

Flooding has once again reared its head over the winter, disrupting homes and livelihoods. I am actively engaging with local authorities and the Environment Agency to push for more robust flood prevention measures. Our beautiful landscape must be protected, not just for today but for future generations. I will also advocate for schemes that encourage sustainable farming practices, supporting our farmers in their essential role as stewards of the countryside.

Supporting local businesses will be key to strengthening our economy in the year ahead. By expanding opportunities for skills development and apprenticeships, we can help ensure that young people across Suffolk have the tools they need to secure fulfilling, long-term careers within our own communities.

As always, I am here to listen and first and foremost, to act on your behalf. If there is an issue you feel needs attention or a cause you would like me to support, please do not hesitate to get in touch. This year presents an opportunity to build on our progress so far and I look forward to hearing from you and meeting many more of you in the New Year.

Let us embrace the possibilities that 2025 brings with optimism and determination. Together, we can ensure that the year ahead is one of positive change and renewed hope for all.

Patrick Spencer MP

Member of Parliament for Central Suffolk & North Ipswich

This February half-term kids go free at Banham Zoo!



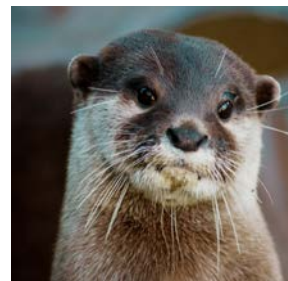
Join us for a wild adventure.

We are thrilled to offer visitors a kids-go free ticket admission this February half-term.

From Saturday 15 – Sunday 23 February, at Banham Zoo when booking a week in advance online.

From the maned wolf to meerkats and tigers there is so much to explore this half term, keeping those little minds learning outside of school time.

Enjoy the safari road train, creative crafts, Toby Investigates: Tracking (a live stage show), and the Explorer Training Schedule (keeper talks) all included in the admission price and offer.



Discover the world of conservation here at Banham Zoo and enjoy a family fun-filled day with us amongst the wild for a little less.

Book online a week in advance to receive free child admission with your visit to the Zoo during the February half-term. Simply use the code KIDSGOFREE at checkout to redeem this offer.

Please note the last date to buy tickets with the kids-go-free offer is Sunday, 16 February 2025.

Joshua Hunter-Harl, Marketing Director at Banham Zoo, said:

"We understand the challenges many families face during the cost-of-living crisis, and we remain committed to our charitable objectives of making the Zoo accessible and affordable for all. We can't wait to welcome guests of all ages to experience the magic of the Zoo, connect with wildlife, and create lasting memories together this February half-term."

For more information and to book tickets please visit: February Half-term | Banham Zoo: www.zsea.org

Ipswich Oddfellows

After a brilliant start to the year at Ipswich Oddfellows, we now enter February - a month known for having the least amount of days and, of course, Valentine's Day.

As the song lyrics go, 'Love is all around me', but love can take many different guises, one of which can be the love we have for our friends.

Whether popping in for a quick cuppa on the way into town or regular catch ups enjoying a mutual interest or hobby, friendship is a powerful love that can pick us up when we are down, throw an arm around us when we need help, or celebrate with us when we achieve a goal or life milestone.

Here at Ipswich Oddfellows we are all about friendship. Whether you want to add a bit of friendly chat to your life, increase your social circle, or you want to come and play a game or two of Kurling, why not give us a go? You'll always find the warm hand of friendship and an interesting event with a ready-made set of friends waiting to welcome you here at your local

friendship group.

In February, we are hosting a number of events, including our Kurling session held every Thursday morning at Ipswich Library starting at 10.15am or perhaps our relaxed coffee morning is more your cup of tea. These are held at the Black Horse Methodist Church, Black Horse Lane starting at 10am on the 28 February.

As well as our events, Oddfellows members can access a wide range of benefits, including care and welfare support and a travel club. There are also opportunities to volunteer and play a part in fundraising initiatives.

To find out more about our group and what we've got planned, or to get yourself a free information pack and events diary, please call our office on: 01473 251867 or email: martin.lambert@oddfellows.co.uk. Visit www.oddfellows.co.uk for more information. We look forward to welcoming you.

Kesgrave Library

Sunday Crafts 10am-12noon – during February we will be making the following crafts:

Sunday 2 – This week we are making snowflakes out of circles – what shapes will you cut out in yours?

Sunday 9 – It's Valentine's Day on Friday 14. Create a Valentine tree with the names of those you love on the leaves.

Sunday 16 – We are making dinosaur pictures today. Which dinosaur do you like best?

Sunday 23 – Create a paper plate animal. Will you choose a mouse, a dog or a rabbit? Whatever you like best.

Activities are free. Parents must stay with under eights.

Word Play Sessions – Every Thursday Morning. Trained staff run these free sessions.

Tot Rock: 9.45-10.15am – active songs and rhymes for pre-school children.

Baby Bounce: 10.45-11.15am – Gentle songs for you and your baby to enjoy.

No need to book. Please just pop along. We look forward to seeing you soon.

Story Time: Fridays 9.45-10.15am Fun stories, rhymes, and songs – this is a free activity.

Lego Club: every Tuesday 3.30-4.30pm. Free play with each child given a basket of Lego bricks to create designs of their choice. We hope to see you soon.

Stay and play: Every Tuesday 10-11am. Bring your little ones to our Stay and play group for a relaxed and informal opportunity to meet other parents and carers, share experiences and chat. Our Stay and play groups are a chance for parents to socialise and give their babies and young children a fun, interactive play session that engages their senses and helps their development. These sessions are suitable for under 5s. This event is part of our Me Myself and Baby perinatal support service. The aim of the project is to help reduce isolation and improve emotional wellbeing for new parent.

Morning Book Group: Tuesday, 4 February, 10am at the library. The group are discussing *The Island of Missing Trees* by Elif Shafak.

Afternoon Book Group: Thursday, 6 February at 2.45pm. They are currently reading *Someone Else's Shoes* by Jojo Moyes.

Evening Book Group: Thursday, 27 February 7-8pm. The group are currently reading *The Black Dress* by Deborah Moggach.

If you are interested in joining any of the above book groups, please contact library staff on: 01473 626103. The library supplies copies of the titles being read.

Knit and Natter: From 2.30pm. This month sessions are on Thursday, 13 and 27 February. You don't need to be able to knit, crochet or embroider to attend – just pop along for a natter. Tea/coffee and biscuits are provided.

Menopause and Me Support Group: Thursday, 6 February 7-8pm. This peer led support group is run by staff and Jen Evans, who is a menopause advisor. All sessions will comply with both NHS and NICE guidelines; and are for anyone who is affected by the menopause and its symptoms. This month's session is a general support group – why not pop along for a chat and support from those attending? Tea, coffee, and biscuits will be provided.

Mr Bean's Magic Show – Wednesday, 19 February – Show 1: 10-10.30am and Show 2: 11-11.30am at Kesgrave Library.

The library has organised two magic shows during half-term week - thanks to a grant from Councillor Lawson. There are 30 tickets for each show, and they are available to collect at the library, from Monday, 27 January (tickets are only needed for the children attending, not accompanying adults). We look forward to seeing you soon.

Recycle Your Ink Cartridges – Did you know that Kesgrave Library is a drop off point for printer ink cartridges, whether used or out of date (apart from laser printer cartridges). Every donation of a used cartridge helps the library to raise funds.

Printing and Photocopying – You can print and photocopy at your local library. We can print A4 colour and black and white, as well as photocopy in A4 and A3.

We are also able to scan to email and enlarge and reduce documents.

Home Library Service – If you would like to access the library but are unable to visit us, Kesgrave runs three home library routes, where volunteers come out with a selection of books to your homes. To access this service, whether you are house bound, recovering from an operation, receiving treatment for an illness, or enquiring for a relative/friend or someone you care for, please ring the library 01473 626103 or log onto the Suffolk Libraries website and complete the online form.

Opening Hours

Monday	9am-12noon
Tuesday	9am-12noon/2.30-5pm
Wednesday	2.30-6pm
Thursday	2.30-8pm
Friday	9am-12noon/2.30-6pm
Saturday	10am-5pm
Sunday	10am-3pm

Maggie Lusher
Kesgrave Library Manager
Tel: 01473 626103
www.suffolklibraries.co.uk

Suffolk Family History Society

On Wednesday, 5 February Keith Barker presents 'Frederick Barnes – Ipswich Architect, born 1815 died December 1898. He designed 200 new build and renovated Buildings in the Ipswich area and around.. many surviving to this day. Find out about this man's busy life.

The talk starts at 7.30pm at The Main Hall, Salvation Army Citadel, 558, Woodbridge Road, Ipswich, Suffolk, IP4 4PH. Free parking at the rear. Entry to this meeting is £2 for members, £3 for non-members. No need to book - just turn up and pay at the door.

More information from Howard King: 07423 404704 / 01473 274300 / howard.king1@outlook.com

Suffolk Industrial Archaeology Society

Suffolk Industrial Archaeology Society next meeting will be on Wednesday, 12 February from 7.30-9.30pm at Ipswich Transport Museum, Cobham Road, Ipswich, IP9 3JD. The speaker will be Peter Jones who will be talking about: 'Jumbo - How Colchester Got its Famous Water Tower.

Peter has proved a popular speaker on his previous visits, and this evening will look at another aspect of his native Colchester, the dominant water tower which can be seen from most parts of the town. After years of neglect, it might be that plans for its future could soon bear fruit.

Further details: 01473 405116.

Headway Suffolk 's Neuro Conference

Prof Sir Jonathan Van Tam MBE, will be a keynote speaker at Headway Suffolk's Conference on 21 May 2025, which will take place at Kesgrave Conference and Community Centre. This will be Headway Suffolk's tenth annual Conference

The Conference has proved popular over the years with health professionals and the public alike, with past speakers including Prof Stephen Hawking and Chris Tarrant.

The conference will focus on neurological conditions, with expert speakers throughout the day.

Helen Fairweather, CEO of Headway Suffolk, said: "Headway Suffolk are very excited about Professor Sir Jonathan Van Tam MBE presenting at our 10th neuro conference. We are so fortunate that someone with so much knowledge and who is so busy is happy to support our Conference and Charity."

Headway Suffolk will continue to announce speakers and sponsors for the 2025 Conference – during the next few months.

To enquire further about the conference, to purchase a ticket and sponsorship opportunities, contact Helen Fairweather on 01473 712225 or email helenmfairweather@headwaysuffolk.org.uk.

The Martlesham Heath Aviation Society



On Friday, 7 February at 7.30pm John Bridges, presents: 'Doodlebugs and Rockets in Norfolk and Suffolk in World War 2'. This talk is another in our long running series of talks all NOT to be missed.

Then on Friday, 7 March there will be a talk on "The East Anglian Air Ambulance".

Martlesham Heath Aviation Society meetings take place at Martlesham Heath Community Centre, Felixstowe Road, Martlesham Heath, Suffolk, IP12 4PB. All start at 7.30pm. Entry to this meeting is £3 for members, £5 for non-members. No

need to book - just turn up and pay at the door.

More information from Howard King: 07423 404704 / 01473 274300 howard.king1@outlook.com / publicity@mhas.org.uk

Bright Stars

Bright Stars Activities sheets for preschool aged children. Would you like to receive them?

At the moment we are sending out free activity sheets by email and/or post on the second and fourth Mondays of each month during term time, for the children to enjoy doing with their family and/or carers, we used to meet in St Michaels Church Centre, Martlesham Heath.

The activity sheets usually include a story, song and a craft or game about a theme or a story from the Bible.

In January we heard how three Wise Men followed the star and visited Mary, Joseph and Jesus in Bethlehem. They gave Jesus gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh and then returned to their homes.

If you have or look after a child/children of pre-school age, or slightly older and would like to receive our sheets, please give us a call on the telephone number below; we look forward to hearing from you.

If you would like further information, please contact Sonya and Maureen Burrows: 01473 625196

Kesgrave Tennis Club

Kesgrave Tennis Club, at the community centre sports area, welcome all ages and abilities. Adult club sessions are Wednesdays 7-10pm all year round – come and try a session out! Various membership packages are available - for details on these, on play sessions, or group or individual coaching (open to non-members too) please contact us at: secretarykct@outlook.com, see our website: <https://clubspark.lta.org.uk/KesgraveTennisClub> or look at our Facebook page. Details of coaching sessions (open to members and non-members) can be found on the coaching page on our website. Matthew Last, Head Coach, has sessions for juniors - youth (red, orange and green ball) & teen players; and for adults - clinics, cardio, pair and play, Tennis Xpress, team training.

In club news the floodlit leagues and winter leagues continue. We've been a bit battered by the wet and cold weather at the end of 2024 and most teams have quite a few matches to get re-arranged but hopefully we'll be back on track. Our annual Mulled Wine Tournament took place at the end of December and was enjoyed by a festive crowd, despite the intermittent rain that evening too.

Badminton in Kesgrave

Woodbridge Badminton Club is playing at Kesgrave High School for the winter season (September-April). Adult club night is 7.30-10pm on Wednesday evenings.

Adults can come along for a guest session for £6 to try us out, refundable if you join as a member. We welcome a range of abilities but unfortunately not complete beginners at the adult club. For competitive players, we run four teams in the local Ipswich and District League. For latest details check out our website at: www.woodbridgebadminton.co.uk or email: contact@woodbridgebadminton.co.uk or ring Jim Cavanagh on: 07803 232892.

Northgate and Associated Karate Clubs



Very busy end of the year for Northgate and Associated Karate Clubs. Started with the last of the year a black Belt grading. Several other students also successfully graded to their next level of belt rank, the standard of the new students that have begun their journey with the karate club was exemplary. Now with a new energy and ideas after short Xmas break, we are all ready to train and achieve our goals.

From January/February 2025 we are going to start another beginners sessions from four years old on Thursdays at Kesgrave Sports Centre. Spaces filling quickly so be quick, go to our website: www.northgate-karate.co.uk and book a trial session.

Now is a great time for starting some new habits, like taking up a sport to improve your health and wellbeing. Karate is an excellent option as it has so many elements that make a well-rounded sports person. You can work on your strength, flexibility and endurance through bouts of high intensity training. Our Karate sessions are available throughout the week at a number of different venues in Ipswich, Kesgrave and Claydon. Our Claydon branch is getting busy, book your free trial to avoid disappointment, there are not many places left!

Please look at the club website or Facebook page for further information on times and locations. If you need more information, send us an email to: northgatekarate@outlook.com or just turn up to one of our sessions and give karate a go, first trial session is free.

Ipswich and District Croquet Club



More courts opening soon

Ipswich Croquet Club will open two new courts in April. This is part of an ambitious and forward thinking programme to make Ipswich a major croquet venue with championship facilities and a club fit for the 21st century.

Croquet is an international sport of skill and tactics rather than physical strength. It is played in summer and winter on equal terms regardless of age, gender or background. It is also widely recognised as contributing to our physical, mental and social wellbeing.

An invitation to sponsor

The club is now looking for sponsors to become a part of this exciting project in return for an individually tailored package of benefits. Such benefits include the discounted use of the facilities for Networking and Team Building, free tuition, acknowledgement at the grounds and on the club's website, in newsletters and in the New Member's Welcome Packs, and discounted club memberships for sponsors and their staff.

This is an excellent opportunity to support your local community while enjoying great benefits.

For more information contact Martin Brown (Club Secretary).

Tel/text: 07780 704792 or email: croquetclub.ipswichuk@gmail.com

Rushmere Baptist Church

Winter will go and the spring flowers will appear, but perhaps you and your family would like something new in your lives now.

We run midweek activities and groups for people of all ages. On Monday evenings in term time there are groups for children and young people, and new people are always very welcome. No need to commit yourself straight away, come and meet us and enjoy.

Every Monday at 6.15-7.30pm FFAF meets. It is a fun club for children in school years 1- 5, with crafts, games, a story, and a drink and biscuit.

Illuminate is a club for young people in school years six-eight at 7.15-8.30pm on Monday, 10 February and Monday 3, 17 and 31 March

Spring is a club for older teenagers in school years nine upwards and it will happen on 3 and 24 February and 3, 10 and 24 March.

All these clubs will warmly welcome you or members of your family for friendship, chat, activities, and refreshments.

If you would like to find out more please contact: secretary@rushmerekbaptist.org.uk / 01473 721455.

At present we are running the 321 course to help us all understand God, the world and ourselves through seeing Jesus' vision for life. There are four sessions with video, discussion and food, being held on Thursdays at 6.30pm and Fridays at 11.15am. If you would like to come to the remaining sessions you are very welcome to get in touch via Messenger on Facebook or by phoning: 01473 721455.

We look forward to meeting you.

God bless.



Kesgrave and Fynn Valley Churches

Don't you just love predictive text? Arriving in the vicarage in Bell Lane late last year I saw how much good stuff was going on in the parishes of Kesgrave, Little Bealings & Playford so decided to open a Facebook page to celebrate the 'Kesgrave and Fynn Valley Churches'.

It turns out that the algorithm at Meta HQ in California couldn't cope with that so our Page is called 'Kesgrave and FUN Valley Churches'! Which we can't be changed for a month or so...

Mind you this may have been a Freudian slip as a few of those I've spoken to like the 'misprint' and have suggested we stick with it. They're not wrong. When I was a school chaplain in Johannesburg our aim was to ensure that Chapel was fun and Chapel was a place where you could go to get help.

And in our three churches and parishes that is what we hope February will bring. As the earth begins to rouse from its winter slumber what could be better than joining in a Wednesday morning Fynn Valley Walk from Little Bealings followed by a baked potato lunch in the Church Café Hub?

If you need some refuge and quiet from a too busy world Playford Church is open for everyone 24/7 and All Saints Kesgrave is now open every day from 10am to 4pm? Pop in, sit quietly for a space, light a candle and find strength for the day ahead.

Putting the 'fun' into Fynn Valley is our bi-weekly Movie and Board Games at Kesgrave as well as great talks at Mothers Union meetings and the Playford WI.

Join us at our yummy Breakfast special in Kesgrave Hall at 9.15 on Sunday, 16 February with a church service before or afterwards including our relaxed 'Families in God' service in the Hall at 10am.

Please check our Social Media posts and website: askegrave.org for other events. There are even rumours of a daffodil bulb planting marathon during half-term so that our children can help Easter bloom...

Bless you - Revd Canon Andrew Dotchin



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