

'Like a friend dropping in'



The Elmswell Newsletter



More than thirty years of Parish Record... all the Community News...

FEBRUARY 2026

On line at elmswell.suffolk.cloud



EXCAVATION
- digging in
... see page 4



RENOVATION - helping out
... see page 24

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Published on the first Friday of every month by the Elmswell Amenities Association Reg. Charity No. 304879.
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EAA@elmswell.org.uk



Our editorial is designed to inform and to encourage debate.

If you wish to comment, please do so via the office or by email at; eaa@elmswell.org.uk

We reserve the right to edit any such contributions that we may use in a subsequent edition.

The Post Office closes. More change.

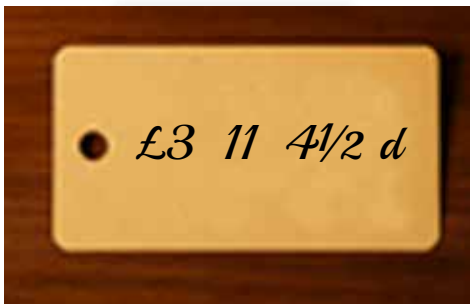
But, even, 'change', has changed. And, in one sense, it has almost disappeared.

Change was what we received when we spent money – real money made of metal and paper. Paper which only 'promised' to pay although the picture of our monarch was reassuring. And metal, which weighed a lot but which allowed us to spend small amounts, make more frequent donations to charity boxes and play shove ha'penny.



The ha'penny, more properly the halfpenny, was, predictably, worth half of a penny. That's where predictability ends. There were 12 pennies to shilling and 20 shillings to a pound. Which meant that the brain had to be engaged in a transaction involving a sale of three pounds, eleven shillings and fourpence halfpenny when the purchaser presented a five-pound note. 5 pounds = 60 shillings = 720 pence. The textbooks had it thus:

£	s	d
5	0	0
3	11	4½
1	8	7½



Schoolchildren (now students) breathed a sigh of relief when 'decimalisation' came along on 'D Day' in 1971. Shopkeepers, too. From the 5 pounds they took £3.57 and gave change of £1.43. All calculated in 'base 10', like the foreign way of measuring - ignoring good old feet & inches or weighing without having to know there are 8 furlongs to the mile or 16 ounces to the pound.

For good or ill these have been significant changes. On a local level change has been equally momentous. The village once met at the Memorial Hall. This was an excellent facility, built by volunteer labour in the 1950's with a library added later. As the growing pains were being felt by communities along the A14 corridor between Cambridge and Felixstowe, Elmswell decided it needed to make better provision for the ever-expanding population with higher expectations than had been the case in the post-war years. The result, at Blackbourne, was not universally welcomed. A petition was raised and signed by 200+ residents, a high percentage of the population at that time, insisting that the change should be ceased. Luckily the then parish council had the vision and the staying power to concentrate

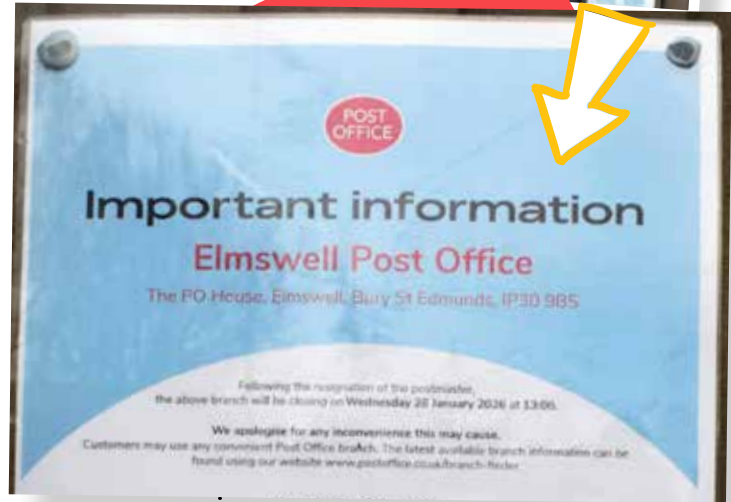
on the common good; to look forward rather than back, and the result remains as testimony to their foresight.

As does Wesley. Another community building, the original hall, tacked on to the chapel, served many clubs and organisations well but showed its age in ways that made it decreasingly attractive against modern expectations in terms of things like heating and toilets. There were high emotions at public meetings called to discuss a wholesale revamp but, once again, wise heads prevailed and the benefit to wide swathes of our community is there for all to see and enjoy.

The subsequent spin-off by way of the Tavern project also has had its detractors, but the village had voted formally for change to happen and happening it is.

The common driver of the resistance to initiatives such as Blackbourne, Wesley and the Tavern is resistance to change. We don't like it. Rose-tinted spectacles tend to blur the reality of the past. Nostalgia is exactly what it used to be – a vision blurred by the distance of time and the convenient misremembering of things past.

The post office serves as a good instance. None of us remember the days of 3 postal deliveries each day or of ordering from the butcher by postcard for immediate delivery by a bicycling Granville. Some might remember saving stamps with pictures of Prince Charles and Princess Anne bought to help the Government after the War. We all remember stamps...1st & second class, often with commemorative illustrations. Stamps are still available. But we don't buy them...emails don't need them, neither does WhatsApp. The mail that comes every now and then is largely advertising or promoting the latest gee-gaws from China or offering to value our houses, tarmac the drive or squirt foam into the loft. We tax the car on line now that we no longer need a paper disc for the windscreen, signed by the Post Office clerk in person.



Hence the closure of the retail business which once survived on selling a wide range of service unobtainable elsewhere. It loses money and losses increase week on week. As the hardware shop has given way to Screwfix and the video hire shop has retreated in the face of ever-advancing Netflix & Tik Tok, so the Post Office fades into folk memory.

The feeling on the street is that someone should stop this. Someone's to blame, surely, and should be brought to book? Yes, both are true. Blame squarely sits on all of us who don't write letters any more or buy postal orders or have our pensions etc paid online where we also tax our cars and buy our TV licence. Just as the high street dwindles because we don't use it and pubs close every week as we prefer to drink from a can at home, we are all authors of what we seem to generally consider to be a regrettable decline.

But blame is the wrong concept. Blame suggests a deliberate act of harm. A plot to end post offices and pubs and high streets for the sake of some perverse devilment – some mischief in the hearts of desperate men. The acclaimed social observer Mr Zimmerman suggested that, at his personal chosen moment in history, 'The Times They are a 'Changin''. He was right then and would be right now. Change is the only permanent thing we have.





ELMSWELL ART CLUB

This month we start with this wonderful depiction of Dunure Harbour, painted in acrylics by Norman Tharby. Dunure is a small village in the South Ayrshire area of Scotland, situated about five miles from Ayr. It is located on the coast of the Firth of Clyde and is overlooked by the ruins of Dunure Castle.



Norman's painting brilliantly captures the feeling of this harbour, as well as the oncoming threat of stormy weather.

Our second picture shows this delightful painting of "Flowers in the Window" created by Maureen Lazarus. Maureen used watercolours to produce her picture and she has really portrayed this homely image perfectly.



Our third and final picture this month is a superb oil painting of a Red Squirrel; Hazel McGregor is the person behind this image.



It is well known that, in Great Britain and Ireland, red squirrel populations have decreased in recent years. This decline is associated with the introduction by humans of the eastern grey squirrel from North America. However, the population in Scotland is stabilising due to conservation efforts.

Eddie Douglas

Finally, make a note in your diary for our Art Show & Sale which will take place on Saturday 25th and Sunday 26th April 2026 at the Wesley.

Entry to the show is free and there will be a prize draw.



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MEETS EVERY TUESDAY FROM
09:00 TO 12:00 AT THE
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NEW MEMBERS
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Elmswell Tavern

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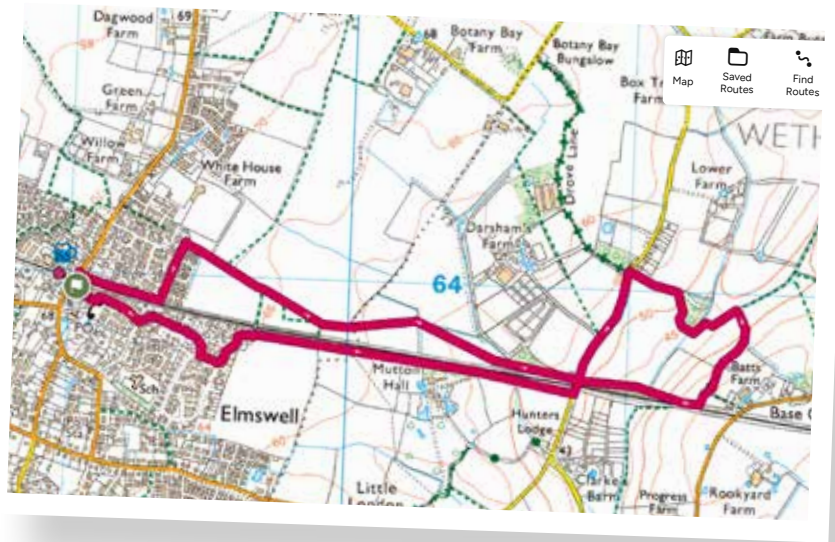
Weekdays 9.00 – 4.00, Saturdays 9.30 – 4.00



ELMSWELL FOOTPATH WALK

Sunday 11th January 2026

Following the resounding 40+ attendance of the New Years Day walk it was back to a hardcore crew of 9 to continue the monthly custom of walk and waffle around Elmswell's rights of way.



A word of thanks here to Alan and Linda Wells for their unstinting generosity in providing the throng of New Years Day walkers with very welcome sustenance and refreshment.

So, on a rather non-descript midwinter morning, a right, right again and a left took the group over the railway, past the

pharmacy and hence on to Long Gilbert's Road all on the well trodden FP10.

A right at FP9 had us heading eastish meandering on to FP23 and on to Mutton Hall through gate 4.

Keeping to the north of the railway we traversed Elmswell and Arches Fields carrying on through the dappled light of Long Links Wood and exited via gate 5 on to Captain's Lane.

Now firmly within the parish of Wetherden we turned left for 450m, heading towards Upper Town, and turned right on to FP49 which took us along a concrete track and through a small copse.

Exiting the wooded area we proceeded to circumnavigate a large open, rolling field by way of FPs 49, 19, 20 and 36 where we met up again with Captain's Lane, the underfoot conditions being

generally satisfactory but with a couple of wet stretches testing the resilience of our footwear.

A left and right through Mutton Hall's gate 6 took us alongside the railway through Pound Field, Square Links, Goslings Wood, The Paddocks and ultimately Stack Field where we exited via gate 3 back into Elmswell.

Now on the newly created but yet to be numbered right of way we met up with FP25 at Lord's Bridge where a left and right took us into Eastern Way and hence through the houses back to Crown Mill

An elongated figure of eight walk of approximately 3.76 miles in 1 hour and 30 minutes (an average speed of 2.5 miles per hour).

Peter Hancock, EPC Footpath Officer



FEBRUARY'S FOOTPATH WALK WILL BE ON SUNDAY 15th FEBRUARY



PLEASE NOTE THAT THE WALKS WILL NOW COMMENCE AT 10.30AM TO BETTER SUIT THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE GROUP



New Year's Day walkers gathered, as they have done for many years, for a gentle ambling introduction to 2026 led by Peter Hancock around 4 miles of the local footpath network.

In recent years, Alan and Linda Wells stationed themselves en route, supervised by Dick Burch who had led the walks in younger days, to provide hot mulled wine, bacon rolls and a whisky chaser for encouragement over the last mile or so.

ELMSWELL TAVERN

INSIDE JOB(S)

The building's up. Sound and dry. Inside, however, the jobs queue for attention. The painters are well into a 6 week contract to 'mist' everything white, fill and sand and then start adding colour. CCTV, intruder & fire alarms and wi-fi are installed with a few tweaks needed. The cellar is cleaned, painted and ready for beer. Final adjustments are in hand towards a final specification for the cook line and, above it, the air extraction system. Flooring is the subject



...adding colour

OUTSIDE JOB(S)

The weather has cost 2 days, but Jake Finch and his crew are working weekends to stay on target. Large amounts of soil have been removed from the front which had built up over decades of the various developments of the site. All of the rainwater is piped into the swale to run down to the stormwater drainage system. The paviours are laid and the Wesley is now conjoined - the unstable walls have gone and the fencing taken away. Wesley /Tavern really are working together. Topsoil, carefully retained, is now spread ready for seeding in the spring and sitting-out in the summer. Bring on the bouncy castle!



Paviours are laid



Wall gone - Wesley & Tavern conjoined

MEANWHILE...

Nadia, our General Manager begins formally on 1st February, although she has had valuable input on an informal basis over the last couple of months. Nadia has a lengthy to-do list which relies on her considerable experience in pub & catering start-ups...specifying cooking utensils, crockery, tables & chairs etc as well as agreeing the staffing levels and recruitment process.



Jake Finch and crew..



W&T
Working Together

Elmswell
Tavern



OPENING TIME?

The deliberately vague aspiration to be, 'open for Easter', remains as a likely possibility. Two weeks of having School Road closed for installing the new power supply remains set to begin on 14th February. Power will be with us on 27th and only then can we commission the cook-line, heating etc which might or might not produce glitches. Chances are it will be a gentle easing -in, a 'soft opening', a few days to iron out the inevitable problems.

Watch this space.



School Road closure - scheduled for 2 weeks from 14th February

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Please note as of February
2023 D A Bevan has been
taken over by MK Autos



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ELMSWELL BATS

COMMUNITY BADMINTON AND TABLE TENNIS

TUESDAY NIGHTS
7.15 to 9.15PM

Welcome to our report for 2025. Over the last year our community group has had great evenings with good games of badminton and table tennis. This year was quieter than last year and it was felt that our Friday night slot was making it difficult for people who planned other activities at the weekend, or just wanted to go out on Friday night to celebrate.



Therefore, on 24 November we started meeting on TUESDAY nights, a little later than previously from 7.15 to 9.15pm, and we have had a very positive response. We have also had a go with Pickle Ball this year which is attracting some interest at the moment.

We have space for more people, so if you are interested, please come along and join us, everyone is welcome and the first night is FREE.

Thanks to everyone who has played and helped last year, have a great new year.

For information, please call Mike on 07513 336412 or email burgess-wilsonmike@gmail.com

ELMSWELL WI



Terry welcomed several new visitors and introduced our speaker, Lindsay Barrell. On another occasion, Lindsay told us all about Sign Language. For this evening, her talk was entitled Burlesque, Me, and the W.I. A complete contrast.

Lyndsey told us all about her alter ego, Miss Cherry Bombe, and arrived resplendent in her burlesque outfit. She then proceeded to explain how she became a burlesque performer, almost by chance.

When her children left home, she was on her own and wanted to have new experiences and make friends. She tried various groups, including craft and salsa, but did not fit in. Eventually she tried a burlesque class and as she became more confident, began to perform. At first she did a solo in a pub! After that, she felt a different woman with renewed confidence, free to perform anywhere.

She joined a new W.I. group and created the first ever W.I. Burlesque troupe. They have performed all over Britain and £4,000 has been raised for women's refuges. During Covid, Lindsey taught another Essex W.I. group by Zoom. Women of all shapes and sizes perform and are instilled with renewed confidence, which enhances their daily lives.

Lindsey was a lively, (interesting) speaker, who related lots of anecdotes about her life.

Our February, meeting is entitled: 'Back care, Pilates, and looking after your joints.' (Some useful hints on what to do, after performing too much burlesque!?)

Rosie Collins 01359 241652



WESLEY UKULELE BAND

Firstly, a huge 'Thank You' to all our audiences throughout 2025, whether they be in Elmswell or in the surrounding areas. We are very proud to share the certificate below, which confirms the sum of £6921 raised for St Nicholas Hospice Care by the Ukes.

The new year has started off slowly with just two gigs so far this month, being our regular visit to the Time Out Club in Fornham and a wonderful evening at Warburton House in Cambridge. Alan and Sandy treated us royally, serving us dinner and drinks before the show. Many of the residents came down to enjoy the music and Carols daughter joined us for a couple of numbers. A great time was had by all and a substantial sum was raised for the new Cambridge Children's Hospital. The picture below shows the band in full swing at Warburton House.

'Til next time. Take care.

Or email: Kevin.Knock99@gmail.com



OVER 55'S CLUB

After a short winter break the Over 55's will resume on Thursday February 12th at 7pm at The Blackbourne Community Centre. We will kick off with a short AGM followed by Bingo.

The next meeting on will be on 26th February when Brotherhood will entertain us for the evening.

We are looking forward to another busy fun packed year, details of upcoming events and outings to follow.

New members are always welcome, please contact us for further information:

Kay – 07730265316 or Sharon – 07885730911 or email elmswellover55s@outlook.com

Regards Kay and Sharon

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Ellen's recent trip to India with Cox & Kings

Ellen experienced the energy of Delhi, the grandeur of Jaipur, Shimla's mountain setting, Chandigarh's unique design and Agra's Mughal heritage... topped off with a morning visit to the Taj Mahal. Not to mention the incredible Indian cuisine along the way!



Get in touch to start planning your next Indian adventure!

Please note that from February, the office will be open for walk-ins and appointments on Thursdays from 9am to 4pm. We will be contactable by phone and email Monday to Saturday.

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ELMSWELL LIBRARY

Hello Elmswell,

This month the Fantastical Book Group is at 11am on Saturday 28th February. This month we are reading *The cat who saved books* by Sōsuke Natsukawa and *A beautiful world* by James Norbury. If you are interested in reading them ask at the desk. There are limited copies of book group books available but we can let you know when a copy comes in if it is not available.

As part of the National Year of Reading, we have increased our selection of manga. For the next few months we will have several of the Dragonball series, Chainsaw Man series and the Komi can't communicate series.

February's book display is inspired by LGBTQIA+ history month so features a mix of historical fiction and some non-fiction. The display includes *The unlikely pursuit of Mary Bennet* by Lindz McLeod, *The liar's dictionary* by Eley Williams, *My cat Yugoslavia* by Pajtim Statovci, *Empty Theatre: A Novel : Or The Lives Of King Ludwig II Of Bavaria And Empress Sisi Of Austria* by Jac Jemc, *The secrets we kept* by Lara Prescott and *The Paris bookseller* by Kerri Maher.

The friends' group have decided that the donation piggy bank needs a name so in February we will be asking for suggestions. You can see the donation

piggy bank on the table when we have activities where there are refreshments as these help pay for them.

We have some interest from people to help with our home library service so if you are unable to get to the library for health reasons, we can organise a volunteer to drop book to you. This can be for a short period or for longer periods. See you in the library soon,

Miles

What's on

Quiz

John Oxlade Author Talk

5.30pm Thursday 17th March

Mahjong

3.30pm Friday 13th and Friday 27th February

Story Time

1.10pm – 1.30pm every Tuesday (except 1st Tuesday of the month)

9.10am – 9.30am every 1st Tuesday

2.30pm – 3pm every Thursday

Sunday Crafts

1pm – 2pm every Sunday

Lego Club

Every weekday from 3pm and every Sunday 11am – 12noon

Pokémon Club

10.30am Saturday 7th February (every 1st Saturday of the month)

Writing Group

6pm Thursday 5th February (every 1st Thursday of the month)

Chess Club

4.30pm Thursday 12th February (every 2nd Thursday of the month)

Fantastical Book Club

11am Saturday 28th February (every 4 weeks) – reading *The cat who saved books* by Sōsuke Natsukawa and *A beautiful world* by James Norbury.

The Keep in Touch Community Café

10.30am Wednesday 18th February at the Wesley Café (every 3rd Wednesday of the month except August and December)

Catch Up In The Library

2.30pm every Wednesday

Gwel's visits

3.30pm – 4.30pm Tuesday 3rd February (every 1st Tuesday of the month)

Opening times

Monday:	Closed
Tuesday:	10am – 1pm and 2pm – 7pm
Wednesday:	2pm – 5pm
Thursday:	10am – 1pm and 2pm – 7pm
Friday:	2pm – 5pm
Saturday:	10am – 1pm
Sunday:	10am – 3pm




Scared of a mouse . . . don't know your App from your Apple?

The digital support sessions available at Wesley on the third Wednesday of each month are increasingly popular. No booking is necessary – our team of Mathew, Tracey and Tracy are keen to help ease the way into better use of our devices.

There is no charge. Simply turn up with any problems to do with mobile phones, laptops, computers - anything digital.

The next session will be on the 16th February between 10:00 am and 12:00 noon.






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CITIZENS ADVICE MID SUFFOLK

I bought a doll for my child recently. I thought it was manufactured by a well-known brand, but I suspect it might be counterfeit. How can I be sure and what are my rights?

You're right to seek advice about this issue, because counterfeit goods aren't only illegal, they can be dangerous.

Fake children's toys, including dolls, often don't meet safety standards and can pose choking hazards - poor manufacturing can mean small parts are easily detachable.

Counterfeit goods are fake products designed to mimic the authentic ones sold by genuine brands. Sometimes it's easy to spot a knock-off, other times it can be harder to tell.

It's not just toys and games - things like clothing, footwear, e-cigarettes, perfumes and media devices can also be counterfeit.

Things to watch out for include strangely low prices from well-known brands and signs of poor quality - like missing security seals, bad or non-existent packaging,

blurry logos and poor stitching. You may also spot some spelling mistakes in the advert or on the packaging.

Looking at photos from official sellers can help when making comparisons, and it's important to only buy products from reputable sellers.

If you have purchased a counterfeit item, there are some steps you can take to try and get your money back. You're legally entitled to a full refund on fake goods within 30 days of your purchase.

If it's been over 30 days since you paid, but less than six months, the seller can provide you with a real version of the item first. If they can't, then they're legally required to give you a full refund. If you paid more than six months ago, you're only entitled to a part-refund based on how much you've used the item and how long you've had it.

Sometimes sellers might refuse to refund you, and argue the items were obviously fake because they were very cheap, but they're breaking the law by selling them and your legal rights still apply.

If this happens and you paid by debit card, contact your bank and ask to use the 'chargeback scheme'. If you paid by credit card and the item cost less than £100, you can ask to use the same scheme.

If you paid by credit card and the item cost between £100 and £30,000, tell your credit card company you want to make a 'section 75' claim to get your money back. To report counterfeit goods or get help getting your money back, contact the Citizens Advice Consumer Service. You can also report a seller to Trading Standards, which investigates criminal activity.

Citizens Advice Mid Suffolk can provide in depth advice on this issue and much more, including debt, finances, employment, benefits and family/relationships. You can contact them by phone on 01449 676060, visit in person at Milton House, 5 Milton Road South, Stowmarket IP14 1EZ or use the contact form at midsuffolkcab.org.uk/contact-us. Opening hours are Monday-Thursday 9.30am – 3.30pm and Friday 9.30am – 12.30pm.

**citizens
advice**

Mid Suffolk

ELMSWELL GARDENING CLUB

We are blooming excited to resume our meetings now that 2026 is underway and we have arranged a varied and hopefully interesting programme for the year ahead.

This time of year is perfect for seed sowing; veggies, herbs and annuals can be sown now, some on a warm window ledge and some with bottom heat from a heated pad or a heated propagator. I have been growing with peat free compost for some years, keen to do my bit to preserve peat bogs. But like most home gardeners I have had mixed results, so I have been investigating alternatives and learning from others' experience of using peat free. The Head Gardener, Tom at West Dean Garden (West Sussex) has undertaken trials and shared these online (The English Gardener Magazine or on the West Dean Garden Blog). There are some great tips from Tom too on using peat free composts and I definitely need to feed and water more based on his advice. I like Melcourt's peat free compost range

but will also give those recommended by Tom a try this year and see how I get on.

Our speakers programme for the first part of this year is:

February 17th –

Tim Fuller 'Gardening with Grasses'

March 17th – Caroline Holmes 'A Royal Country Estate – Sandringham'

April 21st – Chris Wiley 'Hellebores'

May 19th –

Ian Bedford 'Insects, Six of the Best'

June 16th –

Jim Paine 'Trees for all Seasons'

Meetings start at 7.30pm in Wesley Chapel, School Road.

We are also planning a day trip over the summer to Beth Chatto's beautiful garden in Essex, more details to follow.

Whether you are an experienced home gardener or just starting out there is always something new to learn or ideas to take home to your own garden. Non-members are always welcome and you may make some new friends. There is

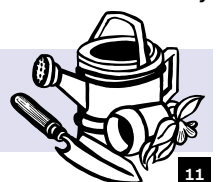


a small fee for non-members of £5 for each meeting, but membership for the year is a bargain at just £20 for all ten meetings.

We look forward to welcoming you in February and cultivating another year of shared garden inspiration together.

Wendy

For Information contact elmswellgadmin@btinternet.com or myself on 07748442951





ST JOHN'S CHURCH

Greetings from St John's Church

On Tuesday 17 February, St John's invites you to a **Messy Church Pancake Party** to celebrate Shrove Tuesday. All the family are welcome to come along for songs, crafts, stories about Jesus and, of course, pancakes.

But why do we eat pancakes on this day and why is it called Shrove Tuesday?

Shrove Tuesday is the day before Ash Wednesday (the first day of Lent). Lent is a time for discipline, confession and fasting – a sort of spring cleaning for the soul. It lasts for 40 days in the run up to Easter. Shrove Tuesday is traditionally a day to eat up all the rich foods that can't be consumed during Lent, such as butter, eggs, milk and sugar. Is there any better way than to use these foods than to make pancakes?

The word "shrove" actually comes from "shrive" (an old Anglo-Saxon word). It means to be given absolution from one's sins. The day before Lent (Shrove Tuesday), a "shriving" bell sounded to a call people to church to confess their sins and start Lent with a clean slate.

St John's does not have a shriving bell for Shrove Tuesday. We just have the Pancake Party. However, there is a special service at 5pm on Ash Wednesday, which will include the imposition of ashes (a sign of repentance and a sign of our mortality).

In our Sunday services, we will be continuing to focus on what happened to Jesus in Jerusalem during the week running up to the first Easter Sunday. Our Sunday School (which meets in the back room during the service) will continue to hear about the miracles Jesus performed.

We are a warm and welcoming church and love to share the good news of Jesus. Why not pop along to Messy Church Pancakes (above) or on a Sunday at 10:30am to meet new friends and to discover more about the God who made us and loves us? Tea and coffee are available afterwards.

Upcoming Dates:

Sun 1 Feb 9:00am Holy Communion

Sun 1 Feb 10:30am Family Service

Sun 8 Feb 10:30am Sunday Worship with Holy Communion

Sun 15 Feb 10:30am Sunday Worship

Tue 17 Feb 10:00am Messy Church Pancakes

Wed 18 Feb 5:00pm Ash Wednesday service with ashing

Sun 22 Feb 10:30am Sunday Worship with Holy Communion

Sun 1 Mar 9:00am Holy Communion

Sun 1 Mar 10:30am Family Service

Every Saturday:

9:00am Weekly prayer meeting online (see website for details)

We live stream most of the 10:30am services on our Facebook page (also available on our main web site later that day).

Rector: Peter Goodridge

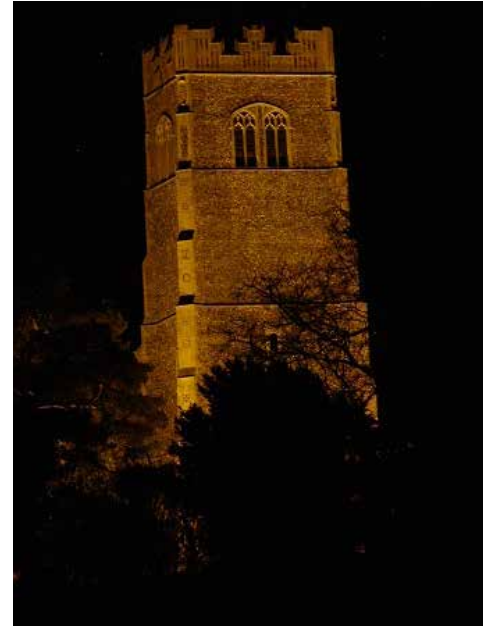
Email: elmswellrector@gmail.com

Tel: 01359 240512

Web site: www.stjohnselmswell.org.uk

Facebook: www.facebook.com/stjohnselmswell

YouTube: www.youtube.com/@stjohnselmswell



ST. JOHN'S CHURCH

TOWER

FLOODLIGHTING

As always, everyone is welcome to sponsor the floodlighting of St. John's, a lovely way to commemorate a personal event, an anniversary, or any special occasion. Alternatively, you can simply make a donation. And it all helps to pay the ever-increasing day-to-day running expenses of our parish church.

Please note that after 31 years of asking for £5 for a night's floodlighting, we have reluctantly decided to increase this amount, from the beginning of January, to £10.

This will not apply, of course, to sponsorships that have already been pre-paid. Cheques payable please to "ST. JOHN'S CHURCH, ELMSWELL".

For the winter months the lights will be on between 5.30 p.m. and midnight.

The deadline for inclusion in the March Newsletter is Monday 23rd February.

Your support is very much appreciated. Thank you.

FEBRUARY 2026 SPONSORSHIPS

- 1 to remember and thank all those past Elmswell Fire-Fighters who served their village and community so well.
- 4 in loving memory of my dear Dad, Geoffrey Dalton.
- 6 Geoffrey Sturgeon. "Remembering the best Grandad". Love from Shaun & Shelly. xxx.
- 10 remembering a dear Grandad, George Stiff. Love, Louise and Brian. xx.
- 10 Craig Paul Stammers. Remembering my wonderful son



Craig on the 5th anniversary.
"Love and miss you so much". Love
from Mum and Peter. xxx.

- 11 in memory of my brother.
Love, Louise. x.
- 12 Ted Rookard. Treasured "Happy
Birthday" memories, for a dear
Husband, Dad & Grandad. Lots of
love from all his family. xxxx.
- 13 in loving memory of
Marjorie Ellen Manning.
- 13 remembering Fred Rush,
a dear Dad, Grandad, and Great
Grandad, on his Birthday.
- 18 remembering Anne Dyball
on her Birthday.
- 20 in loving memory of Wally Fraser
on his Birthday.

**All bookings and payments please to :-
Trevor Sadler, Abbots Warren, Church
Road, Elmswell (Tel: 240908)**



CATHOLIC PARISH OF OUR LADY, STOWMARKET

Parish Priest:

Rev. Simon Leworthy,
The Presbytery, 29 Lockington Road,
Stowmarket, IP14 1BQ
Tel:01449-612946
E-mail: pp@ourladystowmarket.org.uk

MASS TIMES:

Saturday (First Mass of Sunday) – 6pm
St Mary's C of E Church, Woolpit IP30
9QG

Sundays – 8.30am & 10.15am
Our Lady's, Stricklands Road,
Stowmarket IP14 1AW

Holy Days – 10am & 7.30pm
Our Lady's Strickland Road Stowmarket
Weekday Mass is usually 10am, see the
weekly Newsletter or the Parish Website
– www.ourladystowmarket.org.uk

All are welcome to "Coffee and Chat",
2 – 4pm on the 2nd and 4th Thursday of
the month. This is held in the Parish Hall
above the Church – a lift is available.



ELMSWELL BAPTIST CHURCH

Because of the generous giving of those
who attended our Carols in the Daylight
and Carols by Candlelight we were
able to send over £250 to Spurgeons
Childcare (an increase of over 25% on
last year) to help them in their vital work
with families. Thank you.

February is an important month, it's my
birthday on the 2nd (!) and we celebrate
St. Valentines Day on the 14th and Shrove
Tuesday on the 17th ready to start Lent
on Ash Wednesday as we prepare for
Easter, the most important festival in
the Christian calendar. Without the
resurrection of Jesus on Easter Sunday
our faith is meaningless.

Here at the Baptist Church in February
we celebrate our 139th Anniversary
this year, or more accurately, 139
years since the erection of our present
building. It's not doing too badly for
what was designed as a temporary sort
of structure, even if like some of us it
does creak and groan a bit! This year
we have Rev. Greg Marlam coming to
lead worship and help celebrate our
Anniversary on February 22nd. It is 50
years this year since Greg started his
ministerial calling here! Come and join
our celebration with a light lunch after
the service.

Why not come and give us a try by joining
us one Sunday morning at 10.30am or
coming along to our other activities as
listed below. ALL our welcome.

The **Ladies Friendship Group** meet on
Monday February 2nd at 2pm for a games
afternoon with Stephen and Jenny
Spurgeon. ALL ladies are welcome, come
and join us. See the What's on Diary
for future months. Phone Margaret on
07926 753882 for more details.

Food 'n' Friends meet at Midday on
Thursday February 12th when senior
citizens gather for soup and roll and
home made desert for a donation of
whatever you can afford, and plenty of
time to chat. ALL older folk are welcome.
Contact Dorothy on 01359 245811 for
more info.

We are not having so many of our
Wednesday morning meetings for
bible study or prayer in 2026 but all are
welcome to join us for those. Phone Tony
on 07784 095225 for dates and details of
content.

We are grateful to all those who come to
preach each week. Our preachers at our
10.30am services in the coming weeks
are as follows:-

February 1st
Rev. Reg Craig – inc Communion

February 8th
Stephen Spurgeon

February 15th
Rev. Norman Tharby

February 22nd
Rev. Greg Marlam –
139th Church Anniversary

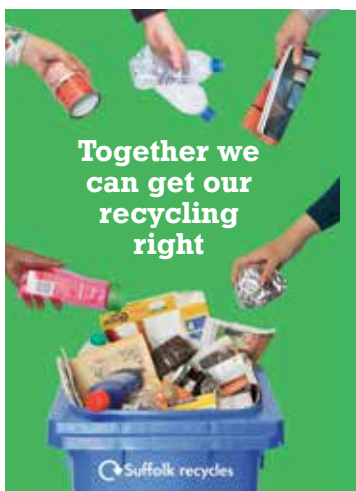
March 1st
Rev. Reg Craig – inc Communion

A warm welcome is extended to all who
wish to participate in any of the above
events.

Please visit our website for further info
or email cockant2@btinternet.com or
telephone 07784 095225 to get in touch.

God bless you all.

Tony



**As from June of this year, Mid Suffolk
are making changes to encourage more
recycling of waste.**

**Household bins will be able to take glass
bottles, drink cartons. And plastic bags.
There will also be a separate collection
of waste food.**

**New bins and more details will be
delivered in February / May**

**The WEE bin for electrical & electronic
waste, together with the textile bank
will remain at Station Road.**

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We will continue to stock bathroom plumbing supplies but we will be focusing more showroom area to trade and value priced bathroom products.

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NEWS FROM ELMSWILD

Town Field hedge cutting

In November we carried out the third phase of our hedge restoration project at Town Field. This is part of a five year plan to rejuvenate the ancient hedgerows which enclose this small field. All hedgerows need to be managed to keep them healthy, as a neglected hedge can quickly turn into a line of straggly trees with little or no benefit to wildlife. Over the last three years we've enlisted the help of Steve and Will of the Wandering Woodsmen to help conserve these important, species-rich hedges. The work involves coppicing, cutting back the overgrown trees and laying the vegetation so that the hedges grow back bushy and healthy. All the brash – the cuttings – were used to construct dead hedges around the coppiced stumps, which helps to protect the new growth from browsing by deer and rabbits. They also provide new habitats for the wildlife that depends on hedgerows for food and shelter. Our thanks to both Steve and Will for all their hard work with the chainsaws!



Willow cutting at Lukeswood

Our willow cutting morning attracted a good turn-out in January. The weather was quite bracing – it was certainly a good way to blow away the cobwebs after the Christmas holidays! All the willow was cut, sorted and bundled in short order, and many people took away armfuls for their own gardens or to craft something interesting. We still have some bundles left, so if you missed the cut but would still like to have some willow please get in touch. We're happy to let you have some in return for a small donation. Thank you to everyone who came to help – it was lovely to see you all at Lukeswood.



Mad March Hares

In February hares are beginning their breeding season which reaches its peak in March. They become very visible at this time of year, having spent the winter hunkering down, and start to behave in odd ways – hence the expression, 'Mad as a March Hare'. You can see them tearing over the fields at speeds of up to 40 miles an hour, chasing each other. This is also when the boxing matches occur. This is not, as you might be forgiven for thinking, males fighting each other, but in fact females warding off unwanted attentions of the males. A male hare will chase a female, but sometimes she is not ready to mate so she turns round and wallops him to put him in his place. It looks like boxing because they rear up on their hind legs and hit each other with their front paws. It can get quite ferocious and fur can fly!

Make your own March Hare

After the success of the Christmas reindeer last year, we have another willow weaving course coming up. This time it's to make a wonderful hare sculpture – just in time for the March Madness! We're hoping to run two courses – on Saturday 21 February and again on Saturday 28 February. This is a full day course, 9.30-4.00, and will take place at the Blackbourne. Our tutor is once again the talented weaver, Jo Hammond. Tea and coffee will be available and participants should bring a packed lunch. All materials and tools are provided. Cost is £45 per person. Places book up quickly so if you would like to take part please get in touch as soon as you can. Don't miss this opportunity to craft your own beautiful March Hare!

Mary Feeney
info@elmswild.org.uk



ELMSWELL HISTORY GROUP

Astounding Archaeological Discoveries in East Anglia



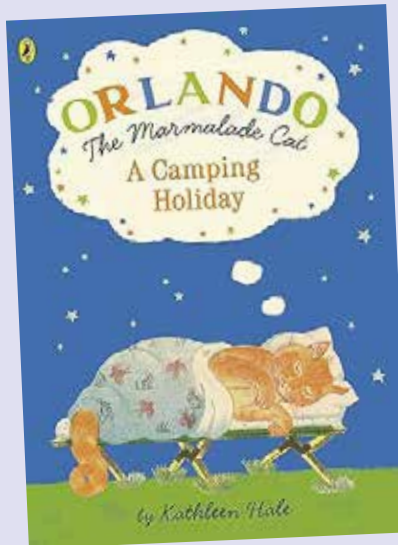
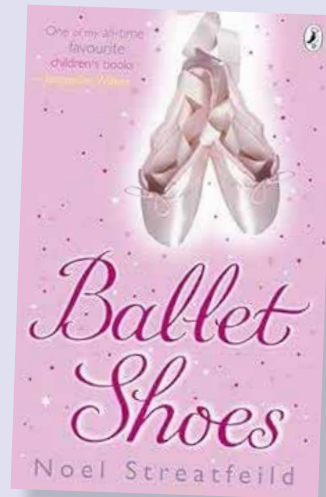
You may have seen on the recent local news that two archaeological digs have uncovered some amazing artefacts. Firstly, just north of Thetford, they have unearthed an extremely rare CARNYX (bronze celtic war trumpet, about 5ft long but played upright, i.e. vertically!), and a BOAR STANDARD (a Celtic military emblem to rally the troops in battle). Secondly, on the Sizewell C site, more than 200 archaeologists have been working over 70 sites for an unprecedented insight into Suffolk's long history, and have found items covering 40,000 years, i.e. from the Neolithic, through the Bronze and Iron Ages, Roman, Anglo-Saxon, early Medieval, and right up to WW2. All this and much more can be seen on BBC2's "Digging for Britain" programme (Episode 2, shown on 14th January), or on the iPlayer if you missed it - definitely worth a catch-up viewing!



FROM THE ARCHIVE

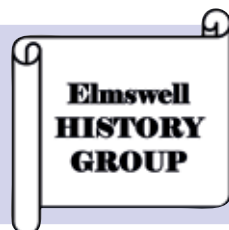
28th February 1938

On this day, Noel Carrington of *Country Life* magazine had an idea for a major project involving Cowells, the Ipswich printers, so he sat down to discuss it with Allen Lane of Penguin Books (who celebrated their 90th birthday in 2025). It took Carrington only a few minutes to convince Lane that a series of well-illustrated paperback books for children would be successful. They were to cost no more than 6d (today's 2.5p) and would be called 'Puffins' (remember those?). Carrington chose Cowells because he knew they could print the sort of brightly-coloured books he had in mind. The world was at war by the time Puffins started to roll off the Ipswich presses; the first title was an illustrated educational book called *War on the Land*, followed by others explaining various aspects of the war to children. The books were often designed and illustrated by artists working directly onto lithographic plates. Some of them, like Kathleen Hale of *Orlando the Cat* fame, were taught how to do this by Cowells' lithography department. In 1941, the first Puffin storybook appeared, featuring Worzel Gummidge the scarecrow, and other favourites soon followed, like Noel Streatfield's *Ballet Shoes* and *Babar the Elephant*. Despite wartime paper shortages, Cowell's were busy printing more Puffins throughout the war and continued long after. (Ref: Ipswich Institute)



Further information - **W.S. Cowell Ltd** was a British printing company, established in 1818, which played a significant role in the history of printing in Ipswich. As well as their popular children's books of the 1930s and prestigious coffee-table books, they also started producing postcards, including their Christchurch series. However, after several mergers in the late 20th century, the name was finally dropped by its corporate owners in 1988. Subsequently, in 2022, artists including Kathleen Hale, Eric Ravilious, Edward Ardizzone, Hilary Stebbing, Pablo Picasso, and Henri Matisse were included in the exhibition «Picture Books For All: The Fine Printing of W.S. Cowell Ltd» at The Hold Heritage Centre in Ipswich. You can probably still borrow a good selection of Puffin children's books from the Library, so do go along there to see what you can find.

Our next meeting will be on **12th February, 7.30pm** at the **Wesley Hall**, being a postponement of our January meeting which had to be cancelled due to the severe weather warnings issued for that evening. Happily, by a slight re-arrangement of our programme, we again look forward to hearing three short talks on (1) "Growing up on the **Ickworth Estate**", (2) "The History of **Postcards**" which will include a selection of Elmswell ones, and (3) "Memories of 1950-60s **Woolpit**". Non-members/visitors are always welcome to attend any of our meetings, so do join us then. However, as ever, if the weather looks at all questionable, it would be sensible to double-check our website, Elmswell Next Door on-line, or ring the number below before setting out, to save you a possible wasted journey.



For further information about our History Group, please visit our website –

www.elmswell-history.org.uk
or contact our Secretary, on 01359-242601



TRIBUTE TO TONY FRANCE, R.I.P.

It is with great sadness that we report the passing away of Tony France at the end of November after a short illness, and his well-attended funeral took place just before Christmas.

Following his "retirement" after a career in engineering, Tony was instrumental in setting up the W.E.N.T (Woolpit, Elmswell, Norton & Tostock) Community First Responder Group (a voluntary arm of the Ambulance Service) in 2007, with the excellent guiding hand of Dr West at the Woolpit Health Centre. Many people will remember Tony in this role, and he continued to lead the Group for ten years,

with his energetic "can do" approach to life being both infectious and an inspiration. He also led a programme for the installation of Defibrillators in all local villages, the first one being at Elmswell's

Co-op. Tony and his colleagues would have visited many village groups and local events to provide training in CPR (resuscitation) and information about the Responders.

Our thoughts and sincere condolences are extended to his wife, Jenny, and family who would like to thank everyone for their sympathetic words and numerous kind offers of help at this sad time.

*Nick & Stella Chamberlin
(former Treasurer & Secretary of the local CFR Group)*



READY FOR A NEW CHALLENGE IN 2026?

Join the team at Elmswell Fire Station

Are you looking for something more than just a job?
Do you live or work 5-8 minutes from Elmswell Fire Station?
Are you 18 or older?

We have vacancies for on-call firefighters to join our close-knit team and serve our local community.

This is your chance to make a real difference.

Why join us?

- ✓ Protect and support your local community
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- ✓ Opportunities to develop, progress, and specialise

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Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service

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Winter Fun



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A	N	H	D	F	E	H	E
E	O	M	A	V	I	C	E
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BOOTS SCARF COAT COLD HAT
ICE GLOVES WINTER SNOW

Ice Art

Create your very own garden ice art, look for natural objects in the garden or when out on a country walk. Put the objects into water in a cup or container. Pop them in the freezer until frozen.

Don't forget to look after the birds this winter, why not make your own bird feeder.

You will need: lard, fir cone, bird seed and string.

-  Mix the bird seed with the lard
-  Push the mixture into the fir cone
-  Put in the fridge overnight to harden
-  Remove from the fridge
-  Tie some string on to the top
-  Hang outside in the garden for the birds to enjoy



How does a Snowman get to work?

By icicle 

What do snowmen eat for lunch?

Ice Bergers 

How do Eskimos make their beds?

With sheets of ice and blankets of snow



WHY WOMEN'S SELF-DEFENCE MATTERS MORE THAN EVER

In today's society, women are navigating a world that still too often places the responsibility on them to avoid harm rather than on the perpetrators to stop causing it. These days women are often forced to think about their safety in ways men rarely have to. From walking home after dark, to travelling alone, to simply asserting boundaries, many women live with an underlying awareness of risk. This reality is not a reflection of weakness—it is a reflection of a society that has yet to fully protect women. Self-defence training is not about living in fear; it is about reclaiming confidence, autonomy, and personal power.

A women's self-defence class offers far more than physical techniques. It teaches awareness, assertiveness, and decision-making under pressure. It helps women trust their instincts, recognise danger early, and respond effectively if a situation escalates. Most importantly, it shifts the narrative that women are not passive, helpless targets, but capable individuals who deserve to feel safe and respected in their day to day lives.

The course teaches students how to break free from grabs, defend against common assaults, protect themselves on the ground, and create opportunities to escape safely.

Just as importantly, they learn to trust their instincts and assert their right to personal space and safety.

Learning self-defence is an act of self-respect. It sends a clear message—to ourselves and to the world—that our safety matters. In a time when violence against women remains a serious concern, empowering women with practical skills and confidence is not optional; it is essential. This class is not about teaching fear—it is about building strength, resilience, and the freedom to live without constantly looking over your shoulder.

Classes are held on Monday evenings at The Blackbourne 18.30 - 20.30 and start February 9th

There are limited spaces, so if your are interested in taking part call

Gary 07711680262 or email ryoishintowaryuheiho@gmail.com

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ELMSWELL BOWLS CLUB

This is exactly the right time of year to play all of Bowls' aces. I imagine, if you will, a balmy summer's afternoon, (remember them?) ((they will be back!)) you are outside basking in the sunlight, about to meet up with some really good friends and taking a little light exercise, on a perfectly prepared Bowls Green. What's not to love? Now I am not claiming that it never rains during a Bowls match, of course it does. Every self-respecting bowler carries waterproofs, just in case you wondered what we carried in those mysterious bags. The good news is that all this is on your doorstep. The Bowls Green is at the Blackbourne, you must have seen it from the Car Park. All Elmswell Residents are

entitled to use the Green, it is part of the Bowls Club's contract with the Parish Council, we maintain it and have priority use on condition that we welcome residents to the green. As it happens, all Bowls Clubs welcome new members and you are welcome 'to try before you buy' We strongly believe that most people who give bowls a try, will end up loving it. We will open the green in early April and then hold practice days Wednesdays and Saturdays, we have all the equipment you will need. All that you need of your own is flat-soled shoes and you are 'good to go'.

This is the point when I show some nice, sunny photos from last season, by all

means use them to reminisce about the summer. I must point out, however, that we don't only play in sunshine.

Last season, we entered the Agnew Cup and were drawn against the favourites, Stanton. The photos are from that match. The first show John Irving bowling, with Jenny Murray and Mark Edwards looking on and the second shows Barry Hayward, who completed the team.

Elmswell
Fox



Peter Edmonds, E.F.B.C.
07860 395720
edmondspeterj@gmail.com

Bowls Club

THANK YOU

Dick Burch would like to thank family and friends for attending his party at Blackbourne on 5th December.

Special thanks to Brian Hawes for doing the Bingo raising £250 towards a total £560.00 which went to East Anglian Air Ambulance.



Computer Help

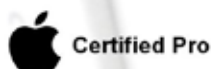
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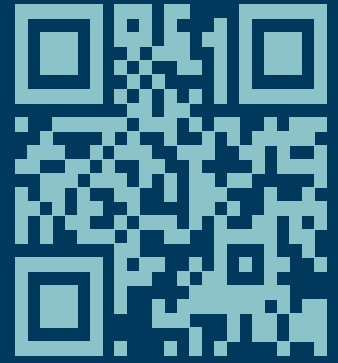


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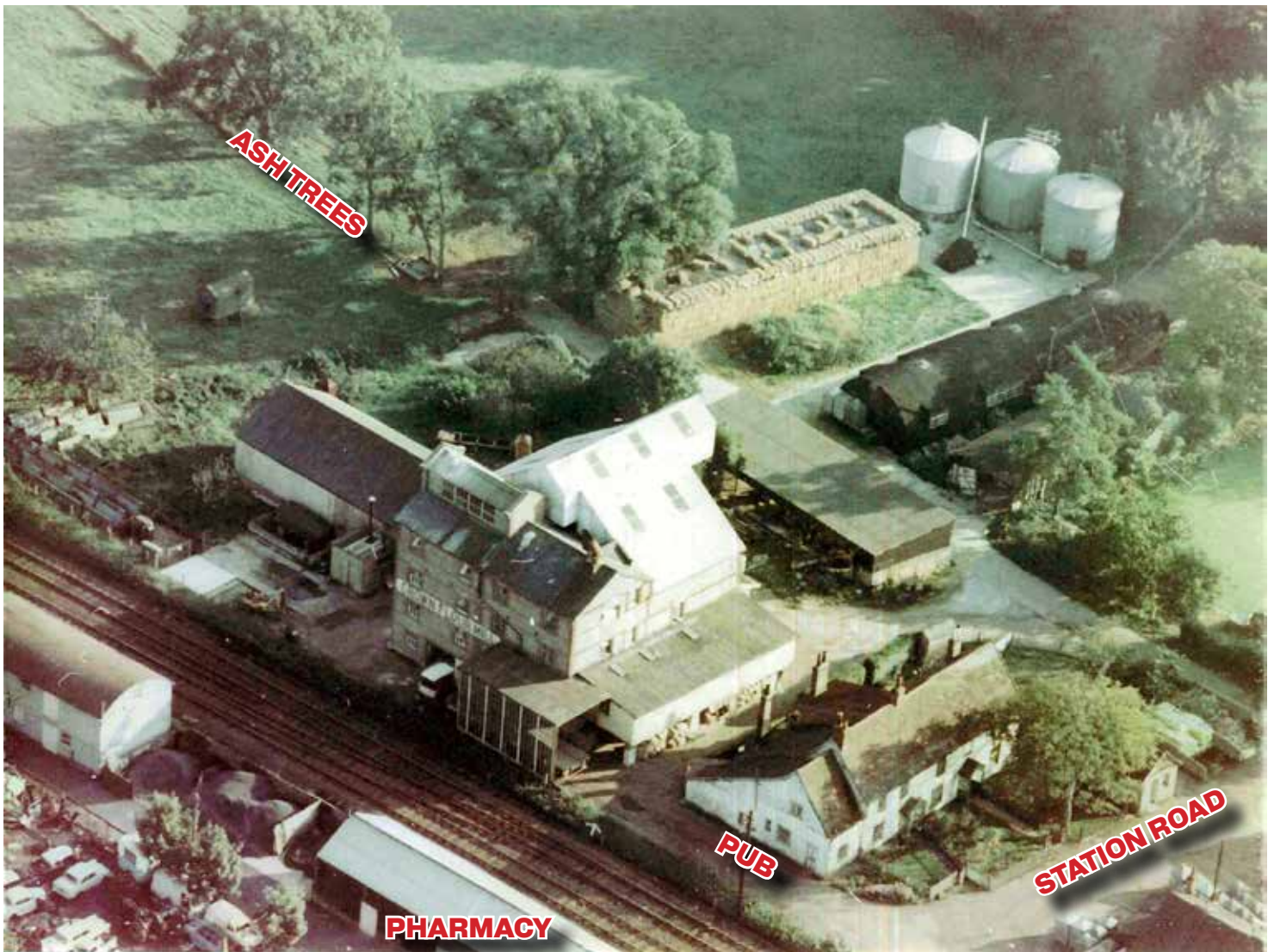
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Work has recently been done on 2 mature ash trees fronting some of the houses at Crown Mill.

Our photo, from the Village Archive, was taken in 1970 and the trees are marked.

56 years ago Crown Mill was as its name suggested, a mill. The centre of the village was dominated by farming concerns, Crown Mill and other agricultural activities run by Jim Baker and Jewers' grain business at the station where he aptly named Granary flats now stand.

The pub connection is less clear but The Crown is marked next to the cottages facing what is now the vet's surgery, then the village reading room.

At about that time there would have been 4 pubs in the village. In addition to The Crown there was The Fox, now about to undergo another transformation, which was a much smaller enterprise than we see today. The Lion, once the Swan and previously The Old Swan, sat opposite what is now The Mace Stores became Catton's garage and eventually a private house. The Railway Tavern, soon to be reborn as the Elmswell Tavern, was already of long standing and looks to be soon resuming over a century of service to Elmswell. The trees have seen it all and are now made safe for a few years more.



The trees remain in a much changed setting.

Better Recycling : Ahead of the major improvements to recycling in June this year, additional bins for food waste and recycling will be delivered to each household, starting this month. For more information about the changes, look out for your copy of the Mid Suffolk Magazine - if you haven't received one by the end of February, please let Sarah or Jen know so that we can request that a copy is sent to you.

Elmswell to Woolpit pedestrian path and cycleway: We have been frustrated to learn of some delays in the detailed design stage of this fully-funded project. However, the relevant County Council officers assure us of their confidence that the work will be delivered to timescale (broadly, design stage 9 months, mobilisation 3 months, build 6 months) and within budget.

Local Government Reorganisation: At a meeting January 12th, a majority of County Councillors voted to request a further postponement of their elections due this May (originally postponed from 2025), and this has since been confirmed by Government. The Green Party position is that we should have elections at the allotted time, not decided by politicians when it is convenient for them.

Councillor drop-in sessions: Jen and Sarah are regularly available for residents to come to meet for a chat. Future sessions are:

- **Thursday 12th Feb 10:00 – 12:00 at Green Wolf Café, Woolpit.**
- **Tuesday 31st March 10:00 – 12:00 at Wesley Café, Elmswell**
- **Tuesday 28th April 10:00 – 12:00 at Wesley Café, Elmswell**

To get in touch with us, please contact:

Mid Suffolk District Council - www.midsuffolk.gov.uk / Tel: 0300 1234000
Cllr Sarah Mansel - 07860 829517 sarah.mansel@midsuffolk.gov.uk
Cllr Jen Overett - 07928 512591 jen.overett@midsuffolk.gov.uk



The Elmswell Repair Café

As part of our efforts to re-use, recycle and reduce waste, our repair volunteers will be at Wesley each month to repair advise on a range of problems to encourage people to repair items rather than throw them away, thus reducing waste and saving you money! There is no charge for this but donations are accepted to cover running costs.

The team will be happy to mend clothing items, small electricals, small items of furniture, toys, jewellery and anything that needs fixing or gluing. If they can't fix it they can usually suggest what you need to do.



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**DON'T BIN IT -
REPAIR IT.
WE CAN HELP**

Last Saturday monthly 2.00 - 4.00pm
Next session: 28th February

**NO BOOKING
NECESSARY -
JUST TURN UP**

ELMSWELL PARISH COUNCIL JANUARY MEETING REPORT

The Parish Council meets at least once each month, sometimes excluding August if there is insufficient business, although extraordinary meetings can be called as required at any time. The January meeting with 10 councillors present together with BMSDC Ward Member Jen Overett, the Parish Clerk Peter Dow and 15 members of the public took place at Blackbourne on Monday 19th. This report is compiled from that meeting by the Parish Clerk and edited by the Council's Editorial Board which comprises the Council Chairman, the Council Vice-chairman and Cllr Sue Roots, elected by her peers to join them. It seeks to cover some of the more interesting or significant items thought to deserve wider public attention. Included, where appropriate, are matters reported to the meeting by external bodies such as the County and District Council Ward Members or as raised at the meeting by members of the public. Further background and reference to subsequent events are included where relevant.

The Minutes of recent Parish Council meetings and Committee meetings when ratified, together with the agenda for the next meeting, are available online at elmswell-pc.gov.uk and from the Parish Clerk by arrangement. Bound copies of older Minutes are lodged in the Village Archive at Blackbourne and with the Suffolk County Records Office in Bury St. Edmunds. The most recent Minutes from meetings held on 15th & 23rd December, as approved at this meeting, are posted in the Council's notice board at Crown Mill.

County Council

Cllr Andy Mellen, Ward Member on Suffolk County Council, tabled a Report which included the following:

Protecting Suffolk's Rivers

At council on Thursday 11 December, my group proposed a motion to strengthen protection for rivers in the county via the Universal Declaration of the Rights of Rivers which include the right to flow naturally, be free from pollution or contamination and the right to recover from environmental harm. Councillors in the group and those from other groups at the council spoke passionately about rivers and the harm being done to them by sewage and agricultural and highways run off. Unfortunately, the Conservative group opted to vote against the motion and it was not carried. Other motions tabled at the meeting including writing to the government to protest the recent budget announcements, a motion criticising the council's record on Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and the importance of local Post Offices.

Suffolk Minerals and Waste Plan

At Cabinet on Tuesday 2 December, preparation arrangements were agreed for the county's Minerals and Waste plan, which is now five years old and due for renewal. The plan looks at the county's needs and decides what planning measures need to be taken to meet them – for example, aggregates such as sand and gravel which are necessary for housebuilding. As the government has announced high targets for housing in Suffolk, the amount of these materials needed will be higher than before. As the Local Government Reorganisation process means that Suffolk County Council will likely not exist by the time the plan is due to be adopted, the decision made by Cabinet was to undertake all the prep work and gather evidence for it so that the new authority/ies who have to publish the plan will be well-placed to do so once established.

Review of SEND progress

On Thursday 4 December, the council's Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Committee convened to scrutinise progress on the action plan for improvement to Suffolk's Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) services. The action plan was developed following a poor inspection report from Ofsted and CQC in November 2023. Council officers and Cabinet members for children's services joined the meeting and acknowledged that although progress had been made to clear the backlog of EHCPs and improve the waiting times to produce them and review them annually, many families had not yet felt the benefit of improvements the council and health partners were trying to embed. The Cabinet member for Education and SEND apologised at the meeting for this. It was noted that some issues, like the shortage of speech and language therapists, were a national issue rather than specific to Suffolk. The council is also working closely with the Department for Education and in partnership with Bedford Borough Council on best practice and support with strategy. The government's Schools white paper, which is expected to include an overhaul of the SEND system nationally, is expected soon in 2026. Members of the committee included education professionals and parents of children with special educational needs who expressed their concern that the council was still not providing a good enough service to Suffolk families.

New Funding for Buses and Sustainable Travel

Suffolk has been awarded £27m of funding for bus services from the government's Local Authority Bus Grant (LABG), this can be used for routes, ticketing or improving infrastructure like bus stops and shelters. Previously known as the Bus Services Improvement Grant,

communities in Suffolk will be able to suggest improvements in their area and 'bid' for funding via the Suffolk on Board website: <https://www.suffolkonboard.com/>. The council has also been awarded just over £12m from Active Travel England to promote sustainable travel in the county. This can be used to invest in footpaths, cycle lanes and other infrastructure. Examples of how this funding has been used recently include pedestrian crossings in Bridge Street and College Road by Ipswich waterfront and improved cycle routes including from Ipswich Hospital to the waterfront area, Nacton Road in Ipswich, Main Road in Martlesham, and within Woodbridge as part of the town's current active travel project. Cllr Chris Chambers, the Cabinet Member for Transport Strategy at the council, said it was important for the council to develop a network of measures to encourage people out of the car wherever possible in order to reduce congestion and pollution.

Warm Homes in Suffolk

At the end of November 2025, Suffolk County Council secured £1.38 million from the government's Warm Homes Local Grant Fund, which means Suffolk residents living in properties which are not energy efficient could be eligible for funding to make their homes warmer and reduce their energy bills. Residents and landlords are urged to apply quickly, as the funding must be allocated by the end of March 2026. The fund aims to provide free energy saving improvements to energy inefficient homes if residents are on a low income, receive certain benefits or live in a certain postcode area. This could be wall and loft insulation, solar panels or air source heat pumps. To be eligible, Suffolk homes must be privately owned (either by you or your landlord) and have an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) of D, E, F or G (you can find this out when you apply). Household income must

usually be £36,000 a year or less - but if you earn more than that, you might still be eligible if either:

- you live in a certain postcode area (certain areas of Beccles, Felixstowe, Ipswich, Lowestoft and Stowmarket)
- someone in your household is getting certain benefits
- you have a severe or long-term health condition, which is adversely affected by living in a cold home

Once these conditions have been approved, an assessment of your home will identify which measures are best suited to your property. These will then be installed by trusted contactors, for free. You can find out more and apply using this link: <https://www.warmhomessuffolk.org/> In addition, Suffolk County Council and East Suffolk council have teamed up to provide Winter Warmth Packs to help vulnerable residents stay warm and healthy at home even if they are struggling with rising living costs. Referrals are via community groups, food banks, GP surgeries or hospitals and each pack includes items such as thermal hats, gloves, blankets and gilets, tailored as necessary – for example, children’s winter coats can be included. Although the Warm Homes Healthy People programme is delivered by East Suffolk Council, it is a county-wide programme.

Helping Older Drivers Stay Safe
Suffolk’s Fire and Rescue Service are holding workshops at fire stations around the county to advise older people on how they can stay safe while driving. Nationally, one in four car drivers killed on the roads last year were aged 70 or over, and as a rural county, many residents are reliant on cars to stay independent. The sessions are planned for 11am-1pm and the nearest to Elmswell is on Wednesday 28 January at Ixworth Fire Station To book a free place, please visit <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/o/suffolk-fire-rescue-service-road-safety-86298781223?msockid=1b58e35a30906c973b40f56031016d19>

District Council

Cllrs Sarah Mansel & Jen Overett, Ward Members on Mid Suffolk District Council, tabled a Report which is printed elsewhere in this Newsletter.

BW-TMA

The Blackbourne & Wesley-Tavern Management Association tabled a Report which is printed elsewhere in this Newsletter.

Clerk’s Report

The Parish Clerk’s written Report to the Meeting included the following:

- Since purchasing the Tavern there has been a liability for Council Tax on the 1st floor accommodation which was redundant for our purposes but remained habitable, although marginally so. The Valuation Office Agency have finally accepted that the flat is no longer useable from the date that we can prove the staircase was removed and there remains access only through an external door at 1st floor level to be reached only by a ladder. Accordingly, we shall have a rebate backdated to 3rd June last year and no further liability until the premises are restored and accessible. The monthly bill was £597.00 pcm which included the substantial, ‘empty homes,’ premium.
- Councillors may recall that Ward Members and others have expressed concerns regarding the very slow and seemingly chaotic process whereby SCC officers are administering the eventual delivery of the Elmswell – Woolpit community cycle & walking path. A meeting was due to be held on 27th January but this is now postponed until on grounds, proffered by officers, that: *We have received a quotation for the design work; however, due to the cost, we have challenged this and sought a further quotation from another contractor. The second quotation has now been received, but it does not cover the same scope of work.*
We are currently working to reconcile the two and agree a clear and consistent scope as soon as possible.
I have expressed concerns at an apparent lack of due process. Cllr Mellen is pursuing the matter through the Portfolio Holder.
- In light of the arboricultural report commissioned to inspect 2 large ash trees at Crown Mill which were reported by residents to be showing ground heave in windy conditions, I have attended on site with Wayne Jarvis, our preferred contractor, and taken the opportunity to inspect other tree problems at that location as reported from residents. This ties in with the job of removing the diseased acacia tree to make way

for the Junior Play Area expansion. The total cost of all works would be £2,635.00 and, in consultation with residents and our Tree Warden, I shall press on and instruct appropriately.

- Work starts on the refurbishment of the junior play area at Crown Mill in the last week of January with a possible build-time of 4 weeks depending on the weather. The final spec. for the toddler/ pre-school kit is awaited following further consultation with the residents at a Working Party meeting held on 1st December.
- As reported in the Newsletter, the Tavern post main-contract works proceed apace, most dramatically the groundworks which are, literally, changing the landscape. UKPN are still due to lay on the electrical power on 27th February when commissioning works can begin. Meanwhile progress is being made with kitchen fit-out including extraction, a Lead Brewer Supply Contract with Greene King, final works to wi-fi, security alarms, CCTV & lighting. Internal decoration has begun and quotes are in hand for flooring. Our General Manager, Nadia Tunmore was able to meet with several Councillors at the carol service and stands ready to begin formally on 1st February. This will allow for progress on recruitment, menu range and furniture / foodservice fit-out.

Planning Results

The Meeting noted the following as notified by Mid Suffolk District Council as Planning Authority:

- DC/25/04594** To plant an English Yew hedge...Juniper Crossing, Cooks Road GRANTED EPC supported
- DC/25/04999** Remove existing window...Mulberry Farm, Ashfield Road GRANTED EPC no comment
- DC/25/05000** Listed building consent... Mulberry Farm, Ashfield Road GRANTED EPC no comment



WESLEY Coffee Shop... We are open!

where you are warm and welcome

**Weekdays 9.00 – 4.00,
Saturdays 9.30 – 4.00**

Toddler/Pre-school play area at Crown Mill 3 members of the public spoke and tabled a petition against the installation of pre-school and toddler age-appropriate play equipment on land at Crown Mill on grounds that there is not a clearly-evidenced demand and that the site is unsuitable.

Staff pay Following discussion without the public present it was agreed that the remuneration of the Responsible Finance Officer be adjusted upwards within the parameters of the Local Government Services Pay Agreement 2025/26.



Next Meeting It was noted that the next Ordinary Meeting of Council was scheduled for 16th February beginning at 7.30pm at Blackbourne. The public are, as ever, welcome to attend all Council meetings and the agenda will always offer opportunities for questions and comment. Agendas are published online at elmswell-pc.gov.uk and on the Council's notice board at Crown Mill and are available from the Council Office at Blackbourne.

Enquiries on any Parish Council matter are invited to the Clerk, Peter Dow, at The Council Office, Blackbourne, Blackbourne Road, IP30 9UH – right next to the car park and with wheelchair access.

Staffed Monday – Friday 9.00am – 4.00pm and other times by arrangement

clerk@elmswellpc.co.uk

Tel. 244134 www.elmswell-pc.gov.uk



Future Council Meetings

Notice of all meetings and agendas is posted on the Council's notice board at Crown Mill and in the community notice board at the Co-op.

Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June
16 th	16 th	20 th	18 th	15 th

Meetings are held at Blackbourne, beginning at 7.30 unless otherwise notified

BLACKBOURNE & WESLEY-TAVERN MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION

The BW-TMA advises the Parish Council on matters relate to the management of the village's community facilities at Blackbourne, Wesley and, soon, The Tavern. Membership is drawn from 16 user-groups as well as councillors, staff representatives and residents elected at the AGM.

The latest meeting, held at Wesley on 5th January, was attended by 17 Members and the following matters were among those discussed:

- Nadia Tunmore, the Wesley / Tavern General Manager who takes up her post on 1st February, has expressed an interest in working with Peter Hancock who has begun work on specifying the twin illuminated external signs proposed to be post-mounted at either entrance.
- The insurer of the sub contractor who inadvertently ripped up some ground source collector pipes at Blackbourne in February of last year have finally confirmed their, 'possible interest', as public liability insurers for the company concerned. Council's insurers have confirmed that, should all else fail, there could be a claim for the invoiced costs but not for ancillary losses such as the business interruption element and admin. time.
- Efforts continue, advised by the ecology consultancy which surveyed Turners' Field and provided the professional assessment of the biodiversity net gain requirement, to devise a land allocation profile which allows the provision of community recreation land whilst retaining on-site sufficient appropriate area to balance the assessed diversity deficit. The clear objective is the provision of a large grassed area suitable for community sport & recreation with the remaining land dedicated to diversity gain by way of such as wildlife / conservation area with footpath access.
- The Treasurer's Report showed overall receipts continuing to increase year-on-year with the Blackbourne

contribution lagging due to the fall-off in corporate bookings following Covid which established more options for remote working rather than meetings-in-person. Meanwhile, Wesley continues to have difficulty coping with booking pressures and, across the board, children's parties are increasingly popular. In light of the contribution which the new solar collection and storage at Blackbourne is anticipated to make to reducing the otherwise inevitable increase in running costs, it was agreed to set only minimal increases to booking rates for village organisations and individuals at 2%, & 4% respectively whilst maintaining the 7% uplift, as last year, for external bookings.

- The Meeting noted the large and enthusiastic turnout for the carol service which served as an early example of the burgeoning Wesley / Tavern partnership. The event provided an opportunity for the community to glimpse, for the first time, the inside of the refurbished & extended Tavern and to meet with Nadia Tunmore who will be General Manger of both venues. Feedback on the new premises was 100% positive.
- The Meeting welcomed the initiative to offer a monthly 'Repair Café' event at Wesley as a useful community service and another opportunity, as with the established Digital Support sessions, to have new faces introduced to Wesley offering further opportunities for community interaction.

- Members noted that works on the refurbishment and extension to the existing junior play area at Crown Mill are scheduled for late January and that the final specification for the pre-school/toddler facility is awaiting final input from the residents who have been meeting with the Council's working party.
- The ground source heat pump collector network at Wesley has developed a brine leak which reduces the system pressure and, consequently, efficiency. The problem will lie at the interface of the feeder pipes with one of the 5 the collector chambers. These lie under the car park and excavation will be needed to identify the problem unit. Arrangements will be made which minimise the disruption to parking. The Chairman, advised by Peter Hancock, is looking at recompense for what is a Latent Defect.
- Progress on the Tavern project was reported as being within the scheduled time line for an Easter opening. The groundworks are making dramatic progress and some 17 other fitting-out aspects are in hand with various sub-contractors. It was suggested that the decision to keep project management in-house has saved some £70k+ on the eventual cost, recognising the very considerable workload on the part of Councillors and others that are making this possible

Peter Dow

VILLAGE INDEX



Useful contacts for community groups & others...feedback is essential.

Do be in touch to correct or add details or to suggest someone else deserving of listing.

Amenities Association	Jean Barker (Sec)	eea@elmswell.org.uk	241135
Art Club	Eddie Douglas	edward.douglas2@gmail.com	
Arts Society of West Suffolk	Diana Hollins	theartssociety-westsuffolk.org.uk	01449 736930
Baby & Toddler Group		elmswellbtgroup@gmail.com	
Baptists	Dave Hollings	davehollings@btinternet.com	241323
BATS (Badminton & Table Tennis)	Mike Burgess Wilson	burgesswilsonmike@gmail.com	07513 336412
Beavers	Ruth Salmon	ruthcourt4@hotmail.co.uk	
Bingo at Blackbourne	Brian Hawes		07761 125093
BWMA	Peter Edmonds (Sec)	edmondspeterj@gmail.com	07860 395720
Blackbourne – all enquiries	Parish Council office	clerk@elmswell.suffolk.gov.uk	244134
Brownies	Megan & Frankie	elmswellbrownies@hotmail.com	
CAB		advice@midsuffolkcab.org.uk	01449 676060
Carpet Bowls Club	Mike North	mcnorth8@gmail.com	
Christians Together in Elmswell	Peter Goodridge	elmswellrector@gmail.com	240512
Companions	Linda Waspe	linda@labbot.plus.com	
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Cricket Club	Ben Whatling (Captain)	benwhatling@mail.com	07760 174811
Cubs	Mark Pernot	mark.pernot@gmail.com	
District Councillor	Sarah Mansell	Sarah.Mansel@midsuffolk.gov.uk	07860 829517
District Councillor	Jen Overett	Jen.Overett@midsuffolk.gov.uk	
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First Responders	Merv	merv.smith@tiscali.co.uk	07909 006 496
Football	Chris Edmonds	edddd101@gmail.com	
Fox Bowls Team bowls at Blackbourne	Rob Dann	rccsdann@btinternet.com	07917 013846
Gardening Club	Wendy Walker	elmswellgcadmin@btinternet.com	07748 442951
Guides	Viv	elmswellguides@outlook.com	
Harry Huson Bridge Club	Amanda Roberts	robertsar@sky.com	07526 743734
Health Centre - Woolpit			240298
History Group	Stella Chamberlin	stellachamberlin@yahoo.co.uk	
Ladies Voices (Choir)	Anna Wilton Mills	annawm63@gmail.com	
Library	Miles Row - Manager	Elmswell.Library@suffolklibraries.co.uk	240974
Little Elms	Paula Reynolds / Samantha Willers	info@littleeelms.co.uk	240491
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Over 55's Club	Sharon & Kay	elmswellover55s@outlook.com	
Parish Council	Parish Clerk	clerk@elmswell.suffolk.gov.uk	244134
Police Emergencies			999
Police; non-emergencies	Mid Suffolk South SNT	headquarters@suffolk.pnn.police.uk	101
Poor's Land Charity	Peter Goodridge	elmswellrector@gmail.com	240512
Power cuts		Powercut105.com	105
Rainbows	Gemma	elmswellrainbows@yahoo.com	
Royal British Legion	Norman Plumpton (Biff)	nplumpton@aol.com	07707 524722
School	Mrs Ash	admin@elmswell.suffolk.sch.uk	240261
Scouts	Mark Pernot	mark.pernot@gmail.com	
St John's Church	Peter Goodridge	elmswellrector@gmail.com	240512
St John's Floodlightimng	Trevor Sadler	trevor.sadler@dsl.pipex.com	240908
Sewing Bee	Isabel Burgess	isabel.burgess@live.com	
Village Tree Warden	c/o Parish Clerk	clerk@elmswell.suffolk.gov.uk	244134
Wesley – all enquiries	Parish Council office	clerk@elmswell.suffolk.gov.uk	244134
WI - evening	Tricia McNeeney	triciamcneeney@gmail.com	241197
Youth Football	Wayne	wsast@hotmail.co.uk	

Enquiries on any Parish Council matter are invited to the Clerk, Peter Dow, at The Council Office, Blackbourne, Blackbourne Road, IP30 9UH - right next to the car park and with wheelchair access.

Staffed Monday - Friday 9.00am - 4.00pm and other times by arrangement.

clerk@elmswell.suffolk.gov.uk Tel. 244134

**IF YOU ARE NOT HAPPY THAT YOUR DETAILS APPEAR HERE,
PLEASE DO BE IN TOUCH VIA eea @elmswell.org.uk**

What's On in Elmswell ?



To be included in our events diary make sure you send separate notification of your announcement.

For a full year's calendar of what's booked at Blackbourne, please go to the Parish Council website at www.elmswell.suffolk.gov.uk - it might help you in planning dates for your events.

February 2026

- 2 Ladies Friendship Group at Elmswell Baptist Church, Games afternoon with Stephen and Jenny Spurgeon
- 3 West Suffolk Arts Society
The Beatles Here There and Everywhere
Speaker: Jamie Hayes
- 3 BATS – TUESDAY NIGHTS - Badminton and Table Tennis at Blackbourne 7.15 – 9.15 pm – everyone welcome first night FREE
- 4 Elmswell WI Afternoon 2.00pm Speaker John Saunders 60 years in Constable Country
- 7 Annual Wine Tasting at the Wesley Hall 7:30pm Entertainment with Wesley Ukelele Band Tickets £22 each Contact events@greenpunch.co.uk
- 10 Elmswell WI Back Care, Pilates and Looking after your Joints
- 10 BATS – TUESDAY NIGHTS - Badminton and Table Tennis at Blackbourne 7.15 –

- 9.15 pm – everyone welcome first night FREE
- 12 Midday Food 'n' Friends at Elmswell Baptist Church
- 12 ELMSWELL HISTORY GROUP 7.30pm; in Wesley Chapel. Three short talks by our members (postponed from January) – Ickworth Estate, History of Postcards, and 1950-60s Woolpit.
- 12 Elmswell Over 55's at the Blackbourne Centre - Short AGM and Bingo
- 17 Elmswell Gardening Club Tim Fuller Gardening with Grasses Wesley All welcome
- 17 BATS – TUESDAY NIGHTS - Badminton and Table Tennis at Blackbourne 7.15 – 9.15 pm – everyone welcome first night FREE
- 17 Messy Church – pancake day St John's 10.00am
- 18 Ash Wednesday service with imposition of ashes St John's 5.00pm

- 24 BATS – TUESDAY NIGHTS - Badminton and Table Tennis at Blackbourne 7.15 – 9.15 pm – everyone welcome first night FREE
- 26 Elmswell Over 55's at the Blackbourne Centre entertainment from Brotherhood.

March 2026

- 2 Ladies Friendship Group at Elmswell Baptist Church, Spark a love of nature with Nan Eshelby
- 3 West Suffolk Arts Society Around the World in Sixty Minutes by Victorian Travellers Speaker: John Scott
- 4 Elmswell WI Afternoon 2.00 pm Rev Alison Roberts Her journey
- 10 Elmswell WI St Nicholas Hospice
- 12 ELMSWELL HISTORY GROUP, 7.30pm; in Wesley Chapel. Speaker Roy Clare: Suffolk Connections with Charles Darwin's Voyage on the Beagle
- 17 Caroline Holmes - A Royal country house estate – Sandringham, Wesley Chapel

STOP PRESS

Regular sessions at Blackbourne & Wesley include:

- ART CLUB** at Wesley every Tuesday 9.00 – 12.00 Eddie Douglas edward.douglas2@gmail.com
- ARTS SOCIETY OF WEST SUFFOLK** first Tuesday monthly, October-June. Diana Hollins 01449 736930 theartssociety-westsuffolk.org.uk
- BABY & TODDLER GROUP** - Monday mornings elmswellbtgroup@gmail.com
- BATS** - badminton / table tennis at Blackbourne TUESDAY night 7.15 – 9.15 pm burgesswilsonmike@gmail.com or tel. 07513 336412
- BEAVERS / SCOUTS** - Wednesday 5.45 – 9.15 ddc.paula@stowmarketscouts.org.uk
- BINGO** – Blackbourne, last Friday monthly doors open 6.30...eyes – down 7.30
- BOWLS** - barryhayward1902@gmail.com tel. 240951
- BRIDGE** – Blackbourne - Monday afternoons from 1.15pm – Phil Peters 07825 016884 peters33@btinternet.com
- CARPET BOWLS** – Wednesday 7pm at Wesley – em.mcnorth8@gmail.com
- CIRCLE DANCING** - Thursdays 1.45 – 3.15 jenlerner@gmail.com
- COMPANIONS** – every other Friday 10 – 12 at Wesley - linda@abbott.plus.com
- CUBS** Tuesdays 6.15 – 7.30 - mark.pernot@gmail.com
- DANCE & FITNESS / CIRCUITS** - Mondays 7.00pm & 7.50pm at Wesley
- DIGITAL SUPPORT SESSIONS** – free at Wesley 3rd Wednesday monthly, no need to book
- FOOTBALL** - Chris Edmonds edddd101@gmail.com
- GARDENING CLUB** at Wesley 3rd Tuesday monthly 7.30 elmswellgadmin@btinternet.com
- GUIDES** - elmswellguides@outlook.com
- HISTORY GROUP** at Wesley 2nd Thursday monthly 7.30 stellachamberlin@yahoo.co.uk
- JAPANESE JUJUTSU / SELF DEFENCE** – Monday & Wednesday 6.30 – 8.30 ryoishintowaryuheiho@gmail.com tel. 07711 680262
- JUNIOR FOOTBALL** - smyth98@hotmail.com 07717 841591
- KARATE with Lewis** - Friday 5.00 – 7.00 info@greatheadma.com
- MARDLE QUILTERS** - last Friday monthly carpajak@aol.com
- MOO MUSIC** - Fridays 12.45 – 3.15 bury@moo-music.co.uk
- OVER 55'S** - every other Thursday 6.30 – 10.30 Diann Armstrong tel. 241002
- PILATES** – Monday & Friday mornings – suzanne@triformpilates.co.uk
- RAINBOWS** - elmswellrainbows@yahoo.com
- TREFOIL GUILD** - 1st Tuesday monthly lesley.grout@btinternet.com
- WI** – afternoon at Wesley 1st Wednesday monthly at 2.00pm Carol Blissett carolblissett@hotmail.com
- WI** – evening at Wesley 2nd Tuesday monthly 7.30pm triciamcneeney@gmail.com

If we've missed you out, do let us know...all enquiries to Ann at the Council Office Tel. 244134 Email clerk@elmswell.suffolk.gov.uk

Your Newsletter Fact File

For the next 3 months we need copy by: February 24th, March 24th, April 21st, May 26th

Contact us on **01359 244 134** for all Amenities Association business, Newsletter and adverts.

Our email address is **EAA@elmswell.org.uk** Your editors: Jean Barker, Maggie Bushell, Peter Dow

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