# Stebbing Scene

Your Village - Your Magazine



Edition No: 176 Winter 2025 www.stebbingscene.uk





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### Stebbing Village Stores Christmas Opening Hours

Wed 24<sup>th</sup> December – 8am-6pm Thurs 25<sup>th</sup> December – CLOSED Fri 26<sup>th</sup> December – CLOSED Sat 27<sup>th</sup> December – 9am –3pm Sun 28<sup>th</sup> December - 9 am-12.00pm Mon 29<sup>th</sup> December – 8am-6pm Tues 30<sup>th</sup> December - 8am-6pm Wed 31<sup>st</sup> December – 8am-6pm Thurs 1<sup>st</sup> January – 9am-12.00pm



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### Dates For Your Diary: Winter 2025



A Victorian Christmas Experience	Village Hall	4.00pm	Saturday 6 <sup>th</sup> December
Charity Quiz Night	White Hart	6.30pm	Thursday 11 <sup>th</sup> December
Christingle & Crafts	Priors Hall Barn	3.30pm	Sunday 14th December
Carols In The Pub	White Hart	7.30pm	Thursday 18th December
Cricket Team Drinks	White Hart	7.00pm	Friday 19 <sup>th</sup> December
Carols In The Barn	Priors Hall Barn	4.00pm	Sunday 21st December
Santa Comes to Stebbing	White Hart	TBC	Tuesday 23 <sup>rd</sup> December
Crib Service	Priors Hall Barn	3.30pm	Wednesday 24 <sup>th</sup> December
Candlelit Holy Communion	Little Easton Church	9.30pm	Wednesday 24 <sup>th</sup> December
Family Service	Priors Hall Barn	11.00am	Thursday 25 <sup>th</sup> December
Over 60s Present Swap	Old Friends Meeting House	2.00pm	Wednesday 21st January
Garden Club Talk	Village Hall	8.00pm	Monday 26 <sup>th</sup> January
Local History Society Talk	Village Hall	8.00pm	Monday 9 <sup>th</sup> February
Over 60s Armchair Yoga	Old Friends Meeting House	2.00pm	Wednesday 18 <sup>th</sup> February
Over 60s Talk	Old Friends Meeting House	2.00pm	Wednesday 18 <sup>th</sup> March
Dorcas Society Annual Spring Soup Lunch	Village Hall	12.30pm	Friday 20 <sup>th</sup> March
Stebbing Village Spring Market	Village Hall	10.00am	Friday 27 <sup>th</sup> March
Local History Society Talk	Village Hall	8.00pm	Monday 13 <sup>th</sup> April
Stebbing Summer Fayre	Mill Lane Cricket Field	1.00pm	Sunday 14 <sup>th</sup> June

### District Councillor's Corner: A Revolution Ahead??!! Local Government Reorganisation ("LGR")

No, there is no need to take to the barricades but Yes, it is the case that **radical change** (the first for 50 years) to the way that Local Government in Essex is organised is around the corner. This is not something that neither your District nor County Councillors have decided should be



imposed upon residents but it is the result of a policy decision taken by Government. This will affect several "Shire Counties" and not just Essex. It will, however, come as some surprise to many residents since the reorganisation was not anticipated in this Government's Pre-Election 2024 Manifesto.

Consequently, Essex County Council will disappear and be replaced in 2026 by a Greater Essex Mayoral Authority and subsequently in 2028, Uttlesford District Council (along with all the other District Councils in the County) will be superseded by a Unitary Authority. The question as to by which Unitary Authority and how it will be made up is explained below.

What does this mean for us here in Stebbing? Well, for the Parish Council, it will be "business as before" since its status and constitution will not be affected by the devolution and LGR changes ahead. However, in my personal view, in due course it is possible that Parish and Town Councils could acquire greater responsibilities and influence in wider democratic affairs as a "knock-on" consequence of these anticipated changes, so that might provide a positive long-term outcome for residents.

The immediate change for us relates to Essex County Council since it, Thurrock and Southend Councils will be scrapped and replaced in Spring 2026 by a Greater Essex Combined Authority ("CA") led by a directly elected Mayor, for whom elections will be held on 7 May 2026. It is intended that the CA will have strategic planning and other functions devolved to it from Central Government, including major infrastructure provision permitting it to have greater access to direct funding for that purpose. The CA will also have powers and obligations intended to stimulate major economic as well as large scale housing growth (the latter being consistent with the Government's policy towards extensive house building during the course of this Parliament). It will also be responsible for public safety and assume the role of Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner.

The Unitary Authority created to replace Uttlesford will provide residents with not only all the services, including social housing, that Uttlesford currently provides but it will also supply its residents with schools and education services as well as the adult and young persons' care which is currently provided by Essex County Council. The Government's aim is to centralise such services in the hands of Unitary Authorities, rather than have some provided by County and others by District Councils, as at present, with a view to the saving of money by the creation of scale. That appears of course logical but in practice, guaranteed cost savings are more difficult to achieve in practice than on paper. Indeed, elsewhere in the country where LGR has already been put into effect, the cost savings anticipated have not ultimately materialised. While staff rationalisation might be planned for and implemented, it does come with substantial cost implications, including in particular staff pension contribution "make-up". As to costs to be incurred in future,

Uttlesford has already reserved £2.75m towards its share of anticipated unitary transitional costs.

The Government called for Essex County and District Councils to submit their business cases for the creation of Unitary Authorities by the end of September 2025. As will be imagined, extensive work was undertaken to analyse the prospective costs, risks and benefits of unitarization. Essex County Council's leaders were very keen from the outset to minimise the number of Unitary Authorities to be created out of LGR, preferring to establish fewer in number but representing a greater number of residents than is the preference of the majority of the District Councils. That was reflected in the "competing" submissions made by the various Councils. It will be the Government (not the Councils themselves) however who will decide how the process will be resolved and their decision as to the number and make up of the Unitary Authorities is expected in Spring 2026.

What was Uttlesford's preference? I am pleased to say that there was majority agreement reached across the political floor at the Council meeting held in September (24 members in favour, 4 against and 5 abstentions) which was to support, along with nine other District Councils in the County, the creation of five Unitary Authorities. Essex CC and two other Districts (Epping and Braintree) by contrast favoured the creation of only three. Some other councils submitted alternative arrangements also, but Uttlesford and the majority favoured the creation of five, as depicted overleaf.

An executive summary of the joint submission to Government made by them justifying their preference is here:

https://www.essexlgrhub.org/sites/default/files/4799901/2025-09/Greater%20Essex%205UA%20LGR%20Proposal%20-%20Creating%20a%20greater%20future%20for%20Essex%20-%20Executive%20Summary.pdf

If this concept were to be approved by Government, it would mean that the present Districts of Uttlesford, Epping Forest and Harlow would join together to form one Unitary Authority ("West Essex Council") representing a population of some 320,000. The business and spatial logic of this structure is derived from the common link provided by the M11 and the significance of Stansted Airport as an economic driver. If the three unitary model promoted by Essex CC were to be favoured by the Government, Uttlesford would be joined together with Braintree, Colchester and Tendring Councils, making up a unitary of well in excess of 600,000 residents. The several alternative submissions to Government can be read on the Essex CC LGR website.

At a local level, under the five Unitary Authority model (with Uttlesford joining with Epping Forest and Harlow) there would be 83 Councillors required, of whom 25 would represent Uttlesford electors. This compares with the total of 43 at District and County level currently. Our current ward of Felsted and Stebbing would be reorganised with two councillors likely to be elected for a combined Felsted, Stebbing, Flitch Green and Little Dunmow ward, being one councillor for c. 3,000 voters. Under the three Unitary Authority model, there would be still fewer councillors elected, amounting to about one for c. 4,800 voters. So, all proposed arrangements would involve a reduced level of democratic accountability in the sense of there being fewer elected councillors than at present but significantly more so in the case offered by the three unitary model.

The Government has now called for preferences to be expressed by members of the public on the alternative submissions in a consultation which runs from 19 November 2025 to 11 January 2026. Comments may be made online via this link:





I encourage all readers interested in this (once in a further 50 years perhaps?) important topic to review the competing Councils' submissions and respond to the Government's consultation.

If any resident has any questions or issues to raise on this article (or of course any other unrelated subject) I will be very pleased to hear from them. I am of course always ready to assist any resident who might have a question or other concern relating to Uttlesford business.

District Councillor John Evans cllrevans@uttlesford.gov.uk

E:

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### The Pilgrim Parishes: Have A Happily Imperfect Christmas!



Have you got fed up of Christmas adverts yet?

Every year we are bombarded with more ways to make our Christmas perfect. Recipes glisten from magazine pages, we are given multiple, often conflicting, pieces of advice on cooking the perfect turkey, the crispiest potatoes, and festive tarts and pies without a soggy bottom in sight!

We can barely enter a shop without a dazzling array of the latest *must have* baubles, trinkets and of course a tremendous array of lighting options. Last year we spent upwards of £660 million on Christmas decorations; most of them additions to those we already possess!

We seem obsessed with the concept of creating a perfect Christmas; using over 910 million metres of Christmas wrapping paper to make our, oh so carefully chosen, gifts look even more delightful.

We definitely need a boost to get us through the darkness of the season. Remember in the story 'The Lion the Witch and the Wardrobe' that when the White Witch of Narnia reigned, it was 'always winter and never got to Christmas'. We need something to look forward to, but why do we put so much pressure on ourselves to make it perfect, when we all know that, in reality, it won't be? We all know that there will be gifts, oh so lovingly given that, as we unwrap, we will have to mask a grimace. Some of the things we cook won't look quite like Mary Berry or Jamie Oliver's, and worse still no doubt a few cross words will be thrown into the mix over the Christmas season and that's without the mess, the expense or the hangovers!

We all try so hard to 'Disneyfy' Christmas. It's exhausting!

The Christmas story offers us a much-needed dose of imperfection. One modern carol sums this up. Stuart Townend wrote: 'From the squalor of a borrowed stable, by the Spirit and the shame of scandal, came the saviour of the human race'. The writer says 'I wanted to recapture some of the shocking reality of the birth of the son of God - the scandal of an unmarried mother giving birth in a squalid, cold place, and that God should choose for himself such a humble path.'

We have a God who does not demand perfection, but who understands us, just as we are, and who offers each of us a way through the messiness of life. A God who had no earthly throne, just a bed of used straw.

Why not join us at some of our many Christmas services across The Pilgrim Parishes and learn more about our amazing God who gets his hands dirty, to rescue us.

Happy Christmas and a blessed New Year everyone!

Sue Hurley, Vicar

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### Stebbing Neighbourhood Plan: An Update

We have previously advised residents that a review of our very successful Stebbing Neighbourhood Plan, which was made in the Summer of 2022, is now required. So, we are bringing the community up to date as to what will be happening in the coming months in support of this project.

The review is needed because Uttlesford District Council is progressing towards the last stages of making a new Local Plan for the District and part of its Spatial Strategy requires that additional housing development takes place in the "Larger Villages", of which Stebbing Parish is one, and for this to be provided through a Neighbourhood Plan and its policies.

All told, Uttlesford's net additional housing requirement for the Local Plan in the period 2021-2041, as calculated by the Government is about 6,000 dwellings and Stebbing's "share" of the proposed "allocations" is 98 dwellings. Stebbing Parish Council is required to bring forward a review of its Neighbourhood Plan within the next two years in order to plan where in the Parish additional housing might best be located, taking into account the constraints applicable. If the Parish Council fails to undertake the update, then Uttlesford would step in and decide on the locations themselves but with significantly less community involvement.

As well as providing for these proposed additional housing allocations, the current Neighbourhood Plan will be reviewed and refreshed generally so as to reflect the latest input from the community. It will also have to be in general conformity with the new Uttlesford Local Plan. In that way, neighbourhood planning in our Parish will continue to provide an important part of "good place making" for our current residents and businesses as well as those that live here in the future.

Importantly, while we are in the process of updating our Neighbourhood Plan, the current made Plan is valid until its fifth anniversary in July 2027 so that it will maintain the same full weight and effect under the National Planning Policy rules that it presently has.

The procedure to get to a final reviewed Plan will be a repeat of the previous process, including gathering information including consultation with residents, preparing documentary evidence, publishing a "call for sites" and thereafter determining which locations might be best suited for potential development. Then a draft reviewed Plan is prepared, it proceeds to an Examination by an independent planning professional and finally to a Referendum of the voters in the Parish. Thereafter, it proceeds to be "made" by the District (or succeeding Unitary) Council as the Local Planning Authority.

The Stebbing Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group has met informally in workshops over recent months to decide on their work programme and immediate priorities. The first priority is to conduct another Survey of Residents to ask about their current housing arrangements and what type of housing they anticipate would be required in the future for them and members of their households. Questions will be asked as to what Residents think about the current facilities and those lacking in the village and identify their priorities/wish lists for future possible improvements.

Residents will perhaps recall that a similar Survey was conducted in Spring 2017 and the results were extensively used to support the work which led to drafting of the Policies contained in the Neighbourhood Plan 2022. A fantastic response rate of 92 % to that Survey was achieved, meaning that we really did secure the representative views of the community on the themes and questions asked at that time. Similarly, obtaining input and responses from households and business owners/employees to the forthcoming Survey will be an equally important foundation for the review of the 2022 Neighbourhood Plan. We hope that the response level from the community will be just as strong on this further occasion!

We plan that the Survey will be launched in February 2026 and after the responses have been reviewed and analysed, a Community Meeting/presentation will be held in the Village Hall to discuss the findings with all concerned to hear any additional views and thoughts of our community. So, we do urge everyone to involve as many members as possible of their households to participate in the Survey, when launched, so that we can secure as comprehensive an input across the generations as possible.

The Survey will be able to be completed online and on a hard copy, so please watch out for announcements of where and how to complete the Survey as well as the deliveries of a hard copy. Publicity about it will be on the usual social channels and the Parish Council website – so please be sure to join in when the time comes!

Stebbing Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

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### Stebbing Local History Society: The Gypsy & The General's Daughter

This article appeared in the October 2015 edition of the Local History Journal.

On the 22nd May 1946 an event in Stebbing made the front page of a national newspaper. The newspaper concerned was the News Chronicle, not a name that will mean much today as it merged with the Daily Mail in 1960; but it was a popular national newspaper at the time.

The Stebbing article, which also had accompanying photographs, appears alongside other news, such as arguments between Britain and India on Constitutional matters regarding India's coming independence, also 100,000 Poles being allowed to come here after the war; and the 'misunderstandings' on the presence of Russian troops in Czechoslovakia who were merely "passing through!"



'Lucky 'Arthur Smith and Edith Henderson

So, what was the event in Stebbing that made the headlines? It was the marriage that had taken place between Edith Henderson, who seemed to prefer to use her second name Helen, a Brigadier General's daughter, and Arthur Smith, a gypsy. Clearly an event that brought together two people from such differing backgrounds was very unusual at the time. The following text is a reproduction of the article in the News Chronicle 23rd May 1946.

Only daughter of a general, 40-year-old Helen Hume Henderson, was married to a gipsy, Mr Arthur Smith, at Stebbing, near Braintree (Essex), yesterday. After the ceremony the bride said: "We are going to have a real Romany honeymoon. We are taking a car into the blue and pitching our tent just where the fancy takes us." The bride, whose father was the late Brigadier-General M. Hume Henderson, of the Indian Army, first met her husband when he went to do some digging in the garden of her home, Martin's Hall, Stebbing where she lives with her mother.

She was an ambulance driver in the A.T.S. during the war after being in the F.A.N.Y (1) for several years. The bridegroom, known as 'Lucky" Arthur to the villagers, lived in a shack with his brother on Stebbing Downs. He is a nephew of Gipsy Smith, the famous Evangelist and a descendant of 'swearing Will' Gaskin, whose family has roamed East Anglia for generations. Aged 47, he fought with the Royal Fusiliers in the 1914-18 war and was severely wounded in the left hand. "It will take me some time to get used to living at the Hall after the old shack on the Downs, but Helen and her mother are very kind to me" he said yesterday. Mrs Henderson, the bride's mother, said: "I am sure Helen and Arthur are going to be supremely happy." The wedding cake was decorated with a miniature caravan made by the gipsy husband.



### Stebbing Local History Society Speaker/Event Programme 2026

9th February 2026: AGM & Researching House History:

Images from The Archive

13th April 2026: Dendra Dating - Dr. Martin Bridge

8th June 2026: Latest Essex Archaeological Finds - Maria Medlicott

TBA July Summer Outing

14<sup>th</sup> September 2026: Pleshy, The Collegiate Church & The Castle –

Simon Coxall

9th November 2026: The Companye of Merrie Folk - Xmas Food



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Contact me: 07811 692 431 g.d.sanders@btinternet.com The newly acquired press photograph is interesting in its own right as it came with some additional information. The back of the photograph has a stamp for Acme Newspictures Inc. of London and another one for Acme News pictures of New York City. The photo was sent from London to the New York Bureau to be published in the United States. The rear of the photo has a pasted label with the following text:

British General's daughter weds Gypsy. England. – Edith Helen Hume Henderson, 40, daughter of the late Brigadier M. Hume Henderson, and her new husband, 'Lucky 'Arthur Smith, a gypsy, are pictured during honeymoon following wedding in Stebbing, Essex. It was a second marriage for 'Lucky Arthur', a nephew of the famed evangelist, Gypsy Smith, who moved from his humble shack into the stately family mansion of the Hendersons. (This is an original of radiophoto previously Service Credit Line (ACME) 5-28-46.

In fact, a search of the web has shown that in modern day parlance the story 'went viral'. Stories of the wedding were definitely published in various newspapers in the United States and copies available online can be found for the states of New York, Michigan, Pennsylvania, Alabama, Washington, Wyoming, South Dakota, North Carolina and Wisconsin as well as in Singapore. I suspect that the story was actually published all over the English speaking world.

Perhaps the most remarkable telling of the story was in the Milwaukee Sentinel where the article was written by Ethel Vance, cited as the author of 'Escape'. She wrote it as a Hollywoodesque love story entitled 'The Lady and the Gypsy'. Part of the story involved 'Lucky' Arthur and Edith becoming entrapped by the tendrils of a tropical vine in Edith's greenhouse and their love blossoming as a result. This event was depicted in the story with the following illustration by William Randall who, shall we say, used a little artistic license.



'Lucky 'Arthur and Edith in the Greenhouse

Checking the official records it would appear that Edith was in fact born in 1900 and was therefore aged 46 when the marriage took place, not 40 as all the articles state. I remember Dolly Hayden talking about the event and saying that it was well received in Stebbing at the time – I wonder how much the War had changed attitudes.

I haven't been able to find out much about what happened after the wedding other than Beatrice Henderson, Edith's mother, died in 1955. Edith herself died in 1974 in Chelmsford District. If anyone has any more to add to this story and in particular if anyone knows where the 'shack 'on Stebbing Downs was, what happened after the wedding to the

married couple, or to the Smith family, we would love to hear from you. Also, any information on the famous Gypsy Smith or 'swearing Will 'Gaskin would be warmly received. Many thanks to Alison Fisher for allowing us access to a newspaper cutting of the original article – she also allowed us to copy a drawing that Edith Henderson made of a local cottage.

Graham Joliffe

### Introducing Our New Parish Clerk: Amy Ferraro



Dear Residents of Stebbing,

I have recently taken over as your Parish Clerk from the very able Greg King. For those of you not familiar, the role of a Parish Clerk is varied; I am your main point of contact for the Council, and I coordinate all administration and communication. The role could be described as the hub of a wheel – all information goes in, all info goes out (through the spokes), and the wheel turns and everything moves forward. Should you have any questions, comments, or concerns for the Parish Council, please feel free to reach out to me. I will ensure that this is shared with the Councillors as needed.

I am also the Clerk for Hatfield Broad Oak, and my experience gained from working across the two parishes will hopefully be mutually beneficial. Sadly, I do not have the privilege of living in Stebbing; I live in Coggeshall with my husband, daughter and giant cat, and enjoy playing the viola in orchestras in my spare time (albeit this is thin and far between since having my daughter!).

The contact details remain the same (<u>clerk@stebbing-pc.gov.uk</u>, 01371 855805). I work part-time flexible hours, but I will always get back to you as soon as I'm able. I look forward to getting to know the Parish and its residents better.

Hope you all have a lovely Christmas and New Year. Amy Ferraro, Clerk to Stebbing Parish Council

### Stebbing Over 60s

Our group is for both men and woman, our aim is to offer friendship and fun. We meet on the third Wednesday of each month in the Old Friends Meeting House, in Stebbing High Street at 2pm

We have a varied programme. This year included a visit from the school choir, a clothing company, visits to Lavenham and Southend, a strawberry tea and harvest lunch.

We ask for an annual fee of £10 and £2 per meeting to cover the price of a raffle ticket and delicious homemade cakes with tea or coffee

January 21<sup>st</sup>: Present swap and visit from school

February 18th: Armchair Yoga

March 18<sup>th</sup>: The Way Forward Project talk

If you would like further information, please contact Edwina 856520 or Doreen 856408

Judith Greenway

### Stebbing Cricket Club News



Mill Lane cricket square is covered in frost as I write this final article for 2025, club bats, pads and gloves packed away awaiting next season.

2025 saw a season with plenty of positives to celebrate and just a few bumps to keep us alert.

#### Cricket

Well done Gary, Max and all players for mustering teams for all fixtures, no mean feat. Recruiting new players is always a challenge and the partnership with Dunmow Cricket Club has resulted in significant benefits not least introducing several younger players to the village team.

#### Mill Lane Cricket Ground & Pavilion

A long hot and dry season presented challenging square maintenance and wicket preparation conditions. A big thanks to Wally Crow and everyone involved in pitch maintenance.

This season has seen the addition of sight screens and a safety net to protect the play area.

Meanwhile the cricket square, which in our case has eight wickets or strips, is into its renovation programme to make it as resilient as possible for next season. Scarifying, reseeding, Ongar loam and fertilizer has been applied. Subject to the weather and growing conditions a few light trims follow.

Phil Barker pavilion has had an electrical refresh, new front decking, a coat of paint and minor roof repairs. A significant expense even with much voluntary labour.

#### The Future

I signed off the previous Stebbing Scene article looking forward to seeing everyone at the September Stebbing Summer Fayre however stormy weather dictated otherwise. Fingers crossed for the date next June.

The village team is planning a get together in the White Hart on 19<sup>th</sup> December, way warmer than the pavilion in Winter, so drop in if you are free.

Our mission statement reads "to create opportunities for participation in village cricket to both new and experienced players in a way that enhances village life and builds communities in Stebbing and the surrounding areas". I think we are on track to achieve that goal. Meanwhile Happy Christmas!

Ben Riley, Club President.

















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### Stebbing Garden Club News

Although there may still be plenty of colour to be found in the garden at this time of year, as I write this the rain is pouring down outside so I am happy to be inside catching up with some admin today.

Back in September, The Garden Club were very grateful for the invitation from the organisers of the Friday Morning Market to hold a stall at their Macmillan Coffee morning. This gave us the opportunity to sell all the produce and plants that we had collected for the Fayre when so sadly the weather prevented that event from going ahead. Thank you to everyone who supported us by helping on the stall or buying plants. As always we were happy to be able to donate a percentage of our takings to such a great charity.



At the end of September we were treated to an extremely entertaining talk on the subject of The Poison Garden at Alnwick by Caroline Holmes, author, garden historian and broadcaster. She gave us a vivid description of the planning and research that went into creating the garden and provoked interesting discussion on the historical and literary references that refer to the plants in the garden and their uses.

At our meeting in October we learnt about the work of the Essex Gardens Trust from Carol Winser and a fellow volunteer. The aim of the trust is to protect the precious green spaces of

Essex by identifying and recording their history and details and thereby providing informed comment on relevant plans for development. The trust have an educational programme and have published several books about Essex Gardens and heroes. They are keen to recruit new members if you want more information their website is <a href="https://www.essexgardenstrust.org.uk">www.essexgardenstrust.org.uk</a>

Our final meeting of the year is almost upon us! On Monday 24th November we will be welcoming back, agronomist and award winning artisanal florist, Zoe Rutterford. Zoe grows her beautiful flowers at Chickney Hall Farm, near Broxted and has put together an illustrated talk about the highs and lows of farming over the past year in the challenging weather conditions. Zoe will also demonstrate how to make a decorative door swag as an economic alternative to a wreath and is hoping for some audience participation! We will celebrate the end of another successful year of the club with some seasonal refreshments.

The programme for 2026 is almost complete with some two interesting outings already planned for the Summer months. Full details will be available at our first meeting of the New Year on the 26th of January when we will be renewing membership cards and a Mr Gibson will be talking to us about birds and wildlife in the garden.

As always we welcome new members to join us at an annual charge of £15 which includes nine meetings and the opportunity to sign up for either one or both of our Summer outings to gardens of interest. There are additional costs for outings.

Visitors are also welcome at any of our meetings at a cost of £3 on the door. All meetings are held at The Village Hall, Mill Lane, Stebbing. Doors open at 7.30 for a talk at 8pm followed by refreshments, a raffle and the opportunity to chat.

### Just How Old Is Your Robin?

In early July Jane and I made, what has become something of an annual pilgrimage, to Oare Marshes Reserve in Kent to see a Boneparte's Gull. This small, beautiful north American Gull, named after a French ornithologist, who was Napolean Boneparte's nephew, has been returning to this location for 14 years. It arrives in late June or early July and only stays for a few weeks, before disappearing to who knows where for the rest of the year.



This got me thinking about how long different species of bird live and the factors that affect

their chances of survival. After all we all tend to assume that the Robin in our garden is the same bird year after year.

In general garden birds have a relatively short lifespan, due to predation (particularly by cats, I will say no more!), bad weather and food shortages.

On average a Robin's lifespan is less than two years, with the longest living recorded at twelve years. Blackbirds and Starlings, on average, live twice as long, with occasional birds living for up to twenty years.

I think the reason we always appear to have the same Robin present is that Robins are very territorial and that as gardens are prime territories, there are always birds in less suitable habitats ready to take over.

Migratory birds, particularly small birds, such as Warblers, face the additional problems of having to cross hazards such as deserts, mountains and seas, and it is therefore rare for them to live more than three to four years.

Regarding the longest living birds in the world there are a whole series of birds which regularly live more than thirty years including various Parrots, which in captivity have lived for over one hundred years, plus Albatrosses and large birds of prey. Several species of Flamingo regularly live for forty to fifty years in the wild, which is unusually, longer than they live in captivity, probably due to the specialist nature of their diet.

Many of the smaller seabirds, such as Shearwaters, Terns, and Noddies, on average, have very long-life expectancies, because they spend most of their lives at sea and only come to the land to breed.

The most remarkable of these birds is the Arctic Tern, which is not much bigger than a Blackbird and performs the greatest migration of all birds. Some of these bird's breed in the far northern Arctic in Summer and then migrate to the Antarctic every year and travel between forty-four and fifty-nine thousand miles annually.

As Arctic Terns regularly have a life span of between twenty and thirty years, this means that they can cover getting on for two million miles in their lifetime, an amazing achievement for such a small bird.

20 Howard Joliffe

### **Stebbing Primary School News**



We have had an excellent start to the new school year and have already had many exciting visits and visitors take place.

So far this term we have had:

- Visits to the local park and shop
- A visit to Stansted Mountfitchet castle for our year 2 class
- A visit to the local Rayne Quarry for our year 3 class
- A visit from an inflatable planetarium to allow the children to further develop their interest and enthusiasm for space
- Visits from St Marys Church way forward project
- A visit to West Stow for our year 5 class
- A visit to Colchester Castle for our year 4 class
- A residential trip for our year 6 class
- A visit to Audley End for our reception and year 1 classes











We are also thrilled to say that we have reached the 200 pupil mark at Stebbing Primary. This means we are only 10 children away from being full. This is really exciting. We have grown slowly and steadily over the past 5 years and we feel our small school feel is still present as we have managed to hold onto some of the really important aspects of our nurturing school.

We are now really looking forward to the Christmas excitement that being in schools with young children brings. Over the next few weeks we have numerous Christmas productions; our annual Children's Christmas market; our craft market for parents to buy their children handmade crafts and a special Christmas dinner cooked by our lovely Catering team. We wish you all a very Merry Christmas too!

### Renovation Progress at St Mary's: From Bricks to Benches: It's All Taking Shape





For those following our social media updates, you'll know that laying the 20,000 bricks for the new floor at St Mary's has been quite the undertaking. Mixing old bricks with new to create the intricate pattern was an incredibly skilled process. With six different heights of bricks and not all of them perfectly rectangular, each one had to be placed by hand with the help of laser lines and spirit levels to ensure a completely level surface. Once the bricks were down, the mortar went in, again by hand, filling every carefully judged gap. The results are nothing short of stunning.

With the floor complete, other exciting milestones have followed. Wall radiators have been installed, and new custom-built furniture has begun arriving from Bakers of Danbury's workshop, including cupboards, a servery, bench seating for the rear corners, and a purpose-built cabinet to house the sound desk equipment. It's also been lovely to see some of the old pews being repurposed as part of the new design.







Outside, the large hole that dominated the churchyard this Summer now hides a bright yellow underground tank that will store the bioLPG fuel to heat the church.

Archaeologists uncovered several human skeletons, which were carefully excavated when this deep hole was dug. The skeletons date from the medieval period to the eighteen hundreds. These ancient remains, along with others that were uncovered inside the church, when the floor was excavated last year, were recently, respectfully reburied in coffins in the churchyard. The Reverend Sue Hurley presided over the service, offering thanks for the lives of these unknown people and prayerfully committing them to be reburied. Sue used a range of ancient prayers and readings, chosen specifically for this occasion. The service was attended by villagers, archaeologists and members of the project team.







Beyond the building site, the team has been busy out and about in the community, from creating our scarecrow Kneville the Benevolent Knight for the Stebbing Village scarecrow competition (who, we hear, startled a few early morning runners!) to hosting a stall at the Stebbing Village Market, visiting Stebbing Primary School to deliver an assembly on local history through the eyes of two cheeky bats, and building a five-star bug hotel in the churchyard. We've even popped up a few times at Dunmow Library with our volunteer stall.

Our Tuesday Volunteer evenings in the Pelham Room at the village hall are proving popular and it's great to see folk enjoying chatting and helping with crafts for our next event!



We're now turning our attention to Christmas. If you follow our social media or have spoken to a member of St Mary's Church recently, you may have heard whispers of A Victorian Christmas. As part of the Way Forward Project, we've been exploring how the Victorians celebrated this festive season; and we're excited to share our findings with the Stebbing community!

On December 6th, we'll be stepping back in time at the Village Hall with roast chestnuts (no open fire, though (a), sugarplums, mince pies, homemade Victorian-style decorations, DIY crafts, handmade cards, crackers, a story from St Nicholas, and so much more!

By the time this edition of Stebbing Scene reaches you, there will probably be only a few hours to go. So, if you are free from 4-6pm 6<sup>th</sup> December, please visit us in the Village Hall. Then keep an eye out for more Way Forward events coming in 2026!

To keep up with the latest project news, visit: www.wayforwardstebbing.org facebook.com/wayforwardstebbing instagram.com/thewayforwardproject2427

Every milestone brings us one step closer to reopening St Mary's, a space for everyone, lovingly renovated to last for generations to come.

Sarah Maddox, Project Administrator sarah.smvtwf@gmail.com

### **Celebrating Our Stebbing Scarecrow Competition**

Back in September, the Scarecrow Competition was welcomed back to the village after a short break. And it was incredible to see how many people got involved and the wonderful creativity on show. So, whilst the Stebbing Summer Favre (at which the scarecrows were due to be judged) was so disappointingly



cancelled due to the dreadful weather that weekend, we were grateful to a team of independent judges (aged between 13 and 70) who went out in the rain to choose the winning entries.



1st Prize: 'Slash' from Guns n'Roses. made by John Priest & family in Ploughman's Reach



2nd Prize: The Baker made by Sally in Church End

Highly Commended:

by Ria in the High Street



3rd Prize: Farmer & Goat made by Richard, Begui, Cecily, Adelphe, Benita and Jethro in the High Street



Highly Commended: Harry Potter made by Molly & Lily from Church End





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### Porters Hall Open Days

We were touched to welcome 80 of our local residents to an open day at Porters Hall on Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> October – there was so much interest that we ran an additional session on Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> October too and we still have a waiting list!



but had never made it past the original kitchen!

It was also wonderful to meet Ken, who worked at Porters Hall in his younger days. He shared some great memories of Len, Percy, and Vic Moore (owners between 1947-2014) and it was clear they ran a tight ship, with every farm tool needing to be accounted for. He also recalled how it took him 10 weeks to pick a 12 acre sugar beet field - all by hand! Ken was also the person responsible for putting the fox weather vane (which Vic

had made) on the front barn—a detail that makes seeing

it there still today so much more meaningful.

It was a true pleasure to meet so many of you and hear some wonderful stories about the property's past. We especially loved hearing from those who had delivered mail or collected tomatoes here in their younger days,



We were truly grateful for the opportunity to finally show everyone the rest of the property and share the history of Porters Hall and our journey over the past five years. And judging by the wonderful feedback we received on the day and from emails afterwards, everyone really enjoyed the day and were impressed with what has been achieved.



A big thank you from us too, as through everyone's generous donations, we also raised £210 for Pancreatic Cancer UK – a cause close to our hearts, as our aunt (on dad's side) died from this horrific condition 4 years ago.

So, thank you to everyone who came and made it such a special weekend. We plan to run another open day next year, so if you are interested and would like to be added to our waiting list (or want to book a stay at Porters Hall!) please email admin@portershall.co.uk - Porters Hall can accommodate up to 22 overnight guests and 4 dogs, on an exclusive hire basis. The property is also available to hire for corporate events, photo and film shoots.

From left to right – Brian and Maureen Moore (owners), and Fran, Lisa and Nicola (daughters managing the business)





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#### Great Dunmow Panthers U9s

The 2024/25 season has been an incredible journey for the Great Dunmow Panthers U9s, a team built on spirit, determination, and a love of football. With a mix of talent from Stebbing and Dunmow, the boys have shown week in and week out what it means to play.





We are proud to have five fantastic young lads from Stebbing – Jake Rodell, Harvey Lakovic, Alfie Beattie, Fletcher Smith, and Louie Perry – all bringing energy, skill, and heart to the squad.

Alongside them stand five more brilliant players from Dunmow, who together make up a group that has bonded into a team.

This past season has been one of growth. The boys have worked hard in training, sharpened their skills, and shown fantastic teamwork on match days. Their progress was clear to see as they battled their way into the knockout stages of recent 5'aside competition, a huge achievement that reflects just how far they've come in such a short time.

A special thank you must go to the local Parish Council, whose generosity in letting us use the pitch has given the Panthers a proper home to train, play, and develop. Without this support, the journey would have been much harder with limited areas in the local areas to train.

We are also extremely grateful to our local kit sponsors, Smith and Son, who kindly provided the boys with their wonderful red away kit. The lads have worn it with pride, knowing they have the backing of their community behind them.

And of course, none of this would be possible without the tireless support of the parents. Through the cold mornings, wet afternoons, and long drives, you've been there with encouragement, cheers, and a steady supply of sweets, coffee & munchies, The Panthers are lucky to have such dedicated families on the sidelines.

As we look forward to another season, the Great Dunmow Panthers can be proud of everything they've achieved so far. With hard work, fun, and the same brilliant team spirit, the future looks very bright indeed.

Scott Rodell, Coach



### From Ivy Tinsel to Victorian Magic

Since stepping into the role of Volunteer & Training Coordinator for St Mary's Church Way Forward Project in August, I've been focused on laying strong foundations for a more connected, supported, and diverse volunteer community here at St Mary's, Stebbing.

Over the past few months, I've been busy getting our new online platform up and running, a space that will make it easier for people to get involved, stay informed, and find opportunities that suit their time and talents. I've also been reaching out to groups and agencies beyond the village, helping to widen our volunteer base and share the load more sustainably.

One of the highlights of this season has been our weekly volunteer socials; relaxed, welcoming gatherings designed to bring people together, over mindful craft activities, and enjoy some fun and laughter. These sessions have not only supported wellbeing and community spirit, but the beautiful creations made are going to be used to decorate the hall for our upcoming Victorian Christmas Experience, taking place at Stebbing Village Hall on Saturday 6th December 4–6pm.

Next week marks the final social of the year, but we'll be back in the new year with fresh energy and exciting new projects to get involved in. Whether you're a seasoned volunteer or just curious to dip a toe in, there'll be something for everyone so please do get in touch. Thank you to everyone who's joined in so far, it's been an absolute pleasure getting to know you and I wish you all a wonderful festive season ahead.

30 Helen Murphy

### Race For Kids: Saturday 11th October

Stebbing - You were asked to make a difference, and you did. Thank you!





On a grey chilly October Saturday morning, when having a lay in seemed a desirable option, instead, the Stebbing community responded to the call for action to help others.

It was in the last issue of this magazine that I shared the ambition of Great Ormond Street Hospital to raise funds for a new world leading children's cancer centre. To support the project individuals or groups were asked to sign up for a 2K or 5K walk and could complete this locally.

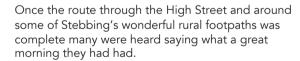




Currently fighting breast cancer myself, it seemed the perfect opportunity to do something positive to improve the cancer care for this terrible disease, that affects so many of us, especially children and their families.

This charity is particularly close to my heart as I was a patient at the hospital as a very young child. In those days there were no facilities for parents or carers to stay overnight let alone children having access to play equipment or outdoor space.

On the day, our fantastic White Hart Pub opened early to serve refreshments for those taking part and supporting. It was humbling to see so many of the community turn up to either complete the walk and or donate funds. There was a great buzz as over 50 people set off together which highlights that feel good factor when giving to others and making a difference.



Many had also generously supported October's White Hart Quiz night where the proceeds were also donated to GOSH. In addition to the community enjoying connecting together an amazing £2,092 was raised!







I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who supported in any way. Also a special thank you to Jackie and family at the White Hart Pub, Karen for promoting the cause in this magazine and of course my family, all of whom made the event a success.

Michelle Keeling

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### Mad Medic

Hello lovely neighbours,

It seems like only two minutes since I was sorting the numerous 'to do tasks' in preparation for India, and now I'm home. Definitely my hardest challenge, pain wise, since accepting the severity of this stupid illness. Most people in chronic pain, are in denial like me, refusing to utter that dreaded word 'can't '. So regardless of great advice given to us, we charge at life head first, ignoring the signals our bodies scream at us, determined to achieve purposeful goals. If you could see my life in India and what has kept me going back for 27 years, you would totally understand. My friends and life out there embrace my heart and soul, never afraid to declare their love. It's a warmth that is open and unreserved, does this make me selfish?





Doing my pop up street and railway clinics fills me with love for the amazing people that captured my heart. Gratitude I feel at being able to love and care for them is indescribable. One slum hutment mum, held me and said 'Walerie mama, please never die, you're mummy'. Being amongst them is uplifting, tending to their needs soul satisfying. Cuddling those grubby little dots in their torn T-shirts, big eyes staring and trusting me to make them better is beyond words.

My friend Bev went with me and was fantastic, we laughed a lot as well. On each trip, we visit the Gateway of India, almost a pilgrimage now, where our British troops used to enter India. We first call at Leopolds famous cafe, a place dear to my heart, where I'm treated as family, more so since the horrific terror attack. Lots of hugs later we traipsed to the Gateway a stones throw away. It has always amused me that I get mobbed by people, taking my photo and selfies with me. Not one or two but hundreds, it's hilarious. Bev, my adopted niece Spoorthi and her brother Akshith were in fits of laughter, despite being concerned for me. A tiny Indian lady decided to announce that she was my bodyguard, boldly stating to everyone 'I am movie

stars bodyguard'. Getting into her stride, she then started trying to charge 100 dollars for a photo with me. Needless to say, her new career was gently terminated. An exhausting day but funny, the warmth from everyone so touching.

Sad times and happy times, new memories to treasure, I'm forever thankful. Love to all of you, wishing you an amazing Christmas.

A massive thank you to Bruce and Wendy Haynes for their love and support in supplying vital needs for many children. My friend Amanda kindly treated my Daniels Gift Project children to lots of lovely goodies. Special people indeed.

I bought Mrs Blunderful some incense and she messaged me to say thank you for the incest. I need to chat to her xxxxxxxxx



### What a fabulous village Stebbing is...

A heartfelt thank you to everyone who supported the Stebbing Village Market Macmillan fundraising event. Your generosity is invaluable, as Macmillan relies on donations to provide vital support to those affected by cancer.

We raised a fabulous amount of £400 for Macmillan and £400 for the village.

A massive thank you to all those that help with refreshments, run stalls, bake, set up, put away and to all those who attend. Please keep coming. The clubs that benefit from your generosity really appreciate it.

Our village market has been running for decades and is a wonderful place for Villagers of all ages to meet up. Regular stalls include pre-loved books and jigsaws, home grown produce and cakes, crafts, bric a brac and of course a raffle.

### Market dates for 2026:

March 27<sup>th</sup> - Spring Market June 19<sup>th</sup> - Garden Club 25<sup>th</sup> September - Macmillan Coffee Morning 27<sup>th</sup> November - Christmas

Look forward to seeing you all in 2026.



### Cold Comfort

Here's a challenge for you - how would you stay alive outside during the cold of Winter? Would you pile on the Winter coats? Dig yourself a hole to hide in?

These are certainly two good ways to maintain body temperature, but other animal species use different strategies to get by in Winter. To start with, if you're not warm blooded then there's less need to keep the heat inside you. As long as you stay above freezing point, you can get by.



Most invertebrates match their life cycles to the seasons. Eggs and pupae seem to deal with the cold better, so it's best to have that part of the life cycle in the Winter. Cardinal beetles spend the Winter as pupae sheltering under bark. In Spring they quickly develop into adults and are some of the first insects that we see. But not the very first.

A few invertebrates survive Winter as adults, finding sheltered spots underground (like the Ladybirds that pip Cardinal beetles to the post in the wake-up race!) Some Queen bees are thought to store extra glucose in their cells to act as an anti-freeze. In all these cases, the cold temperatures cause the animal's metabolism rate to drop drastically. This is a process called dormancy. The creatures just need somewhere sheltered to do it.

And all this is where our latest wildlife project at St Mary's Church comes in. In October, a number of us got together to build a safe place where invertebrates could shelter from the worst of the winter – basically a Bug Hotel. Our threestory construction of bundled twigs and hay packed into pallets will make a luxury overwintering spot for many small bugs and beasties.

For an invertebrate, much better than just piling on the Winter coats!



Richard Wren, Ecologist in Residence, St Mary's Church

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## Remembrance Sunday Service & 10 Mile Race

This Remembrance Sunday, we once again gathered at the war memorial, standing together in quiet gratitude. We paused to remember the men and women from Stebbing—and across the United Kingdom—who gave their lives in war and conflict so others might live in peace.

And, as has become tradition, we also welcomed some 500 runners from all over Essex for the popular Stebbing Remembrance 10 Mile Race, organised by the Grange Farm and Dunmow Running Club. The race started after the remembrance service at the War Memorial. It looped around the High Street, then off to Lubberhedges and Pages Lanes, a short stretch on the B1057, before following a bridleway back to Lubberhedges. The race finished through the High Street, where enthusiastic crowds cheered the runners home to the school. It is a pretty flat course, apart from a hill just after the 7-mile marker, which is a challenge.









The 10 Mile Race is an inclusive event for all ages and all abilities. Ranging from some of the best runners in the county, who flew around in under an hour. To joggers who finished in over 2 hours. All received the same cheering and encouragement from the spectators. The race also has one of the best medals around, shaped as a poppy.

If you are a keen runner or just a weekend ParkRun jogger, do come and join in next year.. Entries are open around July-August from the Dunmow Running Club site.

The Last Post & Reveille - Just in case, like me, you were wondering: Traditionally a bugle call in the British Army, the Last Post signalled the end of the day and that the camp's sentries were posted. At remembrance services, it marks the end of duty for the fallen, an honouring of their final rest, and leads us into silence. Afterward, Reveille (or Rouse) is sounded, symbolising awakening, renewal, and the living commitment to carry their legacy forward.

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Turkeys (bronze & white), boneless gammon cured on the farm, meat hampers, sausage meat, pigs in blankets, sausages, bacon, cooked ham. Order deadlines:

Turkey, Gammon, Meat Hampers: 8<sup>th</sup> December Collect in store 23<sup>rd</sup> December





Variety of Christmas products & sausages, sausage meat, bacon, cooked ham.

Order deadline: **15th December**Collect in store: 21<sup>st</sup> December

#### Meat order deposits

£25 (turkeys, joints, hampers)

£5 (sausages, sausage meat, bacon, pigs in blankets, cooked ham)



#### Home-made, Christmas cakes, decorated or plain

Order deadline: 12<sup>h</sup> December for collection 20th December

£5 deposit.



### Personalised Christmas gift hamper

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Order deadline: 19th December

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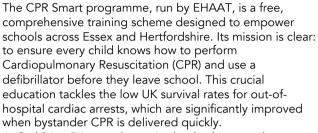
#### Little Lifesavers:

# Stebbing Primary Gets 'CPR Smart' With Essex & Herts Air Ambulance

A fantastic initiative has swept through Stebbing Primary School, equipping its pupils and staff with the ultimate life-saving skill: CPR. The school recently became a "CPR Smart School" in partnership with the incredible Essex & Herts Air Ambulance (EHAAT), ensuring the next generation is prepared to act when every second counts.









At Stebbing Primary, the senior leadership team have been trained by EHAAT's team of medical professionals to become CPR Smart Champions. These champions will now play a pivotal role in delivering this vital training to their peers and younger students year after year, embedding life-saving skills right into the school's curriculum. The training is designed to be engaging and practical,



The training is designed to be engaging and practical, ensuring that the children feel confident and capable of taking action in an emergency. They learn the correct compression techniques and pace, as well as how to use an automated external defibrillator (AED) - a device that is becoming more common in public places.



By instilling this knowledge from a young age, the CPR Smart initiative is creating a sustainable legacy of life-savers in our community. Studies show that countries that integrate CPR training early on see survival rates up to three times higher, a benchmark EHAAT is determined to achieve locally.

The commitment shown by Stebbing Primary School, alongside the Dunmow Excellence in Education Partnership (DEEP), to embrace the CPR Smart programme is a huge step towards a safer, more resilient community. We are not only fulfilling curriculum objectives but are actively equipping their students to be potential heroes. The next time a cardiac emergency happens, it may be one of these young, confident pupils who steps forward to save a life. What an extraordinary skill to possess!

Tom Le Masurier, Assistant Headteacher



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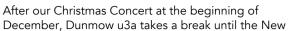
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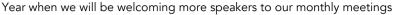
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#### The Dunmow U3a News











On Wednesday 28 January, the Rev'd Canon Chris Bishop will be entertaining us with "Short Songs and Tall Tales" – a mixture of traditional folk songs, not so old songs and his own lyrics to well-known tunes, blended with stories and banter.

"Short Songs and Tall Tales"

On Wednesday 25 February, Lindsey Barrell will offer "An Introduction to Mindfulness". Lindsey will discuss both informal and formal mindfulness, the benefits of mindfulness, handy hints and tips for everyday mindfulness and will end with a relaxing and calming guided meditation.



"An Introduction to Mindfulness"
Wednesday 25 February - 1.30pm for 2pm start



A month later, on 25 March, Ken Lodge will be teaching us how "Body Language Speaks Volumes". A humorous exploration of Body Language and Voice Tone. We are good at recognising when things don't seem quite right in others – but are we so aware of the signals we might be giving out? It's near impossible to communicate nothing, our feelings will reveal themselves!

"Body Language Speaks Volumes" Wednesday 25 March - 1.30pm for 2pm start

All our monthly meetings take place at Foakes Hall, Dunmow CM6 1DG.

Are you new to the area and want to meet local people? Maybe you are looking for a new hobby. Are you are also no longer in full-time employment? If so, now is the time to make the most of life in your 'third age'. Dunmow u3a gives you the chance to develop your interests, make new friends and enjoy yourself.

We are part of the UK-wide u3a movement and offer opportunities for members to learn a new skill, expand existing interests and share knowledge with other members in a friendly and informal environment.

To find out more, email <a href="mailto:membership@dunmowu3a.org.uk">membership@dunmowu3a.org.uk</a> or visit Du3a's website <a href="mailto:https://dunmow.u3asite.uk/">https://dunmow.u3asite.uk/</a>





# Stebbing Bowling Club News A. A.



The picture shows one of the highlights of our club season, the Des & Josie Staines Trophy. Which always attracts an excellent turnout. We play triples, that's teams of three, chosen at random, playing a knockout system culminating in a final to decide the winning team. This year it was David Corbett, Roy Francis and a new member this year Gary Spilman. Well done indeed! It was another very successful club event for all those attending, followed by a BBQ to round off a great day.



Other notable winners of the club trophies were Mike Porter, another new member - The Novice Cup AND the Jimmy Kirk Trophies.

This year our very popular Crown Green tournament. which at times looks chaotic but is a really fun day, was won by David Corbett and I was very privileged to present the Sara Byfield Trophy to David, on behalf of Eric, who had kindly donated it in Sara's memory.

The Club Champion this year was Mark Dovaston (keeping it in the family),

We closed the green back in September with a day of mowing, scarifying, and generally clearing and tidying up. A very big thank you to so many members who turned out on the day, enabling all those end of season jobs to be completed in one day! However work on the green, and some remedial work around the perimeter will go on throughout the Winter months. Thanks to Mark and his team who will ensure we will be ready for another year of competitive bowling.

So that's it for another year, the Club House will be closed, except for Committee Meetings and our Annual General Meeting in November. Prize giving will be in the White Hart courtesy of Terry.

We will continue our fund raising with another ever-popular Race Night held in the Village Hall in March, so please come and support us as you have always done.

May I take this opportunity to wish you all a peaceful Christmas.

Ray Sutton



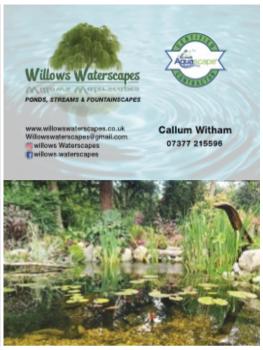
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#### On The Rise: Arcane Moon Gains Momentum



Local band Arcane Moon round off a busy year of gigs by headlining the O2 Academy, Islington. A significant highlight of the Summer festival season was supporting Reef, Dodgy and The Feeling at this year's 8Day Weekend in Saffron Walden.

A creative start to 2025, saw the birth of new, unheard songs that they were keen to record. So they headed back into the studio to record their second body of work 'The Hour Glass' which is a thought provoking album that explores the fragility of time. Their music is available on all major streaming platforms.





They have been behind the camera also this year and have created two music videos. And they've been heard stripping back the decibels performing multiple live acoustic gigs in record stores and radio stations across the counties.

To top it all, their efforts paid off with the wonderful achievement of winning the. 'Best New Band' category at the NMG awards 2025.

If you haven't met the band yet, they are a four piece consisting of Josh (guitarist and lead vocalist), Matt (drummer and Stebbing resident), Joe (bass guitarist) and Scott (keyboardist and backing vocals). They get together on a regular basis in Stebbing to rehearse before heading out to perform at gigs and festivals around the UK.



Josh Mcdowall





# The Great Stebbing Litter Pick: November 2025

Stebbing Parish Council (SPC) organised another Winter litter pick this year. We have previously held one earlier in the year in May, when the vegetation was growing too fast, and felt that we needed





to get back out there as the vegetation died down. Unfortunately, we chose a day that was dull and damp (Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> November) and the volunteers were few and far between, opting for warmer climes and drier conditions!

Thank you to the volunteers who turned up on the day from SPC. You are really special.

The hardy souls, 21 of us in total, turned up to face the elements and the challenge. We had a great success with the teams allocated to four areas.



Firstly: 8 volunteers to the south of the village:

- the Church to Stebbing Green, incorporating Watchhouse, Warehouse, Collops, Porter's Hall and New Pastures Roads.
- 22 bags of rubbish along with a dozen gas cylinders, fly tipped.



Secondly: 5 volunteers in the centre of the village and 2 new volunteers did Lubberhedges Lane:

- from the Church to The Downs including Mill Lane, the playing field, the Kingdom Woodland Walk and Ploughman's Reach, including a scooter, car seat and a mangled road sign (10 bags)
- Crooked mile from the church to the main road (4 bags).
- Lubberhedges Lane and Page Lane (4 bags).

Thirdly: 4 volunteers went to the B1057 from Bran End to Williams Farm plus 2 volunteers did Duck End to Bran End on Friday:

 in total, including the centre of the village, 6 bags of rubbish were collected.

Fourthly: 4 volunteers assembled at Bran End to pick up the estates of Garden Fields, Brookfields, Bran End Fields, the Pulford playing field and Clay Lane.

- in total, 5 bags of rubbish were collected.

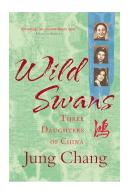
It is quite important to state that the pipe at the top of FP14/Clay Lane had a minimal amount of dog poo bags in it. Thank you to those who respect our countryside and don't fill it.

The next litter pick is planned for April 2026, so don't miss out! Let the parish clerk know if you are interested.

Amy's details are: Amy Ferraro, Parish Clerk at <u>clerk@stebbing-pc.gov.uk</u>

## Between The Covers Stebbing Style: Winter Suggestions

Three biographies, a "cosy crime" easy read and a psychological thriller.



Blast from the Past - Wild Swans by Jung Chang, published 1993 This book sold over 15 million copies when it was published in Britain in 1993. It is the story of three women in China, Jung Chang's grandmother, her mother and Jung herself as, in turn, they faced lives as a concubine with bound feet in pre-Communist days. A teacher and senior Communist official and Jung, her daughter, who enjoyed a privileged and happy childhood but, in her teenage years, was caught up in violence and chaos. Chairman Mao Zedong, whom she had grown up worshipping, unleashed his monstrous Cultural Revolution causing widespread, fear and despair. The younger generation were publicly encouraged by Mao to denounce and revile their elders. In addition, Mao ordered these young Red Guards to "Smash all things old", which resulted in the destruction of

beautiful buildings, parks and gardens. Book learning was deemed by Mao to lead to "stupid people", so education ceased and thousands of books, including priceless Chinese classics, were senselessly destroyed. "All things old" often included parents, local teachers and Communist officials of all ranks. At the whim of the Red Guards, people were denounced, detained and massively ill-treated, together with their innocent families. Jung herself, still worshipping Mao, had become a Red Guard but came to hate the vindictive and brutal behaviour of her fellow rebels. Her father, an incorruptible high official, was among those targeted. After years of detention and relentless physical abuse, he died a prematurely aged man. Jung's mother was sent to a punishing labour camp. Jung and her siblings, as the children of disgraced officials, were sent to do manual work. Gradually, in her twenties, she came to realise that her beloved Mao was a monster, responsible for millions of deaths. After his death in September 1976, life became easier for the persecuted population, allowing Jung to resume her education. In 1978, after many setbacks, she became one of thirteen students allowed to leave China to study in London.



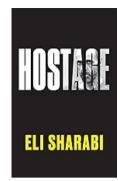
#### 2. Fly, Wild Swans by Jung Chang, published in 2025

Jung Chang's new book, written over forty years later, recaps on these earlier times and then describes the author's life in England when China, at last, began to allow more contact with the West. After initial study in London, Jung moved to York and became the first Chinese student to get her doctorate at a British University. The book describes her two marriages, particularly her second one to an eminent English historian. In the 1980s Jung was able to make periodic visits to her homeland. She was encouraged by her mother to write a book detailing the experiences of her grandmother, her mother and herself. It took over two years and, as noted above, it became a massive bestseller. At first, there was comparative freedom for research and travel but then China, under Xi Jiping, a worshipper

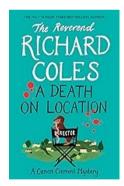
of Mao Zedong, stared to draw back from the West. In 2018, he passed an order stating that any insult or slander of the honour and reputation of heroes and martyrs was a crime punishable by imprisonment. Jung, as co-author of a biography severely criticising Mao Zedong, feared that if she revisited China, she might not be allowed to leave. Her resilient mother, now in her nineties, appears to have accepted that she might not see her beloved daughter again. Their bond, however, remains unshakeable.

#### 3. The Hostage by Eli Sharabi, published 2025

On 7th October 2023, Eli and his English wife Lianne, their two daughters aged 13 and 16 and their dog, were in the safe room at their kibbutz when Eli was abducted and taken to Gaza. At first, he was billeted in a house belonging to a Palestinian family and treated fairly well by their captors, nicknamed "The Mask" and "The Cleaner". Later, the hostages were joined by another Israeli, Almog, who had been at the Nova Festival. Eli, who fortunately could speak Arabic, could now, after many weeks in captivity, speak Hebrew again. This joy was short-lived because, the following day, he and Almog were taken to a mosque. There, a side room had a trapdoor leading down to the infamous tunnels used by Hamas. In a small darkroom, they met



five other Israelis. Eli was the oldest prisoner and felt it was his task to prevent the others sinking into lethargy or despair. He encouraged them to tell their life stories and to find something good about every day. At first, the men were given two small meals a day but they faced starvation when this was drastically reduced. Their brainwashed captors enjoyed humiliating the group. Physical abuse was rarer but did occur. A captor, known to them as "Trash", apparently heard some bad news and reacted by beating Eli so badly that he did not recover for over a month. As time went on, the hostages were moved to an even smaller, unsanitary room. A temporary ceasefire came and went and still their imprisonment continued. Eli befriended Alon, a sensitive young man who was struggling but, much later, he was forced to leave him still a captive. Eli was released by the terrorists in February 2025 after 491 days in captivity. Once back in Israel Eli faced further anguish but vowed that, whatever happened next, he would go on living.



# 4. A Death on Location by The Reverend Richard Coles, published 2025

This the fifth murder mystery by this well-known clergyman but the first I have read. I was disappointed to find the plot very similar to earlier whodunits or a Midsummer Murder programme. A major motion picture was being made at a stately home in Champton St. Mary and, in an early scene picturing a sumptuous masque, a local woman is murdered. The Rector, Daniel Clement, with some help from his friend, Detective Sargent Neil Vanloo, try to discover the truth. They come to believe that the intended victim was, instead, the age-defying, ego-centric film star, Gillian Smith, who seems to prefer reclining in her luxurious Winnebago to acting. They then had to discover why.





#### The Housemaid by Freida McFadden published in 2022

This last book draws in the reader from the first page. Millie, a young woman with secrets, becomes a live-in maid in an imposing town house. The occupants consist of the unstable and critical Nina, her wealthy husband Andrew, Nina's child, Cecilia, and Enzo, the Italian gardener who, from the start, tries to warn Millie of danger. The unease Millie feels escalates. Despite the luxury of the first two floors, she is given a tiny attic room which only has a key on the outside of the door and a small, fixed window. The house always seems to be untidy and dirty however much cleaning Millie does. She also faces accusations from Nina that she has ignored Cecilia's allergies, has thrown away important papers and has been stealing Nina's clothes and discovers that Nina has

spent time in a psychiatric hospital She is unnerved by this but she carries on because she has become attracted to Andrew. The plot then takes a darker turn. It keeps the reader guessing right to the end.

Happy reading!

Diana Roe



### Restaurant Review: Green Man, Lindsell

Our recent bill paid, manager Meg gushed "our new chef starts in three weeks – just wait and see!"

Having since sampled the tapas and mains menus, I can only say – WOW – and hence the need for this update following Chef Howard Webb's recent arrival.

**Howard Webb**: I was awarded two AA rosette awards at my last restaurant for Culinary Excellence by ensuring that every dish that leaves my kitchen makes a statement of which I can be proud. This is where the Green Man will be in 18 months time!

Me: So why here in Lindsell?

**Howard Webb**: Simple. I lived and worked here as a lad, but quickly realized that to achieve recognition as a chef I had to travel to learn. I return to where my family all live, but with a skill set I now offer rather than the lad I once was.

So, to the food... 17 tapas on offer, including fresh oysters and a choice rotating on a monthly basis at about £8 each all prepared with great flair and imagination; all supplemented by home made breads to die for!

Our evening visit started with King Scallops (£15.50) and home smoked Duck Breast (£12.50) with mains of Local Fillet of Venison wrapped in wild blackberry and cassis gel (£28.00) with equally heavenly Fillet Steak cooked to perfection (£36.00) all with attendant veg, tasty and tender – YUM!



GREEN MAN







Our Sunday lunch was for ten and kicked off with an Amuse Bouche of a fresh Oyster and then to starter and main – mine, beef rare from crust to crust and available at around just £30 for 2 courses! Although not a sweet eater, all are homemade and I was assured, delicious.

**Me**: So Howard, why not open on Tuesdays?

**Howard Webb**: Monday is R&R day whilst Tuesday is used to deep clean the kitchen which must reflect the calibre of that which we are serving our diners, excellence in everything we do and produce – and a clean kitchen is a happy kitchen.

**Me**: On a delicate issue, the Green Man was sometimes criticized for failure to rotate and refresh its menu.

**Howard Webb**: You must, which is why all three of my menus are reviewed each month with dishes added/changed as appropriate to keep our offering fresh to even the most regular of our customers.

Enjoy!! Kevin Farr

Ps. Howard and his recipes can be followed on social media at Chef Howard Webb on 53 Instagram and Facebook.





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#### One Tick Off The Bucket List!

My lovely friend Ann had one wish on her bucket list and that was to drive a tractor. My husband Mark was a farmer so our social circle is mainly made up of the farming community. I approached our family friend Michael Hills of D.A. Hills & Sons of Great Broadfields Farm who was more than happy to oblige.

It was countdown and the day dawned to Storm Benjamin but it didn't daunt us. I put my wellies on to pick up a very excited Ann who in her eagerness had gotten up at 4.30am! The weather certainly gave a good feel of what farmers have to contend with as they still have to get on with work in all conditions.

First we chatted with Michael and then his son Toby arrived to do the honours. Toby gave Ann a good overview of his Fendt tractor before taken it down the road. Then they returned to the yard for Ann to take over the wheel. Ann eagerly jumped out of the cabin and ran around to the drivers side! First (but only) blooper as there is only one door! Then I saw Ann scamper back to the left side and climb back in. They set off down the track with Ann seriously focussing on the task in hand. At the bottom of the track Ann did a perfect circular turn back to the yard. It was lovely to watch even though I was being lashed by the winds. So Michael and Toby, thank you both so much for giving Ann this experience and now I will hand this article over to Ann...

As my good friend Sally said, I had only one wish on my Bucket List which was to drive a tractor. Imagine my surprise and excitement when Sally arranged it for me. Storm Benjamin did not dampen my enthusiasm hence by 4.30am I was raring to go and ready for the challenge. Sally collected me and we drove to Great Broadfields Farm. We met Michael and his son Toby who were both very welcoming, giving up their precious time to accommodate

me. I felt a little nervous climbing into the huge tractor, but Toby was extremely patient and immediately I relaxed. Taking charge and driving a vehicle, worth as much as a small house, was thrilling. I just hoped to avoid any collisions. Imagine giving my husband a bill for a new tractor! Toby was so encouraging and I absolutely loved controlling the beast of a machine. Michael has invited me back to ride along on a combine harvester next Summer. I will definitely accept his offer. My heartfelt thanks to Michael and Toby for a wonderful experience which I will never forget.

Storm Benjamin reminded me that we should appreciate that farmers continue to work all hours throughout the year in adverse weather.







## Stebbing Tennis Club News

Greetings from Stebbing Tennis, your friendly village club where players of every age and ability have been making the most of the fine Autumn weather. With Winter now in full swing, our two floodlit courts are proving invaluable, allowing evening fixtures, coaching sessions, and club nights to continue without interruption.

Membership remains buoyant. Our Thursday evening and Sunday morning mix-ins attract a strong turnout, and both cardio tennis and ladies mornings have become firm favourites thanks to the energy and expertise of our Head Coach, Mark Clark. Competitive players have also enjoyed an impressive run of results in league matches. Among the standout achievements were the Ladies 2nd Team securing their second successive Essex Small Clubs League Ladies Division 3 title, the Mixed 2nd Team leading ESCL Division 3, and the Ladies Team taking the top spot in Essex LTA Senior Division 3A. A remarkable set of performances that reflects the growing strength and commitment within the club.





Junior Finalists

Club Chairman, lan Ford-Robertson, with his son

Our younger members have been no less active. Junior and Club Coach Ashleigh Draper continues to inspire with lively after-school sessions and well-supported tournaments. The Autumn half-term camp drew a brilliant mix of members and non-members, with new skills honed and friendships formed. Looking ahead, we will introduce LTA Rating tournaments for Juniors next year and will be entering both U9 and U10 teams in

the Halstead and District League. If you know a young player who is keen to grow their confidence, now is the moment to get them involved.

September saw our annual Club Championships, a day filled with skill, determination, and sportsmanship across every age group. Club Chair, Ian Ford-Robertson, who presented the trophies, shared his reflections:

"The Club Championships are always a highlight in our calendar, and this year's event was no exception. The level of tennis on display was fantastic, and it was wonderful to see our junior and adult players competing with such spirit and enthusiasm. The ice-cream van was a particular hit with players and spectators alike. Congratulations to all our winners and thank you to everyone who helped make the day so special."

In the junior finals, Alasdair M claimed the Red Ball title, and Harvey L delivered an exceptional performance by winning both the Orange Ball and Green Ball events. Remi R took the U14 crown with confidence, and Milly A edged a closely contested U18 final to complete a strong line-up of junior champions.

In the adult competitions, Sara Hill secured the Ladies Singles title, and Ryan Bott triumphed in the Men's Singles. The doubles events brought plenty of excitement, with Erika Taunton and Nicola Douglas winning the Ladies Doubles after a hard-fought threeset match. Andy Bott and Marcus Law claimed the Men's Doubles title, and Tracy Warren and Will Hales came through to lift the Mixed Doubles trophy.



Beyond the courts, our community spirit remains strong. A lively quiz night in November raised funds for our muchanticipated larger clubhouse. Festive socials are on the horizon, along with a friendly tournament on 28 December, a perfect chance to shake off the mince pies and get moving again.

If you would like to join our growing club or simply learn more, please reach out to Sara Hill at membership@stebingtennisclub.co.uk.

Further information is available on our website, and you can follow the latest updates on our Facebook and Instagram pages.

Sophy Walker







## **CHRISTMAS SERVICES**

Sunday 14th December 3:30 pm Christingle and

Crafts in Priors Hall Barn

4 pm Carols in The Barn Sunday 21st December

at Priors Hall

**Christmas Eve** 3:30 pm Crib Service

in Priors Hall Barn

9:30 pm Candlelit Holy Communion at Little

Faston Church

11 am Family Service in **Christmas Day** 

Priors Hall Barn

For more details email Rev Sue: revsuehurlev@gmail.com

JANUARY

Classic & Interesting

Car Show

Sunday 11th

Burns Supper &

Ceilidh Dance

Saturday 24th

An Evening with Mark

Williams-Thomas:

Investigative Reporter

Friday 30th

# -WHATS ON AT LITTLE EASTON MANOR-

## DECEMBER

Father Christmas Afternoon Tea Saturday 6th

Classic & Interesting Car Show. & Christmas Market. Sunday 7th

> Vegas Night Saturday 12th

Gingerbread Decorating Saturday 13th

Alpaca Festive Afternoon Tea Friday 19th

Feast of the Spirits; A Christmas Carol Dinner Musical Saturday 20th Sunday 21st

Monday 22<sup>nd</sup>

# Alpaca Felting

Experience

Family Stargazing Saturday 31st

# FFBRUARY

Classic & Interesting Car Show Sunday 1st

Valentines Wine Tasting & Meal Friday 13th

Valentines Day Movie Night: Bridget Jones' Diary Saturday 14th

> Pancake Day at The Tea Rooms Tuesday 17th

Alpaca Afternoon Tea Thursday 19th

Family Stargazing Experience Saturday 28th

SCAN TO



#### TEA ROOM CHRISTMAS OPENING HOURS

Open as usual until & including Saturday 20th December

Sunday 21st - Christmas Brunch ONLY

**CLOSED FROM** SUNDAY 21ST DECEMBER -TUESDAY 6TH JANUARY

For any private event enquiries, please contact Email: info@littleeastonmanor.co.uk Telephone: 01371 872 857

# Obituary: Barbara Rosemary Woodley

23<sup>rd</sup> October 1933 – 17<sup>th</sup> October 2025

I want to tell you about a remarkable lady. About her life and times in Stebbing and what she contributed over the forty years she lived in our midst. I hope that within the space allocated to me, I can truly represent her achievements for the benefit of you all. She was truly a force of nature with a heart the size of a planet – a one off, the like of which I don't think I will see again in my lifetime.



Barbara Rosemary Woodley – or as she was known to the church family – Aunty Barbara - worked tirelessly for the church and for a good period of time was secretary to the PCC (Parochial Church Council). Her Minute taking was perfect – the grammar and punctuation were exemplary – this is probably due to the fact that she was head of the typing pool for Coutts Bank – a role she organised with great professionalism. She also was a valuable member of the Fabric Team, looking after the Church building.

Her love of music was encouraged and inspired by two Christian ladies who looked after Barbara and her sister Marion when they were evacuated to the West Country during World War 2. They gave Barbara piano lessons which she took to like a duck to water and for many years she played the organ in church sharing with her dear friend Eve Stephenson. She loved singing and had a very good voice and not so long ago sang a solo during the Carol Service when she was in her 80's.



Barbara was all too often seen in the church up step ladders – cleaning windows or walls. Very sadly on one of her forays up a ladder she fell off and the Air Ambulance were called. Thankfully not too much damage was inflicted, apart from to her pride! This inspired Pat Smith and myself to tell her not to go up a ladder again – as also did Stephen Bazlinton – advice she chose to ignore. So Pat Smith came up with the idea to padlock the ladders together – as you can imagine – that went down well!! We were half expecting to see her advancing towards the church with a set of bolt cutters!!

As I understand that her love and lack of fear of heights came from the time when she was a young girl and her father used to encourage her to jump out of trees and he would catch her. She told me that she was very much a Tom Boy! Barbara loved the congregation and would always send everyone a birthday card from St Mary's

Church family. She never missed anyone out and the cards were never late. She paid for this herself. She was incredibly generous and helped many people in a very quiet and unobtrusive manner.

Barbara was also very frugal and never threw anything away – this would at times frustrate the Fabric Team no end!

Barbara was a a great ambassador for an organisation called EPIC (European Partners in Christ) and she was heavily involved with a church in Romania where she became a great friend of some of the families. She drove many times from Stebbing to Romania in the early 2000's when she was in her early 70's – 3000 miles and an 8 day round trip. On one occasion she did it on her own. Other times were with Phil Cobb, Pat Churchill and Stephen and Joan Bazlinton. Phil told me a lovely story of the occasion when he went with Barbara and she insisted on taking an electric piano to give them.

She also wanted to learn a bit of German as they would be going through Germany. So her dear friend, Eve Stephenson, who was part German, taught her a few words. Barbara couldn't wait to try out her new skills when she got to Germany and her first attempt resulted in the person she was talking to saying "So, you are English, no?" This disappointed Barbara a bit! On another occasion she went with Pat Churchill and Phil was already out there. He asked Pat how was the journey – Pat looked at Phil and uttered one word – TERRIFYING! In fairness to Barbara the roads were in a shocking state and most of the drain and manhole covers had been stolen for scrap metal.

In Stebbing she was a founder member of the Garden Club and worked on their stall at the village fete until well into her 80's. She was a member of the Bowls Club, the WI and over 60's Club. She also worked in the village shop. She had a mistrust of anything technical and used to push keypads and tills with great force. The church alarm pad was her bête noire and Phil requested on many occasions she should not to push it so hard as it would break - the same went for the shop till – resulting in shades of Arkwright in "Open all Hours".

On one occasion Cath and I went in to buy some Priors Hall sausages – they were £3.50 -after Barbara had hammered the till keys – we looked over to see the total and remarked that the price of sausages had increased dramatically - £35,000 – Barbara said "Oh that's not right dear!!"

In her later years with her mobility severely impaired it was not an uncommon sight to see Barbara in a Hi Viz jacket with her walking frame making her way to the village shop – in the middle of the road – "because the pavements were uneven" she said.

She had her sad times, with the loss of her sister Marion and her husband Kelvin. And unfortunately, her dear cat, Tigger just disappeared soon after Kelvin died.

One of her great moments was when she went to meet Queen Elizabeth to collect her Maundy Thursday money. This is an honour bestowed by nomination, and on that year 152 elderly people (76 men and 76 women) to thank them for their community service and Christian contribution. The tradition dates back to the 13<sup>th</sup> Century and is based on Jesus washing the feet of his disciples on the Thursday before Easter. And I am sure that everyone would agree she thoroughly deserved the honour.

Barbara spent the last two years of her life at Bings Hall, Felsted and being a very independent lady, she must have struggled to come to terms with her new life style. I can only say that the times that Cath and I visited Barbara, the staff were absolutely charming and made every effort to make her comfortable.

In conclusion, Barbara was part of our Home Group for over 30 years and very rarely missed a meeting. Our Home Group ages ranged from 30 to 80 years old and we all loved when we discussed the bible that Barbara, having 70 years of bible study would say, when a passage was discussed –"Well all these years and I have never seen that before – you are never too old to learn".

We will never forget her lovely smile and here are some quotes from our group when they heard the sad news of Barbara's passing:-

- She will be happy with Jesus
- Such a lovely and faithful lady
- She'll be on her way to Heaven what memories we have of that girl
- I didn't know Barbara very well sadly, but everyone spoke so lovingly about her
- An incredible lady, a real privilege to have met and known her

Our loss is Heaven's gain. At last she has reached the top of her celestial ladder!! to be with her Lord that she loved so much.

This letter was found in the mound of paperwork left at Barbara's home – and quite rightly needed to be read out at her funeral – Barbara always had the last word!!

My dear family and friends,

I thought this would be a golden opportunity to say to you all how much you have meant to me over the years and how much I have appreciated your kindness and tolerance.

One of the songs we used to sing as a family round the piano had these lines in it - "Be to her virtues very kind, be to her faults a little blind" and so you have been to me.

For those I have upset, please forgive me and to others do remember the laughs and fun we have shared but above all, I give thanks to my Saviour who loves us so much, despite our shortcomings, and has made it possible by His death for us to be with Him in eternity.

My time has come and so I say "au revoir" and please leave here rejoicing.

Love Barbara

PS Do hope I'll be going via Jacob's ladder!

Chris Beaven



## Stebbing Village Stores: Chairman's Report 2024-2025

Not only are we are still open and providing a service to Stebbing residents but we have negotiated a new lease (for 8 years) with our landlord. It has taken quite some time to iron out all the creases and make it more bespoke for Stebbing Village Stores. My thanks go to Sue Frost and Julie Gray in supporting me through this onerous period.

I am pleased to say we have a number of new volunteers, but can always do with more!

This year we again had "volunteers" from the local school to help their education. I have personally had the experience of working with one individual (as have other shop volunteers). He is off to pastures new in September and we wish him well in his new endeavours.

Looking at our profit and loss margins at March 2025, we have made over £4k profit by just the two measures below. Our treasurer Nathan Arnold continues to monitor our accounts and keep us on the straight and narrow. Thanks go to Nathan. As mentioned last year we have changed our credit card provider to one with a lower transaction charge. This along with encouraging more cash payments has made a huge difference in our profits. Please keep looking behind the sofa for the coins. We have also introduced a service charge for papers which is going towards reducing the loss that we make on papers.

As I have said we have several new volunteers, but can always accommodate more. This has meant training from David Corbett on licensing and the rules of selling alcohol. Thanks to David for providing this training.

From the kitchen the sandwiches, cakes and hot stuff produced there are all very popular. Many thanks go to Sheila Bundy and her group of volunteers for providing this popular service. Our Easter raffle also raised money for the shop (£109). Sheila's cakes (especially the made to order ones) are superb. Next time you have a celebration coming up think of Sheila and order a cake!. There will be a Christmas cake raffle in due course.

Joy Buhagiar as our company secretary has kept all the paperwork up to date and makes sure I do my paperwork on time. Thanks Joy.

Stephanie Taylor continues as our marketing lady and first line of liaison with trying to get more volunteers. Thanks for this never-ending activity. As always she promotes significant yearly events in the shop so look out for more Facebook notifications.

Although we have not had the premises traumas of last year, we have had our fair share of things to maintain and decorate (more of that later). Thanks go to Sue Frost for sorting all things premises out, I think we all underestimate the time that she puts in to keep the shop in good working order. In addition we have our "go to" person on

technical and electrical issues – Richard Lincoln. He, like Sue does those jobs you would notice if not done but don't notice when they are. Thanks Richard. Now for the decorating, this over the last month or so has been off and on, to say the least. The upshot is we need to find a decorator to paint the external walls and match up the paintwork. You will notice the difference at the front from the top to the bottom. If you know of anyone please let Sue know.

My biggest thanks go to Julie, our shop manager, and all of you who volunteer and keep the shop open. If you know of anyone who might be thinking about volunteering, or has asked about doing, please let Julie know.

Thanks to everyone who keeps the wheels moving.

Judith Farr

## A Greener Stebbing For All To Participate

Stebbing Parish Council (SPC) has a long history of being environmentally sensitive as far as the village is concerned, most noticeably: the preservation of Stebbing Green as a natural grassland; planting of trees around the village; the Sunday Green Skip; creating the Kingdom Woodland Walk; producing



Stebbing Walks Brochure; bi-annual litter picks and the formation of the Greener Stebbing Committee within the parish council to say the least. More information is to be found on the parish website (see <a href="https://stebbing-pc.gov.uk/">https://stebbing-pc.gov.uk/</a> for details).

It is now time to take these credentials to another level and yes, this involves you! There are multiple organisations around the county who are doing some really beneficial environmental projects and SPC has chosen to join some of them to learn from and help fund any initiatives the village wishes to deliver. The starting point for you will be an environmental survey that will be released in January 2026 and publicised through Stebbing Scene, SPC website, social media and notice boards. Your views are fundamental on how we go forward and we urge you to respond. SPC will then collate and propose your best ideas that benefit the greater community.

This is our village and we need to work together to make it a better place environmentally, sustainably and live up to our credentials of being A Greener Stebbing. Please participate.

Stebbing Parish Council A Greener Stebbing Committee



# The Dorcas Society: An Invitation



We would like to invite you to our

# ANNUAL SPRING SOUP LUNCH

on Friday 20th March 2026

At the Village Hall – 12.30pm Tickets £7 per person

EVERYONE WELCOME –
PLEASE COME AND SUPPORT US

Cheques payable to: New Dorcas Society 2006.

Tickets available from: Ann Pattenden 856476 or Rosemary Pitkethly 856155

## Development – West Of The High Street & The Downs

We last wrote in the Summer 2025 edition of Stebbing Scene about the potential development applied for by Montare LLP on the two fields to the west of The High Street and The Downs. At that time, we did not know what would be the outcome of their planning applications, since they were still pending. In the event both applications were refused by the Planning Inspectorate, as has been already reported briefly on the Stebbing Facebook and NextDoor social media pages in late June and October. We now provide readers with more details as to what happened, when and why!

We started our last piece by referring to a "number of bites" being had, referencing that two planning applications were being pursued at the same time by Montare (acting as planning promoters for the landowners and themselves – they are not builders) for more or less the same purpose, namely to develop out two fields, one opposite the Primary School and the other at The Downs. Stebbing has had this proposed scheme involving the development of 28 dwellings and a commercial style building hanging over it since April 2021. To have had full – not outline - applications for the same possible development remaining unresolved for so long would appear to most observers to be unreasonable.

The original Application was formally submitted, together with very extensive documentation, to Uttlesford District Council ("UDC") in October 2023. Initially, UDC's Planning Officers had not been in favour of development in these locations but by the time it came forward to be decided by its Planning Committee in September 2024, Officers recommended it for approval. The Parish Council and Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group objected to the proposals on the grounds that they would not comply with national planning law and policy because not only did they prejudice the settings of heritage assets such as the Conservation Area, the Scheduled Monument of The Mount and the listed buildings at Stebbing Park, but also, because they contravened several important policies in the Stebbing Neighbourhood Plan made in 2022.

The Neighbourhood Plan does not provide for development in these very sensitive landscape locations since its policies designated both fields as Local Green Spaces (a planning status like Green Belt) due to their special importance to the community by reason of their extensive footpaths, historic connections, setting, nature and tranquillity. Any development would also have breached the protection policies in the Neighbourhood Plan relating to Important Open Gaps, the separation of the different village Character Areas and several Protected Views. A large number of residents also submitted their objections to the proposal and showed their opposition too during the site visit made by the UDC Planning Committee.

At their September 2024 meeting, UDC's Planning Committee declined to follow the Officers' recommendation to approve and refused the application, giving as their reasons several of those we had put forward in objection. Montare were dissatisfied with that outcome and in February 2025, they applied to the Planning Inspectorate ("PINS") directly for permission for their housing scheme (omitting the commercial style building). They were permitted to do so under the "Section 62A Procedure" because UDC was at the time "designated" by the Government for failure to grant sufficient planning applications for housing, but which had subsequently been overturned by PINS on

appeal. The designation status was in fact lifted on 6 June 2025 and so in future, this possible application route is no longer available.

In March 2025, while the 62A application was undergoing review, Montare also appealed to PINS against UDC's decision. The Appeal reflected the original application, included the commercial style building and was submitted just within the 6 month time limit allowed.

On 11 June 2025, a very experienced PINS Inspector (having made two unaccompanied site visits in April and May) refused the 62A Application on landscape setting, heritage and Local Green Space grounds and reliance was also placed on the Neighbourhood Plan policies.

A different PINS Inspector having been appointed for the Appeal then considered it afresh. It took until 27 October 2025 for PINS to give their Decision (after one unaccompanied site visit was made in August). The Inspector dismissed the Appeal, again because of harms found to the Conservation Area, the heritage assets and noncompliance with the Neighbourhood Plan policies and in particular those concerning the designated Local Green Spaces. The dismissal was arrived at after considering in the "planning balance" the benefits which were said to arise from the provision of affordable housing and other matters including the fact that Uttlesford does not presently have either an up to date Local Plan nor 5 years' "worth" of planning permissions granted, as is required of it by the Government. These benefits however were not considered to outweigh the various harms which would result from the scheme.

Montare asked for UDC to bear its entire costs of the Appeal. Even though the Appeal was refused, the PINS Inspector did permit them to make a recovery of some of the technical/legal costs that they had incurred.

So, this development Scheme, despite its long protracted nature and the unusual "double dipping" which arose because of the twice over involvement of PINS, is concluded. The decisions reached, and detailed reasons given with reliance placed on the Neighbourhood Plan 2022 policies, show how important it is for Stebbing to keep a Neighbourhood Plan current, including one which contains fully justified planning policies of a type and scale referable to its landscape and historic settings. Then, as in this instance, reliance can be placed on those policies in cases of non-compliant planning applications.

Not only did we rely on those policies when we put forward our objections at all the different stages but it was very gratifying also to see the number and extent of the careful and detailed representations submitted by a great number of residents both in the initial consultation stages, prior to the Committee meeting and then twice more to PINS in the 62A and the Appeal procedures. We would like to thank all concerned for their diligence and commitment in doing so.

Stebbing Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

## **Dorcas Society News**

The weather on the morning of October 3rd was not encouraging, as we carried all our provisions for the Harvest Lunch into the Village Hall in the pouring rain! However as the time neared for the start of lunch, the skies cleared and everyone arrived ready to enjoy themselves! We were thrilled to realise that we really had returned to the numbers we used to have before the pandemic and the Hall was filled to capacity. It was also very pleasing to welcome some first timers to the festivities and hope they will return for the Soup Lunch in March. As we served the lunch, we were able to see the pleasure and enjoyment that these gatherings give to the community, which in turn gives us enormous pleasure and satisfaction.

As lunch ended, I once again took the opportunity to remind everyone that we are always happy to be told about anyone who, for any reason, would appreciate a card, a small gift or some flowers. Please don't hesitate to contact any of us if you do know of someone in that position.

Our next event will be our Spring Soup Lunch on March 20th. We do hope that by then, the Winter will be over and we can all celebrate the Spring together! Do come along.

Rosie Pitkethley

## **Stebbing Ladies Group News**

At our meeting in September we were joined by Steve Lester. He presented a very knowledgeable talk on The Titanic and six members were given scripts to 'give evidence' as to what happened on the vessel's last fateful night. I think we all came away having learnt something either from the talk or the large collection of memorabilia that he brought along.

Our October meeting was hosted by Peter Moore of Wiltshire Farm Foods, with an entertaining talk, where I think he dispelled some of the stereotypes of the recipients of their delicious meals (I can vouch for the taste as he brought along some samples for us to try).

So, looking now to 2026 we have some exciting speakers and events planned, so please come along and see what we are all about. We meet on the 4th Wednesday of the month at the Village Hall on Mill Lane, doors open at 7.30 for an 8pm start. We are always looking for new members possibly with new ideas and interests.

Finally, I would just like to wish everyone a very Happy Christmas and New Year.





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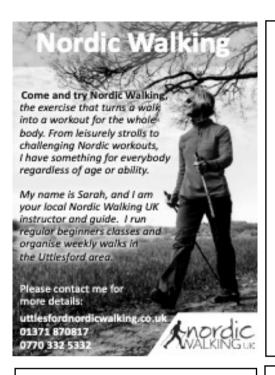
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I have availability for trips to: Joseph & the Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat on 21st June, Sissinghurst Castle Garden on 30th August, Hercules on 30th September, The Producers on 21st October, Bicester Shopping Village on 31st October, Come Alive on 12th November, Ely Christmas Market on 22nd November and Carols at the Royal Albert Hall on 14th December,

There are of course many other trips during the course of the year which are sold out, Evita, Anton & Giovanni and Kinky Boots, to name but a few. Please contact me for details in case I have cancellations, and I can add you to my mailing list for up-to-date information. I will be adding other trips as we go along.

Please contact us for further details: <a href="mailto:judith@ilpresents.co.uk">judith@ilpresents.co.uk</a>: Mob No: 07989 490828. www.jlpresents.co.uk

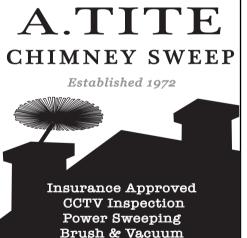


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## Puzzle Corner: Christmas Scramble

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YODIALH	
NWNMSOA	
RDMCEEEB	
NMRANTOE	
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RDEENERI	
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- 25 photo music tribute
- Collection of cremated remains

\*We know seeing a hearse at a funeral can be upsetting, therefore with this service the coffin will be placed in the crematorium before the congregation arrives. A full service will then take place with no hearse or bearers required.







# **Direct Cremation** (non attended)

£ 1,125

#### **FUNERAL INCLUDES:**

- Our professional services
- A standard oak veneered coffin
- Transport of deceased to Crematorium
- Attendance of funeral director
- Cremation fees for an unattended cremation at Dunmow Crematorium
- Crematorium fees
- Collection of cremated remains

## **Funeral Cost Estimator**

We all know a passing is difficult, that is why at Michael J Walsh Funeral Directors and Dunmow Crematorium we like to be as transparent as possible, by giving you the reassurance that the funeral cost will be kept to a minimum, with no unexpected surprises when it comes to receiving the bill. Which is why we have included a cost estimator on our website. You can find this under the funeral tab on walshfunerals.com

Please see our website walshfunerals.com for more details or phone us on 01371
856274 or email info@walshfunerals.com

## Stebbing Scene Is Your Magazine

Thanks to our advertisers, we are able to produce a professionally printed magazine, which is delivered free to every household in Stebbing.

Our first priority is to entertain and inform village residents, but we hope that in doing so we can ensure that advertising with us is worthwhile. For most people in the village, when seeking a local tradesmen or services, the natural first source of information is the *Scene*. If you have a local service or product that you'd like everyone to hear about, why not place an advert?



We can only produce a magazine that meets the needs and satisfies the interests of Stebbing residents if we have plenty of contributions. We rely on you to send us articles and reports of events and social activities in the village. We welcome photos, reports, and announcements, that cover all aspects of life in Stebbing. Let us have your views on the magazine and on how we can improve and develop. If you have an opinion, a moan, or a suggestion, then please contact one of the team.

#### Please send contributions to:

Karen Clark (articles, letters & advertising)
Jon Clark (queries about delivery)
Jackie Kingdom (obituaries)

karen@howetraining.com jon@adaptainer.co.uk jackiekingdom@btinternet.com

### Copy date for next issue is 13th February 2026

All contributions are welcome. Email is preferred where possible, but even handwritten contributions are welcome (if we can read them)

Did you know that this issue, and back copies are available to download at <a href="https://www.stebbingscene.uk">www.stebbingscene.uk</a>

#### Disclaimer

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