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Our front cover was taken on the
Permissive Paths near Dairy Lane

by Elizabeth Oakley

Enhanced by Paul Burt Photography

Stansted Mountfitchet Village Magazine

The Link

www.stanstedlink.org.uk

The Link is published by Stansted Mountfitchet Magazine Community Interest Company and delivered free to 3700 homes and businesses in Stansted. Further copies may be purchased for £1 each or £11.00 per year, plus postage. Each edition is also available on our website.

If you do not receive your copy please email: distribution@stanstedlink.org.uk or telephone 813680

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CONTRIBUTIONS FOR THE NEXT ISSUE

Please email editor@stanstedlink.org.uk by noon on **9th February**. Submissions should be in Word or typed into an email, maximum 300 words, and may be subject to editing. Please send photographs as separate jpg.

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As we look ahead to Spring, we are launching our new *Arts and Creativity Charter*, which aims to support a creative and cultural childhood for all children at the school. We enjoy experiencing our pupils' creativity around the school, whether through performance, in the classroom, or in the fantastic artwork on display, such as this amazing Big Friendly Giant sculpture, who now sits proudly in our library.



We have introduced this charter as we value and recognise creativity as an essential life skill which enables children and young people to thrive in the modern world. We also recognise the importance of creativity in supporting the personal resilience, happiness and wellbeing of all our pupils. We aim for each year group to visit an arts venue, create a piece of original work, study important artists and their masterpieces, compose a piece of music or poetry, experience a live performance and reflect on their own creative work, the work of their peers and of professional artists. We aim that they will also perform in front of an audience, participate in a production, workshop or publication and exhibit their work in the Magna Carta Arts Exhibition in the Summer term. We are very excited about seeing and sharing what our talented pupils create in the coming months.

Could you be a Community Governor at Magna Carta? We have a vacancy on our local governing board; if you are interested in a rewarding position working with school staff to support and monitor the school's improvement, please email: reception@magnacartaacademy.org. You do not need any experience nor formal qualifications. For more information on what is involved, please visit www.essex.gov.uk/schools-and-learning/schools/school-governors.

Amber Cope
Parent Governor
Email: copeA@bmatrust.org.uk



This month I have handed over to our Year 6s to tell you about what has been happening recently in school.

Our topic was called Blood Heart, which is a science-focused topic on the heart and circulatory system. To complement this we read *Pig Heart Boy* by Malorie Blackman. The most exciting part of the half term was when Clive (Miss Dowson's friend and a local vet) came to school armed with masses of sheep's hearts which we, under close supervision, were allowed to dissect and explore! We are very grateful to Clive for giving up his free time to come and help us. We never thought we would see the inside of a heart. Because it was so fascinating we would be excited to do it again (well, some of us).

Head boy Ben, Deputy Head boy Ruben,
Deputy Head girl Ciara

Solar Panels

We are very pleased to inform you that over the past few weeks we have been lucky enough to have solar panels installed on our school roof. In case you do not understand what solar panels do, they use energy from the sun's rays to generate power that is used for our school and hopefully for the local community too! This is a great step in preventing Climate Change.

Honor and Abigail, St Mary's Eco Warriors



I hope January has been kind to you. If we do need to close the school (very unlikely) because of extreme weather there will be a message on our school office answerphone.

Matthew Curzon
Headteacher



HUW JOHNSON CLUB

The Club started 2024 in style with a trip to see *Mother Goose* at the Cambridge Arts Theatre on 6th January – a panto outing that was thoroughly enjoyed by all. Our regular Thursday evenings will restart on **22nd February**, and we have a range of activities planned. As always, anyone interested in attending as a member or a volunteer, please do get in touch.

Ellen Brooks
Tel: 07800 896516
Email: ellenbrooks@hotmail.co.uk



STANSTED SCOUTS

Scouts

Sleeping in a Cardboard Box

To raise awareness about people who live on the streets, the Scouts hosted a homeless night. I packed up some warm clothes, a blanket and a sleeping bag. I also took my warm fluffy boots, a hat, gloves and scarf to prepare for a cold night. We met at the Scout headquarters (HQ) where we were sleeping outside. There was a plastic groundsheet laid on the grass to stop the damp on the ground coming through and one above us to keep the rain off. I saw other Scouts putting their boxes together inside the HQ but Dad and I made mine beforehand. There were lots of different kinds of boxes.



We moved our boxes outside and then enjoyed lots of different activities in the HQ including a Powerpoint presentation about people living on the streets. Later on we went outside and snuggled into sleeping bags inside our boxes. The temperature that night went down to -5°C and later on some of the boxes started to break and fall to bits. Mine stayed warm as our scout leader sealed my box with tape when I was inside to stop lots of cold air getting in.

I had so many layers of warm clothes and my box was well sealed so I was warm in spite of the cold temperature and I slept for about six hours; however by morning my box was quite damp from the dew. Some of the other scouts were much colder. In the morning we had fun with a hot breakfast while outside the leaders burned the boxes. I realised how hard it must be to sleep like this every night.

Alyssa (aged 12)

Joint Scout Groups Christingle Service

We held a Christingle service in St Mary's church on 13th December and were joined by Henham and Elsenham Scout Group, so the church was at full capacity. Rev'd Colin opened the service by explaining the meaning of advent and how the candles are lit. He asked the children about what elements we need to make up our christingles, triggering much shouting out and hilarity. Some of the children took part in the service by lighting the first two of the four advent candles and reciting their lines, along with readings and prayers.

We had an amazing evening and enjoyed singing favourite hymns about light in the world; *Away in a Manger* by candle-light which was magical. The evening finished with mulled wine and mince pies, along with tea, squash and biscuits.



We would like to thank Rev'd Colin for running the service and Lynda Dale and the team for the refreshments. Tesco deserve a big thank you too as they were kind enough to supply all the oranges, mince pies and biscuits. What a great way to get us into the Christmas spirit.

Judith Brand

Email: stanstedscoutgroup@gmail.com



STANSTED MOUNTFITCHET WINDMILL

www.stanstedwindmill.co.uk

Our *Santa at the Mill* event attracted 75 children to see Santa and pass on their wish list. Santa and his helpers had been busy preparing gifts in anticipation of seeing more than 100 children as had been the case in 2023, so he was left with a number of presents to take back to his base. The wet and windy weather on the day was certainly a factor in the drop in numbers; unfortunately there were a number of other commercial fake Santa events which may have had some impact.

The treasurer has reported a profit of nearly £400 on the event which will go into the Mill conservation fund. Whilst all income is welcome, any events we organise to raise funds will only generate a fraction of the money we need for big conservation projects; amongst these is the repointing of the mill brick work, which will cost over £50,000. Although the mill is not in any imminent danger, we were very concerned to discover that during the heavy rain recently we found water running down the inside of the wall on the SE side. We traced that back to the wall where the first external iron band is situated. If we fail to get the repointing done the structure will deteriorate eventually to the point where it becomes unsafe and public access has to be denied. We were pleased to have secured grants of £7,500 from Essex Heritage Trust and £1,000 from The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings Mill fund. We are awaiting the outcome of a number of other funding applications, including the Stansted Airport Community Fund Flagship award which, if we are lucky enough to be successful, would be worth £50,000.

Trevor Lloyd

Tel: 07739 428352



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8 pm Tue 6th Feb

Dog and Duck, Lower Street

We will be discussing

The Island by Victoria Hislop

Inspired by a visit to Spinalonga in Greece, site of a former leper hospital

All Welcome Tel 813056



Stansted Evening W I

7.30 pm Thu 8th Feb
St John's Hall

Note change of venue

Legal Issues Unique to Women

*by Helen Kirkman
and Claire Buttress*

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WHAT'S ON IN FEBRUARY

1	Thu	Local History Society	Venue tbc 7.30 pm
6	Tue	Stansted is Well Read	Dog and Duck 8 pm
7	Wed	Mountfitchet Garden Club	Free Church Hall 8 pm
8	Thu	W I	St John's Hall 7.30 pm
9	Fri	Link copy due in today	before noon
11	Sun	S W Symphony Orchestra	Saffron Hall 3.00 pm
13	Tue	The Arts Society B S RSPB	South Mill Arts 10 am Bishop's Park 7.30 pm
17	Sat	U3A Seminar Farmers' Market	Free Church Hall 9.30 am Ugley Village Hall 10 am
18	25 Sun	Snowdrop Sundays	Easton Lodge 11 am - 4 pm
21	Wed	Ugley W I	Ugley Village Hall 2 pm
22	29 Thu	Snowdrop Thursdays	Easton Lodge 11 am - 3pm



3 pm Sun 11th Feb

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To advertise your event in the March issue

Email: editor@stanstedlink.org.uk by 9th February

Inclusion is subject to editorial decision and availability of space



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Free Church Hall

Tickets 7
visitors welcome

Email: stanstedseminars@gmail.com



7.30 pm Thu 7th - Sat 9th Mar
3 pm Sat 9th Mar
South Mill Arts

Beyond Reasonable Doubt by Jeffery Archer

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www.ugleyvillage.org.uk

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FUN PLACE ON THE HILL

www.stanstedfreechurch.org.uk

We are open every Friday, including school holidays, from 9.15am-11.30am in the Free Church Hall. All visitors are welcome at the Fun Place. Parents, children and all age visitors are welcome to drop in and enjoy a hot drink and chat, while the children enjoy plenty of space to run around and play with the toys, and listen to Story Time or join in with a Sing-Along at around 10.30am.

Our Christmas Event was enjoyed by visitors of all ages, especially singing Christmas songs and carols. The young ones were excited by a visit from Santa and delving for a gift in his sack, and when it was time to go home had a dig in the Lucky Dip box.



We had some lovely comments from those present, and it was a pleasure to organize the event. Now colder weather is returning, you would be welcome to come along for a couple of hours on a Friday morning and help save on home energy costs. Free squash and healthy snacks are available for children, and tea or coffee and biscuits for the adults. There is limited free parking in the church car park. Looking forward to welcoming you on Friday mornings.

Sue Parker and Fran Richards
Tel: 657116

Email: funplace@stanstedfreechurch.org.uk



AUBREY BUXTON NATURE RESERVE

www.essexwt.org.uk

December saw wet and relatively warm conditions with hardly any frost. The three main ponds in the reserve are now full and all of the other ditches and depressions are full of water, providing multiple locations for our frogs and toads to breed. Given the number of frogs that were present in the reserve at the end of the summer I am expecting to see lots of frogspawn anytime from the end of January or early February.

The saturated ground has led to a few trees being partially blown over in the high winds at the end of December and the volunteer group have been making these safe as well as laying a new anti-slip surface to the lower boardwalk. Despite the damp conditions underfoot the reserve still offers a wonderful space to enjoy nature. It is a good time to look out for treecreepers as they are more easily seen without the foliage on the trees. These active little birds will be seen close to the bark gradually working their way up the tree trunk in a spiralling climb looking for insects, spiders and grubs.

John Welham
Warden

Email: communications@essexwt.org.uk

BBC WILDLIFE PHOTOGRAPHY AWARD

I know that our readers will love the glorious picture accompanying this article. It was taken by Sam Hankss, who is a resident of Stansted. He has just won the Portrait Category for the *BBC Wildlife Photography Awards 2023*. The portrait category was about showcasing an animal, rather than what we normally consider to be a portrait. In all respects, it is a stunning picture of these superb animals.



Sam played for Stansted Football Club when he was a junior, and was at school locally. Since then, he has been a safari guide in South Africa and he leads photographic safaris across the continent. He also partners with Bushlife Conservancy who have brought an end to poaching in Mana Pools, assists in the research of wild dogs and elephant behaviour, as well as helping to educate local communities in the Zambezi valley. Many congratulations for your well-deserved photographic accolade, Sam.

Ed

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IN MEMORIAM
DOREEN PEGGY HONOUR
19th July 1933-19th November 2023



Peggy Honour, née Powell, was born in north London in 1933. As a child in East Barnet during the Second World War she remembered seeing a red glow in the sky and being told that it was London burning in the Blitz. She went to live with an aunt in Northampton for about a year during the war but returned as the threat decreased.

She finished her education at Watford Technical School on a commercial course which gave her secretarial and book-keeping skills which she used in a number of early jobs. Much later it was also very useful when she set up in business with her husband, Derek who she married in 1956. They moved to Stansted shortly before their first son, Keith, was born in 1958, buying a house in Blythwood Gardens. They lived in the road for more than 60 years during which time they became actively involved in numerous aspects of village life. Early on, Peggy joined the Evening WI in Stansted, going on to serve in various roles including President. She was a WI member for more than 60 years and made many friends there. She was on the Stansted carnival committee for a few years and was involved with stalls and floats over a long period. Particularly memorable was Peggy dressed as the March Hare on the WI Alice in Wonderland float. She also plucked up courage to sing occasional folk songs in village concerts.

Peggy served on Stansted Parish Council for 14 years. She chaired the finance committee for a while and later the windmill committee. The windmill became a particular passion of hers. She worked as one of the Millers, welcoming visitors, helping to raise funds and organising the annual windmill fête. She later became one of the trustees of the mill responsible for its maintenance and preservation. She was in that role when extensive restoration work was carried out in 2010 which, amongst other things, enabled the cap to turn again to face the sails into the wind. As members of the Essex Windmills Group, she and Derek visited numerous mills around East Anglia and they would often find a nearby mill when on holiday.

Peggy was a founding member of the Stansted Mountfitchet Local History Society, serving in various committee roles, including chair, and was a member for about 13 years in all. She wrote some articles for *The Link* magazine, contributed stories for a children's story page and assisting her husband Derek as editor. She supported other organisations too, such as attending WEA evening classes and the Stansted Music Festival. She did not drive so was regularly seen walking round the village, in the shops and library.

Derek and Peggy set up D Honour and Son Landscape Ltd in Stansted in 1978 and its vehicles can be seen around the area to this day. In the early years, Peggy provided all the office support, answering the phone, typing and doing the accounts. She later had help with this as the business grew but her meticulous record keeping ensured a sound basis for the business. My brother, Keith took the landscaping business forward and when they eventually retired, Peggy and Derek made the most of it with cruises. After their first trip up the coast of Norway to Spitzbergen, Peggy in particular, was hooked. In the garden, Peggy took part in the British Trust for Ornithology annual garden bird watch and loved sitting watching the comings and goings of birds in the garden with a cup of tea in her hand. In later years they greatly enjoyed their fish and chip group of old friends who met for lunch, usually in The Cock pub.

After Derek died in 2018, she moved to Mumbles, by Swansea and the Gower Peninsular, to live near me. She passed away peacefully on 19th November and is greatly missed by her sons, their wives and her five grandchildren.

Malcolm Honour



UTTLESFORD CITIZENS ADVICE


www.uttlesfordca.org.uk

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We urgently need more volunteers to support people through the cost of living crisis. Many people are coming to us for help managing their energy costs, budgeting and debts. We also assist people with housing issues, benefit entitlements, problems at work and family matters. You do not need to have specific experience or qualifications to join us but must be non-judgmental, able to talk to people and familiar with a computer. All volunteers receive training and there is a paid member of staff who provides extra support whenever you need it. Our volunteers come from all walks of life and have many different reasons for volunteering, including the opportunity to help other people as well as build skills and confidence as part of an inclusive, friendly team and the wider local community. Our roles are varied, challenging and rewarding; hours are flexible so fit well with existing commitments. Many of our volunteers go on to paid employment as volunteering with us provides skills which are valued by employers. Several of our paid staff, including our Chief Executive, started out as volunteers.

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Jo Hancock
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www.musicatstansted.co.uk

There are few more accomplished choirs performing these days than the Cambridge Chorale, and we are delighted to have secured their services for a concert on **Saturday 23rd March** at 7.30pm in St. John's Church. The Chorale has come to Stansted twice before, and we are looking forward to their receiving the same enthusiastic reception on this occasion! The choir was founded in 1994, and it is a measure of its high standards that it has attracted a series of top-flight Musical Directors: Michael Kibblewhite, Julian Wilkins, Owain Park and since last year, Robert Brooks. Its members are equally at home in major works like Bach's *B Minor Mass* as they are in folk songs from around the world, and with composers from every century from the 1500s to the present day. Their website proudly announces that they have performed in English, Latin, French, German, Latvian, Korean, Welsh, Italian, Russian, Tamil, Zulu, Hebrew, Spanish, Afrikaans, Igbo and pseudo-Lappish. They have released eight CDs; the great John Rutter said of one of them: "something for everyone, sung with commitment and joy ... This is what a good community chamber choir should be about!"



The programme for the Chorale's Stansted concert was still in development at the time of going to press, but will include mouth-watering madrigals from the 16th century mixed with a number of more modern pieces: something, indeed, for everyone. Look out for more details when they are released on our website. Tickets: adults £15, concessions £12, under 21 free, will be available on the door. We look forward to seeing you there.

Richard Allaway
Email: contactus@musicatstansted.co.uk



www.southmillarts.co.uk

There is a great deal going on at South Mill Arts this February. Join us for the Live Lounge: a regular evening of live music in the Maltings Bar where you can relax and listen to some of the best from the local music scene. This month we welcome *The Exile Club*, the *Acoustic Club* and *Moon Jammers*. For information on dates, please see our website.

The first ever winner of The X Factor, Steve Brookstein will be performing at South Mill Arts on **Thursday 15th** 20 years after his win; with his No.1 album *Heart & Soul*, he is now back with a brand new show. On **Saturday 24th** the established tribute to Coldplay, *Coldplace*, will be joining us. With over 600 gigs under their belts, and a passion for nailing the accuracy and musicianship of Coldplay's sound, they are not to be missed. This half term we have shows for all the family. Follow Alice and the White Rabbit as they set off on a colourful, topsy-turvy adventure and meet a host of outlandish characters in *Alice in Wonderland - A magical Family Adventure* on **Monday 19th**. On **Wednesday 21st** join us for a whizz, bang and pop when the fun-filled and educational *Exciting Science* will amaze you with their thrilling experiments! Finally, get ready for a breathtaking show when *The Amazing Bubble Man* explores the dynamics of bubbles, with audience participation, bubbles upon bubbles, and gasps of amazement from all ages on **Thursday 22nd**. For more information and to book, please see our website or call the box office on 710200.

Seren Stephen
Tel: 710205
Email: sstephen@southmillarts.co.uk



www.swchoral.org.uk

Into the Stars

The Society will be exploring English choral music from the past 30 years on **Saturday 16th March** at 7.30pm in Saffron Hall, starting with Vaughan Williams' *Five Mystical Songs*, and settings of the works by metaphysical poet George Herbert. Cecilia McDowall's *Da Vinci Requiem* uses texts from the requiem mass and the philosophical writings of Leonardo da Vinci. Music by Will Todd and Jonathan Dove, whose *Arion and the Dolphin* the choir performed so memorably in 2022, are also included. This concert celebrates man's ability, through appreciation of music and nature, to transcend grief and reach into the universe to find eternal peace. The conductor will be Quintin Beer, with Stansted's own Richard Carr on piano and organ. Tickets: £11-£21 available from the Saffron Hall website www.saffronhall.com or Saffron Hall Box Office tel 0845 548 7650 Monday to Friday 10.00am-4.30pm.



Sarah Ludlow-Elston



www.saffronsymphony.org

Music from the Silver Screen

Saffron Walden Symphony Orchestra invites you to a mesmerising journey through some of the most beloved pieces of film music on **Sunday 11th February** at 3.00pm in Saffron Hall. The programme includes **John Barry** *Dances With Wolves Suite*, **Elmer Bernstein** *The Magnificent Seven*, **James Horner** *Apollo 13*, **Miklos Rozsa** *El Cid*, **Max Steiner** *Gone With the Wind*, **Maurice Jarre** *Dr Zhivago*, **John Williams** *ET* Tickets: adults £18 and £21, 18-25 year olds £11, under 18s £6 are available from www.saffronhall.com or tel 0845 548 7650.



Marion Dyer
Tel: 814059

This award-winning Theatre Company perform a highly charged courtroom drama written by Jeffrey Archer, *Beyond Reasonable Doubt*. Sir David Metcalf, a famous high court lawyer, is accused of killing his wife. The play takes us through the court proceedings, back to the night in question and ultimately to a truly stunning denouement. As a part of the audience, you become the jury and answer the question: *Did he do it?* The play allows the audience to see every nuance and every clue to allow them to decide whether Sir David is guilty as charged, or innocent as he protests. A host of witnesses are brought forward to testify, some more reliable than others, and in the second half of the play we go back in time to watch the whole scenario played out. Watch the evidence unfold and you can decide.

Performances are at South Mill Arts Complex on **Thursday 7th - Saturday 9th March** at 7.30pm, plus a matinee on Saturday at 3.00pm. Tickets: adults £18.00, concessions £16, are available from South Mill Arts box office tel 710200 or visit www.southmillarts.co.uk. You can find a link and more information on the Water Lane Theatre website.

Richard Pink



UGLEY WOMEN'S INSTITUTE

It was a case of *Jam and Jerusalem* at our November meeting; the jam being provided by Mike Rea and Ray Franklin of Elsenham Local History Society who gave us a fascinating, beautifully illustrated talk on the history of the Elsenham jam factory. It was established in the 1890s by the Gilbey family of Elsenham Hall. The local area had many lavender fields and before manufacturing jam, the factory produced lavender water. In addition to the fascinating views of the jam factory and its employees from the early days to its final closure, Mike handed round examples of packaging, including the distinctive pots used for *Gentleman's Relish*, or *Patum peperium*.

Our December meeting took the form of a festive afternoon tea provided by members of the committee, two of whom also provided the entertainment: a tribute to the much loved Joyce Grenfell. Judy Colliver performed two of her monologues. The first was *Useful and acceptable gifts*, the first that Joyce Grenfell wrote, based on the character of a WI speaker suggesting gifts that could be made at home using re-cycled items. The second was set in a nursery school. I gave a brief overview of Joyce Grenfell's life and work and the members heard two of her songs *Old Tyme Dancing* and *I'll See You Today*. One of Santa's little helpers then appeared on the scene with a large sack containing beautifully wrapped gifts for each of our members.

Martyn Lockwood will be the speaker at our next meeting on **Wednesday 21st February** at 2.00pm in Ugley Village Hall. His subject will be *The History of Nursery Rhymes*. Why not come along and relive some childhood memories? You would be most welcome!

Andrea Fitt
Tel: 815922

MINDFULNESS AND YOGA FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

www.bookwhen.com/mindfulminions

Our children and young people have many reasons to feel stressed, from performing well academically to societal pressures to fit in, to dress and look a certain way, heightened by what they see on social media. With rates of anxiety and depression amongst our young, aged between 7-16 years old, rising from 12% in 2017 to 16.7% in 2020, parents and educators are looking for ways to improve mental health and turning to mindfulness to help them reach this goal. So, what is mindfulness? Quite simply it is about being truly present in the here and now, so anything that teaches awareness can also teach mindfulness. It teaches you to learn to observe your thoughts and emotions without judging or reacting to them. Practising mindfulness regularly can help children regulate their emotions, improve focus, reduce stress and cultivate kindness, gratitude and positivity. Research also shows that practising mindfulness enhances overall well-being, increases respect for others and acts as a buffer for bullying.



This is where we at *Mindful Minions* come in; we run weekly sessions at the Quaker Meeting House for children aged 5-15 years old. Our Mini sessions for 5-11 year olds run on Saturdays at 12.15pm and include games, arts and crafts alongside a 25 minute yoga and mindfulness session. We also have two weekly sessions for 11-15 year olds on Wednesdays at 6.45pm and Saturdays at 1.45pm, which are 45 minutes of yoga, meditation and mindfulness. All details can be found through our facebook page by searching 'Mindful Minions' or please see our website. We look forward to connecting with the community, bringing mindfulness to our children.

Natasha, Kamala and Lyndon
Tel: 07396 759105
Email: mindfulminionscamp@gmail.com

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STANSTED PEOPLE

MICHAEL KING

If we were to find an unsung hero on our railways, surely one of them has to be Michael King from Greater Anglia. As a ticket office relief clerk, he spends his time at stations along the west side of Greater Anglia's operations, usually at Stansted Mountfitchet or Sawbridgeworth, but sometimes he can be found at Bishop's Stortford or Harlow Town. Over the last few years, he has started to get involved with the communities served by his stations and to this end, on special occasions or events, decorates his ticket office to reflect this.



During 2023 he decorated Stansted Mountfitchet and Sawbridgeworth for Easter, the coronation of HRH King Charles, PRIDE month, Wimbledon, Women's World Cup, Rugby World Cup and Christmas. The decorations go down very well with passengers and staff alike and make people smile, comment and take pictures.



As well as decorating the offices, Michael has co-ordinated charity collections for the three local foodbanks at Christmas and the Easter egg collection for the children's ward at Princess Alexandra Hospital in Harlow. In 2023 the Easter egg collection donated over 450 eggs and other treats and the Foodbank collection donated over 1,600 meals for local families that were in need. He believes that it shows as a company Greater Anglia care about the community around its network. For his dedication to his charity work, Michael received a *Customer Experience Award* by Greater Anglia and he was also nominated for the *National Rail Staff Awards*. Although he did not achieve a win, he was still proud about being nominated by his customers and being in the top 15 in the country.

Ed

WATER, WATER EVERYWHERE

Here is an article from 1562 sent in by Ralph Phillips, found in the Essex Record Office, which shows that flooding is not just a 21st century problem ...

We Ffynde that ther is within the paryshe of Stansted Monffychet within the cownty off Essex a serten bregge ledyng to Bysshoppes Stertforde which doth annoy the quenes majesties leage people so that they can nat passe from marcat but they arlluke to be drowned and yt is to be made bye the honorable Erle off Oxefforde and the warden of Oxfforde deserynge your honorable and worhyppes all to se a redress in the same for it hathe beane oftymes put up and no remedye Fownde ther in. Ande we sertyffe your honorable and worshyppes all ye other thynges as farre as we can understand ear well and we knowe no man disobedyant.

It is quite extraordinary how our language has evolved since those times. Many thanks to Ralph Phillips.

Ed

THE GREEN FIELD

Once there was a green field Charlie and Delilah called home
Where there was space for the two pigs to grow and roam
And did their bellies grow over the years, oh my!
So feted and well fed by folk passing by

During the lockdowns their popularity grew
More visitors came and sometimes had to queue!
Then, alas it came to pass that Delilah did die
Went to that other green field in the sky

Charlie soldiered on in isolated splendour
Still greeting the fans and having a wander
Still such a character, the handsome pig
Made The Link's front cover – so infra dig!



The field is no longer the pigs' residence
It's an empty patch of grass surrounded by a fence
No doubt new houses will soon fill the space
But it will always be - Charlie and Delilah's place

Loki

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Ugley Village Hall
www.ugleyvillage.org.uk

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 competitive rates, Ugley Village Hall on the B1383
 (Cambridge Road), is available for hire throughout the
 year for children's parties, adult parties (over 25s),
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For bookings or further information please contact Susan Bone
 Tel: 01279 814052 Email: ugleyvillagehall@gmail.com



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*Helpline serves to harness the goodwill that exists in Stansted
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RSPB

www.group.rspb.org.uk/stortvalley

Our events for February start on **Saturday 3rd** with a visit to RSPB Wallasea Island, Rochford SS4 2HD. We plan to meet at the reserve at 10.00am. Using more than three million tonnes of earth created by the London Crossrail scheme, this is a magical landscape of marshland, lagoons, ditches and sea. Wildlife is flourishing here and the reserve continues to develop and mature. It is a great place to visit and you can expect to see huge flocks of waders and wildfowl plus short-eared owls and marsh harriers. Looking over the river there is the opportunity to see common seals.

For our meeting on **Tuesday 13th** at 7.30pm, we welcome Roger Hance. Roger is a local photographer who combines his love of nature with photography to provide an entertaining and informative combination of wonderful birds and outstanding images. His talk will show the diverse range of birds that we have in the British Isles and explain how some are in decline due to various factors, and some birds, once quite rare in this country, are now doing very well. Meeting Venue: Bishop's Park Community Centre, Lancaster Way, Bishop's Stortford, CM23 4DA.



Our final event of the month is our midweek walk on **Wednesday 21st**; meet 10.00am at St Mary the Virgin Church, Brent Pelham, Buntingford SG9 0HE. Given that this is a winter walk the exact route will be decided in early February and will be a mixture of farmland, country tracks and some road walking.

Peter Allen
Tel: 07876 295456
Email: peter2349@sky.com



HATFIELD FOREST

www.nationaltrust.org.uk/hatfield-forest

As you are probably aware, we are still in our winter opening hours during February. We are open Wednesday to Sunday 9.00am-2.30pm and closed on Mondays and Tuesdays. We close the forest and car parks because over the wetter months, the ground conditions are very poor and can be badly impacted by large footfall. Our reduced opening hours reflect both the use of the forest in those months and our ongoing work to protect this special site. The ground conditions deteriorate as the weather changes, so

we close our grass parks and move to our limited hard standing. Seasonal changes cause erosion of the historic woodland rides, so if you come across a diversion, please follow it and discover a new route.



Please be mindful that car spaces are limited at this time of year as they are restricted to the hard-standing. You cannot book a car parking space, so please check the website for our opening times and further updates.

If you are feeling chilly and have a wood burning stove or fire, please email hatfieldforest@nationaltrust.org.uk to place your log orders and support our ongoing conservation work. We also have fresh venison for sale from the Estate Office. Why not try some diced venison in a casserole; it is delicious and healthy!

Hannah Underwood
Assistant Business Services Co-ordinator
Tel: 870678

Email: hannah.underwood@nationaltrust.org.uk



ROYAL BRITISH LEGION THANK YOU

Poppy Appeal 2023

I would like to give a big thank you to everyone who helped with the Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal this year. Their fantastic efforts meant that we raised an incredible £30,006 for our district; yet another record! Particular thanks must go to those who went out in all weathers collecting door-to-door, in Henham, Elsenham, Stansted, Manuden, Farnham, Ugley, Birchanger and Cherry Green. Thanks also to all those who manned our poppy stand at the airport terminal, our local residents, and 33 and 35 Royal Engineer Regiments based at Carver Barracks ... and let us not forget those shops, pubs and local businesses who also kindly sold poppies. Without our volunteers we would not have made 2023 such a resounding success. New volunteers are always welcome; if you think you can help in anyway, please do not hesitate to get in touch. Thank you all.

Simon Bambridge
Email: sibambridge@icloud.com



THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH

At what point does a new year cease to be new? Writing in early January, it could reasonably be justified that the year is still new, but for how long? One or two weeks into January, and is the new-ness then done with? Certainly, by February it would seem odd to be greeted with a Happy New Year, wouldn't it? Hence, happy 'not so new' year!

Representing The Salvation Army in this area has been an honour for me for the last 2½ years. Last November we opened our new building in Ducketts Wharf, next door to Kwikfit. The same new-ness question could apply here: How long are our new facilities and building 'new' for? This means we now, after 23 years, have our own building in the town, available to us and the community we wish to serve. If you are in the area, pop in on Thursday mornings between 10.00am and 1.00pm, as we are open for drinks, fellowship and chat, and every Sunday for our meeting at 10.30am. In July, I will be moving to a new area, but that is not important here ...

A 'not so new' year, and 'new hall' can generate much excitement about what that can entail. A new year with much to look forward to – a blank canvas in the diary to fill with exciting events. Having God in your life means that his love for you is new every morning. The book of Lamentations in the Bible, (not a cheery title ☺) does have some very encouraging words: *The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness* (Lamentations 3:22-23). Whatever this 'not so new year' may hold for you, remember that God's love will always be available to you and yours, no matter what the date in the diary.

Major Alan Frederlckson
The Salvation Army



ST THERESA OF LISIEUX CATHOLIC CHURCH

High Lane, Stansted CM24 8LQ
www.sttheresasstansted.org

All enquiries The Church Office, St John's Hall,
Including Church St John's Road, Stansted CM24 8JP
Hall bookings Tel: 815243 (with answerphone)
Office hours: Monday, Wednesday, Friday
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Email: stansted.church.office@gmail.com
Website: www.thefivechurches.org.uk

Priest in Charge Rev'd Dr Colin Fairweather Tel: 816721
Email: revdrcolinfairweather@gmail.com

Associate Priest Rev'd Helen Flack Tel: 01371 876145
Email: revhelenstn@gmail.com

Pastoral Kathryn West Tel: 816293
Mobile: 07880 602717

Assistant Email: kewest@btinternet.com

Director of Music: Anne Brooks
Email: anne.brooks22@yahoo.co.uk

Services Family Communion (1st Sunday) 9.30am
Holy Communion (2nd-4th Sundays)
9.30am

Parish Priest Fr Clement Orango
Tel: 814349
Email: frclementorango@brcdt.org

Parish Administrator Clair Rava
Tel: 816889
Email: stansted@brcdt.org

Masses:

Saturday 5.00pm-5.30pm Confessions
6.00pm Mass

Sunday 8.30am Mass
10.00am Mass

Wednesday 12.30pm Mass



Our Mass times can be subject to change so please refer to our website/Newsletter for updated information, including weekday Masses. Confessions are at 5.00pm every Saturday before the Vigil Mass and by appointment.

Baptisms: By appointment

From St John's Registers

Baptisms

5th November Layla Rose Ockenden
Elliot Shiv Ockenden
Connor Dougal Hardman

3rd December Freddie Sidney Charles Philp

Wedding

25th November Andrew Jones and Astrid Charrier

Funerals

7th December James Arthur Seymour Pigrum, age 92 -
at St John's

11th December Jerzy Grochowski - at Cam Valley

18th December Winifred Irene Elizabeth Barron, age 90 -
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Priest in Charge Rev'd Dr Colin Fairweather Tel: 816721
Email: revdrcolinfairweather@gmail.com

Associate Priest Rev'd Helen Flack Tel: 01371 876145
Email: revhelenstn@gmail.com

Pastoral Kathryn West Tel: 816293
Mobile: 07880 602717

Assistant Email: kewest@btinternet.com

Director of Music: Anne Brooks
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STANSTED FREE CHURCH

Methodist / URC
Chapel Hill
www.stanstedfreechurch.org.uk



STANSTED QUAKERS

Quaker Meeting House, 71 Chapel Hill
Stansted CM24 8AE
www.stansted.quakermeeting.org

Secretary Catherine Dean
Tel: 813579
Email: catherine@stanstedfreechurch.org.uk

Lettings Marion and Mike Dyer
Tel: 814059
Email: lettings@stanstedfreechurch.org.uk

Preachers for February

4th 10.30am The Worship Team - New Directions
11th 10.30am Rev'd Gill Hulme - Communion
18th 10.30am Mark Hayes
25th 10.30am Rev'd Stuart Veitch

December was a very special month for us. Our Christmas Day worship was led by 95 year-old Rev'd George Lambdon, a retired Baptist Minister and father-in-law of one of our members. George gave up preaching several years ago but missed it so much that he asked if he could lead worship for us, and we were delighted to see him again.



On 28th December we celebrated the 90th birthday of Denis Walker, shown below with his wife Jill. Denis and Jill are regular worshippers, and Denis is also a very inspiring local preacher. It was a very happy occasion and Denis gave a short speech about his early life and how much his faith means to him.



Denis was the fourth member of our congregation to celebrate this milestone in the last two years and we have several more coming up!



Contact Jonathan Morrell Tel: 07775 860379
Email: woldsouth3@gmail.com

Lettings Yvonne Estop Tel: 07595 087207
Email: yvonne-wood@outlook.com

Sunday worship 10.30am. Visitors are always welcome. We join together in stillness for an hour, followed by coffee and chat. Quakers allow each person to explore their own experience of the divine. We try to live our faith in everyday life, with a dedication to peace, simplicity, truth, equality, and nature.

Light Group This is a guided Quaker meditation. There is more information on the noticeboard outside the Meeting House or do contact Sue on 07759 532115. We generally meet on the 2nd Saturday of each month.



ST JOHN'S 300 CLUB

Congratulations to the winners of the November draw:

£100	No 67	Kathleen Clark
£50	No 238	Alan Helbert
£25	No 133	Laura Higley

In addition we would like to congratulate the winners of the December draw:

£200	No 44	Anthony Minshull
£100	No 23	Isabel Thwaites
£50	No 194	Alastair Bone
£25	No 93	Annabel Pettinelli

The draw for February will be held on **25th February** in St John's Church, following the 9.30am service. Numbers at £2 per month for each number are still available for anyone who may wish to join the Club and be in with a chance of winning one of the 38 prizes totalling £2,500 given away this year. The Club raises vital money to help cover the heavy maintenance costs and work of St John's Church.

Jean Newson
Tel: 819062

Email: jean733@btinternet.com

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THE END OF THE SAXONS 1043-1087 PART 1

Harold Godwinson

Lived c.1022 to 14th October 1066 Reign: 1066

As any clever know-it-all can tell you, Harold Godwinson, the last Saxon king of England, was killed at the Battle of Hastings by an arrow in the eye. However, if you happen upon a **cleverer** know-it-all, you will have that knowledge corrected, as the 44-year old was **actually** hacked to death. Lovely. But the greatest know-it-all of all time won't be sure. Huh? **Whaa???** Well, take a look at the Bayeux Tapestry.



Find that fateful moment, translate the Latin, and you will find it says "Here, King Harold is killed". Below are depicted two men in chainmail: one being shot in the eye, the other being stabbed. It had long been assumed that one was Harold, and the other, some random man unfortunate enough to be situated adjacent to the king at that exact moment in the universe's 4.6 billion-year history. But maybe ... maybe ... they are both him. See, an arrow in the eye could go through, pierce the skull, mess up the brain, and kill you, but if it didn't ... if it didn't ... it would've been enough of an inconvenience to give Norman soldiers time to hack Harold Godwinson to death, and to end a kingdom that was hundreds of years old.

The Funky Chicken
Aged 10

Email: cmgpelly@gmail.com (Mother)



THE PLACE ON THE HILL

www.stanstedfreechurch.org.uk

Are you feeling a bit flat after the buzz of Christmas and new year? Join us for free coffee, cakes and biscuits in friendly company on **Wednesdays 10.00am-noon**. We also have a jigsaw you can work on. There is no need to book, just come along to the Free Church at the bottom of Chapel Hill and save on your home's energy bills. There is limited parking behind the church. Adults of all ages are welcome. If you have children, please come along to *Fun Place on the Hill* which opens on Fridays; see separate article for more information.



Mike and Marion Dyer

Tel: 814059

Email: theplace@stanstedfreechurch.org.uk



RECYCLING



No more Dental Products

Unfortunately we are no longer able to accept dental products for recycling as TerraCycle have closed the scheme. However we can still accept the following: ink cartridges (**not** toners), stamps, mobile phones, ipads and tablets (**not** laptops). Please make sure all personal data has been erased from ipads, mobiles and tablets. The easiest way to do this is by a *factory reset*. It would be helpful if **all items** could be placed in a paper/plastic bag or envelope; please use a separate one for each category and do not mix items. Donations can be left in the boxes outside the blue main door of the Free Church at the bottom of Chapel Hill. There is also a collecting box inside St John's church. Alternatively please leave items in the porch of 7 Blythwood Gardens.

If you have laptops or printers there are two organisations which refurbish them and donate to schools and charities. Both will collect from you free of charge. Contact Cambridge Recycling Centre on 01223 473875 email: sales@cambridge-computer-recycling.co.uk or Townstech in Harlow tel 898240 www.townstech.co.uk.

Aldi Packaging

Readers who shop in Aldi may or may not be aware that the Bishop's Stortford store recycles quite a lot of packaging that we are not permitted to place in our green council bins, viz: crisp packets, pet food pouches, plastic film, sweet wrappers, plastic bags, biscuit wrappers and bread bags.

Note we are not collecting on behalf of Aldi so please do not bring these items to the church.



Marion and Mike Dyer

Tel: 814059

Email: recycle@stanstedfreechurch.org.uk



www.tasbs.org.uk

Our next meeting is on **Tuesday 13th February** at 10.40am in South Mill Arts, with coffee from 10.00am. Dr Susan Kay-Williams will be presenting the recent history of colour in textiles, entitled *Mauve to Mumbai*.



In 1856 an 18-year-old student at the Royal College of Chemistry accidentally discovered the first synthetic dye. This lecture takes us from then to present day synthetic dyes and fibres. It is a story of serendipity, science, war, innovation trial and error, environmental concerns, economics and fashion. Guests are very welcome and we invite a donation of £7. Come and be entertained and enlightened. Our Membership Secretary is Jenny Savage, tel 656065.

Michael Fitch

Email: info@tasbs.org.uk



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STANSTED FIRE STATION

www.essex-fire.gov.uk/location/station-83-stansted

Over the Christmas period the team helped to put up the Elsenham Christmas tree; this was a fantastic morning helping all the local volunteers.



The wet weather and wind have caused the crew to respond to a variety of incidents. In the midst of Storm Henk in January the station was extremely busy. We were even called back to our own station after a concerned resident reported a potentially hazardous tree on our own station ground. The crew closed the area and were thankful to a local tree management company for coming out as an emergency and taking the tree down safely. The crew have also been attending a lot of incidents involving cars being stuck in flood water and we would like everyone to take note of this safety statement:

- Keep an eye on weather reports for flooding in your area; do not travel in heavy rain unless essential
- Do not ignore road closed signs
- Never attempt to cross or drive through floodwater if you do not know how deep the water is. Just two feet of water will float a car
- Never try to swim through fast flowing water or floodwater; you may get swept away or be injured by an object in the water
- Do not assume fords are safe to cross just because the road is not closed. Always look at the river level gauge and use your common sense
- Floodwater may be contaminated. Never allow children or pets to go near or play in floodwater
- Prepare a flood kit in case your home floods or you are trapped in a vehicle for any period. This should contain a change of clothing, wellies, waterproofs and blankets, a torch, charged mobile, medication and a first aid kit and a list of useful numbers, including flood alert lines.

Steve Perry

Tel: 01376 575830

Email: stanstead.oc@essex-fire.gov.uk

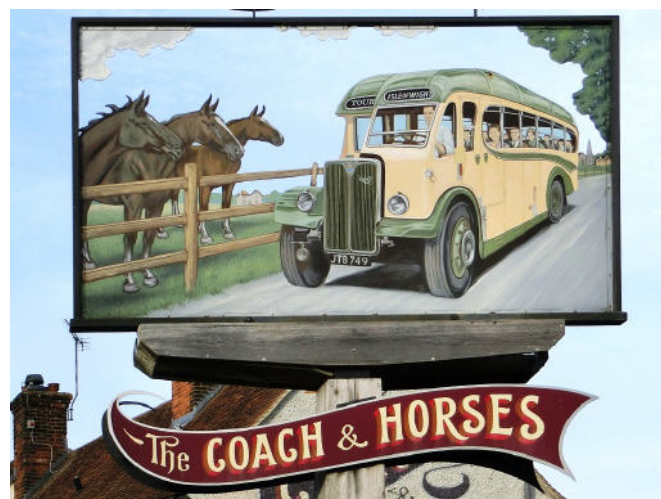


THE HUNDRED PARISHES SOCIETY

www.hundredparishes.org.uk

The Society's website has been updated although it retains the name as shown above. The most significant change is the addition of a section called *Articles*. This section has about 80 pages and offers a window onto more aspects of the Hundred Parishes, complementing the existing introductory pages to items such as parishes, walks, people and What's On.

The articles section comprises a series of short essays on a diverse range of subjects ranging alphabetically from Almshouses to Workhouses. Most of the articles started life as a submission to local parish magazines; many have been expanded. We have introductory articles about the Hundred Parishes Society's origins, aims and activities. Other topics include Aviation, many aspects of Churches, Landscape, Listings, Museums, Parish names, Pub names, Village halls and signs and many more. This expansion of the website has provided an opportunity to include some 600 additional photos. The Articles section will grow over time, usually to incorporate new subjects from the various parishes.



Coach and Horses Pub at Thorley

We like to receive feedback, whether that be to report a problem, expand our knowledge, or perhaps just to express an opinion on what the Society is doing or could do. We particularly rely on feedback to keep our What's On page up to date and the contact details current within our parish introductions. The details that require most frequent change usually relate to our pubs, either closing, re-opening or changing their contact details. We hope residents will take a fresh look at the website and that they will find something to interest them and perhaps inspire them to investigate further, either online or better still on foot, following one of our suggested walk routes.



Ken McDonald

Secretary

Tel: 813226

Stansted Network

NEWS FROM YOUR LOCAL COUNCILS

PARISH COUNCIL UPDATE



...with news of our part-night lighting trial, support now being offered to Stansted businesses, our plans to boost biodiversity across the village, the search for a site for much needed almshouses and the publication of parish councillors' attendance at meetings since April 2023

Lighting trial gets under way

As we moved into the new year, our contractor was busy converting the last of the 88 village street lights scheduled to be switched to part-night lighting as part of a three-month trial announced by the Parish Council back in September.

AJ Lighting has been paying regular visits to Stansted Mountfitchet since October, replacing traditional bulbs to energy-efficient LED ones as well as fitting timers to allow for lights to be turned off from midnight to 5am.

With each visit, more of the village's streets have been incorporated into the trial which, as a result, has got under way with a rolling start. "You may notice for the first week or two the lights may come on at odd times," explains Andy, our contractor. "But this will only be temporary and happens because sensors in the lights need to assess and adjust to the existing day light hours."

The Parish Council maintains 242 street lights and switching to LEDs and installing timers will cost less to run and be less polluting. Converting the lights has been paid for with £34k provided by the district council from their Zero-Carbon fund. This grant was conditional on streets in Stansted being switched to part-night lighting.



A street-light being switched to LED and a timer fitted on the Mountfitchet Estate



Lights can take a few weeks to turn on and off at the correct times as sensors adjust to the existing day light.

The part-night lighting scheme is still at a trial stage. Main thoroughfares will continue to be lit all night as will the twitchells. And wherever you are in the village between

midnight and 5am, the scheme has been planned so you will never be out of sight of an illuminated light. But you are welcome to let us know of any areas where you believe a re-think is needed. You can do so by emailing info@stanstedmountfitchet-pc.gov.uk or calling our office on 01279 813214.

Grants for business at the Exchange

Andy Schmiedecke, Business Support Officer at Uttlesford District Council, will hold another advice drop-in from 10am-1pm at the Mountfitchet Exchange on February 9th.

The drop-ins no appointments needed, by definition! kicked off at the end of 2023. They have been organised to make it easier for firms in Stansted to apply for grants to support their businesses. Andy and his team at the district council are keen to make local entrepreneurs aware of three avenues of funding available to them:

- **Business Start Up Grants:** These are worth between £500-£2,000 and can be applied for if you have been trading for less than two years
- **The High Street Premises Enhancement Fund:** Between £500 and £5,000 is available to improve or repair your shop front
- **Low Carbon Workplace Grants:** These see £500-£5,000 distributed to small- to medium-sized firms adapting their operations to reduce their carbon footprint.

The drop-ins also provide an opportunity to point local businesses in the right direction for training and for advice on everything from how to set up your own enterprise to how best to compete for local government tenders.

The drop-ins are the result of discussions between members of the recently formed Economic Development Group into how best to support businesses in Stansted. The group consists of members of the Stansted Business Forum, the Stansted Mountfitchet Parish Council and Uttlesford District Council. Find out more about the business support sessions, which happen on the second Friday of the month, by emailing: business@uttlesford.gov.uk

For the bugs & the bees

Another Parish Council project gathering pace in 2024 is our commitment to deliver a more bio-diverse habitat for the village.

Many of nature’s pollinators are under threat both locally and nationally. Climate change and industrial farming practices being two culprits. The Parish Council wants to change this. A long-term plan is soon to get underway to create patches around Stansted where the likes of beetles, butterflies and bumblebees can thrive.

The project hinges on the successful use of wildflower planting and rewilding at eight locations around the village between 2024 and 2028:

Pennington Lane	2024-2025
High Lane knight sign	2024-2026
Walson Way Green	2026
Foresthall Park Suds	2025-2026
Memorial Gardens	2026-2027
Recreation Ground	2027-2028
Forest Hall Road	2027
Elms Farm Park	Dependent on land handover

At Walson Way Green and Foresthall Park, rewilding will take the form of self-seeding. So certain plants such as thistles and nettles don’t crowd out other varieties, these will be weeded out. A curated look will be maintained by regular grass cuts by the council contractor. Elsewhere, a native mix of annuals and perennials will be sown. Certain spots – the Memorial Gardens, the Rec – will also see the likes of poppies, English bluebells and snowdrops sited.

Rewilding and wildflower sowing are horticultural practices that take time to bear fruit – excuse the pun. In fact, even though quotes are in from contractors to prepare the land, and work at Pennington Lane could start this September, it could be two years before a new habitat is established.

In the meantime, we would ask for residents’ patience while nature takes its course to grow a brighter, greener future for Stansted.

Almshouses site search

In January the Parish Council met with representatives from Bloor Homes. Among topics raised was the potential for siting almshouses on land to the east of High Lane, or north of Walpole Meadows, the latter being a site where the developer plans to construct up to 350 homes.

“The talks were positive,” says Maureen Caton, Parish

Council chair. “Bloor have said they’d consider allocating a spot for almshouses as one of the project’s community gains. But they made it clear they can’t make a definite commitment at this stage. And we have a few concerns ourselves. The Walpole Meadows site may not be sustainable due to its



Parish Chair Maureen Caton in 2021 with Diana Hoy of Leap outside the former almshouses on Church Road

distance from village shops and services.”

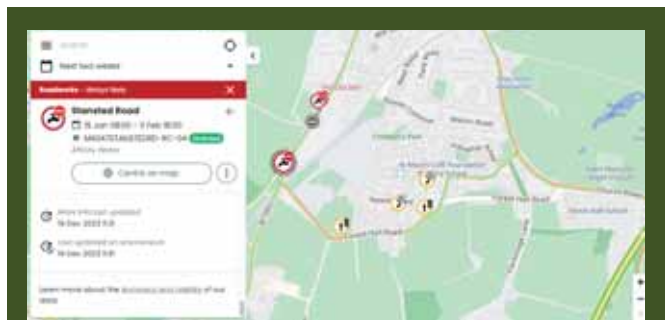
The Legacy East Almshouse Partnership (LEAP) holds the sum of £800,000 for the construction of almshouses in Stansted. These proceeds from the sale in 2013 of the village’s previous almshouses on Church Road are in danger of being spent elsewhere if a new site cannot be found.

As we go to print, we have heard that LEAP are in discussions regarding a potential property in the village.

Stansted has had almshouses since 1882, and sadly they are a community resource needed now as much as they ever were. An increasing number of older people now reach retirement without having been able to buy their own property during their working lifetime.

That is why the Parish Council is keen to hear from anyone in the community who may be able to offer a site for 4-6 almshouses. The sites mentioned in relation to Bloor and Leap are only possibilities at this stage. So if you know of, or could even offer, a suitable alternative spot of land, please email maureencaton@stanstedmountfitchet-pc.gov.uk

Roadworks & the Parish Council



There is no statutory duty to consult with Parish Councils on road works. A listing on the Live Traffic map on the Essex Highways web page is typically the first warning the Parish Council gets of a closure being requested and granted. Roads not named on the map have not had permission for closure. A closure cannot continue beyond the specified date, though a workteam may complete before this time. Also, work may start by a day or so prior to the date on a permit.

Stansted has been under a siege of road closures of late. Silver Street, High Lane, Church Road, Chapel Hill have all been shut for periods during the last 12 months. Currently, there’s a four-week blockade of the B1383 by Affinity Water. Understandably the inconvenience caused by each closure prompts many a resident to ask, can’t the Parish Council do something?

Unfortunately, not a lot. Permits to close roads are signed off by Essex County Council. They maintain they have little grounds to refuse a request by a company to shut a road. As the lowest tier of local government, the Parish Council has no statutory power to challenge closures. We do try to inform the community on our website and social media channels on an impending closure as soon as we can. And where it is not possible to give advance warning, we endeavour to provide the most accurate information on the timing of a closure and any diversion route.

But we are reliant on accurate information being provided to us. A case in point here is Affinity Water’s B1383 roadworks. Both residents and the Parish Council received conflicting messages on the timing, location and scale of the closure. We can only cross our fingers there will be less road digging in 2024.

Councillors' attendance record

At the end of last year, our Parish Councillors decided in the interest of openness, their record of attendance at meetings should be published twice yearly.

The attendance record below shows their presence at meetings between April and December of 2023:

<i>Alan Barnes</i>	87%
George Braeckman	38%
<i>Maureen Caton (Chair)</i>	83%
Sanjukta Ghosh	56%
<i>Anne Guney</i>	80%
James Hogg	33%
<i>Peter Jones</i>	82%
Jo Kavanagh	94%
<i>Ayub Khan (Vice Chair)</i>	74%
Allan Love	93%
<i>John O'Brien</i>	89%
Lois Prior	59%
<i>Geoffrey Sell</i>	82%
Tom van de Bilt	70%

The percentages explained

Under the Local Government Act 1972, council members must attend at least one meeting in six months of the Full Council or a committee of which they are a member if they

are to continue to serve in their role – a bar which all 14 of our Parish Councillors comfortably have met.

It should also be noted that a councillor must be physically present at a meeting for their attendance to be recorded. This means the figures exclude occasions when our councillors may have made use of Zoom software to follow a meeting. As such, the figures may not in all circumstances reflect an individual's efforts to contribute to the life of the Parish Council.

Similarly, some members serve on working groups that meet during the daytime or evenings to research particular issues. Again, the figures below do not reflect such commitments. Neither do they capture the attendance/work undertaken by, for example, the Chair, during their frequent trips to the office during the working week on council business and attendance at meetings with other partners such as the District Council.

Finally, parish councillors receive no allowances nor payment for carrying out their duties, unlike councillors at the district and county level. Their work representing the community is entirely voluntary.

For more information

If you would like to raise any questions about a member's record of attendance, you can contact the individual using their details on page 23

DISTRICT COUNCIL UPDATE



Liberal
Democrats

Alan Dean

District Councillor for Stansted North
tel/813579 email: cldrdean@uttlesford.gov.uk

The last time I wrote here about life at Uttlesford DC was in September 2023. Since then, residents were asked in the weeks running up to Christmas for their views for the decades-awaited Local Plan. I have no knowledge of what comments residents submitted. What I found disappointing was that residents were asked to comment on an outline list of schemes that did not include any mention of well over 1,000 homes given planning permission near Great Dunmow at the end of October.

Gove controversy

Meanwhile, a related controversy broke out in the first week of January when the District Council's primary opposition group convened an Extraordinary Council meeting for mid-January to address a letter from Rt Hon Michael Gove, the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities, etc, in which he raises questions about UDC's ability/intention to deliver a new Local Plan by a government imposed deadline. All I will say in response is that 2024 seems to be shaping up to be worse than 2023 for political madness!

Motion adopted to clean up waterways

Getting down to the basics of life, District Cllr Geoffrey Sell and I put forward a motion at December's Full Council Meeting on the topic of sewage. The motion addressed the dumping of raw sewage into "our precious

rivers and chalk streams" and that the Environment Agency has showed "totally unacceptable performance on pollution for most of England's water and sewage companies".

The motion "called on the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for the Environment to strengthen the legislation on the discharging of raw sewage into our rivers" and to bring in "prompt prosecution and fining of all offending companies".

Geoffrey and I were delighted when the motion, which also requested the government to bring forward the date by which companies are required to reduce their discharges by 50% by some 20 years, was approved unanimously.

The motion authorised the Chief Executive and the Leader of the Council to write to the Secretary of State for the Environment and to our local Member of Parliament to take forward the Council's requests.

The inspiration for the motion came out of a visit in early December to Stansted Sewerage Works with Cllr Sell, together with an aspirant MP called Smita Rajesh. The purpose of the visit had been fact finding about the ability of the works to cope with a growing population in Stansted. We came away feeling that the works' operator may need to speed up plans to upgrade the place. This prompted us to submit the Council motion.

Car park consultation

Finally, be aware that UDC will imminently be reviewing public car parks – how they are used and what they cost. Please take part when invited by UDC. The Consultation ends on February 2. You can leave your thoughts at uttlesford.gov.uk/car-parking-consultation

STANSTED MOUNTFITCHET PARISH COUNCIL

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Committee & Projects Officer Laila Azure-Marxen
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tomvandebilt@stanstedmountfitchet-pc.gov.uk

PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS

Meetings begin at 7.30pm at the Mountfitchet Exchange at on the days shown. If you wish to attend virtually, look for Zoom details in the agenda documents on our website:

Feb 7 Full Council

Feb 14 Highways Sub-committee

Feb 21 Finance & General Purposes Committee

Feb 28 Full Council

UTTLESFORD DISTRICT COUNCILLORS

Alan DEAN
☎ 813579 email: cllrdean@uttlesford.gov.uk
Geoffrey SELL
☎ 815925 email: cllrSELL@uttlesford.gov.uk
Ray GOODING
☎ 813103 email: cllrgooding@uttlesford.gov.uk

Nick CHURCH
email: cllrchurch@uttlesford.gov.uk

ESSEX COUNTY COUNCILLOR

Ray GOODING
☎ 813103 email: cllr.ray.gooding@essex.gov.uk

MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT

Kemi BADENOCH MP
House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA
☎ 0207 219 1943 email: kemi.badenoch.mp@parliament.uk

POLICE

PCSO 81764 Alex STEWART
email: alexander.stewart@essex.police.uk
Non-urgent incidents call: 101
Serious incidents call: 999 www.essex.police.uk/ro/report
Meet-up Events: Stansted Co-op Feb 2

LIBRARY

The library at Mountfitchet Exchange opens:

Tuesday 9am-1pm **Wednesday** 2pm-5.30pm
Thursday 2pm-7pm **Saturday** 9am-5pm

ADVICE SESSIONS

Uttlesford Citizen's Advice run a FREE drop-in service every Thursday from 9.30am-2pm, except when Peabody operate advice sessions (see below). You can also ask to speak to an advisor during Parish Council reception hours via computer hook-up. Ask at our reception for details.

Peabody Trust run a drop-in service on **Thursday, Feb 8** from 11am-3pm. Advisors can help with benefits problems, housing issues, access to job training and offer support to overcome addiction.

TOUCHPOINT, STANSTED

The community wellbeing project runs a variety of clubs, groups and activities from 72 Chapel Hill where you can socialise, get help, access training, and fill up your larder for free! **Foodshares** Stansted Social Club Wed 2.30-3.30pm, Thursdays Crafton Green 10am-noon, Saturdays 1-2pm; **Community Cafe** Thursdays 11am-5pm, Fridays 10am-12pm; **Free hot meals** on Tuesdays 4-6pm for pre-school and school age children; **Breakfast Club** every Friday 8.30am-10.30am. Contact info@thetouchpoint.org ☎ 07572 114882

GARDEN WASTE SERVICE

We await news of when the district council's garden waste recycling services start again after its winter hiatus.

Village Defibrillators

Defibrillators in yellow on the map are accessible 24/7. Call Emergency Services for an access code. Defibrillators in orange are only available during the working hours of the establishment they are sited at.



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IN THE GARDEN

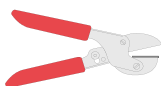
In her book of *Flower Fairies*, Cicely Mary Barker illustrates Spring with, among others, The Celandine Fairy who sings: *Before the hawthorn leaves unfold, Or buttercups put forth their gold, By every sunny footpath shine The Stars of Lesser Celandine*. In February these beacons of spring will once again be giving us a foretaste of the abundance that nature has in store as the year awakens.



In our gardens, the snowdrops will be giving way to crocuses and early daffodils, hellebores, hardy cyclamen and dwarf iris. Now is the time to plant more snowdrops and winter aconites as this should be done 'in the green' before the leaves die back. Overcrowded clumps of existing plants can be lifted and divided at this time too.

February is the time to prune late-flowering shrubs such as buddleia, hardy fuchsias, lavatera and santolina, and to cut back late-flowering group 3 clematis. This includes the viticella, texensis and orientalis varieties where all growth should be cut to 25-45cm from the ground, taking each stem back to just above a healthy bud. As with all plants a good feed and mulch after pruning protects the roots and encourages fresh healthy growth. Pot-grown shrubs benefit from a good organic feed right now. Remove as much soil as possible from around the base of the shrub then replace and top dress with plenty of fresh compost, ideally incorporating a slow-release fertiliser. Although bare-root shrubs and trees can be planted any time during the dormant period between November and March, the optimum moment for planting occurs during February just before the soil begins to warm up, provided the soil is neither frozen nor waterlogged. Daylight hours become appreciably longer throughout February, beckoning us to get out and enjoy our gardens once more.

u3a Garden Group
Email: stanstedu3a@gmail.com



STANSTED EVENING WI



In October we heard from Touchpoint, Let's Talk Stansted and Sustainable Stansted. It was very interesting to learn more about these local enterprises in depth. Our Christmas Party was a great success with a royal tribute to 'King' Elvis by Clifford Fox, ably assisted by his tech man Sam. A good sing along was enjoyed by all.

Our meeting on **Thursday 8th February** at 7.30pm will be in St John's Church Hall; please note **change of venue** for this month due to renovations at the Day Centre. Our speakers are Helen Kirkman and Claire Buttress talking about *Legal Issues Unique to Women*. We welcome visitors and new members. Please come and join us.

Linda Gurr
Tel: 07743 549241

SUSTAINABLE RESOLUTIONS FOR 2024

We at Sustainable Stansted have come up with some nifty thoughts for you during 2024 to help you become more ecologically aware. All the ideas help save the planet, but also save you money. We are sure you have more ideas and we want to encourage you to post any great thoughts you may have onto our Facebook page.

- Recycle
- Buy products that have more sustainable packaging
- Pick up litter - join a local group or with friends
- Walk or cycle rather than use a car
- Turn off the tap when you brush your teeth
- Turn your heating down - put on a jumper instead
- Turn off lights when you are not in the room
- Use energy saving light bulbs
- Eat everything on your plate – avoid wasting food
- Shop locally
- Eat a more plant-based diet - avoid red meat
- Unsubscribe to spam mail
- Turn your car engine off when the vehicle is idle
- Stop shopping from fast fashion stores
- Shop in second hand shops, repurpose old clothes, repair; be friends with your local tailor
- Only wash clothes when they really need it
- Take showers rather than baths
- Use water saving shower heads
- Take fewer flights abroad - explore the UK more
- When out use reusable water bottles or mugs
- Use tote bags rather than plastic bags
- When buying foods look for certification that they have been ethically sourced
- For presents, buy experiences rather than more material goods.

Have fun with being sustainable, make the difference you want to see. Every effort, no matter how small, has a **huge** impact. Thank you for trying to help.

Claire Taylor

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www.mountfitchetgardenclub.co.uk

The Club's first meeting of the year will be on **Wednesday 7th February** at 8.00pm when our speaker, Lynn Moore, will be talking about *52 weeks in the Shade Garden – a different shade plant for each week of the year*. **Please note:** due to refurbishment and building works at the Day Centre, this meeting will be held at the Stansted Free Church Hall (CM24 8AG). The hall is situated behind the church on Chapel Hill. Parking is available at the Lower Street Car Park and at the Crafton Green Car Park – so please allow a little extra time to walk to the hall. Doors open at 7.40pm and tea and coffee will be available prior to the talk.

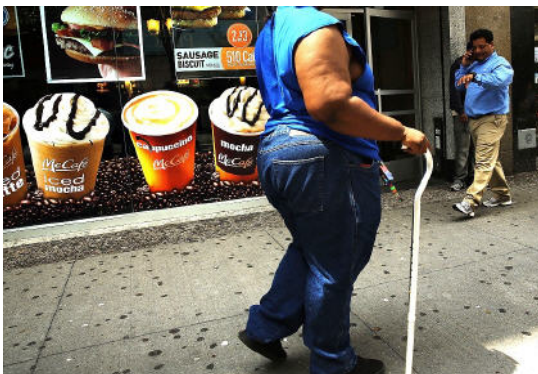
Another date for your diary: On **Wednesday 6th March** the speaker will be Brian Carline, talking about *The Science of Plants*. This meeting will also be held at the Stansted Free Church Hall. The committee are really looking forward to welcoming everyone back to our monthly meetings. Visitors are also very welcome.

Maralyn Harris
Tel: 07919 478144

BRAIN TRAINING

Weight Loss

It is that time of year again; either buy larger trousers or try the latest fad diet to regain our svelte tummies. Diets come and go, and for many years we were encouraged to follow the low-fat diet. People made every effort to buy low fat foods, but clearly, this dietary advice did not work. As a nation, we grew steadily fatter. The best diet completely depends on you, not the latest fashion. There are three main keys to losing weight: have a compelling reason, know thyself and learn the true meaning of the word *diet*.



A compelling reason is far more than the desire to be slim. Often the reason will be medical – lose weight or you will not live to see your grandchildren. The reason is completely personal to you. No one can give it to you. **Know thyself:** people are very different from each other. Some really suit the discipline and guidance of a Slimming Club. For others it is a matter of accepting something more idiosyncratic. There are many well-understood diets you can try out before committing: low carb, intermittent fasting, mediterranean and even just eating less. **The true meaning of diet:** your

diet needs to be a long term, sustainable, healthy way of eating. Your day-to-day diet has to change forever. To think of a diet as a short-term spell is to fail. Permanent weight loss is tough and anybody who denies this is lying or is naturally slim. Try keeping notes; what you write is valuable information! In time, patterns will emerge, and you will be able to get a better idea of what really suits you and what does not work for you.

Clare Harding
Z-Health Master Practitioner
Mobile: 07802 872919



www.eastonlodge.co.uk

I am writing this as volunteers work to clear fallen trees and boughs brought down by the torrential rains and winds at the beginning of January. Hopefully February will be seasonal with some cold weather, of course, but also with some of those lovely bright winter days when it is a joy to be outside, seeing the early flowers emerge. For us that means snowdrops, and with luck some aconites too. The snowdrops have spread hugely throughout the gardens, partly because we have planted extra. We have also been careful to leave grass cutting till after the bulbs have replenished themselves and divided, producing extra bulbs and after they have formed seeds. These are apparently planted unwittingly by ants carrying them into their nests!



We do not have as many aconites as we would like. Their bright yellow flowers make for such a cheery sight, often coming a bit before the snowdrops. They are native to Italy, Bulgaria, the Balkans, Turkey and Iraq. I have read they were introduced to Britain in 1596 and were first recorded as being naturalised in the wild in 1838. We have some longstanding clumps but we have found it difficult to establish more. We keep trying though!

Our open days for snowdrops are on **Sunday 18th, Thursday 22nd, Sunday 25th and Thursday 29th February**; we have our fingers crossed that the snowdrops will be at their most beautiful then. Gates open at 11.00am; tickets can be purchased in advance through our website or through www.Trybooking.com or can be purchased on the day. Snowdrops in the green will be on sale. Please note that the gardens of Warwick House are not open to visitors on the Thursdays. For more information please go to our website, email: enquiries@eastonlodge.co.uk or leave a message on 01371 870979.

Jill Goldsmith

STANSTED MOUNTFITCHET u3a

www.u3asites.org.uk/stansted



STANSTED MOUNTFITCHET

LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

www.stanstedhistorysociety.org.uk

Our last meeting was extremely well attended, despite appalling weather. Ray Clark gave a talk: *Stay tuned - I could say something brilliant at any moment*, a familiar catch phrase to many. Ray's subject was the rebellious and exciting broadcasting of Pirate Radio and Radio Caroline in particular, where he worked for many years. Enthusiasm for the music drove him and the other presenters to tolerate cramped conditions out on the choppy sea, as his fascinating slides demonstrated. Please do check the details of the 2024 monthly talks on our website. There really is something to interest everyone.

The u3a Singers were welcomed back to the Hadham Country Club once again for their Christmas performance which was enthusiastically received by the audience; they have been booked for Christmas 2024 already!



u3a Choir

The poetry group recently enjoyed sessions on Maya Angelou and John Keats; in December the theme was *Celebrations from Different Cultures*. This year promises more intriguing poetry and discussion, including sessions prepared by members on Elizabeth Barrett-Browning and Sylvia Plath. The group meets on the first Thursday of each month in the afternoon and welcomes anyone with an interest in poetry and life; if that sounds a little po-faced, know that Pam Ayres has been a regular choice! For their Christmas



celebration, The Bus Pass group stayed relatively close to home by journeying to Saffron Walden. This intrepid group have further intriguing destinations in store for

2024 so think about making extra good use of your bus pass in friendly company. For more details of all our events, and how to become a member, please go to our website.

Julia Cook

Email: stanstedu3a@gmail.com

The talks for our first meeting of 2024 were given by three of our members. Our chairman, Dave Perry, thanked members for supporting the Christmas raffle which raised funds toward the new speaker system. Janice McDonald confirmed that the summer trip this year will be to Sutton Hoo on 11th June. Please let Janice know if you would like to join us.

The first of our talks was given by Tony Wellings who is a collector of hand tools, saws and craftsmen's implements. Tony brought many of these objects for us to inspect and was keen to show us their use, and to demonstrate the beautiful way many of the wooden handles had been so painstakingly constructed. Talk number two was given by Leila Riddell, who gave a presentation with slides entitled *Lighthouses on the Isles of Shetland*. Leila gave some details of the formidable task in both the construction and the hardship of actually living in them. The islands are beautiful but very windy. Our final talk was given by Peter Webb on *The Bishop's Stortford High School*. Peter started as a teacher there in 1966 and has for many years been collecting data and articles about the school. It opened in 1947 and the original location was in the town centre. It moved to larger new premises in London Road in 1957. The academic achievements of the school are outstanding and rival Bishop's Stortford College and Joyce Frankland Academy, Newport. The school's reputation has made it so popular that intake is now limited and few out-of-catchment pupils can be admitted. The school will be moving in the not-too-distant future to its new larger home with extensive facilities on site. The next meeting will be on **Thursday 1st February** at 7.30pm.

Edward Taub
Tel: 816932

Email: taub8jr@btinternet.com

HELPLINE

NEW YEAR, NEW YOU

Would you like to embrace new challenges this year? Volunteering for a local organisation is very rewarding and an excellent way to contribute to the community and perhaps make new friends. Stansted Helpline has been assisting village residents since 1984 and needs more volunteers, especially daytime drivers, in order to continue this much valued service. No regular commitment is required - when and how often is at the volunteer's convenience, usually no more than once every two or three weeks. Contributions towards fuel cost are made by the client. All drivers require a DBS check. Could you help **please?** For more details call 07704 553727 Monday to Friday 9.00am-4.00pm

Stansted Helpline Committee



STANSTED FOOTBALL CLUB
www.spartansouthmidlandsleague.co.uk

The awful wet weather has had a really bad effect on the scheduling of fixtures in all non-league football. Two home fixtures were postponed before Christmas, so we can expect to see a number of midweek fixtures being added to our schedule. The effect of not playing weekly means that the league table can look a bit distorted and although we are currently languishing just above the relegation line, we do have a number of games in hand.

Both our 1st and Youth Teams have secured new sponsorship deals which have enabled the club to purchase a new second kit and tracksuits for the 1st team. In addition, our under 15s and under 14s youth teams are now playing in new first kits, tracksuits and boot bags. In these austere times it is great that local businesses are still committed to grassroots sport. The picture below is of our under 15s proudly wearing their new kit.



Fixtures at Hargrave Park in February:

3rd v Dunstable Town, Spartan Premier Division, Kick Off 3.00pm
10th, 17th, 24th These dates will see our Over 45s play but no confirmed fixtures as of yet.



Tom Williams
Tel: 07921 403842



STANSTED BOWLS CLUB

As we head into 2024 the bowls green is still resting after having four tonnes of top grade soil put on it in September. The team will start the pre-season process of seeding, aerating and cutting to bring the green up to tip top condition for the start of the season at the end of April. Many of our players are entering competitions in both the North-West Essex and County bowls. This will give them plenty of experience and maybe some silverware to show off. The Club will ultimately benefit from this and help encourage others to follow their example.

If you fancy being part of a friendly club which offers a subsidised bar, lots of banter and other activities for you to get involved in, then please email me and I will help answer your questions and get you started.

Peter Beattie
Hon Secretary
Email: peterdavidbeattie@gmail.com



Stansted Tennis Club
Founded 1889

www.stanstedtennisclub.co.uk

During the winter months the Club has been undertaking maintenance work on and off the courts. New fencing has been erected with a security gate into the football club car park. This was jointly funded by the Parish Council, the Sports Association and the Club. The car park has new, much needed, floodlights which were paid for by the Sports Association. Major work on trees surrounding the courts was completed and we thank the Parish Council for funding this. In addition, new banners and new floodlight control boxes have been purchased by the Club. We are now ready for another great year of tennis with open club sessions, league matches, various competitions and social events. We are working with coaching friends of our sadly missed Ollie Toms to bring back junior training this month. We will also be hosting a children's event in memory of Ollie in February. Please contact us for details nearer the time.

Essex Small Club League winter matches are currently being played with Stansted entering five teams (three ladies' teams, one men's team and one mixed doubles team). We continue to have open club sessions on Wednesday, Friday and Sunday mornings and Wednesday evenings. The AGM will be held on 22nd February. If you would like to find out about how to join the Club, please check out our website, or via the email below.

Debbie Lane
Email: contact@stanstedtennisclub.co.uk



**STANSTED HALL & ELSENHAM
CRICKET CLUB**

After a very successful season in 2023 the Club now looks forward to a special year: 50 years at our Stansted House ground. The Club was founded in 1947 as Burton End Cricket Club, playing in the grounds of Stansted Hall. However, the Club was forced to move ground in September 1973 due to the building of the M11. A pitch was offered to the Club by the then owner of Stansted House, Brian Thornton. The first match was played at the ground in 1974 against a Robin Hobbs XI which included a young Graham Gooch. The Club is fortunate that a cricket enthusiast, Patrick Hearne and his family moved into Stansted House in the 1980s. Plans for celebrations are in hand and being finalised.

In the meantime, the Club will be entering a 3rd XI in the Herts and Essex Border League with matches being played at Molehill Green. We are also entering the Essex Matchplay U16 competition. Therefore we are looking for new players of all ages, especially U16 players who want to improve their cricket whilst playing against the best players in the county. Indoor nets begin in February so if you are interested in joining, please contact me.



David Brown
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Uttlesford Support Group	Simon Russell2@tiscali.co.uk		
Rainbow Pre-School	Gill Pursglove Tel: 814242/07966 506997 Email: admin@rainbowpreschool.net		
Rainbows (Fri)	Sue Pollard Tel: 813734		

Note: This list will be updated as and when we learn of any changes. If you would like your organisation to be added please let us know. Contact details are on page 1.

BIRTHDAYS, ANNIVERSARIES or SPECIAL OCCASIONS

If you would like to mark any occasion that is special to you or someone you know, by announcing it in the Link, please email a short message together with your name address and telephone number to: announcements@stanstedlink.org.uk or send the details to 7 Blythwood Gardens, Stansted CM24 8HG. Details must be submitted by the 8th of the month for publication the following month.

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	Paris Legore (Flowers & Gifts)		IFC		Orion Heating	24
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	Illuminating Gardens	30			Rainbow Pre-School	12
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	The Secret Gardener	30		Tree Surgeon	Maskalls Tree Surgery	OBC
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