



# Elmham News

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**FEBRUARY 2026**

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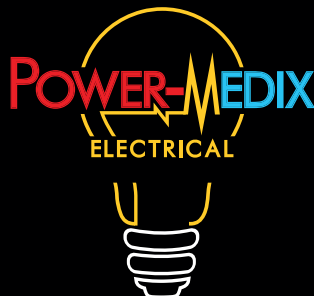
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## EDITORIAL

Here we are after a fairly unexciting January, with only the village production of 'Beauty and The Beast' to live up the days. All the seats were sold out and a great time was had both by the audience and by the cast! A huge thank you to them and the team of volunteers for their mammoth efforts but especially to Theresa, the moving force behind the production. To celebrate we hope to have lots of photos of the pantomime in the next edition.

The weather played silly billys, with rain, cold, frost and snow but, as is so often the case, we were not so hard hit as many other parts of the country, thank goodness.

Warm congratulations go to Eileen Bent, Chairman of the Royal British Legion Branch who celebrated her 90th birthday at the end of January. Well done, her continued involvement in community life serves as an inspiration to us all, proving that staying active is key.

We send our sincere condolences to the family and friends of Ian Nickerson who sadly passed away at the beginning of January. Ian was a kind, gentle man who always gave his time freely to the church flower festivals and shared his passion for flower arranging through demonstrations. His presence and generosity will be greatly missed.

Our cover photo, kindly sent in by Sue Andrews, captures the beautiful sunset many will have enjoyed on New Year's Day.

Our thanks for donations go to Sally and Neville Websdale, Anon Station Road, Anon Oak Avenue.



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## NEXT DEADLINE: 14TH FEBRUARY

We welcome contributions from everyone in the village. Please share your stories, events, club activities and heartfelt tributes to loved ones with us. Your participation is crucial in making the Elmham News a true reflection of our village. Please email your article to each of the Editors.

## VOLUME 49: ISSUE 1

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## COUNTY SCHOOL SEVENTY YEARS AGO

If you are going to Fakenham, you will pass the site of a large school for boys on a hill overlooking the Wensum. These boys were destitute, many were orphans, with no family at all. There were over 300 lads from small babies to teenagers, some of them had mothers who couldn't cope, some whose families had fallen on hard times and children who had been put into various homes for waifs and strays.

### Watts Naval School

Originally the building had been built as a school for gentlemen's farmers sons, but it was not viable and closed in the 1890's. In 1901 the school was generously donated to Barnados as a home for destitute boys; it would be able to accommodate 350 boys from about 10-16 years old. The benefactor was Mr Edmund Hannay Watts, Head of the British Steamship Company, and it was hoped that these youngsters would benefit from a strict regime of discipline and nautical training. He agreed to fund the purchase of the site and its alterations. And the school was subsequently named after him.

The building itself was very impressive. Its rooms and corridors were named after naval places and battles. It looked like a ship inside and was run like a ship with a harsh regime, though over the years, old boys who have come back to say it was fair and they remember their time there with great affection.

There were younger children too, but they lived in the cottages with a foster mother. I can remember when I was in the first class at Elmham Primary School, a young boy joined our class just for a while. I have never forgotten his name, it was Geoffrey Rainbird which sounded so appealing.

Many of the boys joined the Royal Navy or Merchant Navy when they were about 14



years old. Life was tough for them! Don't get the impression that the lads had to join up; many of them stayed around here and I think some returned home when they were old enough to be employed to help with the family's finances.

The School was self-contained with its own chapel, infirmary, playing field, swimming pool (with river water) its own band and classrooms for lessons. Life was hard for them, no frivolities.

As a young child I loved to see the boys marching into the village and I have always been in love with those blue uniforms. The photo shows two of the boys in their uniforms.

I wanted to join the Navy when I left school but my mother vetoed that idea. It was those uniforms which impressed me!

*Janet Woodhouse*





## COUNTRYSIDERS

First, may I wish everyone a very Happy New Year! With Christmas now a distant memory, we are looking ahead to an exciting year for North Elmham Countrysiders. Since our last issue, here's a catch-up on what December and January have held for us.

### December Highlights

December saw us taking part in three Christmas Tree Festivals at Fakenham, Brisley, and West Raynham Veteran Centre. A fantastic total of £200 was raised, which was shared between ourselves and the Veteran Centre.

We also enjoyed a wreath-making session with Blackwater Highlands and took part in our Winter Competitions, where we did extremely well, gaining many placements across the competitions.

Our final meeting of the year was our much-loved Club Christmas Party, complete with food, games, and of course our ever-popular Secret Present game – a great way to round off the year.

### January Fun

January began with a joint meeting at Garveston Village Hall alongside Dereham Countrysiders. Unfortunately, the planned talk on Soil Regeneration had to be postponed due to illness, but that didn't stop us having fun!

The evening quickly turned into organised chaos with balloon games, a lively game of "Stuck in the Mud", and we finished off with our famous "pull yourself along the rope" game. Our Countrysiders were more than happy to show Dereham how it's done! Even parents joining us for pick-up time enjoyed watching – and a couple were even convinced to have a go themselves. A brilliant end to a great night.

### Upcoming Dates

9th February Event TBC

23rd February Pancake Fun, North Elmham Memorial Hall, 7:00pm start

9th March Easter Fun

23rd March Mini Golf, Mattishall Golf Club, South Green, Mattishall, Dereham, Norfolk, NR20 3JZ 6:00pm start

More information to follow

Our group is open to all aged 10–16. You don't have to be a farmer to be a Countrysider or a Young Farmer! Normal £4 subs only

For more information, please find us on Facebook or email us at:

north\_elmham\_cs@norfolkycf.co.uk

We look forward to seeing you at our upcoming events!

*Wendy Cotterill*

## WIVES PLUS ALL

The first meeting of Wives Plus All in 2026 will be the AGM. Please will Club Members note the commencement time of the meeting as 7pm.

## WIVES CLUB AGM

**THURSDAY 12th FEBRUARY 2026**

**THE MEMORIAL HALL  
NORTH ELMHAM**

**7.00 pm**

The AGM will be followed at 7.45 pm by a Power Point presentation entitled "Wi Likkle but Wi Tallawah" by Paulette and Harold Morgan

**There will be a raffle and refreshments**

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## TRACKS CHARITY CALENDARS

We would like to thank all the male volunteers who took part in the Calendars and also Judy for taking the excellent photos. It has enabled us to sell 600 copies and raise an amazing £6,542.93 which has been divided between The Big C Hub at the N&N Hospital and the King's Lynn Big C Hub. This will enable them to help many individuals and families.

We thank everyone of you who bought calendars or gave donations on Tracks Ploughing Day. This year's total raised for the Big C in 2025 is £13,087.36. Our sincere thanks to you all.

*Sally and Neville Websdale*

## BRECKLAND UPDATE

Here is a brief update to explain what happens next with Breckland District Council's Local Plan following its latest round of public consultation, with the Parish Council's comments being available to read in full on the North Elmham Community website at [www.elmham.org.uk](http://www.elmham.org.uk).

In brief, these supported the allocation of site NEL2 for 50 houses off the top of Back Lane bounded by Holt Road and Eastgate Street, and the substitution of the only submitted brownfield site at Station Yard to replace site NEL1 for 30 houses off Eastgate Street to the east of Orchard Close, which is currently preferred by Breckland.

The overall number of about 80 new houses to be built during the 5-year life of the plan is something which has been decided by central government, in terms of the total number of dwellings to be built across Breckland. Breckland has then decided, subject to the Plan being approved, that North Elmham should have about 80 new houses. The Parish Council felt these two sites were the best of those



available from the 'call for sites' to provide the total required number of new houses.

There will be one more round of consultation known as the Regulation 19 consultation, unless Breckland DC decides to have an additional round. At that point, probably later this year, comments can only be made as to the legal compliance and 'soundness' of the proposed Plan, before it goes to an Inspector for examination.

*Michael Rayner – Councillor and Planning Lead, North Elmham Parish Council*

## ROYAL BRITISH LEGION

Our President Eileen will celebrate her 90th birthday on 1st February; we sincerely thank her for her loyal service to RBL.

The next meeting is on 3rd February at 8pm at the Kings Head. If you'd like to join, just come along—everyone is welcome.

*Mike Aston, Branch Sec*

## CLUBS & ORGANISATIONS



### GROUP

Archive Group  
 Art 4 All Norfolk  
 Bowls - Institute  
 Bowls - King's Head  
 Brisley & North Elmham Cricket Club  
 Countrysiders  
 Elmham Football Club  
 Elmham News  
 Elmham Surgery Patient Participation  
 Elmham Tennis Club  
 Friends of North Elmham School  
 Gardening Club  
 Guides  
 Knit and Natter  
 NELS (North Elmham Living Sustainably)  
 North Elmham Netball Trailblazers  
 Reading Group  
 Royal British Legion  
 Sewing for Pleasure  
 SINE (Help)  
 Snooker Mon & Fri  
 Snooker Wed  
 Tea@Two  
 The May Singers  
 Walking Football  
 Walking Group  
 Wensum Valley Birdwatching Society  
 Wensum Valley Miniature Railway  
 Wives + All  
 Yoga  
 Young Farmers

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 Gordon Ford, 01263 512350  
 Gill King, 01362 668530  
 Karen Cornall, 07752 580414  
 Ella Jeary, ejeary23@gmail.com

## KNIT AND NATTER

There was no group meeting in January but I can report that during the break, knitting may have slowed down but not stopped. February brings St Valentine's Day and little red knitted hearts, filled with sweeties, which will be ready to place on the pillows of guests in care homes. It cheers us up as well as the recipients.

Hopefully we will be able to get the Pavilion fully warmed up during the next meeting which will be held on Tuesday February 3rd 2-00 til 4-00 pm.

Happy New Year to all our followers.

*Eileen Cotterill 01362 668380*

## FAKENHAM CHORAL SOCIETY

### Spring Concert

At its Spring 2026 concert Fakenham Choral Society will be performing Louis Vierne's Messe Solennelle and Matthew Coleridge's Requiem.

Vierne's Messe solennelle, composed in 1899, was scored for choir and two organs. It was published in 1900, before it was first performed at Saint-Sulpice in Paris in December 1901. It was later adapted for a single organ, as most churches could not provide two such instruments.

Matthew Coleridge is a UK-based choral composer whose music is regularly performed by amateur and professional choirs around the world. His Requiem has become one of the UK's most popular new choral works and is a regular fixture in the upper reaches of Classic FM's annual Hall of Fame.

Rosemary Dear, Chair of Fakenham Choral Society, says: 'We really like the idea of complementing a new work with something older and more traditional and chose these particular pieces of music as both require an organ accompaniment

rather than our usual use of an orchestra. We are hiring an organ for the concert and the organist will be a previous FCS accompanist, James Mooney Dutton.

'The Coleridge has become very popular on Classic FM so, although it is a relatively new work, many people will have heard some snatches of it already. The Vierne is a big and bold work that will fill the church with the sound of both voices and organ.'

The concert will take place at Fakenham Parish Church on Saturday 21 March at 7.00pm. Tickets are £18 tickets with an early bird price of £15 before 7th March, see [www.fakenhamchoralsociety.org](http://www.fakenhamchoralsociety.org)

During the interval there will be wine and soft drinks to purchase.

## GARDENING CLUB

Our November meeting was our Christmas Social when we shared food and wine and seeds intermixed with a game of Call my Bluff and a Quiz. A good time was had by all.

Our January Meeting will have been the Annual General Meeting but it is too late to report on here but the programme for 2026 will be distributed to members.

We will be having our Annual Dinner on Friday 27th of February, courtesy of Ben and his staff. Menus cost to follow.

## WALKERS ARE WELCOME

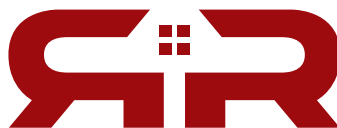
Please come and join us for a walk in the local area. We have two regular walks each month. Our shortest, easiest walk of around two miles is on the second Tuesday of the month and a slightly longer one of around four miles is on the first Friday of the month. Our next longer walk is in May and begins as a bus journey.

For up-to-date information, please check our website [www.derehamwaw.org.uk](http://www.derehamwaw.org.uk) or email Ken Hawkins: [ken-hawkins@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:ken-hawkins@tiscali.co.uk) or call him on 07505 426750.

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## IAN STANLEY NICKERSON

Ian, born 21st October 1957 attended Tunstead Primary School, followed by Broadland Secondary School. He left school dreaming of becoming a painter and decorator. The early mornings of his milk round brought a quiet sense of independence, while the Saturday job at a garden in Wayford Bridge, near Stalham, filled his weekends with the scent of soil and growth. During this period, he and his sister Cathy eagerly anticipated weekends at stockcar races, sharing the laughter and excitement. Later that winter, when invited to help in the owner's flower shop in Stalham, Ian discovered a genuine joy for working with blooms, a passion the took root in his heart. After completing his earlier education, he eagerly pursued his passion for floristry at Isle College in Wisbech. There, he proudly obtained his City and Guilds and a National Diploma from the Society of Floristry. These hard earned qualifications later enabled him to share his enthusiasm by teaching the subject.

After completing his studies, he worked in Pamela's, Bonds Floral department in Norwich, then moved on to Daniel Brothers (now Notcutts). By the age of 22 he became the manager at Allborough & Son Florist in Wymondham.

Soon after taking on a management role, he opened a shop in North Walsham for a short time. In 1984 he launched his own first shop, 'The Flower Box' with a business partner, in Attleborough. During this time, he also taught at Easton College, the nationally accepted City and Guilds standard of proficiency for florists, at Bull Road in Norwich. This is where he met Brenda Ravencroft and became good friends with her and her husband Ronald, who ran their business here in North Elmham.

After 10 years in the Attleborough business, he was asked to take over a Dereham shop from Margaret Brooks who



was retiring in 1994, and renamed it 'Ian's Floral Studio'. After 29 years, he retired on 28th February 2023 as a professional florist.

He kept his hand in presenting demonstrations here in the village and the surrounding areas. Sadly he did not get to enjoy a long retirement as ill health took its toll. He was taken to the Norfolk and Norwich on New Year's Eve and passed away surrounded by family and friends on 3rd January 2026.

He loved his village of North Elmham and its people who welcomed him.



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# NORTH ELMHAM PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

## WEDNESDAY 5TH NOVEMBER

**Councillors Present Were:** Mr. M. Phillips (Acting Chairman), Miss A. Ferris, Mr. T. Fitzalan Howard, Mrs. A. Keeble, Mr. N. Markwell, Mr. M. Rayner and Mr. J. Sowinski.

**Also in Attendance:** Mr. K. Webb (Clerk) and two parishioners

**Apologies for absence:** Mr. B. Gee, Mr. F. Gillespie, Mr. P. Grainger, Mr. C. Smith and Mr. G. Bambridge (District Councillor)

### Public Participation

Dr. Peter Wade-Martins raised the following topics:

*The Ruins:* A paper by Dr. Wade-Martins in an academic journal, Norfolk Archaeology, has just been published which overturns the 1982 interpretation that the ruined church was a bishop's chapel and re-instates the long-held view that it is, in fact, the Anglo-Saxon cathedral. He said that we can feel proud that we do have such an important historic building.

*Community Hall:* He felt that Parish Council minutes give the impression that this project is making little progress. He said that some people are asking what has happened and how soon will this project be opened up to a wider discussion in the village? He was also of the opinion that the Institute is showing signs of becoming an unstable structure.

*Traffic Calming at the School and Post Office Corner:* Dr Wade-Martins said that, in addition to the pinch-point at the doctor's surgery, the intention agreed with the highways engineers was to have a build-out at either end of the 20mph zone. The build-out has been installed at the southern end of the zone, but the equivalent at the north end was put on hold until the new school car park had been finished so that traffic movements could be reviewed. Current speeds for

south-bound traffic coming down church hill suggests that there is every reason now for the second build-out to be installed under a Parish Partnership Scheme.

Mr. Andrew Parsons, Treasurer, attended on behalf of the Tennis Club to discuss the current situation with proposals for additional CCTV cameras on the Playing Field/Pavilion in general and the area close to the Tennis Club, in particular. A full report on the matter is given below.

### Updated Information and Matters Arising

#### Update from North Elmham Living Sustainably (NELS) Group

Mr. Sowinski had spoken with Mr. Ben Earle. Intentions were discussed and any ideas that he may have were requested from him.

#### Land Management Matters

*Village Green:* Picnic tables are ready to be put in place – three on the Village Green and one in the Millennium Wood.

*Cathedral Ruins:* There has been a response to our annual invoice regarding the management fee (£5,355 received). Mrs. Keeble has attempted to contact Alison Naylor, English Heritage, with a view to arranging a meeting. Mr. Sowinski has refurbished the seat that is situated just outside the gate.

*Millennium & Jubilee Wood:* Correspondence had been received from a parishioner expressing concern for animals, including deer, following some tidying work that is being carried out at the pit in Millennium Wood. This primarily involves tidying the area, and the sensitivity of dealing with wildlife and the environment is acknowledged. The Clerk will respond and the position will be monitored over the coming weeks.

*Bridleway on Disused Railway Line and Other Railway Linked Matters:* Various work is in the process of being carried out and Mr. Rayner will write to Mr.

Robinson, the Parish Council's liaison contact, regarding a number of matters. Mr. Rayner will also request a copy of the amended deed, which was executed some three years ago, from Breckland Council.

*Prince William Wood:* A wasp's nest has been disturbed and will be dealt with in the near future.

*Allotments:* All rents have been collected.

### **Street Lights**

There is a requirement for the installation certificates to be renewed and this will be done by T.T. Jones at an approximate cost of £900. The replacement light in Holt Road is considered to be possibly not necessary, but members will inspect to form views.

### **Highway Matters**

The Village Gates have been installed with 50% of the cost to be covered by Norfolk County Council. The damaged bollards near to the bus stop at the end of Eastgate Street have been reported to Highways Department and scheduled for repair in due course. The broken pedestrian surface leading from Elm Close is not the responsibility of the County Council and has to be viewed as a private matter. The parishioner raising the matter will be advised accordingly. It has been confirmed by Highways Department that the build out near to the doctors' surgery has been correctly installed with no provision for priority of traffic in either direction. This is an intentional feature designed to slow traffic from both directions.

### **Pavilion and Playing Field**

The roof and gutter repairs are to start in the near future. Mr. Sowinski has obtained a price for a Christmas tree which will be in the region of £50. It was agreed by all that a charge of £300 will be made to the District Council in respect of the hiring of the pavilion for the much-awaited Mayoral Election to be held on 7th May, 2026. Miss Ferris produced an excellent

booking form for the Pavilion and it was agreed that some items should be added - the need for hirers to have suitable insurance cover, the reason for hiring the facility and the name of the person with responsibility for the booking.

With regard to the CCTV and Wi-Fi at the Pavilion, the revised proposal is to retain existing DVR and 4 cameras, and supplement with two additional cameras. One new camera with enhanced resolution to monitor the car parking area with the aim that number plate recognition will be improved. One other new camera to be fitted with long range lens and located on the Pavilion directed towards the tennis court/boundary wall. Additionally, a Wi-Fi router to be installed in the Pavilion to enable remote access to the CCTV system to monitor live or captured images as required. Access to the Wi-Fi to be strictly controlled by approved password access in accordance with existing CCTV data protection policy. Full cost will be £500 and is much reduced from previous quotes through re-use of existing equipment and installation carried out without charge with the generous help of a local resident. The Wi-Fi facility will require ongoing monthly cost of up to £20 dependent upon volume of data usage. This solution may require future purchase of larger hard drive within the DVR as more data will be captured and therefore the disk will overwrite old data more frequently. However, this can only be confirmed once established, so provision of a further £100 cost may be required.

Once installed and proven, consideration can be given to install the same solution at the Eastgate Centre with the long-range camera directed towards the children's play area.

### **Brookside Development update**

Positive support from Breckland Council regarding EV charging procedures has unfortunately not been forthcoming, despite being chased. The Chairman has requested support from Mr. Bambridge

with a view to establishing why this is the case. It has been noted that Norfolk County Council have highlighted a success story of installing multiple charging points under 3rd party management in an article by Graham Plant in their latest newsletter. There appears to be an opportunity to share knowledge in the event of Breckland Council being unable to support us.

### **Defibrillators**

Miss Ferris reported that site checks have been carried out.

### **Local Plan Update**

The new consultation has started. The sites have changed from the last phase as predicted, with North Elmham now being expected to provide sites for c.80 houses in the Local Plan instead of the previous c.50. This is due to changes at national government level.

Site NEL 1 which was previously site 205 is for 30 houses, with access onto Eastgate via the demolishing of a bungalow on Eastgate. This site was included in the last version of the draft plan.

Site NEL 2 was put forward in the call for sites as site 330 but wasn't included in the draft plan previously, as a smaller site further to the east on Back Lane would have met our quota, along with site 205 (or the old Station Yard). NEL 2 would have access onto Back Lane and would be for 50 houses.

Breckland have not mentioned or acknowledged our preference for the old Station Yard to be included instead of NEL 1. It is felt that we should press for the removal of NEL 1 and for it to be replaced by the Old Station Yard. Mr. Rayner is to draft comments for next week's meeting and will also place a piece in Elmham News.

### **New Village Hall**

A valuation for the Eastgate Centre is being chased. Another meeting will take place in the near future.

### **North Elmham Football Club Facilities**

Both monthly payments have now been received.

### **Location Of Skate Ramp and Associated Repairs**

There are alternatives for this facility:

- i) Leave the ramps in their current position and carry out repairs at a cost of about £5K.
- ii) Dispense with the facility and encourage parents to take their children to better equipped alternative sites such as the one in Dereham.
- iii) Relocate to another position in the village, e.g. to the village green.

Members are to give this matter consideration with a further discussion to be held at the next meeting.

### **Report from District and/or County Councillors**

Reports received can be read in full on the community website. [www.elmham.org.uk](http://www.elmham.org.uk)

### **Schedule of Payments and Income**

#### **Payments**

Drax (Electricity for street lights  
01/09/25 to 22/09/25) £186.78

Drax (Electricity for street lights  
23/09/25 to 30/09/25) £81.26

Biffa (Wheelie bin service from  
27/09/25 to 24/10/25) £81.36

E-on Next (Electricity Pavilion from  
01/09/25 to 04/10/25) £162.19

E-on Next (Electricity for Boars Hill  
07/07/25 to 07/10/25) £28.98

K. Webb (Clerk's quarterly computer  
allowance) £20.00

D. Tyson (Pavilion cleaning for October)  
£146.52

Brown and Co. (work re BPS and Cathedral  
Meadows) £120.00

K. Webb (Clerk's pay for October ) £900.67

HMRC (Tax & N.I. on Clerk's pay) £331.53

Breckland Council (Annual dog bin  
emptying service – 2 bins) £259.32

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 T. H. Scott and Son (Hedge cutting) £1,281.00  
 ADS Utilities (gateways – labour, materials, permits, etc) £3,930.00  
 Anglian Water (Pavilion – 20/7/25 to 19/10/25) £112.77  
 Anglian Water (Playing Field – 20/7/25 to 19/10/25) £163.23  
 K. Webb (Annual fee for Cloud backup of files) £60.00  
 J. Sowinski (diesel for chipper) £27.53  
 J. Sowinski (new latch for Boars Hill gate) £3.54  
 J. Sowinski (paint for M/Wood guard for swing gate) £5.99  
 J. Sowinski (fixings for picnic seats) £33.94  
 Julian Duffield (work in Cathedral Ruins – October) £210.00  
 J. Fencing/Groundscape (grounds maintenance–Sept & Oct) £1,420.00

### **Income**

K. Webb (contribution to new computer & Windows 11 cost) £150.00  
 Langham P.C. (share of new computer cost & Windows 11) £300.00  
 Allotment rents £345.00  
 Pavilion lettings £35.00  
 North Elmham Tennis Club (annual rent) £75.00  
 North Elmham F.C. (one monthly payment) £75.00  
 English Heritage (annual management fee–Cathedral Ruins) £5,355.00

### **Bank Balances at 3/11/25**

Current a/c £78,013.58  
 Business Premium a/c £49,045.51  
 Cambridge Building Society £82,483.96  
 A provision of £1.5K for increased CCTV surveillance is recommended for the play area on the village green (£500) and

potentially the Boars Hill Car Park (£1K). A Wi-Fi data budget of £750 per annum would be needed to cover three sites (including Eastgate and Pavilion).

### **To Consider Planning Applications and Determinations**

#### **Applications**

- i) Proposed external re-facing of the existing boatshed – The Boat Shed, Eastgate Street – PL/2025/1553/FMIN – no comments.
- ii) Proposed garaging and access gates/wall – Threshing Barn, Worthing Road – PL/2025/1570/HOU – no comments.

#### **Determinations**

None

#### **2026 Meetings Dates**

January Wednesday 7th  
 February Wednesday 4th  
 March Wednesday 4th  
 April Wednesday 1st  
 May Wed 6th (AMPC), Wed 27th (APM)  
 June Wednesday 3rd  
 July Wednesday 1st  
 August Wednesday 5th  
 September Wednesday 2nd  
 October Wednesday 7th  
 November Wednesday 4th  
 December Wednesday 2nd

## **NORTH ELMHAM PARISH COUNCIL MEETING**

### **WEDNESDAY 3RD DECEMBER,**

***Councillors Present Were:*** Mr. P. Grainger (Chairman), Mr. M. Phillips (Vice Chairman), Miss A. Ferris, Mr. T. Fitzalan Howard, Mr. B. Gee, Mr. F. Gillespie, Mrs. A. Keeble, Mr. M. Rayner and Mr. J. Sowinski.

***Also in Attendance:*** Mr. K. Webb (Clerk) and three parishioners (two left after Public Participation).



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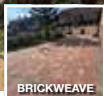


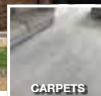
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**Apologies for Absence:** Mr. N. Markwell, Mr. C. Smith and Mr. G. Bambridge (District Councillor).

### **Public Participation**

Two representatives from the Institute Bowls Club attended with a view to receiving updated information regarding current plans for enhanced CCTV camera coverage. They mentioned that the fence between the tennis and bowls clubs had fallen down which increased the risk of possible vandalism. It was asked if the Parish Council would be prepared to make a contribution to the cost of a replacement fence. The Chairman advised that the Parish Council had discussed sharing responsibility for improved CCTV coverage with the tennis club. However, it transpires that it is not appropriate for us to monitor the tennis club under data protection regulations. The tennis club understands this and indicated they will look at the feasibility of an installation that can be managed by them and would meet the regulations. We are, however, committed to improving the CCTV coverage from the Pavilion including a long-range camera pointing up towards the playing field. It is anticipated this would capture images adjacent to the bowls club. Taken together this should provide an extra deterrent to the type of behaviour we have all had to tolerate.

A parishioner mentioned the leaning wall along the footpath at the Cathedral Ruins. It is the responsibility of English Heritage and we are aware that a representative will be visiting within the next 2/3 weeks.

Two drains in the village are blocked – one on Church Hill and the other on Eastgate Street (opposite number 39).

### **UPDATED INFORMATION AND MATTERS ARISING**

#### **Update from North Elmham Living Sustainably (NELS) Group**

Mr. Sowinski had spoken with Mr. Ben Earle who is to formulate some proposals.

A parishioner had previously written to the Parish Council about the pit and concern for deer.

### **Land Management Matters**

*Village Green:* Concrete bases are to be put down for the picnic tables. Quotations for the concrete are to be obtained. It was decided to wait until spring for the better weather to enable this work to be done.

*Cathedral Ruins:* Alison Naylor, English Heritage is to visit on the 17th December. A precise time is to be requested.

*Cathedral Meadows:* Mr. Fitzalan Howard has attempted to obtain four quotations for replacement fencing with two having been received. The preferred option was from Alec Crisp at a cost of £5K (including VAT) and with posts of a life expectancy of 15 years. Acceptance proposed by Mr. Fitzalan Howard and seconded by Mrs. Keeble. All in favour.

*Bridleway on disused railway line and other railway linked matters:* Mr. Rayner had contacted Breckland Council for a copy of the updated transfer deed. This has been received and will be circulated to all members. The buffers to County School section hadn't been included as a permissive path. An exception is when emergency work or maintenance is needed, in which circumstances it is closed on a temporary basis. Mr. Rayner also raised with Mr. Robinson, Railway Liaison contact, the missing level crossing warning sign and requested the formalisation of a permissive path. He also queried plans for the bridge at the bottom of Church Lane.


### **Street Lights**

The general view is that a replacement light in Holt Road is considered to be not necessary. Drax continues to produce mistakes with the attempted renewal of the contract providing electricity for the street lights. A complaint has, therefore, been lodged. The possibility of solar powered lighting is to be investigated.




# Easter Craft Fair

Celebrate creativity  
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Saturday 28th March 2026  
10am-3pm

North Elmham Memorial Hall  
Holt Road  
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Norfolk



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## **Highway Matters**

The Village Gates have been installed with 50% of the cost to be covered by Norfolk County Council. No funds have yet been received so the Clerk will chase David Bullock, Senior Programme Technician.

Mr. Gillespie reported that the hedge in Station Road has been cut and the situation is much improved with regard to using the pavement.

## **Pavilion and Playing Field**

A fee of £300 has been advised to Breckland Council for use of the pavilion for next year's election. A socket for outside lighting has been installed. The Christmas tree is due to be delivered on 5th December. The suggested additions to the booking form for the pavilion have been added. An improved CCTV quotation has been obtained and the necessary work will be carried out in due course.

## **Brookside Development Update**

The Chairman has been liaising with Norfolk County Council, (Tommy Lambert, Engineer – Electric Vehicle Infrastructure) regarding EV charging procedures. There is an option to join the Plug in Norfolk network, which is a NCC run chargepoint network.

## **Defibrillators**

Miss Ferris reported that the defibrillator at the surgery is not working and has to be regarded as defunct. It was issued in 2013 and this type is no longer manufactured. The Community Heartbeat Trust has been informed and a price is to be obtained for a new machine.

## **Local Plan Update**

There are two sites in the Draft Plan:-

a) Site NEL 1, which was previously site 205, is for 30 houses, with access onto Eastgate Street via the demolishing of a bungalow on Eastgate Street. This site, which was included in the last version of the draft

plan, is opposed. The proposal is for it to be replaced by the Old Station Yard

b) Site NEL 2 is for 50 houses and is supported.

Appropriate comments will be forwarded to Breckland Council by the deadline of 15th December as responses to the Local Plan consultation process.

## **New Village Hall**

The Chairman stressed the importance of the financial aspects and that the property valuations are crucial. A small working group is to be set up in January, concentrating on financial matters.

## **Skate Ramp**

The three alternatives for this facility were as follows:

i) Leave the ramps in their current position and carry out repairs at a cost of about £5K.

ii) Dispense with the facility and encourage parents to take their children to better equipped alternative sites such as the one in Dereham.

iii) Relocate to another position in the village, e.g. to the village green.

Option ii) was agreed (removal of the skate ramp). Proposed by Mr. Sowinski, seconded by Mr. Fitzalan Howard. All in favour.

## **Report from District and/or County Councillors**

Reports received can be read in full on the website. [www.elmham.org.uk](http://www.elmham.org.uk)

## **Schedule of Payments and Income**

### **Payments**

Drax (electricity for street lights – 01/10/25 to 31/10/25) £399.65 \* This figure is suspect and has been queried with Drax.

Biffa (wheelie bin service from 25/10/25 to 21/11/25) £81.36

E-on Next (pavilion from 05/10/25 to 31/10/25) £156.31



## YOUNG FARMERS

Having fun at Trowse Dry Ski Slope preparing for a tubing meeting.



We were winners of the 1st Hockey League game of the season!



E-on Next (electricity for Boars Hill  
–07/10/25 to 27/10/25) £6.62  
Public Works Loan Board (Village Green –  
half yearly) £626.45  
D. Tyson (pavilion cleaning for November)  
£146.52  
K. Webb (Clerk's pay for November)  
£900.87  
HMRC (Tax & N.I. on Clerk's pay) £331.33  
Darren Brown (guttering and new tiles at  
the pavilion) £660.00  
Mrs. S. L. Hines (key keeping – Sept, Oct  
and Nov) £93.75  
Norfolk Parish Training & Sup (AGAR  
Assertion 10 training) £43.20

### **Income**

Pavilion lettings £30.00  
North Elmham Bowls Club (annual rent)  
£75.00  
North Elmham F.C. (payment for referee's  
room) £75.00  
U.K. Power Networks (wayleave payment –  
land at Holt Road) £8.03  
Foxburrow Farm Ltd (A.M. Smith – half  
yearly rent) £1,844.50  
HSBC (coif inc div) £30.62  
HSBC (coif inc div) £49.53

### **Bank Balances at 1/12/25**

Current a/c £69,190.72  
Business Premium a/c £49,295.51  
Cambridge BS £82,483.96

### **2026/27**

Mr. Phillips presented a Draft Budget for  
2026/2027 which showed predicted income  
of £63,841 and expenditure of £64,232. The  
revised tax base for the coming year is 533.9  
(up from 523.4) and it was agreed by all to  
retain the Band D contribution at £80.64,  
giving a Precept of £43,054.

### **Any Other Matters (for info only)**

The highly valued work done throughout  
the year by volunteers is acknowledged by  
all. A Christmas gift of some wine will be  
given as a gesture of appreciation.

## **THE TEA@2 CHRONICLES**

### **A Tale of Triumph, Teapots, and Tiny Sandwiches**

Ever wondered what really happens at  
Tea@2? You've seen the dainty reminders  
in the newsletter, but behind the scenes,  
it's less Downton Abbey and more Mission  
Impossible (minus the explosions... usually).

### **The Grand Operation**

On the second Wednesday of every  
month, at precisely 2pm, the Memorial  
Hall transforms into a haven of hot drinks,  
sandwiches, sausage rolls, and enough  
cake to make Mary Berry weep with joy.  
But this doesn't happen by magic—it  
takes a crack team of volunteers with  
nerves of steel and a love of tablecloths.

### **The Prep Squad**

Before you even smell a scone, our elite  
squad is out there:

**Furniture Ninjas:** Tables and chairs  
appear like a well-choreographed ballet.  
Tablecloths and flowers? Absolutely—we  
have standards.

**Sandwich Sorceresses:** In the morning,  
they conjure up a dazzling array of  
sandwiches. Meanwhile, others are  
baking cakes, biscuits, and sausage rolls  
like contestants on The Great British  
Bake Off—but without the Hollywood  
handshake, even though they deserve it.

**Transport Heroes:** Can't get there? No  
problem. We've got volunteers who'll  
whisk you away and drop you home like  
a VIP.

### **Showtime at 2pm**

Guests arrive, and suddenly it's table  
service galore. Drinks, eats, and cheerful  
chatter—our volunteers do it all. In the  
kitchen, kettles boil like a steam engine,  
teapots overflow, and milk jugs are  
topped up faster than you can say "two  
sugars, please."



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## Entertainment Extra

Each month, there's music to keep the vibe lively. The Fakenham Yukes are a crowd favourite, strumming away like ukulele rock stars. Sometimes, the children from North Elmham school pop in to share their projects—and in December, they brought handmade Christmas cards. Cue the collective "aww."

## The Aftermath

Two hours later, the same heroes clean up, wash up, and pack away every chair and table. It's like the hall was never touched—except for the faint smell of victory and Victoria sponge.

## The Secret Service

Here's what you might not know: we also run an undercover picnic box operation for residents who can't make it. Each box is stuffed with sandwiches, sausage rolls, and cakes. About 18 boxes go out

every month—delivered with stealth and received with smiles.

## The Price Tag

Brace yourself... it's FREE. Yes, really. Funded by donations and some of the proceeds of the Elmham House Fete in May. We've been doing this since 2017 (with a brief lockdown hiatus), and we're pretty sure no other village nearby offers anything quite like this.

## Join the Fun

If you've never been—or it's been a while—come along! Expect hot tea, fresh sandwiches, delicious cakes, music, chat, and enough community spirit to power a small country. Come and meet new people.

Check the invite for dates and transport details. Or, if occasionally you could help us out, we'd love to have you.

See you soon—bring your appetite and your best gossip!

## DATES TO REMEMBER: FEBRUARY

Tue 3rd	Knit and Natter	Pavilion	2.00 pm
	RBL Meeting	King's Head	8.00 pm
Wed 4th	Sewing	Tumbleweed Eastgate St	2.00 pm
	Parish Council	Pavilion	7.30 pm
Mon 9th	Countrysiders	TBC	7.00 pm
Wed 11th	Tea at Two	Memorial Hall	2.00 pm
Thu 12th	Wives plus All	AGM and talk	7.00 pm
Mon 16th	Half term holiday		
Wed 18th	Sewing	Tumbleweed, Eastgate St	2.00 pm
Mon 23rd	Countrysiders - Pancake Fun	Memorial Hall	7.00 pm
Wed 25th	Mobile Library visits	The Heath - Wensum Drive	1.15–4.40 pm
Fri 27th	Gardening Club Annual Dinner	TBC	TBC
DON'T FORGET			
Wed Weekly	Norwich Bus	Bus Shelter by Pavilion Opposite Orchard Close	9.37 am 9.39 am

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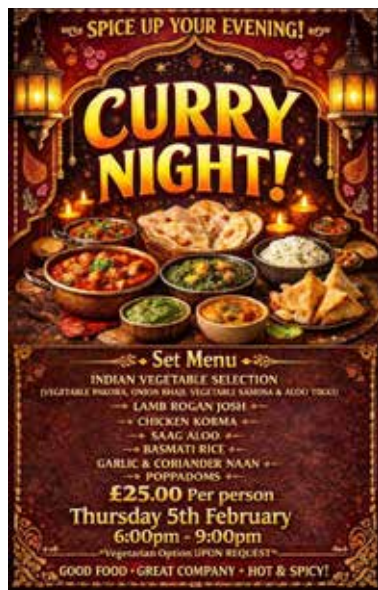
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# ELMHAM WILDLIFE



If you know much about British birds the chances are you will know that the Dipper is a charismatic little bird of stony upland rivers and streams, not a bird you would expect me to be writing about in a piece about the wildlife of an East Anglian village. It's the sort of bird you might hope to see when on holiday in the mountains of the Lake District or Scotland for example, not a bird you would expect to see round here. But this winter we have been fortunate to have a Dipper right here in our parish of North Elmham (photo 1).



If you've been past Bintry Mill (I only just learned that this is still properly spelt with a y unlike the more usual modern spelling of the village of Bintree) this winter then you may have noticed more birdwatchers there than usual. They have come to see the Dipper, a rare visitor to our county.



The Dipper is unique among British birds. They are so-called because of their bobbing action when beside water, often seen when perched on a snag or rock in the middle of a river or stream. It is the only songbird that doesn't just prefer to be around water, but even ventures right into the water (photos 2 and 3). They feed on small aquatic invertebrates and immerse themselves fully into the water and can even swim or walk along the river bed completely below the surface.







Dippers are able to see under water because they have a translucent “eyelid” that they can draw down over their eyes to protect them, called a nictitating membrane. I don’t think this is unique to dippers but it is certainly a feature that they make a lot of use of, and you can sometimes see it when they’re above water – their eyes look whitish when the membrane is drawn over the eye. Apart from its unusual habits and short tail and stocky shape, the white bib on an otherwise dark brown bird is the most obvious field-mark (photo 4).



Dippers are a rare visitor to Norfolk, usually in winter. These don’t come from mountainous regions of the UK, but they are visiting from the Continent, or probably Scandinavia. Dippers vary across their European range in the colour of their underparts. British birds have a lovely chestnut band across the front of the belly just below the white bib (photo 5, taken in Scotland). On Continental birds the belly is more uniformly dark brown or black lacking any chestnut tones. Although they are the same species, these are usually known as Black-bellied Dippers, and when we are lucky enough to see a Dipper in Norfolk it’s nearly always a Black-bellied Dipper (there are just two accepted records of British Dipper in Norfolk, both from the 1980s and, unlike the Black-bellied ones, both were in midsummer).



Although several different subspecies are recognised variation is clinal, with birds from the north of their European range tending to be blacker underneath and birds from the south tending to be browner. Some British birds have less chestnut than others, and some



Continental birds can have a hint of chestnut, so it's not always possible to be absolutely sure where a Dipper has originated from. But as nearly all records of Dipper in East Anglia and the south-east have had dark brown or black bellies (photo 6), it's safe to assume that at least the majority have originated from somewhere else in Europe, not the UK.

Of course I cannot guarantee that the Dipper will still be at Bintry Mill by the time you read this, but it's been there for over a month as I write, so there's a good chance it will be. If you go looking for it, its favoured spot is along the stream either side of the white bridge over the road 300m northwest of the mill, but it also gets on the river itself. It disappears some days though, so you might be lucky enough to encounter it elsewhere along the river or feeder streams in the area. Please let me know if you have seen it elsewhere.

A bird I often associate with Dippers is the Grey Wagtail. When I was a teenager I didn't see them in my home area very often but did see them when I was looking for Dippers while on holiday in the Lake District. They like fast-flowing streams and rivers just like Dippers. They're commoner around here than they were for me as a lad and you can see them anywhere in North Elmham, but especially close to the river. The very best place to see them in our parish is around Bintry Mill, where you can find them all year round (photo 7).

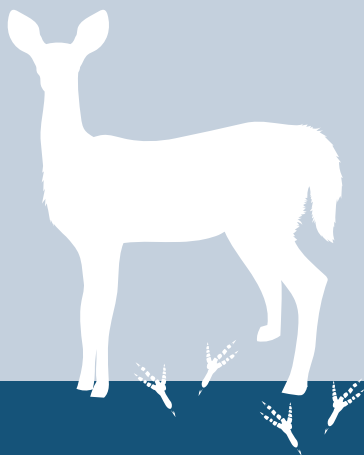
The area around Bintry Mill is a fabulous location to look for wildlife, thanks to its owner Paul who seems to do a great job of looking after the land round there. This side of the river is in the parish of



North Elmham and at the moment it is possible to see Grey Wagtail, Great White Egret, Kingfisher, Stonechat, Wigeon and Shoveler, Marsh Harrier, Red Kite and of course the Black-bellied Dipper if you're lucky. Several visitors recently have seen Otters there too and you never know what else you might be lucky enough to come across.

Let me know what you see, there or elsewhere around the parish – I'm always interested to hear. You can get in touch by emailing me at [appleton.dave@googlemail.com](mailto:appleton.dave@googlemail.com) or phoning me on 01362 668431.

*Dave Appleton*



### Half day closures for staff training

The surgeries will close at 12:00 until 14:00 on the following dates for staff training:

February 5 <sup>th</sup> 2026	March 5 <sup>th</sup> 2026	March 17 <sup>th</sup> 2026 Swanton Morley	April 2 <sup>nd</sup> 2026
May 7 <sup>th</sup> 2026	June 4 <sup>th</sup> 2026	July 2 <sup>nd</sup> 2026	August 6 <sup>th</sup> 2026
September 3 <sup>rd</sup> 2026	October 1 <sup>st</sup> 2026	November 5 <sup>th</sup> 2026	December 3 <sup>rd</sup> 2026

### Andi

We are delighted that we now have Andi, our new virtual care navigator.

Andi is helping patients who prefer to submit their Anima requests over the phone rather than complete an online form themselves. This means that if you call the practice and need help submitting an Anima online request, Andi will ask you questions, just like the online form and will take down your answers. This will then be automatically submitted to our Triage team, and they will respond just as they would do if you submitted online.

How does it work and what this means for you

- If you would prefer to submit your request using the telephone, you will now be able to select the option and it will put you through to Andi, who will help complete the Anima request on your behalf.
- You can still submit your own request online through Anima as usual, this is our preference as we gain more information which is important to help triage your request.
- Your request will then be sent straight to the Triage team, ensuring it is handled quickly and efficiently.

Benefits for our patients

- Reduced phone queues – less time waiting to speak to someone as Andi can handle multiple calls at the same time.
- Easier to submit a request by phone – no need to go online if that is not convenient or you struggle with the internet/ forms.

Benefits for the practice

- Frees up staff time to focus on patient care.
- Improves efficiency in managing patient requests.
- Reduces waiting times and eases pressure on phone lines.

Summary

Whilst Andi is AI, he sounds quite natural so much so you may think you are speaking to a real person. As a Practice we are committed to making it easier for all patients to access our services whether online or over the phone.

Thank you for your patience and support as we pilot this new system.

### Appointment Statistics

- In the month of December, a total of 131 patients failed to attend their appointments which could have been offered to other patients.
- This has cost the NHS £5,240 so far this year in missed appointments.
- You can cancel appointments on the NHS app, using SystmOne or by telephoning the surgery.



## VETERANS VOICE

The Veterans Voice (Charity: 1208763) project aims to help veterans and family members find how to access veteran organisations and support groups, such as breakfast clubs and social hubs, identify opportunities for social interaction with other veterans, and provide information about support resources. Veterans Central, as part of the Veterans Voice project, will be running a monthly drop-in hub in Swaffham.

Come along for a FREE hot drink, cake, and a spot of chat and banter, or to ask question about veterans support.

Venue: The Regency Room, Swaffham Assembly Rooms, Swaffham

Tuesday 27th January, Tuesday 24th February, Tuesday 24th March, Tuesday 28th April, Tuesday 26th May 2026

Time: 10.30 – 13.00 hrs

Location: The Assembly Rooms are located in the centre of Swaffham and there is adjacent 2 hours free parking (but use machine to get a ticket). You are welcome to bring partners or carers.

For more information email ops@veteranscentral.co.uk or call 0771 3860040.

## A TRIBUTE TO A BELOVED AUNTIE

Ruby Jane Coulter of 31 Wensum Drive moved to Elmham in 1984 with her late husband Vic Coulter, they finally settled in their bungalow in 1994. They were a very sociable couple enjoying holidays trips out & meals with friends.

Auntie's passion was flower arranging; she would often be decorating the local church for different occasions & also taught others her skill. Her garden was amazing, it was her life with many plants and shrubs to look at, even the wildlife was lovely to see.

Making friends with the local landlord and lady at the Railway Public House, she would look after their family and became close friends.

As her nieces and nephews from the Midlands, we would spend many a summer holiday with her going to different seaside resorts and being thoroughly spoilt; we have some amazing memories.

As she became more housebound, we and her friends all rallied around to keep her comfortable and able to stay in her bungalow. My late father, her brother frequently drove to her, and they spent happy times together.



We were lucky to have had her last birthday together, even raising a glass of wine, and at the age of 92, she still looked amazing.

Auntie Jane passed away the 31st October with a special friend by her side.

A massive thank you to her network of special friends who were there to the end, you know who you are.

Rest in peace Auntie Jane, you will be forever in our hearts

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## **NORTH ELMHAM PRIMARY ACADEMY**

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### **Singing, Smiles, and Stage Magic!**

Some of our pupils have been busy learning a song for the village pantomime. It's a joy to see their confidence grow and excitement build for the performances.

### **Are you interested in a Nursery or school place for your child?**

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give your child the very best start in their educational journey, our nursery provides:

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- Strong links with the Reception class to ensure smooth transitions
- Flexible session options to suit your family's needs

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## WHAT DID THE VICTORIANS DO FOR US?

The long reign of Queen Victoria (1837-1901) covered a period of immense change, not least in the appearance and condition of country churches and North Elmham's church was no exception. St Mary's, as we see it today, is very much the creation of the Victorians.

The church was served during most of Victoria's reign by two vicars; the Revd Henry Knatchbull, 1833-1867 and the Revd Augustus Legge, 1867-1894. During their time both the exterior and interior of the church was completely transformed, much of it at their own expense.

There are no descriptions of the church before Knatchbull became vicar so we do not know what state it was in when he arrived. The first repairs undertaken in his time involved the repair of the chancel roof in 1836. Later, in 1852, the Norwich church architect, John Brown, was employed to restore the nave roof and the chancel. How dilapidated these areas had become, there is no way of knowing, but the screen behind the altar (the reredos) and the medieval-style stone

seats (sedilia) on the south side of the chancel were his work. Whether the large east window was inserted at this time or later is not clear.

The etching by Robert Ladbrook published in 1843 shows the exterior of the church very much as it is now, except for one very important difference. In 1864 the entire church except for the tower was refaced in 'best Brandon flints' covering the original flint rubble walls. This was an immense undertaking which transformed the exterior appearance of the church. Five new buttresses were built on the north aisle and those to the north chapel were rebuilt. According to the church accounts the cost was £483 partly paid for by a loan of £290 and a further loan from the churchwardens. Other work at the time included reroofing, paid for from the church's endowed estate.

Work also took place in the interior and was described by George Carthew, the antiquarian who visited the church in 1852 and again in 1879. Between these dates the old box pews, some with 'exquisitely-



carved' bench backs had been removed as well at the Jacobean pulpit (later returned to the church). Some work on reassembling the rood screen had also taken place.

The major alterations to the interior took place under Knatchbull's successor, Augustus Legge. He lived with his wife, Alice and his six children in the old rectory next to the ruins, which formed part of the rectory garden. At the time they were thought to be the remains of a 'Roman station', much modified in medieval times. He was an active clergyman in the parish while at the same time pursuing his antiquarian interests, excavating and stabilising the ruins. He also transcribed and published in 1890 a 16<sup>th</sup> -century volume of the churchwardens' accounts.

His major works however involved the transformation of much of the interior of the church. He wrote in 1881, 'Ever since I have been incumbent, I have had it in mind to help liberally towards some necessary alterations as soon as I was in a position to do so - that time has now come'. Working with the church architect, Richard Phipson he re-arranged the interior of the church. The 'wretched' western gallery on which the organ had been placed was taken down, revealing the 'magnificent' tower arch. The organ was moved to the north chapel. The pews in the nave and aisles were all re-arranged so that they all faced east.

If we are to believe Carthew, the nave pews date from the early period of restoration under Knatchbull, probably incorporating the much older pew ends with their 15<sup>th</sup> -century carved ends. However, some are later work with Augustus Legge inserting his own coat of arms in the end of the front pew on the north side of the nave (see illustration). The pulpit and reading desk which had replaced the Jacobean one was removed and the original pulpit returned.

Phipson was pleased that this was possible as 'I am very fond of preserving pulpits of this date'. The intricately-carved choir stalls and the screen around the north chapel were inserted (illustration), and the pieces of the rood screen were assembled and placed across the entrance to the chancel. All this work involved moving Lord Sondes' family box pew in the chancel and the 'retainers' pews to the south chapel. In 1881, Legge wrote to Lord Sondes seeking his approval for the moving of the family pew and asking for a donation towards the cost of the changes, writing that he understood 'the difficulties landowners have at the moment', while hoping for a contribution. The stained glass in the large east window as a memorial to an earlier Lord Sondes was inserted in 1874 and will have transformed the east end of the church.

An important improvement was the installation of the heating system and tiling of the nave and aisle floors. The



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heating system has had several new boilers, but otherwise still functions. There is no record of what the previous floor was like, but tiling would have changed the general appearance of the church. The many ledger slabs originally set in the nave floor were re-laid either in the vestry or the east end of the chancel.

The Victorians are often accused of over restoring their churches and destroying their medieval glory. However much of their work at North Elmham was of a very high quality, with the carvings on reading desks in the chancel demonstrating the skills of craftsmen (illustration). The church architect Richard Phipson, who at various times during his career was both the County and Diocesan surveyor, wrote in 1882, 'Your church is so beautiful and grand that it will well repay the work that is proposed to be done'.

Our parish church has gone through many periods of development and change to suit the requirement of every age since its foundation in the 11 th century.

Now that we hope the problems of damp have been resolved the time may have come for the 21 st century to leave its mark by providing facilities to allow the community role for the building to be further developed.


*Susanna Wade-Martins (PCC secretary)*

**Photo 1:** 1533 Intricate carving on the reader's desk on the south side of the chancel.

**Photo 2:** Coat of arms of Augustus Legge on front pew on north side of the aisle.

**Photo 3:** Date AD 1882 entwined in the carvings on the reader's desk on the north side of the chancel.



A photograph of a woodpecker perched on a tree branch next to a wooden nesting box. The bird is facing left, and the box is mounted on the tree trunk. The background is a blurred green forest.

## TIME TO THINK ABOUT OUR FEATHERED FRIENDS

February might seem an unlikely month for garden preparations, but it's actually the perfect time to put up nesting boxes for our local birds. As the days gradually lengthen and spring approaches, many of our garden visitors are already scouting for suitable nest sites, with some species beginning to nest as early as March.

Here in North Elmham, we're fortunate to host a wonderful variety of birds that readily use nest boxes. Blue tits, great tits, and sparrows are the most common users, but with the right boxes, you might also attract robins, wrens, or even treecreepers. The key is getting them up now, giving birds time to discover and inspect them before the breeding season begins in earnest.

When positioning your box, aim for a height of 2-5 metres, ideally facing between north and east to avoid direct sunlight and prevailing wet winds. Ensure there's a clear flight path to the entrance, and avoid placing boxes too close to bird feeders, which can attract predators. A simple wooden box without perches (which only help predators) and with adequate drainage holes is ideal.

The RSPB's website offers excellent guidance on box designs and placement, while Norfolk Wildlife Trust provides information specific to our local species. Your efforts could make a real difference - suitable nesting sites are increasingly scarce, and a well-placed box can be used year after year.

We'd love to see your photos and hear how you get on if you do choose to add some nesting boxes to your garden.

*By North Elmham Living Sustainably (NELS)*

A graphic of a spiral-bound calendar. The top part is red with the word 'FEBRUARY' in white. Below that is a white section with '14th' in large black font. At the bottom is a black section with 'Next month's deadline' in white.

**FEBRUARY**

**14th**

**Next month's deadline**

## ST MARY'S CHURCH

Dear friends,

What a topsy-turvy world! As day-time temperatures plummeted to 1° in Norfolk last month, it was 40° in Sydney. I'm not a fan of snow and ice, but I know where I'd rather be!

It does give us pause to think about climate change and its effects on all life. We may think there's little we can do, as individuals, to make much difference. However, we can care and demonstrate our concern by the choices we make when we shop, heat our homes, travel, or even in the cleaning products we use. And, of course, to recycle our waste as much as possible, rather than send it to landfill.

The Church is committed to working towards net zero in how we use our buildings and churchyards – not always easy with drafty medieval buildings! But again, relatively small changes can make a difference, such as LED lighting and encouraging biodiversity in our

churchyards. They are unique parcels of land, as they're not treated with fertilisers or widespread weed-killing.

I'm delighted to hear that there is to be another Eco Fair this year at St Mary's Church in Elsing on 16 h May. As with the event in North Elmham last year, this will bring together a range of organisations committed to caring for the environment and wildlife, celebrating the glory of creation. Do save the date and go along to be inspired!

In the book of Genesis, we read about how God created the world "out of nothing". In a way, it's the bible's version of the Big Bang. Whether we are people of faith or not, we can probably agree that we should tread on the world lightly as we pass through. We have this extraordinary gift of a beautiful world to live in. Let's do all we can to protect it and care for it, and pass it on in good health to the generations who follow.

*Yours, in Christ, Revd Sally*



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## WORTHING NEWS

Happy New Year everyone and I sincerely hope you all are well, keeping warm and safe particularly after the snow, blizzards and rain. Hopefully we can all look forward to Spring, not long now!

The Christmas Raffle draw took place on Sunday the 21st December immediately after our Informal Village Christmas Caroling. Everyone that took part helped raise £170.02 which has been allocated to our Church Building Appeal, thank you. Congratulations to our prize winners Katie (1st), Alan (2nd) and Danny (3rd).

### Easyfundraising

As we continue to boost our church building appeal, can you also please help?

Worthing Church are registered with EASYFUNDRAISING. This gives us all an opportunity to shop online choosing from over 8,000 retailers AT NO EXTRA COST TO YOURSELVES and for retailers to donate direct to our cause.

Leading up to the end of December, £114.24 was generated through your shopping from various retailers. For more information on how you can help, all you need to do is register and sign up for your weekly shop to meet your home, personal, or business needs as required. Please use

or click on the link below to take you direct to Worthing Church account, thank you.

[www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/worthing-church-and-town-lands-charity](http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/worthing-church-and-town-lands-charity)

### Sunday Services

In February our services fall on the 1st and 3rd Sunday. We shall meet in church on the 1st February starting at 9.00am Holy Communion and 15th Iona Morning Praise starting at 10.30am.

Refreshments will be available after each service together with an opportunity to meet up and share in some friendly banter. We hope you can join us.

### Advance Notice

The Christian tradition of Lent will begin on Ash Wednesday 18th February and ends 2<sup>nd</sup> April. In aid of the Bishop's Diocesan Appeal 2026, Children of Papua New Guinea, Worthing shall be holding a Lent Brunch on Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> March (Holy Communion Service at 9.00am) followed by the Brunch starting at 9.30am. If you can, please come along.

And finally, please check out our facebook page for additional information and stories [www.facebook.com/StMargaretsChurchworthing/](https://www.facebook.com/StMargaretsChurchworthing/)

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## FEBRUARY CHURCH SERVICES



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### 1ST FEBRUARY – CANDLEMAS

9:00am	Worthing	Holy Communion
9:30am	Wood Norton	Morning Praise
10:30am	North Elmham	Holy Communion
10:30am	Stibbard	Holy Communion
10:30am	Bawdeswell	Word & Praise

### 8TH FEBRUARY – SECOND SUNDAY BEFORE LENT

10:30am	North Elmham	Holy Communion
10:30am	Bawdeswell	Holy Communion
10:30am	Foulsham	Holy Communion

### 15TH FEBRUARY – SUNDAY NEXT BEFORE LENT

10:30am	Wood Norton	Holy Communion
10:30am	Worthing Iona	Morning Praise
10:30am	Bawdeswell	The 10:30

### 22ND FEBRUARY – FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT

10:30am	Guist	Holy Communion
10:30am	North Elmham	Morning Praise
10:30am	Stibbard	Morning Praise
10:30am	Bawdeswell	Holy Communion
10:30am	Foulsham	Morning Praise

Services at Bawdeswell All Saints are available on Zoom:

ID: 656 174 6525 Passcode: TwKH7n

### CONTACT DETAILS

Billingford, Bintree, Guestwick, Guist, North Elmham, Stibbard, Twyford, Wood Norton, Worthing: Revd Sally Kimmis, 01362 668850, [heartofnorfolkrector@gmail.com](mailto:heartofnorfolkrector@gmail.com)

Bawdeswell, Bylaugh, Elsing, Foulsham, Foxley, Lyng, Sparham, Themelthorpe: Revd Richard Turk, 07721 035009, [revdrichardrww@gmail.com](mailto:revdrichardrww@gmail.com)

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# WORDSEARCH

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G	E	R	L	E	U	D	L	O	G	M	I	N	A
S	U	O	S	M	O	I	T	L	A	B	O	C	T
I	P	Y	I	A	R	C	R	R	K	R	G	M	U
P	L	C	R	G	E	U	C	A	N	C	C	A	E
M	A	L	D	N	P	E	M	E	R	C	U	R	Y
A	T	I	L	E	P	O	D	I	U	E	M	U	G
N	I	T	E	S	O	D	L	R	A	A	I	S	A
G	N	H	A	I	C	M	N	I	C	K	E	L	N
A	U	I	D	U	U	M	U	I	M	D	A	C	I
N	M	U	N	M	Z	I	N	C	E	S	E	P	I
E	L	M	U	I	N	A	T	I	T	I	R	A	I
S	C	N	E	T	S	G	N	U	T	M	I	L	R
E	L	R	E	V	L	I	S	A	K	C	M	O	O
Z	A	R	I	R	I	D	I	U	M	L	E	U	N

CADMIUM

COBALT

COPPER

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IRIDIUM

IRON

LEAD

LITHIUM

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You can **report a non-emergency crime, issue or incident** simply and quickly at **[www.norfolk.police.uk](http://www.norfolk.police.uk)**.

Your report will be dealt with in exactly the same way whether you report it online or call.

Our website contains useful crime prevention advice and information on how to keep you safe and help you understand the law.

**[www.norfolk.police.uk](http://www.norfolk.police.uk)**

### We're here to help

If you have a question or need any help, you can easily speak with us in a variety of languages via our live chat service.

### Follow us

Use social media to view our latest news, campaigns and appeals.

Alternatively call us on **101**.  
Always dial **999** in an emergency.





# ADVERTISERS INDEX

## Children

Madhouse (Childcare) .....	46
----------------------------	----

## Eating Out/Eating In

Foxburrow Farm Shop .....	2
Kings Head Hotel .....	28–29
Willie Weston (Fishmonger) .....	46

## Fitness, Health & Beauty

Alison Watson (Beauty & Podiatry) .....	4
Cameron Reid (Osteopathy) .....	36
Creative Chiropractic .....	55
Equiphysique (Physiotherapy) .....	46
Joanne Medler (Hypnotherapy) .....	50
Park Physiotherapy .....	2
Tina Barnes (Podiatry) .....	50

## For The Home & Garden

180 Oven Cleaning .....	44
Ant's Carpets .....	26
Assured Boiler Care .....	50
BM Cleaning .....	20
Dereham Hire (Digger & Tool Hire/Sales) .....	14
DKC Plumbing & Oil Boiler Specialists .....	36
D Thompson Chimneys (Chimney Sweep) .....	55
Firing Squad (Woodburners) .....	8
Garrod Property Maintenance .....	40
Greensleeves (Lawn Care) .....	14
Help at Hand (Garden Maint) .....	50
John Coles (Electrician/Property Maint) .....	8
Norfolk Asphalt Driveways .....	30
Norfolk Glass & Glazing Services .....	4
The Norfolk Sweep (Chimney Sweep) .....	8
Norfolk Woodburners (Installations) .....	36
Paul Cox Electrical .....	36
Power-Medix (Electrician) .....	2
R P Pest Control .....	45
Richard Roos (Property Maint) .....	12
S&C Window Repairs .....	26
Tree Work East .....	44
Tufted Interiors (Carpets & Flooring) .....	4
Worzels Roofing .....	48

## Firewood

Mark Bane (prev MB Logs) .....	30
Mark Tasker .....	26

## Funeral Directors

Fakenham & District Funeral Services .....	18
H Brett & Sons .....	40
Littleproud & Son .....	12

## Holiday Accommodation

Kings Head Hotel .....	28–29
------------------------	-------

## Pets

Four Paws (Dog Grooming) .....	12
Furry Dogmother's (Dog Grooming) .....	20

## Tuition

Nick Long (Driving) .....	4
Peter Wild (Music) .....	40

## Vehicle Maintenance

Classic Offroad Garage Services .....	14
Doorstep Tyre Fitting .....	46
East Bilney Garage .....	56
Norwich Road Garage .....	18

## Venue Hire

Eastgate Centre .....	30
Elmham Memorial Hall .....	48

## Other

Clan Press .....	44
Cytex Drone Services .....	30
Fakenham Prepress .....	20

*To advertise in the Elmham News please contact  
Martin Phillips: martin.s.phillips@btopenworld.com*

## This Month's Photo Contributors

Our thanks go to everyone below who submitted and gave permission for the images included this month.

COVER: Sue Andrews  
PAGE 5: Janet Woodhouse  
PAGE 6: Wendy Cotterill  
PAGE 24: Millie Fisher  
PAGE 31–33: Dave Appleton  
PAGE 35: Julie Finch  
PAGE 37: North Elmham Primary School  
PAGE 38, 39, 41: Susanna Wade-Martins  
PAGE 42: Depositphotos.com, Dave Appleton



# NORTH ELMHAM PARISH COUNCIL

## PARISH COUNCILLORS

**Chair:** Paul Grainger, 01362 667135  
**Vice Chair:** Martin Phillips, 01362 668409  
Ann Ferris, 01362 668580  
Tom Fitzalan Howard, 07760 164515  
Brian Gee, 01362 422799  
Fraser Gillespie, 01362 422293  
Ann Keeble, 01362 668216  
Nick Markwell, 01362 668557  
Michael Rayner, 01362 667859  
Colin Smith, 01362 668585  
Joe Sowinski, 07960 287528

## PARISH CLERK

Kevin J Webb, 01328 855046  
northelmhampc@hotmail.co.uk

## MEETINGS

Held on 1st Wednesday of the month in the Pavilion at 7.30pm. All parishioners welcome. Public participation takes place at the beginning of each meeting. County and district councillors attend meetings whenever possible.

Between meetings specific matters for the Parish Council can be notified according to the list below.

## VILLAGE FACILITIES

Allotments.....Martin Phillips  
Broom Green & Pound .....To be confirmed, contact Parish Clerk  
Cathedral Meadows.....Tom Fitzalan Howard, Ann Keeble  
Cathedral Ruins.....Ann Keeble, Tom Fitzalan Howard  
Eastgate Centre.....Martin Phillips, Paul Grainger, Tom Fitzalan Howard  
Millennium & Jubilee Wood.....Joe Sowinski  
Playing Field & Pavilion.....Colin Smith, Ann Ferris  
Prince William Wood.....Nick Markwell, Brian Gee  
Village Green .....Colin Smith, Brian Gee  
Footpath Warden.....Ann Ferris

## SERVICES

Environment & Maintenance.....Martin Phillips  
Highways.....Paul Grainger, Fraser Gillespie  
Mid-Norfolk Railway Liaison.....Michael Rayner, Nick Markwell  
Planning.....Michael Rayner, Martin Phillips  
Street Lighting.....Tom Fitzalan Howard, Nick Markwell, Colin Smith  
Tree Warden .....Tom Fitzalan Howard, Nick Markwell, Colin Smith  
Website.....Martin Phillips

## PARISH CHARITIES

There are a number of charities that make grants to individuals resident in the parish. Please consult the community website for information [elmham.org.uk/parish-council/village-charities](http://elmham.org.uk/parish-council/village-charities).

# NORTH ELMHAM DIRECTORY

**Elmham Surgery, Holt Rd - 01362 668215**

**Group website: [elmhamsurgery.com](http://elmhamsurgery.com)**

Surgery Opening Times Mon, Tue, Thur, Fri 8.30 am–6.30 pm, Wed 8.30 am–6.00 pm

**Swanton Morley Surgery, Dereham Road - 01362 638100**

Surgery Opening Times Mon–Fri 8.30 am–6.00 pm

**Elmham and Swanton Morley Dispensary**

Dispensary Opening Times Mon, Tue, Thur, Fri 8.30 am–12.00 pm, 2.00 pm–6.30 pm  
Weds 8.30 am–12.00 pm, 2.00 pm–6.00 pm

## Other Useful Contacts

**NHS Medical Help**

**Dial: 111**

**111 online: [111.nhs.uk](http://111.nhs.uk)**

**POLICE: Non Emergency Dial: 101 - EMERGENCY Dial: 999**

Breckland District Councillors	Gordon Bambridge Bill Borrett	01603 881364 01362 860200
Norfolk County Councillor	Bill Borrett	01362 860200
Member of Parliament	<a href="mailto:george.freeman.mp@parliament.uk">george.freeman.mp@parliament.uk</a>	01953 600617
Nth Elmham CEVA Primary Academy	Mrs Carol Jeary, Head Teacher	01362 668318
Chair of Governors	John Robson <a href="mailto:chairofgov@flourishfed.co.uk">chairofgov@flourishfed.co.uk</a>	
Memorial Institute	Bookings: Kayleigh, <a href="mailto:elmhammemorial@outlook.com">elmhammemorial@outlook.com</a>	07595 637031
Pavilion	Bookings: Ann Ferris, <a href="mailto:p.ferris84@yahoo.com">p.ferris84@yahoo.com</a>	01362 668580
Eastgate Centre	Heather Caley	01362 668245
Breckland Dog Warden	Confidential message or texts 07771 617417	01362 858500
London Express Tickets	Travel Centre	01362 694211
Sanders	Wednesdays to Norwich	01263 712800
Konect Bus		03300 539358
Community Website	<a href="http://www.elmham.org.uk">www.elmham.org.uk</a>	

Dereham Library, 59, High Street, Dereham, NR19 1DZ - 01362 693184

Opening times: Mon–Fri 09:30–19:00, Sat 9:30–16:00, Sun 10.00–16.00 (Open Library access only)

Mobile Library calls in Elmham every 4 weeks

Anglian Water		0845 7145145
Dereham Leisure Centre		01362 693419
UK Power Networks	Power Cut (24 hours)	0800 31 63 105
Samaritans		116 123
Citizens Advice Bureau	<a href="http://www.ncab.org.uk">www.ncab.org.uk</a>	0800 144 8848

## Clergy - All telephone numbers local code (01362)

Church of England	Reverend Sally Kimmis Reverend Richard Turk	<a href="mailto:heartofnorfolkrector@gmail.com">heartofnorfolkrector@gmail.com</a> <a href="mailto:revdrichardnwv@gmail.com">revdrichardnwv@gmail.com</a>	668850 07721 035009
Roman Catholic	Father Jay T Magpuyo	35 London Rd, Dereham	694066
Methodist	Rev Betty Trinder	31 Trinity Close, Dereham	695582
Salvation Army	Major Diana Bennetts	<a href="mailto:dereham@salvationarmy.org.uk">dereham@salvationarmy.org.uk</a>	696341

## Church Wardens

Elmham	Michael Newey	668424
Worthing	Celia Daniel	668928



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<b>Wed</b>	08:00 - 17:30
<b>Thu</b>	08:00 - 17:30
<b>Fri</b>	08:00 - 17:30
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