

The Heron

Community Magazine

Delivered to homes in Christchurch, Euximoor and Tipps End

June/July 2025

Fancy one of these in your back garden!?

Well, a chap from Nordelph does and we went to find out more. Full story on page 2.

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The Norfolk Spitfire

I have driven to a Downham Market on a number of occasions and wondered about the Spitfire parked in the garden of a house, and why it came to be there. I have considered popping in to ask, and then Kay Miller forwarded me a page she had found on Facebook about the Norfolk Spitfire so decided to contact the owner, Ian Fox, about possibly coming to visit. Ian invited me to go along and take a look so I took Andy Lansdell with me - as he is a better photographer than I am and definitely knows more about military aircraft. There was me thinking we'd spend a few minutes there taking a few photos and away we'd go. I certainly wasn't prepared for how welcoming and interesting Ian would be. Andy and I were utterly amazed by the Spitfire but soon saw that this isn't the only project Ian has but, in fact, there are three more aircraft in his Nissen Hut (which is an original and, in itself, must have been a major project feat to move it there). One of the aircraft, in the Nissen Hut is a project started by a friend, who sadly passed away, and it was his wife's wish to see the project finished. Ian also plans to finish a "small" 8 ft Spitfire model to replace the 6 ft model that used to be mounted on a plinth in the garden.

The detail that has gone into the aircraft is simply amazing. The model that sits in the garden is a mould taken from an original spitfire but there are some differences - the registration numbers on either side are Ian's parents' initials, and the name on the front is his wife. There are some clever touches - the cockpit mirror is made from a hamster ball, a sensible option since an original Spitfire mirror is £1,100!! Ian "missed" the chance to purchase an original Merlin engine at a mere £100k, but even a 3D printed option comes in at £5k. If you look closely at the engine of the aircraft in the hangar, you would be very hard pressed to see that the cooling fins of that radial engine are actually black painted CDs! A really neat detail.

Ian is one of these people who seems to be able to fit 40 hours into a 24 hour day and has a real passion for his hobby. Whilst some of us might manage to put together an Airfix kit, Ian manages to do this on a huge scale - having had to make up the parts in the first place. This he juggles alongside his work, family life (but can you think of a better way to keep your grandchildren happy!?) as well as taking time out, to talk at length, to people popping in to take a look.

If you want to look for yourself, Ian is more than happy to show people around, and can be contacted on flyboy.hanger33@hotmail.co.uk . I can thoroughly recommend visiting, and thanks again to him for showing us around and talking to us.

Clive Benjamin





New Tiger Bus Routes for Cambridgeshire

By the time you read this, Christchurch will have a regular bus service, the New Tiger 7 route, operated by Stagecoach. If you are under 25, you can apply for a pass (which is free), which can be used so that your fare is £1 for the service. If you are over 25, and not using a free bus pass, then the cost is currently capped at £2 until 30th June, and £2.50 until 31st December, with no news on what happens after that, but currently the national fare cap is £3.

This is in addition to the Tiger on Demand bus service, so proves the point that you wait ages for a bus service to come along, and then two new services come along together!

Below left are all of the stops within the village area, and below right are the times at the main timing points.

Outwell, adj Strawberry House
Outwell, adj Bloom & Wake Garage
Outwell, opp Isle Road
Outwell, opp The Crown
Outwell, opp Pius Drove
Upwell, adj Church Bridge
Upwell, adj New Bridge Road
Upwell, adj School
Upwell, adj Baptist Road
Three Holes, adj Croft Road
Three Holes, adj Village Hall
Three Holes, opp Croft Road
Upwell, opp Sixteen Foot Bank
Upwell, adj Sixteen Foot Bank
Christchurch, Upwell Road
Christchurch, opp Crown Road
Christchurch, o/s Farmer's Boy Inn
Manea, opp Day's Lode Road
Manea, Wisbech Road (near)

Wisbech Horse Fair Bus Station - Chatteris East Park Street

☒ Timing points ☐ All stops

Wisbech Horse Fair Bus Station (Bay 5)	06:15	07:15	08:15	09:15	10:15	11:15	12:15	13:15	14:15	15:15	16:15	17:15	18:15	19:15	20:15
Emneth, opp Tram Station Lane	06:23	07:23	08:23	09:23	10:23	11:23	12:23	13:23	14:23	15:23	16:23	17:23	18:23	19:23	20:23
Outwell, adj Bloom & Wake garage	06:35	07:35	08:35	09:35	10:35	11:35	12:35	13:35	14:35	15:35	16:35	17:35	18:35	19:35	20:35
Three Holes, adj Village Hall	06:48	07:48	08:48	09:48	10:48	11:48	12:48	13:48	14:48	15:48	16:48	17:48	18:48	19:48	20:48
Christchurch, opp Crown Road	07:00	08:00	09:00	10:00	11:00	12:00	13:00	14:00	15:00	16:00	17:00	18:00	19:00	20:00	21:00
Manea Park Road (near)	07:15	08:15	09:15	10:15	11:15	12:15	13:15	14:15	15:15	16:15	17:15	18:15	19:15	20:15	21:15
Manea Fallow Corner Road (near)	07:20	08:20	09:20	10:20	11:20	12:20	13:20	14:20	15:20	16:20	17:20	18:20	19:20	20:20	21:20
Chatteris East Park Street (SE-bound)	07:35	08:35	09:35	10:35	11:35	12:35	13:35	14:35	15:35	16:35	17:35	18:35	19:35	20:35	21:35

Chatteris East Park Street - Wisbech Horse Fair Bus Station

☒ Timing points ☐ All stops

Chatteris East Park Street (SE-bound)	07:40	08:40	09:40	10:40	11:40	12:40	13:40	14:40	15:40	16:40	17:40	18:40	19:40	20:40	21:40
Manea, opp Fallow Corner Road	07:55	08:55	09:55	10:55	11:55	12:55	13:55	14:55	15:55	16:55	17:55	18:55	19:55	20:55	21:55
Manea, opp Wisbech Road	08:00	09:00	10:00	11:00	12:00	13:00	14:00	15:00	16:00	17:00	18:00	19:00	20:00	21:00	22:00
Christchurch Crown Road (near)	08:15	09:15	10:15	11:15	12:15	13:15	14:15	15:15	16:15	17:15	18:15	19:15	20:15	21:15	22:15
Three Holes, adj Village Hall	08:27	09:27	10:27	11:27	12:27	13:27	14:27	15:27	16:27	17:27	18:27	19:27	20:27	21:27	22:27
Outwell, opp Bloom & Wake garage	08:40	09:40	10:40	11:40	12:40	13:40	14:40	15:40	16:40	17:40	18:40	19:40	20:40	21:40	22:40
Emneth, adj Tram Station Lane	08:50	09:50	10:50	11:50	12:50	13:50	14:50	15:50	16:50	17:50	18:50	19:50	20:50	21:50	22:50
Wisbech Horse Fair Bus Station (Bay 5)	09:05	10:05	11:05	12:05	13:05	14:05	15:05	16:05	17:05	18:05	19:05	20:05	21:05	22:05	23:05



Stop,
Hang up,
Call your bank
on 159.

Call 159.

The simple and safe way to
phone your bank about fraud.

159 is our first public-facing initiative. Intended for use by consumers, 159 provides an easy route back to safety when you get an unexpected phone call about a financial matter. Easy to remember, the short code number now connects customers of more than 99% of the UK's retail bank current accounts safely and directly with their bank. Unlike many long-form numbers, 159 cannot be spoofed or impersonated.

We launched 159 as a pilot to prove the concept's value. Looking ahead, we plan to develop it further, expanding the number of destinations serviced, and making a better customer experience. We will also ask Ofcom the communications regulator to consult on making 159 a mandatory "Type A" number, like 999, or 111. 159 plays a vital role in keeping people safe and it has not stood still. More than 800,000 calls have been made to the number since its inception. It has been expanded to bring in new banking destinations, including Bank of Scotland, Barclays, Co-operative Bank, Chase, First Direct, Halifax, HSBC, Lloyds Bank, Metro Bank, Modulr Finance, Monzo, Nationwide Building Society, NatWest, Revolut, Royal Bank of Scotland, Santander, Starling, Tide, TSB and Ulster Bank.

More information at: <https://stopscamsuk.org.uk/our-work/159-phone-number/>

Diary Dates

Tue 3rd June/1st July	Mobile Library	12:15pm	Fen View Layby
Tue 3rd June/1st July	Book Club	7:30pm	Contact Pat Rigby
Sun 1st June/6th July	Welle Cinema -see page 17	1:30pm	3 Holes Village Hall
Mon 9th June/14th July	Parish Council Meeting	7:30pm	CCC
Tue 10th June/8th July	Ladies Circle - see article on page 13	7.00pm	CCC
Wed 11th June/9th July	Coffee/Lunch Break	11am - 1pm	CCC
Wed 25th June/23rd July	Coffee/Lunch Break	11am - 1pm	CCC
Sun 22 June	NSG Open Gardens	12-4pm	Village & CCC
Sat 12 July	Quiz	7 for 7.30pm	CCC
Regular Weekly Events			
Monday	Short Mat Bowls	7pm - 9pm	CCC
Tuesday	Hobby & Craft Club	10am - 1pm	CCC
Sunday	Car Boot Sale	8am - 12pm	Skylark Garden Centre
Wednesday	Chair Based Exercise	10am - 10:50am	CCC - 07880543821
Thursday	Cake, Coffee & Chat	1:30pm - 3:30pm	CCC
Thursday	Car Boot Sale	9am onwards (buyers)	Upwell Field
Friday	Christchurch Umbrella Breakfast	9:30am - 11:30am	CCC
Mon, Tue, Wed, Thu	Mobile Post Office	4:10pm - 4:30pm	Lay-by near Fen View



Lady Dannatt Visits Magpie Centre

It was 'best foot forward' for the Magpie Centre, home of West Norfolk Riding for the Disabled Association, when the High Sheriff of Norfolk, Lord Lieutenant Lady Dannatt paid a visit to Wallington Hall, where the Centre is based.

Having met groups of staff and volunteers, Lady Dannatt enjoyed a trip round the paddocks and tracks where the Centre's service users enjoy rides and carriage drives with Magpie Centre Yard Manager, Natalie Dade, driving the 'Gator'.

Then WNRDA Acting Chairman Chris Hitchens escorted Lady Dannatt round the Sensory Garden, opened by HRH the Princess Royal in 2021. It now includes a classroom used by home-schooled children, many of whom have learning difficulties and who attend the Magpie Nest, a facility opened in autumn 2024.

Lady Dannatt was delighted with her visit and appreciated the many ways in which the Centre enriches the West Norfolk community.



'The Magpie Centre is amazing,' she said, 'it delivers on so many levels: to the service users, both physically and psychologically, and to their parents and carers, who also gain in confidence. 'Then the volunteers,' she continued, 'who feel valued and combat loneliness by becoming a part of something.' 'You do it all beautifully,' she said. 'I am beyond impressed.'

As she departed for her next engagement, Lady Dannatt accepted an invitation from Natalie to enjoy a carriage drive during the summer holidays.

At the time of going to press, all information is as accurate and up to date as we can make it. Changes and updates may be published subsequently. All information contributed by outside agencies, including dates etc., will be assumed to be correct.

Editor's Ramblings

Hello and welcome to the June/July edition of the Heron. By the time you read this our Chief Executive Lorna Kirk will have married Andrew Sparrow (Chair of the Parish Council) – we all hope you had a fantastic day and wish you both a long and happy life together.

Unfortunately, we also have to announce the recent passing of Neville Chamberlain, a resident of the village for many years, and there is a piece on page 15 about Neville.

Helen Chappell has appealed on a number of occasions for help with the Breakfast Club on Fridays (which on the one occasion I was able to go, was excellent) – if you have any time free on a Friday morning, either every week or just occasionally, please contact Helen to volunteer, it will be much appreciated by her and, of course, those partaking.

I would like to welcome Kay Miller back to the Heron, I think she is going to be a great addition to the team, and would like to thank Wendy Yates and Liz Scott for their help in the past, both of whom have stepped down from the team.

I know many have wondered, and a few have used this, but the enclosed dog walking area in the Community Field next to the Community Centre is now available for use by the public. Please, please, pick up your dog's poo and take it with you – hopefully in the future there will be a poo bin on site.

And finally, I attended the PCC annual meeting and would like to add my thanks to all concerned, including representatives from the Police and the Fire Service, who gave very informative talks. I also attended (briefly) the Church meeting which was well attended by villagers, and is nice to see people getting involved.

Clive

Copy Deadline - The deadline for copy for the edition of the Heron is 18 July 2025.

Enjoy reading the Heron?

If you haven't donated already and are interested in helping to support the production costs, you can now donate electronically at: www.madegreat.co.uk/sponsorship

100% of your donation goes towards printing costs.

You can choose to have your name printed in the next issue of the magazine or keep your donation anonymous.



Do you know someone who would like to receive a Heron each month, who doesn't live in the village? Contact us at adverts@theheron.info and we will send them a subscription form.

The cost is £15.00 for 6 editions (including P&P).

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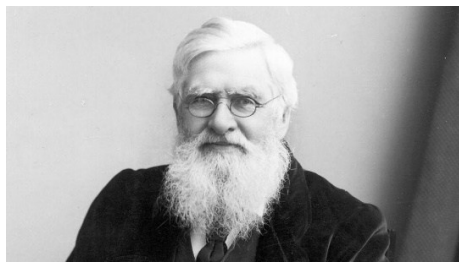


The Fens and the Flat Earth Conspiracy

Conspiracy theories might feel like a modern phenomenon, but one has its roots in the flat landscape of the Cambridgeshire Fens and dates back nearly 200 years.

The rise of flat Earth belief began with American author Washington Irving in his 1828 biography of Christopher Columbus. In it he declared that, as a man of his time, Christopher Columbus and his contemporaries believed the Earth was flat, which led to his navigation errors, and the fear of his crew that they would sail off the edge. That was completely false as Columbus' errors were to do with miscalculating distances, and no one knew better than a sailor the Earth was a globe.

While there had been belief in the flat Earth among the peoples of ancient India, China and Mesopotamia (modern day Iraq), this had largely been overturned from 5th Century BC.



More recently, physicist and mathematician Sir Isaac Newton, was the first to suggest the Earth was not perfectly round but an oblate spheroid.

Samuel Rowbotham was a devout Christian who had studied the Bible intensely as a child and pushed back against the scientific findings of his age. He was a 'flat-

earther' who was desperate to disprove the ancient knowledge our planet is a globe. Rowbotham hated the discoveries of Newton and wanted to destroy his legacy.

He thought the way to do this was to come to the Old Bedford River and conduct an experiment. He sent a boat along the length of the river with a flag on a mast and assumed that if he could see it through his telescope along its entire journey to Welney, it would prove the world was flat. He declared he was able to see it all the way to Welney Bridge, six miles away and to him this proved his theory. He repeated the attempt five times in the next 30 years, at the same spot, with the same method and getting the same result, and toured the country giving lectures and published a book 'Earth not a Globe' in 1865.

In 1861, Samuel married a 15-year-old and had 15 children with her, so his flat Earth work took a back seat, and John Hampden took up the baton, having read Rowbotham's book. The son of a clergyman, Mr Hampden was very much engaged with what he considered to be attacks on God by the scientific community. Hampden realised that Rowbotham's 'proof' had been completely ignored by the scientific community and was sinking into obscurity. As a result, he offered £500 to anyone who could prove Mr Rowbotham's flat Earth theory wrong.

The advertisement was spotted by the eminent naturalist and geographer Alfred Russel Wallace and on 5 March 1870, the pair met at the Old Bedford River. With them were two referees and a circus of the curious and the credulous. Mr Wallace, using the laws of refraction, was able to prove the Earth did have a curvature. Mr Hampden rejected this and refused to pay up. Lawsuits, libel cases, periods in prison and death threats followed.

Wallace never received a penny of the wager money, but was hounded by Hampden until the latter died in 1891.

Lady Elizabeth Blount was the next to energetically support the flat Earth theory, although she was mostly met by ridicule. It has since found some traction in the United States, where proponents use an ancient Jewish text, the Book of Enoch, to justify their belief.

From BBC News Cambridgeshire by Katy Prickett and John Devine, with content by Camay Chapman-Cameron of the March Museum

A "Heads Up" - Road Closure – maybe!

There was supposed to be a planned road closure for 2nd June at Jacksons Corner (Upwell Road/Sixteen Foot Road Junction), but our Parish Clerk, Dave Gibbs, has been informed that it may not happen on that date, so keep an eye out for any notices as to when it will happen. It will probably only be for 1 day when it does happen, and is for additional road markings and signs to try to improve the safety at the junction.



**CAMBRIDGESHIRE
FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE**
Working together to improve community safety

Safety reminder as charging batteries cause several fires

Crews from Wisbech and March, along with crews from Norfolk, have been called to fires involving batteries being overcharged, resulting in thermal runaway from the lithium-ion contained in them

and causing significant damage to people's homes, and in some cases, residents requiring hospital treatment for burns. Station Commander Gareth Boyd, one of the Service's community risk managers, said: "These incidents highlight the potential risks that lithium-ion batteries can pose and how it is vital for people to be alert when charging any kind of device. Last year firefighters attended around 20 fires involving batteries charging in homes, with more occurring already in 2025."

Most devices come with safety features to ensure they do not overheat when being charged. Using the charging packs, cables and plugs provided by the manufacturers, rather than cheaper versions will help charge devices safely. If you are looking to purchase additional ones then make sure they are the right voltage and are fully compatible. Replica replacement chargers sometimes don't have these features and can end up overcharging the battery, which causes thermal runaway leading to explosions and rapidly intense fires. We have seen items for sale, at car boot sales as well as online, that people can use to convert a standard bike into an e-bike. These, whilst seemingly a cheap alternative, can be highly dangerous and do not conform to the required standards to be sold in the UK.

Residents are being reminded to Take Charge and Be Safe, remembering some simple tips to help keep themselves and their families safe. Things like charging a mobile phone while you are awake and alert, rather than while sleeping, means the device won't be overcharged and risk overheating the battery. This can be the same for any device.

The Service is encouraging people to plan a good bedtime routine. Things like making sure all internal doors are closed, electrical sockets are switched off, any candles or heating appliances are off and keeping hallways and stairs clear of obstructions. This will not only help prevent a fire from happening but also ensure an easy escape if one does.

Many fires in the home start at night while people are asleep. This can be down to a number of different causes but can be easily avoided by following a few simple tips, as well as having working smoke alarms on each floor of your home. A bedtime routine is a great way to help you and your family stay fire safe in your home. By following a few simple tips before heading to bed for the night, you can prevent a fire from happening or, if one does break out, stop it from spreading.

Residents can also use our online home safety check to carry out their own fire risk assessment of their home. This simple to use tool goes through each area of a property and generates a safety plan for the occupants to follow. The check can be carried out on behalf of a vulnerable family member.

More information and safety tips on how to Take Charge and Be Safe [can be found in the Community Safety section of our website.](#)

For more information log on to www.cambsfire.gov.uk, follow us on social media or call 01480 444500.

Advertising in the Heron

Quarter Page (14cm High x 9.5cm Wide)

Portrait Format

6 x issues £52 (1 year)

Eighth Page (6.5cm High x 9.5cm Wide)

Landscape Format

6 x issues £36 (1 year)

Please contact adverts@theheron.info or phone Elaine on 01354 638310.

Advertisers - all our advert rates and conditions can be found on our website www.theheron.info. Business advertisers can book a series of 6 adverts (for 1 year's worth of advertising), paid in advance. Adverts for village fundraising events, personal announcements, or small private ads are usually free.

PC Snippets

As usual, a quick summary of the last 2 meetings for the Parish Council – full details of the meetings can be found at <http://www.christchurchparishcouncil.org.uk/minutes/>

Congratulation to Cllr Andrew Sparrow who has been elected Chair of the committee, Cllr James Hughes now taking the role of Vice Chair.

It was reported that the Defibrillator outside the Dun Cow has power and is in full working order, and the unit at Townley School is accessible at all times, so the intention is to have these added to the Circuit – the national register used by the emergency services.

The Clerk has offered to discuss the process that Manea followed with the Clerk of Manea Parish Council for them to have a mobile mast installed.

A meeting is to be arranged with Clarion Housing Group's Regional Operations Officer to discuss the Household items outside the property in Upwell Road.

The latest emergency response to a vehicle in the Sixteen Foot River turned out to be an older vehicle that had been in the water for some time.

The Clerk reported on meetings attended and correspondence received, including meetings with the Probation Service regarding Community Payback, Accent Housing in connection with the affordable housing proposal (Cllr Sparrow and the Clerk met with Accent Housing's Development Manager and Cambridgeshire ACRE's Rural Housing Enabler to discuss the work undertaken by the Council in preparation for the development. Accent will now contact landowners in the area to identify a suitable site). Cambridgeshire Highways re the Local Highways Initiative application. Cllr Sparrow proposed that the bus shelter project be renamed the Village Centre Regeneration Project. He is working on scoping the project, including looking at other villages. Elements suggested include a book share cupboard and historical interpretation signage. The Clerk met with the Project

Officer assigned to the Local Highway Improvement application for Wayside Estate. The suggested solution is a one-way traffic flow with speed humps. This will require the provision of a smaller vehicle to empty bins in Wayside Estate and Primrose Gardens. The Clerk has contacted the District Council to discuss the feasibility of this and is awaiting a response.

Members and Residents Issues

Cllr Hughes reported that a resident from the Croft had approached him regarding the sewerage plant – it is still working but can be unreliable. Residents are keen to explore the potential for a connection to the mains sewerage system. Members expressed concern regarding the feasibility of this.

Public meeting re the Church of Christ - It was noted that more than 50 people had attended the meeting. Cllr Hughes reported that several trees had been felled at an address in Church Road, but there appeared to be active bird nests in the trees – more evidence would be required for any action.

The Community Service Payback team have been attending on Sundays to undertake work on the Recreation Ground. The boundary behind Wayside Estate has been cleared and pollarding of the willows has been completed and the branches are now being stacked on the extension field to be transformed into bug houses, posts, and stakes. Cllr Hughes stated how impressed he was with the commitment and hard work of the Payback team. Recreation Ground - the two culverts have been installed. The Community Service Supervisor has offered to build bird and bat boxes for the project. Residents have started using the dog run.

The Community Centre play equipment needs some attention and/or cleaning (Community Payback team are a possibility) and the Junior area is reaching end of life.

The Annual Parish Council meeting was well attended by parishioners and the Police and Fire Service who attended to give presentations were very informative and well received.

The Heron V-A-C-A-N-C-Y

We are always looking for new ideas, articles, photographs, local historical stories, puzzles and information about things going on locally. Can you spare a couple of hours during the evening, once a month, to sit (usually with coffee and biscuits or similar) and discuss the next edition of the magazine? If so, your input would be greatly appreciated.

The Heron is also looking for someone who has knowledge of publishing software or, at least, have enough desktop knowledge to stand-in on the odd occasion to help put the magazine together. This usually takes a few hours over a period of about 3 weeks but can be done as and when - to a fairly flexible deadline.

The magazine is put together by volunteers (most of whom have been doing this for several years now) but as with anything, they can't do it forever and without them, there wouldn't be a magazine. Can you help?

If you can spare some time and are interested in joining the team, please contact the current Editor, Clive Benjamin, at editor@theheron.info - we'd love to welcome you.

Church News

Date	Place. Service. Time	
1 st June 2025	Christchurch 6.30pm Evening Prayer	Doddington. 10.30am Holy Communion
8 th June	Manea 10.30am Holy Communion	Wimblington 10.30 Morning Prayer Benwick 3pm Holy Communion
15 th June	Christchurch 10.30am Holy Communion	Doddington 10.30.am Morning Prayer
22 nd June	Manea 10.30am Morning Prayer	Wimblington 10.30am Holy Communion Welney 3pm Holy Communion
29 th June	Manea 10.30am United Benefice Pet Service	
6 th July	Christchurch 10.30am Morning Prayer	Doddington 10.30am Holy Communion
13 th July	Manea 10.30am Holy Communion	Wimblington 10.30am Morning Prayer Benwick 3pm Holy Communion
20 th July	Christchurch 10.30am Holy Communion	Doddington 10.30am Morning Prayer
27 th July	Manea 10.30am Morning Prayer	Wimblington 10.30am Morning Prayer Welney 3.00pm Holy Communion

Sunday 22nd June

NGS Open Gardens Day 12noon-4pm

(see below, from Philippa Pearson, for details)

Christchurch Community Centre

12 noon until 4pm

Tea, coffee and cakes

Come and relax in the Community Centre or even better, weather permitting, in the **newly upgraded garden area** (near the old bowling green) and enjoy fresh, home-made refreshments.

Some of the profits will go to National Garden Society but most will go to the church funds.

QUIZ NIGHT

Back by popular demand

Saturday, July 12th 2025

Christchurch Community Centre

7pm doors open. Questions start at 7.30pm

Teams of 6 maximum

£7 per person to include a ploughman's supper.

Book your team in with Helen on

07702 225259

The bar will be open and there will be a raffle

(Raffle Prizes gratefully received)

All profits to Church Funds

Sunday 22 June, 12-4pm - Christchurch Village Gardens open for charity, Entrance £8, children free, all money raised is for critical support nursing and health charities, with a donation to the village church.

Four village gardens will be open again this day for the National Garden Scheme (NGS). Last year, we opened for the first time for the NGS and, along with an additional opening in September, over £600 was raised for charities including Macmillan Cancer Support, Marie Curie and Carers Trust and Hospice UK. During the afternoon, tea and homemade cakes

are available at the Community Centre, kindly provided by the team at the church and a donation is given to the building for this. Lots of visitors came to the village last year to enjoy the gardens and refreshments, and we hope that many will again come and see us this year. Local people are all welcome - if you don't want to see the gardens, then enjoy the tea and cake at the Community Centre! If you can help with providing cakes on the day or offer some time to serve refreshments, please contact Helen Chappell at the church.

REMEMBER..... Our Parish Church is still collecting donations for March Food Bank. I deliver it all to the Food Bank in March at 12.30pm on TUESDAYS.

There's a box by my front door (5, Upwell Road, Christchurch) in which you can place your donations. If you would rather that I collected your donations from you, please message me or call me on 01354 638088 and we can arrange a time for that. Thank you to all who give, or are considering giving, to this worthy cause. If anyone would prefer to give money, let me know and I will give you a receipt.

Annie Nason

Looking for somewhere to go?

What's on in June & July.

6th June Friday 7:30pm - Isle Ave a Shanty, an evening of songs from the sea - The Secret Garden, Mile Tree Lane, Wisbech PE13 4TR - tickets from eventsources.co.uk website.

7th June Saturday 11am - 4pm - RSPCA Block Fen Animal Centre, Open Day and Fun Dog Show, Block Fen Drove, Wimblington, PE15 0FB. Dog Show, Live Music, Arts, Crafts and Food Stalls. Free Entry.

7th June Saturday 2pm - 9pm - Dance In The Park at West End Park, March Dance Tent, DNB, House. Free Entry.

8th June Sunday 3pm - Glenn Miller Magic with The Freedom Jazz Orchestra at Manea Royal British Legion Club, East Street, Manea PE15 0JJ- Tickets 10.00 with bingo during the interval. Tel. 07597 631632 for tickets.

8th June Sunday 10am - 2pm - Upwell and Outwell Yard Sales - see their village Facebook page for addresses taking part or Fenland Yard Sales Facebook page.

22nd June Sunday - NGS Open Gardens, Christchurch - 12-4pm - See Page 9 for further details.

5th July Saturday 10.00am start - Skylark Summer Market, Manea Road, Wimblington PE15 0PE.

11th – 13th July Friday - Sunday - Ely Folk Festival at Ben's Yard, Stuntney Estate, Ely CB7 5TR- folk music festival, onsite camping, Morris dancing, ceilidhs, real ale bar. Tickets via elyfolkfestival.co.uk

12th July Saturday - Quiz Night - 7 for 7.30pm - Christchurch Community Centre. Team of up to 6. £7 per person to include a Ploughman's Supper.

25th July Friday 7pm - 11pm - The Great Gatsby Ball in Ely Cathedral- bringing the roaring 1920s back to life featuring a Live Swing Band, 1920s fashion, Cabaret Performers. 1920s dress encouraged! Tickets via Eventbrite website.

31st July - 3rd August - Cambridge Rock Festival at Ben's Yard, Stuntney Estate, Ely CB7 5TR.

Riddles

- 1: If a zookeeper had 100 pairs of animals in her zoo, and two pairs of babies are born for each one of the original animals, then (sadly) 23 animals don't survive, how many animals do you have left in total?
- 2: A tree doubled in height each year until it reached its maximum height over the course of ten years. How many years did it take for the tree to reach half its maximum height?
- 3: It has keys, but no locks. It has space, but no room. You can enter, but can't go inside. What is it?
- 4: Ask this question all day long, but always get completely different answers, and yet all the answers will be correct. What is the question?
- 5: Throw away the outside and cook the inside, then eat the outside and throw away the inside. What is it?

Answers below

1: A: 977 animals (100 x 2 = 200; 200 + 800 = 1000; 1000 - 23 = 977) 2: Nine 3: A Keyboard 4: What time is it? 5: Corn on the Cob



TOWNLEY SCHOOL AND NURSERY

Christchurch, Wisbech, Cambs. PE14 9NA
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Website: www.townley.cambs.sch.uk
01354 638229



Facebook—Townley School and Nursery

Remember that our website has lots more information about school.

May 2025

It feels like a lot has happened since our last report: the Year 6 children have just finished their SATS; we had a string quartet concert; the new mobile is on site almost ready to use; the Enhanced Resource Base is open; we welcomed the new Director of Education to the school; the new classroom looks like a classroom – it just needs a ceiling and carpet and the supplies have arrived to convert the current Year 5/6 classroom into the new EYFS classroom! WWT Welney are helping us spend a grant we have received from the DFE (we were one of only two schools in Cambridgeshire who qualified for the Nature Grant) I am looking forward to sharing with you how we spend this.

In addition to this we are currently consulting on proposals to Federate Townley School & Nursery with Friday Bridge Primary. You can give your views on our website www.townley.cambs.sch.uk

Emerald Class (Y3/4) we completely embraced the 'Design your own Building' competition Jeakins Weir (the contractor building the new classroom extension) ran in school. We could barely move in class for all of the fantastic models the children made at home. We really have a new generation of designers in the making! In science we have been exploring electricity – we should have combined the two things! We have even managed to take part in Bikeability this week!

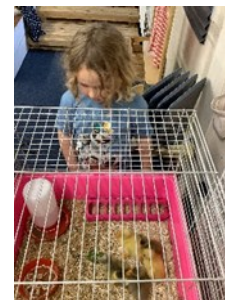


EYFS Class (YN/R) EYFS have had a busy term, we have hatched chicks, made drums, been on a safari Story Café and made African safari animal masks! These are just a handful of the amazing fun learning activities we have taken part in! If you would like to see more have a look at our weekly newsletter on the school website.

If you are looking for a Nursery place for your child in September, please call the school office. We can offer up to 30 hours from age two.

Emperor Class (Y5/6) have been writing dialogue in first person using Myths and Legends. We have been reading the story Theseus and the Minotaur and have been working on balancing description and dialogue, using dialogue to show character and using noun phrases and relative clauses to add information. In **Guided Reading** we began our new text 'The Explorer' by Katherine Rundell.

In **RE** we investigated where some religious laws come from, how they are different to the laws of the land and how they might be interpreted by some Muslims. In **Music** the class used abstract images as inspiration and used the link between colours and music to create their own vocal compositions.



Hawker Class (Y1/2) in computing the children have been exploring programming as part of the Lego Discovery Project (another grant!), we have received fantastic under the sea themed Lego kits. They all built submarines, and thought about what else explorers might need to go deep into the ocean. In PSHE we explored what our early warning signs are, those things that our body does to tell us we are in danger.



Remember that you can find out more about us on our website or Facebook page. If you are thinking of applying for a place at our school and would like to more, call and make an appointment, we would love to show you around.



Dal Roy - Independent Councillor - Elm and Christchurch

Dal Roy is an Independent councillor representing the Elm & Christchurch ward at Fenland District Council. He also serves as a Wisbech Town Councillor for Clarence Ward.

Beyond his political career, Dal Roy has held various leadership roles, including Managing Director providing transport to Cambridgeshire County Council, Practice Manager at Boots UK, and Training Manager at Boots UK. His experience spans sales, management, and training, demonstrating strong leadership skills and a commitment to growth and development.

As a councillor, he is actively involved in the Council Overview and Scrutiny Panel and has appointments to outside bodies, including the Hundred of Wisbech IDB. He is also a member of the Institute of Leadership and the Institute of Licensing.

Additional roles he has held are Governor at the local school, lay member for education appeals, Chairman of the Business Forum, Member of the Fenland Strategic Partnership in its founding years and is also currently the area executive member for Wisbech and March Neighbourhood Watch Schemes.

He was born in Wolverhampton and moved to Whittlesey in 1986, and after to Elm in 2004. Married with four grown up children and two grandchildren. He has been President of Whittlesey Rotary and Wisbech Rotary and has over 25 years' experience in helping with a hand up and not a handout. He is also a Trustee for the Wisbech Society and campaigns for the preservation of the town's historical buildings. In his spare time, he likes to cycle and spend time gardening. Councillor Dal Roy's contributions stand out due to his independent approach to governance and community-focused initiatives. Unlike many councillors affiliated with major political parties, Roy operates as an independent councillor, allowing him to advocate for local issues without party constraints. His involvement in the Overview and Scrutiny Panel ensures transparency in council decisions, and his appointment to the Hundred of Wisbech Internal Drainage Board (IDB) highlights his commitment to water management and flood prevention.

Compared to other councillors in Fenland District Council, Roy's focus on local infrastructure and environmental concerns has been particularly notable. For example, his opposition to a proposed housing development in Elm reflected strong local sentiment. His advocacy contributed to the council rejecting the proposal due to its unacceptable encroachment into the countryside.

Other councillors in Fenland District Council represent a mix of Conservative, Liberal Democrat, and Independent affiliations. While some councillors focus on broader party policies, Roy's direct engagement with residents and community-driven projects, such as securing a memorial bench in Elm to honour former councillor Mac Cotterill, demonstrate his hands-on approach.

Councillor Roy attends most of the Christchurch and Elm Parish Council meetings to support them in his role as District Councillor. He can be contacted on droy@fenland.gov.uk.

The views of thousands of people across Cambridgeshire about their quality of life is being sought, to give councillors an insight.

Cambridgeshire County Council said the survey would help influence business planning decisions and policies. Residents who live in the five district areas of the county will be asked to take part in the annual review.

The authority said previous surveys had highlighted that roads and pavement maintenance, the cost of living, and mental health and loneliness were areas of concern.

Data also showed that residents felt happy and safe, and that the county was a good place to raise children, the council said.

The online and telephone survey will aim to speak to about 1,100 people in each of the five districts - Cambridge City, East Cambridgeshire, Fenland, Huntingdonshire and South Cambridgeshire. The council added: "This year, for 2025, there are two questions to help introduce the concept of Local Government Reorganisation to residents and provide an early indication of awareness."

The survey closes on 21st July, and can be found here:

<https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/council/quality-of-life-survey>

+

SIXFENCHURCHES
|
CHRISTCHURCH

As many of you know, the Church of Christ in Christchurch village has been closed for over two years. The drains need renewing, and damp has led to the internal ceiling falling down, making it unsafe to use the building. The building is therefore listed on the Historic England Heritage at Risk Register.

At the end of March, the Parochial Church Council (distinct from the Parish Council) and the Diocese of Ely initiated a consultation process to explore the future of the church and gather community input.

Thank you to everyone who came to our community meeting on 29th March and who filled in the survey. 50 people came to the meeting and there were 51 respondents to the survey, some of which included more than one person. As far as surveys go, a response rate of over 5% is fairly representative, (900 people live in the parish), but we do note that most respondents are towards the more mature end of the age range! If you're a parent of younger children we would still love to have your view.

The survey showed the community values the church building. Most respondents see the church as the historical and emotional centrepiece of the village, that the church is the 'hub' or 'heart' of the village and gives the village its name. The building holds significant value for life events (weddings, funerals, christenings) and community gatherings. Over ½ of the respondents discussed the importance of the churchyard.

Over 2/3 of respondents support the repair and improvement of the building if funding is available. A minority of people (3) opposed repair, suggesting

instead the building be converted to alternative uses, such as housing. Respondents suggested that improvements also be made to the kitchen, toilets, eco-friendly heating, Audio Visual systems and to improve accessibility so the church could be used for more than just religious events. Respondents suggest the church building complements rather than competing with the Community Centre as an exhibition, concert or arts space.

Many respondents expressed how important the churchyard is, as 'an oasis of peace', for personal time of reflection, and expressed how the church 'holds the history of the village'. Many have 'at least one memory' of the church at a special service.

Sixteen people expressed an interest in being part of a renovation project team, so I am now in touch with those people to see if we can form a group. This team would drive the project forward, scope the work, apply for grant funding, plan the work that needs to be done and engage with stakeholders further in the village, whilst reporting to the PCC. Local farmers with their expert local knowledge have suggested how we might manage the fundamental problem of drainage.

Thank you again for your responses. The PCC will keep you updated with progress.

Canon Mark Collinson, Rector
mark.6fenchurches@gmail.com

Helen Chappell, Churchwarden
helenchappell3101@gmail.com

Christchurch Ladies Circle

On Wednesday 16th April, the new Christchurch Ladies Circle held an afternoon session with a guest showing off his wood turning skills. As you can see in the attached picture it was a quite well-attended meeting...

In May our speaker was Brian Bignall speaking about being a 60's photographer with stars such as Cliff Richard, The Who, Adam Faith, Cilla Black and The Beatles to name just a few. It was very interesting and brought many memories back to our members and guests. Amazing how many had seen some of them in our local dance halls. An excellent presentation enjoyed by all.

- June 10th - Strawberry party and Quiz evening - Competition
- Strawberry related
July 8th - Talk by the R.N.L.I. - Competition
- Sunshine related

Visitors always welcome cost £3.00.



Stonea Camp

Dread Across the Sea: Roman Fear of Celtic Britain



For generations, the Roman Empire had expanded its borders with apparent ease, taming the wilds of Gaul, the deserts of North Africa, and the dense woodlands of Germania. Yet Britain remained unconquered, not because the land lacked value - its rich resources were well known throughout the empire - but because the Romans were afraid of invading Britain.

To the Romans, Britain was a land of mist, myth, and menace. The Druids, as keepers of sacred knowledge, interpreters of omens, and officiators of bloody rituals, wielded enormous spiritual and political power and kept alive an oral history that bound the Celtic people together and were seen as sorcerers, political influencers, and ideological enemies of Roman order. Their practices appeared both primitive and subversive and most terrifying of all were the Roman accounts of Druidic human sacrifices, which were either exaggerated or true, with victims described as being ritually slain to appease Celtic gods. The fact that Druids taught reincarnation and preached fearlessness in battle made them all the more dangerous in Rome's eyes.

The Celts were a collection of tribal people who, although culturally linked to the Gallic tribes across the Channel, they had developed distinct traditions, identities, and modes of resistance. They were a unifying force, with their warrior ethos; courage, loyalty to the tribal chief, and the pursuit of honour in battle were the highest virtues. Warriors painted themselves with blue woad, adorned their hair with lime, and often fought semi-naked to intimidate their enemies, these displays reflecting a view in which death in battle was a pathway to glory. Celtic armies were fluid and fierce, they lacked the discipline and tactics of Rome, but they compensated with speed, ferocity, and an intimate knowledge of their terrain. British warriors used chariots, an unfamiliar and unsettling tactic to the Romans, and ambushed enemies in forests and marshes where Roman formations faltered, and Stonea Camp would have represented everything the Romans feared about invading Britain, being remote, marsh-bound, and situated in a natural landscape difficult for the rigid formations of the Roman army to navigate. The local knowledge gave the Iceni a tactical edge - this was not a flat, open terrain, but a watery maze filled with potential ambush points.

Stonea's significance as a centre for Druidic worship or political gatherings extended beyond the military. It would have been a place where the Iceni reaffirmed their traditions, held rituals, and passed on their cultural memory. To destroy such a place would demand confronting the spiritual heart of the tribe, a task many Roman commanders dreaded - defeating Celtic warriors on the battlefield was one thing; stamping out the roots of their religion and identity was another. Roman propaganda, in its attempt to demonise the Celts and justify conquest, only reinforced the aura of dread surrounding Britain, and when Roman legions finally crossed the Channel, they carried the burden of inherited fear.



When Julius Caesar first encountered the Britons, he was surprised by their resistance. Even though he won several skirmishes, the lack of political centralisation, harsh weather, and logistical nightmares convinced him to retreat, and reinforced the notion that Britain was not worth the risk at that time. When Emperor Claudius resolved to invade in AD 43, marching into Britain was not just a logistical campaign - fears had built up over nearly a century that it was a venture into the unknown, against enemies fighting with the favour of strange gods and the promise of eternal life.

What set the Iceni apart was not just their warrior skills, but their political cunning. While many tribes were quick to either resist or capitulate to Roman demands, the Iceni carefully balanced between cooperation and defiance. Their leaders, such as Anted(ios) and Prasutagus, accepted the status of client kings under Roman rule, paying tribute whilst retaining a degree of sovereignty, but this arrangement was always fragile, built on mutual suspicion rather than trust. While the Roman invasion ultimately succeeded in establishing a foothold, the Iceni, initially cooperative, rose in open rebellion under Queen Boudicca, and the uprising shook Roman Britain to its core. Though it was eventually suppressed, the revolt confirmed to the Romans that these were not a people who would quietly accept domination.

For further information about Stonea Camp, forthcoming open days at the site, a presentation or guided tour, please email, Heritage, Culture & Community (HCC) Stonea at hccstonea@gmail.com or follow our Facebook page, <https://facebook.com/hccstoneacamb>s, or our Instagram page, https://www.instagram.com/hcc_stonea, we would be delighted to assist. Amanda Carlin – Chairman HCC Stonea.



Christchurch Gardening Club

As I was sitting in the gardening club meeting on Tuesday 20th May, it occurred to me how, thanks to the goodwill generated by the club and our secretary Marion, we seem able to attract some of the most well-known and talented people to come and share their knowledge and expertise with us, the club members.

This meeting was no exception, when garden designer Philippa Pearson came to share with us the process, angst and pleasure of designing a garden for The Chelsea Flower Show. Her garden featured on the main avenue, won a silver medal, and was indeed a labour of love, taking the best part of two years to complete and featuring a wonderful mosaic path showing a Peacock and Victorian Summerhouse. The garden now resides at a hotel in The Lake District.

Imagine my surprise when our guest speaker from March, Jenni Cairns, popped up several times on TV in the last few weeks demonstrating her wonderful sculptures and involved again this year at Chelsea, although this time contributing her art rather than designing a whole garden.

April saw us welcome Sarah Jane who told us all about setting up a nursery. Once again, a fountain of knowledge.

So, should you wish to hone your gardening skills or just revel in the knowledge and skills of our speakers just get in touch or come along on the night.

Next month, Tuesday 17th June, is our Summer Buffet, lots of food and the chance of a good natter. What's not to like?

In July we have Roderick Woods coming to talk about Western Australia. Call: 01354 638 230 for more information.

Steve

Your Letters

Neville Chamberlain

25.2.1938 – 23.4.2025

Nev as he was known, a lifelong resident of Christchurch sadly passed peacefully away recently at the age of 87 following a few months of deteriorating health.

Born at 7 Council House and educated at Townley School he, upon leaving at age 15, went to study as a baker/confectioner at Cambridge Technical College for 3 years. National Service followed this with 2 years in the RAF on the catering side. After his discharge he secured a position as pastry chef with the East India Company, later to become P&O Orient lines and just after his 21st birthday he set sail aboard the ocean liner Iberia. Thus began his career as a chef sailing the 7 seas aboard P&O's many ships including the Oriana (as Head Pastry Chef), Navassa, Uganda, Sun Princess and the Canberra. Later he became Head Chef aboard the Baltic Princess (a roll on roll off ferry sailing between Felixstowe and Finland).

Following a number of years with leg problems, and many operations, Nev decided to retire at the age of 54 but continued to travel - taking holidays all over the World (the last few years his Dun Cow drinking friends have chaperoned him on various holidays).

Nev enjoyed walking, gardening, taking meals with friends and family, the breakfast club and visits to the Dun Cow - with a short stagger home. His great passion all his life was being an ardent fan of his beloved Manchester United whose recent form some believe contributed to his demise.

Charities were well supported by Nev as he regularly donated to Guide Dogs, Norfolk Hospice, Air Ambulance and was a member of the Buff Club who raised money for good causes.

He will be missed as a village character with his booming laugh and strong opinions. Rest in peace Nev.

Article written by his brother-in-law, Malcolm Hicks

Christchurch Umbrella

Christchurch Umbrella are looking for regular volunteers to help with the Friday Breakfasts. Whether you can help by taking orders, washing up, clearing tables or serving food - we really don't mind but we are struggling without your support. Can you help? If so, please contact Helen on 07702 225259.

Christchurch Book Club



The Christchurch Book club met up in May to discuss the book we had been reading by Louise Candlish called *The Other Passenger*. Mixed views on this particular book. We are currently reading *The Husband's Secret* by Liane Moriarty. Our next book will be *Strong Female Character* by Fern Brady.

New members are always welcome. For some members of our book club, they prefer to read the book electronically rather than a physical book so for anyone looking to come along to our meeting, it is personal preference.

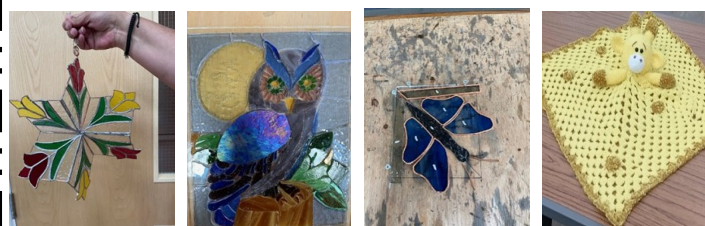
For further details or if you would like to come along to the next meeting, which is Tuesday 3rd June and 1st July at 7:30 and require details of the venue, please contact Pat Rigby on 07776 142642.

Christchurch Hobbies and Craft Club

We now have approximately 22 members who make up The Christchurch Hobbies and Craft Club. The Club meets on a Tuesday morning from 10 am until 1 pm. Members bring along their hobbies/crafts and indulge in 3 hours of 'me' time, devoted to their particular interest - while enjoying the company of others - exchanging ideas, or just 'chin-wagging' followed by lunch and other refreshments.

Please see below for some samples of some artistic glass creations and a crocheted baby comforter blanket made by some members of our group.

Among our talented attendees there are artists, knitters, crocheters, sewers/embroiderers, gift card makers and we now have 6 regular members working with stained glass. If you are interested in learning a new skill and would like to join our 6-week course, learning how to work with stained glass, or if you are interested in joining us, please ring Janet Harper on 07941 465319 for further details. We'd love to see you.



Christopher

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Three Holes Village Hall

SUNDAY 6TH JULY
A COMPLETE UNKNOWN (15)

The electric true story behind the rise of one of the most iconic singer-songwriters in history. New York, 1961. Against the backdrop of a vibrant music scene and tumultuous cultural upheaval, an enigmatic 19 year old from Minnesota arrives with his guitar and revolutionary talent, destined to change the course of American music. He forges intimate relationships with music icons of Greenwich Village on his meteoric rise, culminating in a groundbreaking and controversial performance that reverberates worldwide. Timothée Chalamet stars and sings as Bob Dylan.

SUNDAY 3RD AUGUST
WICKED (PG)

Wicked, one of the most beloved and enduring musicals on the stage, now arrives on your screen as a generation-defining cinematic event. The untold story of the witches of Oz, Wicked stars Cynthia Erivo as Elphaba, a misunderstood young woman who has yet to discover her true power, and Ariana Grande as Glinda, a popular young woman who has yet to discover her true heart. The two meet at Shiz University and forge an unlikely friendship before their lives take different paths following an encounter with The Wonderful Wizard of Oz. Their extraordinary adventures will ultimately see them fulfill their destinies as the Wicked Witch of the West and Glinda the Good. Wicked is an immersive, cultural celebration you will want to experience over and over again!

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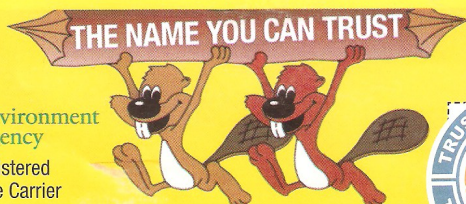
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Village Contacts and Useful Information

By now you should have all received a hard-backed copy of the Contacts and Useful Information which featured regularly in the magazine. It was decided that we could free up a page in the magazine by offering this as a 'pull out and keep' page for readers. However, if you are new to the village, and haven't received a copy, please let us know (enquiries@theheron.info) and we will do our best to get one to you.



Fly-tippers and cowboy waste operators to have vehicles seized and crushed

A new crackdown on cowboy waste operators will tackle soaring fly-tipping and clean up Britain's streets, lanes and rural areas, the Government has announced on 29th April.

Councils will work with the police to identify, seize and crush vehicles of waste criminals. Drones and mobile CCTV cameras will be deployed to identify cars and vans belonging to fly-tippers so they can be destroyed.

Ministers have launched a rapid review to slash red tape blocking councils from seizing and crushing vehicles. Councils currently have to bear the significant cost of seizing and storing vehicles but under new plans, being consider by Ministers, fly-tippers will cover this cost, saving councils and taxpayers money.

In addition, waste cowboys will now face up to five years in prison for operating illegally. Any criminals caught transporting and dealing with waste illegally will now face up to five years in prison under new legislation.

The Environment Agency will also carry out identity and criminal record checks on operators in the sector so there is nowhere to hide for rogue firms. It will be handed more resources as they will now be able to fund the cost of policing the industry through permits, boosting their powers and cutting costs for taxpayers. The reforms will also give them more power to revoke permits, issue enforcement notices and hefty fines.

The proposed reforms to the carriers, brokers, dealers and exemption regimes, coupled with strong and effective enforcement from the regulators, could go a long way to help tackle the scourge of waste crime, with increased scrutiny and accountability making it much harder for criminals to operate in our sector.

Full article: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/councils-to-seize-and-crush-fly-tipping-vehicles-to-clean-up-britain>



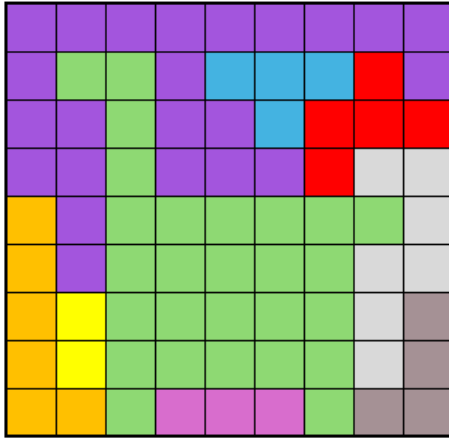
Jeff is caught fly-tipping.

Letters to the Editorial Team

The Editorial team welcome letters from its readers. Please email letters to: editor@heron.info or post them to *The Editor of The Heron, 1 Brimstone Close, Christchurch PE14 9EE*. **PLEASE NOTE:** Letters will only be considered for publication if they are accompanied by name and contact details. The Heron will not share any contact details unless given permission.

We look forward to hearing from you!

Puzzler



1. Your goal is to have exactly one X in each row, column and coloured region.
2. Two X cannot touch each other - not even diagonally.

Answer on page 24.



WW2 veteran joins the Royal British Legion - at 102

The Royal British Legion will welcome its newest member on the 80th anniversary of VE Day - thought to be the oldest in the country to sign up.

Stanley Eastgate is a 102-year-old World War Two veteran of the Army, who still lives in the town where he was born - Wisbech in Cambridgeshire. Mr Eastgate joined the Royal Artillery as a gunner in March 1942, at the age of 19.

He signed up at the town's RBL branch on 8 May, external, saying: "If they will have me, I'll enjoy it; I can take part in church services."

Branch chairman Toby North said he was "absolutely thrilled" to welcome Mr Eastgate, although he admitted that when he first heard a 102-year-old wanted to join the Wisbech RBL branch, he thought it was an April Fool joke.

Mr North said: "The legion must have members of 100-plus years, but surely no one of the age of 102 has ever joined as a new member."

He said he hoped Mr Eastgate would be an active member, taking part in events including laying wreaths on Remembrance days.

Mr Eastgate's son David, 72, and daughter Carol Ann, 76, said they both planned to join the legion alongside their father.

"We like to try and support our dad as much as we can, and with the help the RBL can offer, it is a nice for dad to join something like that," his son David said.

Mr Eastgate's son David described his father as a "very determined man who has looked after the family tremendously well over the years".

Mr Eastgate said of his long life: "I go to see the doctor regularly and have check-ups - and I keep my fingernails clean, people don't realise that dirt and germs get under them, I have mine manicured."

Mr Eastgate attempted to escape from his first prisoner of war camp through the main sewer in January 1943, but was re-captured.

As a teenage soldier, Mr Eastgate was captured shortly after his regiment arrived in Algiers, Algeria, in November 1942. "I ended up in a camp in Italy and was given the job of treading grapes, bare-footed, but I'll tell you something - I used to do a wee in it and I have never drunk any wine since," he said.

"I had my head shaved and a red diamond sewn on the back of my uniform, but I still made two attempts to escape, one of which was through a sewer, without success though."

The gunner was demobbed in 1947 and eventually returned to Wisbech where he re-joined the fruit and potato merchant he had worked at prior to the war.

He said he had had "quite a life" but was now "a bit slower in my actions and walking around".

From BBC News, Cambridgeshire – John Devine



Over 65s Parish Lunch 2025

Another great turn out this year for our Annual Over 65s Parish Lunch, where the guests were greeted on arrival with sherry and fruit juices. Then followed a lovely lunch of Chicken Breast in a cream, bacon and mushroom sauce with fresh vegetables. A choice of summer fruit pavlova or chocolate brownie followed. Wine and fruit juices were served throughout the afternoon and guests were then treated to music and entertainment by The Upwood Ukelele Band who kept us all singing and laughing.

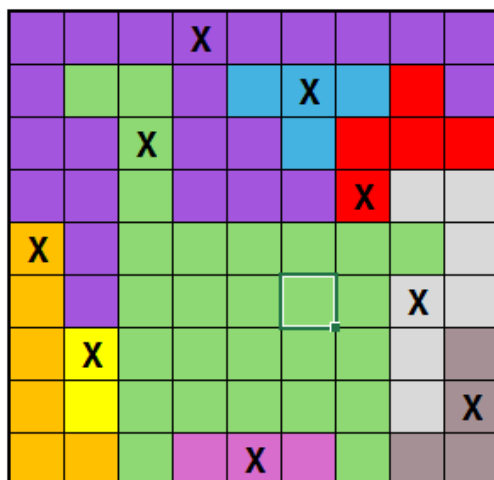
Feedback from the afternoon was hugely positive and we hope that all who came had a really lovely time.

A big thanks to the youngsters who gave up their time and came along to help on the day. It was really appreciated.

Parish Lunch Committee



Puzzler Answer



Newspaper clippings about WWII soldiers from Christchurch

Courtesy of Sue Holmes who took them from the Wisbech and Surrounding Villages Facebook Page

Any views expressed in The Heron do not necessarily reflect the views of The Heron Editorial Team. The team aim to provide a balanced view of village opinions where such views are expressed. We reserve the right to edit any submissions where we feel this is appropriate.



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