



The Heron

Community Magazine

February/March 2026

Delivered to homes in Christchurch, Euxmoor and Tipps End



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Carvery in aid of the Heron

On Sunday 25th January, the Heron ran a carvery to raise funds. This was sold out, with 57 tickets sold, and along with the raffle, raised almost £500.

A massive thank you to Danielle-Choe Carver (showing the skills she brings to the Village Cakery) and her family for preparing and running the carvery, all went extremely well, and the food was simply fantastic.

Also a big thank you to Andy Lansdell for running the bar, to FACT (see elsewhere in the magazine) for providing a hamper as a raffle prize, and to Paul and Sue Simpson who also provided a raffle prize.

Can't wait for the next one (Danielle, that might be a hint...)



Fenland Farmers Santa Run

On 20th December, the annual Santa Run came to Christchurch with 3 festively decorated tractors, winding their way through the side roads of the village so no-one missed out. About £280 was raised on the day, of which £140 comes back to the village.



Christchurch Over 65s Annual Parish Lunch

Sunday 12th April 2026

12.30pm for 1.00pm

If you or your partner live in the Christchurch Parish, and are 65 or over, you are very welcome to join us at our annual lunch on 12th April.

Invitations will be going out mid-March, to all those people we have on file, but if you haven't received an invite by the 29th March, please call Elaine Reed-Hughes on 01354 638310 to book your place.

All those from the parish, who qualify, are very welcome and we look forward to seeing you.

Parish Lunch Committee

DIAL-A-RIDE Fenland



Dial-A-Ride is a service designed for people who cannot access or use conventional modes of transport, including wheelchair users. We are a membership organisation, therefore you will be required to register with us (<https://www.fact-cambs.co.uk/Registration.html>) before you can benefit from our services. You must be a member of FACT to use this service.

Our buses are fully accessible and equipped with clamps and fittings to secure you and your wheelchair in safely. If preferred the driver can assist you with transferring to a seat.

This is a door to door service and will take you anywhere you need to go in the town. The drivers offer assistance to individual passengers in boarding and leaving the vehicle and makes sure you are transported safely during the journey, but we are not able to offer support once your destination is reached, however you can take an escort with you. The bus will pick up other members on route and the time of your journey will vary depending on how many people are travelling. Please note that all our times listed on the timetables are approximate.

So that Dial-A-Ride can be available to as many people as possible it does follow a form of route and timetable. To find out which days/times it serves your area, please refer to the timetable for your area. We also run a "Special" Dial-A-Ride, going to either Kings Lynn, Huntingdon, Ely, Stamford and Peterborough, plus Day Trips all year long. Please refer to the Dial-A-Ride Specials and Day Trips timetables for dates and fares.

Just like any other bus service, Dial-A-Ride has to charge fares, but these are kept as low as possible. Members with a valid Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority's concessionary bus pass can travel on our Dial-A-Ride service free of charge. If you require more information about the bus pass scheme please contact us or visit the CPCA website - <https://transport.cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk/buses/free-bus-passes/cambridgeshire-free-bus-passes/cambs-applying-for-and-renewing-a-free-bus-pass/>

Please make sure you have booked before 1pm the day before you wish to travel.

To become a Dial-A-Ride member please refer to the registration process - <https://www.fact-cambs.co.uk/Registration.html>

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.



Gary Goose

Supporters of a gaggle of geese living freely in a town have created a charity pin badge of one member who likes to roam separately from the rest.

The Geese of March Facebook group, which has 7,000 members, has designed a badge of a loner called Gary, who lives apart from the white-feathered flock. Chrissie Fadipe, who co-ordinates sales of the Cambridgeshire town's goose merchandise, said they had decided to model the pin on Gary due to his "hilarious" personality. She said sales of merchandise "went off the scale over Christmas" and they hoped the badge would help raise further funds for two local animal charities. The metal pin badge will be made of hard enamel and zinc with glitter.

Gary has a distinctive beak with a crack on the side, white plumage with a few black feathers and "the most beautiful blue eyes".

"I was once calling him and he appeared to tell me to honk off because he does respond when you call him with a quack," said Fadipe.

"People love him as he is the ultimate underdog. No-one likes to see someone isolated on their own or not fitting in with a gang."

The majority of the gaggle, which numbers about 18 birds, live on a hillock known as Tellytubby Hill, close to the river but Gary prefers to live away from the rest of the town's feathered inhabitants and has chosen to reside in Taff Stevens' garden, which backs on to the river where the bird has a "little ramp" between a boat and decking that he uses to get on to dry land.

The bird had moved in eight years ago and "sort of stayed there ever since", said Stevens.

"We sort of feed him and everybody sort of feeds him and walks by," he added.

"The kids stop to see him before they go to school and when the boats go up and down the river, he'll follow them so far and then he comes back. Everybody knows him."

"He's not the friendliest... he will give you a peck, he's a bit of an antisocial goose, really," says Taff Stevens.

Stevens said many people had knocked on his door if they had not seen Gary for a day or two.

The loner goose does need help occasionally - he got stuck when the river froze recently. "We had to break the ice so he could get in and out of the water and into the garden," said Stevens.

He is now selling his property and has told all interested viewers they will have to keep Gary "otherwise they will upset the people of March. He's very easy to live with and stays in a separate bit of the garden."

From BBC News, Images, Chrissie Fadipe/Linda Batten and John Devine



GARDENER AND CLEANER WANTED...

To assist a couple in (Church Road) Christchurch. If you are interested, or for further information, please call Gordon or Shirley on 01354 638019.

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 first edition of 2026. The days are starting to get longer, and more importantly, the bin collections have returned to normal, so no more asking which bin is going to be collected this week, and what day are they collecting again. Well, until Easter any way.

As I write this, I have just returned from the fantastic carvery organised by Danielle-Chloe, and what a brilliant afternoon it was, raising around £500 for The Heron, but more importantly bringing a lot of people together for an absolutely first class meal, and it's lovely that people pitch in and help with these events.

I've spoken to two or three people in the village, and there's a lot of interesting history in Christchurch and surrounding areas. If anyone would like to send in stories of the past, we'd be delighted to publish them in The Heron.

From the Chair of The Heron Executive Committee...

I would like to share with our readers how pleased we are that our Parish Council has made the Heron a generous grant to support the magazine and ensure its longevity for the coming months.

Village Skip

The Parish Council have agreed to fund a Skip for the village. This will be placed in the grounds of the CCC on 11th April, and will be in an area covered by CCTV to ensure that this facility is not abused.



Church Renovation

The Church Renovation Committee are excited to announce that they have appointed an Architect to become the project lead, which is the first step of the process with getting the Church usable. More details to follow in the next edition!

Copy Deadline - The deadline for copy for the edition of the Heron is 16/03/2026

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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Volunteer Appeal

Volunteer School Appeals Panel Member

- Are you interested in Primary and Secondary School Education?
- Do you have excellent listening skills?
- Are you able to put people at ease?
- Are you able to make balanced decisions?

If you have answered yes to any of the above, please consider applying to be become a Volunteer School Appeals Panel Member.

What is the role?

All parents or carers have the right to make an appeal to an independent appeal panel if their child is not offered a place at their preferred school. The role of the panel is to decide whether a child, who has been refused a place by an admission authority, should be given a place.

Appellants often become clearer about the options open to them during a hearing and the reasons why a place was not offered at a preferred school. The appeal panel is independent of the local authority and their decision is binding on all parties, unless overturned by the courts.

Why be a panel member?

For some people the work is helpful for their career, providing them with relevant work experience. For others, it is rewarding to give people and school representatives the chance to state their case.

What will I be doing?

- You will be sitting on independent admission appeal panels
- Ensuring that parents feel they have had a fair and independent hearing, have been given every opportunity to put their case and have been taken seriously
- Volunteers must be able to listen to two sides of a case and weigh up evidence objectively and impartially.

What skills or experience do I need?

The following qualities will help you with the role of member of the panel:

- Ability to communicate effectively with a wide range of people.
- Ability to read, assess and analyse information and identify key points.
- Ability to listen to key information.
- Ability to ask questions to obtain and clarify information.
- Ability to obtain and weigh up evidence to reach a reasoned and evidence-based decision.
- Willingness to work as part of a team.
- Willingness to take advice.

Equal Opportunities

- Ability to demonstrate awareness/understanding of equal opportunities.
- Ability to consider people's physical, social and welfare needs.

Panel members will be expected to develop an understanding of the admissions process and the guidance / legislation.

Will I receive training?

All volunteer Panel Members receive initial and annual refresher training. You will also be fully supported by the Appeals Service.

How much time do I need to give?

This can vary depending on the level of commitment you wish to give. Appeals are arranged for half day or full day. Appeals are held through the academic year, but the peak months are between April and July.

Hearings are currently virtual using Microsoft TEAMS.

If you require further information or would like an informal to chat to discuss the above, please contact Clare.Cronk@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

Volunteers needed!!



- Are you interested in Primary & Secondary School Education?
- Do you have excellent listening skills?
- Are you able to make balanced decisions?

Parents/carers have the right to appeal if their child is not offered a place in their preferred school. We coordinate an Independent Panel to review a school's decision to refuse a school place and determine whether one should be offered, or not.

We urgently need volunteers to be part of this professional panel – Please Apply Today! - Full training will be given.

Please contact me if you would like to join our team of volunteers.

Clare.Cronk@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

Stonea Camp and the Iceni:

Feasting, Borders, and Rebellion

Stonea Camp is an Iron Age fort in the Fens, which in the past was an important island in the wetlands. It had strong ditches and banks built over several phases, with an inner enclosure and outer defences. Its size and position made it useful both for everyday settlement and for large gatherings, and as it sat on the edge of Iceni territory, close to the lands of the Catuvellauni and Corieltaui tribes, Stonea was also a meeting point, a place where allies could feast together, or where enemies might clash. Archaeologists think this is one reason Stonea could have been the site of a violent battle described by the Roman historian Tacitus in the first century AD.

Ritual and Feasting in Iron Age East Anglia

Across Iron Age Britain, sites like Stonea were not just forts, they were centres for gatherings, feasts, and ceremonies. People met to trade goods, share food and drink, and honour their ancestors. The Iceni, who lived across Norfolk, Suffolk and the Cambridgeshire Fens, were wealthy and produced beautiful metalwork and coinage.

Feasting and gift-giving were ways of showing power and status, and large enclosures like Stonea were the perfect stage for such displays. Stonea also lay in a strategic border zone, to the south and west were the Catuvellauni, a powerful tribe whose leaders like Cassivellaunus and later Caratacus often resisted Roman expansion and to the north-west were the Corieltaui (sometimes called the Coritani), controlling the East Midlands. This meant Stonea stood at a tribal crossroads, making it a natural place for assemblies, trade, and in times of tension, conflict.



From Warriors to Roman Clients: Anted, Prasutagus and Kingship

The Iceni were a warrior people, their forts, weapons, and coinage suggest a culture built on status and military skill, but when the Romans invaded Britain in AD 43, they often preferred to control tribes indirectly, and so instead of wiping out local kings, Rome made them 'clients.' A client king could keep his position if he accepted

Roman power, supported Roman aims, and avoided raising his own army. Anted (Antedios) is known from coinage as an early Iceni ruler, and Prasutagus (shown in artist's impression) later appears in Roman sources as the Iceni king, remembered especially, as he is believed to have been Queen Boudicca's (also artist's impression) husband. Both men ruled under Roman approval, balancing Iceni pride with the reality of imperial control.

Disarmament, Rebellion, and Ostorius Scapula

This uneasy balance broke down in AD 47 under the Roman governor Publius Ostorius Scapula. Determined to secure the new province, he demanded that tribes in the east lay down their arms, and to the Iceni this was unacceptable, their weapons were part of their identity as warriors. The Iceni were the most rebellious tribe against this Roman command. Ostorius struck back quickly. According to Tacitus, writing for the first time about a landmark in Britain, an attack on a fortified location took place, trapping its defenders inside, with no escape through the narrow entrances, and so the Iceni was cut down in a brutal slaughter, a slaughter meant as a warning to all tribes not to resist Roman rule.

Conclusion

Stonea Camp shows how one site could be both a place of community and a scene of tragedy. For the Iceni, it was a gathering place for feasts, trade, spiritual following and alliances. But in AD 47 it may also have been the trap where Rome punished a tribe for defying imperial orders. The Iceni's story of warrior elites forced into an uneasy clientship, crushed when resisted realised by the combination of Tacitus's words and the bones uncovered at Stonea. Through these sources, we glimpse both the pride of the tribe and the harsh reality of Roman power. Further if archaeologists are correct the significance of Stonea Camp is huge, having been the first British landmark to enter the historical account!

If you would like to know more about Stonea Camp, or would like information on forthcoming open days at the site, a presentation or guided tour, please email Heritage, Culture & Community (HCC) Stonea at hccstonea@gmail.com, follow our Facebook page, <https://facebook.com/hccstoneacamps>, or our Instagram page, https://www.instagram.com/hcc_stonea, we would be delighted to assist.

Amanda Carlin – Chairman HCC Stonea.

PC Snippets

Matters discussed at the December and January PC meetings include:

- Fenland District Council Infrastructure Delivery Plan with a formal request to FDC to pursue the mapping of mobile telephone signals using bin lorries.
- Public defibrillators, notably those at the Dun Cow and Bridge Farm
- Parking outside Townley School
- Village skip – see elsewhere
- Green Lane reinstatement – this was discussed and a couple of the residents have replied and have been invited along to the PC meeting in February
- Clarion Garden project and The District Council's Environmental Services team has formed a Nature Recovery Project, including Cllr Roy, to restore overgrown areas. Also work on fly-tipping - Cllr Roy is also working with the fly-tipping officers on a more proactive approach to identify fly-tippers and secure prosecutions. Members were asked to advise residents undertaking work on their properties to check and photograph permits and the loaded vehicles used.
- Numerous Traffic orders for the closure/works upcoming. Local roads, repairs and improvements were discussed. Sixteen Foot Road has had some work done, but there is more planned in places.
- Cllr Burfield reported that he had complained to the Salvation Army Trading Company regarding the unannounced removal of the clothes bank from the Community Centre car park.

- The Clerk advised Members that he had written to the Combined Authority regarding the location of the bus shelter and asking whether they might provide a new shelter in a safer location. The initial email received a positive response, so further conversations and investigations will take place over the coming months.
- Clarion Garden Project - The Probation Service has started work on the site, with most of the vegetation cleared. Clarion's landscaping team have removed some of the green waste.
- Santa Run - The Clerk reminded Members that Fenland Farmers Santa Run will start at the Farmer's Boy at 5.00pm on the evening of 20 December. (see elsewhere for photos, this raised £280, 50% of which goes to Christchurch) Cllr Bliss reported that she had seen adults on motorbikes riding on byways and across fields of crops.
- A request was made by the Chair of the Heron Executive Committee to the PC for a grant towards the running costs of the magazine. This grant of £945 was approved by the PC committee.
- The Village skip is to be arranged for 11th April. This will be placed in the CCC grounds and covered by the CCTV there to ensure that it is not misused.
- ACRE are holding a community webinar on 3rd Feb.

This is a brief summary of the two meetings (and the minutes of the January meeting have not yet been approved) - apologies if anything has been missed, but as always, full details can be found at:

<http://www.christchurchparishcouncil.org.uk/minutes/>

Diary Dates

Tue 3rd Feb/3rd Mar	Mobile Library	12:15pm	Fen View Layby
Tue 3rd Feb/3rd Mar	Book Club	7:30pm	Contact Pat Rigby
Mon 9th Feb/9th Mar	Parish Council Meeting	7:30pm	CCC
Tue 10th Feb/10th Mar	Women's Circle	7pm	CCC
February	Gardening Club	7pm	CCC - call 01354 638230
Mon 2nd Feb & alt. Mondays	Charity Bingo	6pm for eyes down 7pm	3 Holes Village Hall
28th Feb	Quiz Night for Church Funds	7pm	CCC
Sun 1st Mar/5th April	Welle Cinema	1:30pm	3 Holes Village Hall
8th March	Canal Art Workshop	10am - 3pm	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	Indoor Bowls	7pm	3 Holes Village Hall
Thursday	Car Boot Sale	9am onwards (buyers)	Upwell Field
Friday	Christchurch Umbrella Breakfast	9:30am - 11:30am	CCC
Friday	Purdy's Auction (drop off from 7:30am)	6:15pm (viewing from noon)	3 Holes Village Hall
Saturday	Bingo	5:30pm for 6:30pm	3 Holes Village Hall
Mon, Tue, Wed, Thu	Mobile Post Office	4:10pm - 4:30pm	Lay-by near Fen View
Wed & Friday	Upwell Town Youth Football	5:30 pm - 6:30pm	3 Holes Village Hall

Church News

Services in the Benefice for February

1st February

9.30 am Breakfast Church Wimblington

10.30 am Morning Prayer Christchurch

10.30 am Holy Communion Doddington

8th February

10.30 am Holy Communion Manea

10.30 am Morning Prayer Wimblington

3.00 pm Holy Communion Benwick

15th February

10.30 am Holy Communion Christchurch

10.30 am Morning Prayer Doddington

22nd February

10.30 am Morning Prayer Manea

10.30 am Holy Communion Wimblington

3.00 pm Holy Communion Welney

Services in the Benefice for March

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9.30 am Breakfast Church Wimblington

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10.30 am Morning Prayer Doddington

22nd March

10.30 am Morning Prayer Manea

10.30 am Holy Communion Wimblington

3.00pm Holy Communion Welney

29th March

10.30 am United Service Wimblington



Throughout Lent we will be collecting nonperishable food items, cleaning products, toiletries and Easter treats for March Food Bank. The box will be in the usual place outside Grasshopper Cottage, 5 Upwell Road. Any queries contact Annie on 638088

Saturday 28th February – Quiz with Hotdog and Chips Supper. Teams of 6 maximum. £7 per person. Bar open. Raffle. Doors open 7pm. Christchurch Community Centre.

Sunday 8th March – Canal Art Workshop with Andy from Well Creek Art. 10.00am - 3.00pm. Lunch included. Materials provided. £25 per person. Christchurch Community Centre. (15 places only)

Looking for somewhere to go?

What	When	Where
March Farmers Fayre <i>Free-to-attend Market with lots of local producers.</i>	Sunday 1st February, 10am—2pm.	March Market Place, PE15 9JF.
Children's Movie Night <i>Contact Wimblington Events Group – wimblingtoneventsgroup@outlook.com</i>	Friday 13th February.	Wimblington Parish Hall, Addison Road, PE15 0QT.
Valentines Day Disco with DJ Darv.	Saturday 14th February, 7pm till late.	The Dun Cow, Green Lane, Christchurch.
Charity Tractor Run 2026, raising money for 2 local charities - Scottys Little Soldiers and Tapping House. £15 per tractor. <i>Route: Upwell, Christchurch, Silt Road, Nordelph, Barroway Drove, Wootton Corner, Mortons Bridge, Marsh Road, Edge Bank, Hungate, Emneth, Outwell and back to Upwell.</i>	Sunday 15th February, starting at 10am.	Starting from Upwell Playing Field, New Road, PE14 9AB.
Range of activities in association with Wildlife Trust for Beds, Cambs & Northants. £19.99 per person – www.skylark-events.co.uk	February 16 th , 18 th & 20 th .	Skylark Garden Centre, Manea Road, PE15 0PE
Race Night at Wimblington Parish Hall. <i>Contact Wimblington Events Group – wimblingtoneventsgroup@outlook.com</i>	Friday 13th March.	Wimblington Parish Hall, Addison Road, PE15 0QT.
Dog Show www.skylark-events.co.uk	Sunday 22nd March.	Skylark Garden Centre, Manea Road, PE15 0PE.

HEAT STRUGGLING WITH FUEL PRICES?

Are you struggling with fuel prices and need some advice?

If you, or someone you know, is struggling with their energy bills, we may be able to help.

Our dedicated mentors can provide advice by visiting you at home and continue support through further visits or remote assistance to help you save money on your energy.

We may be able to help speak to your supplier about any questions you may have regarding billing issues or outstanding debt.

PLEASE CONTACT OUR HOME ENERGY ADVICE TEAM TODAY!

HEAT@THEWISEGROUP.CO.UK

0800 092 9002

WELLE CINEMA
Three Holes Village Hall
SUNDAY 1st MARCH

Downton Abbey The Grand Finale (PG)
Final episode of the award-winning ITV costume drama following the lives and loves of those above and below stairs in an English stately home. In this special, set in late 1925 and early 1926, everyone reunites for Edith (Laura Carmichael) and Bertie (Harry Hadden-Paton)'s wedding on New Year's Eve while Anna (Joanne Froggatt) prepares to give birth. Elsewhere, Carson (Jim Carter) reveals to his wife that he suffers from a hereditary illness known as the palsy, which makes him question his role at Downton, and Lord Merton (Douglas Reith) tells Isobel (Penelope Wilton) about his own illness but retains his desire to marry her. However, his daughter-in-law Amelia (Phoebe Sparrow) keeps Isobel from seeing him. Will the year end happily for those at Downton Abbey?

SUNDAY 5th APRIL
THE SALT PATH (12)
THE SALT PATH is the profound true story of husband and wife, Raynor and Moth Winn's 630-mile trek along the beautiful but rugged Cornish, Devon and Dorset coastline. After being forcibly removed from their home, they make the desperate decision to walk in the hope that, in nature, they will find solace and a sense of acceptance. With depleted resources, only a tent and some essentials between them, every step along the path is a testament to their growing strength and determination. THE SALT PATH is a journey that is exhilarating, challenging, and liberating in equal measure. A portrayal of home, how it can be lost and rediscovered in the most unexpected ways

Starts 2pm doors open 1.30pm £3.50 per person
NO NEED TO BOOK

BAR & REFRESHMENTS
www.threetholesvillagehall00.org.uk





TOWNLEY SCHOOL AND NURSERY

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



Facebook—Townley School and Nursery

Remember that our website has lots more information about school.

January 2026

Happy New Year! The new calendar has been so very busy already as the Nursery and Reception children have finally moved into their new class; we have held our annual Bedtime Read; Emerald and Emperor Class have held their Story Café's; the local authority have visited us; we are preparing for our biennial residential with Year 5 and 6; and let's not forget the snow and heating failure!

EYFS Class (YN/R) - We thought that you would like to see inside the new classroom!



Hawker Class (Y1/2) - In guided reading we started our new book "The Tale of Peter Rabbit". The children predicted what might happen to Peter if he entered Mr McGregor's garden, based on what happened to his father! We love our new OPAL lunchtimes – thank you for your support with donations.



Dragonflies Class (Y3-6) - **Community Time** is one of our favourite parts of the day where we come together for the first time as a group around the table sharing thoughts and feelings around some lovely personal, social and emotional topics. We re-visited our Happy-Healthy Towers looking at all the areas of our life we need to nurture to be balanced, healthy and happy; we then used this to move onto thinking about goals and wants for the year ahead and how we can make steps towards them.

Emerald Class (Y3/4) - In **Computing**, we are working on Online Safety. The first lesson was about understanding how the internet can be used to share beliefs, opinions and facts. In the second lesson, we explained what should be done before sharing information online (need to ask for permission, identify how others may feel if someone shares things online without permission). In **English**, we have been learning and applying the rules of how to punctuate dialogue, revised how to effectively and accurately add the suffix -ed to verbs to make the simple past tense. We also worked on the past tense of irregular verbs.

Emperor Class (Y5/6) - We have started a new guided reading book. 'Skellig' is a fantasy novel about 10-year-old Michael, who, while dealing with his baby sister's serious illness and a move to a new home, discovers a strange, winged creature (part owl, part angel, part human) in his dilapidated garage.

The Magpie Centre

Equine Assisted Learning & Therapy at The Magpie Centre

The Magpie Centre, West Norfolk offers Equine Assisted Learning and Therapy (EALT) - a gentle, horse-led approach supporting emotional wellbeing, confidence, and personal development. EALT is ideal for those who struggle with anxiety, emotional regulation, communication, or focus in traditional settings. Horses are intuitive and respond honestly to human behaviour, creating a calm space for reflection and growth.

No horse experience is needed.

All sessions are ground-based (no riding), using guided activities where the horse acts as a mirror to help participants better understand their emotions and behaviour.

Benefits of EALT

- Builds confidence and self-esteem
- Improves communication and emotional regulation
- Develops coping strategies for stress and anxiety
- Encourages trust, empathy, and stronger relationships

Who Can Benefit?

- Teenagers and young adults
- Individuals with Autism, ADHD, or social and emotional challenges
- Groups seeking confidence, teamwork, or leadership skills
- Anyone looking for a unique, nature-based approach to wellbeing

Get in Touch

Sessions are delivered by our qualified and compassionate team, with the welfare of people and horses at the heart of our work.

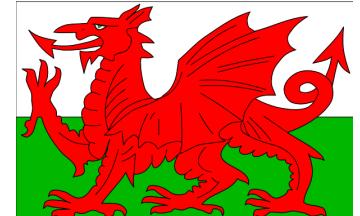
✉ The Magpie Centre, West Norfolk

🌐 Website: www.rda-westnorfolk.org.uk

📞 Phone: [01553 810202](tel:01553 810202)

St David's Day

St David's Day (March 1st) traditions celebrate Welsh heritage with wearing daffodils or leeks, attending parades with Welsh flags and dragons, singing Welsh songs like "Hen Wlad Fy Nhadau," (Old Country of my Fathers) enjoying traditional foods such as *cawl* (a traditional Welsh Lamb stew) and Welsh cakes, and children participating in cultural events or wearing traditional costumes.



Key Traditions:

- Emblems: Wearing a daffodil (national flower) or a leek (national emblem).
- Flags: Flying the Welsh flag or the black and yellow flag of St. David.
- Parades: Colorful parades in towns like Cardiff and Swansea, featuring dragons, music, and traditional dress.
- Music & Dance: Folk dancing, singing Welsh hymns, and the national anthem (*Hen Wlad Fy Nhadau*).
- Food: Eating traditional Welsh dishes like *cawl* (lamb stew), *bara brith* (fruit loaf), Welsh cakes, and rarebit.
- Costumes: Children often wear traditional Welsh costumes (plaid skirts, shawls, hats) or modern interpretations like rugby players.
- Eisteddfodau: Schoolchildren may participate in Welsh cultural competitions.

How it's Celebrated:

- It's a national day for Wales, observed by Welsh people worldwide, but not a public holiday.
- Events range from large city parades to small community gatherings.
- Schools often mark the day with special activities, sometimes taking a half-day.



Golden Age

Record attendance at festive event for older people.

Generous donations given by the Fenland community have been distributed to older people at a free festive event which saw an unprecedented turnout of visitors.

Gifts given to the Golden Age Appeal were given to visitors to the December Golden Age event, this year held in March town.

Individuals, organisations and community groups donated gifts, money and support to enhance and pack goodie bags given to visitors at the event.

Cllr Sam Clark, Golden Age team leader, said: "We're so incredibly grateful to everyone who supported the Golden Age Appeal and all those who have supported the Golden Age events for so many years. The Golden Age events are now in their 22nd year and they couldn't happen without all the partners who come along. This is the second year we've run the gift appeal to enhance the goodie bags and so many individuals, organisations and community groups got behind it to help show Fenland's older people how cherished they are. A huge thank you to them all."

A record-breaking turnout of 340 visitors enjoyed festive cheer at the event and were able to stroll stands to gather information on opportunities, services and support available to over 60s in Fenland. There was music from 'Fenland's Choir' and, as always at Golden Age events, free refreshments.

A total of 45 service providing organisations were represented, offering chats and information.

Visitors to all Golden Age events, which are held at venues across Fenland four times a year, get a goodie bag. This was the second year running that the Golden Age Christmas Appeal has been held to enhance goodie bags for Christmas. The appeal was inspired when a guest three years ago said the simple goodie bag would be her only Christmas gift.

Community Effort

The Golden Age Christmas Appeal is a collaboration between Fenland District Council and Head to Toe, the official charity of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough NHS Foundation Trust, which provides district nursing care for older people and those with long-term conditions and mental health services, together with the Trust's 'How Are You Fenland?', which encourages people to get active, learn new skills and be creative.

This year, once again, Tesco in March and Wisbech and libraries across Fenland acted as donation points. Hundreds of gifts were donated by the people of Fenland.

Anglian Water provided gift bags and volunteers to write on cards and help with sorting and parceling up the gifts. Rotary Club of Wisbech donated £500. Puzzler Magazine again donated puzzle books. A raft of community groups handmade gifts and cards.

Several community groups and partner organisations provided volunteers to help with special collection days at the Tesco stores and gift wrapping.

Particular mention goes to FACET charity, which provides opportunities for adults with disabilities, for support with wrapping and on the event day.

Cllr Clark said: "It's a true demonstration of the kindness and generosity of Fenland's community. A massive thank you for every single donation."

The next Golden Age event is **Friday, March 6, 10am to 1pm, in Chatteris**, at King Edward Community Centre, 3 King Edward Road PE16 6NG.



Eye Tests

Drivers over the age of 70 will have to have their vision checked every three years, under plans to reform driving laws in Britain.

The changes are part of the government's new road safety strategy, which also include lowering the drink-driving limit in England to match the limit in Scotland, and giving penalty points for not wearing seatbelts. Nearly one in four car drivers killed in 2024 were aged 70 or older, according to government figures.

Drivers in the UK must be able to read a number plate from 20 metres away, according to the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA), but currently, drivers of any age are not required to prove their skills or health once they obtain their licence. Drivers must tell the DVLA if they become unfit to drive, but this is a self-reporting system.

Edmund King, president of the AA motoring organisation, said: "Eye tests are free for people over the age of 60 anyway and healthcare professionals advise them every two years given they can help with diagnosis of other underlying conditions.

"In fact, the AA advises everyone to have an eye test every two years." NHS eye tests are free for over-60s across the UK. Some other groups are also eligible for NHS-funded eye tests in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. The NHS in Scotland provides free eye tests for all age groups.

Dr Peter Hampson, clinical and policy director at the Association of Optometrists, said: "Sight often deteriorates gradually, meaning drivers may not realise their vision no longer meets legal standards. Even small changes can cause drivers to react slower and increase the risk of serious collisions. This simple change to the law would bring the UK into line with much of Europe."

'Socially isolated'

Lilian Greenwood, local transport minister, said: "As the country's older population grows, our plans in the first road safety strategy in more than a decade will preserve personal freedoms where possible with action to save lives."

But Prof Andrew Steptoe, director of the English Longitudinal Study of Ageing, said measures needed to be put in place to protect older people who have surrendered their licences. "If more older people are unable to drive, efforts need to be made to offset any reductions in social contact and to maintain active engagement with friends, family and the community."

Age UK said it supported the change, but said eye tests alone would not lead to a significant reduction in car crashes. Caroline Abrahams, charity director at Age UK, said that most older drivers "take very seriously their responsibility to be safe on the road".

Last year, an inquest into the deaths of four people killed by drivers with failing vision said enforcement of eyesight standards on the roads was "ineffective and unsafe".

HM Senior Coroner for Lancashire Dr James Adeley pointed out that the UK was one of only three countries to rely on self-reporting of visual conditions affecting the ability to drive. In the report, which was handed to Transport Secretary Heidi Alexander, he said: "Self-reporting of visual conditions permits drivers to lie about their current driving status to those performing an ophthalmic assessment and avoid warnings not to drive.

"Drivers may also admit they drive but then ignore instructions not to drive and fail to notify the DVLA." Rebecca Guy, senior policy manager at the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents, said: "Regular vision checks are a sensible way to reduce risk as we age, but the priority must be a system that supports people to drive safely for as long as possible, while ensuring timely action is taken when health or eyesight could put them or others in danger."

BBC News, Katy Austin

Christchurch Book Club

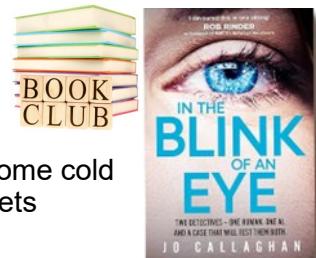
February's book was **In the blink of an eye** by Jo Callaghan.

When a detective is picked to lead a pilot programme that has been paired with Aide Lock (artificially intelligent detective entity) her instincts come up against its logic. When some cold cases being reviewed become active, Lock is the only one who can help when the case gets personal. An enjoyable book.

The next meeting will take place on Tuesday 3rd February. A new book has been ordered, **Cold Comfort Farm** by Stella Gibbons which was also made into a film.

For some members of our book club, they prefer to read the book electronically rather than a physical book but it's a personal preference.

New members are always welcome. For further details or if you would like to come along to the next meeting and require details of the venue, please contact Pat Rigby on 07776 142642.





Pot Holes

Reporting Road and Pavement Faults

If you wish to report any dangerous potholes, please use the reporting website:

<https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/travel-roads-and-parking/roads-and-pathways/roadworks-and-faults>

The more reports received, then the more likely they will be inspected and repaired. (*though someone painting a skull and crossbones around a dangerous hole on Langwood Hill Drove a couple of years ago seemed to elicit a quick repair!!*). It also helps with your claim, if you suffer any damage to your car, if it can be shown that the authority were aware of the fault – the reporting website does show this.

Cambridgeshire County Council's road repair backlog bill stands at £800m and has previously said roads built on peat can cost four times as much to repair as standard ones, and a report to the authority's highways and transport committee claimed to fix them alone would take £500m.

The council said about 40% of the county's roads lie on peatland, and it is seeking a "fairer funding model" to reflect additional costs. A spokesperson for the Department for Transport said it was investing £188m for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough in the next four years "to help councils resurface roads and fix the pothole plague".

"The government has done its bit, now it's over to councils to use this money to plan ahead and deliver safer, smoother journeys," they added. Responsible for maintaining 2,858 miles of roads, the council has called on the government to help with those which are soil-affected, stating they "fundamentally need to be fully reconstructed".

These roads, according to the council, are "routes significantly affected by the sub-soil, which expands and contracts in response to changes in climate, causes cracking and undermining the road structure".

Essential work recently began on Forty Foot Bank between Ramsey and Chatteris, a road described as a "death trap" by a resident, after subsidence.

In the past year, the authority said 11km (6.8 miles) of peat-affected roads were reconstructed or resurfaced at a cost of £5.5m. The council said its total net budget is about £500m, which cannot be used purely for roads when it has statutory duties such as social care.

The county received an "amber" rating in a new mapping tool and traffic light rating system designed for drivers in England to see how local authorities are tackling roads riddled with potholes.

From BBC News, Phil Shepka, image John Devine

Christchurch Craft Club

We enjoy both the crafts and the company of those taking part.



We meet from 10am until 1pm on Tuesday mornings at the CCC. The first week is free, and then it's £3 per week or £10 per month, plus £1 for lunch – pop along and see, you'll be made very welcome.

Here are some examples of the latest work:



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Please contact me for further details if you are interested.

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Cambridgeshire Libraries

What would you like to see performed at your library? Have your say. Cambridgeshire residents are invited to help shape the next season of live music, theatre and dance coming to libraries across the county.

What entertainment would you like to see performed at your local library this year? That's the question being asked by the team behind The Library Presents, as members of the public are once again invited to help shape the next season of this much-loved arts and entertainment programme.

For over eight years, thanks to generous support from Arts Council England, The Library Presents has delivered high-quality live entertainment in libraries across the region. Central to the programme is the choosing process, which gives local people a direct say in the events that come to their communities, helping to ensure each season reflects local tastes, interests and ideas.

Until Monday 16 February, following this link:

<https://www.library.live/the-library-presents-blog/menu-for-spring-2024> (yes, that's still correct for 2026)

- the choosing menu, containing over 50 events, is available online and in participating libraries. People are invited to browse the menu and select up to six performances they would most like to see take place at their local library.

The menu includes a lively mix of music, poetry, theatre, dance, digital, comedy and magic. It features both popular, much-loved artists who have performed as part of The Library Presents before, such as *Graffiti Classics* and *The Zoo That Comes To You*, alongside exciting new artists being introduced to the choosing menu for the first time.

The impact of local involvement is clear to audiences. One attendee from last season said: "**It's wonderful to have these events locally.**" This simple sentiment reflects a core aim of the programme: bringing exceptional cultural experiences into the heart of everyday communities, shaped by the people who live there.

Have your say by visiting one of the county's libraries or taking part online between 15 January and 16 February. For more information, visit <https://www.library.live/the-library-presents>

Community groups and clubs can also arrange a visit from The Library Presents team to gather views in person.

To find out more, contact thelibrarypresents@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

The programme is funded by Arts Council England (2023- 2026), managed by Cambridgeshire County Council.



Indoor Short Mat Bowls

Meets every Monday 7-9pm at Christchurch Community Centre.

ALL WELCOME! (Spare bowls available to loan.)

For further details call Hazel Spry on 07768 648619 .



Christchurch Women's Circle

Our December meeting was well attended, members enjoyed a relaxed evening with a bring and share buffet, Secret Santa and bingo with Christmas songs and Carols in the background. On the closing of the meeting Linda thanked members for the support they had given the new club and wished everyone a Happy Christmas and looked forward to seeing everyone in 2026.

January 13th - Our first meeting of 2026, Speaker Lucille Hird from Cambs ACRE shared many ideas and the benefits of using a slow cooker, a very interesting presentation. Lucille also gave members information on other things her work entails, such as making people aware of benefits and enhancements to income etc. there were many leaflets for members to take home and read, all with contact details. Competition an item beginning with A proved a popular letter with interesting items shared.

Half Year Programme for 2026 – Meetings at CCC at 7pm on second Tuesday of each month

- February 10th To be Arranged
- Competition Letter B
- March 10th Talk on the importance of Power of Attorney
- Competition Letter C
- April 14th AGM and Poetry by Holly Trundle
- Competition Letter D
- May 14th A visit to Layne Rowe Glass Blower and Sculpture
- Competition Letter E
- June 9th Talk by MAGPAS
- Competition Letter F

The Power of Attorney meeting will be open to anyone; there will be a small charge of £4 including light refreshments.

Visitors and New Members are always welcome.

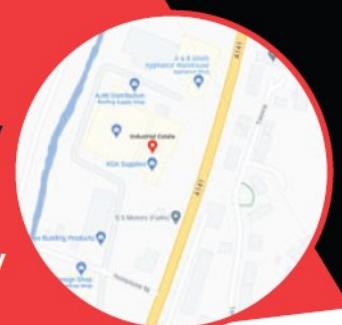
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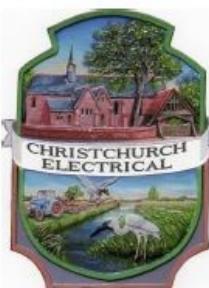
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Village Contacts and Useful Information

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.

Your Local Councillor

Dal Roy - Independent Councillor - Elm and Christchurch
Mobile : 07885 381007 Email : droy@fenland.gov.uk



The New Year ahead is a time for reflecting and appreciating the things we achieved in the last twelve months. The things we did well and the things that didn't go well. It is an opportunity for us all to see how we can improve, not just ourselves, also the lives of those around us.

I am always impressed by all the amazing work our volunteers do in our communities, often going out of their way, to help improve the lives of others. In this challenging world of ours, these unsung heroes help pave the way for our communities to thrive. In these times of great mental health challenges, building trust and social bonding is very important.

I was walking along the road the other day doing some litter picking, when a young man with a backpack was walking in front of me. The backpack was open and as he moved along, the sheer number of things in there were struggling to stay in, and a couple of his books fell out. I rushed and picked them up and called to him.

He turned around and came back and said, "thank you, I really appreciate that". Our youth sometimes get a bad name, however it's often because they are navigating a world that they know little about at that stage. At that point I realised that I had just given myself a boost of oxytocin - the "bonding hormone". It is so important for reducing stress and anxiety by lowering cortisol levels. Now the interesting thing here was that I felt good and he felt good. As he walked ahead of me, he saw a senior member of our community who was carrying some large shopping bags, and he must have asked to carry them for her, which he did. That made her feel good. I thought to myself this is so infectious and we should all be doing this. It costs nothing, makes people feel better and improves the areas we live in.

In my role as District Councillor, I attend the Parish meetings to help support in any way I can. Challenging decisions at Overview and Scrutiny meetings, focusing on ensuring local voices are heard, and generally working towards solutions to challenges that arise in our community.

My motto has always been "together we achieve great things". Here is to a better 2026 for everyone.

You can contact me on 07885 381007, or email me at droy@fenland.gov.uk



Please remember that no dogs are allowed on the playing field. Thank you.
Your co-operation is much appreciated.



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!

Bayeux Tapestry

A woman who has spent nearly a decade making a replica of the Bayeux Tapestry is releasing some of her designs so others can have a go.

Mia Hansson, from Wisbech, Cambridgeshire, has been working on her own full-size copy of the tapestry since 2016.

She has included 25 hand-drawn full-scale images of the designs in a book. They can be ironed on to fabric and embroidered.

Hansson said that with the real thing heading to the British Museum later this year, it was the perfect time to release Embroider the Bayeux Tapestry.



Mia Hansson had stopped exhibiting her work to the public because of its size and the risk of damage

The original tapestry, nearly 1,000 years old and 70m (230ft) long, tells the story of the 1066 Norman conquest of England and the Battle of Hastings.

It will be displayed at the London museum from September as part of a cultural exchange later.

the tapestry returns home to the newly reopened Bayeux Museum in Normandy.

It will also mark the 1,000th anniversary of William the Conqueror's birth.

"We have pitched this book perfectly in time... [and I hope] I will be there watching it with eagle eyes," she said. "I am hoping they will allow me to take part of my tapestry... and get a picture."



Key scenes from the tapestry have been drawn specifically for inclusion in Mia Hansson's book

Hansson said her work contained just seven colours.

"In these nine and a half years I have stitched myself to the fabric and have had to unpick myself," she said. "I could say I have become one with the fabric in my project."

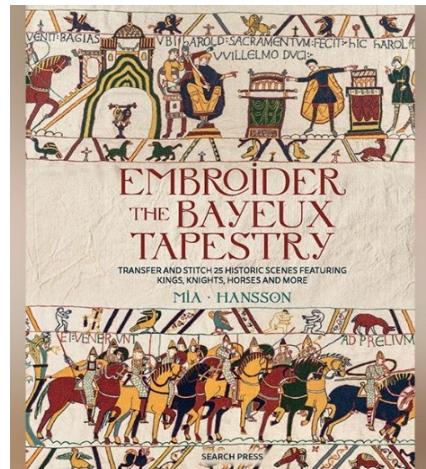
The needle she has used has been named "the one and only" as she has used it for the entire project.

Hansson's book is called Embroider the Bayeux Tapestry, she has published five colouring books linked to the tapestry.

Embroider the Bayeux Tapestry will be available from June and she hopes it will go on sale at the British Museum while the original is on display there.

She said she had a meeting with a publisher recently, "and sales reps told me that the interest for this book is huge as it may be the only one of its kind".

From BBC News Aimee Dexter, Photos John Devine, Jule Cave and Search Press



World War Two Bomb Discovered

World War Two bomb discovered by magnet fisher in Ely

2026 started off with a bang for one magnet fisher who discovered a World War Two bomb.

Response officers from Cambridgeshire Police were called to Ely at the start of the month after a magnet fisher contacted them, believing that they had found a historic explosive.

The Bomb Squad (EOD) arrived and confirmed that it was a German bomb from the Second World War. A local farmer allowed teams to use his field for a controlled explosion, and the bomb was disposed of safely. By Francesca Herring, Ely Standard



Team GBR skater joins crowds on frozen fen fields



Dozens of skaters - including an international competitor - have flocked to The Fens from far and wide after word got out that flooded fields had frozen over.

Competitive skating began in the watery landscape in 1879 and since then it has become a magnet for lovers of "natural ice".

Fen skating takes place when a field floods and then freezes over, so the ice is very shallow, in places just a few centimetres, unlike frozen lakes.

Peter Riches, 24, a Team GBR short track skater who came from Nottingham to try out his blades at Welney, on the Norfolk/Cambridgeshire border, said: "We all made the trip over - we all kind of flock here from various parts of the country.

"Word got out at the weekend that the Fens were freezing and with the cold snap due to last, many more are expected to make the pilgrimage to the wide open spaces.

Competitive skater Riches said: "You just have to make sure that you respect the ice - I don't think you're ever going to tame the ice. You can go as fast as you like. This feels more natural, more organic. This is what I call real skating. That's what the sport is all about; that's how it started; that's the tradition. It's a challenge, there are little obstacles you have to avoid, but as much as it's a challenge, it's more like a treat."



Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service had warned people to stay off frozen lakes after reports of youngsters playing on them at the weekend. However, those involved in skating on the Fenland fields were quick to point out how shallow the frozen water they use is.

"This is completely different to a lake," said Hew Williams, short track director at British Ice Skating. "Here we've got naturally flooded farmland that's unique to this area of Britain and... there's no flowing water underneath. This is still water that's frozen and it needs to be frozen thick enough to actually be able to skate on. On lakes, on rivers, the speed of the water stops the ice from freezing thick enough so that's what's unique here. The maximum depth of the water under the ice was about a foot, or shin-deep."

Laura Upton drove to Welney from Wisbech in Cambridgeshire with her two sons when she heard "on the grapevine" about the ice. Her father used to sell skates and she has been Fen skating for about 45 years, since she was five. "We definitely have to make the most of it on a beautiful sunny day like today," she said. "We used to roller speed-skate throughout the year to try to be ready for the ice when it used to come. It's great to keep the traditions going; it's a bit of a natural phenomenon and we're very lucky."

From BBC News, John Devine and Helen Burchell, Images John Devine & Joe Giddens

Scams

The Police produce a book about scams, which is now in its 5th edition. There are a number of copies available at the CCC, or you can find it as a PDF online.



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The Heron is printed by
March Stationery & Print, 5 Fenland Walk, March, Cambs PE15 8TW
Tel: 01354 656614 Email: sales@marchsp.co.uk