

The Heron

Community Magazine

APRIL/MAY 2026

Delivered to homes in Christchurch, Euximoor and Tipps End



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Fenland Future Strategy

Following the surge in pothole reports, a new group is being formed, Fenland Future Strategy (FFS), to be headed by April Phule, who is moving from the planning department. The aim of FFS is to determine the long-term viability of the road network in the Fenlands, and the likely future uses of the roads.

The current policy is to classify a pothole as being more than 40mm deep and 300mm wide and then to repair these as soon as possible, with funds allocated to a few larger projects to completely resurface rather than simple patch certain areas.



Jetson ONE

Your personal aircraft in aluminum and carbon fiber, powered with eight powerful electric motors.



Of course, the issue is that patched repairs do not last for long, and the geology of the Fenlands, along with changing weather patterns means that even a fully repaired road still has a very limited lifespan compared to other areas of the country.

One of the changes that FFS are looking at is how the road network will be used in the future, and with the first personal drones now being available, such as the Jetson One, and upcoming air taxis, it is anticipated that these will become common within the next

10 years, meaning road usage will be predominantly by larger commercial vehicles and tractors which are much less affected by smaller potholes due to their larger wheels.

One likely outcome is that potholes will be redefined as having a depth of 150mm with no width definition at all, and that there will be less urgency to repair these surface defects.



Classroom Removal

As no doubt everyone will be aware, the “temporary” classrooms have been removed from Townley School and this is what the school looked like immediately after the removal, and before the cleanup of the area.



Tea with a Pony Returns this May at The Magpie Centre



We're delighted to announce that our much-loved **Tea with a Pony** sessions are returning for the 2026 season! Sessions begin on **6th May** and will run through until the **beginning of October** at The Magpie Centre in West Norfolk.

Tea with a Pony offers a relaxed, welcoming opportunity to meet our wonderful ponies up close, enjoy refreshments, and learn more about the work of Riding for the Disabled Association (RDA) and The Magpie Centre. These sessions are designed to be inclusive, friendly and accessible, creating meaningful experiences for people of all ages.

The sessions are particularly popular with:

- Local community groups
- Dementia support groups
- Care homes
- Schools and children's groups
- Social clubs and wellbeing groups

Spending time with ponies can be incredibly therapeutic. For some visitors, it brings back fond memories of horses from years gone by. For others, it's a rare opportunity to enjoy animal interaction in a calm and supportive setting. The combination of gentle pony interaction and tea and cake makes for a truly special outing.

Each session offers the chance to:

- Meet our ponies
- Learn about their personalities and daily routines
- Discover the impact of RDA sessions at The Magpie Centre
- Enjoy tea, cake and good company

If you're part of a local organisation and would like to arrange a group visit, we'd love to hear from you. Full details can be found on our website



Local Talks Available

We're also pleased to share that one of our dedicated volunteers, **Caroline**, is available to give talks to local groups. Caroline shares the history of RDA and The Magpie Centre, the difference our work makes in the community, and how people can get involved. If your club, society or parish group is looking for an engaging and informative speaker, please do get in touch.

We look forward to welcoming both familiar and new faces to Tea with a Pony this season, it's a simple pleasure that brings smiles, sparks memories, and strengthens community connections.

For more information or to book please contact us:

📍 The Magpie Centre, West Norfolk 🌐 Website: www.rda-westnorfolk.org.uk Phone: 01553 810202

Community Centre Social Evening... More info on page 15!

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.

Diary Dates

Tuesday 7th Apr/5th May	Mobile Library	12:15pm	Fen View Layby
Tuesday 7th Apr/5th May	Book Club	7:30pm	Contact Pat Rigby
Monday 13th Apr/11th May	Parish Council Meeting	7:30pm	CCC
Tuesday 14th Apr/12th May	Women's Circle	7pm	CCC
Friday 17th Apr	Social Evening	7pm—11pm	CCC
Tuesday 21st Apr	Gardening Club - Video Club night	7pm	CCC - call 07508 281306
Sunday 5th Apr/3rd May/7th June	Welle Cinema	1:30pm	3 Holes Village Hall
Sunday 10th May	Coffee, Cake and Adventure	3:30pm	CCC
Tuesday 19th May	Gardening Club - Schools In	7pm	CCC - call 07508 281306

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

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.

Editorial

Hello and welcome to the latest edition. We are now into lighter nights, British Summertime and warmer days and hopefully smoother roads within the village.

I trust that you spotted the April fool in the cover article, though who knows, in 10 years, there may be a lot more of the Jetson One and other similar vehicles in use – there is no reason why they should remain expensive toys, we shall see.

I would like to offer my thanks to Amanda Carlin of HCC Stonea for the series of articles she has written for the Heron, this being the concluding article of the series.

Otherwise, have a browse, there is quite a lot happening locally as we come out of hibernation from the winter.

SHIRLEY MATHEWSON

It is with sadness that we announce the death of Shirley Mathewson, who passed away on Monday 9th March.

Our sincere condolences go to Gordon and his family at this time.

From all at The Heron

Agricultural Token Found in the Village...

The token pictured is of an agricultural metal token for value of a half penny which was found in Christchurch this year.

It bears the name of Wm Hunter Upwell, on one side and 1/2d on the other. There were farmers in Upwell with name of Hunter-Rowe who were fruit farmers and it is believed this token may have been one of theirs.

Some years back, you would pick a certain amount of fruit in either a punnet or bucket and weigh it in and collect a token. At the end of the days or weeks pickings, you would then exchange tokens for cash.

Any obsolete small coins could be used as tokens and face value would be paid at the current rate.

Some tokens were even made from cardboard, a farm could have many tokens, depending on its size and number of pickers working at any one time.



Copy Deadline - The deadline for copy for the edition of the Heron is 16.05.2026

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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Here are some things you may not know about Easter...

- 1. Named After a Goddess:** Easter takes its name from *Eostre* (or Ostara), an Anglo-Saxon goddess of spring, fertility, and dawn. The egg and rabbit symbols were originally associated with her, representing new life.
- 2. It Was Originally a Hare, Not a Bunny:** The "Easter hare" (Oschter Haws) originated in German folklore as a judge of whether children were good or bad, bringing coloured eggs to the well-behaved ones. The tradition evolved into the "Easter Bunny" after arriving in the US.
- 3. Eggs Symbolise the Tomb:** While pagan traditions used eggs for spring, Christian tradition adopted them to represent the empty tomb of Jesus, with the hard shell symbolizing the sealed tomb and breaking it representing his resurrection.
- 4. The First Chocolate Eggs:** Chocolate eggs were not invented in the UK, but rather in Germany and France in the early 19th century. The first hollow chocolate eggs were later made by JS Fry & Sons in 1873.
- 5. Red Eggs and Blood:** The tradition of dyeing eggs began by painting them red to symbolize the blood of Jesus shed during the crucifixion. This custom is still widely practiced in Greek Orthodox celebrations.
- 6. Why Easter's Date Changes Every Year:** Easter is what some people call a 'movable feast' because, as most people know, its date differs from year to year. That's because its date is calculated using the lunar calendar, or monthly cycle of the moon. Since the 4th century, Christians have celebrated Easter on the Sunday following the first full moon after the Spring Equinox. This seems straightforward. However, there was huge disagreement about the date of the Spring Equinox, how to calculate the lunar month, even the hour of the day when Easter Sunday began and so this meant that different Christian traditions had their own calculations for determining the date of Easter. In the mid-7th Century, two such traditions came head-to-head in the Anglo-Saxon kingdom of Northumbria. One side followed calculations used in Rome and mainland Europe, the other a method used in parts of Ireland.

The question was at long last settled in 664 at the Synod of Whitby, a meeting of leading clergy and nobles. It was agreed to use the Roman method for calculating Easter and this is the method we still use today.

- 7. Easter was once banned:** By the late Middle Ages, Easter was marked by elaborate religious services. These included a procession on Palm Sunday, 'Creeping to the Cross' on Good Friday and the placing of a sculpture of Christ and the 'consecrated host' (communion wafer) in a symbolic tomb called an Easter Sepulchre, where they would remain until they were symbolically resurrected on the morning of Easter Sunday. Easter was also one of the few times each year that a person would receive Communion, or the Eucharist.

In England, many of these ceremonies were targeted by Protestant religious reformers during the Reformation, and the Puritans, who gained power after the Civil War in the mid-17th Century, took radical religious reform to the next level: In 1647, Parliament abolished Easter and all other Holy Days. Easter Sunday became just an ordinary Sunday. In 1660, Charles II (the 'merry monarch') was restored to the English throne and Easter Sunday festivities returned to the calendar of the Church of England.

- 8. Good Friday Hot Cross Buns were believed to protect against bad luck:** There's a centuries' old tradition of baking special bread, biscuits or buns on Good Friday. Marked with a cross, by the early 18th century they were known as Hot Cross Buns: In 1733 London street vendors advertised their wares with the cry '*One a-penny, two a-penny, Hot Cross Buns!*'

Biscuits and buns baked on Good Friday were believed never to go mouldy and to be capable of curing diseases, especially those affecting the stomach. Some were even hung in homes and were thought to protect against misfortune.

It's possible that these traditions are an echo of medieval beliefs about the miraculous powers of the consecrated host, which was also decorated with a small cross. As we've already seen, the host played an important part in medieval Easter services.

- 9. Eggs were rolled for Easter Entertainment:** Since the time of the Anglo-Saxons, Easter has been marked with a holiday and a break from work, making it the perfect opportunity for fun and games. Traditional Easter, or 'Hocktide' pursuits included archery, even rolling hard boiled eggs down hills. Easter sports sometimes involved a lot of rough and tumble. Since 1779, the Easter weekend in Workington, Cumbria, has been marked by a mass football 'match' called the 'Uppies and Downies.' Not for the faint hearted, rules are few and far between, and serious injuries, even deaths have occurred!

10. King Edward I Gifted 450 Decorated Easter Eggs: Readily associated with new life, the giving of eggs has long been synonymous with Easter. In 1290, Edward I purchased 450 eggs which were painted or covered in gold leaf before being distributed to members of the royal entourage. Henry VIII received an egg enclosed in a silver case as an Easter present from the Pope in Rome. Fees due to the Church at Easter were sometimes paid using eggs, which at medieval Durham were known as 'egg-silver.' Eggs were also collected at Easter to be distributed to the poor as charity. Today the most popular gifted egg is of course made from chocolate, complete with colourful foil decoration. Originally dark chocolate was used and the first English chocolate egg was sold by Fry's in 1873; milk chocolate later became the most popular type of Easter egg after it was introduced by Cadbury in 1897.

Where to get your Hot Cross Buns

Tesco

- Regular
- Extra Fruit
- Apple & Cinnamon
- Salted Caramel & Belgian Chocolate
- St Clements
- Marbled Neopolitan
- Triple Chocolate
- Cheddar & Red Leicester
- Strawberries & Clotted Cream
- Chocolate Orange (Free From Range)

All 4 Packs and from £1.50 with Tesco Clubcard

Morrisons

- Regular
- Apple & Cinnamon
- Lemon Drizzle
- Extra Fruity

All 4 Packs and range from £1.50 to £1.80

Aldi

- Regular 6-pack
- Luxury Fruit 4-pack
- Rhubarb & Custard- 4-pack

Prices range from 99p to £1.39

Asda

- Cherry Bakewell
- Regular
- Extra Fruity
- Free From Regular
- Free From Apple & Cinnamon
- Free From Chocolate Orange
- Chocolate Orange
- Apple & Cinnamon
- Salted Caramel
- Lemon & White Chocolate
- Triple Chocolate
- Carrot Cake

All 4 Packs and range from £1.40 to £3.05 for Free From.

Sainsbury

- Regular
- Fruity
- Double Chocolate & Cherry
- Carrot Cake
- Chocolate & Salted Caramel
- Triple Berry
- Apple & Cinnamon
- Lemon & White Chocolate
- Rhubarb & Ginger
- Orange Marmalade
- Free From Extra Fruity
- Free From Chocolate
- Free From Fruity
- Free From Apple & Cinnamon

All 4 Packs and from £1.50 with Nectar Card

Marks & Spencer

- Mini Fruit Filled
- Mini Millionaire
- Mini Luxury Fruited
- Tiramisu
- Red Velvet
- Extremely Lemony
- Millionaire
- Extremely Cheesy Cheddar & Red Leicester
- Extremely Chocolatey
- Rich & Fruity
- Granny Smith Apple
- Luxury
- Gluten Free – Apple & Brown Sugar
- Gluten Free – Regular

All 4 Packs (Minis are 9-pack) and range from £2.50 to £3.00

Lidl

- Deluxe – Luxury
- Rowan Hill – Regular
- Deluxe – Bramley Apple & Cinnamon
- Deluxe – Triple Chocolate
- Deluxe – Very Berry
- Giant

All 4 Packs and range from £1.39 to £1.59 for Giant Variety.

PC Snippets

Parish Council Snippets – as usual, full minutes can be found at <http://www.christchurchparishcouncil.org.uk/minutes/>

The Defib at the Dun Cow is now registered. The unit from the Farmer's boy could be mounted on one of the two new proposed housing developments on Padgetts Road. The benefits of standardising all future defibs to a standard model will be considered as the current units reach the end of their warranty period. The casing for the defib at Farmer's boy has been commented about and suggested removal so no confusion as to whether there is a unit inside.

Parking outside Townley School will be included as part of the forthcoming consultation on the Wayside Estate Local Highway Improvement scheme. Members considered the opportunity to submit an application for the County Council 20mph scheme but agreed not to do so. Also discussed was the possibility to establish a Community Speedwatch group and agreed to appeal for volunteers at the Annual Parish Meeting.

Cllr Roy reported that the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government has launched a final public consultation on the proposed local government reorganisation (now ended). Changes to the business rates system take effect from 1 April, with details on the Anglia Revenues Partnerships website.

A resident contacted the Clerk to make the Council aware of noise nuisance from the newly-installed air source heat pumps on the front of the Townley school building, facing the road. The control unit for the heating system has not yet been installed. This will reduce the hours of operation but not the volume. The local authority is already aware of the problem and is monitoring the noise levels, with the installation of baffles being considered. The new Whitemill Fund Committee has now been set up – Cllr Potter will represent the PCC.

Members agreed in principle that Community groups can use one half of the Parish Council noticeboard, but the Clerk pointed out that during the audit process, a large number of official documents must be displayed, for which the whole board will be required.

Cllr Sparrow mentioned potholes on Upwell Road opposite Fen View and at the junction with Halfpenny Toll Road, and fly-tipping on Padgetts Road. The Clerk confirmed that the highway defects had been reported and were awaiting repair (some now repaired, others marked for repair).

Village Centre Regeneration – 3D visuals to be shared with residents at the Annual Parish Meeting.

Clarion Garden Project - Clarion's gardening team has cleared the garden and the site is now ready for the laying of the membrane and gravel and the installation of raised beds.

A new Clothing recycle bin is to be placed at the CCC by the RSPCA.

Green Lane Project Members discussed the condition of Green Lane with several residents present. They noted that CityFibre has written to residents regarding the installation of cables in the verge. Several issues were raised regarding signage, wheelie bins, potholes, and agricultural traffic, some of which the Council will seek to address. Members agreed that the protection of the eastern verge can only be achieved by installing marker posts and removing vegetation from the dyke side. A more detailed proposal will be developed in due course.

Members discussed the arrangements for the Village Skip day. The skip would need to be delivered to the Community Centre early on the Saturday morning to ensure that it can be supervised. However, subsequent to this, it has been ascertained that the collection and delivery dates/times cannot be guaranteed, which means that the skip would be unmonitored, which would cause issues if items put in the skip which were unsuitable. This date has now been cancelled and alternatives will be considered.

An application to erect a single-storey rear extension to an existing dwelling involving link to existing garage and formation of a new access – Kotilo, Euximoor Drove, Christchurch – The committee had no objection.

A small independent mobile grocery shop has asked for feedback as to the wish and viability of creating a route that would serve the village.

Upwell FC have requested pitches at the CCC for training on Wednesdays.

Church News

Services for April

Good Friday 3rd April –

Christchurch - Stations of the Cross 2pm

Wimblington – An Hour at the Cross 2pm

Easter Saturday 4th April –

Manea – Wild Church/ Easter Trail 10.30am

Easter Sunday 5th April –

Wimblington – Breakfast Church 9.30am

Christchurch – Holy Communion by extension 10.30am

Doddington – Holy Communion 10.30am

Welney - Holy Communion – 3pm

Sunday 12th April –

Manea – Holy Communion 10.30am

Wimblington – Morning Prayer 10.30am

Benwick – Holy Communion 3pm

Sunday 19th April –

Doddington – Morning Prayer 10.30am

Christchurch – Holy Communion 10.30am

Sunday 26th April –

Manea – Morning Prayer 10.30am

Wimblington – Holy Communion 10.30am

Welney – Holy Communion 3pm

Services in May all at 10.30am unless otherwise stated

First Sunday – Holy Communion – Doddington

Morning Prayer – Christchurch

Breakfast Church – Wimblington 9.30am

Second Sunday – Holy Communion – Manea

Morning Prayer- Wimblington

Holy Communion – Benwick 3pm

Third Sunday – Holy Communion -Christchurch

Morning Prayer – Doddington

Fourth Sunday – Holy Communion – Wimblington

Morning Prayer – Manea

Holy Communion – Welney 3pm

Fifth Sunday 31st May – United Benefice Service in Christchurch with a focus on the Building Project.

We thank everyone who supports our fundraising events. Since June 2022 our monthly events have raised about £5000 which we will use as part of the match funding for a National Heritage Lottery Grant, hopefully later this year. Of course, there is always expenditure in maintaining the building and churchyard, for example we recently had the gutters cleared at a cost of £650.

Events coming up ...



Saturday April 25th

Christchurch Community Centre

Beetle Drive and Spring Tea

Sandwiches, savouries, cakes
and other sweet treats.

Doors open 3pm

£6 per person

There will also be a raffle

Saturday May 23rd

Christchurch Community
Centre

Quiz and Ploughman's

Max. Team of 6

£7.00 per person

Doors open 7.00pm

Questions start 7.30pm

Bar open and raffle

Looking for somewhere to go?

What	When	Where
Easter Fayre & Dog Show. <i>Easter egg hunt for dogs, craft and gift stalls.</i>	Sunday 11th April, 10am—4pm.	Lakes End Village Hall.
Yard Sale. <i>Maps on sale from Mepal Village Shop from 15th April.</i>	Saturday 18th April, 1pm—3pm.	Mepal Village.
Craft Destash. <i>Stalls selling unwanted arts and craft items.</i>	Saturday 25th April, 10am—1pm.	Eddies Fenland Art-works, Unit 1A Norwood Road, March, PE15 8JL.
Old Fashioned Jumble Sale.	Saturday 25th April, 9am—1pm.	Outwell Village Hall.
St Georges Fayre. <i>Stalls, entertainment, food & treats.</i>	Sunday 26th April, 11am—4pm.	March High St.
Wedding Fayre. <i>Dresses, cakes, catering, hair, & photography.</i>	Sunday 26th April, 11am—4pm.	GER Sports Club, Robingoodfellows Lane, March, PE15 8HS.
Ely's Eel Day. <i>Live music & craft stalls.</i>	Saturday 2nd May, 11am—4pm	Jubilee Gardens
Ely's Food, Drink and Craft Fair. <i>Artisan food and drink, street food & gifts.</i>	Sunday 3rd May & Monday 4th May, 10am—4pm.	Palace & Cross Green
Cars and Coffee at the Crematorium. <i>In aid of mental health. Contact Scott on 07513 426007.</i>	Saturday 13th June, 10am—3pm.	Fenland Crematorium, Knights End Road, March PE15 0YJ.
Charity Quiz and Raffle in Aid of EAAA. <i>Bar and snacks available. £20 per team. Pauline Baldwin—07484733255.</i>	Friday 26th June—8pm start.	Outwell Village Hall.

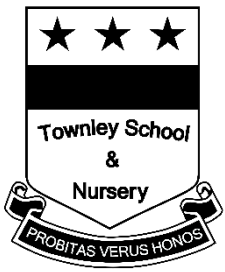
Christchurch Over 65s Annual Parish Lunch Sunday 12th April 2026 12.30pm for 1.00pm

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.

Those that have attended in the past should have received their invite by now but if you have slipped through the net and you haven't received an invite, 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



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.

March 2026

Are you interested in Primary School Education?

Have you ever considered becoming a school governor? It's a rewarding way to make a real difference in your local community. Governors take on a wide variety of roles supporting different aspects of school life—Safeguarding, Finance, the Curriculum, Special Educational Needs, Sports, educational visits, and much more. Whatever your interests or experience, there is a place for you to contribute.

Townley Primary School in Christchurch joined the Fenland Schools Federation alongside Friday Bridge Primary School in September 2025. The Governing Board for the Federation now has two vacancies for individuals who are enthusiastic about helping shape and strengthen this new and exciting chapter in primary education for local children.

The commitment includes seven Full Governing Body meetings across the school year, as well as two sub-committees, each meeting once per term. You don't need previous governance experience—Cambridgeshire County Council provides comprehensive training to support all governors, whether you're completely new or bringing existing knowledge to the role.

If you're interested, why not have a chat with our Chair of Governors, who can give you a clear picture of what the role involves? Contact Sue Rudge: srudge@fenland.cambs.sch.uk or call the school office.

It is certainly strange without the old mobile classroom on site! Mr Cheung took a great aerial picture of how the site looks now! Watch this space for more changes!



It feels like the school year is racing by, I would like to put the brakes on a little! So much has happened since our last edition. In case you wondered, Emperor and Dragonflies Class were wonderful at Burwell House, the children say I say it every year, but this group were so kind and considerate of each other AND I got two nights of sleep! Miss Gourley has been teaching in Emerald Class with Mrs Greening, she goes back to University next week and we will miss her. The children have loved a writing workshop run by Holly Trundle. Hawker Class enjoyed a trip to the Zoo with Friday Bridge and are looking forward to returning to Delph House and EYFS have been busy hunting for eggs! And we all shared books for World Book Day

Working in a small school is extremely rewarding, but it brings unique challenges as we have limited space and adults to go around. However, the staff work very hard to be creative and we couldn't do it without the support we receive from our community. Resources continue to come in for OPAL. Places at Mr Rudge's stamp club are sought after, Hattie the Reading dog is very loved and Mrs Lyons sewing club has a waiting list! Could you help our children by volunteering your time to support forest school, or read with children or maybe teach us a new skill? Get touch with the school office if you would like to make a positive difference to our children.



Tea, Cake... And ADVENTURE

Sunday May 10th at 3:30pm in the Community Centre. It's Free – come along!



An illustrated talk about my father's Life Work as a Pioneer Anglican Christian Missionary amongst the Khumi-Chin people, in the jungles of Western Burma (Myanmar) 1932 – 1965.



Whatever you may think of 'Missionaries' and 'Religion', and whether you agree, disagree, are sceptical, or belong to another religion or none, it's definitely a very interesting story.



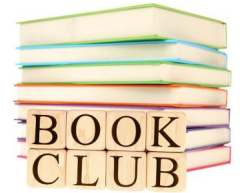
Well, I would say that, wouldn't I, as it's part of my family history. BUT.... I promise it's fascinating and I won't be preaching.... Hahaha.

Annie Nason

← Ernest Walter Francis ... affectionately known as 'RUFUS' as he had auburn hair. My Daddy xx

Christchurch Book Club

February's book was *Cold Comfort Farm* by Stella Gibbons, which told the story of a recently orphaned young woman who goes to stay with eccentric relatives on a farm in Sussex and who sets about transforming their uninteresting lives one by one. Quite an enjoyable book, which was also made into a film.



The current book is a psychological thriller, *The Family Upstairs* by Lisa Jewell. One House, Two Families, Three Bodies and a baby unharmed. What happened in that house? There is also a follow up to this book, *The Family Remains*, no doubt we will be looking at reading this one in the future.

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, which will be on 14th April, and require details of the venue, please contact Pat Rigby on 07776 142642.

Christchurch Gardening Club

After what seemed like a long winter, the gardening club members re-surfaced for the first meeting of the year, after the club's hiatus. The A.G.M on Tuesday 17th February.



For the past twenty-some-odd years there has been very little change in the make-up of the committee, this year however we were in for some radical changes. Our esteemed treasurer Peggy Warby, stood down after many, many years of service to the club. At the same time long serving member of both the committee and the club Sandra Kaye also stood down along with another stalwart Graham Warby. On behalf of the club and committee I should like to thank them for their service, and I hope they continue to enjoy the club meetings and participate in the future of the club.

Having said that, I should like to welcome our new members to the committee. Treasurer Carol Jones, committee member Sue Simpson, who join the remaining members of the committee unanimously re-elected Stephen Hawthorn (Chairman), Marion Hawthorn (Secretary), Tracy Day and Jennie Head.

Onwards and Upwards. Tuesday 17th March, saw the club welcome Speaker Graham Watts, his first time at the club. Graham is a stalwart member of the National Open Gardens scheme and regularly welcomes visitors to his garden in aid of charity. He kept the assembled group both intrigued and laughing as he described turning a huge plot with a lake into an incredible space with multitudes of different species of plants and flowers. If you possibly can this is a worthwhile charity and Graham's garden is well worth a visit.

You can find the national Open Garden scheme at Visitngs.org.uk

Next Month the modern world catches up with the club as we host a video night on gardening, subject to be announced.

For more information or to join the club come along on the night or call 01354638230
Steve



Is Vicky the fastest pea-pod?

A runner in a pea-pod costume believes she has set a new Guinness World Record as the fastest woman to complete a half marathon dressed as a vegetable.

Vicky Knight was among more than 20 mental health campaigners who dressed as various vegetables for Sunday's Cambridge Half Marathon. The human salad bowl selection also included a sweetcorn, a tomato and an aubergine.



Knight was aiming to beat the record of 1 hr 46 mins. She hit the finish line in 1:21:21, according to the race organiser's official records.

Her outfit had made her feel "pretty hot" but had been "lighter than it looks", she said. Guinness World Records has yet to verify the attempt.

More than 20 people took part dressed up as vegetables and flowers to raise funds for Cultivating Change.

Knight has taken part in several half and full marathons over the years but had "never done one dressed like this".

The Cambridge group was running for Cultivating Change, a charity that aims to engage communities through gardening to support mental health.

It has worked with communities and schools across Cambridgeshire, Essex, Norfolk and Suffolk.

The current holder of the "fastest woman to run a half marathon dressed as a vegetable" record is Elizabeth Thayer from the US, who achieved a time of 1:46:51 on 19 September 2021.

Vicky Knight's costume did not stop her finishing in an impressive time.

By Katy Prickett, Images from Cultivating Change and Aimee Dexter, BBC News

A Missing Scarecrow...



A gardening group is appealing for help to find a missing 7ft scarecrow called Tex.

Chatteris in Bloom has even held a scarecrow amnesty, in the hope someone would hand him in.

Since September 2025, Tex was sitting amid some of the group's flower displays on Huntingdon Road in the Cambridgeshire town. He vanished around 14 March.

The group's president, Sue Unwin, said the volunteers were disappointed "someone would take something that people find a lot of joy in".

The Fenland town is one of the finalists in Britain in Bloom 2026.

It is also one of four finalists in the town category of the Royal Horticultural Society's competition. Unwin added: "I just can't believe someone would

want a seven-foot high scarecrow.

"We would like him back, we are missing him," she said.

The charity put an appeal on Facebook and contacted the police. It said police were going to review doorbell footage.

Tex is pictured alongside Sally, who is also on display in the town.

By Aimee Dexter BBC News, Images from Chatteris in Bloom





Christchurch Women's Circle

Our February Meeting was changed at very short notice with Fossils Galore from March helping us out. A very comprehensive presentation on a dig which cost approximately £50,000 to extract a near complete skeleton of a Dinosaur. Many hours of work still lie ahead with cleaning and preservation of the bones. We were able to hold some of the pieces that are already on display, which was amazing. An excellent and interesting evening with a peep into the past.

March meeting, we had Marie from the Inheritance Legal Services Ltd on the importance of making a Will and The Power of Attorney. Marie covered the reasons for getting these in place especially now with extended families, properties and possessions we all have. There were some interesting questions raised, shared and answered by Marie. No hard sell but a very helpful and informative evening for our members and guests and certainly a lot of food for thought.

- | | | |
|------------------------|--|------------------------|
| April 14 th | AGM and Poetry by Holly Trundle | - Competition Letter D |
| May 12 th | A visit to Layne Rowe Glass Blower and Sculpture | - Competition Letter E |
| June 9 th | Talk by MAGPAS | - Competition Letter F |

Visitors and New Members are always welcome.

Christchurch Hobby and Craft Club

**Every Tuesday
10.00 AM- 1.00 PM
Christchurch Community Centre**

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.

We can also offer a Working with Stained Glass course over 4 weeks for a charge of £85, However places are limited. Please contact me for further details is you are interested.

Contact Janet Harper on 07941 465319.

Here are some examples of the latest work:



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

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For further details call Hazel Spry on 07768 648619 .

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SUNDAY 7th JUNE
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offer more dates over the coming year.



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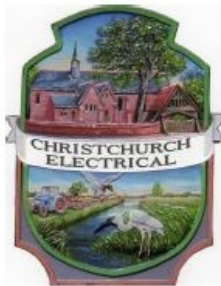
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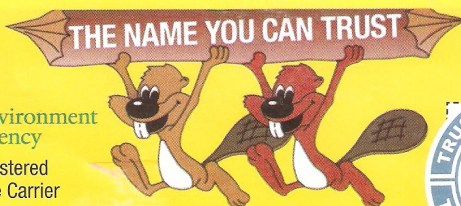
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Church Renovation Update

The Church Renovation Committee are pleased to inform residents that a Project Lead/Architect has been appointed, after a lengthy and thorough interview process, to move the renovation forwards. The architect who has been appointed is Ashley Courtney (BA (Hons) DipArch RIBA AABC).

Ashley is a Conservation Accredited Architect with 30 years of experience, and is already familiar with the church, meaning that progress has already begun. Ashley has completed many renovations and repairs to places of worship locally, including St Mary and St Michael in Trumpington, St Andrew in West Dereham, and St Peter in Upwell.

Fundraising efforts are still ongoing, with thanks to the Church Warden, Helen Chappell and Karen Beers. A quiz was hosted by Helen and Karen on 28th February 2026, with a further £368.50 raised for the Church Renovation Fund. Additionally, Helen arranged for Well Creek Rose Art to host a Canal Art Workshop on the 8th March which was a sell-out and enjoyed by all of those who attended. The workshop raised a further £255.

On Sunday 31st May at 10:30am, it is the United Benefice Service in Christchurch at the Community Centre, with a focus on the renovation project. We encourage all of you who may be interested in hearing more about the project to attend the service, all are welcome.

Here is Helen, representing the Parish Church, signing the documents!



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Feed Fenland

We are a new initiative fighting food poverty by providing a hot meal to anyone who needs it. You can find us every weekday and every Sunday between 18:00-19:00. We serve in the playground of The Olive Academy (address: Coalwharf Rd, Wisbech PE13 2FP) and our Serve is accessed via a side gate along Somers' Road. There is a Volunteer stationed at this gate to help with direction.

Everyone is welcome to get some food, clothing, and sanitary products, no questions asked.

We offer all kinds of support to all kinds of people.



Feed Fenland

Feed Fenland serve warm meals to any person in need in Wisbech, six nights a week – and it is solely run by volunteers. In the past year, they have introduced emergency food parcel deliveries across Wisbech and the surrounding area.

I volunteer as a cook once a month for their soup-style kitchen – which feeds anywhere up to 160 people in one night! I thought some of you may be interested in what it entails, so I am going to take you along...

A day (or two...) in the life of a volunteer cook!

A rota is sent out each week in the whatsapp group, requesting for serve leads, servers, gatekeepers and cooks. You get to pick which day you would like to do (or like me you have a regular slot.. I stick to cooking on the third Tuesday of each month)!

On the day or two before you cook, you get to visit the AMAZING lock-up – filled with an incredible amount of donations (which come from the general public on donation day which is every Sunday at Wisbech Tesco, as well as lots of extremely generous local businesses, such as Bakkavor, Accent Fresh and Pearls Puzzle Library – the list really does go on). At the lock-up, you get to collect your ingredients and plan your cook with what is available. I generally go for either a Sausage Casserole or Curried Chicken – but there is usually a decent selection of meat and vegetables to choose from including mince, pork and diced beef. If I am doing sausage casserole, I use around 200 sausages. I then gather up whatever fresh veggies I can get my hands on, tins of beans to help bulk the meal out, and lots of tomato-based tins to make the sauce. I always serve mine with pasta... all 10kg of it!

Next comes the equipment – two large plastic tubs to transport the cooked pasta in, 3 large slow cookers, an extra-large pot which fills my oven from top to bottom, and two humungous non-stick pans to boil the amount of pasta needed, along with some extra-long serving spoons because a normal wooden spoon won't cut it, and some insulated bags for the slow cookers to stay nice and hot. It is a car full, but easy to fit in if you pop the tins into the pasta boxes and use up all the empty spaces in the pots and pans! Homewards bound...

Everything gets unloaded into the fridge once I am home, ready for my cook the next day.

The day of the cook...

After my kitchen clean down, I pop my ovens on, and start cooking trays of sausages. There is a divide in the team, some prefer to cut the sausages before cooking into chunks, but I prefer to cook the sausages and then use some scissors to snip them into bitesize pieces (it doesn't take as long as you'd think). Once all the sausages are cooked up to a safe temperature, and chopped, I divide them into the slow cookers and the pot for the oven, along side the vegetables, beans and tomato sauce, with some seasoning – I like to use cajun seasoning in mine to give it a little warmth. I pop the slow cookers on high and the pot in the oven on a medium temperature and they can be forgotten about all day as they slowly cook. Prepare to be hungry, the smell always makes me crave some!

Mid-afternoon, it's time to start the carbs. I put on all 4 rings on my hob and put 2.5kg of pasta into each of the two large saucepans, and boil 5kg of the pasta at a time. Once cooked, I drain and decant the pasta into the large plastic tubs, drizzle with oil to prevent the servers for having to battle stuck-together pasta and repeat the process again for the remaining 5kg. As soon as the last batch of pasta is finished, the oven and slow cookers are switched off, the lids cling wrapped to within an inch of their life, packed into the insulated bags and loaded into the car.

I am greeted at The Olive Academy where the food is served (normally around 5:50pm, ready for a 6pm serve) by a large wheeled trolley, which I load up with the hot food and wheel into the serving room (I use the term wheel loosely, I normally take a few attempts getting it through the door – I make it look harder than it is, ha!). The team will greet you with a smile and a hug, help you unload the trolley, and handover any clean boxes and pots from the night before ready for you to drop off to the lock-up on your way home.

The day of the cook is ALWAYS finished with a lovely message in the group, thanking you for cooking, how many portions were roughly served and any compliments from the service users are passed on – it's a lovely way to end the day!

Feed Fenland are always on the lookout for more volunteers, if you'd like to get involved, please visit their website: www.feedfenland.com

- Danielle, Publisher

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

It has been a busy period across our villages, and I would like to update residents on several matters affecting the communities of Elm and Christchurch.

Firstly, I would like to thank residents who continue to engage with local consultations and community discussions about the future of Fenland. The district council is currently progressing work on its emerging "Fenland 50" Local Plan, which will help guide development and planning decisions across the district in the coming years. Residents are encouraged to share their views so that the voices of our rural communities are properly represented.

In recent weeks, I have also been speaking with residents about issues that matter locally, including road safety, drainage and general infrastructure concerns in the villages and surrounding rural areas. As many people know, parts of our area are low-lying Fenland, and managing water levels remains an ongoing priority for local authorities and internal drainage boards.

Community engagement remains a key focus of my work. I recently attended local discussions and events where residents had the opportunity to speak directly with organizations and advisers about energy efficiency, flooding resilience and support available for households. These events are an excellent way for residents to receive practical advice while also raising concerns about local issues affecting their homes and communities.

Elm parish itself continues to grow and remains one of the larger villages in the Fenland district, ensuring that services and infrastructure keep pace with that growth is something I will continue to raise with the district and county councils.

Finally, I would encourage residents to keep in touch and let me know about any issues in your street or village. Your feedback helps shape the priorities I take forward on your behalf.

As always, I remain committed to representing the interests of residents across Elm and Christchurch and ensuring that our villages continue to be strong, safe and thriving communities.

Cllr Dal Roy - Independent Councillor - Elm and Christchurch
Fenland District Council – Elm & Christchurch Ward



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!

Stonea Camp; History & Future

As Chairman of Heritage, Culture & Community (HCC) Stonea, I have the privilege of working with incredibly talented and dedicated volunteers, together we help share the story of one of the most remarkable historical sites in the Cambridgeshire Fens: Stonea Camp. Although many people drive past the approach road to the site without realising its significance, Stonea Camp represents more than 2,500 years of human history. It tells a story of ancient communities, Roman conquest, archaeological discovery and, today, a growing movement to reconnect local people with its heritage.

Our Ancient Fenland Stronghold

Stonea Camp is widely recognised as the lowest lying hill fort in Britain. Unlike the dramatic hilltop forts seen in other parts of the country, this Iron Age fort sits on what was once a small gravel island rising just two metres above sea level. When it was first constructed around 500 BC, the Cambridgeshire Fens looked very different. Much of the landscape was marshland, rivers and reed beds, making any area of higher ground extremely valuable.

The fort itself was a significant construction. It was built as a multivallate hill fort, with multiple defensive banks and ditches surrounding the settlement. These impressive earthworks formed a protective enclosure where people lived, worked and traded. What we see today is only a glimpse of what once stood there, but archaeological evidence suggests the interior would have contained a large roundhouse, storage buildings and communal spaces. Hill forts such as Stonea were not simply military structures. They were centres of community life and leadership. Families would have farmed the surrounding land, fished the waterways and traded goods across the Fenland landscape. From this small rise above the marshes, the people of the Iron Age could watch over an environment rich in natural resources.

The Roman Conquest and a Violent Turning Point

The story of Stonea Camp took a dramatic turn in the first century AD with the arrival of the Romans. Historical accounts suggest, and many scholars believe the site was the location of a major confrontation between Roman forces and the Iceni who resisted Roman rule.

The Roman historian Tacitus recorded a battle with Roman troops under Governor Ostorius Scapula, who defeated the Iceni as they took refuge within their own defensive earthworks. Archaeologists are 95% sure, this account refers to a conflict at Stonea Camp. Archaeological discoveries at the site lend weight to this theory. Excavations uncovered human remains in the defensive ditches, including bones showing signs of violent injuries. These findings suggest that the hill fort was under attack, with the occupants unable to escape. For the people who once visited Stonea Camp in ancient times, the arrival of the Roman Empire marked the end of a way of life that had existed for centuries.



A Roman Centre in the Fens

After the conquest, the Romans established their own presence in the area. Archaeologists later discovered the remains of an impressive Roman building just north of the hill fort. This structure appears to have been a large multi-storey, stone built tower. The building was far more sophisticated than anything that had existed on the site before. It included features such as heated floors, painted wall plaster and glazed windows. These details indicate that it was likely an important administrative centre rather than a simple farm or outpost.

Historians believe the tower may have been used to oversee Roman control of the Fenland region. It may also have played a role in early drainage projects and land management, as the Romans began transforming the wetlands into more productive farmland. However, like many Roman developments in Britain, the settlement did not last forever. The building appears to have been demolished around the second century AD, and over time the site faded back into the landscape.

Rediscovering Stonea Camp

For many centuries Stonea Camp lay largely forgotten. As the Fens were drained and agriculture expanded, the earthworks were gradually worn down by ploughing. By the twentieth century much of the original structure had been damaged or buried. Interest in the site returned when archaeologists began investigating the area in the mid-1900s. Excavations helped reveal the complex history of the hill fort and uncovered evidence of both Iron Age life and Roman occupation. In the early 1990s, a major restoration project was undertaken to preserve the monument. The defensive ditches were carefully excavated, and the surrounding banks were rebuilt using the excavated soil. This work helped restore the shape of the hill fort so visitors could once again appreciate the scale of the ancient defences.

Today Stonea Camp is protected as a Scheduled Ancient Monument, recognising its national importance as an archaeological site.

[Continued on the last page...](#)

Stonea Camp continued...

The Role of HCC Stonea

At HCC Stonea, our mission is to ensure that this extraordinary piece of history is not overlooked. The organisation was created to celebrate the heritage, culture and community connected with Stonea and the surrounding area. Over the past few years, we have worked hard to bring the story of the site to life. Through heritage open days, community events and educational activities, we have welcomed hundreds of visitors to Stonea Camp. These events often include Roman and Iron Age re-enactments, historical talks, guided tours and activities for families and children.



Seeing people experience the history of the site firsthand has been incredibly rewarding for everyone involved. For many visitors it is the first time they realise that such an important monument exists right on their doorstep. We have also been fortunate to receive small grants that have allowed us to develop materials, helping us better explain the site's significance and engage visitors of all ages, as with most volunteer groups, our work is very dependent upon successful funding bids, so we welcome all support received from local communities in our applications and events.

Looking to the Future

Whilst we appreciate what has already been achieved, we believe the story of Stonea Camp is only just beginning. One of our key goals is to continue supporting research into the site. There is still much to learn about the people who lived here, the events that took place during the Roman conquest and the wider landscape of the ancient Fens. Every new discovery helps deepen our understanding of this remarkable place. Most importantly, we want Stonea Camp to remain a place where the community can connect with its past. Local heritage belongs to everyone, and we believe that sharing these stories helps strengthen a sense of identity and pride in the area.

A Fenland Treasure

Stonea Camp may appear at first glance to be a quiet earthwork in the fields, but its story spans thousands of years, from an Iron Age stronghold surrounded by marshland, to a site of Roman conflict and administration, to a modern heritage project supported by volunteers, it represents a unique chapter in the history of the Cambridgeshire Fens.

As Chairman of HCC Stonea, I am humbled and privileged to be part of a team dedicated to protecting and promoting this extraordinary site. With continued support from the community, we hope to ensure that the history of Stonea Camp is preserved, understood and celebrated for generations to come. Thank you so much to The Heron for inviting the group to write about Stonea Camp, and the work that we do.

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.

Thank you Amanda for your fascinating articles—the history surrounding Stonea Camp is very interesting and I have enjoyed learning more about our local history.

- The Editor



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.

