

December 2025 / January 2026

The Journal

Fen Drayton ■ Fenstanton ■ Hilton

Village hall underway

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Places of interest - Part 3

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Shetland Islands visited

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Magnificent women in their flying machines

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Our MP reports

On page 33

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Festive Greetings

The combined December/January edition is always a bumper issue and this year is no exception. We have some fascinating articles including the magnificent women in their flying machines that charts the lives of pioneering female pilots. Travel this month brings us closer to home with a piece about exploring the Shetland Islands. Whilst our cooking piece is for delicious stuffed mushrooms. Enjoy!

Throughout the magazine are advertisements for the numerous activities going on around our villages at this time of year. Please try to support these events as the organisers stage these for your enjoyment. Whatever you end up doing, have an enjoyable festive period and a happy new year.

From all at The Journal we hope you enjoy this edition

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Please submit any copy by 9 January latest for the February edition.

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Events at a Glance

Fen Drayton Fenstanton Hilton

November 2025

- 29 Mulled Wine Evening
- 29 Christmas Market, Clock Tower
- 29 Christmas Fayre, Parish Church

December 2025

- 03 Christmas Wreath Workshop, Primary School
- 05 Winter Fair, Primary School
- 06 A Christmas Carol, Pantaloons Company, Village Hall
- 12 Carol Service, St Mary's Church
- 13 Swavesey Community Choir, Village Hall
- 14 Children's Party, Village Hall - **Postponed**
- 14 Christmas lunch in aid of Arthur Rank Hospice, Church Centre
- 16 Carols around Hilton
- 18 Christmas Party, Welcome Space, Church Centre
- 20 Christmas Crunch, Church Centre
- 20 Books and Jigsaws Sale, URC
- 26 Fenstanton Morris, Clock Tower

January 2026

- 17 Books & Jigsaws Sale, URC

February 2026

- 07 Parish Church Fundraising Supper
- 14 James Bond Fundraiser, Prince of Wales

March 2026

- 21 Feast Week Quiz, Village Hall

July 2026

- 04 BIG Village Fun Day, School Field



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If you have an event coming up that you would like to have listed on this page please send the details to Anne at fenstanton@thejournal.life

Fenstanton's new Village Hall – Building our future together

After many years of planning, perseverance, and unwavering community support, we are delighted that construction of the brand-new Village Hall has finally begun. This marks a major milestone for our village — one of aspiration, collaboration, and belief in a stronger future for Fenstanton.



If all goes to plan, the new hall will be completed by June/July next year, opening its doors to become a vibrant hub at the heart of our community. A place where friends meet, ideas grow, memories are made, and everyone can take part in the life of our village.

This moment would not have been possible without the tireless work of the Fenstanton Village Hall Trustees. They have navigated complex funding streams, planning challenges, design stages, and countless hours of meetings to get us to this point. Their hard work, passion, and belief in this project has been nothing short of brilliant — and we thank them sincerely for everything they have achieved so far.

We would also like to express our heartfelt gratitude to Cambridgeshire County Council, Huntingdonshire District Council and Fenstanton Parish Council. Their support, guidance, and funding contributions have been essential in turning this ambition into a reality.

But now, as we move from foundations to the excitement of a finished home for the

community, we need more hands, more ideas, and more.

Join us — Help shape Fenstanton's future!

We are now looking for new volunteers to help drive the project forward into its next chapter. We would love to hear from people with skills or interest in:

- Marketing & publicity
- Event planning
- Fundraising & sponsorship
- Organisation & logistics
- Community engagement
- Fresh ideas for activities and hall use

Whether you have a wealth of experience or simply lots of enthusiasm — you are welcome. This is your village hall, and your input will help shape it into the lively, inclusive centre the community deserves.

Your Village. Your Hall. Your Opportunity.

Over the coming months we'll be planning opening celebrations, future events, and how the hall can serve Fenstanton in exciting new ways. If you want to help build something special — now is the perfect time to get involved.

To volunteer or find out more, please get in touch: fenstantonvillagehall@gmail.com

Together, let's create a Village Hall that Fenstanton can be proud of — not just for today, but for generations to come.



Hilton Royal British Legion



When door to door collectors were finding that donors had little or no cash two years ago, Margaret and Charles Andrew held a very successful Open House; then last year Jan and Bruce Whatley followed suit. With awareness of such hard work, a group of us in Hilton decided to begin the 2025 Poppy Appeal with an 'Open Village Hall' and over the months around 100 people offered time, raffle prizes, decorations, cake and ideas.

Then the Papworth, Elsworth and Hilton WI choir offered to sing for a while and the Brownie group decorated glass jars as table centres with a promise to help. We are also grateful for the support of Hilton Town Trust.



Due to begin at 10.30am, the 'gang' arrived at 9.10am to an empty Village Hall and in 60 minutes we were ready - but would anyone come? Oh, yes, also with enough cake to feed an army and very nearly an embarrassment of fantastic raffle prizes. The donations were frankly amazing and it all went smoothly and with much affectionate friendship. So Imagine the gasps when it was announced that the day had raised £1,238.55! Thank you so very much to Hilton and beyond for this enormous support.

The Silent Auction

Talented Emma of the Prince of Wales painted the most beautiful picture of Poppies and it was decided to offer it in a Silent Auction, the highest bidder to own the painting.

There was a total of 17 bids - and please sit down to read this result - the winning bid

for Emma's beautiful picture was £1,001! The new owner wishes to remain anonymous but Sir or Madam - thank you on behalf of the Royal British Legion for your amazing donation. (Hilton's final total will be announced when everything has been counted.)



Remembrance Sunday

At the Lychgate on Remembrance Sunday, we were led by Reverend David Busk supported by Pauline Zähler from the Methodist Church with an address hoping that we care for one another; Geta Bond placed the wreath remembering the Fallen of WW1 and George Fieldhouse placed one in remembrance of those of WW2. A small group of Brownies placed wreaths that they had created and beautifully dipped their Standards during the Silence, then during the Morning Service they recited a poem of thanks to all who had served in any form.

It has been a time of reflection and gratitude for all the benefits we enjoy even in these difficult times - a time to be strong, as always.



Hilton Feast Week

We're excited to announce that this year's Feast Week will take place from 19th to 25th July 2026. Preparations are already underway, and we're looking forward to another brilliant week of community celebration. Put the dates in your diaries now so you don't miss out on the fun!

Before we get there, we'd like to thank everyone who has supported our recent fundraising efforts. Our refreshment stall at Fireworks Night was a great success, and we're grateful to all who stopped by. A huge thank you to the Parish Council too for the fabulous fireworks display!

A big thank you as well to everyone who joined us for the recent quiz night. If you are keen for another round, the next quiz will be held on Saturday 21st March - we'd love to see you there.

And don't forget the Feast Week Lottery! Buying a ticket is a simple, fun way to support the fundraising that makes our village celebrations possible. For just £5 a month you can both support Feast Week and have a monthly opportunity to win a cash prize. See the poster below for details on how to join.

Thank you for your continued support - together, we're making Feast Week 2026 something to look forward to!



Find a defibrillator near you

We hope you never need a defibrillator, but if you did they are located in various places throughout our villages. The locations are below with the  what3words location references.

Fen Drayton Village Hall on Cootes Lane
Fenstanton Ash's Store (NISA) on the High Street
Fenstanton Church Centre on School Lane
Fenstanton Zaza barbers on Headlands
Hilton Prince of Wales Pub on Potton Road
Hilton Cricket Pavilion

moons.grumbles.admires
pouting.cabinet.washroom
reclusive.creeps.deleting
thing.pylon.relatives
mindset.skip.pulps
clerk.farmland.unroll

Wildlife of Panama – from Canal to Cloud Forest

The Huntingdonshire Local Group of the Wildlife Trust is pleased to welcome back Jo Thomas on Wednesday 14th January at 7.30pm at Brampton Memorial Hall.

Many of you will know Jo, who worked for the Wildlife Trust for many years and was a previous Chair of the local group and warden at Grafham Water. Since then Jo has worked for WWT at Welney, alongside running Wild About Travel for over 20 years. Jo says she appreciates all things wild both at home and abroad. Today's talk will focus on Panama, where Jo has seen an amazing number of birds, including the Harpy Eagle and the Resplendent Quetzal. This promises to be an exciting presentation and will provide a change from our more usual UK based talks!

Everyone is most welcome to attend. Booking is not necessary. The charge is £5.00 (£4.00 for Wildlife Trust members; under 18s free). Payment is by cash or card. We meet at Brampton Memorial Hall, Thrapston Road, Brampton, PE28 4TB. For more information please contact Tim – 07941 261346 or timpfryer@googlemail.com.

Part of the Wildlife Trust for Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire. Registered Charity No: 1000412



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**Huntingdonshire
Local Group**

Hilton Carol Singing Tuesday, 16 December

If you would like to join us as a singer or as a collector, please come to the Parish Church at 6pm.

There will be refreshments for all singers and collectors in the Methodist Hall at the end!

This year, the Carol Singing around the village will be to support Christian Aid because there was no collection in the village during Christian Aid Week this year.

Christian Aid exists to create a world where everyone can live a full life, free from poverty. Disaster after disaster has caused extreme poverty to rise again this year, after decades of progress. Recently, hurricane Melissa has caused devastation in the Caribbean and the charity is also providing help in the Middle East, Afghanistan, Sudan and many other places.

The singers won't be able to get everywhere – so if you would like to donate to Christian Aid, please put your donation in an envelope and drop it off at 7, Chequers Croft.



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Coffee Mornings at Hilton Methodist Hall, Potton Road

Saturday, 6th December 10:00 - 12:00

Saturday, 3rd January 10:00 - 12:00

Saturday, 7th February 10:00 - 12:00

Everyone Welcome

Some places of interest - Part 3

After last month's look at some places to the north, we are now heading south this time to look at some historic houses and windmills:-

Buckden Towers PE19 5TA

A medieval fortified house and bishop's palace. Katherine of Aragon was held here after her divorce from Henry VIII. Now owned by the Claretian Missionaries, it is used as a retreat and study centre. The gardens are open for visitors during daylight hours but the main buildings are not open to the public. More details on the Buckden towers website.



Wimpole SG8 0BW

An impressive mansion with extensive parkland, gardens and a rare breed farm. Cafés and a large car park. The property is owned by the National Trust. There are special events throughout the year, including a winter wonderland experience from 21 November to 3 January. See the National Trust website for more details.



Kimbolton Castle PE28 0EA

Kimbolton Castle is also a private day and boarding school. There are regular public open days and the option of booking private group tours. It was the last residence of Katherine of Aragon before her death in 1536. The castle in its present form dates from 1690 to 1720. See the Kimbolton Castle website for more details.



Great Gransden SG19 3AG

The Great Gransden windmill is one of the oldest surviving windmills in England, constructed c. 1612. It isn't open to visitors. The mill is currently owned and maintained by Cambridgeshire County Council and it is planned to hand over management of the mill to a charitable trust once the current repairs are complete.



Longstowe Hall CB23 2UH

An historic country estate just off the A1198 which is available for hire. The gardens are open to the public on specific dates. The opening dates for 2026 will be published on the Longstowe Hall website in January.



Great Chishill SG8 8SD

Great Chishill's 200-year old windmill is at the highest point in Cambridgeshire and has been restored by the Great Chishill Windmill Trust. See the Great Chishill Windmill Trust's website for details of open days.



Tubs2Pubs

Last year I collected Tubs2Pubs in Fenstanton. I'm doing it again this year! Please will you bring tubs to my house, 28 Bell Lane, Fenstanton, between 1 January and 10 February.

Please note: this is earlier than the pubs advertise, so I can get them delivered to the pub by 15 February.

Thank you.
Jean Ding



Hilton Churches' Advent Lunches

In Aid of Diamond Hampers in Huntingdon



**Do come and join us for a light lunch
between 12:30 and 2:00pm.**

**Wednesday, 3 December Abbotsmede, Chapel Close
by kind invitation of Linda and Ian Stott**

**Wednesday, 10 December The Grange, The Green
by kind invitation of Julia and Andrew Parkinson**

**Wednesday, 17 December Wistow, The Green
by kind invitation of Claire and Nick Sarkiest**

Suggested donation - £5:00 or more

Fenstanton Morris

will be dancing on

Boxing Day

Thursday 26 December



at The Clocktower
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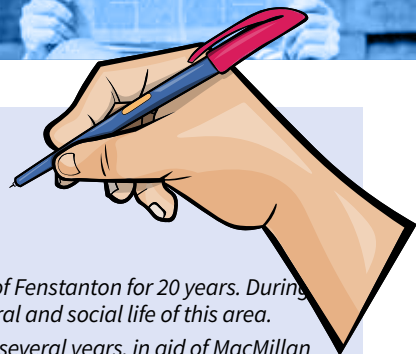
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Letters to the Editor...



A fond farewell to Lynda and Nigel

Nigel Ferrier and Lynda Symonds have lived in the village of Fenstanton for 20 years. During this time, they have made a huge contribution to the cultural and social life of this area.

First there were the jolly and delicious Safari Suppers over several years, in aid of MacMillan Cancer Support. There were three Fringe on the Fen events, when choirs, music of all kinds, orchestras, bands, comedians and other performers flooded the village for a week and raised over £100,000 for charity – an enormous undertaking.

Nigel was instrumental in the production and development of The Journal, an award-winning magazine covering three villages. He was a proactive and creative member of Fenstanton Parish Council and drove forward, with many others, the concept of the hugely successful Big Village Fun Day. He was also pivotal to moving the Parish Council office from St Ives to Fenstanton High Street, helping to deliver a far more visible and customer focused approach. He is a trustee of Fenstanton Village Hall Trust, recently helping to define its branding and future direction once it comes online.

The Manor House garden was readily opened in support of the Church Restoration Fund and notably in support of the National Garden Scheme with three other village gardens, when hundreds of visitors came to Fenstanton, raising large amounts of money for national charities.



Nigel and Lynda are saying goodbye to Fenstanton and moving to a new home in Suffolk. We wish them every happiness in their new home and thank them for their great contribution to village life.

Jan and Paul Stone

Editor's footnote: Whilst Nigel is moving to Suffolk he will still play an active role in the production of The Journal going forward.

Christmas Party postponed

Unfortunately, owing to unforeseen circumstances, the planned children's Christmas party at Fen Drayton Village Hall has had to be postponed until the new year. Please keep an eye open for the new date.

Village News

STOP PRESS



The Crown and Pipes pub is to reopen on Saturday 29 November to coincide with the Fenstanton Christmas Market. Work is well underway on the interior with a new bar area and new flooring. The pub will feature a selection of ciders and lager, Guinness and at least two real ales.

Neil, one of the owners whilst up to ears in directing operations said, *"It's going to be tight but we have every intention of opening that weekend. It's a real Challenge Anneka situation but we will get there. It is important to open then as the Christmas Market gives us a unique opportunity to be part of the local community."*

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Christmas Services 2025

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Advent Talk Saturday, 13 Dec 2025 after the vigil mass at 6:00pm.

Confessions Thursday, 18 Dec 2025 between 7:00pm to 8:00pm.

Christmas Masses Wednesday, 24 December: Christmas Eve

Carol service – 5:30pm

Christmas Eve Mass – 6:00pm

Carol Service – 9:30pm

Mass during the Night – 10:00pm

Christmas Day 25 December 2025, Thursday

Christmas Morning: Masses at 9:00am & 11:00am



Fen Drayton Poppy Appeal

A huge thank you to those of you who took part in the Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal this year, both our door-to-door collectors and our local businesses. A special thank you to Kirsty P for all the extra work she put in helping me set up the boxes and count the money. And, of course, thank you to everyone who donated!

The money is literally being counted just as The Journal goes to press, but so far we have counted over £1,700 and that doesn't include wreaths and QR code donations - so watch this space for whatever our amazing total is going to be this year!

If anyone is interested in helping next year, I'd love to hear from you – it's not too early to let me know! gonecompletelybonkers@gmail.com



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Coming soon to your village!

Fenstanton BIG Village Fun Day Saturday 4 July 2026



The Fenstanton Big Village Fun Day organising committee hope that you all have a fabulous Christmas and New Year.

We are already looking forward to the sun shining, excitement, fun and games on 4 July next year. The Big Village Fun Day will be back on the school field, bigger and better than ever. We have already confirmed bookings for two bands, a choir, races, dog show, BBQ, beer, wine and Pimm's tent, pub games, stalls, tug of war, archery, inflatable fun, with much more to come.

Please use the long winter evenings to plan your entry into the village-wide Scarecrow Competition. Add Saturday 4 July to your diaries, we would love to see you at the Big Village Fun Day.

Further details of the event, and how you can get involved in this fun event, will be posted in subsequent editions of The Journal. We would also like to thank Fenstanton Parish Councillors for wholeheartedly supporting the Fenstanton Big Village Fun Day.

A Theatrical Christmas Treat Comes to Hilton!

It's not every day that a professional theatre company performs right on our doorstep — so don't miss your chance to enjoy a spectacular start to the festive season! The critically acclaimed Pantaloons Theatre Company are bringing their wonderfully inventive adaptation of A Christmas Carol to Hilton Village Hall on Saturday 6th December.



The Pantaloons, known for their clever reimaginings and irresistible energy, are touring across the country this Christmas — and Hilton is lucky to be one of their stops.

Join them for an evening of laughter, live music and festive magic as they breathe new life into Charles Dickens' beloved tale. Meet tight-fisted Ebenezer Scrooge as he faces the Ghosts of Christmas Past, Present and Future in a hilarious and heartwarming production filled with audience interaction, top-notch performances, and—of course—just a touch of humbug.

And to top it all off - the Village Hall Committee will be running a licensed bar before the performance and during the interval.

Book your tickets now and kick off your Christmas season with a truly unforgettable night, all whilst supporting Hilton Village Hall. For tickets visit www.thepantaloons.co.uk/christmas/, call 07415 916 456 or just use the handy QR code on this page.





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Shetland – Britain's Northernmost Islands

By Malcolm Lynn

As the Shetland Islands lie about 110 miles north of the mainland of Scotland, they are not the first choice for many tourists. It used to take me about 10 hours to get from Hilton to Lerwick, the islands' capital, so it would have been quicker and easier to get to almost anywhere else in Europe! Though having been to the islands quite a few times over the years, I think the journey is well worth the effort.

The islands have a lot to offer visitors, particularly if you are interested in wildlife or ancient history and, of course, the islands are also famous for knitwear and Shetland ponies. The TV crime drama series, *Shetland*, has shown some of the islands' spectacular scenery and glimpses of what island life is like for the 24,000 inhabitants, though it has grossly exaggerated the crime rate!

In total, there are about 100 islands, scattered between Fair Isle and Muckle Flugga of which 16 are inhabited. The main part of the archipelago (excluding Fair Isle) is about 70 miles long and it has over 1,600 miles of coastline, which includes the largest tombolo in the UK at St Ninian's Isle (see photo).

If you fly to Shetland, as many visitors do, you will land at Sumburgh airport, on the southern tip of the main island,



Mainland. The airport is on one of the few areas of flattish ground on the island – and even then, the runway juts out into the sea at both ends and has a road running across it!

Sumburgh is a remarkable place because, together with the Jarlshof site nearby, it boasts examples of human habitation over four thousand years, including an iron age brooch, a viking village as well as the much more modern lighthouse and airport.

It is impossible to cover all that the islands have to offer in a short piece like this, so I will just pick out some of the things that appeal to me.



The Tombolo and St Ninian's Isle

Continued overleaf

Trains, Boats and Planes



Mousa Broch

The first example has to be Mousa Broch. Over 2,000 years old, this multi-storied circular drystone tower is about 13m high and is the best surviving example anywhere. Like other brochs, it has a double wall, with a total width of about 5m and a narrow, low, entrance passageway. There is an internal staircase between the walls which leads to the top of the tower. Once, there were hundreds of brochs in northern Scotland and the islands but few remain because the stone from most of them has been “repurposed” for crofts and houses. Mousa has been spared from the plunder of its stones partly because it is on an uninhabited island - and I suspect also because the island is the home of a colony of (very aggressive) arctic terns, which would deter any “stone merchant” before the building came under the protection of Historic Environment Scotland.

The islands’ capital, Lerwick, is about 20 miles north of Sumburgh and a substantial part of Shetland’s second-largest broch, Clickimin, is still standing at the southern end of the town. Lerwick is home to about 7,000 people and its sheltered harbour is the main ferry port for ferries to the other islands in the group. It also houses an award-winning museum which showcases examples of the islands’ textile heritage as well as giving an insight into Shetland’s cultural heritage. I

was also very interested in their exhibition on the complex geology of the islands.

Scalloway, the ancient capital, is the second-largest town and is on the western seaboard. It is dominated by a forbidding castle, built in 1600 by the tyrannical Earl Patrick Stewart, who met an untimely end in 1615 – but that is another story. Perhaps the town’s best claim to fame is as the base for the clandestine “Shetland Bus” operation during World War 2, which provided a regular transport link between Britain and the Norwegian Resistance, who were carrying out acts of sabotage against the German forces who were occupying Norway.



Shetland Bus Memorial

Further north, there is the eight-mile long inlet from the sea, Sullom Voe, which was once Britain’s largest oil terminal. At its peak, the terminal handled an average of over 1,200,000 barrels per day of crude oil but it is now in decline and handles only about a tenth of that amount. Right at the start of operations the Shetland Islands Council



Busta House Hotel

wisely negotiated a modest levy on every barrel of oil for the Shetland Charitable Trust. As of March last year, the Trust's assets were valued at over £430million, which partly explains why the roads on Shetland are so good and why every school in Shetland has a swimming pool!

At the western end of Sullom Voe, there is a narrow isthmus, called Mavis Grind, where the North Sea and the Atlantic Ocean almost

meet and it is said that you can throw a stone from one sea to the other (though that's probably only true at high tide).

The nearest township to Sullom Voe is Brae, which claims to have the northernmost Chinese takeaway in the UK. Another of its claims to fame is the lengthy legal battle over probate for the Busta House Hotel, pictured, which Charles Dickens fictionalised as "Jarndyce vs Jarndyce" for his novel, *Bleak House*.

But for me, my best memory of Brae is going to the Up Helly Aa celebration some years ago, when hundreds of people with burning torches marched to the harbour and set fire to a replica of a Viking Ship.

There are a number of Up Helly Aa celebrations in the islands, which are held around New Year. The most famous one is in Lerwick and the one I went to at Brae was the last in the season. Many hours of preparation go into these festivals, not least making the replica ships and the Viking costumes.

I remember standing by the boathouse chatting to a fireman, who was also enjoying the spectacle.

Afterwards, the celebrations went on well into the early hours with many talented acts from local performers in the hall.



Replica Viking Ship at Brae

Trains, Boats and Planes



Seascape at Eshaness

Further north, there is a fine folk museum at Tangwick Haa on the Northmavine peninsula and some spectacular sea views around Eshaness.

Further north still, there may some exciting projects coming up for two of the islands, Yell and Unst. The Bluemull sound between them is the site of the world's first tidal power generation array and there are likely to more projects around the islands in the future.

There is also proposal that these two islands may be linked by tunnels to Mainland

(Shetland that is) to replace the roll-on/roll-off ferries. And as Saxa Vord, at the northernmost tip of Unst, is already the first fully licensed vertical spaceport in Europe, there could be a boom time ahead for Shetland's northernmost islands.

Finally, if you are planning to visit Shetland, please bear in mind that at 60° North, the days are very much longer in the summer than they are here – you can read outside at midnight - but the days are very much shorter in the winter!

Note from the publisher

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Making a Difference Locally

Updates from Clare Tevlin, your District Councillor



Huntingdonshire District Council's Local Plan (up to 2046) update:

This time last year we had the first phase consultation on HDC's Local Plan, now it is in the next phase of consultation, engaging on Preferred Options. I encourage residents to feedback to this consultation. It closes on 17th December.

The Preferred Options consultation will form part of The Local Plan, which sets out how Huntingdonshire will grow and develop sustainably up to 2046. It outlines the policies the council will use to make planning decisions, identifies sites for new homes, jobs, services and facilities, and ensures the right infrastructure is in place to support future communities.

This Local Plan will shape Huntingdonshire for the next 20 years. It's about the homes, jobs, services and green spaces our communities need. It's also about creating places that our children and grandchildren will be proud to live in.

This is a crucial opportunity to help shape the future of Huntingdonshire. By giving feedback now, residents and organisations can influence the scale, location and design of new development, before planning applications are submitted. Local Government Re-organisation will not change the planning process in terms of national planning policy; the Local Plan will be carried across. Please take this opportunity to get involved, share your views, and help us build a sustainable future for Huntingdonshire together.

You can visit Huntingdon Commemoration Hall on 4th December, for more information. To make your response and to find out more, head to: www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/news/have-your-say-on-the-local-plan

Huntingdonshire's unique potential as a centre for growth, innovation, and investment

Set against the backdrop of the Strategic Defence Review, the Defence Industrial Strategy, and the Oxford–Cambridge Growth Corridor, Huntingdonshire continues to play a strategic role in national defence.

In a recent consultation with Ministers and Defence Leaders, Executive Leader of HDC, Councillor Sarah Conboy, said: Huntingdonshire deserves the Government's attention when making critical decisions about where to locate and expand their defence operations. We've shown the strength of our partnerships, the depth of our local talent, and our shared ambition to deliver prosperity across our communities."



In response, Minister Al Carns has emphasised the importance of collaboration and partnership, noting that strong relationships are key to achieving long-term success. He remarked, "your network is your net worth," adding that cooperation between councils, local leaders, and national partners is crucial.

Defence Leaders have commented on how HDC has genuine potential for developing a defence cluster in Huntingdonshire, built on shared vision and growing momentum among partners.

Do you have any queries or questions?

You can contact me by: clare.tevlin@huntingdonshire.gov.uk or 07565 350 014.

Step into the Past

Early Days and Memories of Hilton Annual Bonfire

By Doreen Bates

I thought readers might be interested in my earliest memories of Hilton Annual Bonfire so, the first thing to do was to dispatch husband, Ian, to the Parish Council Archives in Huntingdon Library to research and help me with those memories during a mid-1970's - mid 1980's period:

In 1975 an NHS promotional job move saw us both and our expected first-born leaving glorious Wotton-under-Edge, Gloucestershire, for the much flatter lands of Cambridgeshire but we were lucky to have found a comfortable little house to rent, Manor Cottage on The Green, owned by local farmer George Britten. Being in Round Table, Ian made contact with the local one, eventually becoming friends with fellow Tabler Geoff Fleming also living in Hilton

- it was he who urged us to check out new houses being built in the village. We viewed and reserved one, little realising that both our son and house would arrive within 2 weeks of each other, around Christmas!

Whilst still in the cottage and during a conversation with George, Ian mentioned the annual Round Table bonfire he'd been involved with in Wotton, as a result the Parish Council asked Ian to think about organising one for Hilton, to which he agreed.

Eventually a sub-committee of willing helpers was gathered to make plans for our first-ever Bonfire Night, planned for November 1976 and the site - still being used to-day - was agreed for The Wilderness.

Over the coming months plans were gradually drawn up, with Ian tasked in locating and ordering fireworks, tracking down Standard Fireworks Co. in Huddersfield, which duly arrived packed in large wooden crates and stored in the garage of our new home (handy box for coal storage after the event).

Nearer the date the team then had the fun task deciphering instructions which came with each of the displays, bearing in mind they were all novices, probably only ever having shop-bought fireworks before, usually stored in an old biscuit tin for safety!



Silver Jubilee Celebrations 1977

Way back then there was no 'tech' to get information out to the villagers, just word of mouth. Councillors delivered letters to all households, and notices on the village notice boards (still very much in use to-day), and notices on stakes beside each road into the village.

George would fire up his trusty tractor/trailer and, followed round the village by cubs and scouts, old wood and dry garden cuttings were happily tossed into the trailer. Local farmers also donated straw to set underneath the bonfire to help with the burn.

There was more fun for children to construct their own Guy Fawkes - one year 8 appeared, judged then tossed high up onto the fire - most probably BEFORE ignition!

Parish Council ladies would sell and serve refreshments but there appears to be little reference in the Archives as to what was provided. There was mention in later years of the WI helping but I am sure there would have been others either from Hilton Village Hall Committee, Playgroup Committee (with parent helpers) also Housewives Register.

At last, set-up morning arrived and the team had to work out where individual displays would be erected. One very important task was for the BOMBS involving an especially supplied strong tube inserted into a hand-dug 3ft deep x 6in wide tube (you work it out!). Believe it or not these were set off individually with instructions to "*light the blue touch paper and retreat to a safe distance*".... There were also the usual rockets, Roman candles and Catherine wheels, all lit by blue touch-paper. Two tall wooden poles were erected then strung across the gap ready for, what would be, the finale for the evening.

Ian along with Doug Smith (late of now-called 'Douglas Cottage' Grove End, farm labourer for George) were asked to light the fire which was successfully carried out and crowds of villagers of all ages eagerly stood as near as possible, feeling the heat from the roaring flames - there were no restricting barriers in those days, we just moved back when we got too hot!

The first 'BOOM' from the first bomb rocket lit up the night skies and a truly successful

evening unfolded. The grand finale was ignited and 2 cannons fired at each other across the gap between the 2 poles then the words "Good Night" gave a last sparkling ending signalling clapping and cheering from those gathered. Later accounts showed a profit of £57.75 was raised and, following encouraging comments and letters of thanks, the Parish Council agreed takings would be paid into an account for the following year/s.

Further Thoughts From The Early Years:

Other bonfires have occasionally been lit, usually for National celebrations including the 1977 Silver Jubilee, Royal weddings etc. The newspaper report, (overleaf) describes the Hilton bonfire at the Coronation in 1953.

Standard Fireworks were a success but, in the late 1980's, supplies were sourced locally from the Rev Ron Lancaster, chemistry master of Kimbolton School - inventing fireworks being a weekend hobby! Darryl Fleming (Hilton) attended Kimbolton and enjoyed helping out.



London New Year's Eve 2024

(Up-to-date footnote on Kimbolton Fireworks:- after leaving the school, student Darryl set up an extremely successful and highly regarded fireworks display company securing displays for many international shows, taking him over the world and, still on New Year's Eve, we can all watch his shows on our TVs for London's prestigious annual event. However, all his fireworks lighting is far removed from the old blue touch-paper days, it's all highly controlled by electronics, probably a lot more stressful than FUN!).

Continued overleaf

Hilton Town Trust

Hilton Town Trust is a small charitable trust which exists to provide support to the village and villagers of Hilton. Grants are available to village organisations or to individuals.

If you would like to know more or think we can help please contact us on

Hiltontowntrust@gmail.com or
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Fen Drayton War Memorial	3.40pm – 4.10pm

Route H11 – 2nd Thursday In The Month

Hilton Village Hall	2.00pm – 2.40pm
Fenstanton Headlands	2.50pm – 3.40pm
Fenstanton Chapel Green	3.50pm – 4.20pm

Route H25 – 4th Thursday In The Month

Fenstanton Chapel Green	9.30am – 10.00am
Fenstanton Headlands	10.10am – 10.45am



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Step into the Past

Over those first years, word slowly got round other villages about the bonfire in Hilton but, not only did this mean more and more people driving and parking on The Green, it was also noted a gradual, year-on-year increase in size of the fire... one time a 3-piece suite, and another occasion a fully glazed door were tossed on, this being particularly dangerous as children thought the growing heap was a superb play area! They ALL played out happily in those long-ago days! A decision was made to restrict 'donations' which meant volunteers who were available during any one day, having to monitor entry to The Wilderness. Later a lockable barrier was erected and this proved a success and collection/building was carried out on a much shorter time scale.

On one occasion the bonfire grew ENORMOUSLY beforehand, I must say it did cause a certain amount of 'glee' and 'anticipation' amongst children who watched its growth with eagerness to see it ablaze. However, one year, a nearby oak tree was spotted with a suspicious flaming and smouldering effect, the Fire BRIGADE were called, quickly extinguishing the flames, leaving after some stern words about drastically cutting the size of any future bonfires.....

Once again the children were - literally - well catered for as, the morning afterwards they turned up with foil - wrapped potatoes and tossed them round the still smouldering mound, returning home with their wellies a 'little bit melted' but, as long as the kids were happy... nobody ever got burnt.

Ticket prices and sales gradually increased from 5p, yes, you did read that right! By 1989 increased to £1.20. The first fireworks purchased cost £54.00 and modest profits continued to be made going towards the following year's purchases. Safety and insurance came to the fore, as an example:- children were handed a sparkler on arrival with a bucket of water "just in case" then over the years these were changed to 'glow lights' of all shapes. A line of burning 'candles' on poles lit the way along Wraggs Row up to the Wilderness. A barrier was fixed round the bonfire area included the fireworks display 'arena'.

Sadly 1982 was not able to gather enough

volunteers and for the first time only, this was abandoned.

There were so many willing helpers over that early decade, e.g. when George was unable to use his tractor, Bruce Whatley, who had moved with his young family to Hilton in early 80's, volunteered his large van to load bonfire burnables, also transporting down crates of fireworks and equipment/refreshment tables etc during the morning. There are still some, now retired, early days volunteer Hiltonians with others still attending and enjoying the show - a huge "thank you" must be made to them all for beginning a fabulous annual social gathering. Ian never thought that, back in 1976 Hilton's first Bonfire Night would still be running in such a magical setting.



Report of the bonfire on Coronation Day, 1953

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Ian Sollom MP

Save precious palliative care beds at Arthur Rank Hospice



Over the past month, I have received countless messages from constituents concerned about cuts to funding at our local Arthur Rank Hospice.

Alongside my Cambridgeshire Liberal Democrat colleagues, Charlotte Cane and Pippa Heylings, I wrote to the Secretary of State, Wes Streeting, and visited the hospice itself. We then launched a petition to show the Government just how much the service means to people locally. Our petition gained over 10,000 signatures in its first 24 hours, and at the time of writing that number now sits at over 16,000.

On the 3rd of November, I joined my constituent Vivien from Fen Drayton, whose husband was supported by Arthur Rank before he died from a rare cancer in November 2024, to deliver the petition to 10 Downing Street. We called on the Prime Minister and his government to restore the cut funding and ensure that all 23 beds at Arthur Rank remain open; to provide long-term, sustainable funding for the hospice's palliative care services; and to properly roll out nationally the move from hospital to community care, with hospices and GPs at its heart.

Thank you to everyone who signed the petition and who continue to support our

campaign – I will continue to share any updates on its progress on my social media pages.

Local Business Visits

Over the summer, I enjoyed making the most of the opportunity away from Westminster to spend more time in the constituency; meeting with local organisations, visiting schools and businesses, and learning about the issues that matter to people in our area.

One of these visits was to Centrado Trading, a family-run supplier of picture framing materials who moved into their purpose-built Fenstanton HQ in 2023. I visited the team to speak to them about this investment in sustainability, as well as the impressive growth of their business – receiving a loan from Lloyds Bank's Clean Growth Financing Initiative, they have been able to massively boost their capacity and grow operations while also improving their energy use and efficiency. Like many Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), they face many challenges in the current business environment, but it's clear that local family businesses like this are vital to our economy, creating jobs and investing in our community.

More recently, I enjoyed speaking to residents on the doorstep in Fenstanton about local issues from healthcare to housing – and of course pausing for lunch at Little Piggy on the High Street with my Lib Dem team!

Get in touch

I continue to hold both in-person and online surgeries to speak directly to constituents about their issues. If you feel you have a problem I could help with, or you have a policy matter you would like to discuss with me, please don't hesitate to contact me at ian.sollom.mp@parliament.uk

I also send out a regular email newsletter with updates on my work, which you can sign up to at www.iansollom.org/emails.



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Deep midwinter memories

My memory tells me that still air days only occur during blazing hot summers and the depths of winter. Adding the scent from the fragrant smoke of a fire with apple wood pruning's intensifies the memory. Today it's a lost memory because we have green bins for our prunings and should not burn our trimmings. Smells on sunny winter are so powerful because they tell us that the garden is still alive. Fragrant plants flowering on warmer winter days include winter Honeysuckles esp. 'x purpusii', Chimonanthus (Winter sweet), Clematis cirrhose balearica, Witch hazel (hamamelis) especially 'Pallida', skimmia, viburnum x bodnantense, and liriopse. As the days start to lengthen acacia dealbata (silver wattle) *, Azalea mollis, clematis- armandii, coronilla glauca*, daphne, mahonia, and sarcococca (winter box) fill our gardens with fragrance. If your pruning, many herbs and shrubs have aromatic foliage and wood. * Plants require a sheltered position.

Pruning and trimming

When pruning bush roses remember the old saying 'The harder you prune the harder they grow' and don't forget your gloves. Prune out dead wood and crossing branches first, then aim to leave the branches equally spaced. Many a fruit tree has masses of small fruit that don't ripen properly. Thinning and de-cluttering the branches will reduce fruit set leading to larger fruit, allow more air and light which will reduce diseases and help ripening. Prune branches of shrubs that shade lawns shrubs, especially evergreens, and tidy up perennials. Continue to gather up fallen leaves for the compost heap or the green bin.

You can still plant trees shrubs and perennials during mild spells including bare root roses and hedging. In severe weather protect pots and tubs, (wrap them to a wall if you can), and don't forget to drain out hose pipes, fittings and turn off/wrap outside taps.



December Top Tips

- Enjoy colours of winter
- Plant trees and shrubs
- Prune roses, trees, shrubs
- Turn off outside taps
- Weed, mulch and tidy

raypuddefoot@gmail.com

Fenstanton Parish Council

Making Fenstanton an even better place to live

In case of flooding – sandbags available

As we move into the time of year when flooding can pose a greater risk, your Parish Council has taken proactive steps to help protect our community. A stock of sandbags has been purchased and securely stored, ready for distribution to parishioners whose homes may be at risk of flooding.

If you require sandbags, please contact the Parish Council using the phone number or email address provided to arrange collection.

We hope this measure offers some reassurance and practical support during the wetter months ahead.

Fenstanton Parish Council
Making Fenstanton an even better place to live

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Sandbags

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To arrange collection please contact:
clerk@fenstantonparishcouncil.org.uk
Telephone: **07542 681976** Out of hours telephone: **07949 453767**



Cemetery winter maintenance

Your Parish Council carried out the winter maintenance of the cemetery in readiness for the Remembrance Sunday service, ensuring the grounds were tidy and respectful for this important occasion. The lime trees at the front of the churchyard still require some additional work — unfortunately, one has died and will need to be removed, while another will need more than a simple pollard to help it stay healthy for the future.



To contact your Parish Council Clerk Telephone: 01480 465300

Email: clerk@fenstantonparishcouncil.org.uk Website: www.fenstantonparishcouncil.gov.uk

Next Parish Council meetings

Parish Council meetings are usually held on the second Thursday of each month (except in August and December unless required) at the Church Centre, School Lane, Fenstanton, PE28 9JR. Please note that dates may occasionally change due to unforeseen circumstances, and extraordinary meetings may also be called if urgent business needs to be discussed.

In addition to our regular meetings, we also hold:

- Planning Committee meetings (when applications are submitted)
- Finance & Constitution Committee meetings
- General Purposes Committee meetings
- Burial Board meetings

Details of all upcoming meetings, along with agendas and minutes from previous meetings, can be found on the Parish Council website - www.fenstantonparishcouncil.gov.uk

Date	Meeting	Time and Location
Thursday December 11	PC Ordinary	7.00 pm Church Centre
Thursday January 8	PC Ordinary	7.00 pm Church Centre
Thursday January 29	General Purposes Committee	7.00 pm Church Centre
Thursday January 15	Burial Board	7.00 pm Church Centre

Parish Councillor Saturday Surgeries

Saturdays 10.00 – 12.00pm The Hub, 6 High Street, Fenstanton.

Pop in for a chat with Councillors. Whether you have concerns to raise or ideas to improve our village, we'd love to hear from you! Let's work together to make Fenstanton even better.

29.11.2025	Tina Yates	Martin Hewitt
31.01.2026	Anne Mustill	Tina Yates
28.02.2026	Simon King	Martin Hewitt

The Councillors attending is subject to change and we will inform you of any changes on Social media.

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December



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- ✿ Second Friday of month
- ✿ 5.30pm – 7pm
- ✿ Parish Church
- ✿ Hilton



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News from the Pews



St Mary's Fen Drayton St Peter and St Paul Fenstanton

We wish you a joy filled Christmas
and a New Year full of hope.



Please note – services in St. Peter & St. Paul's Church, Fenstanton are live streamed where possible, details via <https://www.fenchurchbooking.org.uk>

Do contact us if you would like the Zoom links for Morning Prayer.

DECEMBER 2025 – SERVICES AND EVENTS

Thursday 04	8.30am on Zoom	Morning Prayer
Sunday 07	10.30am Fenstanton	Holy Communion Advent 2 <i>with Sunday Club</i>
	5pm Fenstanton	Christingle Service
Thursday 11	8.30am on Zoom	Morning Prayer
Sunday 14	9.15am Fen Drayton	Holy Communion Advent 3
	10.30am Fenstanton	Worship For All – Giving a Gift Service Followed by Christmas Lunch- please contact Ian Hucklesby for tickets
Monday 15	5pm Fenstanton	Fenstanton & Hilton School Community Carol Service – all welcome
Thursday 18	8.30am on Zoom	Morning Prayer
Saturday 20	10.30am to 1.30pm	Christmas Crunch, Fenstanton Church Centre
Sunday 21	10.30am Fenstanton	Holy Communion Advent 4
	5pm Fenstanton	Traditional Carols and Readings, with choir
	6pm Fen Drayton	Nativity, Crib & Carols, St Mary's
Wednesday 24 Christmas Eve	5pm Fenstanton	Nativity, Crib & Carols, St Peters & St Pauls
	11.30pm Fenstanton	First Communion of Christmas
Thursday 25 Christmas Day	9.15am Fen Drayton	Christmas Day Holy Communion
	10.30am Fenstanton	Christmas Day Holy Communion
Sunday 28	10.30am Fenstanton	<i>No service at St Mary's</i> Parish Service, Family Communion

Accessibility in our churches: The Parish Church (Fenstanton) has a ramp which can be deployed upon request. There is a toilet, with wheelchair access. St Mary's (Fen Drayton) has a small threshold that may be possible to navigate with a wheelchair. There are no toilet facilities. Although we have fixed pews in both churches there are plenty of spaces available for wheelchairs, prams and buggies.

JANUARY 2026 – SERVICES AND EVENTS

Sunday 04	10.30am Fenstanton	Holy Communion for Epiphany
Thursday 08	8.30am on Zoom	Morning Prayer
Sunday 11	9.15am *Fen Drayton 10.30am Fenstanton	Holy Communion at *Fen Drayton Village Hall Worship For All
Thursday 15	8.30am on Zoom	Morning Prayer
Sunday 18	*8am Fenstanton *9.30am URC Church	Holy Communion, St Peters & St Pauls United service for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, held at the URC Church
Thursday 22	8.30am on Zoom	Morning Prayer
Sunday 25	9.15am *Fen Drayton 10.30am Fenstanton	Morning Praise in *Fen Drayton Village Hall Family Communion
Thursday 29	8.30am on Zoom	Morning Prayer

Have we got news for you...to re-use the phrase from a TV programme. Our News from the Pews for December 2025 and January 2026 is packed full with information. Lots happening, including some changes to our usual pattern of services and venues, so please do take a few minutes to have a read and put dates in your diary or calendar.



All are welcome to join us on **Sunday 7 December at 5pm** in the parish church, Fenstanton, for our family friendly Christingle Service. This service brings awareness of the work of The Children's Society and raises funds for them, as well as the fun of making our own christingles. We will have plenty of oranges, sweets and candles.

On **Sunday 14 December** we have our annual Giving a Gift service, 10.30am in the parish church. This is an opportunity to bring an unwrapped gift for a child for Cambridgeshire County Council to distribute to those in need. There have not been so many donations to this worthy cause during this year, so their current supply is running low. They are asking particularly for gifts for children aged 10+ and also for those aged 15/16/17. Please do give if you can. The Giving a Gift Service is followed by our Christmas Lunch, raising funds for the Arthur Rank Hospice. If you have seen the news in recent weeks you will know how important it is to raise funds for this charity. Tickets and more information available from Ian Hucklesby.



Rector: Rev Rosie Tallowin: 01480 467393 email: vicar@fenchurches.org.uk
 Assistant Curate: Rev Claire Brockelsby: 07769 106562 email: curate@fenchurches.org.uk
 Churchwardens: Philip Blunt 07855 481697 and Ian Hucklesby 01480 465211

Continued overleaf

News from the Pews



Monday 15 December all are welcome to come along to the Fenstanton & Hilton School Community Carol Service at 5pm in the parish church. Please do look at the table of services for all our usual and special services in December. We are looking forward to seeing you.

Advance notice re services for January, February and March for St Mary's Fen Drayton: as you may know, the lack of heating at St Mary's is on our agenda. It gets extremely cold and very damp in St Mary's during the winter months. Thanks to a generous donation from someone who would like to remain anonymous (thank you) we have taken the decision to move the services from the church to **Fen Drayton Village Hall** for the following dates. 11 and 25 January, 8 and 22 February and 8 March, which means our next service actually in the church will be 22 March and those following, including our Easter services. Service time remains the same at 9.15am.

Fen Drayton with Fenstanton Parish

Christmas Crunch

(Christmas crafts and lunch)

Saturday 20th December 10.30-13.30

Fenstanton Church Centre

Free childrens activities, story, crafts and lunch

Activities for toddlers to teens

Parents welcome to join us for a simple lunch from 12.45pm

To help with planning please book a place by emailing: ikhuck@virginmedia.com
Toddlers/pre-schoolers need to be accompanied by a parent/carer, please.

Thank you, Katie Hucklesby

Hilton Churches Together

Carol Service

Hilton Methodist Church
Sunday 21 December at 5:00pm
Collection for Charity

Hilton Methodist Church



Light that lasts

Dear Friends,

As December arrives, an increasing number of homes and streets begin to sparkle with decorations - twinkling lights, shining stars, glittering angels, and beautiful trees.

I wonder if you have a favourite ornament? Each decoration can help connect us with the Christmas story. The star reminds us of the one that guided wise travellers to find hope, welcome and new life.

The angels recall the good news they announced to those who perhaps had little to celebrate: "Peace on earth, and goodwill to all." The tree, evergreen and enduring, speaks of life that continues through every season as well as nudging us to remember Easter too.

Amid the excitement and busyness of the days leading up to Christmas, these familiar sights invite us to pause and wonder. Christmas isn't only about gifts or glitter, feasting or family but about God's love coming close - love that entered the world in a new way, in a baby born in Bethlehem. Jesus came to shine God's light into our everyday, offering hope for dark times, courage for weary hearts, and love for all people for all time.

As we look ahead to the New Year, perhaps we could each think of how we may we carry that light with us, and reflect it, choosing kindness, forgiveness, and trust in all that unfolds throughout 2026.



If you'd like to discover more of the One at the heart of Christmas and the gift of love that never fades, any of the churches close to you would be delighted to welcome you.

As you place your decorations this year why not find a moment to ponder the real meaning of Christmas, and the hope Jesus represents for you, for all.

With prayers and blessings for Christmas and 2026

Best blessings, James

Revd. James Bamber

jjamesbamber@gmail.com

Phone: 01480 453857

Services in December and January

7 December	10:00am	Ms. Viv Almond
14 December	11:15am	United Service in the Methodist Church
21 December	10:00am	Rev James Bamber
21 December	5:00pm	Carol Service
24 December	11:30pm	Midnight Communion Service
28 December	10:30am	Zoom Service (Phone 01480 494014 for the link)
4 January	10:00am	Mr. John Green
11 January	11:15 am	United Covenant Service in the Methodist Church
18 January	10:00am	Rev. Pam Siddall
25 January	10:00am	Local Arrangements

Hilton Parish Church



Dear Friends,

When I was about four years old, I was captivated by what seemed like an enormous tree in our living room. I can still remember the feeling of awe, of mystery, and almost of fear at this tremendous and beautiful presence.

I am unlikely ever again to stand before a Christmas tree giving it my heart, as it were – and just as well.

But we now enter a season which invites us to offer our hearts to One who can respond. Over the next few weeks we shall prepare ourselves to hear a familiar story retold. Those of us who are privileged to do so in the company of children may find that they draw us with them into a realm where mystery and reverence and wonder confront us. For others, it may be harder to let ourselves be grasped by these things, either because the story feels too familiar, or because the trappings obscure it, or because life has made the story seem like sheer sentimentality.

The heart of the Christmas story is not something trite or saccharine at all, but is both earthly physical and overwhelmingly mysterious. Anyone who has been present at the birth of a child knows what that is like. My prayer for us all this Advent and Christmas is that we will be granted an experience that leaves us in no doubt that we have been visited by Divine Love.

May God in Christ greet and bless us all.

With love, David

Revd David Busk (01480 436400)

Services in December

Sunday 7 December	8:00am Holy Communion (BCP)
Sunday 14 December	11:15am United Gift Service at the Methodist Church
Sunday 21 December	8:00am Holy Communion
Sunday 21 December	5:00pm Carol Service at the Methodist Church
Tuesday 23 December	4:00pm Crib Service
Thursday 25 December	8:00am Christmas Communion
Sunday 28 December	11:15am Holy Communion

Services in January

Sunday 4 January	8:00am Holy Communion
Friday 9 January	5:30pm Friday Feast (Messy Church)
Sunday 11 January	11:15am United Covenant Service at the Methodist Church
Sunday 18 January	8:00am Holy Communion
Sunday 25 January	11:15am Coffee, Cake and Church in the Village Hall

Weekly Online Services (Via Zoom)

Holy Communion Wednesdays (2:00pm) Bible Study Fridays (10:00am)

Please contact Revd David Busk (01480 436400) for Zoom access details



Fenstanton United Reformed Church

Chequer Street, Fenstanton

Sunday morning services are at 09.30. All are welcome.

December 2025/2026 Services

- 07 Led by Faith Paulding
- 14 Revd Christine Davies - **Holy Communion**
- 21 Revd Christine Davies
- 25 Revd Alison Davis
- 28 Led by Church Elders

January 2026

- 04 Revd Christine Davies
- 11 Revd Lythan Nevard - **Holy Communion**
- 18 URC & St Peters and St Pauls Joint Service - Christian Unity
- 25 Revd Christine Davies

Meditation – Led by the Free Church St. Ives

- Tuesday 09 December 2.30 - 4pm – Led by John Williams
- Tuesday 13 January 2.30 - 4pm – Led by John Williams

Geoff Hawkins Fenstanton URC Secretary
fenstantonurc@stivesfreechurch.org

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Fenstanton United Reformed Church

I'm sure you all know the story 'A Christmas Carol' by Charles Dickens. The main character – Ebenezer Scrooge, was a tight fisted, selfish, cold-hearted man, who hated Christmas. He was troubled, on Christmas Eve, by visits from the ghost of his deceased business partner, Jacob Marley, and the three spirits of Christmas Past, Christmas Present, and Christmas Future. But on waking to find it had all just been a nightmare of the very worst kind, Scrooge was determined to change his ways before it was too late.

Christmas can change every one of us, making us into more loving, generous and happier people. And our change does not come about by us having some scary nightmare, but by our gazing at a newborn baby, wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger, in a Bethlehem stable. By our reflecting on the 'real' meaning of Christmas. This baby was sent by the Eternal God to change the world. The name the baby was given – Jesus, means 'The Lord Saves'. Jesus was born to save us, and to change us into

people of compassion and love, of kindness and generosity; joyful people glad to be alive in God's world!

The transformation of Ebenezer Scrooge was not just for one day – Christmas Day. His nightmare that Christmas Eve changed him forever. Likewise, our gazing at the baby, born in the Bethlehem stable, should not just fill us with a warm glow and a feeling of goodwill to all for Christmas Day only. As we gaze at this very special baby, we are looking at the Son of the Living God – an encounter which is real and should turn our lives upside down – transforming us into new people for Christmas and for always – transforming us into hope filled people, joyful people, bringing happiness into the lives of those around us – changing us into people who want above all else, for everyone to come to know the baby and the man the baby grew up to be – the Son of the Living God for themselves.

"A very Happy Christ filled Christmas".

Christine Davies – Member of Fenstanton URC





update



New pavilion

The parish council is delighted to see the new pavilion in use after many years of working towards this goal (no pun intended!).

The Lions football club and the PC are finalising plans for the construction of a disabled ramp and deck area. The pipework will also be boxed in and new planting will add the finishing touches.

We are extremely grateful to Jackie Isden and Roger Davies, who continued to support the project for months after standing down from the PC.

Community Cafe charity

The cafe's charity, the Fen Drayton Community Charity, is delighted to support the purchase of the village Christmas tree; this will continue permanently. We hope that many people will enjoy the lovely tree once it's lit up in the centre of the village, outside the Three Tuns.

Other cafe charity grant recipients this year were the Fen Drayton Bowls Club

and the local scouting movement, which applied for a grant to help establish a Squirrels' drey! The Squirrels group is for 4-6 year olds and is the precursor to Beavers, Cubs and Scouts.

The cafe also donated medals for all the children who took part in the annual village pancake race earlier in the year.

The charity welcomes applications for a grant of up to £200 from any village group or organisation.

If you would like to apply, or find out more information, please email the charity committee at fendraytoncommunitycafe@gmail.com.

The December, January and February cafes will serve homemade soup with bread, in addition to the regular coffee, tea and homemade cakes (for £1 each!).

We ask for contributions to a charity for the soup and bread. This year the beneficiary is the Arthur Rank Hospice.

We wish all our customers a very merry Christmas and a happy new year - and hope to see you at the cafe in 2026!

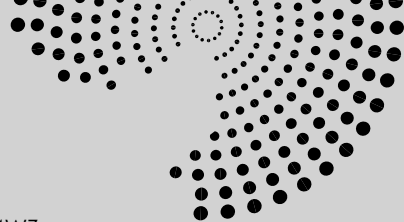


Contact:

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website: www.fendrayton.org

post: PO Box 1102, Fen Drayton, Cambridge CB24 4WZ



Cllr Sue Ellington, Swavesey ward

Four-day week The secretary of state has written to SCDC expressing serious concerns regarding the four-day week way of working and whether this is providing value for money for council tax payers.

As a result, I demanded an emergency council meeting to discuss the letter and its response. The administration cannot be forced to discontinue the project, but I would suggest that the government can apply significant pressure to make it happen – we will see!

Major developments Locally, there has been significant development regarding planning applications along the A14/A1307. I wrote about the Boxworth Gateway logistic site and Bar Hill to Oakington proposals in September, but there is now a further site between Lolworth and Bar Hill.

The sites will provide a variety of job opportunities, but will also increase traffic on local roads. In addition there are concerns around surface and sewage water that will be sent to Uttons Drove sewage works which is currently over capacity.

A meeting of all interested parties and authorities is planned for late November. I hope I will have more positive news in the future.

Unitary authorities An emergency full council meeting will debate plans for the

new unitary authorities, with business cases for the proposed options. SCDC's administration has opted for a South Cambridgeshire/Cambridge City unitary. The government will make a decision in the new year before the May elections.

Local Plan SCDC has launched its proposals for the new Local Plan which is out for consultation from 1 December to 30 January. Some of the key proposals locally are 13,000 new houses in Cambourne North (nearly stretching to Elsworth), 11,000 in Waterbeach and 10,800 in Northstowe. I will look closely at the availability of fresh water and where it will be treated, infrastructure and viability.

If I can help in any way, call 07774 146331 or email cllr.ellington@scambs.gov.uk

Community cafe update

The annual winter/Christmas craft fair in November proved very popular and the cafe was one of the busiest yet.

Swavesey Community Choir will be at the cafe on 13 December to entertain us with festive songs and music. Everyone is welcome to join in the singing (word sheets will be provided).

The cafe will open from 10.30am to 1pm from December through to February. Soup and a roll will be on the menu, as well as the usual coffee or tea and homemade cakes!



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The Highs and Lows

Weather Watch by Patrick Landucci

According to the Met Office, Summer 2025 was the warmest UK summer on record, though conditions varied markedly across the 4 Nations. Southern, Central and Eastern England including East Anglia were the warmest areas. This follows the UK's warmest Spring on record. It was also the equal warmest Summer with 1976 based on the Central England temperature series from 1659, though in 1976 there were nearly twice as many "heatwave" days (30°C or 86°F). The warmest day I recorded was on 11 July when 32.4°C (90.3°F) was reached. The warmest night was on 19 July when the temperature remained above 19°C (66.2°F).

It was hardly surprising that during a Summer dominated by high pressure this led to several lengthy dry spells especially in June and August, where my records for those two months gave a combined total of just 0.84 of an inch (21.5mm) of precipitation. The continued lack of rain was particularly unwelcome in parts of England including East Anglia where the dry Summer followed the driest Spring since 1893.

The Summer was also sunnier than average with only one day being completely sunless during the 3 Summer months, making a total of just 3 sunless days for the 6 months since 1 March.

The generally benign weather continued through most of September. Two isolated days, the 7th and the 18th brought a surge of tropical air lifting the temperature to 26°C

(77.8°F) and 26.7°C (79°F) respectively. The month brought two wet days, both delivering half of an inch, otherwise the dry theme continued. By the end of September the total rainfall for the year was just under 10.5 inches (240 mm.) which is well below normal.

October brought a reminder that autumn had arrived with two named storms, Amy and Benjamin, both bringing very windy unsettled weather. Sunless days also returned with at least 10 such days during the month.

Looking worldwide, with global ocean temperatures around 2°C higher than normal, this served to increase the intensity of typhoons and hurricanes. The most notable hurricane was Melissa, a category 5 storm with winds of up to 185 mph which wreaked catastrophic destruction and loss of life in the Caribbean, especially in Haiti, Jamaica and Cuba. At least 50 people died.

Further afield, extreme heat through Summer this year continued to grip the Northern Hemisphere and break records. Japan had its hottest July on record during which a new highest temperature of 41.8°C (106°F) was recorded in Tokyo in August. During the same heatwave South Korea recorded 22 consecutive tropical nights, one of which failed to fall below 29.3°C (85°F). In normally temperate Finland this Summer they recorded 22 days when 30°C (86°F) was exceeded.

Step into the Past

“The Gate of the Year”

A poem called ‘God Knows’
by Minnie Louise Haskins

Submitted by John Deeks

On Dec 25th 1939, King George VI broadcasts to the Empire. It was this broadcast that firmly established the Royal Christmas message as a British tradition.



Dressed in the uniform of the Admiral of the Fleet, sitting in front of two microphones on a table at Sandringham, King George VI spoke live to offer a message of reassurance to his people.

It was to be a landmark speech and was to have an important effect on the listening public as they were plunged into the uncertainty of war:

He said; “A new year is at hand. We cannot tell what it will bring. If it brings peace, how thankful we shall all be. If it brings us continued struggle we shall remain undaunted.” He went on to quote from Minnie Haskins’ poem “The Gate of the Year” (1908).

“I said to the man who stood at the Gate of the Year, ‘Give me a light that I may tread safely

into the unknown.’ And he replied, ‘Go out into the darkness, and put your hand into the Hand of God. That shall be better than light, and safer than a known way.’”

“The Gate of the Year” is the popular name given to a poem by Minnie Louise Haskins. The title given to it by the author was “God Knows”.

Background

The poem, published in 1908, was part of a collection titled *The Desert*. It caught the public attention and the popular imagination when the then Princess Elizabeth handed a copy to her father, King George VI.

The poem was widely acclaimed as inspirational, reaching its first mass audience in the early days of the Second World War. Its words remained a source of comfort to the late Queen for the rest of her life, and she had its words engraved on brass plaques and fixed to the gates of the King George VI Memorial Chapel at Windsor Castle, where the King was interred. Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother was also buried here in 2002, and the words of “The Gate of the Year” were read out at her funeral.

First part of the poem:

And I said to the man who stood at the gate of the year:

“Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown.”

And he replied:

“Go out into the darkness and put your hand into the Hand of God.

That shall be to you better than light and safer than a known way.”

So I went forth, and finding the Hand of God, trod gladly into the night.

And He led me towards the hills and the breaking of day in the lone East.”

Is it too early to start thinking about Christmas . . . ??

Nativity, Crib and Carol Service

in Fen Drayton Church

Sunday 21 December, 6.00pm (til c. 6.45)

Join us for traditional Christmas carols and Christmastide readings, led by Revd. Claire Brockelsby.

All most welcome!



WINTER FAIR

Friday 5th December

5.30pm–7.30pm

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- Burnt Ends BBQ shop
- Sundae Service
- Flourish Bakes
- Nature's Posy Flower Field
- Ant's P.Y.O polytunnel and field

UPCOMING EVENTS:

December 3rd - FESTIVE FEAST EVENING

Festive Feast evening meal. Set menu with all the trimmings and meat from Remi's butchers. Booking only.

December ongoing - BUTCHERS ORDERS & MARKET

Order your Christmas Turkeys, Pigs in Blankets, Stuffing Balls, Gammon Joints, and more!

Every second Saturday of the month, find us at St. Ives farmers market.

December 6th - CHRISTMAS TASTING DAY!

Samples from our local Christmas food and drinks, including Draycott Brewery, Todd's Christmas Cakes, Butter Bike Peanut Butter, Chapel & Swan smoked salmon, and more!

December ongoing - NATURE'S POSY WREATHS

Preorder handmade, local, sustainable Christmas Wreaths. Made with a willow supporting ring, you can reuse every year.

January 24th - BURNS NIGHT EVENING MEAL

Burns Night, set menu. Haggis, neeps & tatties - including gluten-free and vegetarian options.

Throughout January - FARMSHOP DRY JANUARY

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Hilton Parish Council



A Civility & Respect
Pledge Council

Report from the Meeting of the Council dated Monday 3 November

Tree Survey

The Council approved the Open Spaces' Officer's recommendations for work costing £1600 in respect of 5 trees, subject to approval from the District Council; and was advised similar work (relating to other trees that are also the responsibility of the Parish Council) is likely to require greater funding in future years.

The Major Oak

The Council took note of feedback that the recommendation of the arboreal consultant to take only 5% off the crown volume is intended to prevent unnecessary 'shock' to this tree. An application to carry out the recommended work is being made to the District Council, and to obtain suitable quotations for the work.

Daffodils

The Council agreed to a parishioner's request to allow the purchase, at no cost to the Council, of daffodil bulbs to be planted by members of the Community Garden in front of the churchyard boundary wall between Church End and Church Lane; subject to consultation with the Churchwardens about whether this will impinge on any plans they have to repair the churchyard boundary walls.

From our County Councillor

County Cllr David Keane informed the Parish Council that Cambridgeshire County Council has put forward to the Secretary of State 'Option A' (from a list of 5 options on the table) as its preferred recommendation for Local Government Reorganisation. He drew attention to the provision of EV chargers now available at the St Ives' Park and Ride.

Budget and Precept

Following publication of the proposed budget and precept for 2026/7, and there being no feedback from parishioners, the Council approved formally the budget in the sum of £45,770 and a modest increase in the precept to £41,570 which is an increase of £1,744 or 4.4%.

Fireworks event

The Council agreed to the purchase of additional lightweight fencing materials to facilitate the

safety of parishioners attending the event on November 8th.

Street Lights

The Council took note that authorisation has been given for the replacement of its 8 remaining sodium lamps with LED lanterns; which will contribute to future energy savings

Equipment

The Council agreed a budget provision to enable the purchase of Christmas lights to be hung round the Pavilion, to replace those vandalised earlier this year; and that in future these lights will be taken down at the end of the Christmas season. In recognition of the importance of a working trolley for use by the Maintenance Person and to mitigate the ongoing challenge of punctures to existing pneumatic tyres (especially from blackthorn), it was agreed to source replacement hard wheels or a replacement trolley with hard wheels.

Jubilee Playground

The annual safety inspection of the playground equipment has been instructed and should take place in the next couple of months.

Thanks

The Council expressed appreciation for a range of voluntary services carried out recently on behalf of the parish - including the provision and delivery of suitable materials to go on the bonfire for the fireworks event, and the generous loan of equipment (by Gregg of GCE Groundworks in Fenstanton) to compact materials to fill potholes in the Village Hall car park.

Future meetings

The Council agreed to move the date of the April 2026 Parish Council Meeting back a week; from 6th (being Easter Monday) to 13th.

The next Parish Council meeting will be held on Monday 1st December 2025 in Hilton Village Hall. Agendas will be issued in advance on the village notice boards and the Council's website www.hiltonparishcouncil.com. Parishioners are welcome to speak at council meetings on agenda items.

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Baked Stuffed Mushrooms

This is a quick and very tasty dish, which can be a starter for eight or a main course for four. As a starter it takes a bit of beating. Accompany it with speciality bread (herb, olive or Mediterranean) to make it perfect.

Ingredients:

- 8 large, flat mushrooms
- 1oz (25gm) butter
- 4 rindless rashers of lean bacon, chopped
- 1 onion, finely chopped
- 2oz (50gm) fresh wholemeal bread crumbs
- 2 tbs (30ml) freshly chopped parsley
- 2 tbs (30ml) grated Parmesan cheese
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper



Method:

1. Preheat the oven to 190°C, 375°F, Gas Mark 5.
2. Remove the mushroom stalks, chop finely and set aside.
3. Place bacon, onion and half the butter in a pan and cook for 5-6 minutes, stirring occasionally until golden. Remove from the heat and add the mushroom stalks, breadcrumbs, parsley and seasoning to taste.
4. Spoon the mixture into the mushrooms, pressing down gently. Melt the remaining butter and use it to brush the outside of the mushrooms.
5. Sprinkle the cheese over the top and place mushrooms on a lightly-greased baking tray in the oven for 10-15 minutes.
6. Serve immediately and await praise.

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Thinking about getting married abroad?

Thinking of marrying abroad as a British national may require additional documentation, most commonly a Certificate of No Impediment (CNI), sometimes called a “No Impediment to Marry” certificate. A CNI is an official document, typically issued by a registry office or similar authority, confirming that the named individual is legally free to marry. It evidences the absence of legal barriers such as an existing marriage, prohibited degrees of relationship, or failure to meet minimum age requirements.

Many foreign jurisdictions require a CNI from non-nationals before permitting a marriage to take place. This safeguard aims to prevent bigamy, underage marriage, and other issues that could render a marriage invalid under either local law or the law of the parties’ home country. Requiring a CNI helps local authorities confirm that both parties have capacity to marry in accordance with both the destination country’s law and the parties’ domestic law.

The application process and criteria vary by country of residence, but the typical steps are:

- Attend the local registry office (some regions permit online or postal applications, though personal attendance is often required).
- Provide supporting documents, including proof of identity (passport), proof of residence, and evidence of the dissolution of any previous marriage (final divorce decree or former spouse’s death certificate). A sworn affidavit of freedom to marry may also be required.
- Pay the prescribed fee.
- Allow for processing time, which can range from several days to several weeks.
- Arrange translation and legalisation where necessary. If marrying in a non-English-speaking jurisdiction, an official translation may be required. Some countries require legalisation or an apostille.

It is essential to check the specific requirements of the country where the marriage will occur. Some jurisdictions impose strict rules, demanding that the CNI be issued within a defined timeframe prior to the ceremony. Note that the UK does not issue CNIs for every

country. In those circumstances, alternative documentation—such as an affidavit or statutory declaration confirming freedom to marry—may be acceptable to the foreign authority. Early planning is advisable to ensure timely issuance, translation, and legalisation so that the ceremony can proceed without administrative hurdles.

Additional pre-marital considerations include pre-nuptial agreements (prenups). A prenup is a contract entered into before marriage that sets out how assets and finances will be treated upon divorce. In England and Wales, while prenups are not automatically binding, courts increasingly give them significant weight if safeguards are observed: both parties should receive independent legal advice, give full financial disclosure, and sign free of duress—commonly at least 28 days before the wedding. A well-drafted prenup may be particularly effective in shorter marriages or where substantial pre-acquired or family assets, business interests, or inheritances are at stake, and can offer clarity and protection for wealth intended for children from prior relationships.

How we can help

Professional assistance is available for drafting and advising on pre-nuptial agreements and other family law matters. For support, contact Leeds Day Solicitors on 0333 577 2250, email family@leedsday.co.uk, or visit www.leedsday.co.uk/family.



Lisa Leader - Senior Associate Solicitor

Fen Drayton Primary School

Harvest festival



We were thrilled to welcome Pastor Bob from Swavesey once more. Pastor Bob is a familiar face at Fen Drayton Primary School, often joining us to listen to children read and offering a friendly ear to both staff and pupils. We were delighted that he led our harvest festival this year. All donations went to Jimmy's Homeless Shelter in Cambridge, and we were touched to receive a heartfelt note of thanks for the generosity of our families.



Parent lunches

Last term, we were very excited to reintroduce our popular parent lunches, now that our school meals are freshly prepared onsite again. Every few weeks, parents and family members are invited to join their children for a delicious school meal—and even enjoy some time together in the playground afterwards! These sessions have proven incredibly popular, with every one this term fully booked.



The Lion King

As a small school, we have our Y5/6 residential trip every other year. In the years between, we offer an exciting alternative: a trip to London to see the matinee performance of The Lion King! This year's visit will be extra special, as pupils will also take part in a workshop led by a West End performer. The day will be rounded off with

dinner at Bella Italia before we head back to Fen Drayton. By the time you're reading this, we'll already have been to London—so keep an eye out for next month's magazine to hear all about our adventure!



Friends of Fen Drayton Primary School

Interested in supporting our school? Our PTA has rebranded to become Friends of Fen Drayton Primary School, meaning you don't have to be a parent or member of staff to get involved in fundraising for our school. Grandparents, neighbours and anyone in the local community is welcome to come on board. If you are interested in finding out more, then please email the office and we'll put you in touch.

So far this year, the Friends of FDPS have held a movie night, cake sale and 'break the rule day', raising over £500 towards our latest projects. This term, they have their wreath-making night, Christmas cake sales and more events going on in school. To find out what they are up to, follow their Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/FenDraytonPrimaryPta>



Starting school in 2026?

If your child was born between **September 2021 and August 2022**, they'll be due to start school in **September 2026**. Applications must be submitted by **15th January 2026** via Cambridgeshire County Council.

Join our school family

We currently have places available across all year groups. If you're looking for a warm and welcoming school community, we'd love to hear from you. Come and see what makes Fen Drayton Primary such a special place to learn and grow.

Nina McQueen Headteacher

School contact details

Email: office@fendrayton.cambs.sch.uk

Phone: 01954 273346

Website: Fen Drayton Primary School

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/fendraytonprimary>

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Fen Drayton Primary School – Inspiring learning for life.

What you're Missing

Fenstanton Friendship Club

It's hard to believe that we are now into November and planning for Christmas and 2026. All good wishes to everyone for a Happy Christmas and a Healthy, Peaceful New Year.



We were founded in 1949 by a dedicated group of villagers and we still meet every other Wednesday at 2.00 pm in the building of the United Reformed Church in Chequer Street. Although we hold our meetings in the church building, we are not affiliated to the church. Our activities are varied and as well as the yearly trips out to lunch, cream teas, boat trips on The Ladybird, strawberry tea and Christmas celebration, we will have various speakers and entertainers.

We welcome new members and look forward to seeing you. Come along with your ideas for the club's future.

8 October Another great carvery at the Hartford Mill. Always a day to look forward to.

23 October We had a great talk from Francis, the owner of "St. Ives Electric Boat Co." They have wonderful trips on the Great Ouse, including Twilight Trips, looking for Bats, Cream Tea Cruise, Early Bird Trip, Houghton Mill and The Manor, Hemingford Grey - to name but a few. Francis is very knowledgeable, coming from a horticultural background. We learned about the health of the river and the plants, good and bad, that grow in and around the river. We look forward to booking trips next year.



Upcoming meetings

3 December Our Christmas tea party, carols, games and lots of good food.

17 December An afternoon with Caroline Foster with seasonal music. Visitors welcome.

14 January We will be at the "Sleeping Beauty" pantomime at Burgess Hall, oh yes we will!!!

28 January General meeting with a quiz.

11 February The fabulous "Banjo Man".

25 February A talk about the Arthur Rank Hospice TBC

Any questions or problems please contact me. Marie Newns bubblenewns@gmail.com 01480 350119

What you're Missing

Hilton Community Hub

Hilton's 'Warm Hub' has been running for almost two years in its current form, based at the Village Hall on Wednesdays from 10.30-12.30. All are welcome.



"I shall say this only once! - Breaking news from Jan"

We have all sorts to offer - mainly good company and lots of variety!

It's a place to chat and/or take part in crafts; baking; quizzes; competitions; to have a laugh and to hear from occasional guest speakers. The programme is guided by participants, and we do not need to make a charge, due to generous grants from various sources.

Refreshments are served all morning, finishing each week with a wholesome two-course lunch (not to be missed!).

Come and join the fun - we'd be delighted to see you, whether you're from Hilton or beyond.

Fen Drayton Bowls Club news

We've had exciting news since last month. The bowling green has long been the playground for the local rabbit population and while it's great fun to watch them, bunnies and bowling don't mix! Following an application, we have received a £3800 grant from Sport England along with a generous donation of new timber from Stubbins of Fen Drayton to enable us to rabbit proof the green before next outdoor season. More images of work in progress after Christmas.

The short mat indoor league has now started

and while the first couple of results haven't gone our way we're looking forward to the rest of the season. The main club night is on Friday evenings from 7pm throughout the winter months, and we also have a Monday afternoon group that meets at 2pm throughout the year. Come along to any session in the village hall, which is located on Cootes Lane, CB24 4SL. For more information contact Stephen George, club secretary, on 07876 407 219 or via email at stephengeorge79@gmail.com.

Fen Drayton Lions

We welcomed Matt Clowery as assistant manager, who brought over a few much-needed youngsters to strengthen our squad. After a bit of a shaky start we began to find some rhythm and managed to rack up 17 goals in three games – everyone was on fire and the Lions were roaring! Our biggest problem now is keeping everyone fit and available all season. If we can do this I'm sure we can get some success.

I would like to take this opportunity to mention the sad passing of Pete Terry. For those that didn't know Pete, he was a Fen Drayton resident for many years and a big part of Drayton Lions, managing the side many years before me. As a football club we would like to pay a tribute and thought about a bench at the recreation ground in memory of Pete.

So, as a way to raise some money, we are holding a charity game on Saturday, 27 December, 10.30 kick off, with some (very!) past players against the current side. All footballers will be asked to pay £10 and there will be tea and cake available for a small donation towards Pete's bench. Any money left over will be donated to charity. If you are free, please come along as it's always good fun and I'm sure Pete's family would be pleased to see you.

Lastly, our new pavilion has finally arrived after years and years of trying! As a football team we are so grateful to everyone who has helped fund this project, that's all the residents who attended the beer festival set up by Francis and Lois, all the local businesses that kindly donated and everyone who made personal donations and bought 300 club tickets.

Even with all this generosity this project still would not have happened if it wasn't for the persistent efforts of Jackie Isden and Roger Davies. Chris Gray, Matthew Young, Tim Egan, Martin Leach and John Cox also played a huge part, giving up their time for all the meetings and endless discussions about the new pavilion. Special thanks too, go to Paul Pinner for all the help, expertise and materials he provided.

Jackie really kept this project alive, applying for different grants and exploring different options. As someone who has lived in Fen Drayton all his life and been involved in the football club for countless years, I can't tell you how grateful I am to each and every one of you who helped fund this and made it possible. I hope future generations can all get to use the new facilities.

Simon O'Neill, manager



Acknowledgements

Funding for the pavilion was obtained by grants and donations from local businesses and residents.

Grants were received from the Thalia WB Community Fund* (£40k), the National Lottery (£10k), the Town Lands Charity, managed by the parish council (£4.4k), the Lions football club (£2k).

The Lions and Fen Drayton Parish Council are deeply grateful to the following for their generous donations:

Wilderspin Garage	Bannolds
The Three Tuns	Chestnut Nurseries
10k Run	Football club donors
Fen Drayton residents	

Special thanks also go to Durman Stearn who supplied and installed the fencing, temporary roadway, drainage and water connections and blocks to build the platform.

Without their support the new pavilion would not have been possible.

*Thalia WB Community Fund awards grants to support community, environmental and heritage projects run by non-profit organisations based in Cambridgeshire, within 10 miles of a landfill site. The fund is managed by Cambridgeshire Community Foundation and is part of a voluntary environmental tax credit scheme called the Landfill Communities Fund. For more information please visit: www.entrust.org.uk or www.cambscf.org.uk/thalia-community-fund-2

What you're Missing

Fenstanton Football Club

Fenstanton Football Club is at the heart of our community for both children and adults. We have youth football teams at mini level from U7-U10, and at youth level for U11, U15 and U17 teams, alongside a Men's First team, Reserves team and Vets team. The club is always a busy and enjoyable place to be on a Saturday morning for the youth teams and Saturday afternoon for the Men's, as well as a Sunday for the Vets. We are pleased to support so many kids and adults, not only from our local community, but also from some of the surrounding villages, to have the opportunity to be involved in football and enjoy sport as part of a team environment. We would always welcome members of our local community to come down, watch and support our village teams. We would also like to thank all who joined the recent quiz held at the Church Centre to raise money for the club.

Our Mens' teams are currently looking to recruit a number of players. Training sessions are held every Tuesday evening at Western Park Pavilion, Northstowe. Everyone is welcome, so if you think you would like to get involved, please contact us at fenstantonfootball@outlook.com or Harry directly on 07725 256636



Fenstanton FC were proud to show their support for Remembrance Sunday during their games on Saturday 8 November, including a one-minute silence before kick-off. A number of our youth players were also involved in other community activities for Remembrance Sunday at the church.



Hilton Flower Club

Our November meeting was a great success, our demonstrator was Elizabeth Robertson, she did six wonderful flower arrangements, which gave us all ideas for Christmas; she also kept us amused with her stories, it was a very enjoyable afternoon.

1 December is our end of year Christmas Party, so we hope all our ladies can join us. June and Beverley will be doing two Christmas Flower Arrangements each, so these will be the raffle prizes.

Beverley and June wish all our ladies a **MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HEALTHY NEW YEAR.**

2 February is our first meeting in the New Year.

2 March Tim Meakin will be our flower demonstrator we always look forward to seeing him.

Hilton Village Hall 2pm - 4pm

Entrance £6.00 (includes tea/biscuits)

No Membership, all welcome.

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11:15 - TOY TIDY UP

11:20 - STORY TIME AND
MATS AWAY

11:30 - GOOD BYE UNTIL
NEXT WEEK!

HILTON VILLAGE HALL
PE28 9PF

What you're Missing

Hilton Women's Institute



In this new millennium, the achievements of women mean literally that 'the sky's the limit' with women successfully flying to space. However, these achievements have been hard won, mainly by the determination of some women who literally looked to the skies from the first flight itself in 1903.

At our October meeting, Guy Bartlett spoke of seven such pioneer women, a talk entitled 'British Women in Aviation'. Bear in mind that women could not have a bank account in their own name except by a man's guarantee until 1928, so these women had much to fight against and this article will begin in modern times and work back to emphasise how much is owed to these few pioneers.



Jo Slater - The First British Woman Jet Pilot

Jo joined the Royal Air Force at 18 as an officer, firstly as an engineer. When women were first allowed to front line combat in 1992 she gained her wings and was posted to 617 Squadron - named the famous Dambusters. It meant two years of detailed training to learn how everything in the aircraft worked. Jo flew Tornados during the Falklands war, learned low level flying at 500mph at under 250 feet to avoid radar detection and was the first woman to pass that test.

She once said 'it was exciting, dramatic and demanding - flying can be exhilarating but tough so it's a mixture of challenge and adventure.'

Barbara Harmer - The Only British Woman To Fly Concorde

Born in 1953, Barbara left school at 15 to train as a hairdresser, then at 20 she left to learn to fly as a commercial pilot at her own expense (in the year 2000 this cost around £100,000). After gaining her Commercial pilot's licence, she made over 100 job applications (which were unsuccessful because she was a woman) before securing a job as a pilot at Genair, a small commuter airline based at Humberside Airport.

In 1984, she joined British Caledonian, which was taken over by British Airways in 1987. At that time, British Airways had 3,500 pilots of which only 60 were women. She then successfully applied to fly the new Concorde and after six months in training finally captained a Concorde flight to New York in 1994. When that aircraft was permanently grounded, Barbara was transferred to Boeing 737s for 10 years.



Lettice Curtis - Air Transport Auxiliary

Lettice was born in 1915 and trained to fly at the age of 22, funded with £100 from her grandfather. At the start of WW2 women were only allowed to join the Air Transport Auxiliary (ATA) delivering aircraft from factories in northern England to fighter stations in the south, so Lettice enlisted. In the course of the war, she delivered 1,500 planes of 90 different types, including 160 Spitfires and 120 Mosquitoes and she was the first woman to fly an Avro Lancaster and four-engined bombers.

A journalist once said of her and her colleagues - and ladies this will shock you -



‘the menace is the woman who thinks she ought to be flying a high speed bomber when she only has the intelligence to scrub a hospital floor.’

Note - for five years she was working unremittingly for 13 days on and two days off. Lettice continued to fly in various positions before retirement, then at 77 and bored, she trained to fly helicopters and ‘grounded herself’ in 1995 aged 80!

Joy Lofthouse- Equal Pay Volunteer

Aged only 20 in 1943, Joy applied to join the ATA and was one of only 17 accepted from 2,000 applicants without having driven a car! Once flying, Joy discovered that the men of the ATA were paid more than the women for the same conditions and proceeded successfully to lobby the management, who then became the first equal opportunity employer in 1943. Some achievement! Joy once said of the Spitfire ‘it was the iconic plane, the nearest thing to having wings of your own’.

Dolly Shepherd - Parachute Pioneer

Dolly was born in 1886. In 1902, at the age of 16 and passionate about the music of Sousa, who was in concert at the Alexandra palace, she took a waitress’ job there because she couldn’t afford a ticket. Backstage, Dolly found kites and gliders (remember this is 1902!) and in due course became part of the Buffalo Bill troupe.

In 1905 Dolly was on a trapeze below a hot air balloon due to rise to 2,000 - 4,000 feet but it malfunctioned and she rose rapidly to 15,000 feet before successfully landing. Worse was still to come during another escapade. Dolly and her colleague, Louie May, were each flying high by parachute (this is entertaining?) when Louie May’s descent mechanism failed. Dolly somehow managed to get to Louie May with her own parachute - thus preventing her rapid rise, only for them to land so heavily that Dolly was paralysed and bedridden. Then a doctor offered the chance of electric shock treatment but gave her too much, causing Dolly to be thrown from her bed and to hit a wall. Wow! This caused her spine to return to normal and she could walk!

A daring lady with great spirit, Dolly accepted an offer to jump with the Red Devils display team. She was only 92! Dolly said she loved to go high because ‘if I had to be killed, I’d like it to be completely good and proper’. (Thanks to the Dolly Shepherds of this world, times HAVE changed).

Hilda Hewlett - The First British Woman To Gain A Pilot’s Licence.

Born in 1864 in Vauxhall, London and one of nine siblings, Hilda firstly trained as a nurse in Berlin and was already skilled in woodwork, metalwork and needlework. After a brief but failed marriage, Hilda happened to go to an Airshow in Blackpool in 1909 and decided there and then that she wanted to fly - but every Flying School refused women. The only choice was to train in France and Hilda finally gained her licence, only the number 122 and the first woman - at the Royal Aero Club in 1911.

In France she had met two men and they formed a new flying school where she taught Geoffrey de Havilland to fly in a Sopwith Camel aeroplane. Hilda was also one of the first women to learn to drive and in 1912 she moved to Battersea, set up a car repair garage and was one of the first to use an oxyacetylene welding machine.

To read more of this remarkable woman and her daughter you can read her biography entitled ‘Old Bird’. Hilda’s husband had once said ‘women will never be as successful as men, they haven’t got the nerve’. Opinion, ladies?



Yes, it has been a long road, well earned, look at us now and how optimistic the young girls of today can be with their choice of career.

What you're Missing

Hilton Art Club

At the October workshop with Elaine Clarkson, she showed us her wonderful artwork, depicting flowers, using watercolours. Elaine explained her way of deciding how to adapt a photograph to improve a painting and how to use colour in the background to enhance the subject.

Elaine worked from the age of 16 as an artist for a wallpaper company and had to grind and mix her own colours. From working on repeat patterns, she graduated to the main design, so this has influenced the way she paints today.

The second part of the workshop was given over to attempting to use her techniques in drawing and painting our own cyclamen, which was more difficult than it looked when Elaine showed us!

Altogether, we found it an absorbing and enjoyable day. Thanks to those that provided the delicious cakes.

19 December from 12.15 pm The Windmill, Somersham:- Christmas Lunch. Members only

16 January 10.00am - 12.30pm POWERED BY STEAM: All things steam. From kettles to steamships. Bring your own reference pictures.



Fenstanton Glebe Allotments Association

This growing year has seen a lot of highs and lows. A lot of compote and jam has been made with a glut of soft fruit which included strawberries, raspberries and blackberries. The warm summer meant that outdoor tomatoes grew well and a delicious green tomato chutney made with the fruit that didn't ripen.

I was hoping to have photos of the winning pumpkin in the allotment competition but unfortunately all but one were stolen either the night before or a few days before in the lead up to the competition. This is not the first time this has happened and it saddens us that all the hard work that was put into growing and taking part has been ruined by some thoughtless individuals. It has made us

think twice about holding the competition next year.

As the vegetable beds are being mulched and prepared for the winter months in readiness for spring, it's time to look through the seed catalogues and plan what to grow next year.

If you would like an allotment, live in Fenstanton and want to join the waiting list please contact the secretary at secretary.fgaa@btinternet.com





Hilton Community Garden

Annual Report 2025

by Heather Chambers

This is the fifth annual report for the Community Garden.

My thanks must go to all the committee for their hard work and commitment to the garden. This is a real team venture and it has been a pleasure to chair the committee meetings over the last 12 months.

The crops have again been fantastic although hot weather and heavy rains at different times have meant we have faced challenges over the year. We were delighted to receive a grant from The Highways Agency and organised various events including building 30 bird boxes, 60 hedgehog houses, having a seed planting day and culminating with a summer party. We are very grateful to Don who designed and then helped us to create IKEA style flat-packs from which to build these new homes.

We have also organised various social events including fish and chip suppers and enjoyed sitting in the garden as the sun has set. The gazebo has been an excellent addition and special thanks are due to Rob for the vision and practical skills to put this up. It has made a huge difference to us, and to all our visitors.

The Rainbows and Brownies groups have visited the garden again and helped us to plant and look after the garden. They, and the Warm Hub, planted potatoes ready for the produce show. We did really well in the Produce Show and managed to get 3 Firsts, 4 seconds and 5 thirds. We distributed the Kings Seed catalogues to villagers and further afield as well as the committee and people were able to purchase seeds at discounted prices.

Claire gave a brilliant talk at Houghton and Wyton Garden club, with slides provided by Rob, and it is great to be able to share our achievements to a wider audience.

The visitors book stand made by Sam and Guy Dolby has been a huge hit and we have enjoyed reading the comments of the many visitors to the garden. It has been staggering to read how many people do come and visit the garden and we have used the comments to help us apply for more grants.

On 5th May we resolved by an extraordinary meeting to change bank accounts and whilst not always straight-forward to implement this change, we now have a successful free banking arrangement with Nat West bank. There were 8 votes for and 2 abstentions for this decision. This has saved us £60 per year and my thanks go to Cynthia, Heather and Aileen for enabling this to occur.



Again we have had help at the garden from our Duke of Edinburgh students and it has been lovely to see them learn more about gardening over the last few months. The compost bins have been a huge success and the purchase of a shredder has made this much easier. Thanks to Cynthia, as our appointed compost lead, for leading us through this process. The petrol lawn mower has meant that paths are kept short, and the garden has looked beautiful over the summer months.

We continue to enjoy Jan's cakes and Heather W's meticulous account keeping so thank you both. The garden is a success due to the commitment of all those who come to the working groups on Saturday mornings and those who work here during the week



The Yellow Pages

Venues for hire

Fen Drayton Village Hall	07596 576515
Fenstanton Church Centre	01954 230471
Hilton Village Hall	07752 678415

Councils

Cambridgeshire County Council	0345 045 5200
Fen Drayton Parish Council	07704 023534
Fenstanton Parish Council	01480 465300
Hilton Parish Council	01480 830605
Huntingdonshire District Council	01480 388388
South Cambs District Council	0345 045 0500

Community Groups and Clubs

Books and Jigsaws at FURC	01480 498221
Fen Drayton Bowls Club	07876 407219
Fen Drayton Lions FC	07718 900880
Fen Drayton Parent and Toddlers	07549 630124
Fen Drayton Tai Chi	07799 444993
Fen Drayton Tennis Club	01954 231752
Fen Shanty Folk	07841 599492
Fenstanton Baby and Toddler Group	07742 259653
Fenstanton Beavers, Cubs and Scouts	07531 863368
Fenstanton Bowls Club	07876 343900
Fenstanton Community Hub	07949 453767
Fenstanton Football Club	07968 081874
Fenstanton Friendship Club	01480 350119
Fenstanton Glebe Allotments	07817 786298
Fenstanton Town Trust	01480 464753
Fenstanton Indoor Bowls	01480 497202
Fenstanton Knitter and Natters	01480 498221
Fenstanton Litter Picking	07949 453767
Fenstanton Speed Watch	07949 453767
Hilton Art Club	01480 830696
Hilton Baby and Toddler Group	07527 394945
Hilton British Legion	01480 831186
Hilton Community Garden	07488 351128
Hilton Flower Club	01480 830571
Hilton HGV Watch	07768 294878

Community Groups and Clubs

Hilton Neighbourhood Watch	01480 831658
Hilton Rainbows and Brownies	07970 404569
Hilton Speed Watch	07540 811115
Hilton Town Trust	01480 830866
Hilton WI	01480 831186
RSPB	01954 233260
Slimming World	07568 444140

Community events

Fen Drayton 10k run	07919 254467
Hilton Feast Week	01480 830605
Hilton Produce Show	01480 830412
Hilton Summer Ball	01480 831299
The BIG Village Fun Day	01480 370973

Education

Fen Drayton Primary School	01954 273346
Fenstanton and Hilton Primary School	01480 375055
Hilton Day Nursery	01767 688715
Ladybird Day Nursery	01480 469166
Sunhill Nursery	01954 230030
Swavesey Village College	01954 230366

Churches

St Mary's Church, Fen Drayton	01480 465211
Fenstanton Parish Church	01480 465211
Fenstanton URC	07710 240363
Hilton Methodist Church	01480 830686
Hilton Parish Church	01480 830866
St Ives Roman Catholic Church	01480 462192
The Particular Baptist Church	01480 830142

Emergency numbers

A&E Addenbrooks Hospital	01233 217118
A&E Hinchinbrooke Hospital	01480 416416
Environment Agency (Flood Line)	0845 9881188
Fenstanton pharmacy	01480 495159
Fenstanton surgery	01480 461873
Fly Tipping	0345 0450500

Emergency numbers

Gas leak	0800 111 999
Non emergency medical	111
Non emergency Police	101
Papworth pharmacy	01480 831415
Papworth surgery	01480 830888
Peterborough City Hospital	01733 678000
Power cut	0800 678 3105
Samaritans	116 123 Free
Swavesey surgery	01954 230202
Water leak	0800 316 7676

Buses

A2B	0800 001 6255
Dews Coaches	01487 740241
Stagecoach	01223 423578
Whippet Coaches	01954 230011

Pubs and eating places

Barry's Plaice	01480 462382
Little Piggy Cafe	07764 336911
The Duchess, Fenstanton	01480 350859
The White Swan, Conington	01954 267251

Retail

Alan's Carpets	07790 681317
Ash's Store	01480 466225
Denise Jackson Interiors	07910 507541
Eye Specs	01480 499606
Ron's Farm Shop	01480 495127

Garden services

Hamptons Groundcare	01480 274848
Hemingford Arboriculture	01480 463674

Decorators

Jason Kirby	01954 211775
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Design, printing and copying

St Ives Quickprint Ltd	01480 465215
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Household services

Cambridge Light Removals	01480 352220
Christopher the Locksmith	07772 111222
Easton & Cook Funerals	01480 310400
Fairy Dog Mother	01480 461959
Fenstanton Dental	01480 381129
Hamptons Pest Control	01480 274848
Hilton Private Hire	07521 293434
J L Wight Chimney Sweep	01954 253315
More Space Storage	01480 830130
Sureclean	07870 338074
Television Mobile Repair Service	07887 887319
W&H Peacock Auctioneers	01480 474550
Z Cars Taxis	01480 462046

Electricians

Bowling Electrical Services	07903 756915
TW Electical	07810 710826
Twin Electical Services	07796 492953

Plumbing and Heating Engineers

Cosy Gas	07411 805067
J Halstead	01480 830329
MDS P&H Ltd	07860 829591
RDS	01954 770309
T. N Walsh	07887 561525

Building services and supplies

GCE Groundworks	07737 884643
Graham Malkan	07799 850237
R D B Flooring	07970 256237
Stormguard Building Services	01480 270744

Car servicing and repairs

Wilderspin Garage	01954 230273
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The Journal

Advertising	07768 274456
Circulation	07876 446565
Editorial - Fen Drayton	07711 442473
Editorial - Fenstanton	07952 838121
Editorial - Hilton	07793 794431



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