

February 2026

The Journal

Fen Drayton ▪ Fenstanton ▪ Hilton

**Learn about
The Tudor
Hotel's past**

On page 30

**Start the New
Year with
confidence**

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**Fenstanton
Village Hall ahead
of schedule.**

See page 8

**New minister
for the United
Reformed Church**

See page 52

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A WINTER *at last!*

After a number of years of indifferent winters this year we have had at a real cold snap at last. Checking records, it is 2010 since we had proper whiteout of snow and the last time it snowed on Christmas Day in Cambridge was 1927. We hope you have kept warm recently and are now looking forward to the change of seasons.

In this month's Journal we can warm you up with a travel piece on a safari in South Africa. Also, don't miss the first of two parts on the history of the Tudor Hotel and as we look forward to spring check out what you should be doing in the garden to get ready for warmer times.

We hope you will enjoy this first edition for 2026.

From all at The Journal we hope you enjoy this edition

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Please submit any copy by 6 February latest for the March edition.

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Events at a Glance

Fen Drayton Fenstanton Hilton

February 2026

- 05 Thursday Lunch Club, Welcome Space, Church Centre
- 07 Sing for your Supper, Church Centre
- 14 James Bond Fundraiser for Arthur Rank Hospice, Prince of Wales
- 17 Pancake Day, Welcome Space, Church Centre
- 21 Books & Jigsaws Sale, URC

March 2026

- 07 Bowls Club Quiz Night, Primary School
- 12 Thursday Lunch Club, Welcome Space, Church Centre
- 21 Feast Week Quiz, Village Hall

April 2026

- 09 Thursday Lunch Club, Welcome Space, Church Centre

May 2026

- 16-17 'Church Full of Art', St Mary's Church
- 16-17 Open Gardens


June 2026

- 18-20 Booze in Fenstanton Pews, Parish Church

July 2026





- 04 BIG Village Fun Day, School Field
- 19-25 Hilton Feast Week

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



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Saving Ratty: Should water vole conservation involve more than just mink control



Wildlife Trust for
**Beds, Cambs
& Northants**

**Huntingdonshire
Local Group**

The Huntingdonshire Local Group of the Wildlife Trust is pleased to welcome back Alistair Grant on Wednesday 11th February 2026.

Once a familiar sight along Britain's watercourses, the water vole is now listed as endangered after one of the steepest declines of any mammal since 1990. In some areas the population fell 90% between 1989 and 1998 alone! Although eradicating the non-native American mink has been vital, recent data shows that water voles do not always recover following this.

Drawing on extensive practical experience as a specialist riparian ecologist working

closely with water voles, Alistair will explore the ecological challenges and conservation strategies needed to secure a future for this much loved species.

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

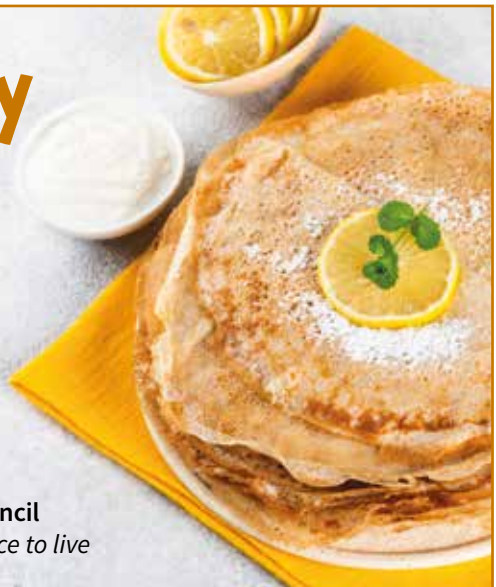
PANCAKE DAY

Free pancakes for the all the family
from 12.30 pm until 4.00 pm on
Tuesday 17 February

ALL WELCOME TO JOIN IN THE FUN!

Welcome Space
Church Centre, Fenstanton

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A wonderful community celebration

What a great day we had at the Fenstanton Christmas Market! The weather cleared just on cue, giving us a perfect afternoon and evening to enjoy this fabulous village event.

An estimated 450 people attended, including around 100 children who enjoyed a visit to Santa. With more than 20 stalls on offer, there was plenty to see, do, and enjoy throughout the market.

Entertainment was of the highest quality. Sarah Anne Champion was in fine voice, the Swavesey Choir were on top form, and Michel Sedgwick and his brass ensemble provided a wonderful festive soundtrack. The Fenstanton Morris Dancers were thoroughly entertaining, especially when Parish Council Chairman Martin Hewitt joined the troupe, to great applause. Our thanks go also to MC David Martynski, who kept the afternoon running smoothly and added his own festive cheer.



The big lights switch-on went without a hitch, and, as ever, the Christmas tree looked superb.

Our sincere thanks go to everyone involved: the organisers and volunteers, the village groups who ran stalls, all the wonderful stallholders, and of course Fenstanton Parish Council, who facilitated the whole event. It was a truly enjoyable celebration and a great example of our village spirit.

Hilton Royal British Legion



First of all, on behalf of the Legion, a HUGE thank you to everyone who contributed time and donations to the recent annual Poppy Appeal, names would fill a book but you all know who you are!

Many of you will know of our totals but here they are anyway!

Our event on 25 October 2025, together with donations to tins in the Shop (thank you to Siva and Priya for continuing our tradition), Simon and Emma at the Prince of Wales, Roland and Dreda at Monach Farm and the team at Barkway Grange, the collection on Remembrance Sunday and further donations totalled a truly remarkable £1,627.55.

Then Emma of the Prince of Wales donated her amazing painting with which we held a Silent Auction. There were very generous offers but the winning one by far was for £1,001, making the total TO DATE £2,628.55.

The donor wishes to remain anonymous and his/her generosity continues – the painting has been returned to Emma and now hangs in our very special pub.

Very importantly, as one Legion member has commented:-

'I'm sure those serving and ex- service men and women who receive our help would love to say thank you.'

Finally, the running total of donations to the St Ives branch (of which we are part) in mid-December was £20,152.57 and it is a grateful rise from 2024.

On the strength of such a happy, successful event, the village hall has been booked for Saturday 24 September with the hire fee very generously guaranteed.

Hilton is indeed a remarkable village of caring people.



Hilton Churches' Lent Lunches



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

Wednesday, February 25th – 27, Scotts Crescent
- by kind invitation of Sandy and Richard Monk.


Wednesday, March 4th – 1, Grove End
- by kind invitation of Carole and Malcolm Lynn.

Suggested donation - £5:00

Proceeds in aid of MAGPAS

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AIR AMBULANCE

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
moons.grumbles.admires

Fenstanton Ash's Store (NISA) on the High Street
pouting.cabinet.washroom

Fenstanton Church Centre on School Lane
reclusive.creeps.deleting

Fenstanton Zaza barbers on Headlands
thing.pylon.relatives

Hilton Prince of Wales Pub on Potton Road
mindset.skip.pulps

Hilton Cricket Pavilion
clerk.farmland.unroll



Taking shape and ahead of schedule



Exciting progress is being made on Fenstanton's new Village Hall, and we're delighted to share an update with you.

The build is due for completion in early summer, and thanks to the tremendous efforts of our contractor, Allgood Services, the project is well ahead of schedule. Before the Christmas break the roof was completed and the building made fully watertight, putting us in a great position for the plumbers and electricians to begin work in early January.

It's incredibly rewarding to see the new hall taking shape so quickly. Once complete, it will be a modern, flexible and welcoming space – a real asset for Fenstanton and a place that can be enjoyed by residents of all ages for years to come.

But this is where you come in!

This is your Village Hall – Tell us what you'd like to see!

We want the new Village Hall to reflect the needs, ideas and aspirations of our community. Whether you're interested in activities, facilities, events or new groups, your input really matters.

What would you like to have in the new hall?

- Community clubs or classes

- Social events or coffee mornings
- Youth or family activities
- Fitness, arts or hobby groups
- Equipment or facilities you feel are important

These are just a few ideas – we'd love to hear yours.

Have your say

Please take a few minutes to complete our survey and let us know what you'd like the new Village Hall to offer. Scan the QR code to complete the survey online.



For a hard copy of the survey:

Email: contact@fenstantonvillagehall.org

Telephone: 07949 453767

Or from the Parish Council Office,
The Hub, 6 High Street, Fenstanton, PE28 9LQ

This is your Village Hall, and it will be shaped by the people who use it. Thank you for being part of this exciting new chapter for Fenstanton – we can't wait to open the doors and welcome you in!

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Casual	£15.00	£10.00	£17.50	£10.00



Coffee Mornings at Hilton Methodist Hall, Potton Road

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

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

Everyone Welcome

Some places of interest - Part 4

This month we are heading north again, to places in the northern part of Huntingdonshire and around Peterborough. Although we are not normally going to include anything on villages or parish churches in this series, Little Gidding has two unique claims which justify it being an exception to our rule. (See below). And Holme Fen is included, even though we don't normally include nature reserves, because it also has a unique claim to fame.

Norman Cross PE7 3SP

A scheduled monument, this is the site of the UK's first purpose-built Prisoner of War Camp. The site was recently acquired by the Nene Park Trust. Although there is little to see on the ground, the Trust has produced a seven-minute explanatory video and it is planning to hold regular guided walks of the site. The video and more details are available on the Nene Park Trust's website.



Little Gidding PE28 5RJ

Little Gidding (population about 20) is the only village we know of which has a poem dedicated to it by a Nobel Laureate (T.S. Eliot). It is also the only place of pilgrimage in our area as far as we know. Details of events and the pilgrimage are on the Friends of Little Gidding website.



Holme Fen PE7 3PT

Site of Special Scientific Interest. The lowest point on land in the UK, it is 2.75 metres below sea level. The fen posts were erected in 1848 and driven down to the underlying clay, in order to record the peat shrinkage due to drainage of the fens. The posts now stand around 4m above ground level. More details are on the great fen website.



Peterborough Cathedral PE1 1XS

One of the finest Norman cathedrals in Europe, renowned for its magnificent architecture and rich history, which dates back to a monastery founded in 654. It is the final resting place of Katharine of Aragon.



Flag Fen Archaeology Park PE6 7QJ

The park sits in a unique Bronze Age landscape with a mysterious timber causeway and platform made 3,500 years ago. Exhibits include some bronze age boats that were discovered nearby. The photo shows one of the reconstructed prehistoric roundhouses. See the Flag Fen Archaeology Park website for more information.



Village News

Wansford - Nene Valley Railway PE8 6LR

Headquarters of the Nene Valley Railway, a heritage railway which runs between Wansford and Peterborough. The railway has been awarded the Tripadvisor Travellers Choice Award, putting it in the top 10% of recommended places to visit worldwide. See the Nene Valley Railway website for timetables and details of special events.



Elton Hall and Gardens PE8 6SH

An extraordinary, romantic, part-Gothic historic house near Peterborough, nestled in the beautiful countryside. It stands proud in unspoilt landscaped parkland where a house has stood since the 12th century. Opening for the 2026 season on May 24th. See Elton Hall website for more details.



Longthorpe Tower PE3 6LU

Longthorpe Tower displays one of the most complete and important sets of 14th-century domestic wall paintings in northern Europe. The tower is managed by Nene Park Trust. Please visit their website for more information, including to book tickets for your visit. Booking is essential.



Helpston - John Clare's Cottage PE6 7ED

Historic home of Cambridgeshire's poet and environmentalist, John Clare. Open Wednesday – Saturday 10:30 -2:30. A glimpse into rural life 200 years ago. Café and garden. Small car park. More details on the clarecottage.org website.



Burghley House PE9 3JU

One of the grandest 16th century houses in the country with spectacular gardens. Privately owned. Gardens re-open to the public on February 14th. House re-opens on March 14th. See Burghley House website for ticket prices and more details.



Apethorpe Palace PE8 5DJ

One of England's greatest stately homes. A favourite residence of King James I and King Charles I. Previously owned by Queen Elizabeth I. Now a private residence open to the public for pre-booked tours in July and August. See English Heritage website for more details.






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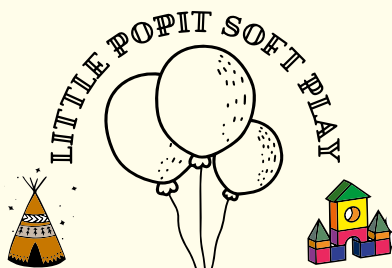
Fen Drayton
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Hilton Town Trust

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

Hiltontowntrust@gmail.com or
by phone on 01480 830866

Joseph Ellis Foundation Trust

PARENTS AND CARERS

If you are a resident of Fenstanton with a child in full time education or a resident of Fen Drayton with a child in full time education (year 7 or above). And, you are struggling to purchase clothing or equipment necessary for your child's education (academic or physical).

We can help

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Teresa Dellar. Jellistrust@gmail.com

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Fen Drayton Poppy Appeal 2025 results

We had another hugely successful Poppy Appeal in Fen Drayton, collecting on behalf of the Royal British Legion.

Thank you so much to everyone who took part - 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!

Lots of people commented on the lamp post poppies we had this year, and I'm hoping I'll be able to source even more next year! Thank you to Webb Haulage for sponsoring a double-poppy lamp post. If you're a local business and would like to sponsor a poppy or two next year, please do let me know.

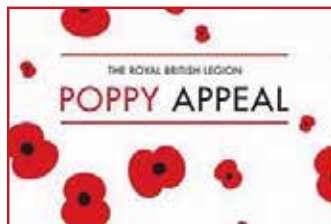
So - how much did we raise this year?

- Fen Drayton businesses and door-to-door collectors **£1979.10**
- QR codes (across Fen Drayton and Swavesey) **£159**

Particular thanks to Fen Drayton Primary School who collected **£171.74**, and to Bannolds, who collected **£754.51!**

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

Thank you! Jo Hitchins - Poppy Appeal Organiser, Fen Drayton & Swavesey



Fenstanton BIG Village Fun Day

Summer is coming!

The musical performers, bands and choirs have been booked and are committed to entertain you at the BIG Village Fun Day, on Saturday 4 July 2026.

Bars, food outlets, stalls, inflatables, races, tug of war, dog show, pub games, archery, slippery pole and sunshine have all been booked for this summer.

Do not miss this free event for all the family, supported by Fenstanton Parish Council, on the school field on Saturday 4 July, starting at 1.00pm.



Let's Run Girls – Fen Drayton



Let's Run Girls is dedicated to empowering women to improve the health and wellbeing of their local communities in the UK. We currently have supportive running groups in twelve different locations in Cambridgeshire including Fen Drayton.

The free weekly run sessions are led by a dedicated team of volunteer run leaders who are passionate about supporting other women to get into running. If you're already running and would like some company and extra motivation, the weekly steady run group is a great option for you. All paces are welcomed, we just ask that you can continuously run for at least 20-25 minutes.



The Fen Drayton group meets every week at 6.45pm on Monday evenings outside the Fen Drayton village Hall. find out more or register by scanning the QR code below (@letsrungirls.com), or contact info@letsrungirls.com for more information.



Fenstanton Morris

Boxing Day at the Clock Tower

Following our performance at the Christmas Lights event in Fenstanton, we foregathered on Boxing Day at the Clock Tower, where we were happy to see loads of lovely people who had braved the chill to watch us.

Some brave souls also joined in!

We will be back at The Clock Tower at 5.30am on 1 May 2026. See you there!

Follow us on Facebook to find out when and where you can find us!

Fen Drayton Housing Needs Survey – Have Your Say



Cambridgeshire ACRE, an independent charity, is working with Fen Drayton Parish Council to carry out a Housing Needs Survey for the village. The survey will assess the need for affordable housing for local people. The Parish Council is supporting the survey so that any future decisions affecting Fen Drayton are informed by clear, local evidence rather than assumptions.

This survey is your chance to make sure Fen Drayton's voice is heard. It is independent and does not assume that any new housing will be built. Instead, it gathers vital information about whether people with a local connection to the village are finding it hard to access suitable housing now or in the future.

We encourage all households living in the village, and those with a strong local connection who wish to return, to take part. Even if you do not have a housing need yourself, your response helps build an accurate picture of the village as a whole.

The survey is confidential and takes only a few minutes. All Fen Drayton residents should receive the survey in the post though can also take part now at www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/FenDrayton/ or by scanning the QR code. The survey closes on 27 February 2026.



QUIZ NIGHT

Saturday 7 March. 7pm start
Fenstanton & Hilton Primary School
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for more details.

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Charities benefit from fundraising in Hilton in 2025

by Heather Woods

I would like to say a huge thank you to all who turned out on 16 December for Carol Singing around the village. The weather was kind and once again villagers were generous. £446.69 was raised but then topped by a wonderful donation of £200.00, making a grand total of £646.69 for Christian Aid. THANK YOU ONE AND ALL.

The hot chocolate and nibbles were much appreciated afterwards in the Methodist Hall.

In the weeks before Christmas, Hilton's Advent Lunches raised £660.00 for Diamond Hampers in Huntingdon and we were delighted to see that the charity's founder, Lianne Simpson, was awarded an MBE in the King's New Year's Honours List.

In addition, the collection at the Carol Service on 21 December raised £336.00 for the Arthur Rank Hospice Charity and the collection for Action for Children at the Gift Service on 14 December raised £523.00. We are also pleased to report that we collected £740.00 for Jimmy's of Cambridge.

During the year, the monthly Coffee Mornings for East Anglia's Children's Hospices (EACH) raised a total of £880.00 for the charity.



Carol Singers in full voice

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 Community Hub

When he accidentally ploughed through a mouse's nest in 1785 our famous Scot Robert Burns wrote 'the best laid schemes o' mice and men gang aft agley' (fall apart, you non-scots!)



And so it was here in Hilton on January 6th 2026 when our 'best plans' for our return went astray when the heating in the village hall broke down during the very cold spell.

After countless texts: a solution. Diamond Jan held our usual day at her house and served a wonderful warming meat and potato pie. We are so very, very fortunate, thank you yet again Jan and team.

The amazing team has also organised still more weeks of quizzes, food, Valentine biscuit making, pancake tossing, no doubt some surprises and an interesting visit by Kara of the local Fairy Dogmother business.

During the following weeks our favourite football teams are also due to be challenged by a 'Grande Comb and Footie League with the Final and Cup Presentation on February 4th. (And surely more fun than a certain Ashes event?)

We are there in the Village Hall every Wednesday morning from 10.30 - 12.30 with the warmest of welcomes to all - and remember, it is free.

COME and JOIN US!



All Ready for People to Tuck In!

Hunts Guardian – Saturday 3rd June 1871

Fenstanton; (When there was more than one pub in the village).

An Answer Wanted:

"Almost every week a case of drunkenness, riotous conduct or similar offence is brought before the St Ives bench from this place. There must be a reason for this ignoble pre-eminence and it is desirable that we should not only ascertain the cause but also to endeavour to provide a remedy. We believe it is the frequent remark that Fenstanton causes the magistrates of the division more work than any other place".



Ian Sollom MP

Looking Ahead in 2026

Looking to the coming year, there is much to plan for – both across St Neots and Mid Cambridgeshire and in Parliament. Progress on legislation introduced last year continues, and we are expecting a range of new bills to be introduced soon, which, as always, my Liberal Democrat colleagues and I will be working hard to scrutinise.

Speaking to residents on their doorsteps during the Christmas period, as is so often the case, healthcare was one of the topics most frequently raised with me. The Government's 10 Year Health Plan was a step in the right direction to fix our NHS – but these plans must translate into real change for people in 2026. This year, I will be continuing to push for our local GPs, hospitals, pharmacies and dentists to receive the support they need to improve services in our community and put healthcare back into the hands of local people.

Following on from my campaign to protect palliative care beds at Arthur Rank Hospice last year, I will be continuing to put pressure on the Government to take real action on this. We heard in January that £25m in capital funding would be given to hospices across the country, but given that Arthur Rank is facing a deficit of almost £1m -- and these are running costs, not capital costs -- this new funding will be nowhere near enough to guarantee the sustainability of such services for years to come.

We are also expecting the Government to announce reforms to special education needs and disability (SEND) provision, news of which I know has been a significant concern for many local parents. The current system is not working, but any reform must be rooted in children's and parents' needs, not in cost-cutting. The drip-feeding of information that we have seen over the past year is unacceptable, and the Government must come forward urgently to clarify their plans so that SEND families have the clarity they deserve.



Much the same can be said for the changes to Personal Independence Payments (PIP) that the Government proposed last year. I am working to press the Department for Work and Pensions to work closely alongside those with real lived experience of disability before making any changes that might cause them harm.

Across the constituency, I am looking forward to continuing to hold my weekly surgeries, where I meet with residents to hear about the issues important to them and see where I might be able to support them with personal issues. I am pleased that I was able to help so many constituents last year, from smaller wins like getting incorrect parking fines refunded through to life-changing actions like securing new housing for someone who has been living for years in mould and disrepair. Of course there is much more work to be done, and I will continue to listen to, and stand up for, my constituents throughout 2026.

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South African Safari

By Sandy Monk

In September 2025 I was lucky to be going on a trip to three different game reserves in the north west of South Africa. The trip had been planned by my niece, my sister's younger daughter Sophie, since 2024 and I was invited to join my sister, her husband, Sophie and her husband and my sister's other daughter, Tracey, who I would be sharing accommodation with. My sister and husband had been to Africa on safari five times in three different countries and Sophie had been twice to South Africa. She did all the flights, transport between airports and lodges and booking the lodges so we had no travel agency involved.

We flew from Heathrow on a 10 hour night flight and arrived in Johannesburg at 10am. There is only one hour time difference between the UK and Johannesburg. The airport was very modern and immigration did not take very long. Our minibus with friendly driver was waiting outside for us, a modern vehicle with air conditioning and wifi so I was able to let Richard know I had arrived safely. We were going to travel NW of Johannesburg. Once outside the city the roads were very quiet. They were very wide, straight roads with a few holdups on the way for quite long sections of roadworks. It was a 3.5 hour journey to our first game reserve. Along the way we could see many small villages built at the side of the road. Some of the housing looked very poor, small huts made of corrugated iron, but alongside some fairly large bungalows and houses. The driver explained that often the parents choose to live in shacks and use their money to educate their children. When their children hopefully get good jobs they will build their parents a lovely home for later life. The road

passed through several towns and most of them had a modern shopping mall where we had a comfort stop, with the usual fast food outlets such as KFC and Burger restaurants. Gun shops, hunting and fishing shops were evident, even taxidermists!

First stop Mabula

Our first stop was Mabula Game Reserve and we were staying in Kwafubesi lodge. This lodge had accommodation for 10 people in five tented structures. The rooms were built on a wooden platform with steps up at the front and a veranda. There was a permanent, structured canvas bedroom and bathroom on top of the platform. It was very comfortable, nicely furnished and with tea making facilities etc. The shower was outside at the back with a screen fence around. The room had netting to keep insects out. There was a central building for all our meals which was wooden with a thatch roof, African style. There were armchairs and a small library. There was even a small swimming pool.



As soon as we arrived there was no time to unpack as our first game drive was at 4pm just after a delicious afternoon tea. Our guide was called MJ, an Afrikaans young man. Even before we set off we could see rhinos in the distance from main building. The vehicles

Continued overleaf

Trains, Boats and Planes

used are Toyota Land Cruisers which seat 10 people plus the driver. They are quite high up so you need to be agile to climb up into them. The dirt roads are very rocky and so it's a bouncy ride and difficult to take photos.



We saw many rhinos, different antelopes, zebras, hippos and different birds. The guides communicate with one another by radio in Afrikaans to tell each other where the different animals are to be found. Every evening game drive stops at a suitable place to watch the sunset and have a sundowner drink. The guide unpacks a large cool box with beers, wine, many different gins as well as soft drinks and snacks such as crisps, biltong and nuts. We got back to the lodge at 7pm and our pre-ordered four course dinner with wine was waiting. The meals were fantastic and worthy of Masterchef. I was not going to be hungry!

The next morning we were asked to get up in time for a 6am game drive. Every morning we had to get up about 5.15, sometimes even earlier at 4.30am! Coffee and a biscuit were available to keep us going, as breakfast was taken on arriving back at 9am. MJ had heard that a pride of lions was on the move so we headed to another part of the game reserve early. The lions had not fed for several days so were on the move to hunt and we didn't have to hunt for them. There was a male lion, two lionesses and some young lions, three males, one female. They were walking towards us very close to our vehicle and we were able to follow them as they set off. The

lions were kept in a separate fenced area as there was a resident cheetah and two young cheetahs due to arrive in the main reserve. Lions are very territorial and will attack cheetahs and their young, and in the past had killed cheetah cubs. Two days later we heard that the lions had made a kill of a zebra and we were driven to where they were eating. The male lion and young males eat first and then the lionesses get their turn to eat. The adult male was full and starting to sleep so the lionesses were able to tuck in. It was great to see them so close up.

We had free time in the day for writing, charging batteries, sorting luggage, laundry etc. A cooked lunch was provided at 1pm then afternoon tea again at 3.30pm and off on the afternoon game drive at 4pm. There were rumours that a cheetah had been spotted and after quite a lot of driving and tips from other guides by radio we were lucky to see it only 100 yards away resting under a tree.



Onto Pilanesberg

After four days in this reserve it was time to move on to the Pilanesberg national park and our lodge, called Black Rhino. This park is a much bigger area, quite mountainous in places. There were many large areas of water where we could see crocodiles and hippos



as well as a variety of water birds and many different antelopes. Black Rhino lodge had a lot more accommodation than our last lodge and the buildings were of solid construction with African style thatched roofs. The room was very spacious, large bathroom and sitting area and had all mod cons and wifi at our disposal. Again the food was excellent.

Our guide was a man called Freedom. His father had also been a guide. He was extremely knowledgeable about the wildlife and went the extra mile to make our experience a good one. The guides do not earn much money, average £450 per month. Prices are much lower than the UK, for instance a large glass of wine is about £2. It is customary to leave the guides a good tip at the end of your stay. My niece said £50 per person would be about right and the guides were well worth it. A lesser sum is left to be shared amongst the housekeeping and catering staff. Freedom came from Soweto and told us he had three children, two boys aged 12 and 8 and a girl age 3, his little angel he called her. He worked three weeks on and three weeks off.

As this park is very large it was about an hour's drive from our lodge to get to where the animals are so we set off very early again. It is very cold first thing and we were supplied with fleece lined ponchos and blankets as the vehicle is open sided. These were very welcome. We saw hot air balloons being used to track the animals and the information relayed to the guides. They do not use drones because poachers also use drones and so it would cause confusion. There had been no rain as it was spring, the trees just coming into leaf and many flowering. The temperature rises to about 28-32°C. The rainy season doesn't come until November or December, so the weather pattern is dry winters and wet summers. As it was spring many of the male animals were fighting each other and the winner would have the right to mate. We saw the male giraffes "necking" where they hit each other with powerful blows using their necks and



horns. It made quite a noise. We saw cape buffalos with large horns charging each other, sometimes we learnt they fight to the death. Also the rhinos charge each other.

There are about 12 types of antelope in the reserves and we were lucky to see them all. The most numerous are impala and these make up the main diet of predators. There were eland, springbok, kudu, nyala, bushbuck, wildebeest, tsessebe, waterbuck, klipspringer and steinbok. We saw the springbok pronking where they take off on all four legs at the same time. We saw many white rhino and a lot of them had young which is a good sign for the species. They came very close to our vehicle and were not upset by it. They have quite poor eyesight. On our third day in the park Freedom suggested that instead of two game drives we get up extra early (4.30am) and take a picnic and spend all day in the park. This was a good suggestion as it saved us driving for an hour to get into the park and back twice and meant we could cover more ground. It

Trains, Boats and Planes

was dark when we left and a young male lion suddenly appeared walking along the track in front of us. We had to drive slowly behind him until he decided to go off into the bush. We saw an elephant herd with young, different antelopes, a herd of cape buffalos, 2 brown hyenas on a distant rocky ledge and many rhinos some with young. There were several lakes with hippos, crocodiles and many birds. We were lucky to see a spoonbill, a fish eating eagle, African sacred ibis, cormorants and blacksmith lapwings.

Later we were hunting a leopard, very difficult to spot. It was found but well camouflaged in the distance so not easy to see. We arrived back at the lodge about 3.30pm and that evening was a braai or BBQ. There was a fantastic selection of salads and meats as well as vegetarian options and followed by, strangely, sticky toffee pudding and custard!

On our last day here we saw a kori bustard with the male in a courtship display. There was a large herd of female elephants with young. One baby elephant was tiny, only 1-2 months old and was suckling. Freedom had arranged to take us stargazing after dinner. He was very knowledgeable about the stars of the southern hemisphere but unfortunately it was rather cloudy that night so the stars kept disappearing. We did see the Southern Cross clearly and the Scorpion.

Moving onto the Waterberg region

From Pilanesberg, after four days we were moving on to the Waterberg region and Welgevonden game reserve. We stayed in Nungubane lodge. This was my favourite reserve. It was 1500 metres above sea level and had a high water table with many

streams and water holes. It was surrounded by mountains which are 1800 million years old and had lots of different trees. It was more rocky and the road to the reserve was extremely difficult for the minibus driver with huge ruts from the rains and many boulders in the dirt road. We had four days in this lodge and the manager, Keegan, was our guide, an Afrikaans man. His wife looked after the admin side. Again the food was amazing and the accommodation was spacious and comfortable.



This reserve has 50 plus mammals and all the big five. The only one we didn't see was the black rhino. We managed to see a cheetah and many lions close up. We saw many elephants with babies which was lovely. We also had a close encounter with a large bull elephant in "musth" who started to charge at us - so reverse gear had to be selected

very quickly as the elephant was moving very fast! The reserves have to control the elephant numbers as they need to eat 200kgs daily of trees, bark, roots and fruits and they cause a trail of destruction in their path. Some of the elephants have been darted with contraceptives to control their numbers which is sad but there isn't the habitat to maintain large numbers.

Keegan was able to identify all the different rhinos as they have a system of notches in the ears. The left ear has notches at the top for no. 4, the middle for 2 and the bottom for 1. The right ear has similar notches but the values are 40, 20 and 10. This system enables the rhinos to be identified, important for the genetics. Keegan told us that rhino horns are much shorter than they used to be. Poachers over the years have killed the rhinos with



the longest horns, maybe 1.5 metres long, so genetically rhinos now have much shorter horns. In some reserves the rhinos have their horns cut off so they are not poached. We were lucky to see rhinos with their horns but these reserves have to be more vigilant to prevent poaching and the rangers are armed and will shoot to kill. The reserves all have a conservation fee to be paid which helps fund anti-poaching.

We went further afield in the steep mountains to search for the elusive black rhino, no luck but we had a rare sighting of a family of bush pigs which our guide was very excited to see as he had only ever seen them three times before. It was getting dark and we spotted an eagle owl and also a nightjar on the road. I liked the families of wart hogs with their piglets and we learnt they sleep in holes in the ground and we were lucky to see one backing into a hole at dusk. We also heard a black backed jackal calling and it passed quite close to us.

We had a braai at each of the lodges we stayed in but the one in this lodge stays in my mind. All the women, nine of them, who worked there, danced and sang Zulu songs

to us and their voices were beautiful. They were all so friendly and seemed very happy people.

On our last day Keegan was optimistic that we would see lions. There was a report that Sharka, a male lion, had been sighted. We drove to the dam and he just walked out from behind a bush a few yards from us and he continued walking across the dam wall. When he reached some bushes on the other side about 500 yards away he gave a huge roar which carried to us. He was calling for his lionesses. A lone buffalo had strayed near to Sharka and we saw him run to catch it but fortunately the buffalo escaped this time!

Reflections on my trip

My lasting memory is of the vast open areas with the many different animals grazing together and each with a part in the ecosystem. I learnt so much about the country and the flora and fauna, too much to mention here. I would definitely like to return one day and perhaps visit the south, Cape Town, botanic gardens, the garden route and Drakensberg mountains and maybe finish back at Nungubane lodge to see more animals.





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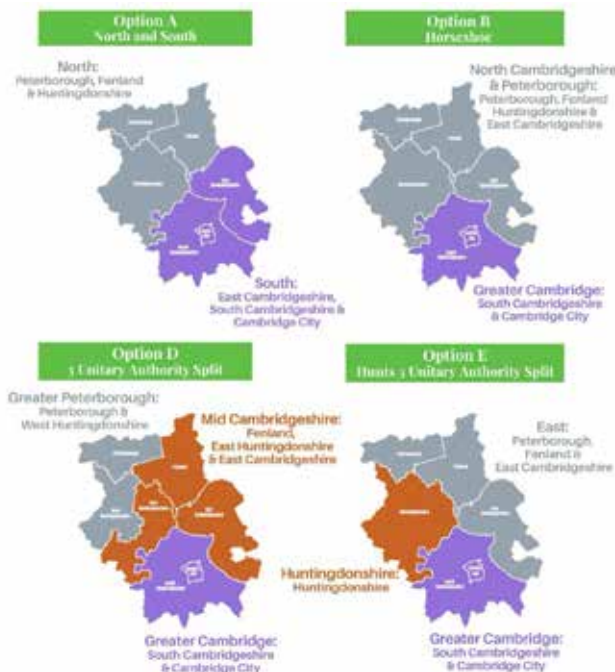
Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) update:

There are the four options that have been submitted to the Government for Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) in Cambridgeshire. Huntingdonshire District Council's Cabinet agreed to submit to Ministers **Option E** as part of plans for LGR. This decision followed a preceding Full Council meeting, where there was a majority vote in favour of **Option E**: A Three Unitary Authority split, with Huntingdonshire as its own authority.

I, however, listening to residents, voted for Option C at the Full Council meeting, which

would have joined Huntingdonshire with South Cambs and Cambridge City. However, Option C is no longer on the table, as we could only put forward one option per Authority to Ministers.]

We all now await what the Government and Ministers decide on the future of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough (decision likely to be heard in summer 2026). You can find out more www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/news/cabinet-approves-option-e-for-local-government-reorganisation-submission-to-government/



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



A Potted History of the Tudor Hotel - Part 1

By John Deeks

The Tudor Hotel that once stood on the corner of Swan Road and the High Street was demolished to make way for housing in 2025. It was a local landmark for nearly 100 years. Although it was within the Fenstanton village conservation area it was not a listed building.

The land that it stood on was for many centuries the high ground before the marshes at Little Moor and the Great Moor. Bronze Age people would have been the first people to use it as farmland and it would have continued as farmland for the next two thousand years. This land was half a mile from the old village centre and it fronted onto the Roman Road, now the High Street. This piece of land would have seen the coming of the Romans, Saxons, Vikings and Normans, all using the old Roman Road.

We have no way of knowing who owned the land in antiquity. Although the mid sixteenth century survey of Fenstanton gives the names of the owners of each plot of land in the village, unfortunately it does not have a map to show where these plots were. Sadly the last owners of the Tudor would not agree to

an interview so there was no opportunity to see the list of prior owners in the deeds. Much of the information and dating comes from newspaper articles. Unfortunately some of the dates do not match up with local people's memories of the various landlords.

So, we have to start at the place where we do have records and this is with Thomas Coote who owned Oaklands House from 1837 to 1906. Thomas added much to the house and its estates including the purchase of land to the left of Swan Road. Here he built a thatched cottage for his head gardener; he called it The Swiss Cottage. There was also a fish pond, tennis courts, a kitchen garden and orchard. The Tudor Hotel was later built on the site of the kitchen garden.

This late 19th century map shows the original



Swiss Cottage house at the top left and the now demolished Oaklands House at the bottom right. The Swiss Cottage café and restaurant (Tudor Hotel) was built facing onto the High Street.

The Swiss Cottage café and restaurant was built in 1927 by Mr Charles Montague Bennet and his wife Elizabeth May Bennett. It would appear from the records that neither of the Bennetts had family links with the village.

Mr Bennett had been involved in tea planting in Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) and his wife had been the manageress of a London coffee house. How they came to hear of the Fenstanton site is not recorded but they must have appreciated the great profit potential offered by the volume of local and passing traffic.



Picture taken shortly after the rebuild in 1935

The original building bore no resemblance to the building that was recently demolished. It rather resembled the type of colonial bungalow that the British liked to build in the colonies. Or even a cricket pavilion, with its wide veranda and supporting pillars. The Bennetts lived in the Swiss Cottage at the bottom of the very large garden.

Cambridge University graduates of that era would well remember visiting the Swiss Cottage for early morning breakfast, especially after the May Balls! Breakfasts were sometimes served as early as 3 to 4 o'clock in the morning! The tearoom was also very popular with cycle clubs as it was a good place to stop for refreshments on the return journey to Cambridge.

Charles Bennett died in June 1935 at the age of 65 years. I have been unable to trace his will but he must have left a considerable amount of money to his wife as soon after his death, the building was extended and a second story added.

At the time of the 1939 national register the owner was recorded as Elizabeth Bennett, who was aged 51 years and she lived in the thatched cottage in Bell Lane. The Swiss Cottage café was described as a private hotel and café. At the start of WW2 in September 1939, the government took the building over and used it to house army officers who



Both these pictures were taken in the early 1930's



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Step into the Past

were stationed locally. From time to time there were British, American, Canadian and Australian army officers billeted there.

The following is an extract from 'Hansard', the official record of House of Commons activities.

Dr. Peters asked the Secretary of State for War whether his attention has been drawn to the case of Swiss Cottage Café Fenstanton, Hunts,

payments for abnormal damage is available

In 1939 John Blomiley Hadfield was living in the Oaklands House porter's lodge where he had been living since returning from abroad in 1936. The Porter's Lodge was opposite the Swiss Cottage. John was registered as being 34 years old, single and a manufacturer's representative in the furniture trade. He was also involved in the village air raid precautions. A relationship was formed with

Elizabeth Bennet and they were married in Warwick in 1944. Elizabeth was 56 years old and John was 40 years old. Why Warwick? Who knows? Perhaps Elizabeth had family there, John was from Cheshire. As soon as the war finished in 1945 Elizabeth Bennet, now Hadfield, reopened the Swiss Cottage as a quality tea room and restaurant with a lovely garden.

Elizabeth May Hadfield died in Addenbrookes hospital on 31st March 1952. In her will she left the sum of £11,448 (today worth around £416,000) which probably included the value of the Swiss

Cottage restaurant. John died a few years later and by then the Swiss Cottage Cafe had been leased out. Elizabeth is buried in the village cemetery but John is not.

From this time onwards, apart from newspaper reports and advertisements, there are few records to consult but I am grateful for the memories and experiences of those people who lived in the village and who remember some of the owners. It would have been nice to have seen the deeds to the building but it was not meant to be.

It is not clear when the name of the hotel was changed from Swiss Cottage to The Tudor Hotel, nor which of the owners made the change. But from newspaper reports it looks likely that it was in July 1955, when it was called the Tudor Restaurant and Country Club.



The Tudor in the 1930s

in respect of which the War Department had to pay the sum of £ 243 2s. 3d., in excess of fair wear and tear, for damage to, and loss of, furniture and effects, and damage to landlord's premises and fixtures occasioned by the occupation of the premises by officers during the period 8th October, 1939, to 19th November, 1940; what disciplinary action has been, or will be, taken in respect of this occurrence; whether he will state the total sum expended in like cases throughout the country since the outbreak of war; and what steps have been, or will be, taken to recover these moneys from the officers responsible for the damage?

Captain Margesson reply;

I am aware of the case to which my hon. Friend refers, and the disciplinary aspect of it is being considered. I regret that no record of

Step into the Past

Independent Press, Friday July 8th 1955.

"Opening shortly, The Tudor Restaurant and Country Club (Formerly Swiss Cottage), Fenstanton. The above restaurant is being re-opened under new management and the proprietor extends a cordial welcome to old and new customers for; Morning Coffee, Luncheons, Teas, Suppers."

In January 1950 Hugh John Watson had become the tenant of the Swiss Cottage Hotel, Fenstanton, taking it furnished at a rent of £10 a week. At that time Watson had an overdraft of £1,150 and he stated that, *"while I was at the Swiss Cottage my overdraft increased by £500. Not in the whole period I was at the Swiss Cottage did I do well. It was a difficult place to find for anyone not knowing it to find"*.

His first year there resulted in a net loss of just over £300 but he admitted to drawing a £1,172 salary. Since February 1951 he had had several spells in hospital with nervous troubles. He said he had reduced his debts a good deal since 1951, by about £2,000. Asked what business at the Swiss Cottage was like for the twelve months before bankruptcy Watson replied; *"Terrible"*. On June 6th 1954 he decided to file for bankruptcy".

In July 1955 Hugh Watson was declared bankrupt, (The London Gazette, 13th July 1956). Peterborough Standard, Friday

August 5th 1955. *"Last 12 months trade at Swiss Cottage was terrible. Well known in St Ives and district, Hugh John Watson (56) formerly residing and carrying on business at the Swiss Cottage Hotel, Fenstanton, appeared for public examination at Peterborough Court on Friday"*.

From the Peterborough Standard 1957: *"A former licensee's Discharge. A former licensee was discharged from bankruptcy. He was Hugh John Watson (52) who formerly resided and carried on business at The Swiss Cottage Hotel, Fenstanton. The discharge was granted on Watson submitting to judgment for £150"*.

From the Saffron Walden Weekly News, Friday 24th May 1957. *"Sale Next Friday by direction of the owner between Cambridge and Huntingdon. 10 miles Cambridge, 6 miles Huntingdon, busy main road position (A604), prominently situated, valuable freehold*

premises, formerly Country Club, known as The Tudor Restaurant. Containing dining room, lounge, bar, kitchen, 7-bedrooms. Also newly constructed ball room, car park and gardens with lake. Vacant possession".

From the Independent Press, Friday July 26th 1957. *"For sale: Freehold, immediate possession. Tudor Restaurant and Country Club. Main road position, nine mile Cambridge, with newly constructed dance hall. Two acres grounds with boating lake. Cheap for quick sale"*.

In 1958 the next owner of the business was John (Pop) O'Hannan together with his partner and housekeeper Winifred Saunders and their daughter Hazel. The name was changed to the 'The Music Box'. He was very eccentric and the hotel housed an eclectic collection of music boxes, instruments, bird cages, rabbits, old fashioned cylinder records and so on. They served high class afternoon teas on pretty bone china. Bus trips were organised to come and sample the afternoon teas.

Saffron Walden Weekly News Friday 2nd October 1959. *"Fenstanton man did not tell police. John Selwyn O'Hannan (55) of the Music Box Fenstanton was fined £1 with £3.5s.4d costs at St Ives magistrate's court on Tuesday for failing to report an accident at Market Square St Ives"*

Peterborough Evening Telegraph 10th November 1959. *"Ballet Visit for Film Group. Members of the Peterborough Film Society and their friends enjoyed a social evening when they visited the ballet at Cambridge. Later they had supper at the Music Box Fenstanton"*.

Saffron Walden Weekly News Friday 11th December 1959. *"Tried to keep on right side of law. Café proprietors view of licence offence. John O'Hannan a café proprietor of the Music Box Fenstanton told magistrates on Thursday. He pleaded not guilty to obtaining a driving licence while being disqualified. After a short retirement and because of special circumstances he would be given a conditional discharge."*

In the next part in March's copy of The Journal we will pick up the story when the Tudor changed hands again in the 1960's.



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This also includes **ADAPTING EXISTING WINDOW DRESSINGS**, either for a new space or to freshen up what you already have.

To complete your transformation, I have a range of **TRACKS AND POLES** to supply and fit and **FINAL HANGING AND DRESSING** are all part of my service.

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DENISE@DENISEJACKSONINTERIORS.CO.UK

The promise

February brings that uplifting moment when we know that warmer days are on their way and our gardens transformation from winter browns and greys gathers a pace. The promise of warming sunny days grows and grows until the day we all notice the world is green and lush again. A promise that starts with the snowdrops, crocus, winter aconites, dwarf narcissus, primroses, hellebores and friends.

While the deciduous trees and shrubs are still leafless, take a moment to assess the structure of your garden and plan any changes. Look to achieve a natural balance of shape and form. If you want to colour theme your borders, I would recommend getting a copy of the RHS Encyclopaedia of plants and flowers. Visiting gardens and concentrating on structural features, especially in February, can be very inspirational. I have a project to make a wild, tangled, rustic trellis inspired by a visit to Puzzle Wood in the Forest of Dean. It is a magical place used in tv programmes and films including 'Dr Who', 'Merlin', 'Star Wars', 'Harry Potter' and 'The Secret Garden'. Nearer to home many a Botanic Gardens has exciting, small intimate gardens that are full of structural and planting ideas.

Mild February days are a great opportunity to complete the winter pruning and give the garden a tidy. Direct spring seed sowing of half-hardy annuals and perennials is a great budget friendly way of adding colour to your borders. It always amazes me how spring edging lawns makes a garden look so neat and tidy. Repair bare patches in lawns by lightly forking the soil and sowing fresh lawn seed mixed with compost.

It's a rewarding time to plant as the moist soils and warming weather helps plants to establish quickly. Many 'summer impact' bulbs and corms can be planted from February onwards. These include lillies (I love the giants), gladioli, sparaxis, nerine, cyclamen and crocosmia. Always water well and mulch after planting to settle plants in and reduce competition from weeds.



February Top Tips

- Prune and tidy
- Planting
- Sowing
- Mulching borders
- Service lawnmowers



raypuddefoot@gmail.com

Food waste bins

From March 2026, all residents will receive:

- a 7-litre grey kitchen caddy
- a 23-litre external grey food waste unit

These will be provided by Huntingdon District Council free of charge.

Residents can place any food waste, including raw or cooked meat and bones, dairy, eggshells, tea bags, coffee grounds, vegetables and fruit into their kitchen caddy before transferring it to the external food waste unit for weekly collection.

This new service is part of a commitment to promote sustainable waste disposal, support national changes to household recycling and reduce the amount of food that ends up in landfill.



Age UK support services in our community - use it or lose it!



Age UK provides a wide range of practical and wellbeing support services to help older residents remain safe, independent, and connected within their own homes and community. These services include regular welfare visits, help with everyday tasks, companionship, and reassurance for both residents and their families.

To encourage residents to try the Age UK Community Warden service and benefit from the support available, your Parish Council continues to fund the first three months (10 weeks) for new clients joining the scheme. This funding extends the standard Age UK trial period from 2 weeks to a full 12 weeks, giving residents the opportunity to properly experience the service without financial pressure.

This initiative reflects the Parish Council's ongoing commitment to supporting the wellbeing and independence of our older residents.

If you, or someone you care for, would like to find out more about the service or discuss whether it may be suitable, please contact the Age UK Warden directly: Email: wardens@ageukcap.org.uk or telephone our Warden on 07816 087742.

Honey Hill, School Lane and The Fen – parking consideration

Your Parish Council kindly asks residents to park considerately in the Honey Hill, School Lane and The Fen area to help ensure safe access for the Connections Youth Bus, which needs to reach and park in the school playground. Wednesday evenings from 6.30pm (term time only).

The youth bus provides a welcoming and safe space for young people in our community. By leaving sufficient room for the bus to pass through and park safely, you are helping to support an important local service.

Thank you for your cooperation and consideration.

To contact your Parish Council Clerk Telephone: 01480 465300

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

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.

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.

Christmas Market and Lights Switch-On – 29 November

Fenstanton's Christmas Market and Lights Switch-On on 29 November was a fantastic start to the festive season and a wonderful example of our village community coming together.

Despite the winter chill, the evening was full of festive cheer, great entertainment and a lively market atmosphere. We enjoyed brilliant performances, including the Chair of the Parish Council bravely giving Morris dancing a go, a wide range of stalls, and a welcoming buzz that brought residents together to celebrate the season.

The Parish Council would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to all the volunteers, performers, organisers, stallholders and community groups who gave their time and energy to make the event such a success. Events like this simply could not happen without their dedication and enthusiasm.

Thank you as well to everyone who attended and helped create such a warm and festive

atmosphere. We hope it brought a little extra Christmas spirit to the village.



Chequer Street car park

The units placed in the corner of the Chequer Street car park are temporary welfare and storage units for contractors carrying out improvement works to homes within our community on behalf of Places for People. A donation is expected for the benefit of the village in connection with these works.

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 12 February	PC Ordinary	7.00 pm Church Centre
Thursday 12 March	PC Ordinary	7.00 pm Church Centre
Thursday 26 March	General Purposes Committee	7.00 pm Church Centre

Your Parish Needs You!

Become a Parish Councillor and Help Shape the Future of Our Community.

This is your opportunity to make a difference. As a parish councillor, you can:

- Represent your local community
- Help make decisions on local services and priorities
- Protect and improve your area
- Ensure local money stays within the parish

No previous experience is necessary — just a commitment to your community and a few hours a month.

If you're passionate about where you live and want to ensure your parish remains represented and funded, please get in touch today.

To find out more or express your interest, contact Sarah Barber at 01480 465300 or clerk@fenstantonparishcouncil.org.uk



Note from the publisher

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Adult Education Classes at Swavesey Village College

New community evening classes are now available to book via our website.

Try something new for 2026!

From Yoga to Badminton, Language classes for all levels and many art classes to choose from such as Ceramics or Crochet.

Courses range from 4-10 weeks, starting from just £36.



[www.swaveseyvc.co.uk/
general-courses/](http://www.swaveseyvc.co.uk/general-courses/)



Jigsaw Exchange **Hilton Parish Church**

Do you like doing jigsaws? Do you know we run a jigsaw exchange in the parish church in Hilton? It's free and easy to get involved...

the puzzles are stored in the church which is open during the day, or evenings by request. We have puzzles suitable for all ages and abilities The idea is that you just go in and exchange your puzzle(s) or, if you don't have a puzzle to exchange, then just borrow one and bring it back when completed. We can even collect & deliver puzzles for anyone with limited mobility and, of course, would be happy to receive puzzle donations.

For more information, please contact Rachel Wood (830866) or Jenny Broom (830413)

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for children's parties



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KNOCKOUT DARTS COMPETITION

SATURDAY 7TH FEB 2026
£5 ENTRY FEE
SIGN UP FROM 4.30PM
PROMPT 7PM START
CASH PRIZES FOR
1ST PLACE AND RUNNER UP

QUIZ NIGHT

THURSDAY 12TH FEB 2026
£2 PER PERSON
MAX 6PER TEAM
8PM START
£50 CASH FIRST PRIZE

FEN DRAYTON TOTS

A relaxed and welcoming group for little ones aged 0 - 5 years held at Fen Drayton Village Hall!

JOIN US FOR

- Arts and crafts
- Themed activities
- Messy play
- Toys and games
- Snacks and drinks

THE DETAILS

Monday mornings (10am - 12pm) - £4 per family

Keep an eye on our Facebook page for upcoming sessions!

facebook.com/fendraytontoddlers





A Licence to *love*

A black-tie and glam filled, 007-themed evening of elegance, espionage, and giving back – all to support the Arthur Rank Hospice Charity

- When: Valentines Day – February 14th from 8pm
- Where: Prince of Wales, Hilton
- What: Music, dancing, casino, silent auction, nibbles and more

Dress as your favourite Bond character – prize for the best outfit
No Entrance Fee – but come ready to support our Local Hospice!

Presented by the Prince of Wales Ladies,
with support from amazing local sponsors



JOIN US FOR **FRIDAY FEAST**

- ✿ Free All Age event
- ✿ Get creative
- ✿ Food & Fun
- ✿ Informal gathering
- ✿ Churches of Hilton together
- ✿ For all faiths, and none
- ✿ 13 Feb, 13 Mar & 8 May
- ✿ To find out more, call Rachel on 830866

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



BRING A BOTTLE!

News from the Pews



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



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.

FEBRUARY 2026 – SERVICES AND EVENTS

Sunday 01	10.30am Fenstanton	Candlemas Holy Communion <i>with Sunday Club</i>
Thursday 05	8.30am on Zoom	Morning Prayer
Saturday 07	7pm	Sing For Your Supper – see separate poster
Sunday 08	9.15am Fen Drayton	Holy Communion Fen Drayton Village Hall
	10.30am Fenstanton	Worship For All
Thursday 12	8.30am on Zoom	Morning Prayer
Sunday 15	10.30am Fenstanton	Holy Communion <i>with Sunday Club</i>
	6pm Fenstanton	Sung Evensong
Wednesday 18 Ash Wednesday	7.30pm Fenstanton	Ash Wednesday Holy Communion
Thursday 19	8.30am on Zoom	Morning Prayer
Sunday 22	9.15am Fen Drayton	Morning Praise Fen Drayton Village Hall
	10.30am Fenstanton	Family Communion
Thursday 26	8.30am on Zoom	Morning Prayer



Thank you very much!... to everyone who got in touch about or attended our Giving a Gift Service last December. We were able to pass on a fantastic amount of gifts for children, and particularly teenagers, for distribution by Cambridgeshire County Council to those in need. Do look out for the giving trees as CCC are in need of gifts throughout the year, not just at Christmas, so that children and teenagers in care, or families in need of help, can receive a birthday gift. Thanks again.

**A reminder that Services for St Mary's have moved to Fen Drayton Village Hall-
please see table above**



You are warmly invited to meet on **Tuesday 3 March at 7.30pm in the Committee Room at Fen Drayton Village Hall**. Light refreshments and warm conversation will continue our discussions on the future of St Mary's Church, and we would love to hear your thoughts and ideas in person.

We are also hoping, with community support, to hold a special weekend in Fen Drayton 2026 - **A Church Full of Art and an Open Gardens event, both on 16 & 17 May** — celebrating local creativity, bringing villagers together, and welcome visitors from further afield to enjoy some of Fen Drayton's beautiful gardens. If you would like to share your garden or artwork or be involved in any way please contact Ian Hucklesby 07850 470085

Survey Update

St Mary's Church, Fen Drayton

Tuesday 03 March

Fen Drayton Village Hall, Committee Room, 7.30pm - Light Refreshments

The story continues

Will you share your thoughts and comments regarding the future for St Mary's?

How Can You Help?

Are you able to help at St Mary's for 'A Church Full of Art' and/or Fen Drayton Open Gardens, both planned for 16 & 17 May 2026?

Dear Fen Drayton residents

Thank you to everyone who took part in the recent survey about the future of St Mary's Church. We received 35 responses, and we are incredibly grateful for the time, thought, and care you put into sharing your views. Your feedback highlighted several strong themes:



- **What you value most:** the church's historic character, its peaceful setting, and its place at the heart of village life.
- **Favourite memories:** especially the Christmas Eve carol services, along with weddings, christenings, funerals, and other cherished community events.
- **Hopes for future use:** clear support for concerts, exhibitions, children's activities, quiet reflection, and continued worship — with community emerging as the most frequent theme.
- **Barriers to use:** heating, toilets, and essential repairs were identified as the biggest obstacles to wider and more comfortable use.
- **How the church is valued:** almost three-quarters of respondents rated St Mary's as a highly valued community resource.
- **Offers of help:** many of you expressed interest in volunteering, joining a project group, or contributing skills such as fundraising, event planning, practical repairs, and more.

This feedback gives the PCC a strong foundation as we plan the next steps for repairs, future events, and wider community involvement. As part of this next phase, we are also working towards the creation of a Friends of St Mary's group — a welcoming way for anyone in the village who wishes to support, promote, and care for our church to get involved.

With warm regards

The Ministry Team, St Mary's Church, Fen Drayton

Continued overleaf



In aid of Fenstanton Parish Church Restoration Fund

***Sing for
your Supper***

Enjoy a hearty three course meal
and relaxed sing a long
(Bring your own drinks)

**Saturday 7th
February**

**Fenstanton Church
Centre, 7pm**

Tickets: Adults £17.50
Under 12s £7.50

Available from Ian on 07850 470085 or
ikhuek@virginmedia.com

Raffle

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 07850 470085

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.

Hilton Methodist Church



Dear Friends,

I know Christmas is barely behind us, but February already points us towards Lent – a season traditionally associated with reflection and renewal.

One of the central themes of Lent is the idea of change: recognising that none of us has life completely sorted and that there is always room to grow, to mend, and to begin again.

You may already know something of the story of the Colman's Mustard Factory in Norwich. In the 19th century, the Colman family, whose Christian faith shaped their values, believed that people mattered deeply. At a time when harsh working conditions were the norm, they introduced practices that were well ahead of their time – decent housing, education, healthcare, and support for workers and their families.

Their beliefs weren't just words; they were lived out in practical, everyday ways, and the impact of those choices was felt across the community for generations.

Lent invites us to reflect in a similar way. For Christians, it is rooted in the belief that God offers transformation that goes deeper than self-improvement alone – a change of heart that shapes how we live and how we treat others. Even for those who don't share a Christian belief, Lent can still offer a valuable pause: a chance to think honestly about our habits, our relationships, and the kind of people we want to be.

It is easy to speak about wanting a fresh start or a 'new heart', or to pray the words of the psalmist, 'Create in me a clean heart,



O God...?' (Psalm 51:10), but much harder to live that out in practice. When we do, however, even small changes can ripple outward, shaping our homes, our village, and the wider world in ways we might not expect.

This Lent, may we each find space to pause, reflect, and discover how God's renewing love might quietly shape our lives and our community.

With blessings, James
Revd. James Bamber
jjamesbamber@gmail.com
Phone: 01480 453857

Services in February

1 February	10:00am	Mr. Colin Webber
8 February	11:15am	United Service in the Parish Church
15 February	10:00am	Dr. Barbara Spencer
22 February	10:00am	Rev. James Bamber

Hilton Parish Church



Services in February

1 February	8:00am Holy Communion (BCP)
8 February	11:15am United Service in the Parish Church
15 February	8:00am Holy Communion (BCP)
22 February	11:15am Coffee, Cake and Church in the Village Hall

Friday 13 February 5:30pm Friday Feast (Messy Church)

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



Talks schedule - 2026

6.30pm start at the Three Tuns Pub

‘Cows and Crucifixion’ - Roman settlement at Fenstanton - 11Feb

Speaker: David Ingham (archaeologist who led the excavation)

Neolithic cattle grazing - including brief visit to FD's own site - 15 April

Speaker: David Saunders (archaeologist)

Talk sponsored by Stubbins, Fen Drayton - with thanks

Papworth Hospital - local history - 10 June

Speaker: Steve Bridge (CEO 1988 to 2016)

St Mary's, Fen Drayton - tour + talk - 12 August

Led by: Revd Geoff Dodgson

Sport in Fen Drayton - come and share your memories - 14 October

Led by: Nigel Fenner

Cost: £3 / talk - PLEASE email nigel.fenner@ntlworld.com for more info.



Fenstanton United Reformed Church

Chequer Street, Fenstanton

Sunday morning services are at 09.30. All are welcome.

2026 Services

February

- 01 Revd Alison Davis
- 08 Revd Dr Janet Tollington - **Holy Communion**
- 15 Revd Christine Davies
- 22 Led by Chris Davis

March

- 01 Revd Alison Davis
- 08 Revd Christine Davies - **Holy Communion**
- 15 Revd Christine Davies
- 22 Revd Alison Davis
- 29 Led by Alison Jiggins

Meditation – Led by the Free Church St. Ives

- Tuesday 10 February 2.30 - 4pm – Led by John Williams
- Tuesday 10 March 2.30 - 4pm – Led by John Williams

Geoff Hawkins Fenstanton URC Secretary
fenstantonurc@stivesfreechurch.org

Church of the Sacred Heart



19 Needingworth Rd. St Ives
Priest in charge: FR. T. J. Monteiro
Tel 01480 462192,
www.sacredheart-stives.org
email: office@sacredheart-stives.org

**Mass Times: Saturday 17.00,
Sunday 09.00 and 11.00**

We also have a large hall available for hire.
Please contact the parish office for details.

The Particular Baptist Chapel

Church Lane, Fenstanton,
PE28 9JW

There has been a witness to the
worship of God here over the years
since 1643

**Services are on Sundays at 10.30am
and 2.30pm and on Thursday
evenings at 7.15pm**

We still use the Authorised, King
James Bible, believe in Particular
Redemption

New Minister at URC

It is a pleasure to write my first piece for The Journal, as the new minister for Fenstanton, St. Ives and St. Neots United Reformed Churches.

Have you managed to keep the resolutions you made on New Year's Eve?

We are just over a month into the new year, and I know my resolve has weakened. But do not despair, there is another season coming which may help us.

The season of Lent, which starts on the 17th. The name comes from the Old English for lengthening of the day, which is of course true. But, I suggest it is also an opportunity for us to renew our resolve about our resolutions and go wider.

Commonly there is talk of giving up things for Lent, and there is the link with our new year resolutions. They too are often about stopping doing things. So this is your chance to renew your resolutions.

But, it can also go wider; how about taking something up for Lent? As well as focusing on ourselves (with our resolutions), we could focus on others, on our community.

Each day of Lent, do something extra for someone else, or the community. It doesn't need to be a big thing, it's as simple as smiling at five people, for example. It is your choice. I have found that often it is easier to keep on with a positive action rather than a negative one.

I hope that as Lent progresses we can enjoy the new life of Spring and the longer days.

Revd Alison Davis





Wednesday's Tea and Chat Sessions



Tea • Coffee • Cake • Good Company

**A friendly, relaxed get-together for anyone
who would enjoy a cuppa and a chat.**

No pressure, no need to book - just come along.



Where

Fen Drayton Village Hall - Committee Room



When

Every 2nd & 4th Wednesday - 11am - 1pm



Who's it for?

**This is a community group where everyone is welcome.
Whether you'd like a chat, some company, or just to
sit with a cup of tea.**

**Support to help you attend can be discussed
on 1-to-1 basis.**



More information

Email Rachael

info@fendraytonvillagehall.org.uk



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with our latest
news.



Frank's Farm is set in the Cambridgeshire countryside on the site of a 4th-generation family farm. The old piggery, grain store and workshop have been lovingly restored into individual shops filled with passionate producers:

- Frank's Farm Shop
- The Old Workshop Bistro
- Remi's Craft Butchery
- Webbssour Bakery
- Burnt Ends BBQ shop
- Sundae Service
- Flourish Bakes
- Natures Posy Flower Field
- Ant's P.Y.O polytunnel and field

UPCOMING EVENTS:

February 14th - VALENTINES DAY EVENING MEAL

Set menu starting from 6pm. Bookings only. Pre-order a vase of flowers to be waiting for you on your table from our resident flower farmer, Debbie.

February 14th - FARM SHOP VALENTINES GIFTS

Stocking locally grown flowers, handmade chocolates and a wonderful selection of wine and cheese available in hampers to treat that special someone.

February 14th - REMI'S CRAFT BUTCHERS

Valentines day specials including steaks and English Wagyu Beef from Norfolk.

February 27th - NATIONAL TOAST DAY

February - P.Y.O

The Polytunnel is back open after winter, come and see whats growing and pick some fresh produce to take home with you.

February - VALENTINES BOUQUET PRE-ORDER

Pre-order your valentines bouquets from our resident flower Farmer, Debbie, via email: info@natiresposy.co.uk.

Visit us at: Frank's
Farm, Brockley Road,
Elsworth, Cambridge,
CB23 4EY

Or give us a call on:
07943 797077



Book a Table

update



Cootes Lane closure

By the time you read this most of the work on the footpath along Cootes Lane should have been completed. However, as we go to press the situation has changed and the road closure has been pushed back to 12 February. Some advance work is currently being carried out along Cootes Lane with traffic controlled by lights.

The PC had initial discussions with Highways about the proposed works, exploring different methods of traffic management. Ultimately, the only safe solution for all concerned, was the closure of the road to all but necessary vehicles from 9am to 3pm on weekdays.

Please see the parish council website and Facebook page for updates.

New pavilion

As many of you will be aware, the new pavilion is being well used. The Lions football club is very pleased with the new and hygienic facilities for the players and its ease of maintenance.



The access ramp should enable the building to be used by even more people – a welcome development. In time we will plant screening to reduce its visual impact from the road.

Our thanks go to the pavilion committee, especially to Jackie Isden and Roger Davies, who oversaw the project from its beginning in 2019, and to Chris Gray and Matt Clowery. Finally we thank all our generous sponsors as acknowledged by the Lions on page 71 of the December/January issue of The Journal. Without your support the project would not have been possible.

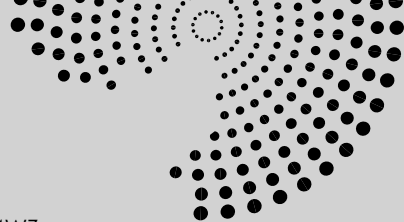


Contact:

email: fendrayton.clerk@gmail.com

website: www.fendrayton.org

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



Tea and Chat sessions

Tea and Chat sessions are now being held in the village hall committee room on the second and fourth Wednesdays of the month, from 11am to 1pm.

This is a friendly community group; all are welcome and there's no need to book. For more information email: info@fendraytonvillagehall.org.uk

District Councillor, Sue Ellington's report

The issues around the four-day week and the A14 logistic sites have not moved on since last month, but they are both still very much alive.

The closure of Cootes Lane has caused concern to Fen Drayton residents and I'm grateful to the parish council for negotiating some mitigating solutions. The situation needs further investigation and the development of a procedure for any future need to close the road. Hopefully the new Unitary Authority with combined responsibility for Highways and Planning will have departmental collaboration.

The emergency full council meeting to debate the plans for the Unitary Authority resulted in South Cambridgeshire District Council opting for a City/South Cambridgeshire authority. The government will ultimately decide later this month.

The council was asked whether it wished to cancel the May elections due to the increased workload involved. The council has not made its response public yet, so we await a decision.

As usual, ring me on 07774 146331, or email: cllr.Ellington@scambs.gov.uk if I can help in any way.

Cllr Sue Ellington, district councillor for Swavesey, Fen Drayton and Lolworth

Community cafe

The December 2025 cafe proved to be busy yet again. Customers were treated to festive music and songs from Swavesey Community Choir. All were encouraged to join in the singing, which put us in the festive spirit.

As in previous years, soup lunches will be available in January and February this year. The charity chosen to benefit from customers' soup donations is Arthur Rank Hospice.

At the cafe on 7 February you'll have the opportunity, once again, to swap seeds or bulbs 'in the green', for example snowdrops. So, if you'd like snowdrops for next year, come along and enjoy fresh coffee or tea and cake, and swap at the same time!

Looking ahead to March, the cafe will again welcome a Magpas community CPR and defibrillator trainer, offering free sessions. Spaces are limited, so if you, or someone you know, would like to be trained, email fendraytoncommunitycafe@gmail.com to secure your place.



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Hilton Parish Council



A Civility & Respect
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Report from the Meeting of the Council dated Monday 1 December

The 2025 Fireworks and Bonfire Event

This was deemed a successful occasion with a bumper attendance and receipts. Looking to the future, the working group will discuss the potential for ticketing the event, reorganising parking arrangements and finding more people to litter pick the area in the aftermath.

Re-roofing the Bus Shelter

As the Council is keen to carry out this important repair, quotations are being sought and will be considered early in the new year. The work will include removing asbestos sheets, replacing rotting timbers and providing a new suitably bonded roof covering.



Street Lighting

With the existing contract for street lighting due to expire at the end of January in respect of the 29 lamps that are the responsibility of the Parish Council, it was decided to call an extraordinary meeting in mid-January to agree a new contract. It is anticipated this will generate increased costs to the Council when compared to the current contract.

Concerns about the Graveley Way watercourse

In view of ongoing concerns brought to the Council's attention by parishioners and the importance of transparency about which body

carries appropriate responsibilities, it was agreed to form a Hilton Flood Action Group comprising councillors, residents of Graveley Way and District Cllr Tevlin.

From our County and District Councillors

County Cllr Keane highlighted a letter he has sent jointly regarding the A141 consultation and that individual responses are recommended as the volume of responses is considered in these matters. District Cllr Tevlin reported discussions about proposed local government reorganisation plans resulted in the HDC cabinet putting forward Option E – for a standalone Huntingdonshire unitary authority - for consideration by central government. This will NOT affect the existence and significance of local parish councils. Cllr Tevlin informed the meeting that food waste collection arrangements will change in April 2026, and further communication will be forthcoming nearer the time.

Green Open Spaces update

The council noted a couple of trees close to the Community garden had fallen; likewise from the bank of The Ware. A parishioner had expressed concern about branches taken off a tree within a conservation area advised this is something that should be reported to the HDC Tree Officer. There was an update on tree work discussed at the previous meeting and the views of HDC on the best way to manage the Major Oak.

There will be an Extraordinary Meeting of the Parish Council on Monday 19th January 2026 at 7.30pm in the Methodist Church Hall; the next regular Parish Council meeting will be held on Monday 4th February 2026 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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Mayonnaise Cake

The usual reaction is, “Mayonnaise cake! Ugh!” but this cake has been a family favourite for many years. You would never guess that mayonnaise is a significant ingredient, but it makes for a lovely light, moist chocolate cake. Originally it was a “Blue Peter” recipe.

Ingredients:

- 10oz (285gm) self-raising flour
- 8oz (230gm) caster sugar
- 1½ teaspoons baking powder
- 7oz (200gm) jar mayonnaise
- 4 tablespoons cocoa in 8fl.oz. (230ml) boiling water
- 1 teaspoon vanilla essence

For the icing:

- 2 tablespoons cocoa
- 2 level teaspoons instant coffee
- 2 tablespoons hot water
- 8oz (230gm) icing sugar
- 3oz (85gm) soft margarine

Method for the cake:

1. Mix all the dry cake ingredients together.
2. Add the mayonnaise and mix well.
3. Add the cocoa mixture and fold in carefully.
4. Put the mixture into an 8 inch greaseproof paper lined tin
5. Bake for one hour in the oven at 350°F, 180°C or gas mark 4.
6. Allow to cool in the tin – this is essential.

Method for the icing:

1. Add the instant coffee and cocoa to the hot water and mix well.
2. Blend the soft margarine into the icing sugar.
3. Add the coffee and cocoa mixture to the icing sugar mixture and blend until smooth.
4. When the cake is cold, spread the icing mixture all over the cake with a palette knife in a swirling pattern.
5. Decorate as required, (e.g. with mini-eggs and a fluffy Easter chick for Easter).





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Lisa Leader - Senior Associate Solicitor

Fen Drayton Primary School



Happy New Year! As I look back on our first term back in the building, it's clear that it has been a very busy and exciting one!



The Lion King

Our Year 5/6 pupils thoroughly enjoyed their trip to London to see The Lion King. The day began with a fantastic workshop led by West End performer Tamara McKoy-Patterson, who has starred in The Lion King and Mary Poppins, as well as the film Mamma Mia! Here We Go Again. The children had great fun learning a dance routine and a song from the show. This was followed by the matinee performance of The Lion King, tea at Bella Italia, and then a return to school.



Fenstanton Dental

As part of their learning about teeth, our Year 3/4 pupils welcomed a dentist from Fenstanton Dental. She was very impressed with the children's knowledge, and everyone was delighted to receive a new toothbrush and toothpaste to take home.



Christmas Celebrations

We enjoyed some wonderful Christmas celebrations, including a disco and activity afternoon organised by our PTA. They also kindly provided crackers, decorations and other items to make our Christmas dinner even more special.



Our Dormice (Reception/Year 1) and Rabbits (Year 2) classes performed a Nativity for their families and the rest of the school. They worked incredibly hard to learn their songs and lines and did a fantastic job.

Parent Workshops

So far this year, we have run three parent workshops. Parents of children in Reception and Year 1 attended Phonics and Reading workshops, while our Year 6 parents joined us for a KS2 SATs workshop. These sessions are designed to help parents support their children's learning at home, and each workshop finishes with the children joining their parents to play learning games together. All workshops have been very well attended.



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.

Apply for a school place | 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

News from Fenstanton and Hilton Primary and Preschool



As we move quickly towards half term, we have been looking back at December with happy memories of lots of positive activity in school. The Christmas period was a delight, with activities such as our PTA Winter Fair, Church Service and Nativity Play. We were very proud of the performances of acting and singing our children gave at the Fair, in the church and on stage in the school hall in front of their beaming family members. The highlight for many of us, though, was the trip to the Cambridge Arts Theatre to see Sleeping Beauty. It was a very special moment to look across the circle and see all of our children from Year 1 – Year 6 engaged in the show!

The new term has started positively, with children quickly into the routines they know so well. This term often feels like the one where the children make really strong progress as a result of their security and safety in the setting, and their ability to build on the skills and knowledge they developed in the autumn term. We remain proud of the provision we are developing to meet the needs of our SEND pupils and the adaptations that allow all children to access their learning. We are looking forward to the official opening of our sensory space, the Calming Cove, later this term.

Our Preschool remains busy, with over 30 children on roll and many of them preparing to join our Reception Class later this year. Our partnership with Kids R Us (our breakfast and after school club provider) means that we can provide care for all of our children from 7.30am – 6.00pm each day. School is always a busy place!

With very best wishes, from all of us at Fenstanton and Hilton Primary School and Preschool.



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What you're Missing



Fenstanton Friendship Club

Welcome to 2026, looking forward to good things.

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.

5 November A group of members went to Scotsdale Garden Centre to enjoy the beautiful Christmas displays. Well worth a visit to put us in the mood. 🎄🎁🌲



19 November We had a wonderful afternoon tasting the delicious seasonal canapes made and demonstrated by "Wild in the Pantry". Such simple ideas that left us wanting more.



3 December Our Christmas tea party went with a swing, carols were sung with gusto, games were fun and lots of good food was appreciated. Lovely time had by all.



17 December Unfortunately Caroline was unable to perform due to illness. We enjoyed a social afternoon with a humming Christmas carol quiz. Very amusing but fun.

Upcoming meetings

11 February The fabulous "Banjo Man".

25 February A talk about the Arthur Rank Hospice.

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

Hilton Flower Club

We hope all our ladies had a wonderful Christmas and have a healthy New Year.

We start our first meeting of 2026 on 2 February

2 February A talk about essential oils by Valere Zarno and Flower Demonstration, by Beverley Tack. This should be fun smelling the oils as they are passed around each lady.

2 March Tim Meakin will be with us again showing us how to do wonderful arrangements, we always look forward to seeing him, a meeting not to be missed.

13 April Lesley Beeton - a flower demonstration on "Spring Is Coming", looking forward to seeing her it will be an entertaining afternoon.

Hilton Village Hall 2pm - 4pm

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Look Forward To Seeing You All, Beverley and June



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11:20 - STORY TIME AND
MATS AWAY

11:30 - GOOD BYE UNTIL
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What you're Missing

Hilton Women's Institute

At this beginning of the year it is time for some reflection.

In the previous edition we focussed on examples of the achievements of some women of yesteryear and their struggles against the rights, attitudes and necessary hard toil of their era. We women of our time fortunately have privileges that were a mere dream for them although many would say that we still have some way to go and that fact would warrant much debate any day. Indeed our March speaker is a very welcome return by Lucy Lewis who is one prime example of a woman's successful determination. Lucy is the first female Marshall of Cambridge University and earlier in her career she was the first woman to lead the Bomb Squad in the British Army.

This is somewhat reflected in the four current choices of Resolutions for our discussion and submission to Federation, albeit for the February 6th deadline now past, yet still worth a ponder.

Without revealing our submission, one is particularly striking - Action on women's homelessness. Can any of us even begin to contemplate having no roof over our head and the probable reasons and traumas, cruelty even, preceding it?

Hilton is an incredibly caring WI (and indeed village) and with this new year maybe a village Resolution should be determinedly to continue this care. Surely we owe that to the women of the 21st century ahead of us?

the WI INSPIRING WOMEN

Rose Milligan once wrote a delightful poem entitled 'Dust if you must' with one verse that says:-

Dust if you must, but wouldn't it be better

To paint a picture or write a letter, bake a cake or plant a seed

PONDER THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN WANT OR NEED

New members who would enjoy our WI company can contact hiltonwisecretary@gmail.com



Choir Singing at Hilton WI's Christmas Party



Hilton Art Club

In November, the subject 'Showtime' was a stimulating one and gave us lots of ideas.

On 19 December, we celebrated the end of the year with a Christmas lunch at The Windmill restaurant in Somersham again. As well as enjoying the meal, it was good to catch up socially, something we always relish! A big thank you to Kathy Bateman for arranging the meal. A flowering pot plant was presented to her for all her hard work during the year.

20 February 10.00 – 12.30 pm 'PENCILS ONLY': use any form of pencils – should be an interesting challenge.

Fen Drayton Bowls Club news

Following the news about rabbit proofing the bowling green last month, we're pleased to announce that the work is now complete and there's quite a different view to be seen.

As well as Sport England, major thanks are due to South Cambs District Council (Community Chest), Stubbins and the Fen Drayton Community Cafe. We're also very grateful to Jon Walker Bespoke Landscapes, the contractor who carried out the work for us.

Our lease on the land has been extended until May 2033 and we're all set for the new outdoor season. If you'd like to come and join us please contact Stephen George, Club

Secretary, on 07876 407 219, or email at stephengeorge79@gmail.com, or via our new website: fendraytonbowls.co.uk

Over the winter the short mat indoor league continues – as a taster event, we'll be demonstrating the game at the February Saturday Cafe on 14 February from 10.30 in the village hall so why not come along and have a go. 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.



The Yellow Pages

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Community Groups and Clubs

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Fen Drayton Parent and Toddlers	07549 630124
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Community Groups and Clubs

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Community events

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Hilton Summer Ball	01480 831299
The BIG Village Fun Day	01480 370973

Education

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