

The Sexton's Wheel

Issue 266

The magazine for Long Stratton & Wacton



March 2026

Long Stratton Village Hall - Booking Information

The hall can be booked as follows:

Via our facebook page, search Long Stratton Village Hall

Via our website www.longstrattonvillagehall.org.uk

Email us at longstrattonvillagehall@outlook.com

Call Kirsty Dye on 07986942804 and leave a message

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Wacton Village Hall - Booking Information

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Email: bookings@wactonvillagehall.co.uk, or Tel: J Johnson 07958606637

Licensed bar available through Wacton Social Club. Contact stevemaz51@outlook.com

Church Contacts

Stratton St Mary's Rev Becki Bensusan - (01508) 813900

St Michael's Rev Becki Bensusan (01508) 813900

Tharston St Mary's Rev Becki Bensusan (01508) 813900

All Saints' Rev John Madinda (01953) 789240

Congregational Church June Braddock (01508) 470701

Church Parish Office

Due to a change in circumstances the Parish Office will no longer open.

If you know of anyone who is unwell or would benefit from a visit from a member of our ministry team, please contact Rev Becki Bensusan. (01508) 813900.

Long Stratton Town Council, The Pavilion, Manor Road, Long Stratton

Usual office hours are Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday between 10am and 2pm and by appointment on Wednesday.

Tel: Clerk Becky Buck 01508 530524 E-mail: clerk@longstrattoncouncil.info

For general enquiries Email: office@longstrattontowncouncil.info

The Editors reserve the right to edit or decline any material submitted for publication. While every effort is made to ensure that the contents of the magazine are accurate, no responsibility can be taken for errors and omissions. The material printed does not necessarily represent the views of the magazine committee and no recommendation of products or services is implied. While the committee take reasonable care when accepting advertisements for publication, it cannot accept responsibility for any unsatisfactory transactions. Errors and omissions excepted.



In March we transition into Spring with the vernal equinox featuring rising temperatures and flowers blooming, and we lose an hour in bed when the clocks go forward.

The Sexton's Wheel Team

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A Good Read.

At the beginning of March, we have World Book Day. Did you get any good books for Christmas and if so, have you read them? Many of us love to curl up on these colder darker evenings with a good book and a cup of tea. (other beverages are available I'm told!) What is your go to genre? I love a good mystery. I used to read a lot of Alistair MacLean and still like those written by John Grisham. If you look at my book shelf though it's split between two types of books. I really love the Beatles have a lot of books about them. (27 at the last count!) Books concerning the gear they used when playing, to their life stories and the lyrics of their songs. I also have The Beatles Complete which is all the music for their songs. No, I can't play them all by heart but do play quite a few. The other big section of the shelf is given over to Bibles and reference books about the Bible. I have 6 or 7 different translations of the Bible and many different concordances and umpteen commentaries on various individual sections of the bible.

I said I like a good mystery and the bible is a great read. Whatever the type of book you like I'm certain you can find that style in the bible. There are stories of battles (David against Goliath), mammoth journeys (The Exodus from Egypt), 'magical' events (The Plagues in Egypt). There are also some great love stories. Jacob worked for 14 years to gain the woman he loved. There's Samson and Delilah, not such a happy ending. Also, the love of Ruth for her mother-in-law Naomi. But the greatest love story of the bible is of God's and Jesus' love for the world. (and yes that does mean you!)

In these days when true love seems to be hard to find, have a read of these two verses from the gospel of John. "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son that whoever believes in him shall not die but have eternal life". (John 3:16) and "Greater love has no man than this that he laid down his life for his friends". (John 15:13) That speaks to me of Real love. (oops another Beatles reference!)

This year I've set myself the challenge of reading the bible in a year and I'm doing well so far. If you like a good read and enjoy a good book why not have a read of the bible. In just 10-15 minutes a day it can be read in a year. I'm sure God will bless you in your endeavours.

God Bless

Steve Adcock
St Mary's Church



This month's theme is
Messy Easter!

Stratton St. Mary
Saturday 28th March
4:00pm-5:30pm

strattonmessychurch@gmail.com

All children to be accompanied
by an adult

Wonderful to be back again this month with news from our last session of Messy Church and sending love and prayers from all the Messy Church team. In January we met for our usual session learning from the story of the wise and foolish builders. We heard how foundations are very important if you want to build things that last, and together we considered how we might have good foundations with God that will help us in the storms of life. There were lots of building opportunities from giant Jenga and Tetris Tumble, to Lego and special heavy bricks that had a lovely background story from Louise's childhood. We made booklets about the ways we can build our faith and we had sand art and even cracker stacking. There were lots of ways to talk about building a life that puts good things into practice. It was lovely to have the chance to write prayers and put them on the pinboard wall. We also had a nice picnic tea all sitting round together and catching up after a few people had been busy and we managed to celebrate lots of birthdays too. A great start to the year for us all and we'd love to welcome you as part of it too.

Our next session is on Saturday 28th March, see the poster for details. The session starts at 4pm as usual and our theme will be the Easter story. You can expect lots of chocolate and fun for this one that is a special Messy Session. It'll be lovely to see you there if you can make it. You can let us know you're coming or turn up on the day. If you want to be in touch with the team for any reason, then please feel free to email us on strattonmessychurch@gmail.com

World Day of Prayer

Friday 6th March 2026 at 2pm

United Service at Long Stratton
Congregational Church

A service for everyone entitled -
'I will give you rest, come'

Prepared by the Christian
Women from Nigeria



World Day of Prayer



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BIKE ACTIVE NORFOLK

When you read this in March, BikeActive Norfolk will again start running its adult disability cycling group weekly at our new venue in Tivetshall. Tivetshall village hall has a large parking area, disabled toilets and is surrounded by quiet rural roads allowing us to offer rides of 2.5 and 3.5 miles. Sessions will happen weekly at Tivetshall through March and April, running alternative Fridays and Mondays, see our website, BikeActiveNorfolk.org, and there are three times offered at 1030/1130/1230hrs. In May the Friday rides will migrate to our lovely venue at Topcroft Sports and Social club leaving the Monday rides at Tivetshall

In our four years of running, we have given out over 600 adult rides to people with disabilities ranging from stroke recovery, knee and hip problems, learning disability, limb amputation, cerebral palsy, spina bifida, para cerebellum and MS to name just some problems people have to deal with. I understand some people are put off from attending by not fitting into a specific category of disability, please don't be. If you'd like to cycle with us in a safe environment on specialist cycles designed to get EVERYONE out cycling, then please do. We have many friendly volunteers, we are always looking for more, and the fun people have is reflected in the many smiling faces after a ride.

May will see us start our Rickshaw, side by side tandem trike and wheelchair transporter taxi service in Long Stratton. With an official launch on May the 8th. Our local MP Ben Goldsborough will cut the ribbon and the BBC's Jenny Kirk will attend for Look East. More details in next month's article, so if you want to join in the fun, you'll be able to.

2ND LONG STRATTON BROWNIES

We had a well-attended Parents Meeting with slides of previous sleepover and Pack Holiday.

As part of the Network Skills Builder we have built towers of playing cards (much easier with a bit of blu tack!), made Lego towers, practised remembering number sequences, different ways of getting instructions and made paper aeroplanes and enjoyed flying them. We also talked about what makes a good friend and found paired partners. The Unit Meeting Activities (UMAs) for the Know Myself theme have also included good turns and lending a hand.

Well done to Polly, Isabella, Mia, Eloise, Eliana, Anya, Hannah, Nicola, Ella, Tilly, Molly and Elia for gaining the Kindness interest badge. And for some this meant the Take Action theme badges were awarded to Anya, Elia, Eliana, Ella, Isabella, Molly, Nicola and Polly. Very well done to Elia, Ella and Polly who thus with their fourth Brownie theme meant they were awarded their Silver Brownie Awards.

Brownie Guiders

Long Stratton Town Council

Pavilion, Manor Road Playing Fields, Manor Road,
Long Stratton, NR15 2XR. Clerk: Mrs B Buck

Save the Date

We are hosting our summer event this year on Saturday 20th June 2026 on Manor Road Playing Field. We hope to see you there for a wonderful day of fun, food and entertainment. The exact times of the event are to be decided – stay tuned!

Lost Property

Daily checks are carried out for any lost property on the playing fields, children's play areas, MUGA, skatepark, gym and in the Pavilion toilets. All items are kept safely in the Town Council's office, we do try to reunite items via posts on Facebook, on our website and by contacting the schools. If you're ever unsure where you may have left something don't hesitate to ask us.

Upcoming Full Council meeting dates

The Full Council meetings are held in the Pavilion community room. Anyone is welcome to attend the meetings but whilst members of the public cannot participate a short period of time is given for members of the public to air their views on matters directly related to the Town Council.

We ask that all members of the public who attend remain respectful and only speak when invited to do so by the Chairman, to ensure the meeting runs smoothly for all.

All councillors are volunteers who give up their time to be at the meetings.

The next meeting will be on **Monday 9th March 2026 at 7pm.**

Make a Difference as a Trustee!

Are you ready to help shape young lives and support Scouts? Join our team of trustees to make a real difference! As a trustee, you'll ensure Scouts operates smoothly, supports leaders, and follows safety and legal standards. Whether managing budgets, checking equipment, or helping plan for the future, you'll play a key role in delivering life-changing experiences for young people.

Trustees gain invaluable skills in decision-making, finance, and teamwork, while enjoying new friendships and a sense of achievement. This role is flexible - ideal if you want to make an impact but need it to fit around your life. You don't need experience, just a passion for helping youth develop confidence and skills.

Whether you're building your CV, applying your career expertise, or giving back to your community, trusteeship is rewarding and supportive. Join us and help inspire the next generation!

If you are interested in finding out more, we'd love to hear from you. Please email 1stlongstrattonscoutgroup@gmail.com or message us via Facebook at: www.facebook.com/1stlongstrattonscoutgroup or visit: www.scouts.org.uk/volunteer

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LONG STRATTON & DISTRICT WI

In January our members enjoyed a talk on Beekeeping throughout the year. The speaker was a keen beekeeper and took us through the whole process and his life month by month, ending with a tasting session.

As previously advertised, on Wednesday 18th February Queen Victoria (aka Georgina Vale) was our speaker and on Wednesday 18th March do come along and try your hand at papercrafts.

You are very welcome to come and join us, we are a friendly, relaxed institute and would love to meet you. If you need further information **contact 01508 531154**
Save this date in your diary.:)

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LONG STRATTON HIGH SCHOOL

Long Stratton High School Achieves the Leading Parent Partnership Award

We're proud to share that Long Stratton High School has achieved the Leading Parent Partnership Award (LPPA), recognising our strong commitment to working closely with families. Over the past year, we've improved communication, enhanced reports, created more welcoming spaces, and expanded opportunities for parent involvement.

A big thank you to our staff, families, and community partners for helping us reach this milestone. Together, we continue to build the best support for our students.

Welcoming Parents Into School This Term

We've enjoyed several events this half term that strengthened the link between home and school.

Year 9 GCSE Information Evening: In early February, families heard from the Headteacher and Assistant Headteacher about the options process and visited departments to explore GCSE subjects—supporting Year 9 students as they make their choices for next year.

Parents' Evenings and Exam Workshop: January saw our Year 11 Parents' Evening, giving families the chance to discuss progress with teachers ahead of the summer exams. Later in the month, we held a parents' exam workshop offering practical revision strategies and wellbeing tips.

Parent Reading Partnership: This term we also launched our Parent Reading Partnership. Parents and students read the same book and are invited into school to share their thoughts—promoting reading and encouraging great discussions at home and in school.

Students Learning Beyond the Classroom

Opportunities for off-site learning have included Geography field trips to London and Cromer allowed students to explore urban and coastal environments firsthand, and a trip to the Regent Theatre in Ipswich to hear live performances from poets and deepen students' understanding of the poems they are studying for English GCSE.

Help Us Choose a Local Charity to Support

We're currently seeking suggestions from our community for a local charity that Long Stratton High School can support this year. If you have an idea, we'd love to hear it.

Please email your suggestions to me, and our Student Parliament will consider all proposals before making the final choice. Your input will help us strengthen our role within the local community and support causes that matter to the people around us.

Carolyn Daniels – *cdaniels@lshs.org.uk*

Community Liaison Lead

DIGGERS & DIBBLERS GARDENING CLUB

Tuesday 10th March 7.30pm Forncett Village Hall

Martin Tickler will be speaking about house martins.

Everyone welcome! Day members: £5 (includes a raffle ticket, soft drinks and snacks).

Wine £1 a glass.

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LONG STRATTON LIBRARY

Long Stratton Library is welcoming more exciting authors this year as part of its monthly author talks. In March we welcome Mary-Jane Riley for a chat about her book 'Beattie Cavendish and the White Pearl Club', the first in a new spy series and Mary-Jane's first historical novel. She has also written four thrillers, The Bad Things, After She Fell, Dark Waters and Gone in the Night, all of which were set in East Anglia. A former journalist, working on Eastern Counties Radio, Mary-Jane has taught prose fiction at UEA and will be ready to discuss her life, work and career when she visits on Mon March 2 at 2pm. Tickets £2.50 including tea, coffee and homemade cakes.

Then in April we're very excited to have the amazing Cressida McLaughlin back again. Cressida, who has sold over a million of her contemporary romance novels describes her fiction as feel-good and escapist, featuring unforgettable characters who find their happy place, and she is most well-known for her eight-book Cornish Cream Tea series. Her latest book, The Secret Christmas Bookshop, the start of a new, Norfolk-set series, is her sixteenth novel. Cressida lives in Norwich and will be with us on Monday April 20 at 2pm, tickets cost £5 including tea, coffee and homemade cakes.

Finally a quick reminder that the wonderful author Michael Bartlett will also be at Long Stratton on April 23 offering a one day creative writing course. Come and find out how to kickstart your writing journey, £40, 10am-4.30pm. Booking essential.

All welcome. Please let us know in advance if you plan to come along so we can secure you a seat, but payment on the day is fine. And if you want to read any of these books before the events, pop in to the library and we'll try to help.

St Mary's Quiz Night Long Stratton Village Hall Saturday 21st March 6:30pm for 7:00pm Start

£7.50 per person, includes ploughmans during the interval

Maximum of 6 per team

Please bring your own drinks of choice

For entry forms contact Janet on **01508 530121 or
Sexton's Wheel**



Let's Chat Opening

Janet and her team invite you to come back to St Mary's Church on **17th March 2026 10:00 to 12:00** where the home made cakes and tea and coffee and lots of chat will be on offer again.

All Welcome



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LONG STRATTON LIONS CLUB

Many years ago Helen Keller asked Lions Clubs International to be 'Knights of the Blind' and help relieve blindness in the world. They have kept their promise to do so. They now have permanent eye camps in many parts of Africa and South Asia and also travelling camps covering large areas which otherwise would have no eye care facilities. They treat thousands with cataracts and other eye problems and have just about wiped out river blindness. It is very important work. The target this year is 500,000 sight restoring surgeries.

They obviously also require spectacles and these are also provided by the Lions clubs. Many people in the Long Stratton area help us with this by placing their discarded spectacles in the bins at Long Stratton Eye Care and the Swan Lane Surgery. It does not stop there, however, we also collect at Newton Flotman Surgery, and the Opticians and other collecting places in Diss. It is an on-going task and we thank the collection points for letting us know when the bins which we provide are getting full. These spectacles can now be graded and are given to those in need in these countries.

Two Lion members, Bob and Roy, do the collecting and pack them in boxes ready for collection and dispatch to Birmingham, the country's collecting point. The picture shows a wall of our boxes of used spectacles waiting for collection by friendly Mark, the man with the van, who takes them to Birmingham for us. Bob and Roy are lurking in the background. The wall of boxes contain about 10,000 pairs! Thanks to all who deposit their used specs. and those who collect them for us. You are helping so many needy adults and children.



On other needs there are those who require help in our own area. This is where the LIONS' SHARE of the funds we raise are spent. At Christmas there are those who we help with a gift, the annual trips for the care home and sheltered housing and never knowing what our next request for help will be. It includes the young and the elderly. We continue to provide overnight toiletry packs for children and their parents who find themselves having to stay overnight at the children's ward of the Norfolk and Norwich.

The residents and businesses of our area help us with this, donating prizes for our raffles etc. attending our events or giving us a donation. Thank you, Co-op, for allowing us an annual Christmas collection on your premises and the Queen's Head for our Race Night.

If you would like to join the Lions, or visit us, my number is in the middle pages of Sexton's Wheel. Or perhaps you would like to be an occasional helper?

Roy Woodhouse
Secretary

LONG STRATTON MEDICAL PARTNERSHIP
Swan Lane Surgery, Swan Lane, Tharston, Norwich, Norfolk, NR15 2UY
Tel: 01508 530781

Mental Health Support

Let me introduce myself, I am Miles one of the Mental Health Practitioners working at Long Stratton Medical Partnership. I have been part of the surgery team for the past four years and work closely with GPs and other staff to support patients with their mental health. My role is to help people feel listened to, understood, and supported when they are struggling with their wellbeing.

We are introducing a new mental health triage system at the surgery. This means we can assess mental health needs more quickly and help people access the right support sooner. You will be offered a phone assessment and following this, we may offer support directly at the surgery or refer you to another service that is best suited to your needs. This aims to improve patient experience and reduce waiting times for mental health appointments. Through this process, we can help connect you with local support services. These include NHS Talking Therapies for anxiety, stress, low mood, or depression. We can also signpost to our Social Prescribing team for support with money worries, housing problems, loneliness, domestic abuse or other life stresses. For people with mild mental health difficulties, we can link you with our Norfolk and Waveney Mind practitioner, who provides local, practical mental health support including bereavement and stress.

If you are already being supported by a local mental health service — such as a Children and Young People's Mental Health Service (Youth), Adult Community Mental Health Team, or Older Persons Mental Health Team — we are not able to offer an additional appointment through the GP surgery mental health service.

Your existing team will continue to be the best place for your ongoing care and support.

You can also self-refer to the following services:

Local Mental Health Support Services

NHS Norfolk & Waveney Talking Therapies: Support for anxiety, depression, stress, and low mood. You can self-refer without seeing a GP. **0300 123 1503** www.nandwtalkingtherapies.org.uk

Norfolk and Waveney Mind: Local mental health charity offering emotional support, advice, courses, and signposting. **0300 330 5488** www.norfolkandwaveneymind.org.uk

Mind Rest: A partnership project that brings together mental health support, local services where everyone can feel welcome. **0300 330 5488** www.restnorwich.co.uk

Change, Grow, Live (CGL) – Norfolk Support for alcohol and drug use, including advice, treatment, and recovery support. **01603 514096** www.changegrowlive.org

Social Prescribing Team: Support with finances, housing, employment, loneliness, domestic abuse, and community activities. Please contact LSMP reception to be referred.

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HOWARDS

Impatiens Patchwork & Quilting Group

Impatiens is a local friendly, thriving group of people who enjoy quilting, patchwork and embroidery, but very importantly gathering together, helping each other, sharing ideas, learning and supporting each other. We meet monthly in New Buckenham with members coming from the local villages and towns. We have invited speakers and occasional workshops.

We are pleased to announce our free Spring Exhibition of colourful and varied Textile Art & Craft. Date: Saturday 25th and Sunday 26th April 2026 Time: 10:00 – 16:00 (each day) Venue: New Buckenham Village Hall, Moat Lane, NR16 2AU You might see work and think – “I’d like to do that”. Well, we’re a welcoming group and members will be present during the weekend; come and meet us, discover new ideas, be inspired and talk to us. You might even think of joining us.



Save the date

Long Stratton community event will be held on Saturday 12th December 2026, 12:00 to 19:00pm. Any local businesses who would like to take part in this great event please email: lschristmas@outlook.com

Stronger Breaths, Brighter Voices!

The Norfolk ‘Playing for Cake’ charity runs singing sessions for health, wellbeing and fun, and runs a ‘Singing for Better Breathing’ group in Long Stratton. This friendly, supportive group would love to grow, come and join us! Singing for Breathing sessions are designed to support breathing and vocal strength – whether you’re living with a lung condition, navigating Parkinson’s, recovering from illness, or simply want to feel more connected to your breath, these gentle, joyful vocal exercises are designed to make you feel better. Songs are tailored around breathing exercises drawn from established approaches, and sessions are run by a trained leader.

The Long Stratton group currently meets weekly, and will meet on the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of the month after Easter 2026. The sessions are held in Long Stratton Village Hall (NR15 2TA), from 2.30-4.00pm. We start with a cuppa and a chat, followed by some relaxation, breathing exercises, voice warm-ups and of course some fun singing! Participation is free (donations are encouraged to help with running costs, £5 suggested).

For more information contact Nicky Childerhouse at nicky@playingforcake.uk, phone 07792 757474, <https://playingforcake.uk/for-health>

M	T	W	T
2 Local Walk - see page 38	3 Community Sing Wacton Village Hall 1900 Pilates - Hempnall Village Hall see p29 Coffee Morning Wacton Village Hall 10.30am	4 Chatter& Natter Long Stratton Leisure Centre 1300-1500 Wacton Parish Council Meeting 18:00pm	5 Pilates - Wacton see
9 LSTC Meeting Pavillion Community Room Manor Road 19:00	10 Community Sing Wacton Village Hall 1900 Pilates - Hempnall Village Hall see p29	11 Chatter& Natter Long Stratton Leisure Centre 1300-1500 Cup of Hope Pavillion community Room 08:50am - 11:30am Lions Club Meeting Phone Roy Woodhouse for details on 01508 531406	12 Pilates - Wacton see Lunch Club 12:30pm Long S... Congregation Call 0796871 Tharston& Wacton V 7:30pm
16	17 Community Sing Wacton Village Hall 1900 Lets Chat St Mary's Church 10:00am to 12:00pm Pilates - Hempnall Village Hall see p29 Coffee Morning Wacton Village Hall 10.30am	18 Chatter& Natter Long Stratton Leisure Centre 1300-1500 Long Stratton & District W.I LS Village Hall 7:30pm	19 Pilates - Wacton see
23	24 Community Sing Wacton Village Hall 1900 Lets Chat St Mary's Church 10:00am to 12:00pm Pilates - Hempnall Village Hall see p29	25 Chatter& Natter Long Stratton Leisure Centre 1300-1500 Cup of Hope Pavillion community Room 08:50am - 11:30am Lions Club Meeting Phone Roy Woodhouse for details on 01508 531406	26 Pilates - Wacton see

T	F	S	S
			1
on Village Hall p31	6 World Day of Prayer Congregational Church 14:00pm Wacton Social Club open 7.00pm - 11.00pm with Bingo	7	8 Hope chuch Service St Mary's Acadamy 10:30am. See p19
on Village Hall p31 2:00 - 2:00pm stratton al Church Hall 6698 to book District W.I. illage Hall 0pm	13	14 Wacton Church Coffee Morning 1030am.	15 Community Family Breakfast 9:45am at Long Stratton Congregational Church Hall
on Village Hall p31	20 Wacton Social Club open 7.00pm - 11.00pm pool,darts etc	21 Long Stratton W.I. Open Morning Sale. Long Stratton Village Hall 10:00am-12:00pm Quiz Night Long Stratton village Hall 7:00pm see p14	22 Hope chuch St Mary's Junior Acadamy 10:30am see p19
on Village Hall p31	27	28 Messy Church 1600 Stratton St Mary's see p6	

HARLESTON CHORAL SOCIETY

We are very lucky to have gained a very diverse range of individuals with interesting backgrounds, lives and musical experience over the past 25 years.



One of our longest standing founder members, is Peter Heard, who has lived in Harleston for over 40 years and joined in 2000 as a tenor. He had always enjoyed singing but never had the opportunity to sing in a formal group. Peter can't read music and doesn't play any instruments. He is 68, retired and worked previously as a solicitor. He has also been a marathon runner and loves his real ale! Peter enjoys HCS because he has found all the members are friendly, welcoming and supportive.



Our newest member joined just a few weeks ago - Kathryn Rayner from Bush Green, Pulham Market. Kathryn is 63 and retired after 40 years as a nurse and midwife. She has joined us after previously singing and performing a variety of music in a community choir in Hertfordshire. She plays the piano and can read music but this is her first time in a choral society. She has found HCS to be a friendly bunch of people, singing beautiful music and is enjoying the challenge of learning new pieces. Kathryn also loves gardening, cycling, swimming, crochet and cooking.

So, whatever your background, if you want to join us, rehearsals are on Monday nights at 7.30pm at The London Road Church, Harleston, IP20 9BH. For further information and contact details, take a look at our website www.harlestonchoralsoc.org.uk



AIR AMBULANCE

As some of you may have read, the results have been announced by Air Ambulance for money raised for the charity.

I am very pleased and proud to report that the Long Stratton and surrounding communities are this year the winners of "most funds raised" for the East Anglian Air Ambulance Charity.

A grand total of £3867.52 was raised from, plant sales, Christmas fayre and the Christmas lights.

Air Ambulance send the sincere thanks to everyone, can I also thank the entire community for buying plants, attending the lights switch on and donations.

But I don't stop there.

The following events will all take place at 32 Manor Park Gardens, Long Stratton.

Now for the new year.

By the time you read this my first plant sale has happened on the 14th of February.

Dates for your diary.

The 9th and 30th of May for the first massive plant sales, and probably sales in June, July and August.

The 14th of November, another huge Christmas lights switch on from 5.30 pm until 7.30pm.

The 12th of December an all day event

A Christmas fayre followed by another lights and music show. 9am until 7pm. The first time ever an all day event.

Lots of surprises to be announced at a later date.

Every penny raised from the events will go to the East Anglian Air Ambulance Charity.

No expenses taken from any of the events.

I look forward to meeting you all again throughout the year.

Keith.

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BEN GOLDSBOROUGH MP

I recently met with Long Stratton Town Council to discuss the opportunities and challenges facing the town, and I would like to thank Councillors for their time, insight, and commitment to the local community. It was a constructive conversation focused on how we can work together to support Long Stratton as it continues to grow and how we can shape a positive, sustainable future for the town.

One of the key issues discussed was the long-standing ambition to secure a supermarket for Long Stratton. The Co-Op in the centre of Stratton is helpful, but I've heard how access to local affordable food shopping wanted by so many. Rather, it is about supporting residents, reducing the need to travel elsewhere, and strengthening the town centre. I know how important this issue is to many people locally, and I will continue to engage with partners and decision-makers to support efforts to make this a reality.

We also spoke about the views of residents on renewable energy production and storage in the Long Stratton area. As many know, I opposed the Tasway Solar Farm project and have called for three sites to be removed from the East Pye Solar Farm scheme. On the Battery Energy Storage Site near Wacton, this is a decision for South Norfolk District Council and I'm supporting residents in raising their concerns.

Another major theme of our discussions was the pressure on public services as a result of additional housing. Like many places across South Norfolk, Long Stratton has seen significant development in recent years. While new housing brings opportunities, it must be matched by the right investment in infrastructure, healthcare, transport and other public services. Councillors shared their concerns about services struggling to keep pace, and I am committed to raising these issues and pressing for the support needed to ensure growth is properly planned and sustainable.

Finally, we discussed how to make Long Stratton a destination: a place that attracts people in, encourages them to spend time locally, and supports our local businesses to thrive. This means thinking creatively about the town centre, events, amenities, and how Long Stratton presents itself to visitors as well as residents. A strong local economy is central to a thriving community.

These are complex challenges, but they are best tackled through partnership. I value the role that Long Stratton Town Council plays in representing residents and shaping the future of the town, and I look forward to continuing to work closely together.

By listening, collaborating, and focusing on long-term solutions, we can help ensure that Long Stratton remains a vibrant, sustainable, and welcoming place to live, work, and visit.

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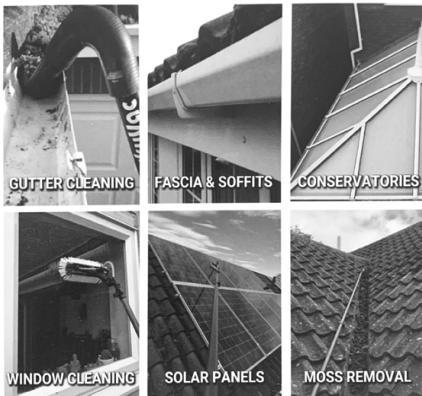
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Local Walk

This walk had been delayed due to the rain last month but we finally made it with only a bit of drizzle and lots of mud! We began at Cherry Lane Garden Centre from where, after a few yards on the A140, we turned East across a field towards Dunning's Lane. The going was quite slippery so rather than crossing the next field we detoured round the road for a while to cross the next field where the track was again very muddy and full of winter turnips, presumably destined for animal feed. Walking across this field we had seen some primroses and also heard skylarks, a welcome reminder that spring is not far away. This then led us to part of Boudicca Way which here meandered along a pretty and very full, fast-flowing stream skirted by trees and small copses. We followed it South where after a few yards we passed a narrow bridge on the left, which led to a track to the east inviting more walks to explore further beyond an intriguingly named Duck's Foot Road, Bush Green and a maze of paths.

Alongside the stream there was plenty of winter vegetation and signs and sounds of wildlife, mostly Great Tits and Robins, and with distant views across the fields to Pulham Market and the church tower in the distance. In spite of the gloomy weather it felt that spring wasn't too far away and with a few days of sunshine the whole scene would be transformed. It is definitely worth exploring again at a different season to see the changes. Cutting across another field full of turnips and through a narrow track we emerged into Pulham Market. From there we followed the road North, happily with no cars and time to look around and get our bearings. Finally we could see the garden centre across the fields to the left and after crossing the first field again we emerged on the A140 and a few yards to Cherry Lane and our cars to take off our muddy boots. A most enjoyable walk.





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CHURCH SERVICES: March

1st March - 9am - BCP Holy Communion - Stratton, St Michael
9:30am - Morning Prayer - Wacton
11am - Morning Worship - Stratton, St Mary

8th March - 9:45am - Word and Worship - Tharston, St Mary
11am - All-age Holy Communion - Stratton, St Mary

15th March - 9am - BCP Holy Communion - Stratton, St Michael
11am - All-Age Worship & Mothering Sunday Celebration - Stratton
St Mary

22nd March - 9:30am - Holy Communion - Wacton
11am - Holy Communion at Stratton, St Mary

28th March - 4pm - Messy Church at Stratton, St Mary

29th March - 11am - United Benefice Communion for Palm Sunday - Tharston, St Mary

Congregational Church

1st March - 10:45am – Family Service incl. Holy Communion - Rev Malcolm Simpkin

6th March - 14:00pm - World Day of Prayer Service

8th March - 10:45am – Family Service - Joy Southam

15th March - 9:45am – Community Family Breakfast
10:45am – Mothering Sunday Family Service - Rev Malcolm Simpkin

22nd March - 9:45am - Prayer Meeting
10:45am - Family Service - Bruce Thorn

29th March - 10:45am - Palm Sunday Family Service - Rev Malcolm Simpkin

Hope Church

8th March -10:30am - Service for all ages -St Mary's Junior Academy NR15 2UY
22nd March - 10:30am - Service for all ages -St Mary's Junior Academy NR15 2UY

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