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**Our front cover Features local children on
the Permissive Paths near Stansted Hall**

by Kathy West

Enhanced by Paul Burt Photography

Stansted Mountfitchet Village Magazine

The Link

www.stanstedlink.org.uk

The Link is published by Stansted Mountfitchet Magazine Community Interest Company and delivered free to 3700 homes and businesses in Stansted. Further copies may be purchased for £1 each or £11.00 per year, plus postage. Each edition is also available on our website.

If you do not receive your copy please email: distribution@stanstedlink.org.uk or telephone 813680

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Please email editor@stanstedlink.org.uk by noon on **9th March**. Submissions should be in Word or typed into an email, maximum 300 words, and may be subject to editing. Please send photographs as separate jpg.

DISCLAIMER Opinions in The Link reflect those of the authors and contributors. Publication (on paper or electronically) of articles, advertisements or product/services information does not constitute endorsement by The Link nor is any culpability accepted for work undertaken by advertisers.

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EDITORIAL



Our lovely front cover shows one of our local beauty spots, the permissive path system near Elms' Farm. Thanks so much to Kathy West for sending this in to us and to the two young children who took part. Many people use these paths for walks, with dogs or without them. A variety of wildlife can be seen: Canada and Brent geese, with their glorious cries, as well as red kites and buzzards with their rather odd squeaky cries. Song birds accompany the walker all along the paths, and water birds squawk loudly from the two lakes – usually cursing my dog if she gets too close! In this issue, there are loads of spring flower pictures sent in to grace our pages: Hatfield Forest, see below, In the Garden p3, and Easton Lodge p17.

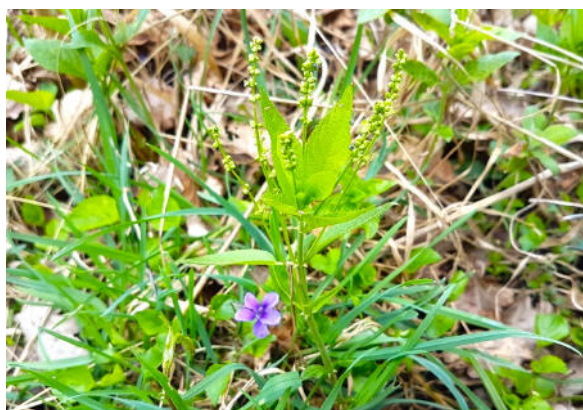
One of the highlights for me editing this magazine is to read about our local primary schools, and the amazing range of adventures they have at school. So much imagination goes into their curriculum, both inside and outside the classroom. I remember my early schooling as being completely academic, seemingly lacking in heart and soul. Magna Carta mentions a *Dress to Express* day, St Mary's Years 5 and 6 children were asked to feel what it is like to be a polar explorer, Bentfield sang in the *Young Voices Concert* in the O2 arena, and Birchanger are now experiencing an innovative *Outdoor Play and Learning* programme. I am sure you will enjoy reading about them.



HATFIELD FOREST

www.nationaltrust.org.uk/hatfield-forest

As we move into spring, the coppicing tools will be put away in order to give the birds time to move in and start nesting. If you are quiet, you may be able to hear the hammering of the woodpeckers amongst the other noisy birdsong chatter. The darker colours of winter are chased away by the emergence of the vivid emerald-green carpet of *dog's mercury* with flecks of colour from the wild flowers; *dog violets* and *primroses* common sights along the woodland edges.



Even as spring begins to make an appearance, the ground conditions are still poor. We are dealing with the ongoing erosion of historic woodland rides, so if you come across a diversion, please follow it and discover a new route. From **Sunday 25th March**, the forest will go back to summer opening hours and we will be open all week, 9.00am-4.00pm. The Café is open 9.00am-4.30pm with a delicious seasonal menu, hot and cold drinks and takeaway food. Do visit us and hopefully experience some of the warmer, sunnier spring weather. To find out more about what to expect from your trip, visit our website.

Hannah Underwood
Assistant Business Services Co-ordinator
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Email: Hannah.underwood@nationaltrust.org.uk



STANSTED MOUNTFITCHET

LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

www.stanstedhistorysociety.org.uk

At our last meeting, instead of a guest speaker, we watched three films streamed from The East Anglia Film Library which has an extensive catalogue of downloadable short films. *Mid-Day Adventures* was a film showing the preparation and serving of school dinners from 1950-1960. It was a labour-intensive job and although having some helpful tools like an automatic potato peeler, the cooks and dinner ladies worked hard to produce a substantial mid-day meal for the children. However, it did not show the dreaded and unforgettable semolina puddings (or frog spawn as we called it).

Harlow New Town (1956), dealt with the ideas and initial construction of this exciting concept: to build a town with all necessary facilities, in landscaped areas with easy access to local shops and green spaces. Young people would be catered for with youth clubs and sports facilities. A separate industrial centre was to be built to enable most of the community to work within the town, and a modern three-bedroom house could be rented for £2 a week. To those who came from the London slums it must have seemed too good to be true. If only ...

Stansted Airport 1980 was a real blast from the past. Originally constructed in 1942 by the US air force, and having a runway over two miles long, it was destined to be London's third airport. In 1980, it was a matter of arriving, parking directly outside the terminal for a very small parking fee, and when your flight was called, walking out onto the tarmac and boarding the plane. Those were the days when it really was a pleasure to fly. The next meeting is on **Thursday 7th March** at 7.30pm in the Quaker Meeting House.

Edward Taub
Email: taub8j@icloud.com



SOCIAL CLUB

www.smsc.uk.com

It has been a whirlwind start to 2024 and things are not slowing down any time soon! On the subject of whirlwinds, we have Jimmy White back at the Club on **Friday 29th March**. Tickets are selling out quickly so grab yours whilst you still can. We recently purchased a Yamaha state-of-the-art sound system which means we can attract bands from further afield. They can just turn up with their instruments, plug in and perform. Membership continues to grow and at the time of writing we have 1,035 paid up members. This is a great reflection on the effort that has gone into making the Club great again.

There is a terrific entertainment lineup for March. We start on **Saturday 2nd** with *Lord Toffingham* who will be banging out your favourite glam rock tunes. **Saturday 9th** sees a *Bruce Springsteen* and *Bryan Adams* tribute night. We have the ever-popular karaoke night on **Friday 22nd** followed by a *Phil Collins* tribute on **Saturday 23rd**. We round off the month with a fantastic night of Irish music from *the Wild Murphys*. As always, entertainment is included as part of your membership. Non-members are welcome to events; the ticket price is £10. The exception to this is the visit of Jimmy White, which is £25 a ticket for members and non-members.



Andrew Sharpe
Email: stanstedclub@gmail.com



STANSTED MOUNTFITCHET WINDMILL

www.stanstedwindmill.co.uk

The Mill has been given its annual spring clean and is now ready to welcome visitors. The first open days of this year will be on **Easter Sunday 31st March** and **Easter Monday 1st April** 1.30pm-5.30pm. We will be setting up an Easter Egg Hunt for our younger visitors on both days. Details of all our open days can be found on our website. We have decided to keep the entry fees at the same level as last year so adults can explore the mill for £2.00, and children for 50p. Stewards will be on duty to ensure your safety and answer any questions you have about the mill.

We are very keen to encourage more residents to take up the Miller's membership scheme, which only costs £10 a year for a family at one address and includes free entry to the Windmill on open days. For new members there is a complimentary guide book too. Details of how to join are on our website or you can email our membership secretary, Neil Russell on neilrussell1758@hotmail.com. We would love more people to get involved in our work and possibly join the Committee. There is no pressure to commit to anything if you do become a member; however if you are interested in getting more involved, please contact us via the email address below. As part of our fundraising efforts we hope to hold a Race Night in the near future. Details will be published on our website and on notice boards around the village.

Trevor Lloyd
Email: info@stanstedwindmill.co.uk

IN THE GARDEN

The beginning of March ushers in Spring and seeing the first daffodils blooming in the garden brings a relief that another winter is behind us. Even if we do endure a cold spell this month, we all know that at this time of year it will not last very long. In his book *Christopher Lloyd's Gardening Year*, the author begins his March chapter with: *There is something sharp and aggressive in the very word. March is prepared to hurl every sort of weather at us.*

Magnolias venture into flower with trepidation, scillas and hyacinths now bloom. Euphorbias, primulas and cowslips, species tulips, grape hyacinths, anemones and pulmonarias, with their two-tone, pink and blue flowers which bloom until May, are all stars of the borders now. The first month of spring is also a time of hope and activity.



Pulmonarias

This is a good time to relocate shrubs and to prune. Vigorous climbers can be cut back hard as can winter stems grown for their ornamental colours. Divide perennials and put in supports such as twiggy pea sticks before there is too much growth. Hardy annuals can be sown, as can herbs such as chives, fennel, coriander, parsley, tomatoes, salad leaves and beetroot. Chard and spinach should be sown under cover. Now is also the time for getting early potato tubers and onion sets in the ground. Lawns need to be aerated, scarified and mown with the blades on a high setting. Do not forget houseplants as now is the time to begin to feed them weekly. By the end of the month the clocks will be going forward and the borders will be bursting forth with renewed growth. There is always something to look forward to in the garden.

u3a Garden Group
Email: stanstedu3a@gmail.com



The market will be on the last Saturday of each month at Elsenham Village Hall (next to the school) from 12.30pm-2.30pm on the following dates: 30th March, 27th April, 25th May and 29th June. There is no charge for entry.

Elsenham Farmers Market Team



UGLEY VILLAGE HALL COFFEE MORNING

It is Village Halls Week from 18th-23rd March, so to celebrate, we are having another of our famous coffee mornings on **Tuesday 19th March** 10.00am-noon. There will be coffee, tea, cakes, a raffle and a generous bring and buy stall. Proceeds go towards the upkeep of Ugley Village Hall. There is plenty of free parking. We hope to see you there.



Susan Bone
Tel: 814052



DAISY MAY'S FARM

www.daisymaysfarm.org

Our small animals are cosily tucked away in the woodland area and are absolutely loving being amongst the trees near the snuffly pigs. They are looking forward to having lots of visitors to make a fuss of them. There really is so much for you to do at the farm at the moment including riding on our train through the woods, meeting the new lambs and kid goats, holding chicks and ducklings, a woodland trail, warm drinks and snacks to enjoy, seasonal arts and crafts and more! We have all sorts of chickens, ducks, guineafowls, turkeys, and geese and we often have chicken and sometimes duck eggs for you to buy.



Come on down to our farm, blow those cobwebs away and meet all the new additions who will be born over the coming months. Check our Facebook page for news on our latest arrivals, our opening hours and for any new events such as our *Hatch a Chick* scheme which is now up and running again, along with other farm news updates. We always need help in so many ways, particularly at times like this when there is so much to do; so if you have a little time to spare, please get in touch, we would love to hear from you. We look forward to welcoming you to the farm. We are open daily 10.00am-4.00pm, at Hall Road, Elsenham CM22 6DN.

Elaine Terry
Tel: 07747 787973



www.mencapgrovecottage.org

The eagerly awaited Grove Cottage Black Tie Ball, the largest fundraiser in our calendar, is set to take place on **Saturday 11th May** 6.30pm to midnight at the Radisson Blu Hotel, Stansted Airport. This exclusive event promises an enchanting evening, perfect for creating lasting memories with family, friends, or colleagues. It is also a fantastic opportunity for businesses to entertain clients in a sophisticated setting. Guests will be greeted with a sparkling reception upon arrival, followed by a sumptuous three-course meal.



The evening will feature an exclusive auction and raffle, adding an element of excitement. Following the meal, guests can hit the dance floor to the tunes of live music or try their luck at the casino. Do not miss your chance to be part of the glamour and generosity at the Ball; this will be an evening dedicated to making a positive impact. Tickets are £75. Individual tickets or tables for 10 are available for booking at mina@mencapgrovecottage.org

Alison Cameron
Tel : 651908

Email: fundraising@mencapgrovecottage.org

ST JOHN'S 300 CLUB

Many congratulations to the winners of the January draw:

£100	No 184	Sandra Embleton
£ 50	No 190	T J Bryant
£ 25	No 78	Susan Sedgebeer

The draw for March will be held on **31st March** in St John's Church, following the 9.30am service. Numbers at £2 per month for each number are still available for anyone who may wish to join the Club and be in with a chance of winning one of the 38 prizes totalling £2,500 given away this year. The Club raises vital money to help cover the heavy maintenance costs and work of St John's Church.

Jean Newson
Tel: 819062
Email: jean733@btinternet.com

STANSTED IS WELL READ

8 pm Tue 5th Mar

Dog and Duck, Lower Street

We will be discussing

The Joy Luck Club by Amy Tan

Four Chinese immigrants to San Francisco in 1949 meet to play mahjong and tell stories of what they left behind in China

All Welcome Tel 813056



Monthly Meeting

The Science of Plants
by Brian Carline

7.40 for 8 pm Wed 6th Mar

Free Church Hall

Free refreshments served before the meeting

Visitors welcome, entry £5
www.mountfitchetgardenclub.co.uk



7.30 pm Thu 7th - Sat 9th Mar

3 pm Sat 9th Mar

South Mill Arts

Beyond Reasonable Doubt

by Jeffery Archer

Tickets adults £18, Conc £16
from 710200 or from
www.southmillarts.co.uk

WHAT'S ON IN MARCH

5	Tue	Stansted is Well Read	Dog and Duck 8 pm
6	Wed	Mountfitchet Garden Club	Free Church Hall 8 pm
7	Thu	Local History Society	Quaker Meeting House 7.30 pm
7 Thu to 9 Sat		Water Lane Theatre Co	South Mill Arts 7.30 pm
9	Sat	Water Lane Theatre Co	South Mill Arts 3 pm
9	Sat	Link copy due in today	before noon
9 Sat / 14 Thu		New Volunteers' Days	Easton Lodge 10 am - 1pm
12	Tue	The Arts Society B S	South Mill Arts 10 am
		RSPB	Bishop's Park 7.30 pm
14	Thu	W I	Bowls Club 7.30 pm
16	Sat	Farmers' Market	Ugley Village Hall 10 am
		S W Choral Society	Saffron Hall 7.30 pm
19	Tue	Coffee Morning	Ugley Village Hall 10 am
20	Wed	Ugley W I	Ugley Village Hall 2 pm
		Newport Flower Club	Ugley Village Hall 8 pm
21	Thu	U3A Monthly Meeting	St John's Hall 2 pm
23	Sat	Music@stansted	St John's Church 7.30 pm
31 Sun / 1 Mon		Easter Egg Hunt	Windmill 1.30 - 5.30 pm



Monthly Meeting

A Birdwatcher's Year: the other two seasons by Steve Magennis

7.30 pm Tue 12th Mar

Bishop's Park Community Centre
Bishop's Stortford CM23 4DA

Visitors welcome, entry £5

Tel: Peter 07876 295456
www.group.rspb.org.uk/stortvalley



Stansted Evening W I

7.30 pm Thu 14th Mar

Bowls Club, Recreation Ground

Note change of venue

Tales of a Jewellery Valuer

by Mary Waterfall

Everyone Welcome Tel 07743 549241

To advertise your event in the April issue
Email: editor@stanstedlink.org.uk by 9th March

Inclusion is subject to editorial decision and availability of space



7.30 pm Sat 23rd Mar

St John's Church

Cambridge Chorale

Choral music from the 16th century to the present day

Tickets: adults £15, conc £12 under 25s free. Pay on the door



Stansted Millers

Windmill Easter Openings

Come and have a look round

1.30 - 5.30 pm

Easter Sunday 31st Mar

Bank Holiday Monday 1st Apr

Easter Egg Hunt for Children

Refreshments

Entry: adults £2, child 50p



10 am - noon

Sat 16th Mar

Ugley Village Hall

Fruit and Veg ~ Beef, Pork, Lamb

Eggs ~ Fish

Bread and Home Baking

Honey ~ Skincare

Knitting and Needlework ~ Crafts

Refreshments and Free Parking

For info and future dates tel 814052



Monthly Meeting

How the complex world of character, location, plot and subplot arrive in a writer's mind

by Bobbie Darbyshire

1.30 for 2 pm Thu 21st Mar

St John's Hall

Entry free

Prospective new members welcome
<https://u3asites.org.uk/stansted>



www.ugleyvillage.org.uk

COFFEE MORNING

10 am - noon Tue 19th Mar

Coffee • Tea • Cakes

Bring and Buy • Raffle

Proceeds towards upkeep of the hall

Free Parking ~ All Welcome



7.30 pm Sat 16th Mar

Saffron Hall, Saffron Walden

Into the Stars

Exploring English Choral Music
from the last 30 years

Tickets from www.saffronhall.com

Tel 0845 548 7650



ST MARY'S SCHOOL

www.stmarysstansted.co.uk

Recently our Years 5 and 6 participated in a Polar Challenge, which tied into their topic of Frozen Kingdom. It was devised so they could experience some of what polar explorers have to endure. The tyre challenge was to replicate pulling provision-stacked sledges and the children threw themselves into dragging or flipping tyres, and doing an army-style obstacle course. The ground was frosty, and the negative temperatures were ideal training conditions; this helped them appreciate the epic tasks undertaken by polar adventurers. What really impressed me was the teamwork and support the children gave each other and how they pushed on through despite tyre bruises, rope burns and fatigue. Our sleeping bag challenge involved a relay of getting in and out of three sleeping bags and zipping them up while wearing gloves. It made for a very different activity with lots of squeals and giggles, but it certainly was not easy and relied on them helping each other.



Year 5 had an exciting trip to the O2 to perform as part of the *Young Voices* choir. On the day we attended there were an astounding 8,742 children singing together. It was a long day with rehearsals in the afternoon before the concert in the evening. They joined in with songs by performing artists such as Natalie Williams and MC Grammar. They were also joined in the Matilda medley by Miss Honey herself! The children were all fabulously well behaved and did a great job representing the school, as well as having an incredible experience and they should be very proud of themselves. A big thank you to the staff who supported them in learning the songs and taking them to the O2. Next month I will share a little of what our younger pupils have been up to.

Matthew Curzon
Headteacher
Tel: 812212



STANSTED MOUNTFITCHET u3a

www.u3asites.org.uk/stansted/home

The Poetry for Pleasure group devised a new venture last year wherein one member presents a choice of poet and summarises their life story, followed by readings from their

work. Past poets have included black activist Maya Angelou, John Keats and Sir John Betjeman. The group meets on the first Thursday of the month and always welcomes new members. One of the French groups is currently studying *Le Petit Nicolas*, the adventures of a young boy. They watch videos and online lessons with French teachers to improve listening and speaking skills as well as enjoy quizzes and games. If you fancy learning or improving your French in a relaxed and fun atmosphere you will be very welcome to join.

Recent monthly outings of the Thursday Walking Group have included Albury, Manuden and Saffron Walden with coffee at The Cross Keys. A lunch in January was enjoyed at The Yew Tree in Manuden with a brief walk around the village. Walks continue this year on the first Thursday of each month, sometimes ending up at Touchpoint or enjoying refreshments in a tea shop or pub. In December the u3a Knitting and Crochet Group were invited to decorate the window of the Salon on Chapel Hill, brightening things up with their wonderful creations. Our monthly meeting is on **Thursday 21st March** at 2.00pm in St John's Hall; Bobbie Darbyshire will explain in a lighthearted way how the complex world of character, location, plot and subplot arrive in a writer's mind.

John Hudson
Email: stanstedu3a@gmail.com



www.mountfitchetgardenclub.co.uk

February Meeting

Lynn Moore's family-run nursery in Billericay, Moore and Moore, specialises in shade loving plants and they have been awarded Chelsea Gold Medals for their displays. Her presentation of *52 Weeks in the Shade Garden – a different shade plant for each week of the year* was inspiring. She discussed many more than hostas and ferns; over 1500 different varieties of plants are grown in the nursery, all outside and in peat-free compost. Guiding us through the year with slides, members were shown some of the many different plants which thrive in shade or partial shade. Form, colour and texture should be considered before planting in order to create a really interesting plant bed. Throughout the summer the nursery can be seen at the various garden shows around the country. Open days at the nursery will be held on 30th March, 27th April, 4th May, 1st June and 14th September, 10.30am-3.30pm. A lively question and answer session followed the talk with anecdotes on meeting her gardening heroes!

Our next meeting will be on **Wednesday 6th March** 7.40pm for 8.00pm in the Free Church Hall. Refreshments will be available prior to the meeting. The speaker will be Brian Carline and his topic is *The Science of Plants*. Everyone is welcome; entry fee for visitors is £5.

Maralyn Harris
Tel: 07919 478144

UTTLESFORD CITIZENS ADVICE

www.uttlesfordca.org.uk

You can make a difference

As an independent local charity, we could not help the people who need us without our incredible team of volunteers. We are currently recruiting for the following roles to help us support people through the cost-of-living crisis.

Giving information and advice: helping people over the telephone, by email or face to face to explore the issues they need help with. You do not need specific experience or qualifications but you do need to be non-judgmental, able to talk to people and confident using a computer. All our volunteers receive training and there is a paid member of staff who you can turn to for extra support whenever needed.

Trustee: although no specific qualifications or skills are required, at the present time we are looking for someone with current or recent experience in Human Resources or IT, to make sure our board is well balanced. We welcome applications from anyone who is passionate about advice services and can bring innovative ideas, unique perspectives and good judgement; we are particularly keen to increase diversity on our board.

Student interns: if you are an undergraduate or recent graduate in law, social policy or a related discipline and would like to gain some valuable experience volunteering for us for four weeks or more during the holidays, we would love to hear from you.

If you are interested in volunteering, please contact us Monday to Friday 9.30am-3.30pm or visit our website for more information and an application form

Jo Hancock
Office Administrator
Tel: 01799 618840
Email: help@uttlesfordca.org.uk



MAGNA CARTA PRIMARY SCHOOL

www.magnacartaacademy.org

Our biggest news:

We are very excited to be partnering with *Teach First* to provide teacher training from September. We will be able to offer individuals hands-on experience in our schools, supporting them to achieve a Post Graduate Certificate of Education (PGCE) and Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) within a year. We would love to have local applicants, so if you have an undergraduate degree or are a professional who is considering a rewarding career change, please contact me for more information, or visit www.bmat-trust.org/1060/school-centred-initial-teacher-training.

Being safe online

We have launched a weekly e-safety guide to support parents with online safety, which will also be available on our website. Online safety is absolutely crucial, so we are educating our pupils too, covering everything from WhatsApp to online gaming.



Year 6 finding the most efficient car design

Children's Mental Health Week

This year's theme is *Your Voice Matters*, and we will be holding assemblies and sessions to focus on this, providing calm and thoughtful activities throughout the week; we held a *Dress to Express Day* in late February. Again, if any of our resources around children's mental health and well-being would be helpful to you, they are on our website, under *Mental Health and Well-Being* on the *Information* tab. Finally, I want to say a huge thank you to our PTA, who raised nearly £9k last year. So far this year, they have managed to buy three picnic benches and a fantastic outside reading shed, which we are really looking forward to having installed.

Jen Pearce
Headteacher
Tel: 703484

Email: reception@magnacartaacademy.org


NEWPORT AND DISTRICT FLOWER CLUB

Our aim is to encourage the love of flowers with an atmosphere of fun and friendship. Members are offered a full programme of demonstrations and workshops and no flower arranging skills are necessary. We invite you to enjoy watching very talented floral demonstrators produce amazing arrangements that are raffled off to lucky members of the audience.

We meet on the third Wednesday of the month except August, December and January, 7.30pm for 8.00pm in Ugley Village Hall. Entry is £7.50 to include refreshments and visitors are always welcome. Our meeting on 20th March will be a workshop and everything will be provided to make a seasonal arrangement to take home, as well as step by step instructions. There is a modest fee for materials. Why not come along?



Patricia Sanz
Email: flowersanzp2020@gmail.com



Stansted Pilates & Osteopathy

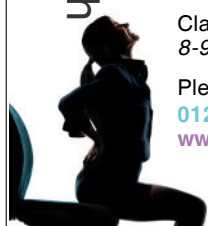

Hazel Williams is one of the few osteopathic practitioners who specialises in both structural and cranial osteopathy to treat a wide range of patients from babies to the elderly, from the immobile to athletes. Her treatment can help with: back, neck, joint, arthritic, muscle and sciatic pain, trapped nerves, sports injuries, headaches and migraine.


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Classes held at: *The Quaker Hall, Chapel Hill.*
8-9pm Mon / 9-10am Sat.

Please call to book an appointment or a class
01279 813371 or **07973 409675**
www.hazel-williams.co.uk

the osteopath



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THE END OF THE SAXONS 1043-1087 PART 2

The Battle of Hastings

In Saxon England and Scotland, the throne did not necessarily go to the reigning king's son. The king could promise it to anyone, which is what Saint Edward the Confessor did. He promised the crown to Harold Godwinson, his wife's brother, and to William the Conqueror, Duke of Normandy. Harold swore an oath to William, but when Edward the Confessor died, the former said: *Y'know what? Stuff that, what is the worst that can happen?* The Viking Harald Hardrada invaded in early 1066, looking to take the crown. He was defeated, and Harold Godwinson figured that William would soon do the same.

So his army waited and waited, until they eventually decided that the Duke of Normandy was not coming, gave up, and went home. When William landed in England later that year, Harold was unprepared. He hastily summoned his army, and hurried to Hastings to die.



William the Conqueror

Remember that clever know-it-all from part 1? He will tell you that the Battle of Hastings actually happened in a place called Battle, but the War-Naming Commission decided the Battle of Battle was a stupid name, and instead named it after Hastings, a nearby town. However, we have learned not to trust him. In fact, Battle did not exist in 1066. It did happen in Hastings, because why else would it be called the Battle of Hastings? When the town Battle came along later, it was named as a reference to the Battle of Hastings.

When William the Conqueror died, there was a power struggle. He was succeeded by his son, William Rufus, nicknamed for his red hair. He met a fate similar to that of Harold Godwinson 34 years ago – an arrow-related fate shrouded in mystery.

The Funky Chicken
Aged 10
Email: cmgpelly@gmail.com (Mother)



RECYCLING



Discontinued collections

Sadly we can no longer recycle blister packs or dental products so please do not leave these at the church.

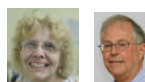
However we can still accept the following: ink cartridges (**not** toners), stamps, mobile phones, ipads and tablets (**not** laptops). Please make sure all personal data has been erased; the easiest way to do this is by a *factory reset*. It would be helpful if **all items** could be placed in a paper/plastic bag or envelope; please use a separate one for each category and do not mix items. Donations can be left in the boxes outside the blue main door of the Free Church at the bottom of Chapel Hill. There is also a collecting box inside St John's church. Alternatively please leave items in the porch of 7 Blythwood Gardens.

To recycle laptops or printers there are two organisations which refurbish them and donate to schools and charities; both will collect from you free of charge. Contact Cambridge Recycling Centre on 01223 473875 email: sales@cambridge-computer-recycling.co.uk or Townstech in Harlow tel 898240 www.townstech.co.uk.

Aldi and Co-op Packaging

A reminder that Aldi in Bishop's Stortford will accept the following: crisp packets, pet food pouches, plastic film, sweet wrappers, plastic bags, biscuit wrappers and bread bags. Stansted Co-op also has a collection point near the entrance for vegetable, fruit and bread bags, crisp packets and biscuit wrappers. Thanks to Rosina Kirkwood for supplying this information.

Note we are not collecting on behalf of Aldi or the Co-op so please do not bring these items to the church.



Marion and Mike Dyer
Tel: 814059
Email: recycle@stanstedfreechurch.org.uk

FRIENDS OF ST MARY'S



The church calendar is already filling up with various events and I am working on new things to bring to you too. Storms of recent weeks resulted in some hefty tree branches coming down. Fortunately, no damage to headstones. A cleaning party is due over the next few weeks. The spring flowers are already making an appearance and our churchyard work will resume very soon. There is always space for more volunteers if you want to come to help us; the churchyard is huge! Last year, with help from Alan, Mike, Peter and Sue, the church path was transformed by sheer hard work. There is no longer the grassy, mossy, slippery path; now we can see the cobblestones and it is no longer a slip hazard. Peter even managed to remove a tree root which was making the pathway buckle and rise. Thank you for that, all of you. It certainly was a challenge for the knees!

We will work towards the Anglia in Bloom competition again this year, to be judged in July, but the work starts now. Any plants that you need to rehome, please spare a thought for the churchyard. Please check the Link for future events, I will advertise in plenty of time.



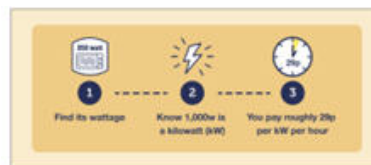
Lynda Dale
Tel: 07716 099474



SUSTAINABLE STANSTED

Knowledge is Power Sir Francis Bacon

One thing that may prevent us from reducing the power that we use, is not knowing how much our appliances are consuming and costing, when we use them. If we do know, we can then make informed choices, so this article shows how to calculate what appliances cost to use.



The Steps

Step	Find the power rating of your appliance in Watts; look in the product manual, or on a label on the product. If in Watts, divide by 1,000 to convert to KWh	Electricity Price P per KWh	Cost in pence to use for 1 hour
1	Microwave rated at 900 watts = 0.9 Kw per hr	30**	$0.9 \times 30 = 27p$
2	Oven rated at 1.2 Kw = 1.2 Kw per hour	30	$1.2 \times 30 = 36p$
3	Tumbledryer – typically 2.5 Kw per hour	30	$2.5 \times 30 = 75p$
4	Washing Machine – on average 0.9 KWh	30	$0.9 \times 30 = 27p$
5	100 W old fashioned light bulb = 0.6 KWh for 6 hrs*	30	$0.6 \times 30 = 18p$
6	11 W LED bulb (for similar light)= 0.066 KWh for 6hrs*	30	$0.066 \times 30 = 2p$

*A typical winter night **a round number and quite typical

Do not forget the amount of time you are using the appliance. For example a jacket potato in the microwave takes 10 mins, so costs 2.7p, but the oven takes 1hr costing 36p. A tumbledryer cycle is usually about 2 hrs costing £1.50p. We hope this helps you, and we love feedback, so please let us know how you get on.

Bob Burlton
Email:sustainablestansted@gmail.com



Into the Stars

A reminder of our concert on **Saturday 16th March** at 7.30pm in Saffron Hall, when we will be exploring English choral music over the past 30 years. The programme includes music by Vaughan Williams, Cecilia McDowall, Will Todd and Jonathan Dove. The conductor is Quintin Beer, with Stansted's own Richard Carr on piano and organ. Tickets: £11-£21 available from the Saffron Hall website www.saffronhall.com or Saffron Hall Box Office tel 0845 548 7650 Monday to Friday 10.00am-4.30pm.



Sarah Ludlow-Elston



THE PLACE ON THE HILL

www.stanstedfreechurch.org.uk

Do you feel sometimes that winter will never end? Join us for free coffee, cakes and biscuits in friendly company on **Wednesdays 10.00am-noon** and save on your home's energy bills. We also have a jigsaw you can work on. There is no need to book, just come along to the Free Church at the bottom of Chapel Hill. There is limited parking behind the church. Adults of all ages are welcome. If you have children, please come along to *Fun Place on the Hill* which opens on Fridays; see separate article for more information.



Mike and Marion Dyer
Tel: 814059

Email: theplace@stanstedfreechurch.org.uk



HUW JOHNSON CLUB

The Club's regular Thursday evenings restarted on 22nd February with an evening of board games. During March we will be welcoming the Bishop's Stortford Gospel Choir to come and perform for us as well as having a crafts evening. As always, anyone interested in attending as a member or a volunteer, please do get in touch.

Ellen Brooks
Tel: 07800 896516
Email: ellenbrooks@hotmail.co.uk

FUN PLACE ON THE HILL

www.stanstedfreechurch.org.uk



Please come and join us on Friday mornings, where children enjoy playing with the toys, have plenty of space to run around, and join in a Sing-Along around 10.30am. Adults chat over coffee in a relaxed atmosphere. All ages are welcome, although Fun Place is particularly suitable for children. We are open every Friday during March **except Good Friday 29th March** in the Free Church Hall, which is warm and comfortable. Why not come along for a couple of hours and help save on home energy costs? Free squash and healthy snacks are available for children, and tea or coffee and biscuits for the adults. There is limited free parking in the church car park. We look forward to welcoming you on Friday mornings.

Sue Parker and Fran Richards
Tel: 657116
Email: funplace@stanstedfreechurch.org.uk



www.letstalkstansted.org

Since the start of the year our steering committee has been busy planning activities and events to help support the mental health of our community. On 1st February we marked *Time to Talk Day*, with several of our volunteers spending the day at Touchpoint, having conversations with people about their mental health. Some people find this a difficult subject to discuss, but we must keep on trying to break down those barriers. It can be extremely helpful to share one's struggles with someone who can listen without judgement.

On **Tuesday 26th March** we are organising a special event to mark *Debt Awareness Week*. Money can be a huge source of stress and anxiety which can negatively affect our mental health. We are inviting a panel of experts to share some information and advice on staying out of debt and dealing with any debt you may have accumulated. Please follow us on Facebook or see our website for further information.



Stansted Men's Shed

It will soon be time to pick up the activity at the Veg Shed, our Elm's Farm allotment, which is part of our network of local activity groups. This is currently run for men only enabling camaraderie and conversation alongside gentle exercise and food growing, but we are now also looking to start a ladies gardening group at the allotment. We will also soon commence work on refurbishing the existing shed to create a work shed for woodworking. The photo shows how one of our birdboxes has been beautifully painted by a young lady and is now a hit with the bluetits! If you are interested in getting involved in any of our groups or projects, please contact us.

Dina McDonald

Email: info@letstalkstansted.org



www.bentfieldprimaryschool.co.uk

On Friday 19th January, we travelled by coach to the O2 arena to take part in the *Young Voices Concert*. Many of the children had not been before, so that first glimpse of the Millennium Dome as we came out of the Blackwall Tunnel

was met with a lot of excitement! We took our seats for the afternoon's rehearsal, led by conductor David Lawrence, and got our first opportunity to hear what a 9,000 strong choir sounds like - it hits you right to the core! We rehearsed parts of the featured artists songs - MC Grammar *Readers Are Leaders* and the *World Book Day* song. Then a particular highlight, getting to perform *Extraordinary* with Natalie Williams and Urban Strides.



As the evening concert began, we had great fun spotting our grown-ups and carers as they took their seats; we were easily viewable as we were flying the huge Bentfield banner and parents mimicked our waves and dance moves across the arena. The concert was simply amazing. It was an extraordinary evening filled with energy, enthusiasm and commitment from the Bentfield Choir. They gave it their all and, after months of learning, they were ready to showcase their talents in song and sign language. I felt huge pride for every one of them and I am sure that what they achieved in that moment will stay with them for a lifetime.

Fran Alvey
School Choir Leader

QUIZ

Give the:

- 1 Name the actress who played Queen Elizabeth II in the first two series of *The Crown*
- 2 Longest river in the UK
- 3 Most consumed manufactured drink in the world
- 4 Number represented by the letter D in Roman numerals
- 5 Letter that represents code name for head of MI6
- 6 Fear of animals
- 7 US state that Albany is the capital of
- 8 Name of a baby kangaroo
- 9 Number of grand slams won by Andy Murray
- 10 First female cabinet minister
- 11 Only planet to spin clockwise
- 12 Grenadine is made from this fruit
- 13 First football world cup to use red and yellow cards
- 14 Colour of the 'black box' on planes
- 15 Number of seats on Concorde

Compiled by Tricia Bromley

Answers on page 29



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www.manudencommunitycentre.co.uk

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Owlets Playgroup

For more information please contact

Chris **01279 817111** info@mvcc.manuden.org.uk



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Email: lettings@stanstedfreechurch.org.uk

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Available for hire on a regular basis for classes,
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drinks, peaceful garden, piano, screen,
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Public parking opposite. Competitive rates

Please contact Yvonne Estop

Tel: 07595 087207

Email: yvonne-wood@outlook.com



ST JOHN'S HALL

Large hall available on a regular basis
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Please contact the church office on 01279 815243

Email: st.johns.church@btinternet.com

Ugley Village Hall

www.uglevillage.org.uk

With two halls, ample parking, facilities for the disabled and
competitive rates, Ugley Village Hall on the B1383
(Cambridge Road), is available for hire throughout the
year for children's parties, adult parties (over 25s),
functions, clubs, classes and social meetings.

For bookings or further information please contact Susan Bone

Tel: 01279 814052 Email: uglevillagehall@gmail.com



FREE NHS Hearing Aid Maintenance Service

2nd Tuesday of each month 10 am - noon
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www.hearinghelpessex.org.uk Tel 01245 496347

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Stansted's Voluntary Community Care Service

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**Helpline serves to harness the goodwill that exists in Stansted
If you would like to help as a Volunteer please give us a call**



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www.rainbowstansted.co.uk**

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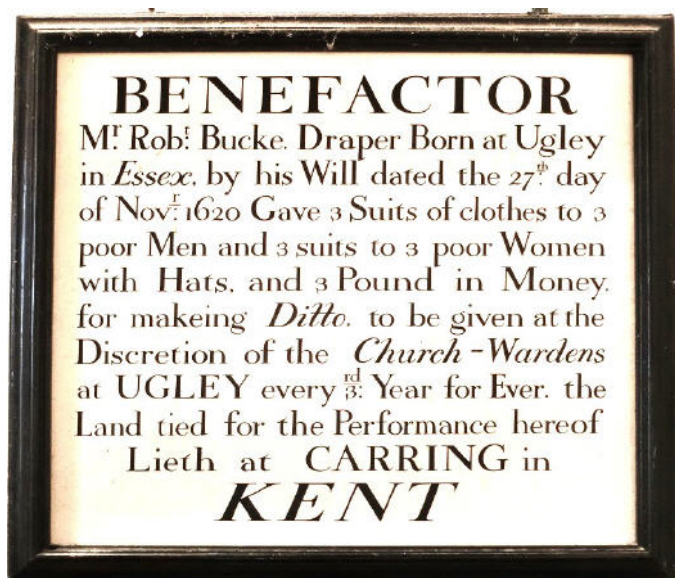


THE HUNDRED PARISHES SOCIETY

www.hundredparishes.org.uk

We are fortunate today that we have a benefit system to help vulnerable people. In the past, the less fortunate relied on parish relief or the generosity of the better-off. Some wealthy benefactors left money for the provision of almshouses. You can see an article on almshouses on the Hundred Parishes website. Other philanthropists helped the poor by giving money in a variety of ways.

Some churches record the benevolence of these donors on large benefactor boards. For example, on the board below in St Peter's Church Ugley, it states that *In his will of 1620, Robert Bucke, a draper, gave three suits of clothes to three poor men and three suits to three poor women with hats, to be given every third year forever.*



Just a few miles away in Manuden's parish church, a board describes three benefactors, one of whom is the same Robert Bucke. Here he gives the same number of suits to the poor of Manuden, with additional hats, shoes and stockings. In Little Hadham the church of St Cecilia has a board recording that Miss Ann Scott, in her 1865 will, left dividends to the rector and churchwardens to distribute bread on Shrove Sunday each year *at their discretion* to the poor of the Parish.

Hatfield Broad Oak's Church of St Mary the Virgin has a brass plaque describing the generosity of John Gobert. He left £600 in his will of 1623 for the purchase of land, the proceeds from which were to be distributed in a variety of ways including £4 per annum to the town of Hatfield Broad Oak. His heir Sir John Barrington subsequently bought the manor of Keeres in Aythorpe Roothing to comply with the will. Please look out for more proclamations of generosity.



Ken McDonald
Secretary
Tel: 813226

Email: hundredparishes@btinternet.com



STANSTED SCOUTS

The 1st Stansted Scout group needs your help to keep it running. No experience? No problem. Any parent already has the skills in place, and if you do not we will show you. In particular we are looking for uniformed leaders for our Tuesday evening Cub section, every now and again or regularly to suit you. We have over 20 would-be cubs aged eight, nine and 10 waiting for you to help them have fun and join the adventure. Remember, if they go kayaking, you go kayaking, providing you want to. If you think you could help or want more information, please contact me.

Mark Gerber
Group Scout Leader
Tel: 07715 628201

Email: stanstedscoutgroup@gmail.com

AUBREY BUXTON NATURE RESERVE

www.essexwt.org.uk

The reserve is already showing the first signs of spring, brought on by the relatively warm weather for this time of year. The hazel trees have catkins hanging from the branches. These are the male flowers; the female flowers are there too, but these are much smaller red buds. The birds too are thinking of spring, and many are actively looking at possible nest sites. I watched a pair of magpies collecting sticks and seemingly exchanging views on what were the best ones. The winter visitors are still here however, and we were delighted to see a flock of redpolls feeding on the birch seeds. They will be putting on as much energy reserves as possible before migrating northwards. They bring the bird species count for birds over the last 12 months to 32.



The volunteers tackled a large tree that had fallen across the middle pond. We sawed through the trunk to leave the root ball on the far side and then gradually hand winched the tree across the pond sawing it into sections as it came. I must say we rather enjoyed it!

John Welham
Warden

Email: communications@essexwt.org.uk

THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH

I used to start my day listening to the Today programme on BBC Radio 4. Now, however, I am more likely to tune into classical music on Radio 3. My conversion is largely attributable to the increasing habit of politicians and activists to talk across each other. Far from arousing my interest, it leaves me irritated and, to some degree, insulted by the implied assumption that if you have the last word you win the argument. Not so. The British public are not as impressionable as some politicians might think. People see cheap party-political points scoring for what it is, an insult to responsible political debate and a side-step from the real issues to hand. The public are not fooled into thinking that those who can talk longer and louder than their opponents win the day. What they do realise is that failing to listen to others and not to exercise respect and restraint damages the political process. Worst of all, it undermines public confidence in those who represent us and the machinery of government, whether national or local. Why is it so few people bother to vote when it should be a primary civic responsibility?

With a general election looming this year, we will have to brace ourselves for increasingly noisy and fractious arguments between the rival parties. People's willingness to engage thoughtfully in the vital issues underpinning the election will not be helped if we have just another unseemly shouting match in which nobody listens to anyone but themselves. Real listening or, put another way, attentive listening is not always easy. It requires honesty and openness and an ability to put aside one's own views for a moment and to consider with care the views of another person and the experience that gave rise to them. It requires courage to challenge oneself and to be open to the possibility that one might be mistaken.



Jonathan Morrell
Stansted Quaker Meeting

EASTER SERVICES

STANSTED QUAKERS

Easter Sunday 31st March
10.30am Meeting

ST JOHN'S

Palm Sunday 24th March
9.30am Procession of the Palms and Holy Communion
We gather in the memorial gardens (weather permitting) for the blessing of palm crosses and process into church. The service includes a dramatic telling of the Passion of Christ in words and music performed by the congregation and the choir

Maundy Thursday 28th March
7.30pm Liturgy of Maundy Thursday followed by one hour vigil. A choral celebration of Holy Communion commemorating the last supper and Jesus's command to love one another in a symbolic act of foot washing

Good Friday 29th March
2.00pm Liturgy of Good Friday. A reflective service of readings, hymns and anthems sung by our choir

Easter Sunday 31st March
9.30am Easter Day Holy Communion

STANSTED FREE CHURCH

Good Friday 29th March
10.30am Rev'd Gill Hulme - Reflective Service
Easter Sunday 31st March
10.30am Rev'd Stuart Veitch - Easter Communion

ST THERESA OF LISIEUX

Palm Sunday
Saturday 23rd March
5.15pm Confessions 6.00pm Mass
Sunday 24th March
8.30am and 10.00am Mass
Maundy Thursday 28th March
7.30pm Mass
Good Friday 29th March
10.30am Stations of the Cross for Children and Families
3.00 pm Liturgy of the Lord's Passion
Holy Saturday 30th March
7.00pm Easter Vigil
Easter Sunday 31st March
8.30am and 10.00am Mass of Easter Day





STANSTED FREE CHURCH

Methodist / URC
Chapel Hill

www.stanstedfreechurch.org.uk

Secretary Catherine Dean
Tel: 813977
Email: catherine@stanstedfreechurch.org.uk

Lettings Marion and Mike Dyer
Tel: 814059
Email: lettings@stanstedfreechurch.org

Preachers for March

3rd 10.30am Richard Lewney - New Directions
10th 10.30am Rev'd Gill Hulme
17th 10.30am Rev'd Charles Martin
24th 10.30am Jerry Heyhoe
29th 10.30am Rev'd Gill Hulme - Good Friday
31st 10.30am Rev'd Stuart Veitch - Easter Communion

We extend a warm welcome to anyone who would like to join us for worship, which is followed by a social time with coffee.



All enquiries: The Church Office, St John's Hall,
including Church St John's Road, Stansted CM24 8JP
Hall bookings Tel: 815243 (with answerphone)
Office hours: Monday, Wednesday, Friday
10.00am-12 noon
Email: stansted.church.office@gmail.com
Website: www.thefivechurches.org.uk

Priest in Charge Rev'd Dr Colin Fairweather
Tel: 816721
Email: revdrcolinfairweather@gmail.com

Associate Priest Rev'd Helen Flack
Email: revhelenstn@gmail.com

Pastoral Assistant: Kathryn West
Tel: 816293
Mobile: 07880 602717
Email: kewest@btinternet.com

Director of Music Anne Brooks
Email: anne.brooks22@yahoo.co.uk

Services Family Communion (1st Sunday) 9.30am
Holy Communion (2nd-4th Sundays)
9.30am



QUAKERS



Quaker Meeting House, 71 Chapel Hill
Stansted CM24 8AE
www.stansted.quakermeeting.org

Contact Jonathan Morrell
Tel: 07775 860379
Email: woldsouth3@gmail.com

Lettings Yvonne Estop Tel: 07595 087207
Email: yvonne-wood@outlook.com

Sunday worship 10.30am. Visitors are always welcome. We join together in stillness for an hour, followed by coffee and chat. Quakers allow each person to explore their own experience of the divine. We try to live our faith in everyday life, with a dedication to peace, simplicity, truth, equality, and nature.

Light Group This is a guided Quaker meditation. There is more information on the noticeboard outside the Meeting House or do contact Sue on 07759 532115. We generally meet on the 2nd Saturday of each month.



ST THERESA OF LISIEUX CATHOLIC CHURCH

High Lane, Stansted CM24 8LQ
www.sttheresasstansted.org

Parish Priest Fr Clement Orango
Tel: 814 349
Email: frclémentorango@brcdt.org

Parish Administrator Clair Rava
Tel: 816889
Email: stansted@brcdt.org

Masses
Saturday 5.15pm-5.45pm Confessions 6.00pm Mass
Sunday 10.00am Mass
Wednesday 12.30pm

Baptisms By appointment

Our Mass times can be subject to change so please refer to our website and newsletter for updated information, including weekday Masses. Confessions are at 5.15pm every Saturday before the Vigil Mass and by appointment.



From St John's Registers January

Wedding
19th John James Mahoney and Angelina Sakka
Funeral
2nd Lilian Joy - at St John's
Memorial Service
26th Margaret Arnold - at St John's

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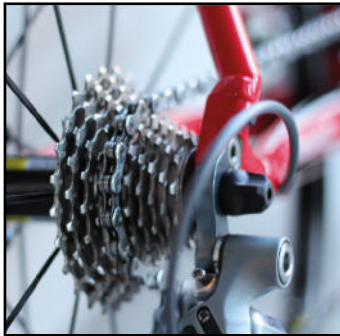
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BEHIND THE SCENES

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Stansted Airport Grant

This month I am bringing you some great news which Touchpoint received at the end of 2023. Each year Stansted Airport Community fund chooses one local charity to support with a large sum of money, and I am pleased to write that this year's recipient is Touchpoint! On Friday 12th January Stansted Airport MD, Gareth Powell and local MP, Kemi Badenoch attended Touchpoint to meet some of the team and present the cheque for £50,000.



The money received will be put towards the refurbishment of the Crafton Green House building, next door to the Day Centre, in order to bring it back into public use. The Touchpoint team have now raised more than £120,000 towards this refurbishment which is wonderful. The use of this building will mean that the work Touchpoint does in the community can be expanded. Currently they directly impact more than 2,000 people in the local area every week through the growing list of projects and services; the ability to help more people will be amazing. In future articles I will update you on the progress of the refurbishment along with my usual insights into the various Touchpoint activities.

Hannah

STANSTED IS WELL READ

The next meeting of our book club will be on Tuesday 5th March at 8.00pm in the Dog and Duck, Lower Street where we will be discussing last month's book choice *The Joy Luck Club* by Amy Tan. Four Chinese women, recent immigrants to San Francisco in 1949, meet weekly to play mahjong and tell stories of what they left behind in China. United in loss and new hope for their daughters' futures, they call themselves the Joy Luck Club. Their daughters, who have never heard these stories, think their mothers' advice is irrelevant to their modern American lives. The mother daughter dynamic will sound familiar whatever your age. Please do get in touch if you would like to join us. A warm welcome awaits.



Diana Griffin
Tel: 813056

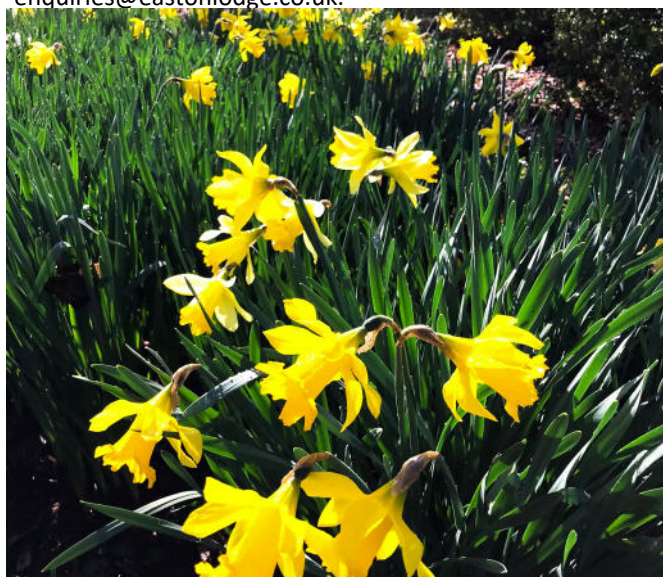
www.eastonlodge.co.uk

In February work progressed fast on the second half of the new path to make sure it was ready for visitors on snow-drop days. Unfortunately the good weather for path building meant the snowdrops coming up fast and being rather ahead of themselves, making us nervous for our snowdrop days. So what March will bring is anyone's guess!

Daffodil season will probably start early, so why not consider a group visit for March? The gardens are not open on Thursdays until April, so a group visit is the only way to see the daffodils in the Lime Wood at their best.

Last year we welcomed the retired International Daffodil Registrar to the Gardens. She found many daffodils that resembled the 17 old varieties that she identified in her 2003 survey. They were probably planted at the time that Peto redesigned the gardens for the Countess of Warwick. The main catalogue available then supplied more than 400 varieties.

Now Kew reckons that 36 wild varieties have been identified and there are over 26,000 cultivated varieties. So, open your eyes to daffodils this year! If you want to arrange a visit for more than 10 people on a Thursday, please email enquiries@eastonlodge.co.uk.



This month we will be holding two New Volunteers' Days on **Saturday 9th March** and **Thursday 14th March**. Our volunteers love spending time at the gardens, whatever the weather - well, within reason! There are tasks suitable for all and the opportunity to make new friends. For more information please see our website.

Jill Goldsmith
Tel: 07947 183439
Email: jillgoldsmith1@virginmedia.com



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We offer a specialist nursery, speech and language therapy and Saturday clubs for children with learning disabilities and special additional needs, to develop their potential and to provide respite for their families. Our Ofsted-regulated special needs nursery provides tailored education and social support for pre-school children, offering a fully inclusive educational and care setting, offering:

- one-to-one provision as required
- extra-curricular activities
- fully qualified staff who liaise with a range of support professionals and therapists
- extensive parental support

The children in our nursery follow the national Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) curriculum in an environment dedicated to children with additional needs. Our nursery staff teach and develop skills which the children may be delayed in, such as speech and mobility; they also encourage them to make friends with other children. Our speech and language therapy programme can be offered alongside our nursery provision, enabling the children to get the most from their early years' education. Children may be referred to us by parents or specialists, usually when there is evidence of a developmental delay, or the child is struggling in a mainstream setting. However, we do not need a diagnosis; if there are specific areas where your child is not meeting specific outcomes, there is global developmental delay or specific medical care needs, we may be able to offer your child a place at our nursery.



Our Saturday clubs give children and young people the opportunity to have fun, meet and make friends and provides vital respite to families. To enable us to give the children and young people the best experience possible, we hold different Saturday clubs according to age and need, covering 5 to 12 years and 13 to 25 years.

Learn more on our website and follow us on Facebook and Instagram @grovecottagemencap.

Sarah Smith
Communications Officer
07517 861608

Email: comms@mencapgrovecottage.org

BRAIN TRAINING

Here is a quick and simple way to improve neck movement if you have a stiff neck.

1. First test out how your neck is moving: turn your head left and right then drop your head side to side
2. Rub each of the following areas for 5-10 seconds
3. Rub around the base of the skull where the neck joins the skull. Do not be too vigorous here! These muscles are only weeny and very precious
4. Now rub behind your ears, on the skull. Listen to the sound of your fingers rubbing the skull
5. Next up, rub the pinnae of the ears, so the floppy bit (aka lugs). Rub all round, paying attention to the sound
6. Finally rub your fingers together near your ear-holes, again paying attention to the sound of the rubbing. Is there a side-to-side difference?
7. Now retest your neck mobility, which will hopefully be a bit freer.



This is an excellent drill if your neck is stiff; it is also good after a lengthy session on a screen. It is a wonderful drill for ball sports where you keep your eyes on the ball whilst your body is in vigorous motion delivering the ball to elsewhere, with as much accuracy as possible and the right level of power.

Clare Harding
Tel: 07802 872919



Stansted Network

NEWS FROM YOUR LOCAL COUNCILS



Annual Parish Meeting 2024

13th March 2024 — 7.30pm
72 Chapel Hill, the Day Centre
Please arrive from 7pm to allow time for refreshments and a prompt start

* The Mountfitchet Exchange will serve as the venue should the Day Centre be under repair in March.



Ruth Clifford Clerk of Stansted Mountfitchet Parish Council

What to expect from our Annual Parish Meeting...

By the time we see our 2024 Stansted Mountfitchet Parish Council will have held over 30 meetings. Residents are invited to them all, but there is one event each year where our doors are opened that little bit wider for the public — the Annual Parish Meeting.

Other than our Full Council, which features a 15-minute period for questions from the public, residents typically attend meetings as observers.

But what makes the Annual Parish Meeting special is the chance for you to raise issues and ask questions of your choice directly to Parish Councillors. In fact under the Local Government Act 1972, any registered elector present at an Annual Parish Meeting is able to call a ballot on matters discussed.

What is also special about the Annual Parish Meeting is it provides a space for village organisations to inform residents of their activities. In recent years we have hosted presentations from TouchPoint, the Stansted Surgery, representatives from Essex Police's Uttlesford Community team, even the chief executive of the district council.

On our pages this month you will find details of the Annual Parish Meeting agenda, reports from SMPC Chair Maureen Caton and John O'Brien, head of the Finance & General Purposes Committee. We also have some background on our guest speakers.

We hope the content on these pages will help residents to be sufficiently informed to make the most of this year's Annual Parish Meeting. We look forward to seeing you there!

And This Year's Guest Speakers Are...

Thanks to help from Forest Hall School our Youth Council made great strides in 2023. We now have six serving Youth Councillors. At the meeting you will hear how they plan to build a vibrant youth community in Stansted Mountfitchet. Also on the youth front will be Faircroft House's Tim Atkinson. A stalwart of the youth and live music scene in Saffron Walden, **Mr Atkinson** will set out his vision for

youth services at the Peter Kirk Centre, now Faircroft have taken on the running of our Youth Club there. You will also get to **find out from recipients of the £7000 distributed to organisations by the SMPC in 2023.**

Discover how our grants have been used to foster closer community ties by some of Stansted's most valued clubs and societies. For when to apply for a SMPC grant, see box on page 23.

What's on the Agenda?

- To receive apologies for absence **1**
- To receive the minutes of the meeting held on 15th March 2023 **2**
- To welcome representatives of Stansted Youth Council **3**
- To receive a report from the Parish Council Chair – Cllr Maureen Caton **4**
- Parish Council Financial Report – Cllr John O'Brien **5**
- To welcome Tim Atkinson of Faircroft CIC regarding the Stansted Youth Club **6**
- To welcome recipients of Parish Grants in 2023 **7**
- Open Forum **8**



Maureen Caton Chair of Stansted Mountfitchet Parish Council

Annual Report for the council year 2023-2024



Finding room for Almshouses

You will be very aware that we have been in search of and exploring potential sites for the re-provision of the Fuller-Maitland Almshouses, previously sited on Church Road. Due to a lack of available appropriate sites, Legacy East Almshouse Partnership, who are the managers of the fund, have made the decision to begin negotiations on the purchase of a house within Stansted to ensure the funds are retained for our community's benefit. We do not have the detail of these negotiations at the time of writing, but more information should be available by the time of the Annual Parish Meeting.



Potholes & Station Staffing

We have all experienced the lack of joined up working by Essex Highways on our local roads. We worked with others and ultimately were able to get some of the decisions that had created unnecessary delays and diversions reversed. This, along with the pothole issue—which remains a focus for answers from Essex County Council on the expenditure in Stansted—must be addressed.

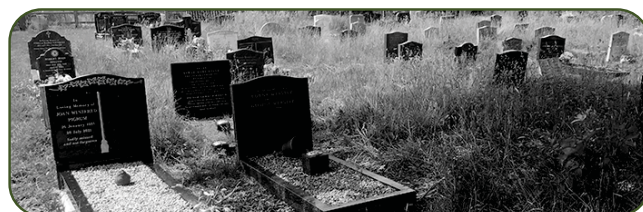
Along with our local District Councillor for the North, we successfully supported the local campaign to retain the staffing levels at our railway station.



Peacock Pharmacy & TouchPoint Partnership

We were also a key advocate in the appeal—which was successful—to grant the Peacock Pharmacy a dispensing licence. We continue to work with our partners at the surgery to provide additional services and a collection access point here at Crafton Green for our residents in the North—since the decision by Boots to close over 200 smaller premises, including Stansted's on Cambridge Road.

We continue to partner with TouchPoint to promote services to benefit our community and congratulate them on their continued success and achievements in securing grant funding to promote the gradual transformation of our Day Centre and Crafton Green House. Other than helping TouchPoint by organising and funding repairs to the Day Centre and adjoining buildings, the Parish Council agreed to lease Crafton Green House to the organisation. Handing over the keys to both buildings will open more doors (excuse the pun) for TouchPoint to run and expand its service provision to the community.



Sticking up for Residents...

Additional cemetery land is still required and is now becoming more urgent, and so remains an ongoing focus in discussions on community benefits with planners and developers. Our relationship with Uttlesford District Council (UDC) planning officers—to promote and gain community benefits where land has been agreed for development—has improved and we hope appropriate land can be made available in future negotiations.

SMPC has sought legal advice in relation to Gigaclear's siting of "the box" on Five Acres without our permission. The advice was to informally negotiate rather than begin a costly legal challenge with a probable negative outcome as the utility cannot be feasibly moved. A meeting with residents, Gigaclear and ourselves will have taken place before the Annual Parish Meeting to hopefully promote an acceptable outcome for all concerned.



Shepherding the NDP nearer to completion

Having received input from UDC officers on our draft Neighbourhood Development Plan, we are now putting the final touches to it to ensure that our policies and objectives are sufficiently robust to withstand an Inspector's review.



Amplifying the Voice of Local Business

UDC will have completed a consultation on car parking access and charging by the middle of March. Local businesses, the Stansted Business Forum and the recently re-established Economic Development Working Group (EDWG), have robustly questioned the proposed doubling of charges—we await the final outcome. The EDWG works closely with Business Officers from Uttlesford Council and has promoted their drop-in sessions at SMPC offices at the Mountfitchet Exchange for local businesses to get support to apply for grants.



...& Helping Younger Residents Have Their Say

We realise that we need to invest in our youth and you will hear at the Annual Parish Meeting about the exciting projects that are planned for the young people attending our Youth Club provision. Our Youth Council has become energised with the support of staff and pupils at Forest Hall School. The group's Chairman will give a brief outline of some of the projects and ideas they wish to pursue. The Youth Council is helping to promote the needs and interests of the young people in the community and gives our young councillors the experience, skills and competencies they will be able to utilise in their working lives.



Support for Climate Group Bears Fruit

Within the focus on Climate Change, Sustainable Stansted will commission a biodiversity study if the outcome of their grant application to UDC's Zero Carbon Fund is successful. Meanwhile, the council has selected two sites for meadow flower planting—the land surrounding the north knight sign at the junction of High Lane and Cambridge Road, and the two grassed areas at the junction of Pennington Lane and Rainsford Road. Sustainable Stansted is now in its second year which is itself an achievement. Apart from setting up and establishing a Facebook page, a number of initiatives have been started. Articles are published in *The Link* and *The Flyer* every month. A leaflet on energy saving has been delivered to all households and presentations made. Looking ahead the group hope to identify and lobby with others for safe cycle routes in Stansted.

LOOKING AHEAD IN 2024

- **6th June** D-Day Landings Ceremony
We plan to mark the 80th anniversary of this seminal event with a ceremony in the Memorial Gardens
- **July** Judging Anglia in Bloom 2024
— SMPC will be working hard with the Stansted in Bloom group to get the village into shape ahead of judging of this prestigious regional gardening competition
- **16-17th August** Concert Performance from Rungis Orchestra
- **30th August** The Miller's Windmill Fête at the Rec (underwritten by the SMPC)
- **September** Rewilding to get underway at two sites in the village
- **November** Twinning Visit from Rungis
- **10th November** Remembrance Service at the Memorial Gardens
- **December** Christmas lighting display, with a new lighting feature at the fountain on Chapel Hill

Flicking the Switch to Part-night Lighting

The programme to convert the majority of the street lights owned by the Parish Council to LED has progressed successfully. The expectation is that this will result in less maintenance and with a minimum energy saving of 40%. The introduction of part-night lighting to some areas will produce further savings, which cannot be calculated until we agree the new contract in September.



Working with Nearby Councils to Fight Boundary Changes

I will be able to update you on discussions held with Elsenham and Henham Parish Council Chairs in relation to this Parish Council's response to the Boundary Commission following proposals from ECC to realign Stansted with the rural wards to the west of the district. These include Langley, Elmdon, Wendens Loft and Chrishall—all within the sphere of Saffron Walden influence and no connection with wards along the A120 corridor. If agreed, the impact of such a change would be significant in relation to issues such as HGV traffic up and down Grove Hill.



John O'Brien Chair of Finance & General Purposes Committee

Annual Financial Report Fiscal Year 2023-2024

In last year's report, I raised concerns over inflation forecasts, at a time when the rate was at 10%.

Last September, we saw inflation had fallen to 6.7%, but energy costs were still very high, as we experienced when the library building's energy contract was renewed in September with an eye-watering increase of 415%. While we were happy to see inflation drop to 3.9% in November, our energy brokers were warning that there could be significant volatility in the markets caused by ongoing international events.

Street lights These are our largest energy users, and their contract is due to renew in September. We are therefore unable to predict what future costs might be by then. Even after converting most of our street lights to LED, and further energy savings gained through part-night lighting, it would be unwise to risk predicting their level without knowing what baseline cost they would refer to.

To ensure that we are protected against unpleasant surprises, the council is deferring the £10,000 per annum for cemetery expansion for one year, and has also decided to bring in the anticipated £12,000 income from investments in 2024-25, as reserve cover against such surprises.

I hasten to add at this point that should our energy costs not increase by as much as we fear, any surplus within that item on the budget will be paid back into the Cemetery earmarked reserve.

Other Energy Costs Now that TouchPoint are planning to expand their services in both the Day Centre and Crafton Green House, the energy bills are bound to rise significantly as the result of greater use. Consequently, we have had to increase the energy budgets for those buildings.

The Day Centre's energy contract is due for renewal this February, with that for Crafton Green House in December.

We are looking into an opportunity to reduce the tariff for the library building and to align all our energy contracts to a common date, to allow the budgeting of future annual costs to be more accurate. We should also gain the advantage of a possible extra discount based on a combined energy demand.

Below I list other essential additions to the budget for this coming year:

Street lights £15,000 A structural and safety survey highlighted that the lights along Chapel Hill, Lower Street and Station Road are nearing their time for replacement. We cannot ignore this warning, so we need to raise £45,000 over three years to have them all replaced in one go — which will be much cheaper than doing it in phases.

Trees £6,000 The summer heat of 2022 exposed how vulnerable our native species are to climate change. The budget for this year has already been spent and we need to re-establish an earmarked reserve, not least because our three-yearly inspection of all trees is due in 2024.

Play Areas £7,500 Most of our equipment has wooden supports as the main part of their structures, and which need replacing.

CCTV £4,500 The system's server is old and needs to be replaced. This system has proved helpful to the Police in their enquiries.

Repairs to Buildings £4,800 There is still some work to be done at Crafton Green.

Grass Cutting £3,000 To increase the cuts in the cemetery and churchyard to maintain them in a tidy condition.

And finally, a cautionary note: Uttlesford District Council is having to make cuts that clearly indicate the authority is in extreme financial difficulty. This is raising concerns over their competence. Take their recent consultation on parking charges which has proposed swingeing increases in both car parks in Stansted. This was based on out-of-date information. This Parish Council is robustly arguing that this is just a debt reduction exercise with no thought for the potential detrimental effects on the businesses and residents of our own and surrounding communities. We are calling for a rethink on how the Lower Street and Crafton Green car parks are operated and pressing for a free 30-minute period.

You can find our audited accounts and Auditor's Report on our website at stanstedmountfitchet-pc.gov.uk/document-category/financial-reports/

SMPC Community Grants

From March 31st, the window will open for local organisations to apply for a SMPC community grant. In 2024 over £6,300 of funding is available. Awards are made for applications that meet SMPC's grant criteria on a first come, first served basis. For an application pack and details of grant criteria visit stanstedmountfitchet-pc.gov.uk/grants

Twining Events 2024

16-17th August An orchestra from Rungis will perform a concert for our community. This will be followed from 6-8th September by a celebration of community organisations in the French town and our village to be held in Rungis. Representatives from clubs and societies in Stansted that wish to be involved should contact twining@stanstedmountfitchet-pc.gov.uk

Mountfitchet Exchange March Events

Open Spaces committee meeting at 7.30pm on March 6
Peabody Advice Drop-in from 11am on March 7
Business Advice Drop-in from 10am on March 8
Full Council meeting at 7.30pm on March 20
Citizens Advice Drop-ins from 9.30am on March 14, 21, 28
Police Meet-ups from 2.30pm on March 14, from 4pm on March 21, from 5pm on March 22, and at the Co-op from 5pm on March 28.

Contact the Parish Council

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Our next meeting is on **Tuesday 12th March** at 10.40am in South Mill Arts. Coffee will be available from 10.00am. The speaker will be Fiona Rose talking about *The Life and Work of May Morris*: designer, craftsperson and younger daughter of William Morris.



Fiona Rose

Overshadowed in her lifetime by the achievements of her illustrious father, May Morris is today recognised as a leading figure in the Arts and Crafts Movement. She excelled in embroidery but also designed wallpaper, made jewellery, was a talented artist and a skilled editor.

Guests are very welcome and we invite a donation of £7. Come and be entertained and enlightened. Please see our website for details. Our Membership Secretary is Jenny Savage, email: info@tasbs.org.uk or tel 656065.

Michael Fitch
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BIRCHANGER PRIMARY SCHOOL

www.birchanger.essex.sch.uk

The school has embarked on an exciting journey of outdoor play and imaginative exploration through its innovative OPAL (Outdoor Play and Learning) programme. As the school embraces this holistic approach to education, the playground has transformed into a vibrant hub of activity, fostering creativity, social interaction, and joy among its students. At playtime, children burst into the open air, greeted by musical melodies, the iridescent shimmer of bubbles, and the colourful swirls of chalk decorating the ground. The OPAL programme has revolutionised playtime, infusing it with elements of fun and spontaneity. The playground becomes a canvas for their creativity, as they draw intricate patterns with chalk, hopscotch through colourful mazes, and invent new games inspired by the whimsical atmosphere. Children not only develop physical skills but also learn important social skills such as cooperation, communication, and conflict resolution.

Meanwhile, the reception class is treated to a delightful visit from the Pop-Up Village, an immersive experience that sparks imagination and curiosity. Inside the hall, a bustling array of role-play areas awaits, each offering a glimpse into different worlds and professions. From a miniature market stall to a make-believe doctor's office, children explore diverse scenarios, trying on different roles and experiment-

ing with their identities. The Pop-Up Village ignites their imaginations and lays the foundation for lifelong learning and creativity. Together, the OPAL programme and the Pop-Up Village encapsulate the School's commitment to holistic education, nurturing the minds, bodies, and spirits of its students through playful exploration and imaginative discovery.

Sharon Vessey
Headteacher
Tel: 812362



UGLEY WOMEN'S INSTITUTE

For our first meeting of the year, we welcomed Ken McDonald of the Hundred Parishes Society who, accompanied by his wife Janice, gave us a beautifully illustrated and fascinating talk on some of the churches belonging to the Hundred Parishes. Starting with Stansted's St Mary's Church we travelled through, amongst others, Great Waltham, Hildersham, and Furneux Pelham's St Mary's with its William Morris and Burne Jones stained glass windows. Then to Ickleton and Hatfield Broad Oak with its 13th century effigy and parish chest dating from 1400.

We then moved on to Sawbridgeworth, Much Hadham and Little Easton with its American Forces window, Hunsdon and Hempstead, the latter being the birth place of Dick Turpin. Radwinter and Clavering and Wyddial Church with its brick pillar dating from 15th century were also on the itinerary and last but not least Ken took us into the beautiful Ugley parish church dedicated to St Peter.

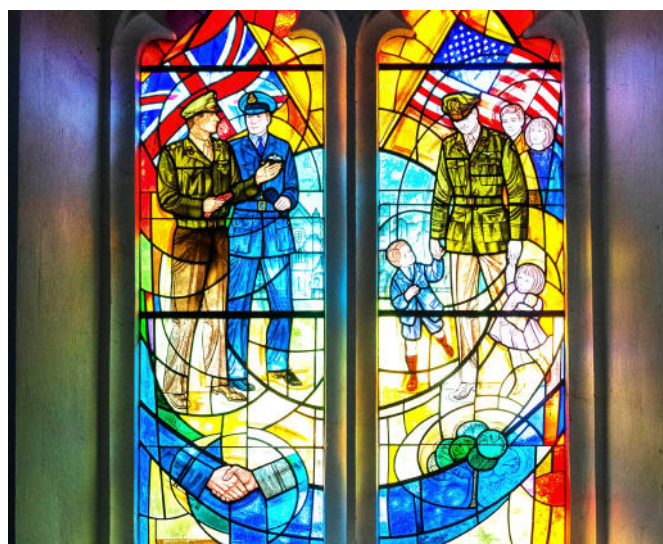


Photo by Mick Fitch of The Arts Society of Bishop's Stortford

Our March meeting is on **Wednesday 20th March** at 2.00pm in Ugley Village Hall. Chris Bishop will be entertaining us with folk songs. Why not come along and join us for the afternoon? You would be most welcome!

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Our January meeting was held in St John's Hall. This would normally have been a meeting run by the members rather than the Committee but this will now be in July. Instead, our treasurer Anne Watson gave a talk about a glass sculptor, Dale Chihuly, who she came across on a visit to Seattle. This city is famous (or infamous) for rainfall, a chewing gum wall and a film! Dale's work was on view in Chihuly Gardens just underneath the Space Needle. Anne was very impressed with his work and showed many of the photos she took, interspersed with some from various international exhibitions he had held, two of which were at Kew Gardens. Dale's work is totally unique; some can be viewed at the Victoria and Albert Museum and at Claridges.



Our next meeting is on **Thursday 14th March** at 7.30pm. It will be at the Bowls Club (please note change of venue) with Mary Waterfall talking about *Interesting Tales of a Jewellery Valuer*. We welcome visitors and new members; please come and join us.

Linda Gurr
Tel: 07743 549241



www.musicatstansted.co.uk

A reminder that Cambridge Chorale, one of the country's leading choirs, are performing at our concert on **Saturday 23rd March** at 7.30pm in St. John's Church. Their programme will explore the world of Italian and English madrigals, with the addition of music by 20th and 21st century composers including Britten, Elgar and Vaughan Williams. As a reviewer has said: *Cambridge Chorale is well on their way to establishing itself as one of the finest chamber choirs in the country. The potent combination of young, well-trained voices and professional-standard musicianship makes them capable of a very high level of performance.* Tickets can be purchased on the door: adults £15, concessions £12, under 21 free.

Richard Allaway
Email: contactus@musicatstansted.co.uk



Our team has been busy responding to emergencies and training for any emergency events. The team took part in various training drills including Breathing Apparatus training, Ladder training and Road Traffic Collisions training; these are all areas the team continues to practise to ensure our response is quick and efficient when we are called out in an emergency. January and February have been a busy start to the year for the crew with the adverse weather meaning an influx of weather-related calls.

Our team now welcomes two Trainee Fire-fighters into our blue light family. FF Morrison and FF Carter have now passed the selection process to start as Trainee Fire-fighters. This selection process consists of a fitness test, maths and English test, aptitude tests, carrying fireground equipment, interview, medical assessment and DBS reference checks. FF Morrison and FF Carter have now completed their initial four-week drill night training on station and will now attend their two-week basic training course at our Service Training Centre under the eyes of our instructors. Then they will undergo a variety of assessments for six weeks before they can join the crew operationally as Trainee Fire-fighters. Everyone at our Fire Station wishes them the best and continues to support them throughout this initial stage of their careers.



The station had a very special visit from Elsenham Primary School on 1st February and the crew commented on how well-behaved all the children were. They were shown all the tools and parts that make up a fire engine and there was even a chance to test out their fire-fighting skills in the drill yard. If any other groups or schools would like to visit feel free to get in touch.

Steve Perry
Tel: 01376 575830
Email: stanstead.oc@essex-fire.gov.uk



DON'T FORGET!

The clocks go forward at
1.00am on Sunday 31st March.

BIG GARDEN BIRDWATCH 2024

For once all my regulars turned up during the annual Big Garden Birdwatch. First to arrive, and last to leave, was a rather portly wood pigeon. In its haste to gobble as much as possible, the pigeon dropped more food than it ate. When the noisy mob of starlings descended and tried to oust the larger bird, it stood its ground, unaffected by all the pecking and pushing. Next was a pair of robins, hopping around under the table picking up any scraps left over from the marauding starlings. Blackbirds joined the robins on the grass, and rather surprisingly were not chased off by the normally aggressive, territorial red breasted chats.



Later another wood pigeon arrived and was soon given its marching orders by the portly one. Some great tits made quick forays to and from the seed and suet ball feeders and a jackdaw came to take a look, after most of the food had gone. A bit later a magpie briefly made an appearance; then even the tenacious pigeon decided to call it a day. Thrilled with how many birds I had counted I went onto the RSPB website to enter my results, pleased to be able to enter more than the pathetic two or three I had spotted for the last few years. Imagine my disappointment when the email from RSPB thanking me for taking part, informed me that my total was less than average for my location! I had never thought of the Big Garden Birdwatch as a competitive sport, but nobody likes being told they are below average! I plan to up my game next year to ensure I increase my score. I do not know how I will achieve this, but I will let you know how I get on.

Loki

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www.waterlanetheatrecompany.co.uk

A reminder that we are producing a marvellous play in early March. This award-winning Theatre Company perform a highly charged courtroom drama written by Jeffrey Archer, *Beyond Reasonable Doubt*. Sir David Metcalf, a famous high court lawyer, is accused of killing his wife. The play takes us through the court proceedings, back to the night in question and ultimately to a truly stunning denouement. As a part of the audience, you become the jury and answer the question: *Did he do it?* The play allows the audience to see every nuance and every clue to allow them to decide whether Sir David is guilty as charged, or innocent as he protests. A host of witnesses are brought forward to testify, some more reliable than others, and in the second half of the play we go back in time to watch the whole scenario played out. Watch the evidence unfold and you can decide.

Performances are at South Mill Arts Complex on **Thursday 7th-Saturday 9th March** at 7.30pm, plus a matinee on Saturday at 3.00pm. Tickets: adults £18.00, concessions £16, are available from South Mill Arts box office tel 710200 or visit www.southmillarts.co.uk. You can find a link and more information on the Water Lane Theatre website.

Richard Pink



Stansted Tennis Club

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www.stanstedtennisclub.co.uk

The mix and match competition which is run every year from October to the end of March is now almost complete for the 2023-24 winter season. This is a fun competition where members are randomly chosen to play with different partners culminating in one pair winning each of the mixed doubles, the ladies' doubles and the men's doubles. At the time of going to print, the ladies' doubles final has already been played with Daphne Lunnon and Diane Brown winning the final against Debbie Lane and Chris Bailey.

Phil Dillon and Dan Warwick are now coaching the junior section of the Club with sessions on Wednesdays and Thursdays 5.00pm-7.00pm in various different age categories. Open Club sessions will continue on Wednesday, Friday and Sunday mornings and Wednesday evenings. Visitors are welcome for a maximum of three sessions at a cost of £2 per hour. We hope to recommence Rusty Rackets in the late spring or summer for members who are not yet comfortable playing at Club open sessions but would like to get back into tennis or gain more confidence.

The AGM was held on 22nd February and details of this will be published in the April edition. We will be holding a quiz evening on Friday 22nd March and on that day there will also be a fun ladies only tournament for 16 players. Please check out our website for further information on the Club.

Debbie Lane

Email: contact@stanstedtennisclub.co.uk



STANSTED HALL & ELSENHAM CRICKET CLUB

www.shcc.hitscricket.com

The recent Club quiz was attended by 178 people and a record profit was recorded – a great start to the year. Junior indoor nets began in December and senior nets have just started on a Sunday morning.

We will be running *All Stars Cricket* for 5 to 8 year olds at our Stansted House ground on Fridays at 5.30pm starting on 3rd May. Arrangements for our 50 years of cricket at Stansted House continue. On 30th June a day of cricket is being organised together with a hog roast which will be enjoyed by members, former members, and Club guests. As ever, if you have an interest in cricket as player, volunteer, or spectator please get in touch.



David Brown
Tel: 831011 Mob: 07788 99963
Email: david1.r.brown@gmail.com



FOOTBALL CLUB

www.spartansouthmidlandsleague.co.uk

We are now seeing more consistency with our First Team League results; we have picked up some much-needed points and have climbed the table. The FA have confirmed that only one side will be relegated and lose their step five status in the National League System, so we feel confident that with six games coming up against teams currently below us in the league, we can face the final months of the season in a much healthier league position. On a wet and windy Tuesday evening we made the long trip to Amptill in a cup fixture; despite playing half the game with only ten players, we managed to take the game to a penalty shootout. Losing 3-4 on penalties was so disappointing given the great effort the players put in in such horrendous playing conditions. The vets are also finding some consistency and a winning formula which has seen them climb up their league.

The Club are hoping to celebrate the anniversary 40 years ago when Stansted FC won the FA Vase in an epic Wembley Final. The date planned is **Saturday 27th April**. We are currently in contact with many of that great playing squad who are keen to attend the celebration. By way of this month's article we are reaching out to as many supporters as possible who made the trip to the final and who have memories and memorabilia of that great day; we would love to hear from you. Next month we will announce further details.

League Fixtures at Hargrave Park in March:

5 th	v Shefford Town & Campton	Kick Off 7.45pm
9 th	v Biggleswade United	Kick Off 3.00pm
23 rd	v Milton Keynes Irish	Kick Off 3.00pm
30 th	v Sawbridgeworth Town	Kick Off 3.00pm



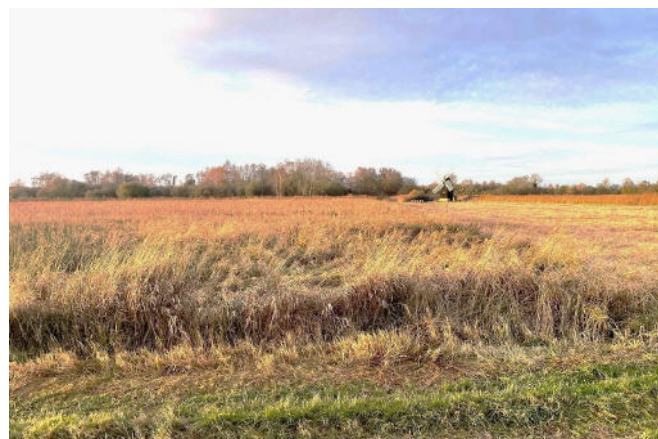
Tom Williams
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RSPB

www.group.rspb.org.uk/stortvalley

Our first event this month is a visit to Wicken Fen National Nature Reserve on **Saturday 9th March**. This is the National Trust's first nature reserve and is one of Europe's most important wetlands with an abundance of wildlife. The raised boardwalk and lush grass groves allow easy access to sedge and reedbeds, where you can encounter rarities such as hen harriers, water voles and bitterns. The reserve is at Lode Lane, Wicken, Ely CB7 5XP and we are meeting there at 10.00am.



The highlight of our March programme is the return of Steve Magennis on **Tuesday 12th March** at 7.30pm to give his presentation *A Birdwatcher's Year - the other two seasons*. In March 2023 we were all captivated by Steve's enthusiasm, knowledge and approach to birding, enhanced with incredible images to illustrate his presentation. This meant that we only had time for two seasons so we welcome him back to present Spring and Summer. We meet at Bishop's Park Community Centre, Lancaster Way, Bishop's Stortford CM23 4DA.

To conclude our March programme, we have a mid-week walk on **Tuesday 19th March**, meeting at Café Yeomans in Lower Street at 10.00am. The plan is to follow a varied route which leaves Stansted via Lower Street and heads in a northerly direction to Ugley Green. From Ugley Green the route passes under the M11 before skirting Alsa Wood and passing Aubrey Buxton Nature Reserve. The return to Stansted is through Lower Street where there are a variety of places offering suitable post walk refreshments. For full details of all our activities please see our website or contact me.

Peter Allen
Tel: 07876 295456
Email: peter2349@sky.com

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6 Zoophobia 7 New York 8 Joey 9 3
10 Margaret Bondfield (in 1929 she was minister for labour)
11 Venus 12 Pomegranate 13 Mexico 1970
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