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Stansted Mountfitchet Village Magazine

The Link

www.stanstedlink.org.uk

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CONTRIBUTIONS FOR THE APRIL ISSUE

Please email: editor@stanstedlink.org.uk or post to 7 Blythwood Gardens CM24 8HG by noon on **9th March**.
 Word attachment or typed into an email, max 300 words; landscape photographs **min 250KB** as a separate jpg.
Articles may be subject to editing

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EDITORIAL



Last month I mentioned that so many of our readers have sent us lovely photographs. This month there is another person who has done so: Carol Jennings. Thank you so very much, Carol, your picture looks terrific on the front cover. I really like the contrast between the delicate whiteness of the snowdrops and the tough rough bark of the fallen tree. Clever you, capturing that so brilliantly. We have more flowers to show you this month; see page 26 for a whole page of pictures guaranteed to cheer you up, with the bright colours of the blossoms and spring flowers.

We have not had a *Stansted People* article since September and it is great that we have been able to talk to Barbara Trigg and learn about her life; see page 4. She is very actively involved with events in Stansted and many people know her well. It was also wonderful to learn about David Knight; you can read about his life on page 7. Those of you who live near Burnell's Way will know about the new bench installed by his family. It is great to read how David's neighbours enhanced his life so much; I love the photo of friends and family having a Bench Party in his honour! He does look quite a character, with that terrific smile of his. I would like to point out a couple of local fundraising events which you might enjoy: Family Cream Tea and Bingo on page 6 and Ugley Village Hall Coffee Morning on page 3. A very happy Spring to all of you.

Ed



BIRCHANGER PRIMARY SCHOOL

www.birchanger.essex.sch.uk



STANSTED MOUNTFITCHET u3a

www.stansted.u3asite.uk

Celebrating a love of reading

This half term we have been celebrating our love of reading across the school and are delighted to have purchased a range of exciting new books for our library. Our Learning Council, who also take on the role of school librarians, led a wonderful collective worship exploring how a love of reading helps us experience life in all its fullness. They proudly shared the new books with the children and spoke about why reading matters so much.



As one of our librarians, Isla, beautifully put it, *reading opens a new mindset*. Additionally, research shows that children who read regularly make significantly more progress, with approaches such as reading comprehension linked to an average of five months' additional progress.

Sharon Vessey
Headteacher
Tel: 812362

Email: admin@birchanger.essex.sch.uk

Debunking conspiracies and other challenges

The welter of decisions and imponderables that seized us all during Covid were recollected by Dr Kevin Bryant during our January monthly meeting. His job, when the vaccine became available, was to dispel some worryingly damaging Covid vaccination ideas that were circulating amongst student nurses training at Anglia Ruskin. As a researcher in Physiology, Anatomy, Biochemistry and Nutrition he was tasked with allaying the concerns of nurses who were to step up to the front line of the NHS. The unfortunate misconception circulating, that somehow vaccination led to changes in DNA, caused many student nurses to balk at taking the crucial vaccination. He produced a clear and vital scientific explanation, demonstrating how the vaccine worked so nurses became convinced and able to take up their places in an NHS fighting hard for us all. The u3a audience also benefited from an excellent summary of the science of the vaccine and, during a lively question and answer session, Kevin explored techniques of combating conspiracy theories and the significance of trustworthy science.

Yet further critical issues are to be addressed by the u3a in March, beginning with the garden group welcoming back writer and broadcaster Geoff Hodge to give a talk on *Gardening in the Global Greenhouse* on **Monday 9th March**, well timed to coincide with the springtime itch to get out and nurture our environment. Then, on **Saturday 14th March**, David Morson will ask the question, *Are Donald Trump and Elon Musk the logical Consequence of Globalisation?* promising a dissection of how we got to where we are today. At the monthly meeting on **Thursday 19th March**, best-selling author Andrew Baker will recollect the infamous Profumo Affair. Information on the extensive activities happening in the Stansted u3a can be found on our website or tel 07874 385541.

Julia Cook

It has been an exciting and enriching half term. Our commitment to working in the community continued with our Reception, Year 1 and Year 4 classes visiting Mountfitchet House Care Home so that pupils could share their reading books with the residents. Everyone had a rewarding experience, and I would like to congratulate the pupils for representing our school so brilliantly. We were delighted to welcome Mina from Grove Cottage; she joined us for a whole-school assembly to share the charity's important work supporting children and adults with learning disabilities. Our Year 6 pupils, Esther, Layla and Ruby, proudly presented Mina with a cheque for £843.93, raised through our *Enterprise Event and Happiness Day*. This was an incredible achievement that reflects the ongoing generosity of our school community.



The fantastic *Woodwind of Bishop's Stortford* performed again to our KS1 and KS2 pupils, who were treated to a range of different pieces and learnt about the instruments being played. Year 5 had their very exciting evening *Forest School* session, returning to our woodland area after dark equipped with head torches. They built a campfire, cooked hot dogs, made s'mores and cookies, and played games in the forest and on the field. As we are only halfway through the term, there is still much to look forward to: our whole school science week which will include a visit from the *WonderDome Mobile Planetarium*, Internet Safety Week and World Book Day. More news to follow.

David Rogers
Headteacher
Tel: 813626

UGLEY VILLAGE HALL COFFEE MORNING

We will be holding another of our famous coffee mornings on **Tuesday 24th March** 10.00am-noon in Ugley Village Hall. We hope to have an Easter and spring theme and there will be the usual bumper raffle, well-stocked *bring and buy* stall and coffee and tea with home-made cakes. Do come along and find some bargains, perhaps win a prize and enjoy a chat and refreshments. We would be delighted to see you. All proceeds towards the upkeep of Ugley Village Hall.



Susan Bone
Tel: 814052

St John Passion

J S Bach's *St John Passion* is a timeless masterpiece of sacred music and is one of his most deeply felt works. The society will be giving a performance of this wonderful music on **Saturday 28th March** at 4.00pm in Saffron Hall, with conductor Quintin Beer, tenor William Searle and five soloists from the Royal Academy of Music. They will be accompanied by The Brook Street Band, playing period instruments. It will be sung in English. First performed in 1724, Bach's vivid retelling of Christ's betrayal and crucifixion is characterised by dramatic storytelling and music of immense emotional power. Recitatives, arias, choruses and chorales are skilfully interwoven to convey the themes of human suffering, sorrow and redemption alongside passages of quiet reflection. Its profound spiritual depth and wonderful moving music continues to enthral audiences worldwide. Tickets: £21-£27, under 25s £11-£14 from www.saffronhall.com or call tel 0845 548 7650.



Sarah Ludlow-Elston



FUN PLACE ON THE HILL

www.stanstedfreechurch.org.uk

Please come and join us on **Friday mornings, including school holidays** from 9.15am-11.30am in the Free Church Hall which is warm and comfortable. The Fun Place continues to be a popular meeting place and all visitors are welcome. Parents, grandparents, children drop in and adults relax with a hot drink and chat, while the children enjoy plenty of space to run around and play with the toys, and join in a Sing-Along around 10.30am.



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 free parking in the church car park; we look forward to welcoming you.



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

STANSTED PEOPLE

BARBARA TRIGG



Barbara was born in Broxbourne, where she lived until the age of 16, when her family moved to Much Hadham. That was in 1947, and Barbara opted out of education and started work at a poultry breeding station on a local farm. This was a varied job, involving collecting eggs and tending to the chickens: feeding them and cleaning their living quarters. She married in 1952 and continued working at the farm until 1957. Daughter Melanie was born in 1958 and Nicola in 1962. Barbara remained at home taking care of her girls from 1958 until the late sixties, when her youngest daughter started school.

Barbara returned to employment in 1969, becoming a Welfare Helper in the village school in Widford, near Much Hadham. She thinks that this post would now be called a Classroom Assistant. In the early '80s she started working at St Elizabeth's Home in Perry Green. She worked with adult residents in the day centre. She really enjoyed being there as it felt as if she were part of a large family. Work included contract work, gardening and driving residents to Harlow College, or Ware College, for various education courses including Computers and Cookery. Barbara continued to work there until the age of 69, when she retired. While working in Perry Green, she lived in Braughing; upon retirement, she moved to Stansted.

Her first Stansted home was in the Fullers Almshouses; at that time, these were managed by a Housing Association. Unfortunately, Health and Safety stipulated updating works. The Association could not meet the cost of these works and all residents had to vacate their flats. Barbara moved to a flat in Stoney Common. Thanks to a cousin's help, she soon moved to the Campions; with even more thanks to her, she started living at Three Colts Yard in 2020. Many of you will know that the Three Colts was a pub until several years ago. The current Three Colts Yard used to be the pub car park.

Barbara's daughter Nicola lives close by and she has a seven year old black labrador called Jewel, who often keeps Barbara company. Her eldest daughter lives in a stunningly beautiful area of Switzerland near the Liechtenstein border and she has a daughter named Amy who is 26. Melanie is

now retired; her life has always revolved around horses. Barbara travels to Switzerland as often as she can and plans to go again later this year.

Barbara finds it very pleasant living in Stansted. This is partly due to the good public transport; for example, there is a bus stop on Cambridge Road right by the entrance to Three Colts Yard. She hopes to become a member of the Uttlesford Community Travel service (see page 2 of the February Link for details). She also benefits from and enjoys TouchPoint's food share programme. For most of her time in Stansted, she has been a member of the local WI, the History Society, u3a and the Windmill, where she is a committee member and helps at events there.

Ed



STANSTED MOUNTFITCHET
LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

www.stanstedhistorysociety.org.uk

Dr Mike James was the speaker for our February meeting; he gave a presentation on Bishop William and his role in the construction of Bishops Stortford's castle and its subsequent history. He explained the relationships between the English royal dynasty and William the Conqueror. Edward the Confessor had spent time in Normandy, and invited the man who would become Bishop William to England. Although Norman, he became Bishop of London in 1051, and held the position until his death in 1075. In about 1060 he purchased the manor of Stortford; this had 26 households, probably about 125 people in total, including a priest and two knights, and was valued at £8. The manor of Stansted was valued at £11.

The castle was begun in the 1070s by Bishop William, using material from a nearby quarry. The tower is estimated to have been eight metres tall, enabling a view of the castle at Stansted. There was also a gatehouse, well, chapel, prison, and possibly kitchens, and the castle was in active use for about 500 years. It was subsequently purchased by the Taylor family in 1849 and labourers working on the site at the time reported finding skeletal remains, ascribed to the castle prison. Further skeletons were found in 1938 and 1999 just outside the castle which were attributed to the Saxon period, and it is thought this may have influenced the position of the castle.

Our thanks are due to Mike for such an interesting talk. Our next meeting will be on **Thursday 5th March** at 7.30pm in TouchPoint when Douglas Coe will present *Sawbridgeworth in World War II*. New members and guests just for the evening are always very welcome.

Keith Parslow
Email: keithparslow0910@gmail.com





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STANSTED IS WELL READ

8 pm Tue 3rd Mar

Dog and Duck, Lower Street

Lord of the Flies
by William Golding

Written in 1954 this book describes a group of young boys alone on an island. Over time they regress from civilised behaviour to savage brutality, driven by fear, lack of order, and innate human darkness.

All Welcome Tel 813056



STANSTED MOUNTFITCHET LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

7.30 pm Thu 5th Mar

Touchpoint

Sawbridgeworth in World War II

by Douglas Coe

Annual membership £15
New members and guests for the evening welcome Entry £3

WHAT'S ON IN MARCH

1/15/29	Sun	Skips	Lower St Car Pak 1 - 5 pm
3	Tue	Stansted is Well Read	Dog and Duck 8 pm
5	Thu	Local History Society	Touchpoint 7.30 pm
7	Sat	Music@Stansted	St John's Church 7 pm
9	Mon	Link copy due in today	before noon
10	Tue	The Arts Society BS RSPB	Southmill Arts 10.40 am Bishop's Park Comm Cntr 7.30 pm
11	Wed	Annual Parish Meeting	Stansted Library 7.30 pm
12	Thu	W I	Touchpoint 7.30 pm
13	Fri	Bingo Night	Bowls Club 7 for 7.30 pm
14	Sat	U3A Saturday Seminar Cream Tea and Bingo	St Theresa's Parish Centre 9.30 am St Theresa's Parish Centre 3 - 5 pm
18	Wed	Ugley W I	Ugley Village Hall 2 pm
19	Thu	U3A Monthly Meeting	2 pm
21	Sat	Ugley Farmers' Market	Ugley Village Hall 10 am - noon
24	Tue	Coffee Morning	Ugley Village Hall 10 am - noon
28	Sat	Saffron Walden Choral Elsenham Farmers' Market	Saffron Hall 4 pm Village Hall 12.30 - 2.30 pm



7 pm Sat 7th Mar

St John's Church

Chenyin Li Piano

*Music by Beethoven, Debussy
Liszt and Rachmaninoff*

*Tickets: adults £18, conc £15
under 21s free. Pay on the door*

THE ARTS SOCIETY BISHOP'S STORTFORD

10.40 am Tue 10th Mar

South Mill Arts

Julia Musgrave

*The irritating and influential
Mr Whistler*

Guests welcome Entry £7. Coffee 10 am
Tel 656065 for more information

To advertise your March event free of charge
on this page in the next issue

Email: editor@stanstedlink.org.uk by 9th March

Ugley Village Hall

www.ugleyvillage.org.uk

COFFEE MORNING

10 am - noon Tue 24th Mar

Coffee • Tea • Cakes

Bring and Buy • Raffle

*We will have an Easter and Spring
theme. Come and browse!*

Free Parking ~ All Welcome



SAFFRON
WALDEN
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SOCIETY

4 pm Sat 28th Mar

Saffron Hall, Saffron Walden

Bach St John Passion

Conductor Quintin Beer

Tenor William Searle

Tickets: Adult £21-£27, U25 £11-£14
from www.saffronhall.com
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Stansted Evening W I

7.30 pm Thu 12th Mar

Touchpoint

How not to get ripped off

by plumber Ian Paddock

Visitors Welcome Entry £3



www.ugleyvillage.org.uk

10 am - noon

Sat 21st Mar

Ugley Village Hall

Fruit and Veg ~ Eggs ~ Olive Oil

Fish ~ Beef ~ Pork ~ Lamb

Bread ~ Home Baking ~ Jam

Chutney ~ Honey ~ Skincare ~ Plants

Refillable Laundry and Edible Products

Knitting and Needlework

Refreshments and Free Parking

For info and future dates tel 814052



Ugley W I

2 pm Wed 18th Mar

Ugley Village Hall

*How to protect ourselves from
scams and scammers*

by PC Tammy Blest

Visitors Welcome

Plenty of free parking



STANSTED Family Cream Tea and Bingo

3 - 5 pm Sat 14th Mar

St Theresa's Parish Centre

Tickets £10 family, £5 single

Bingo games £1 each

For more information tel 850209
Email: davidmorson20@gmail.com

*It would be helpful but not essential
to know in advance if you are coming*



HUW JOHNSON CLUB

We are a social club for adults with a learning disability and we meet on the third Thursday of the month 7.00pm-8.45pm, usually in St John's Church Hall, for a range of fun activities to bring people together.

Our plans over the next few months include a disco, a meal out and a Zumba lesson, all of which we are looking forward to. As always, new members are welcome to come along and try the Club out; please get in touch to check the details of the next session. New volunteers to help us put on the activities and help transport members to and from the sessions are always very welcome too.

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



www.musicatstansted.co.uk

Lovers of romantic piano music will be in their element when international concert pianist Chenyin Li will give a recital based around the four great Ballades by Frédéric Chopin. These pillars of the piano repertoire combine the composer's matchless gift for sumptuous melody with all the drama and poetry of the 19th century romantic movement. Chenyin lives locally and teaches at London's Junior Guildhall School and Bishop's Stortford College; she has made a deep study of the ballades prior to presenting them in recitals around the country.



Also on the programme will be Beethoven's piano sonata in D minor *The Tempest*, Debussy's *La fille aux cheveux de lin*, Liszt's *Au lac de Wallenstadt* and Rachmaninoff's étude-tableau *Little Red Riding Hood*, all richly romantic in their own right. The concert will be held on **Saturday 7th March** at 7.00pm in St John's Church. Wine and soft drinks will be available in the interval. Tickets: adult £18, over 65 £15, under-21 free are available on the door. Please do encourage any budding pianists in your family to come along and hear a world-class artist playing live in Stansted.

Richard Allaway
Email: contactus@musicatstansted.co.uk

CONGRATULATIONS TO SONIA LEVY

Recognition for a musical champion

Sonia's friends at *music@stansted*, as well as many others, would like to congratulate her on being presented with the *Contribution to the Arts* trophy at last month's Indie Awards, given by the Bishop's Stortford Independent in recognition of outstanding community service. This award, sponsored by Bishop's Stortford College, was presented by Head of Prep School Rachael Cox at a gala dinner in the magnificent marquee of Stortford Rugby Club. Sonia is pictured below, second from left, with *music@stansted* colleagues David Clewlow and Richard and Jen Allaway.



Sonia, a professional pianist, was a founder member of *music@stansted* back in 1996, when it was called the *Village Music Club*, and since then she has been involved with putting on over 120 professional concerts for Stansted's music lovers. She has been the driving force behind a number of Summer Soirées to showcase the talent of local young musicians, often providing the piano accompaniment to support the budding instrumentalists. Stansted is full of Sonia's former piano pupils, and in some cases, pupils of pupils. The Grammy- and Brit-Award winning singer Charli XCX is just one of the many who have studied with her. Most importantly, none of the hundreds of professional musicians who have been looked after by Sonia on their visits to Stansted will forget her warm hospitality and her famous home-made quiches. I am sure that the many people who know Sonia will agree that she has indeed made a huge contribution to the cultural life of Stansted. Well done and thank you, Sonia!

Richard Allaway

FAMILY CREAM TEA AND BINGO



Everyone is very welcome to join us for a fun afternoon cream tea and bingo on **Saturday 14th March** 3.00pm-5.00pm at St Theresa's Parish Centre, High Lane. Entry: £10 family, £5 single. Each bingo game will cost £1. It would be helpful to know in advance how many people are coming, so I would be most grateful if you could email me if you plan to attend.



David Morson
Email: davidmorson20@gmail.com

A LITTLE SLICE OF HEAVEN

Remembering David William Knight

A little slice of heaven

I would like to thank everyone who made my Dad feel so welcome in Stansted. After the sudden and unexpected passing of my dear Mum in 2019, Dad moved from Chingford to his lovely bungalow in the village. Of course we were all grieving, but the kindness of neighbours helped ease the huge transition for him. It was only a few months later that we were all plunged into lockdown through Covid. Dad was blown away by the sense of community. He was battling cancer himself at the time so we were able to register as his carers, meaning garden visits at a distance were acceptable. Dad had us close by to help with grocery shopping and collecting various medicines, but he was amazed by the whole community pulling together. He was particularly impressed with Stansted Surgery, the Pharmacy who were offering a delivery service and Goldings Greengrocers who were dropping fruit and veg to the doorstep.



Once Covid restrictions lifted, Dad felt that it was time to try and get himself involved in village life. He joined the u3a, enjoying many of their talks, as well as attending some St John's Church services on a Sunday morning; he loved joining in with all the hymns. He enjoyed the annual Remembrance services at the Stansted War Memorial which we all attended as a family.

Dad passed away suddenly and unexpectedly in July 2024 which was a huge shock to us as his family as well as to his neighbours and friends. He was always smiling and so full of zest for life. He loved chatting to everyone and a quick pop round to Tesco Express would always end in a long chat with someone he met along the way.

We enjoyed a dog walk to the Aubrey Buxton nature reserve which would always end with a very brief stop at the bench at the top of the path at Burnells Way. Whilst it was only a few metres from Dad's home, we would always have a very brief pause there for him to catch his breath. It was around the same time of losing Dad that the bench was removed due to it being unsafe. It seemed a fitting tribute to replace this in his memory. It took a while but as a family we gathered at the new bench where my daughters attached the plaque surrounded by some of Dad's neighbours and friends where we enjoyed a little tippie in the rain!

Dad described Stansted Mountfitchet as *a Little slice of Heaven* and he was so grateful that he was part of village life here, being close to his granddaughters and family and spending time in the place that he grew to adore.



I would like to take this opportunity to thank the residents of Burnells Way for being fantastic neighbours and friends to Dad; they all made him feel welcome and part of the community. He loved nothing more than a chat over the fence or a natter on the driveway. It feels a quieter place in the village for us without his cheery smile and enthusiastic wave but his and Mum's memories live on every time someone takes a pause to rest a weary leg on their bench on Burnells Way.

Judith Grover

STANSTED EVENING WI



I am very sad to say that one of our long-term members, Sue Hitchmough, passed away in February. She will be sorely missed.

In January, instead of a formal meeting we went for dinner at the Three Willows. A very enjoyable evening was had; good food and good company. Our next meeting is on **Thursday 12th March** at 7.30pm in Touchpoint. The speaker is Ian Paddock who is a plumber. His talk is *How not to get ripped off*. The competition is a bathroom item. We welcome visitors and new members so please come and join us.

Linda Gurr
Tel: 07743 549241

LINK ADVERTISING

We are still taking bookings for this year and there are various sizes available

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THE HUNDRED PARISHES SOCIETY

www.hundredparishes.org.uk

Now that spring is on its way, the weather should encourage us to make more use of bridleways and footpaths. Around 150 walk descriptions are available to download free from our website. As well as saying when to turn left or right, our route descriptions aim to point out things of interest along the way. Some of these will be marked on the local Ordnance Survey map. Ordnance Survey (OS) has been the UK's official mapping body since 1791, and it originated for military purposes. Its activities have left various physical markers which may still be encountered, albeit that mapping techniques have moved forward in recent times with the satellite-based global positioning system (GPS).

The two historic OS markers that are most likely to be encountered are triangulation pillars and benchmarks, such as the one shown here on the wall of Clavering church.



Several thousand triangulation pillars, or trig points, were installed all over the UK, solid concrete pillars about 4 feet tall, usually erected at a high point with a clear range of vision. Each has a place on top for positioning a map measurer's tool, a theodolite. The pillar's location and height above sea level have been precisely measured and recorded so that from here the map-maker can plot the surrounding landscape.

OS surveyors also left benchmarks in thousands of strategic locations. These are additional altitude reference points, a horizontal line indicating height above sea level, chiselled into a wall or milestone from around 1840 until the 1990s.

The benchmark was sometimes indicated on a brass plaque attached at the appropriate height. On OS benchmarks, the horizontal line appears above an upward-pointing arrow.



The arrow is visible on both the Stansted benchmark above and the one in Barkway shown below.



Look out for trig points and benchmarks; if they are on a Hundred Parishes walk route but not yet mentioned in the description, please let us know.



Ken McDonald
Secretary
Tel: 813226

Email: hundredparishes@btinternet.com



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THE PLACE ON THE HILL

www.stanstedfreechurch.org.uk

March entertainment

Black Adder II

Thursday 5th to Saturday 7th 7.30pm plus Saturday 3.30pm. £19.50 and £18.00. Water Lane Theatre Company are proud to celebrate the 40th anniversary of Black Adder by performing three stage version episodes of the series.

Music

Ireland the Show

Wednesday 11th 7.30pm £29.50.

Guns N Jovi

Saturday 14th 7.30pm £25.00.

Dreams of FM - Fleetwood Mac Tribute

Friday 27th 7.30pm £32.50.

Spring is on the way but March can often be quite cold. However, *The Place on the Hill* is always lovely and warm, so why not join us for free coffee, cakes and biscuits? We have lovely comfy seats and offer a safe and friendly environment for adults. There is no need to book, just come along to the Free Church at the bottom of Chapel Hill. We are open every **Wednesday 10.00am-noon** and everyone is welcome. We also have a jigsaw you can work on. There is limited parking behind the church. 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



Family

Story Time for ages 2 ½ - 5

Tuesday 3rd 10.30am Free

The Very Hungry Caterpillar

Thursday 19th 1.00pm and 4.00pm, Friday 20th 11.00am adults £17, concessions £15.

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Museum Tour

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For more information about please visit our website.

Seren Stephen

Tel: 710200

Email: sstephen@southmillarts.co.uk

AUBREY BUXTON NATURE RESERVE

Our volunteer group had to cancel some working party sessions recently due to bad weather. By this time of year in the reserve we would normally expect to see not only the permanent ponds full of water, but also the numerous temporary ponds that typically fill during winter and generally stay full through spring, gradually drying out in summer. Despite the significant levels of rain that we received in January we do not yet have nearly the normal levels of water in the reserve. This is perhaps due to our changing climate. According to the Meteorological Office, 2025 was the warmest and sunniest year on record in the UK. Also, four of the last five years now appear in the top five warmest years since 1884.



We do need the temporary ponds to fill because these are the favoured locations for the frogs and toads to mate and produce their young. Why do they choose the temporary ponds over the permanent ponds I hear you ask? Well, they are a safer habitat to breed in, and because they dry out in the summer, they are not good habitats for many of the predators that eat frogspawn and tadpoles such as dragonfly lava and diving beetles and their lava. So as much as we moan about the rain, the frogs and toads will appreciate it.

John Welham

Warden

Email: communications@essexwt.org.uk

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Spring into wellbeing

As March arrives and we begin to swap grey skies for blossoms and birdsong, many of us feel that familiar lift in mood. Spring has a way of nudging us gently forward, a natural reminder that even after the longest winters, things brighten again. This seasonal shift can be a powerful boost for our mental wellbeing, especially at a time when stress and anxiety continue to be two of the most common challenges people face today. Many of us find ourselves juggling constant notifications, screens and online demands, which can lead to digital burnout, a kind of mental fatigue that creeps into everyday routines. Spring offers the perfect excuse to unplug a little and is a season of reconnection. Loneliness remains surprisingly common, with more than half of adults reporting periods of isolation in recent surveys. The good news is that small things like chatting at the shops, joining a community event, or just exchanging a smile on a sunny afternoon, genuinely make a difference.



Here is a spring wellness tip: try a mindful walk. Pick a short route and look for three things you can see, hear, and smell. This can ease digital fatigue, support stress relief, and help you feel more grounded in the moment as nature begins its annual reset. This March, let us welcome the new season by looking up, stepping out, and supporting one another. As always, if you need to talk, we are here to listen.

Rachel Dawes
Email: info@letstalkstansted.org

STANSTED IS WELL READ

The next meeting of our book club will be on **Tuesday 3rd March at 8.00pm** in The Dog and Duck, where we will be discussing last month's book choice *Lord of the Flies* by William Golding. Written in 1954 this book remains a staple text in schools today and describes a group of young boys who find themselves alone on an island. Over time the boys portray their loss of humanity as they regress from civilised

behaviour to savage brutality, driven by fear, lack of order, and innate human darkness. It has been described in one review as *not only a first-rate adventure but a parable of our times*. In addition to his other works, *Lord of the Flies* contributed hugely to William Golding's Nobel Prize for literature in 1983. Please do get in touch if you would like to join us. A warm welcome awaits.



Diana Griffin
Tel: 813056
Email: stanstediswellread@gmail.com

BRAIN TRAINING

How to make things better

If you are wanting to reduce pain or improve performance or flexibility, it is very important to assess and then reassess. I am often asked whether this exercise or stretch is worth doing. The answer is always the same: test it out. This means do something relevant to your goal, eg invoke a bit of pain, touch your toes, see how high you can jump, stand on one leg to see how wobbly you are. Give this action a number out of 10, deciding whether 10 is best or worst. Now do the stretch or exercise as well as you can and then reassess your test. If the stretch or exercise helped, then things will have improved. Not necessarily by much, hence the need to give yourself a starting number. However, you probably feel a bit better, which shows you that you are moving in the right direction. However, things may have got worse! Even the most obvious stretch or exercise may not have helped you. We really are individual and one size does not fit all.



This assess and reassess or test and retest even applies to deeds that the physiotherapist gave you. You have presented with a problem, they assess you and, according to their book, they give you the solution. You cannot assume they are correct. There are a couple of reasons why their exercise will not work: the cause of the problem lies further inside the body, or maybe you have misunderstood how to do the exercise and are doing it badly. This very simple concept of testing stuff out will really help you achieve your goal, whatever that may be.

Clare Harding
Tel: 07802 872919

THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH

On Ash Wednesday 18th February, the solemn period of Lent in the Christian calendar begins. It finishes on Maundy Thursday 2nd April, the night before Jesus died on the cross. Lent is a moveable feast which can take place any time between February and April. Each year, it is determined by the Pope according to the date of the new moon, known as the 7th Nissan, which is traditionally revered as the time of Jesus's death on Good Friday. Lent lasts 40 days and 40 nights and involves self-reflection on what is spiritually important in our earthly lives. In this context, the number 40 has significance for the promise of salvation in the Bible.

The Israelites were led out of slavery from Egypt by Moses and wandered for 40 years before reaching the Promised Land. During that time, Moses had prayed for guidance for 40 days and 40 nights. We are told in the gospels that before Jesus started his Ministry of Salvation, he went into the desert for 40 nights to consider what God wanted of him to show his kingdom of peace and love on earth, eventually leading to his humble self-sacrifice on the cross. Whether we are believers or not, Lent is a time for us to stop and reflect on what is important and true for us in the moment of our lives. It can sometimes be considered negatively as a solemn time for fasting and self-abstinence, but the word *Lent* comes from the Old English *Lencten* meaning a welcoming of spring and the opportunity for new life.

David Morson
St Theresa's Catholic Church



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9.30am; Morning Prayer (3rd Sunday)
9.30am



From St John's Registers

Funeral
26th January Dr David Barnes, age 84 - service
at St John's, burial at Stansted
Cemetery.

STANSTED FREE CHURCH

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

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Preachers for March

1st 10.30am Heather Gale - New Directions
8th 10.30am Rev'd Gill Hulme - Communion
15th 10.30am Songs of Praise
22nd 10.30am Mark Hayes
29th 10.30am Mike Dyer

Sue Hitchmough

We were very sad to learn of the death of Sue at the age of 88. She had started attending worship with us shortly before Covid. Sue loved singing hymns and when we were coming out of lockdown and were allowed a few singers to lead our worship, she was one of them. When we returned to worshipping normally, Sue became a church member. She cheerily greeted everyone when they arrived for worship, giving them the hymnbook and other handouts needed for the service. Sue will be missed very much. The Service of Thanksgiving is on **Thursday 12th March** at 2.00pm in St John's Church, following a family-only cremation at Cam Valley. An obituary will appear in a future edition of The Link.

Marion Dyer



STANSTED QUAKERS

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

Contact Sue Moloney Tel: 07759 532115
Email: suemol@uwclub.net

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.



SUSTAINABLE STANSTED

www.sustainablestansted.org

Looking out for our rivers and streams

We are fortunate to have one of the planet's rarest and most ecologically significant freshwater habitats on our doorstep, the chalk stream. The River Stort is an example; it runs along the western boundary of the parish, rising from aquifers deep in the chalk bedrock. With water rich in nutrients and minerals, these streams can support a diverse range of plant and animal species.

However, the Stort and its key tributary, Stansted Brook, are in poor ecological condition. This is due to pollution from agricultural and urban run-off, the depositing of raw sewage and the over-abstraction of groundwater; in addition, Essex is the driest county in the UK. This is easy to forget in the early rain-filled days of the year but prolonged periods of dry weather cause low water levels which, in turn, contribute to the loss of habitat and reduce the availability of food and water for wildlife. Protection for rivers and streams is threatened by weak national legislation, so the future of our waterways is in the balance.



Sustainable Stansted are grateful to have been awarded funding by Uttlesford District Council's Zero Carbon Communities Grant Scheme to undertake a monitoring project of both the upper Stort and Stansted Brook over a period of 12 months. This citizen science project will monitor the health and biodiversity of the waterways, building a significant body of information. It will help force accountability for incidents of pollution, and drive protection and restoration work; we will then be able to reconnect with and understand this irreplaceable local habitat. If you would like to know more, or get involved, please contact us.

Kate Allen
Email: sustainablestansted@gmail.com

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HATFIELD FOREST

www.nationaltrust.org.uk/hatfield-forest

The start of bird nesting season in March means that many of our forestry and habitat management operations are paused in order to minimise disruption during this important time. Our rangers' attentions shift to other vital tasks, one of which is to monitor nature within the Forest. We survey a wide range of species from wildflowers and fungi, to badgers and deer.



Two species of deer live here: fallow and muntjac. Fallow deer were introduced by King Henry I in the early 1100s and muntjac arrived in the 1960s. We have a statutory duty to protect our ancient woodland from excessive deer damage. Left unmanaged the deer soon outstrip their food supply, which includes tree shoots, buds, leaves, seeds and grass. They have no natural predators so we cull the deer to keep the herds manageable. The by-product of this deer management is top quality wild venison which you can buy from our Estate Office; cuts include haunch steaks, rolled haunch joint and diced and mince venison. Venison has a gorgeous, distinctive flavour with similarities to beef and lamb. It loses very little volume during cooking as it is lean meat, and can be prepared in many ways including frying, roasting, or making into a delicious stew. To order, please call us or email: hatfieldforest@nationaltrust.org.uk. We look forward to hearing from you.

Hannah Underwood
Estate Office
Tel: 870678

Email: hannah.underwood@nationaltrust.org.uk

STANSTED 2026 CALENDAR

A huge thank you to everyone who supported this year's Stansted Calendar. Thanks to your generosity, we raised a fantastic £800, which will go directly back into our community. The proceeds will be shared between two valued local projects: £300 for Stansted in Bloom and £500 for Touchpoint, helping them continue their important work in and around the village.

Special thanks to Dale Crowson, who very kindly donated his stunning photographs, which made the calendar such a suc-

cess. We are also extremely grateful to everyone who submitted photos for consideration and inclusion. All submitted and featured photos can be viewed at www.stanstedcalendar.com. We would also like to thank the local businesses who helped by selling the calendars on our behalf: Peacock Pharmacy, Paris Legore, Uppers, Folies, and The Social Club. Your support made a real difference. If anyone would still like to purchase a copy of the calendar, please contact me.

Julie Dawson-Wills
Media Consultant
Email: Julie@mixedupmedia.tv



RSPB

group.rspb.org.uk/stortvalley

On **Thursday 5th March** we have a midweek Birding Walk starting at 10.00am from The Prince of Wales, Broxted CM6 2BJ. For this 5-mile walk we return to a previous location but use a different route, heading east through fields and woods to reach Tilty, returning to Broxted using a mixture of tracks, paths and roads.

On **Tuesday 10th March** at 7.30pm we resume our monthly meetings in Bishop's Park Community Centre, Lancaster Way Bishop's Stortford CM23 4DA and we do so with a star speaker. Matt Merritt is the Editor of *Bird Watching*, Britain's best-selling birdwatching magazine; he is also a published poet and author of the non-fiction book *A Sky Full of Birds*. He will be telling us about the magazine's home patch in the Peterborough area where he consistently sees around 200 species in a year.



On **Saturday 14th March** at 10.00am we are visiting Cudmore Grove Country Park, East Mersea, Colchester CO5 8UE. This is an amazing nature reserve nestled on the coast where the Colne meets the Blackwater. With impressive views, it is a great place for birdwatching with sea duck and grebes in the estuary and many species of wader on the rich mudflats. For further details of our activities, please see our website or contact me.

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IN THE GARDEN

Paving

If you are planning to add a new patio, you should carefully consider your choice of materials. Ideally, limit your garden to no more than three different materials, as using too many can make the space feel cluttered and untidy. The materials you choose will also influence whether your garden feels contemporary or traditional.



Paving, corten steel and redbrick walls chosen to be in complete sympathy with the house

While personal taste is important, your patio should also complement your house and its surroundings; a silver granite patio can look striking, but it would appear out of place alongside a traditional red brick cottage. There are many paving options available, from highly porous materials such as limestone and sandstone to virtually non-porous alternatives like porcelain. The more porous the stone, the more quickly it will show dirt, turn green in shaded areas, and be difficult to clean. If you have a north-facing garden, pale porous slabs are best avoided; they may look good initially, but they require constant maintenance. Sealing can help but it does not last forever. In these conditions, porcelain, granite, or quartzite are better choices. They resist staining, stay cleaner for longer, and are much easier to clean.

Porcelain is particularly versatile and is available in almost every size and style imaginable, including designs that convincingly replicate wood. For outdoor use, porcelain should be 20mm thick with a slip rating of R11 or higher. Porcelain paving should be pointed using exterior-grade grout rather than a sand and cement mix. Porcelain prices are now very competitive with traditional materials such as Indian sandstone. *Top tip:* avoid laying paving right up to fences. Leaving space for planting softens the overall look and prevents leaves and debris from collecting in an unsightly strip along the edge of the patio.

Anthea Harrison
Anthea Harrison Garden Design
Tel: 647305

BIG GARDEN BIRDWATCH

Where have all the starlings gone? For the last couple of years, a flock of noisy starlings have been regular visitors to our garden, but towards the end of last year their visits and numbers steadily declined and by the end of January, they were very few and far between. Disappointingly, not one made an appearance during the Big Garden Birdwatch.

This year it has all been about pigeons. From pure white ones to speckled white, grey and black ones and some that appear to be wood pigeon crossed with white ones. We also had a lot of jackdaws. Their behaviour is just as unruly as the starlings, constantly vying for the food on offer, but whereas the starlings are all squawks and flapping wings, the jackdaws really go for anyone in their way with a quiet menace, like silent assassins. Even the bold magpie is hesitant to join in the fray, choosing to wait until the jackdaws have departed before coming to the table. Only the pigeons are brave or stupid enough to compete alongside them.



However, there is good news on the sparrow front. Four were spotted in the garden on the day, which was four more than previous years. They did not actually come to the bird table, opting to perch atop our apple tree and just observe proceedings instead. Maybe next year they will be persuaded to venture closer to the food and join in the party. This year's birdwatch was not as entertaining as the last few years without the antics of the starlings, but who knows what will happen next year? That is one of the exciting things about taking part in the annual Big Garden Birdwatch; you can never be sure which birds will turn up, if any.

Loki



Stansted Network

NEWS FROM YOUR LOCAL COUNCILS



Stansted Mountfitchet Parish Council (SMPC)

This month our pages are set aside for the Annual Parish Meeting — which serves as your chance for all registered voters in our area to speak and vote on any community matter

Annual Parish Meeting 2026-2027

Ruth Clifford

»» Clerk for Stansted Mountfitchet Parish Council



11th March 2026 — 7.30pm

The Mountfitchet Exchange
72 Chapel Hill

Please arrive from 7.00 pm to allow time for refreshments and a prompt start



The Annual Parish Meeting is one of the most important — and often overlooked — events in the parish calendar. Unlike parish council meetings, this meeting belongs to you, the local electors.

Held once a year, the Annual Parish Meeting is a legal requirement and a key part of local democracy. It is the one meeting where every registered elector in our parish has the right to attend, speak, and vote on matters affecting the area. While decisions made at the meeting are not legally binding, they signal what residents care about and can help shape the Parish Council's priorities for the year ahead. At last year's meeting, questions were raised on road markings, drainage issues on Pennington Lane, and the impact of local housing developments on water quality.

The meeting will be chaired by the head of the Parish Council, but that doesn't mean it is a typical council meeting. It follows a more open format and matters are settled by a show of hands. Also unlike at a regular council meeting, the Annual Parish Meeting is held in the library at the Mountfitchet Exchange, and not in the normal council chamber. Because of this you will only be able to participate in-person, and not follow along on Zoom on this occasion.

In short, by attending the Annual Parish Meeting you can have your say, hold the council to account, and play an active role in the life of your community. We enjoyed a decent turnout at last year's meeting and would love to welcome an even larger crowd this year.

What's on the agenda?

- 1 To receive apologies for absence
- 2 To receive the minutes of the meeting held on 12th March 2025
- 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 recipients of Parish Grants in 2025
- 6 Open Forum



Annual Report 2026-2027

Maureen Caton

»» Chair of Stansted Mountfitchet Parish Council

Honouring a life of service

Another year has passed, and we have seen new members join us and long-serving stalwarts of our community pass away. Cllr Peter Jones was a very well-respected member of our community, as well as this council, and we wish to pay tribute to his contribution to the promotion of Stansted. As I write this report, we are discussing how best to achieve this.



Parish Councillor and pillar of our community, Peter Jones, who passed away in 2025

City & Country plans

The Local Plan has now been given the green light to progress by the government’s Planning Inspectors and, hopefully, issues such as the City and Country Group’s proposal to develop on Metropolitan Green Belt land between ourselves and Birchanger will be opposed by Uttlesford District Council.

It was certainly the Inspectors’ conclusion that it would not be suitable to use Metropolitan Green Belt land to extend Forest Hall School.

We have opposed City and Country’s application to build nearly 500 homes. We have been joined in doing so by Birchanger Parish Council, with whom we have worked closely to fight this proposal.

It was extremely disappointing that Uttlesford did not support us on the issue regarding the solar farm, to be built on land near the airport and next to the area City and Country want to develop.

The Inspectors are, however, supporting the retention of a country park at Bloor Homes’ Walpole Meadows Phase 2 — which we, as a parish, would welcome.

Neighbourhood Plan Update

Our Neighbourhood Plan is being finalised, and it is important that we get it through all the formal stages to implementation

This will ensure our entitlement to a levy of 25% of community contributions arising from any developments in the future once Uttlesford introduce the Community Infrastructure Levy.

The Neighbourhood Plan—once it successfully passes examination by Planning officials and, crucially, a local referendum—will carry binding effect for planning decisions, helping define where housing can be built. Delivering a Neighbourhood Plan will be a major achievement for this Parish Council.

The project has had to overcome several hurdles, not least the Covid pandemic and, more recently, the passing of its principal drafter, Peter Jones.

Unitary Authority proposals

Local Government Reorganisation is being decided following a consultation period, which did not really clarify the impact on Parish Councils.

The overall ambition is apparently to simplify local government processes. Essex County Council has proposed a three-unitary model, with Uttlesford, Colchester, Tendring and Braintree combined into a North Essex group. Uttlesford District Council has proposed a structure of five unitary councils, with our district placed with Epping Forest and Harlow.

Whilst the decision is awaited, we are looking at which services — if any — may be beneficially provided and transferred for delivery by the Parish Council. This involves extensive financial research, and if any transfers are considered potentially viable, we will communicate further with residents.

Elections for the new Unitary Authorities are expected to take place in May 2027. The new authorities would then go live in April 2028. County Council elections are to take place this May, with elected representatives serving a two-year tenure.

Almshouses secured



I am pleased to announce that Stansted now has a reinstated almshouse provision. This is being managed by Legacy East Almshouse Partnership (LEAP).

The three new two-bedroom almshouses are situated on the Troy Homes development on High Lane. I expect that by the time you receive this report, the homes will be fully occupied. Whilst the funding for the almshouses never belonged to the Parish Council, there was a risk that if no suitable site could be found, the funds would be spent elsewhere and our almshouses lost to the community forever.

We worked as closely as we could with LEAP, suggesting sites within the village and holding discussions with landowners. It was a long fight to retain the money, but well worth the battle and the outcome.

Cemetery land search

We continue to explore potential opportunities to procure land for cemetery purposes and may be able to enlighten you following a meeting scheduled to be held with UDC on this subject.

The parish cemetery next to St Mary’s Church has been managed by Stansted Mountfitchet Parish Council since 1956. The half-acre site, however, is now full, with 500 graves and cremation plots.

We are therefore unable to accommodate new interments, yet requests continue to come in. Many residents wish to be buried in the village where they have lived and worked, and the Parish Council is actively exploring opportunities to secure land for a new cemetery.

Resolution on flags

The issue of the flags that were erected on our street-lights on Church Road, Chapel Hill and Lower Street has continued to cause disquiet amongst our community.

The Parish Council has debated this subject a number of times, but had not been able to find any service provider willing to remove them. This was addressed again in January and, having found a willing contractor, the decision was taken to remove them.



Supporting young voices

Our Youth Club and Youth Council are actively involved in village life and will be supported to give their views on how we continue to support and promote the needs of the young people in our community.

Thanks to our community groups

Thank you to all the organisations and services which promote and support the needs and interests of our community for the work you do and the benefits you bring. The reflected support from village groups and organisations shines across our whole community and the perception of visitors and neighbours.

Pride in ties to Rungis

In January, the Parish Clerk and Parish Council Chair were delighted to join an event in Rungis, at which the town's Mayor marked eight years of twinning activities with Stansted by presenting a special commemorative plaque and by awarding the Chair the Freedom of Rungis. A group from the Youth Club is to meet their peers in the French town this May half-term. We continue to support the Twinning Association in their activities and actively encourage parishioners to join it and take part in trips, hosting, or events held here or in Rungis. This is an economic as well as a cultural, educational and friendship alliance, to the benefit of both communities, and it needs your support with ideas and suggestions to move the relationship forward.



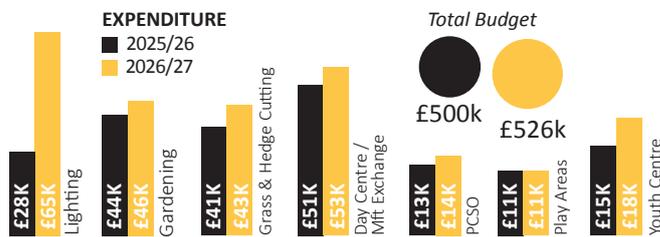
In January Cllr Maureen Caton was presented with an award for building ties between Rungis and Stansted from the Town's Mayor Bruno Marcillaud.

Finance Report 2026-2027



John O'Brien

»»» Chair of Finance & General Purposes Committee



NB Figures are rounded up to nearest thousand. The lighting budget includes funds from SMPC reserve funds

This year has been challenging owing to the uncertainty created by government decisions and U-turns, as well as the pending Local Government Reorganisation of Essex into three, four, or five Unitary Authorities, which will result in the abolition of District Councils. Will this mean higher costs and responsibilities will fall on the shoulders of Parish Councils? That is still not clear.

Inflation a worry

International events have resulted in higher inflationary pressures, with the March 2025 inflation figure of 2.6% being surpassed, reaching a high of 3.8% last October, and owner-occupation housing costs (CPIH) rising to 4.2%. This has eased slightly, but we still have a long way to go.

Money invested in future burial plots

These figures have not helped the Parish Council, as we were hoping to keep our budgetary commitments to 2% per annum. However, we are running out of cemetery space and are actively seeking additional land to purchase. If we are successful, there will be an additional requirement in excess of £40,000 to carry out certain statutory work before the land can be used for burials. To this end, we have had to include £10,000 in our budget for this year.

Small precept rise

As a result, we need to raise our Precept by 4.2%, making the Band D Parish Council Tax rise to £151.91, an increase of £6.14 from this year's Band D rate of £145.77.

Uttlesford updates Council Tax help

An investigation by the Money Saving Expert programme revealed that Uttlesford was one of 69 councils in England and Wales that had not updated the conditions for claiming support on Council Tax and other benefits, which were originally made in 2014.

We are pleased to see that UDC, in response to a letter from SMPC Chair Maureen Caton highlighting this matter, have updated their information and publicised their Welfare Hub to make people aware of what they are entitled to in these uncertain times. I recommend that all take note and reach out to those who are unable to access IT.

You can find our audited accounts and 2026/27 budget at stanstedmountfitchet-pc.gov.uk/document-category/financial-reports/

Stansted Mountfitchet Parish Council

Clerk Ruth Clifford

Deputy Clerk Emma Philbrick

Committee & Projects Officer Laila Azure-Marxen

Communications Officer Dan Schlanker

Email: info@stanstedmountfitchet-pc.gov.uk

Tel: 01279 813214

An answer phone service takes messages after 2pm Monday to Friday and during the weekends

Office Hours Mon-Fri 9am-4pm, Wed 9am-2pm

Reception: Mon-Fri 10am-2pm

Website: www.stanstedmountfitchet-pc.gov.uk

Facebook: www.facebook.com/stanstedcouncil

Instagram: [stanstedparishcouncil](https://www.instagram.com/stanstedparishcouncil)

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Geoffrey SELL | ☎ 815925

cllrsell@uttlesford.gov.uk

Parish Council Meetings

Meetings are on Wednesdays from 7.30pm at the Mountfitchet Exchange.

If you cannot attend in-person, you can follow meetings online using Zoom. The log-on details are published with the agendas ahead of meetings on the SMPC website:

4th March *Open Spaces*

11th March *Annual Parish Meeting*

18th March *Full Council*

Uttlesford District Councillors

Alan DEAN

☎ 813579 email: cllrdean@uttlesford.gov.uk

Geoffrey SELL

☎ 815925 email: cllrsell@uttlesford.gov.uk

Ray GOODING

☎ 813103 email: cllrgooding@uttlesford.gov.uk

Nick CHURCH

email: cllrchurch@uttlesford.gov.uk

Essex County Councillor

Ray GOODING ☎ 813103 email: cllr.ray.gooding@essex.gov.uk

Member Of Parliament

Kemi BADENOCH MP

House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA ☎ 0207 219 1943

email: kemi.badenoch.mp@parliament.uk

Police

PCSO 81764 Alex STEWART

email: alexander.stewart@essex.police.uk

Non-urgent incidents call: 101

Serious incidents call: 999 www.essex.police.uk/ro/report

9th March — 11am-noon TouchPoint (Memory Lane Cafe)

12th March — 5-6pm Co-op, Lower Street

12th March — 6.10-7pm Mountfitchet Exchange Library

19th March — 10am-noon TouchPoint

26th March — 10am-noon TouchPoint

Library

The library at Mountfitchet Exchange opens:

Tuesday 9am-1pm, **Wednesday** 2-5.30pm

Thursday 2-7pm, **Saturday** 9am-5pm

Advice Sessions

Uttlesford Citizens Advice run a FREE drop-in service at the Mountfitchet Exchange every Thursday from 9.30am-3pm, except when Peabody operate advice sessions. You can also ask to speak to an advisor during SMPC reception hours via computer hook-up on Monday, Wednesday & Friday. Ask at our reception for details.

Peabody Trust's drop-in service—also at the Mountfitchet Exchange—is on **Thursday, March 12** from 11am-3pm. Advisors can help with a range of issues such as benefits evictions rent arrears, personal debt and addictions.

TouchPoint, Stansted

The community wellbeing project runs a variety of clubs, groups and activities from 72 Chapel Hill where you can socialise, get help, access training, and fill up your larder for free.

Food shares Stansted Social Club Wed 2.30-3.15pm; Cra on Green

Thursdays 10am-5pm, Fridays 1-2pm and Saturdays 10-11am

Community Cafe Thursdays 10am-5pm, Fridays 8.30am-noon

Free hot meals on Thursdays 12.30-2.30pm

Breakfast Club every Friday 9am-10am

Contact info@thetouchpoint.org ☎ 07572 114882

Garden Waste Skip Service

The parish-council funded garden waste service returns to the Lower Street Car Park on **Sunday, 1st March**. Please note, the service — also in operation on **Sunday, 15th March and 29th March** — runs to new times of **1-5pm** in 2026.

Defibrillators locations

Defibrillators in yellow are accessible 24/7. Those in orange are only available during the working hours of the place they are sited at.

How to use a defib

1. Phone Emergency Services (999) for an access code.
2. Remove all clothing from the patient's chest.
3. Place defib pads on bare chest
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5. Continue CPR until the person responds, their breathing returns, or paramedics arrive.



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ELSENHAM COMMUNITY CHOIR

Did you know that singing in a choir can help your self-esteem, build your confidence, help you to make new friends, engage the emotions and most importantly, enable all sorts of people to come together to meaningfully create something wonderful? If this idea appeals to you, please come and join us on the first and third Tuesday of every month 7.00pm-8.30pm in Elsenham Village Hall next to the Primary School. There are no auditions at our choir, everyone is welcome, just come along and sing. Please just turn up or find us on our Elsenham Community Choir Facebook page or call 07962 586825.

Elaine Terry
Tel: 07747 787973

Cathy, the voice of Human Roots

Communication is one of Cathy's many great skills, from her radio interviews to securing funding for the allotment. We certainly reap the rewards, but she always says that she could not do it without the volunteers. Cathy took over as Human Roots Chairperson in January 2024 and has not looked back since. She was instrumental in obtaining funding from Essex County Council Initiatives Scheme, which, amongst other things, has allowed us to purchase our large fruit cage. She is always on the lookout for future funding opportunities.



www.tasbs.org.uk

Our next meeting is on **Tuesday 10th March** at 10.40am in South Mill Arts (SMA), with coffee available from 10.00am. Our speaker is Julia Musgrave who will be talking about *The irritating and influential Mr Whistler*.



Cathy does a great job of initiating local events at the allotment; if a local business or children's clubs attend, people respond strongly to her enthusiasm and encouraging manner. This approach makes her perfect when new volunteers contact us. Cathy would be the first to say that she is still learning at the allotment, but she had huge success with growing tomato seeds at home last year and loved planting and nurturing them at the allotment. She has already volunteered to grow them again from seed this year, which totally supports the Human Roots motto: *We grow to share and share to grow!*

You will sometimes hear Cathy's calm, silky voice on the Touchpoint radio station; always well worth a listen as her voice was made for radio! We are always happy to welcome new volunteers, so if you would like to join us, please email Cathy at humanrootscommunity@gmail.com. We try to meet up once a week, weather permitting of course! We plant and tend the allotment throughout the year which also includes the best bit, picking our lovely produce. Our aim is to put a bit back into the local community.

An American artist in London, James Abbott McNeill Whistler was a leading proponent of the idea of *Art for Art's Sake*. He signed his paintings with stylised monogram of a butterfly with a long stinger for a tail, as much a symbol of his love of Japanese art as his assertive and sometimes combative nature. Having lived and worked with the Paris avant-garde he settled in London in 1859. He created a distinctive Post-Impressionist style when many of his British contemporaries had yet to come to terms with Impressionism. Whistler's art moved painting towards abstraction, sparked a renaissance in printmaking and gave us the Peacock Room, a masterpiece of interior design. Inspired, influential and infuriating, his art was full of subtle delicacy. He had a wide social network of friends and family and yet, if crossed, could be a formidable opponent; he mastered the art of making enemies. Come and be entertained, amazed and enlightened. Visitors are very welcome for which we invite a donation of £7. If coming by car, please register your car number with SMA reception.

Our membership secretary, Sue Chapman, can be contacted by email: info@tasbs.org.uk or tel 508542. Please see our website for further information. Our Facebook page is Arts Society Bishop's Stortford.

Michael Fitch



Ashley Huggonson
Volunteer

A CELEBRATION OF SPRING FLOWERS

Many of you have submitted photos to The Link, and it has been very enjoyable looking through these pictures and choosing some for this page. The centrepiece is a drawing of animals by young Duck Doodles. Our thanks to Carol Jennings, Gill Owen, Melanie Proctor, Claire Stone and Yvonne Ayres for enhancing The Link; I find this page wonderfully uplifting and cheerful and I hope you do too.



If you have any photos which follow a particular theme, please email them to editor@stanstedlink.org.uk. It would be good to have a page of pictures each month, subject to space. Thank you.

Elizabeth Oakley, Editor



DAISY MAY'S FARM

www.daisymaysfarm.org

Our gorgeous animals are all lovely and snug in spite of the wind and mud; they are looking forward to having lots of visitors come and make a fuss of them. There really is so much for you to do at the farm including riding on our train, meeting the new lambs and kid goats, bottle feeding, holding chicks and ducklings, enjoying warm drinks and snacks, bouncy castle, spring stamp hunt, play areas and more! We have all sorts of chickens, ducks, guinea fowls, turkeys and geese, and we often have chicken and sometimes duck eggs for you to buy.



Come on down to our farm and blow those cobwebs away and meet all our new additions who will be born over the coming months. Check our Facebook page and website for news on our latest arrivals and for any new events such as meeting our new calf who is just so cute! We always need help in so many ways, particularly at times like this when there is so much to do. If you have a little time to spare, please get in touch, we would love to hear from you. Entry is £6.00, under 1s are free and we are open 9.00am-4.00pm on weekdays, 10.00am-4.00pm during the weekend. We look forward to welcoming you to the farm. You can find us at Hall Road, Elsenham CM22 6DN.

Elaine Terry
Tel: 07747 787973



UGLEY WOMEN'S INSTITUTE

Kicks, flicks, upper cuts and the shaking of streamers in time to well-remembered hits of the 50s and 60s were the order of the afternoon when our members were entertained by Catherine Petch. She is a brilliant fitness instructor, known to some of our members for her exercise class *Fitness for Fun*. Happily the exercises were seated, very manageable and effective; we all enjoyed taking the opportunity to burn off a few excess calories.

Police Officer Tammy Blest will be the speaker at our next meeting on **Wednesday 18th March** at 2.00pm in Ugley Village Hall. She will be giving us very valuable advice on

how to protect ourselves against scams and scammers. Why not come along and join us for an interesting and potentially money saving afternoon? You would be most welcome!

Andrea Fitt
Tel: 815922

ST JOHN'S 300 CLUB

Many congratulations to the winners of the January draw:

£100	No 235	Peter Wells
£ 50	No 65	Elaine Wright
£ 25	No 49	Debbie Johnson

The draw for March will be held on **29th March** in St John's Church, following the 9.30am service. Numbers at £2 per month for each number are still available to 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: 819 062
Email: jean733@btinternet.com

RECYCLING

A reminder that we are still collecting stamps and foreign and old UK coins, which will help to raise funds for the Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB). Please place them in the box outside the main blue door of the Free Church at the bottom of Chapel Hill along with the other items for recycling: original ink cartridges, mobile phones, iPads and tablets. There is also a collecting box in the porch of St John's church, which is open most Tuesday mornings and some Saturday mornings. Please place items in a paper or plastic bag or envelope using a separate bag for each category. You can also leave items for recycling in the porch of 7 Blythwood Gardens.

Other items

Please do not leave spectacles, blister packs or any dental products, as they only end up in the dustbin and we only have one small one at the church. Thank you.



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





STANSTED MOUNTFITCHET WINDMILL

www.stanstedwindmill.co.uk

The millers' annual general meeting (AGM) is on **Wednesday 18th March** at 7.30 pm in the mill. We would love to see some new faces so why not come along and find out more about the work of the Millers and see if it is something you might like to get involved in? We are particularly keen to recruit somebody who would be interested in taking on the position of Secretary. We would also like people who are available to undertake stewarding duties on our open days to join us. If you cannot make the AGM but would like to help or know more about what is involved, please contact us via email at the address below.

Our first open days of the year are **Easter Sunday 5th** and **Bank Holiday Monday 6th April** 1.30pm-5.30pm. There will be an Easter Egg Hunt and bunny themed face painting for the children on both days. They will also get a chocolate treat and the chance to win the Golden Egg. We are only open until 5.30pm so would be good if you could join us before 5.00pm. Our normal entry fees of £3 for adults and £1 for children will apply but we would appreciate an additional minimum donation of £1.00 for each child who participates in the egg hunt and face painting.



Our Molly the Miller teddy bear, pictured above, sold really well at the fête so we have added a partner for Molly to our range of mill goods for sale. Dusty Miller will be making his debut over the Easter weekend and you can take home your own Dusty bear for only £5.50. All proceeds go towards the upkeep of the mill.

Trevor Lloyd
Tel: 07739 428352
Email: info@stanstedwindmill.co.uk



www.eastonlodge.co.uk

March is usually a gorgeous month here, with warm sunny days bursting the leaf buds on the shrubs and trees and bringing out the first blossom on the peach, nectarine and

apricot trees. There are daffodils everywhere, with early tête-a-tête providing a blast of colour, followed by a succession of many other varieties, historic and modern. Bumble bees forage and brimstone and peacock butterflies flit around. We sometimes have group visits in March but do not fully re-open until the beginning of April. Meanwhile, our volunteers are focused on preparations: pruning and moving plants in the herbaceous borders, tidying, and planting the first crop of vegetables seeds such as broad beans, carrots and beetroot. They also springclean the history and information building, so that the archives can be enjoyed again by the first main season visitors.



We love to welcome new volunteers in March, as it is such a pretty season for showing them around and there is lots of work pending. Thursday is our main gardening and maintenance day for volunteers, although some of them work on Mondays, Wednesdays or Saturdays. Our Sunday Open Days also rely on volunteers for catering and other front of house duties. So if you like gardens and being outdoors and fancy joining us, or would like to arrange a group visit, please do get in touch via our website or by email.

Jill Goldsmith
Tel: 01371 876979
Email: enquiries@eastonlodge.co.uk



BOWLS CLUB

www.stanstedbowlingclub.co.uk

Work is well under way to get the green ready for the summer season. We are always looking out for volunteers to help with the garden or working on the green as there is plenty to be done, so any green fingered villagers that would like to help please get in touch. Tea and possibly cakes will be available.

The Club has had its first Bingo night, which we are happy to say was a roaring success. The next one will be on **Friday 13th March** 7.00pm for 7.30pm in the Club house; all are welcome, the more the merrier. Please keep an eye out in future issues of The Link for up-and-coming events, as well as our Facebook posts and our website.

David Danby
Secretary
Tel: 07799 722940
Email: daviddanby30@gmail.com



STANSTED FOOTBALL CLUB

www.essexseniorleague.co.uk

The persistent wet weather we have been experiencing continues to play havoc with all our teams' fixtures, and scheduling home league fixtures is becoming a bit of a nightmare for our fixtures secretary. This is especially true for the First Team with the FA insisting that the final weekend of the National League System will be the end of April. However, there will be great excitement as each game will play a significant role on the play-off positions. It is only the team finishing first which will be automatically promoted; those finishing 2nd to 5th will be taking part in the play-offs. Of course, the lack of games has also had an effect on the players' fitness. Our team management are organising extra training sessions; this means searching and competing for 3G high quality facilities in and around our area. Let us hope that one day the FA may fund a facility in Stansted.

League Fixtures at Hargrave Park in March are as follows; both have a 3.00pm kick-off.

7th v Newbury Forest
28th v Barkingside

There will be additional fixtures so please keep in touch with our social media for details.



Tom Williams
Tel: 07921 403842



STANSTED HALL AND ELSENHAM CRICKET CLUB

www.stanstedhallelsenhamcricket.club

We have had a busy start to the season. Russell Property and Nockolds Solicitors continue to be our main sponsors, with other local companies advertising in our fixture card. Thank you all for your support. *Indoor nets* at Bishop's Stortford High School are being well attended. Registration for *All Stars Cricket* for 5-8 year-olds and *Dynamo Cricket* for 8-11 year-olds starts in early March via the England and Wales Cricket Board www.ecb.co.uk. Alternatively you can enquire through our website and we will guide you.



Open Day

This is to give you advance notice of our Open Day on Sunday 26th April 3.00pm-5.00pm. We would be very pleased if you could join us, so please put the date in your diaries; more details will be in next month's Link.



David Brown
Tel: 831011 Mob: 07788 000663
Email: david1.r.brown@gmail.com



Stansted Tennis Club

Founded 1889

www.stanstedtennisclub.co.uk

The Club receives a welcome energy boost

Last year we were awarded a grant from Uttlesford District Council (UDC) to upgrade our sodium halide floodlights to modern LED ones. They have been a roaring success and popular with members, as playing conditions are vastly improved. They are loved by our treasurer Diane, who has seen overall energy costs reduced by 25% since the installation of the very smart new floodlights.



The key benefits are:

- Floodlight power consumption halved, significantly reducing our carbon footprint
- The quality of the LED lamps is far superior, offering instant light; sodium lamps took 10 minutes to warm up
- The lighting is much more even over the playing surface, making nighttime play much easier
- With the reduced running costs, the Club has been able to remove charging for floodlight use; this is a huge benefit for members as the charge was £5 per hour
- Reduced maintenance costs with no need for annual cleaning or 5-year lamp replacement

A huge thank you to the Climate Change Team at UDC and our Chairman Jamie Hogg first of all for his vision, then hard work putting the grant application together in such an expert manner. The Club sits in the centre of the village; we take great pride in its appearance and the new floodlights are a great addition.

Coaching

Junior and adult group coaching sessions are underway. Please contact Dan email: danw.tennis@gmail.com or Phil email: phil_tennis@outlook.com for more details. Our website has information on tournaments, league matches, social events and lots more. New members are always welcome.

Jon Budd

Email: contact@stanstedtennisclub.co.uk

GUESS THE OBJECT 5 ANSWER

Thank you to all those readers who sent in their ideas about these 19th century objects shown below, which are owned by Tony Wellings. The small perforated spoon is a sugar sprinkler which is used to sprinkle sugar on strawberries etc. The other item is a sugar cutter, known as a *nipper*, which was used when sugar came in a block rather than granules.



Sarah Ludlow Elston, Stuart Ayres, Kathryn Chatto, Yvonne Ayres and Susan Bone identified the sugar sprinkler; Mike Dyer identified the sugar cutter. Only Keith Eagleton identified both. Keith used to live in Stansted and moved to Weymouth some years ago, but he subscribes to The Link and says that he looks forward each month to reading his copy. Keith also sent us the following by email:

As you can see from the photo, I have a large collection of sugar sprinklers obtained over 60 years of searching in antique shops etc. I have 180 and only two are identical. They are becoming much harder to find.

Thank you Keith for sending the photograph of your amazing collection. Look out for more objects in future editions of The Link.



ST CLARE HOSPICE

www.stclarehospice.org.uk

Lions on the Loose

Our free sculpture trail, *Lions on the Loose*, brought to you by St Clare in partnership with global art producers *Wild in Art*, is one step closer to coming to life. Throughout the summer of 2026, Harlow and Epping will be transformed by a pride of super-sized lion sculptures, each one uniquely decorated by talented artists from across the region and beyond. These eye-catching works of art will form an exciting, interactive trail for everyone to explore, with a map to help navigate. There will be 30 full-sized lion sculptures and 30 little lions which have been created by local schools and community groups, showcasing the creativity of our young people. The sculptures will increase public awareness about hospice care and its importance and impact on our community.



Sponsors of the large lion sculptures came together at Harlow Council's Civic Offices to have first sight of the short-listed designs, a vibrant mix of florals, food and famous faces. Rosie Knowles, Deputy CEO of St Clare Hospice, said: *Now the sponsors have chosen the designs for their sculptures, the artists will set to work over the next few months translating their fabulous ideas from paper art submissions to 3D lions. We so look forward to seeing the sculptures take shape and sharing them with you when the trail goes live on Friday 24th July.* The trail is sponsored by Harlow Health Centre Trust, Harlow Council and Epping Forest District Council, working together for the good of our local communities. When the trail ends, the large sculptures will be auctioned to raise funds for the hospice. To sponsor a lion or learn more, visit www.lionsontheloose.co.uk, call 773753 or email: lucy.woodington@stclarehospice.org.uk.

Gill Macdonald
Head of Communications and Marketing
Tel: 773700

Email: communications@stclarehospice.org.uk

DON'T FORGET!

The clocks go forward one hour
at 1.00am on Sunday 29th March.



DIRECTORY OF LOCAL CLUBS

Beaver Scouts Age 6-8	Angela Madigan Tel: 01371 513028	RSPB	Peter Allen Tel: 07876 295456 Email: peter2349@sky.com
BS Beekeepers	Kate Walker Tel: 07399 197756 Email: secretary@stortfordbees.org.uk	St Clare Hospice	Rebecca Day Email: info@stclarehospice.org.uk
Bowls Club	David Danby Tel: 07799 722948 Email: daviddanby30@gmail.com	St John's Road and Area Association	Secretary: David Marchant Email: david@marchant.com
Brownies (Tue)	Kathy Shearman Tel: 07724 355533	Scouts (age 10½ -14)	Mike Byrne Tel: 812780
Brownies (Wed)	Susan Scott Tel: 810955	Sparks Netball	Gemma Snelling Tel: 07368 809138 Email: gemmasnelling@me.com
CAB	Tel: 01799 618840	Stansted and District Past Rotarians Club	Geoff Lay Email: geofflay.22@gmail.com
Corkers Netball	Lizzie Read Tel: 07770 594848	Stansted Badminton	Vince Tel: 07793 000107
Cub Scouts (Tue) Age 8-10½	Huskies Charlotte Graham char.huskies1ststansted@yahoo.com	Stansted Business Forum	Iris Evans Email: iris.evans9@gmail.com
(Thu)	Bulldogs Hazel Crundwell 1ststanstedcubsbulldogs@gmail.com	Stansted Cricket Club (Adults)	Ben Sammons Tel: 07852 510330 Email: bensammons3178@gmail.com
Explorer Scouts	Roger Pettett Tel: 07715 740715	(Juniors)	Keith Ayres Tel: 814471
Friends of St Mary's Church	Lynda Dale Tel: 07716 099474 Email: lynnydale@hotmail.com	Stansted Football Club	Tom Williams Tel: 07921 403842
Fun Place on the Hill	Sue Parker Tel: Tel: 657116 Email: funplace@stanstedfreechurch.org.uk	Stansted Hall and Elsenham Cricket Club	David Brown Tel: 831011/07788 999663 Email: david1.r.brown@gmail.com
Garden Club	Maralyn Harris Tel: 07919 478144	Stansted is Well Read	Diana Griffin Tel: 813056 Email: stanstediswell read@gmail.com
Grove Cottage	Sarah Smith Email: comms@mencapgrovecottage.org	Stansted Social Club	Andrew Sharpe Tel: 812992 Email: stanstedclub@gmail.com
Guides	Jennifer Jarvis Tel: 814434	Stansted Speed Watch	Warren Vickers Tel: 813996 Email: vickersw@aol.com
Helpline	Tel: 07704 553727	Stansted Tennis Club	Fiona Kelly Tel: 07949 623484 Email: contact@stanstedtennisclub.co.uk
History Society	Roger Barrett Tel: 814216 Email: rmbarrrett54@gmail.com	Talking Newspaper (BS and District)	Richard Barnett Tel: 651270 Email: familybarnett24@hotmail.com
Human Roots	Keiran Oliver Tel: 07946 783039 Email: keiran@humanrootscommunity.org.uk	The Hundred Parishes Society	Ken McDonald Tel: 813226 Email: hundredparishes@btinternet.com
Huw Johnson Club	Ellen Brooks Tel: 07800 896516 Email: ellenbrooks@hotmail.co.uk	TouchPoint	Shirley Johnson Tel: 07572 114882 Email: info@thetouchpoint.org
Let's Talk, Stansted Mental Health Support	Richard Haywood Tel: 07794 268208 Email: contact@stanstedmentalhealth.org	Town Twinning	Chairman: Geraldine Allars Tel: 07833 089298 Email: twinning@stanstedmountfitchetpc.gov.uk
Little Scrummers	Andrew Poyser Tel: 07738 591232	u3a	Susan Sedgebeer Email: stanstedu3a@gmail.com
Millers (Windmill)	Tudor Owen Tel: 810805 Email: info@stanstedwindmill.co.uk	WI (Stansted)	Linda Gurr Tel: 07743 549241
music@stansted	Sonia Levy Tel: 815282	WI (Ugley)	Andrea Fitt Tel: 815922
Classical concerts	Email: contactus@musicatstansted.co.uk	Youth Centre	Essex Youth Services Tel: 07584 140507
Neighbourhood Watch	Linzi Shelford Tel: 07427 377118 Email: linzishelford@hotmail.com	Note: This list will be updated as and when we learn of any changes. If you would like your organisation to be added please let us know by emailing editor@stanstedlink.org.uk.	
Parkinson's UK	Simon Russell Tel: 01799 524638		
Uttlesford Support Group	Email: simonrussell2@tiscali.co.uk		
Rainbow Pre-School	Lorraine Hayes Tel: 814242 Email: admin@rainbowpreschool.net		
Rainbows (Wed)	Abbie Scott Tel: 07754 768764 Email: abbierose12a@icloud.com		
Rotary Club	Peter Latham Tel: 881607 Email: stortvalleyrotary@gmail.com		

BIRTHDAYS, ANNIVERSARIES or SPECIAL OCCASIONS

If you would like to mark any occasion that is special to you or someone you know, by announcing it in the Link, please email a short message together with your name address and telephone number to: announcements@stanstedlink.org.uk or send the details to 7 Blythwood Gardens, Stansted CM24 8HG. Details must be submitted by the 8th of the month for publication the following month.

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