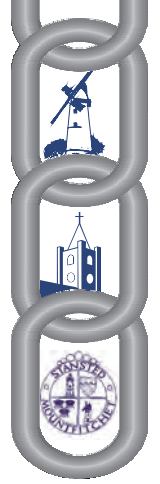


Stansted Mountfitchet

The Link





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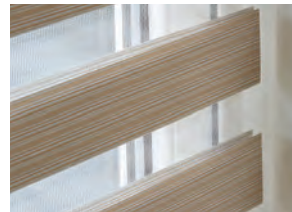
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Front Cover
Blossom on Cambridge Road
By Claire Crommie

Stansted Mountfitchet Village Magazine

The Link

www.stanstedlink.org.uk

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CONTRIBUTIONS FOR THE JUNE ISSUE

Please email: editor@stanstedlink.org.uk or post to 7 Blythwood Gardens CM24 8HG by noon on **9th May**.
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



Some of you may be thinking that you have seen the lovely photo on the front cover before. If so, you would be absolutely correct as it was included as part of the Spring Flowers page in the March edition of The Link. We decided it was so glorious that it really should be our May cover. The contrast between the soft pink and white of the petals and the deep blue sky is stunning, and the photographer who created this is Claire Crommie; all of us at The Link thank you so much for sending us this sample of your artwork.

You will perhaps notice that this issue of The Link is shorter than usual. It has been many months since we have been obliged to downsize; it all depends on how many articles we receive. As the summer progresses, we hope to hear from you with regard to events that you may have organised. Understandably, events are far fewer in the cooler months of the year. We are also lacking people photos for the front cover, so we would be very glad if you could think of us during upcoming events like fundraising runs, outdoor parties and sporting events. For example, the u3a singers are holding a fundraising event on 30th May, see page 4; maybe a great photo can come from that event.

It has been a long time since I thanked everyone who enables this publication to exist; without our article writers, our photographers, our advertisers and readers, we would be nowhere. Many sincere thanks to all of you, and enjoy the rest of the summer.

Ed



BIRCHANGER PRIMARY SCHOOL

www.birchanger.essex.sch.uk



SUSTAINABLE STANSTED

www.sustainablestansted.org

Embracing spring

Spring fever has certainly arrived at our school. The children were thrilled to receive a special delivery of eggs during the last two weeks of term and have been eagerly watching them hatch and grow into fluffy chicks.



They also took great joy in singing and learning about the true meaning of Easter during our Easter Celebration service in St Mary's Church, where each class proudly shared their Easter artwork, poetry and prayers. To top it off, the children enjoyed a fantastic science day, carrying out hands-on experiments outdoors while making the most of the warm spring sunshine. It has been a wonderfully fun and busy term, enjoyed by all.

Sharon Vessey
Headteacher
Tel: 812362

Email: admin@birchanger.essex.sch.uk

No Mow May

If you are anything like me, the lawn has never been top of the priority list. Neglecting it in May is actually one of the best things you can do for local wildlife. *No Mow May*, run by the charity Plantlife, encourages people to put the mower away for the month and let their grass grow. The results are seen quickly and can be surprisingly beautiful. Within weeks, lawns that seemed like nothing more than green carpet can produce clover, dandelions, selfheal and speedwell, all of which are vital food sources for bees, butterflies and other pollinators emerging hungry after winter.

The evidence is compelling. Plantlife's research found that unmown lawns can support up to ten times more nectar-producing plants than regularly cut grass. For bumblebees, several species of which are in serious decline, a dandelion-rich lawn in May can be a lifeline. Approximately 97% of flower-rich meadows have been lost since the 1930s, and with them, vital food and habitat needed by wildlife, so if lawns changed, it could be a real help. You do not have to let everything go wild. Even leaving a patch unmown, or cutting less frequently, makes a real difference. A simple mowed path through longer grass gives it a managed look while still providing habitat. If you want to go further, consider leaving clippings occasionally to return nutrients to the soil. Stansted and the surrounding villages are already surrounded by beautiful countryside; *No Mow May* is a chance for our gardens to join in. So put the mower in the shed, make a cup of tea and watch what turns up. You might be pleasantly surprised. For more information visit plantlife.org.uk/nomowmay. To find out about Sustainable Stansted, please see our website.

Sophie Candfield
Email: sophiecandfield@gmail.com



ST MARY'S PRIMARY SCHOOL

www.stmarysstansted.co.uk

Our pupils have enjoyed a wide range of enrichment activities during the past few weeks, embracing the new opportunities with curiosity and enthusiasm. One highlight was the visiting science workshop, which provided plenty of exciting hands-on learning. We also had an Easter session with the very popular and entertaining Puppets Galore, pictured below. Maple Class and Ash Class have both taken part in local dance festivals, and we were delighted to see how confidently they all performed; they were a credit to the school.



Photograph courtesy of Puppets Galore

The excitement continued as Year 1 completed a successful term of swimming lessons with a fun session in the pool. In Upper Key Stage 2, the pupils took learning about the circulatory system to the next level, as they dissected hearts under the watchful and very impressed eye of a retired vet! Next term, we are looking forward to running a reading café for parents; a big thank you to those who came in to read with the children during a very successful World Book Day. The children will be taking part in sports day and there will be lots more summer fun. Parents of prospective pupils are very welcome to come and see life at our school for themselves; we would be pleased to show you around. Please contact the school office for more information.

Kara Power
Acting Headteacher
Tel: 812212

STANSTED IS WELL READ

The next meeting of our book club will be on **Tuesday 5th May** at 8.00pm in The Dog and Duck, Lower Street, where we will be discussing last month's book choice *The Tattooist of Auschwitz* by Heather Morris. The novel tells the story of Slovakian Jew Lale Slokalov who was imprisoned in Auschwitz concentration camp in 1942 and fell in love with a girl he was tattooing there. The story is based on the real lives of Sokolov and his wife, Gita Furman. Please do get in touch if you would like to join us. A warm welcome awaits.



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

ST JOHN'S 300 CLUB

Many congratulations to the winners of the March draw:

£100	No 234	Majel Elsom
£50	No 156	Ann Lee
£25	No 194	Alastair Bone

The draw for May will be held on **31st May** 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. There is a limit of five numbers per household. 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



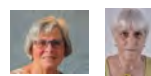
FUN PLACE ON THE HILL

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 welcoming and comfortable. Parents, grandparents, children and all ages drop in to this popular meeting place, and everyone is welcome. Adults relax and chat with a hot drink and the children enjoy playing with the toys. They have plenty of space to run around and enthusiastically join in the sing-a-long at 10.30am.



Free squash and healthy snacks are available for children, and tea, coffee and biscuits for the adults. There is limited free parking in the church car park. Looking forward to welcoming you on Friday mornings.



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

All you need is love

Come and hear the u3a singers on **Saturday 30th May** at 7.00pm in St Theresa's Parish Centre. Tickets priced £5 are available on the door, and include a glass of wine or soft drink. There will be a raffle. All profits go to East Anglian Children's Hospice (EACH). Everyone welcome; for further information tel 815409.

Jenny Jordon



**STANSTED
MOUNTFITCHET
WINDMILL**

www.stanstedwindmill.co.uk

The Millers held a fundraising race night on Saturday 28th March; it was a very entertaining evening. We are grateful to the Bowls Club for allowing us to host the event in their club house. It is an excellent venue for these kinds of events. A big thank you to those people who supported the event and helped us build up our reserves which will soon be needed to replace the sails and carry out other routine conservation work. We would also like to acknowledge our sponsors: Tesco, Yeomans cafe, YZ Minimarket, Protyre Carcare (Dunmow), AutoPoint, Essex Roofing, Canfield Carpentry, Murdochs Estate Agents and S & B Civils (Eng).

Our first open days of the year coincided with Easter weekend so we were open on both the Sunday and Monday. The added attraction of an Easter egg hunt and the favourable weather resulted in the region of 250 visitors over the two days. We were really pleased that so many youngsters got to experience the mill and it was a successful fundraiser. The mill is open on three days in May so there are plenty of opportunities to explore it. **Sunday 3rd May** is our normal first Sunday of the month opening followed by **Bank Holiday Monday 4th May**. We are also open on **Sunday 10th May** as part of National Mills weekend which offers people a chance to explore hundreds of wind and watermills across the UK, which are not usually open to the public.



The photo above shows millwright Paul Kemp having a close-up look at the sails during his routine inspection of the mill. We await his report so we can get a better idea of when the sails will need replacing.

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

During the week of 16th March, the school held a fabulous science week. A mobile planetarium *The Wonderdome* visited our school, kindly paid for by the Parent Teacher Association (PTA). This was an amazing experience for the children who learnt about the planets, outer space and space travel, for example. They all came out buzzing, full of awe and wonder at what they had just seen. They were taken on a journey through space by the charismatic Dennis who imparted his extensive knowledge, and the children enjoyed learning fascinating new information.

Some wonderful speakers also came to talk to the children about how science was used in their job: a doctor who specialises in brains, a vet, a nutritionist, a baker, an immunologist and an optician. They were really informative, and hopefully encouraged many of our young learners to aim for a job in a science related field; we appreciate them giving up their time and we all learnt a lot.



Finally, each year group came up with a question they would like to answer and carried out research to find out the answers to their questions. For example, investigating how the surface area of parachutes affects their air resistance, paper aeroplane testing, how the presentation of food affects its taste, seeing if objects were waterproof and lastly looking at exercise and pulse rate.

Karen Ainsworth
Tel: 01279 813626
Email: admin@bentfield.essex.sch.uk

**STANSTED MOUNTFITCHET
EVENING WI**



Unfortunately, due to problems on the M25 and the M11, the speaker for our March meeting could not get to us but luckily we have been able to book him for later in the year so we had a light hearted table quiz instead.

For our next meeting on **Thursday 14th May** at 7.30pm in TouchPoint, our speaker is Louise Reed whose subject is *Deaf but not Daft*. The competition is a bell! We welcome visitors and new members so please come and join us.

Linda Gurr
Tel: 07743 549241

STANSTED SINGS TOGETHER

Come and join Stansted's
Community Choir

3.30 - 5.30 pm Sat 2nd & 9th May
Sharing event 6 pm Sat 9th May
Touchpoint

All abilities welcome

To book your place please email
Jane on janievox@mac.com



Stansted Millers

Windmill May Openings
Come and have a look round
1.30 - 5.30 pm
Sun 3rd May
Bank Holiday Mon 4th May
Sunday 10th May
National Mills Weekend
Entry: adults £3, child £1



Darkness into Light

3 pm Sun 3rd May
Saffron Hall, Saffron Walden
Rachmaninov - Isle of the Dead
Liszt - Totentanz
Wagner - Siegfried's Death
Strauss - Tod und Verklärung
Adults £18 and £21, 18-25s £11
under 18s £6 from
Saffron Hall Box Office 0845 548 7650
www.saffronhall.com or on the door

WHAT'S ON IN MAY

2	Sat	Stansted Sings Together	Touchpoint 3.30 - 5.30 pm
3 Sun/4 Mon		Windmill Open	1.30 - 5.30 pm
3	Sun	Saffron Symphony	Saffron Hall 3 pm
5	Tue	Stansted is Well Read	Dog and Duck 8 pm
7	Thu	Local History Society AGM	Touchpoint 7.30 pm
9	Sat	Link copy due in today	before noon
		U3A Seminar	St Theresa's Parish Centre 9.30 am
		Stansted Sings Together	Touchpoint 3.30 - 5.30 pm
		Stansted Sings Informance	Touchpoint 6 - 7 pm
10	Sun	Open Day	Easton Lodge 11 am - 5 pm
10 & 24	Sun	Skips	Lower St Car Pak 1 - 5 pm
10	Sun	Windmill Open	1.30 - 5.30 pm
12	Tue	The Arts Society BS RSPB	Southmill Arts 10.40 am Bishop's Park Comm Cntr 7.30 pm
14	Thu	W I	Touchpoint 7.30 pm
16	Sat	Ugley Farmers' Market	Ugley Village Hall 10 am - noon
17	Wed	Ugley W I AGM	Ugley Village Hall 2 pm
		Newport Flower Club	Ugley Village Hall 7 for 7.30 pm
30	Sat	Elsenham Farmers' Market	Village Hall 12.30 - 2.30 pm
		U3A Singers Concert	St Theresa's Parish Centre 7 pm

STANSTED IS WELL READ

8 pm Tue 5th May
Dog and Duck, Lower Street
The Tattooist of Auschwitz
by Heather Morris
The story of Slovakian Jew Lale Sokolov who
was imprisoned in Auschwitz concentration
camp in 1942 and fell in love with a girl he
was tattooing there. The story is based on
the real lives of Sokolov and his wife, Gita
All Welcome Tel 813056

THE FORGOTTEN GARDENS OF EASTON LODGE NATURE DAY

11 am - 5 pm Sun 10th May
Last entry 4 pm
Essex Bat Group
Music by Woodwind of Stortford
Entry £7.50 on gate, £6 advance
Refreshments available all day
All Welcome Tel: 01371 876979

To advertise your local event free of charge on this page
in the next issue *subject to space*
Email: editor@stanstedlink.org.uk by 9th May



10 am - noon
Sat 16th May
Ugley Village Hall

Fruit & Veg ~ Eggs ~ Olive Oil
Beef ~ Pork ~ Lamb ~ Houseplants
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



Singers Concert

7 pm Sat 30th May
St Theresa's Parish Centre

All you Need is Love

Tickets £5 on the door
incl glass wine or soft drink
Proceeds East Anglian Children's Hospice



Green Waste Skip Dates

Sundays 1 - 5 pm
Note new times
10th & 24th May
7th & 21st Jun
Lower Street Car Park

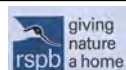


Stansted Evening W I

7.30 pm Thu 14th May
Touchpoint

Deaf but not Daft
by Louise Reed

Visitors Welcome Entry £3



Monthly Meeting

7.30 pm Tue 12th May
Bishop's Park Community Centre CM23 4DA

Kevin Sawford
British Wildlife
through the Seasons

Visitors welcome, entry £5
Tel: Peter 07876 295456
www.group.rspb.org.uk/stortvalley

THE ARTS SOCIETY BISHOP'S STORTFORD

10.40 am Tue 12th May
South Mill Arts

Dr Caroline Levisse
Scandinavian Landscape
Painting from 1840 to 1910

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

AUBREY BUXTON NATURE RESERVE

www.essexwt.org.uk/nature-reserves/aubrey-buxton

If left unattended our meadow areas would quickly turn to scrub as the willow, birch and hawthorn trees are always trying to establish themselves in these areas. This would be the first stage of these areas gradually transforming into woodland. In the absence of large herbivores to eat these trees as they start growing, the meadows quickly become populated with thin tree whips growing up to five feet high within a season. So it is our job at the end of every summer to mow the meadow areas and remove the cuttings. However, cutting them back every year does not stop the development of the roots. A root ball which forms a lump above ground can catch and damage the blades on our mower.



To tackle this issue the last two work parties have concentrated on digging up and removing willow roots and stems. This proved to be no easy task as even a modest willow whip proved to have a very substantial root. This quickly turned into a competition to see who could remove the longest root intact. In the photograph Essex Wildlife Trust volunteer Mike Wagstaff holds up his winning willow root. The thin stems, the only part visible above ground, can be seen on his left side. It was also the occasion of another volunteer John Lockton's 70th birthday so at tea break we had some fizz. This boosted morale and then it was back to work with the spades and mattocks.

John Welham
Warden

Email: communications@essexwt.org.uk



STANSTED SOCIAL CLUB

www.smsc.com

Congratulations to our local darts prodigy, Mason *Tungsten* Teese following another fantastic tournament win, beating his fellow England team-mate Sean Holly in the final of the Cressex Open. Sponsorship is essential to help Mason's progress so please get in touch if you or your company can help. Thanks to everybody in the Club who helped to raise £76 by donating to collection tins for the Animal Rescue Charity. To learn about their great work, or to donate, please see www.animalrescuecharity.org.uk.

Our Easter weekend entertainment was very well received. We had 33 RPM on Good Friday followed by a *David Bowie* tribute on the Saturday. Members' children enjoyed the festivities with an Easter egg hunt. The garden has been given a bit of a birthday so let's hope we get the weather for people to enjoy the sunshine and a cold drink.

Entertainment for May starts on **Saturday 2nd** with *The Soul Corporation* making a welcome return. **Saturday 9th** sees *Dance District* party band making their Club debut; not to be missed! On **Saturday 16th** we have Scam 69 and on **Saturday 23rd** our Billy Joel tribute act returns. We have *Russel Valentine*, an adult comedian, appearing on **Friday 29th** and on **Saturday 30th** we have a *Neil Diamond* tribute. The month ends on **Sunday 31st** with *Chloe Loader*. Evening events start 8.30pm-9.00pm and finish around 11.00pm. Events are free to members and £10 for non-members. Sunday events start after the meat raffle, normally 3.15pm. Annual membership is only £30 for new members and £25 to renew. For over 65s it is £15 for new members and renewal is £10. Membership runs from 1st July each year and brings many benefits including entrance to events, member-priced drinks and the Sunday members draw, where you could win up to £250!



Andrew Sharpe
Email: stanstedclub@gmail.com



www.tasbs.org.uk

Scandinavian landscape painting

Continuing the 50th Anniversary Year of our society's lectures, our next meeting is on **Tuesday 12th May** at 10.40am in South Mill Arts (SMA) with coffee available from 10.00am. Our speaker is Dr Caroline Levisse on *Scandinavian Landscape Painting from 1840 to 1910*. There is something special about Nordic nature. Part of its fascination is due to its vast and remote wildernesses.



In this lecture Caroline explores various ways in which nature has been represented by Danish, Finnish, Norwegian and Swedish painters from 1840 to 1910. As we will see, nature was rarely just represented in a transparent, unmediated manner but mirrored a national identity or an artist's inner world. 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



DAISY MAY'S FARM

www.daisymaysfarm.org

Life has been so exciting on the farm recently; a steady flow of animal babies being born and some of our customers have even been lucky enough to see this happening! You can bottle-feed the lambs, hold the adorable chicks and ducklings, cuddle a kid goat, meet Dexter the calf and his mum, groom ponies and encounter the very cheeky piglets. There are lots of other animals to see and feed, and there are also so many activities to enjoy on the farm: exploring the Woodland Trail, train rides (11.00am, 1.00pm and 3.00pm, £2 per person), playing on the activity equipment, letting off steam on the bouncy castle and splashing in the stream.



We also have home-cooked food and refreshments available, so all you have to do is come and enjoy yourselves. We are open 9.00am-4.00pm weekdays, 10.00am-4.00pm weekends and entry is £6.00, under 1s free. We are at Hall Road, Elsenham CM22 6DN. Please be aware we have no credit card facilities. Most importantly, wear wellies if it is wet. If your child wants a party to remember, then why not book one with us? We can offer a truly individual occasion which they can enjoy with their friends and all our lovely animals. We also welcome school parties and can tailor the visit to suit your needs, so do get in touch to have a chat and find out more. Keep an eye on our Facebook page for animal updates and other important information.

Elaine Terry
Tel: 07747 787973

BRAIN TRAINING

Fall prevention: feel your feet

Nice thick soles can make our feet feel comfortable and protected. However, if worn continually, the many sensation receptors on the sole of the foot will eventually lose efficacy, and the skin on the sole of the foot starts to thin, making walking uncomfortable. Also, after an enforced period of bed rest or low back surgery, the brain ceases to feel its feet, making us feel very tottery when we can stand up again. Sensation in the feet needs to be restored. As we walk, our brain needs a clear understanding of its feet: the better this is, the less the likelihood of falling.

Here are two fixes to improve sensation. The key points on the sole of the foot are the ball of the foot, the base of the little toe and the heel. First, explore a variety of surfaces you can rub your foot over. Carpet, a plastic bag, a bumpy tea

towel, a piece of cardboard, anything you can find that you can rub a foot over. Shut your eyes and try to 'see' the surface with your foot, along with side-to-side differences.

Another thing to try is vibration. You can use the base of an electric toothbrush or buy a Z-Vibe from Tinkstink. To make the brain pay attention, which is critical, you can compare the sensation between each part of the foot. The simple neural explanation is: sensation before movement. Inputs into the brain run from back to front. The main sensation maps of the brain are in the temporal lobe which lies behind the brain's main movement maps in the parietal lobe. Meaning: clear sensation maps enable more stable movement.

Clare Harding
Tel: 07802 872919



Strawberry fields forever

Our strawberries were feeling a little neglected, so we dedicated a session to them. Volunteers got stuck in weeding our unique tyre bed and then put new plants in. We also learnt a few strawberry facts along the way. We have the French to thank for the introduction of strawberries, as far back as the 1750s. Strawberries are certainly a trendy fruit wearing their seeds on the outside; maybe that is why they are so attractive. However some people genuinely have a fear of strawberries called *fragariaphobia*; these people should perhaps steer clear of Wimbledon this year! We now wait and see how they grow, but what better way to say yes to summer than pick ripe strawberries; irresistible with whipped cream! When this work was done, we turned our attention to planting our chitted Charlotte potatoes. Hopefully later in the year the crop will compete with that of last summer.



Those warm March days really fuelled the volunteers. We cracked on getting our no dig beds ready for compost, coupled with the usual weeding chores. The perennials are looking good for the creation of a butterfly-friendly allotment,

but as usual we will be on spring snail watch using our collected eggshells to keep them at bay. We try to meet up once a week, but understandably people have other commitments; there is no pressure and of course it depends on the weather. We tend the allotment throughout the year; this includes the best bit, picking our lovely produce. Our aim is to put a bit back into the local community. If you are interested in joining us, please contact Cathy, email: humanrootscommunity@gmail.com.

Ashley Huggonson
Volunteer




Our services:
All plumbing and heating works including

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- Boiler services and breakdowns
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THAXTED FESTIVAL

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Beyond the main stage, our much-loved Festival Extras bring us closer than ever: free community events, choir mornings, wind-mill tours and brand-new *Sound Explorers* sensory workshops for babies and toddlers. Bring the whole family. Enjoy *Wallace & Gromit: The Wrong Trousers* with live brass band at Saffron Screen, and our thrilling closing concert of Ultimate Film Music with Docklands Sinfonia. Plus, do not miss a beatboxing-meets-opera mash-up with OperaBeatz at Audley End Enchanted Railway; fun for all ages. Booking is now open and tickets start from just £10 for under 30s and £5 for under 18s. Please see our website for further information.

Lorna Burkle
Festival Manager
Tel: 01371 831421

Email: music@thaxtedfestival.co.uk



HUW JOHNSON CLUB

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

At the Club's March meeting we held a 50th birthday party for Andrew, one of our long-standing members, and everyone had a great evening dancing to the disco tunes.

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

NEWPORT AND DISTRICT FLOWER CLUB

Our March workshop was a great success, with 20 members and visitors carefully following Lorraine Gagen's instructions on how to create a crescent arrangement. All materials were provided including containers, flowers and foliage but it was amazing to see so many different interpretations. Once our displays were complete, Lorraine showed us how to manipulate leaves to create interesting forms which can be used alone or within arrangements. We all managed to produce a cone using a large aspidistra leaf into which a single bloom such as a rose could be added. However, plaiting a palm leaf remained a challenge for most of us; much laughter ensued as we all tried our best. Later in March, some Club members attended the Cambridge Group of Flower Clubs' Spring meeting at Chesterford Community Centre. The renowned Morgan-Douglas Nuth demonstrated his Botanical Flair using some very original mechanics such as cardboard cat scratchers and plaster of Paris bandages!



Our next meeting will be on Wednesday 20th May 7.00pm for 7.30pm in Ugley Village Hall. We will welcome, for the first time, Julie Richardson, all the way from the Isle of Wight with her demonstration *Night at the Movies*. Visitors are always welcome and we are delighted that several have now joined as members. To contact us, please use the new email address shown below and follow us on Facebook, Ugley Bunch Flower Club.

Sandra Honour
Programme Secretary
Email: ugleybunchflowerclub@gmail.com



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Imagine an afternoon in good company listening to the soulful sounds of Paul Simon. Such was the very pleasant task of the Poetry Group, as they listened to and discussed just how poetical Paul Simon's lyrics are.



His most famous lines: *Hello Darkness my old Friend, I've come to talk with you again* certainly seem to qualify. Simon's gentle, plaintive voice sparked a most satisfying discussion for the group. The

tea and biscuits were top notch too! Future group topics include the poetry of Americans Walt Whitman and Billy Collins, as well as Zimbabwean poet Batsirai Chigima.

At the Saturday Seminar, David Morson asked whether Donald Trump and Elon Musk are the logical consequence of globalisation. The large audience enjoyed a stimulating, well-researched examination of an important current topic, all laced with humour, Trump and Starmer masks, a touch of mimicry and real insight. Also at the monthly meeting, Andrew Baker, a teacher for over 40 years and now an author on British politics, traced the impact of *The Profumo Affair* on society, with comparisons to modern outrages. He concluded, somewhat poignantly, that after the affair a chastened Profumo dedicated himself utterly to service. He was a volunteer at Toynbee Hall, a charitable institution addressing the impact of poverty in the east end of London. The next Saturday Seminar on **9th May** will see the return of historian Dr Hugh Doherty discussing *The Anarchy*, a very bloody period in English history (1135-1154), after the death of Henry I. Remember, if you fancy a philosophical think, tucking in to pub grub or unwinding with a Sunday walk, to name only three possibilities, check the u3a website and click on *groups* for these and a host of other enjoyable pursuits, or for more information ring 07874 385541.

Julia Cook



RECYCLING



A reminder that we are still collecting stamps along with foreign and old UK coins. 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

THE GARDENS OF EASTON LODGE

www.eastonlodge.co.uk

Spring is my favourite season; May means bluebells, camassia and waving cow parsley under the trees, while the white bracts waft on the handkerchief tree in the glade. In a good year, the laburnum walk drips gold. By the end of the month the foxgloves are crowding out the herbs in the kitchen garden and the *Allium christophii* are spectacular if there is enough rain. Towards the end of the month, we are treated to the lovely unusual pink pea shaped flowers of the false acacia. There are also flowers atop one of the tallest of the trees in the glade, the Indian horse chestnut.



Allium christophii

The gardens are open every Thursday in May 11.00am-3.00pm, last entry 2.00pm. The Trust's volunteers provide refreshments in Daisy's Kiosk and are on hand to answer visitors' gardening questions. The history and information room is open for visitors to browse the pictures and stories telling the history of the gardens, gardeners and the surrounding area. **Sunday 10th May** is Nature Day at the gardens, with a range of fun nature activities, including pond dipping and owl pellet dissection. Essex Bat Group will be with us too. The gardens are open 11.00am-5.00pm, last entry 4.00pm, with refreshments available. Entry: £6 in advance, £7.50 on the day, children free. *Woodwind of Stortford* will be playing their eclectic blend of light music. For more information please see our website.

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LOCAL FARMING

I would like to introduce you to one of our valued local farmers, Stephen Kemp. His day begins with sheep, cows and Gem, his lovely young collie dog who helps with her enthusiastic barking. Stephen is the third generation of family farmers on the same land. The farm consists of arable and livestock, mixed sheep breeds of Texel, Suffolk and a few gorgeous looking Border Leicester with their distinctive long upright ears.



Stephen's day consists of checking fences, feeding and making sure all animals are healthy and grazing contently. Further up north and west the hardy sheep on the mountains are pretty much left to it; Stephen wonders how many animals

he would have left in a few months' time if he were to farm that way! He works pretty much the same way as his late parents did, using traditional methods. It is a way of life and is much the same every day. Stephen has not changed the most natural ways of farming, and dedication is needed all year round; grazing animals helps with the ecosystem.

When not tending his animals, Stephen is sowing seeds or lifting crops. Spring is one of the busiest and probably the most worrying time for Stephen and other sheep farmers with lambing. Just for a few weeks while lambs are very young, please remember to keep all dogs on leads in the fields in Stansted or elsewhere. The time of the year which many of us look forward to is harvest time, when farmers are busy bringing in the harvest of golden wheat, barley or hay.



Carol Jennings



STANSTED MOUNTFITCHET
LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

www.stanstedhistorysociety.org.uk

Our speaker in April was Tim Howard-Smith and his topic was *The River Stort Navigation 1769*, which included various important families involved in both its construction and implementation.

The River Stort Navigation was officially approved by an Act of Parliament in 1766 and opened in 1769. Its engineering was directed by John Smeaton, one of Britain's most important civil engineers. This canal transformed the original narrow and twisting Stort River into a navigable waterway for trade which linked the Sawbridgeworth and Bishop's

Stortford area to the River Lea Navigation and then on to London. It allowed goods like malt, grain, timber and coal to be transported efficiently and easily by barge. This was particularly important to small towns like Sawbridgeworth which saw a substantial growth in the number of maltings, warehouses and wharves built along the river, bringing both employment and prosperity to the area. A fully loaded barge could transport up to 60 tons of goods in about five days to London; it was much more efficient than horse drawn waggons. The Navigation is about 15 miles long with a series of locks to manage the water levels.

There were several important families who lived in the area; amongst these were the Leventhorpes, Jocelyns, Thomas Aldenarly and Jacksons. Most of the wealthy families were interconnected by marriage and owned a large proportion of the maltings and wharves. With the coming of the railways in the 19th century, the economics of barge use diminished but the canal is still used for leisure boating and walking. Our thanks to Tim for a most interesting talk. Our next meeting is our AGM and will be on **Thursday 7th May** at 7.30pm in TouchPoint.

Edward Taub

Email: taub8j@icloud.com



**UGLEY
WOMEN'S INSTITUTE**

Tammy Blest, fraud prevention officer, was the speaker at our March meeting. She pointed out that almost a third of fraud was committed over the phone as criminals disguise their phone numbers to make it appear as if the call is coming from a bank, tax office or even the police wanting your help to solve a crime! They request that you call them or click on links to steal your data and money. Another trick is the phrase *your computer has a problem*. Downloading a computer programme on their instruction gives them access to your computer and everything on it! Yet another scam is *a problem with your account*. With this scam they request you to transfer money to a secure account stating that it will be in your name but of course it is in their name. Yet another is *the investment opportunity-low risk, high rates of return, quick reply required*. However, if it sounds too good to be true, it usually is.

Cybercrime was another area that we were given advice on. The use of strong passwords, anti-virus update software and cautious use of free wi-fi was also advised. For those using social media Tammy warned us to be careful about what we share when using this facility and finally she left us with some very helpful booklets, purse bells to deter purse thieves and card defender wallets to protect our bank cards.

Our next meeting is the AGM on **Wednesday 20th May** at 2.15pm in Ugley Village Hall. The programme for our June meeting will be announced in the next issue of The Link.

Andrea Fitt

Tel: 815922

THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH

The days are getting so much lighter; as the spring sun shines through the new leaves on the trees, and the daffodils bob on the verges, I can feel my heart lightening too. Perhaps you feel that way too?

We have just celebrated the most important festival in the Christian year, Easter, when we remember how Jesus showed God's great love for us by dying on the cross, and how that love was made manifest by the resurrection and the empty tomb.

Sometimes, though, even in the sunshine, we can be filled with worry and fear, especially when we listen to the news and hear the world situation worsening; but the Christian hope is that God is with us, no matter how bleak things might feel. We have the assurance that in both the dark times and the sunny times, God loves us, and is with us. We are not alone, and God will not abandon us. We believe that after Jesus ascended into heaven, God sent the Holy Spirit to be our comforter, guide and teacher; so in this season of springtime and new beginnings we also look forward to the festival of Pentecost on 24th May. If you want to know more you would be most welcome at any of the Christian churches in the village. We might have different styles of worship, but we all believe that God is love, and has shown us that love through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, and the continued presence of the Holy Spirit to guide us.



Rev'd Gill Hulme
Stansted Free Church



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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.



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Preachers for May

3rd 10.30am Rev'd Gill Hulme - Communion
 10th 10.30am Mike Dyer - New Directions
 17th 10.30am Rev'd Charles Martin
 24th 10.30am Heather Gale
 31st 10.30am Babs Ward

Margaret is 95 years young

Our eldest member, Margaret Silvester, celebrated her 95th birthday on 29th March. It happened to be a Sunday and Margaret had already told me that she would be bringing cake for us to share with our after-church coffee.



At the end of the service Margaret was presented with a flower arrangement and two personalised cards, one signed by the congregation and the other by members of the former Shalom group, which meets for a summer reunion every year in Margaret's lovely garden.

Marion Dyer

All enquiries including Church Hall bookings The Church Office, St John's Hall, St John's Road, Stansted CM24 8JP
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From St John's Registers

March

Funerals

9th Tommy Sowerby - memorial service at St John's

12th Dorothy Suzanne Hitchmough, age 88 - memorial service at St John's, cremation at Cam Valley.



FRIENDS OF ST MARY'S CHURCH

April was a very busy month for us; the start of Champing meant six bookings in the calendar. If you see the green signs on the door, that means we have guests staying overnight. They have exclusive use of the church building between 3.30pm and 10.00am the following day.

We also welcomed the Scouts, Cubs and Beavers for their Renewal of Promise service on 19th April. They are always very welcome. We will be continuing with our churchyard project this year, but the grounds are looking neat and tidy already.



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Local vineyards

The Romans introduced wine making to the UK and vines were cultivated to some extent until WWI when land was needed for growing food. Viticulture, the process of growing grapes, was revived in the 1970s, with warmer summers and the development of grape varieties suited to English conditions. Today, we have several successful vineyards in The Hundred Parishes. One of the first was Chilford Hall in Linton parish. It was run by the Alper family for 50 years before changing hands in 2024. The new owners continue to manage the 20-acre vineyard.

In Great Bardfield, Great Lodge produces its own wines from six different grape varieties. The vineyard is open to visitors midweek May-September and there is also a wedding venue on site; see www.greatlodge.co.uk/vineyard. In Farnham, Hazel End Farm has been growing grapes for over 30 years. Their sparkling white wine is sold as *Three Squirrels*. This celebrates the fact that the Gosling family, who own the land, once had a bank in Fleet Street where a sign above the door read *Ye Three Squirrels*. For more details see www.corylet.com.



The new vineyard shown above was planted in 2021 on a south-facing slope in Stansted. The first grapes were harvested in 2023 and wine from the Gunyah Vineyard is now on sale; see www.thegunyahvineyard.com. The vineyard can be seen across the valley from Hundred Parishes walk number 137. In Saffron Walden, the first vines were planted at Saffron Grange in 2008. The family business is now well established, producing white sparkling wines and offering vineyard tours for small groups from mid-April. Visit their website www.saffrongrange.com for more details. Another vineyard has appeared in recent years in Henham and there may be others. Please let me know if you find any more.



Ken McDonald
Secretary
Tel: 813226
Email: hundredparishes@btinternet.com



RSPB
group.rspb.org.uk/stortvalley

Our first event of May takes advantage of the lighter evenings with a midweek evening birding walk around Great Bardfield. On **Wednesday 6th May** at 6.00pm we are meeting at The Vine pub, Great Bardfield CM7 4SR. This is a 4½ mile evening walk that offers an easy stroll through gentle hills and includes a windmill followed by post-walk refreshments.

For our monthly meeting on **Tuesday 12th May** at 7.30pm in Bishop's Park Community Centre, Lancaster Way, Bishop's Stortford CM23 4DA, we welcome a return visit from Kevin Sawford. Kevin was one of our first speakers post-Covid and is a multi-award-winning wildlife photographer whose images are regularly featured in *Nature's Home* magazine and other RSPB material. His *British Wildlife Through the Seasons* presentation is an illustrated journey across the British Isles through the four seasons, featuring many of his published and award-winning images and some of the stories behind these images.



Dunnock

For our last event of the month there is a date change from Saturday 16th May to **Sunday 17th May** at 10.00am, when we plan to visit Essex Wildlife Trust Hanningfield Reservoir at Hawkswood Road, Billericay CM11 1WT. The visitor centre is set in mature woodland and offers superb views over the Hanningfield Reservoir which is a Site of Special Scientific Interest. It is an ideal place to view the wildlife and offers beautiful walks through the woodland, taking in bird hides, ponds and views across the reservoir. For full details of all our activities, please see our website or contact me.

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IN THE GARDEN

Hopefully your gardens are filling out nicely now. It is close to the end of the planting window, unless you are prepared to commit to regular watering through the hotter summer months. So now is the time to sit back, enjoy your space, and perhaps start making notes on any gaps.



This month marks *No Mow May*, when we are encouraged to let our grass grow longer for the benefit of wildlife. A few years ago, I decided to divide my garden by removing a 4 x 6 metre strip of

lawn and replacing it with wildflower meadow turf. I have added to it over time, and this February planted 200 snowdrops and 100 English bluebells. It has become a real focal point, loved by bees and butterflies. If you have a large garden, this is an ideal way to create more colour and interest without the maintenance required for an herbaceous border. Even a medium-sized garden can accommodate a wildflower meadow area. If you are lucky enough to overlook the countryside, it is also a wonderful way to bring that landscape into your space, making your garden feel larger and more connected to nature.

Top tip: You must thoroughly eradicate any grass in the area before establishing a meadow. Grass will far outcompete wildflowers, leaving you back where you started within a couple of years. Do not enrich the soil; poor soil is best. Laying wildflower turf is a more reliable method than sowing seed albeit more expensive, and it provides an instant effect. Ideally, lay it in autumn to minimise the watering needed for establishment.

Anthea Harrison
Email: anthea@antheaharrison.co.uk



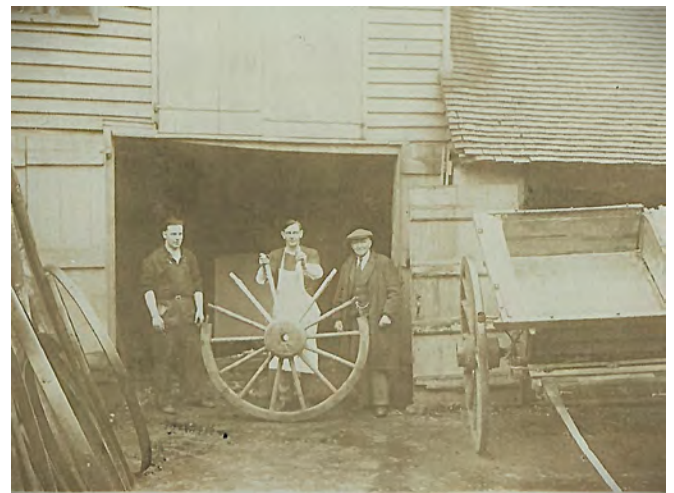
A reminder that our latest Stansted Sings Together, *Sing in the Spring* started in April but there is still time to join us. The remaining sessions are on **Saturdays 25th April, 2nd and 9th May** 3.30pm-5.30pm at TouchPoint, with *Informance* (an informal performance) for friends and family on **9th May** 6.00pm-7.00pm. There is no charge although donations to TouchPoint are welcome. You do not need to read music as we will learn aurally, from PowerPoint projections, lyric sheets or musical scores, to suit individual preferences. The main purpose of the event is to connect, support each other and celebrate our beautiful Stansted community. If you have not been before and would like to know more, please email me. I look forward to seeing you.

Jane Wheeler
Email: janievox@mac.com

BLACKSMITHS

Ken McDonald's article for The Hundred Parishes' Society in April brought back memories of the two local blacksmiths' premises, sadly, both long gone. As a small girl in the 1930s, my mother and I travelled by train to visit the Stansted relations; near the station we stopped to see Mr Brett. Where Sunnyside meets Chapel Hill there is a rounded wall. It makes no sense nowadays, but that was where Mr Brett the blacksmith could be seen working at his forge. He may have been hammering horseshoes for the customer waiting, perhaps a heavy horse from one of the farms, or Barnard's coal cart, or Miss Gold's pretty pony. More than likely it would be a powerful hunter from Gilbert Alder's stable at Hargrave House. Mr Brett was a farrier and, as Ken said, an *expert on equine hoof care*. The Bretts lived in the lodge at the end of Hargrave House drive. He had to be ready to deal with any horse in trouble at the earliest opportunity.

Further along Cambridge Road was Bedlow's Blacksmiths. After WWII, if your farm machinery needed sharpening, grinding or repair, Walter Bedlow was the man you needed. All the best gardeners traded there: new handles, sharpening scythes and bagging hooks (or sickles) and secateurs, every sort of metal tool that needed a good edge to it and a stout handle.



I have special reasons to remember Bedlow's because of the other craftsman for which the forge was essential: the wheelwright, such as my brother-in-law. He served his apprenticeship with Walter and his father and worked with them until 1939. The picture shows the Bedlows and 'Binks' Turner with his apprentice piece, the cartwheel. After Walter Bedlow died, the yard with all tools, the anvils, even a cart needing a new wheel, were left untouched for years. The wreckers came eventually and Stansted lost an opportunity to save Bedlow's premises, a complete example of the work of craftsmen who had provided essential services to their community.

Audrey Rodgers
Email: afcr1931@gmail.com



Stansted Network

NEWS FROM YOUR LOCAL COUNCILS



Stansted Mountfitchet Parish Council (SMPC)

With news of the closure of Chapel Hill for 7 days, our village PCSO, safe spaces for victims of domestic abuse in Stansted, the Annual Parish Meeting, preparations for Anglia in Bloom, a decision on local government reform, and how to take part in the County Council election

Chapel Hill to shut for 7 days

Affinity to work on water mains

Roadwork disruption has been pleasingly absent from village life in recent months, but this will change at the end of May.

Work by Affinity Water to strengthen water mains along Chapel Hill will require a 60-metre stretch of the carriageway, from Spencer Close to Cra on Green, to be closed for seven days from 25 May. Access for emergency vehicles and pedestrians will be maintained throughout the closure.

Please note that SMPC is not responsible for granting permission for or scheduling roadworks.



www.essexhighways.org

Experienced councillor co-opted

Applications invited for the remaining space

At the Full Council meeting in March, Linda Huggett was co-opted as a Parish Councillor. She brings extensive local government experience, having served as a councillor in the London Borough of Redbridge since 1998. During that time, she has served on several committees, including Finance and Resources, Climate Change and the Environment, and Highways and Education. Linda, who has lived in Stansted since 2024, was Mayor of Redbridge in 2017 and served as Deputy Leader of the Council for four years. Alongside her council work, she has also volunteered as a school governor for 14 years.

Her co-option fills one of three Parish Councillor vacancies at SMPC, and another application is due to be considered in April. If you are interested in becoming a councillor, please visit our website to download an application form.

stanstedmountfitchet-pc.gov.uk/joinsmpc

PCSO now funded by Essex Police

Parish Council ponders village policing options

Parish Councillors are considering how best to continue supporting policing in the village following changes to funding for Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) announced in March.

Each year, Stansted Mountfitchet Parish Council contributes approximately £12,000 towards a PCSO who serves Stansted and nearby villages, representing around 25% of the total cost. Parish Councils in Henham and Elsenham each contribute 12.5%, with the remainder funded by Uttlesford District Council.

From April, UDC has withdrawn its funding for all PCSOs, so only those paid for by Essex Police will remain. Under the previous arrangement, the Parish Council had some influence over how much time PCSO Alex Stewart spent in the village and what duties he undertook here.

At its March meeting, the Council considered whether it would be feasible to fund a dedicated PCSO directly. However, there are significant challenges. Opportunities to share costs are limited: Uttlesford District Council is due to be abolished as part of local government reorganisation in the area, and neighbouring parish councils are unlikely to increase their share of support.

In addition to salary costs, funding would need to cover training, equipment and transport. The total cost of a dedicated PCSO for Stansted could be close to £70k a year.

Despite these changes, we have been told that residents can be reassured that PCSO Alex Stewart's beat will continue to see him regularly at end community engagement events in Stansted. For details of Police Meet-ups in May see page 23.



Date set for Skatepark Jam 2026

Vandalised light box repaired

A date has been set for this year's Skatepark Jam. In 2026 one of the highlights of many a young resident's social calendar over the summer months will be held on **Sunday, 6 September**, long-time Skatepark Jam organiser Seann Tompson has told us. Users of the skatepark in Lower Street car park will also be pleased to learn that a contractor has now repaired the lighting. Difficulties in the availability of a suitably qualified electrician delayed work on a damaged lightbox. Fire damage left the skatepark without lights for much of the winter. SMPC would like to apologise to all concerned for the inconvenience that the delay caused.



Help for victims of domestic abuse

Mountfitchet Exchange now a designated space

Following a presentation to the Full Council earlier this year on domestic abuse in the UK, Stansted Mountfitchet Parish Council (SMPC) has partnered with local organisations to establish safe spaces in public settings where victims can seek help in confidence.

Library staff, parish councillors and SMPC officers completed training in March and April through the J9 domestic abuse awareness initiative. An online seminar by the Harlow-based charity highlighted the scale of the issue. Domestic abuse costs the UK economy an estimated £66 billion annually. Trainers also explained that 1 in 4 women and 1 in 6 men

experience domestic abuse in their lifetime.

Those who underwent training learned that domestic abuse is not limited to physical or sexual violence; it can also include financial control, harassment and stalking, and coercive behaviour.

More than nine individuals connected with the Mountfitchet Exchange have now completed the J9 training. As a result, it is now designated as a safe space where victims can be signposted to appropriate support. People concerned that they or someone they know may be experiencing domestic abuse can identify safe spaces by the purple J9 certification displayed on premises. TouchPoint (72 Chapel Hill) has also been similarly accredited.

Anglia in Bloom 2026

Organisers eye gold in regional gardening comp

Preparations are underway for this year's Anglia in Bloom campaign, which launched in March. Part of the Royal Horticultural Society's Britain in Bloom initiative, AiB is described by organisers as a campaign rather than a competition and is meant to encourage communities to take pride in their local area.

Towns and villages from Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Essex, Hertfordshire, Suffolk and Norfolk take part, with awards presented across horticultural, environmental and community categories. Entries must be submitted by 31st May for this year's event.

Stansted Mountfitchet has participated since 2021, achieving a silver-gilt award in the town category. This classification has raised eye-brows in some quarters locally, as it places Stansted in competition with larger, better-funded entries



Annual Parish Meeting 2026

Low turnout sparks questions about the open forum event

The Parish Council, which hosted the Annual Parish Meeting at the Mountfitchet Exchange in March on behalf of the community, would like to thank the small but dedicated group of residents who attended.

There was no keynote speaker this year. Instead, attendees heard from representatives of local organisations, who explained how SMPC funding has helped them provide services for Stansted residents. Speakers included Mick Bott (Uttlesford Community Travel), Kerry Mattholie (Buffy Playbus), David Brown (Stansted Hall & Elsenham Cricket Club), and Paul Chambers (TouchPoint).

At the meeting, the Chair of SMPC, the Chair of the Finance & General Purposes Committee, and the Parish



Is it time to consider whether to continue with this event?

Chair of SMPC
Cllr Maureen Caton

Clerk answered questions on topics ranging from council finances and missing benches to the potential designation of the village as a town. Stansted, with a population of over 8,600, is the third-largest settlement in Uttlesford. The



recently adopted Local Plan refers to Stansted in some of its documents as a town; if confirmed, this status could bring benefits, such as strengthening SMPC's position when negotiating for improved infrastructure and community facilities linked to new developments.

As noted above, attendance at the meeting was low. Declining numbers have been a concern in recent years: 11 residents attended in 2026, compared with 10 in 2025 and 13 in 2024.

Maureen Caton, Chair of SMPC, emphasised that the Annual Parish Meeting is a community forum rather than a formal council meeting and is not a legal requirement. She asked: "Is it time to consider whether to continue this event?"

 www.uttlesford.gov.uk/ECC-elections-202


such as Charles and Brandon.

The Parish Council is working closely with the Stansted in Bloom group who are aiming for a gold award in 2026. The group, which leads the village's entry, currently has five volunteers and is seeking additional support. Anyone able to



help is encouraged to contact Trevor Lloyd (see below). Alongside a £500 annual contribution to SiB group towards publicity and materials, the Parish Council's Open Spaces Committee is considering improvements to strengthen the village's entry.

These include enhancements to the Memorial Gardens on Chapel Hill and an area near Mountfi chet Exchange. SMPC's gardeners have suggested improved planting schemes for the Memorial Gardens. At Mountfi chet Exchange, heavy shade restricts planting. The area is also affected by dog fouling. Landscaping options here are being explored to boost the beds and discourage misuse.

 lloydtrevor33@gmail.com

Street light summer survey

Previous report casts a shadow on retro-looking lights



A traditional looking light on Chapel Hill that may need replacing

Over 250 street lights are maintained by the Parish Council, all of which are regularly inspected to ensure the village remains well-lit throughout the year. These lighting surveys are typically carried out every five years; however, a high number of "amber alerts" on the Parish Council's lighting stock means the next inspection is scheduled for this June, just three years after the last. This could bring

significant financial implications.

In 2023, 119 street lights were classified as "amber", indicating they may require repair or replacement. Of these, 31 are ornamental columns located along Chapel Hill, Lower Street and Station Road.

These lamps have a traditional appearance in fitting with these locations' designations as Conservation Areas by the District Council. But their retro-look comes with a high replacement cost. If they are deemed beyond repair following the survey, SMPC could face a bill of £111,000. This figure does not include the potential cost of replacing any of the remaining 88 columns, should faults require. In this worst-case scenario, the Parish Council would need to consider its options to manage the potential impact on its reserves.

Essex County Council elections

The election that wasn't meant to be is going ahead on Thursday, 7th May 2026. Originally scrapped as part of the local government reform process in Essex, an about-face by the government will see elections for the County Council now take place this month.

Those elected will serve instead of the usual 4-year term, just until 1st April 2028 — the date set for when new single-tier authorities should be up and running.

If you would like to vote, remember that you need to show an accepted form of photo-ID at polling stations. Your ballot card will indicate which of the polling stations in Stansted Mountfi chet you should go to. Voting will start at 7am and end at 10pm.

For details on who is standing in the election and to check on what is permitted as a form of photo-ID, head to the District Council's election and voting webpage:

 www.uttlesford.gov.uk/ECC-elections-202

Stansted's future as part of West Essex

Uttlesford to combine with Harlow & Epping Forest

The government has decided to replace Essex County Council and the current combination of unitary and district councils with five new unitary authorities. The new authority for our



A five local-authority model will replace the existing two-tier structure

area will be called West Essex, bringing together Harlow, Epping Forest and Uttlesford councils. Although there is the potential for hikes in council tax, as comparatively wealthier Uttlesford merges with two less affluent ones, Parish Councillors believe West Essex could strengthen business links along the M11 corridor and see alignment with areas that share more in common.

SMPC has begun talks with Uttlesford District Council to explore which services could be transferred once West Essex is created in 2028. "We will need to establish whether any funding will be provided if we are asked to take on services," said SMPC Chair Maureen Caton. "But one possibility could be assuming responsibility for the village car parks at Cra on Green and Lower Street."



Local Plan 2021-2041

SMPC welcomes the news that Uttlesford District Council has formally adopted a new Local Plan. This

document sets out a framework for future housing, employment, and infrastructure across the district. It also provides a basis for resisting speculative development, enabling planners to refuse proposals outside growth areas. Uttlesford's last Local Plan — adopted in 2005 — has been out of date for many years.

Stansted Mountfitchet Parish Council

Clerk Ruth Clifford

Deputy Clerk Emma Philbrick

Communications Officer Dan Schlanker

Email: info@stanstedmountfitchet-pc.gov.uk

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Chair of SMPC

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John O'BRIEN | ☎ 816772

johnobrien@stanstedmountfitchet-pc.gov.uk

Geoffrey SELL | ☎ 815925

cllrsell@uttlesford.gov.uk

Parish Council Meetings

Meetings are on Wednesdays from 7.30pm at the Mountfitchet Exchange. You can also follow meetings online using Zoom.

The log-on details are published with the agendas ahead of meetings on the SMPC website:

13th May Annual Council

20th May Finance & General Purposes

27th May 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: cldr.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; Call 101 (non-serious), or 999 (serious & ongoing incidents) www.essex.police.uk/ro/report

TouchPoint (72 Chapel Hill): Monday, 11th May – 10am-noon

Thursday, 21st May – 10am-noon **Mountfitchet Exchange**

(72 Chapel Hill): Thursday, 14th May – 6-7pm **Uppers Cafe**

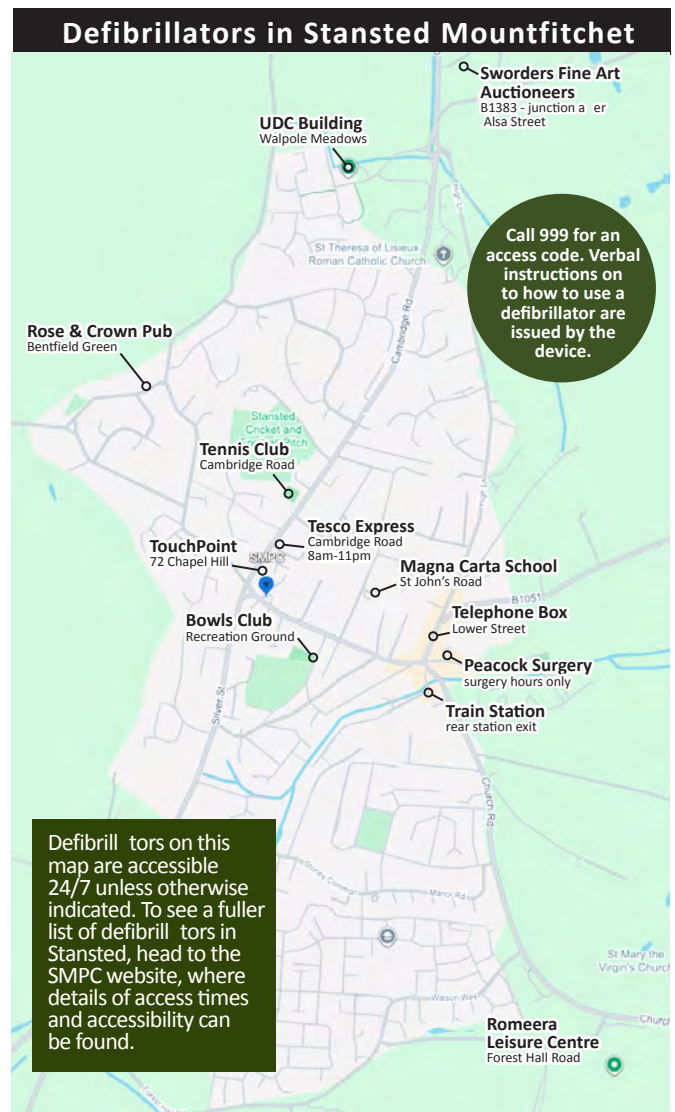
(1 Lower Street) Wednesday, 20th May – 12.30-1.30pm

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. An advisor is also on hand via computer hook-up on Monday, Wednesday & Friday. **Peabody Trust's** drop-in service—also at the Mountfitchet Exchange—is on **Thursday, 14th May** from 11am-3pm. Advisors can help with issues such as benefits evictions rent arrears, 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** Cra on Green Wednesdays 5-5.30pm; Thursdays 10am-2pm, 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 SMPC-funded garden waste service runs in the Lower Street car park on **Sunday, 10th May** and **Sunday, 24th May** — 1-5pm.



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A big team effort

Every club needs volunteers to keep it going, none more so than a village tennis club. We have over 40 members who volunteer throughout the year: cleaning the clubhouse, organising tournaments, trimming hedges or updating the website. We have three working parties per year organised by Lyn Timms, usually held on a Sunday afternoon. Members come to the Club and are allocated a job by Lyn. Regulars include long-term member Rick who always tackles the removal of ivy from the fence and Daphne brings her famous determination to weeding the gutter around the courts. After two hours with all hands on deck the Club looks great.



Lyn is also chief leaf clearer, the definition of a thankless task on a windy autumn morning. Ash and Ginette do an amazing job keeping the garden and hanging baskets looking so attractive. We have six

teams who play in the Essex Small Clubs League. Each team has a captain, and they all work tirelessly organising matches throughout the year. The 12-strong Committee do a great and varied job, much of it unseen and of course all voluntary. It is impossible to mention everybody by name, but as Chairman Jamie Hogg recently said: *Members mucking in with jobs all year round fosters a real community spirit and sense of ownership. It is what makes our Club so special and is really appreciated. It also means we can keep costs down and we only need to pay out for specialist work; this reduces outgoing costs which keeps membership fees down.*

Jon Budd

Email: contact@stanstedtennisclub.co.uk

STANSTED HALL AND ELSENHAM CRICKET CLUB

www.stanstedhallelsenhamicricket.club

The sun is shining and the cricket season looms large. Down at the Hall much work has been done during the close season and we are ready to go. We have a few friendlies ahead of the league fixtures which begin on **Saturday 2nd May**. The junior section is raring to go and have completed numerous winter net sessions. Fixtures have been arranged in the West Essex District League, a great local league with no motorway travelling. With apologies for a short report this month but there is much to look forward to.



David Brown
Tel: 831011 Mob: 07788 999663
Email: david1.r.brown@gmail.com

Following a successful winter nets programme at the Herts and Essex Cricket Centre (HECC) in Sawbridgeworth, the Club will return on **Saturday 25th April** with a friendly away fixture against Stansted Hall and Elsenham. The league season begins the following week, with both the 1st and 2nd XI starting their campaigns on **Saturday 2nd May**. After narrowly avoiding relegation last year, the 1st XI will be hoping for a less dramatic season this year, looking to start strongly with a home fixture against High Beach. The 2nd XI, following relegation last season, will face Harlow Town 3rd XI as they look to begin their season on a positive note.

The squad will hopefully be strengthened by the return of Chairman Matt Abbottson. However, secretary and key batsman Ben Sammons is currently sidelined and will miss the first half of the season, so the Club is actively seeking new batting and bowling recruits. Players of all abilities are very welcome. If you are interested in joining, please contact Ben Sammons on 07852 510330.

Our junior section will be starting soon. Hardball training for U12s to U15s begins on **Monday 4th May**, while softball training for Years 1–6 starts on **Friday 8th May**. The cost for the season is £40 per child, and £25 for each additional sibling. For junior enquiries, please contact Matt Cope on 07583 106408. Parents are always welcome to relax and enjoy a drink in our clubhouse. We would like to thank the Stansted Airport Community Fund and the Sports Association for their generous support in helping us build much-needed new outdoor nets at the Club. We look forward to another exciting season and warmly welcome new players, members, and supporters to the Club.

Emiel Pronk

Tel: 07429 058203

Email: emiel.pronk@icloud.com



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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
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Human Roots	Keiran Oliver Tel: 07946 783039 Email: keiran@humanrootscommunity.org.uk	Talking Newspaper (BS and District)	Richard Barnett Tel: 651270 Email: familybarnett24@hotmail.com
Huw Johnson Club	Ellen Brooks Tel: 07800 896516 Email: ellenbrooks@hotmail.co.uk	The Hundred Parishes Society	Ken McDonald Tel: 813226 Email: hundredparishes@btinternet.com
Let's Talk, Stansted Mental Health Support	Richard Haywood Tel: 07794 268208 Email: contact@stanstedmentalhealth.org	TouchPoint	Shirley Johnson Tel: 07572 114882 Email: info@thetouchpoint.org
Little Scrummers	Andrew Poyser Tel: 07738 591232	Town Twinning	Chairman: Geraldine Allars Tel: 07833 089298 Email: twinning@stanstedmountfitchetpc.gov.uk
Millers (Windmill)	Tudor Owen Tel: 810805 Email: info@stanstedwindmill.co.uk	u3a	Susan Sedgbeer Email: stanstedu3a@gmail.com
music@stansted	Sonia Levy Tel: 815282	WI (Stansted)	Linda Gurr Tel: 07743 549241
Classical concerts	Email: contactus@musicatstansted.co.uk	WI (Ugley)	Andrea Fitt Tel: 815922
Neighbourhood Watch	Linzi Shelford Tel: 07427 377118 Email: linzishelford@hotmail.com	Youth Centre	Essex Youth Services Tel: 07584 140507
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		

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.

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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