



Parish Council Meeting - 4th March

Several members of the public raised concerns about an increase in dog fouling around the village and playing field - the Parish Council agreed to purchase and erect more signage. One resident raised the question of establishing a community garden on a portion of the field, the idea will be on the agenda for discussion next meeting.

The glass recycling has produced a payment of £1096 to the Parish Council which has been earmarked as funds towards the replacement zip wire, so cheers to everyone who are using the bins. It is hoped work will begin on the zip wire in the summer.

Troston spring maintenance day will be on March 22nd, meet at 10am at the entrance to Troston Woods, there will be clearance work and jobs aplenty. Please wear gloves and bring any tools you may have. Some small fruit trees have been planted in the woods and the daffodils are now starting to appear.

Troston website <https://troston-pc.gov.uk> is now live, although Des welcomes any ideas as he continues to update it.

As always if you have any ideas or issues you would like to raise, please contact the Clerk Amanda Jackson clerk@troston-pc.gov.uk

The full minutes for the meeting will be available as always on the website.

Date of the next meeting May 6th 2025 7pm

From Sue Rose, Vice Chair Troston PC

Community Seed Swap

After recent discussions the Parish Council have now adapted the old disused telephone box, located on The Street opposite the pub, into a Community Seed Swap. Anyone in the village and surrounding area are welcome to come and take a look and use it to swap any unwanted seeds, get different seeds to try out, post information regarding extra plants you may have that others might give a good home to and later in the season you can even offer excess produce to others.

If you have seeds to swap, please make sure the packet is labelled with the name of the plant and the approximate number of seeds and any other relevant information. Please be respectful to others that may want seeds and do not take more than you need.

If you don't have seeds to swap, you can make a small donation to the tin (donations will go towards future green space projects in the village).

If you have plants, seedlings or excess produce, please pin a note to the board stating plants/seedlings/produce available and either an address or contact number to arrange collection – please do not leave plants or vegetables in the phone box as they will not be watered or looked after.

From Diana Bilverstone

Village Hall

With Spring upon us and longer, lighter days ahead, getting out and about for social occasions is so much more appealing. Bring family and friends together with a gathering at our charming Village Hall.

For all enquiries and bookings, please contact Sue Bishop. To check availability, book or have a look round, please contact me on 269467. Remember, residents have a special rate of just £10 an hour.

From Sue Bishop

The WI

For our first meeting of the year, we welcomed Adrian Hoyle, a volunteer for the War Graves Commission and current serving member of the RAF. He gave a captivating talk regarding the war graves across the country and world. The graves are kept beautifully due to many hardworking people throughout the country volunteering their time to preserve and remember the service men and women we lost in both the world wars.

At our most recent meeting, we had the lovely Kat and James from Artefact Brewery in Ixworth to talk about their journey in the beer making industry. Although they are currently classed as a microbrewery, they have won many awards for their beers over the few short years they have been running. We got to taste a few of their creations which was a great touch to their presentation.

If you would like to join in please do come along or contact Tricia tel. 268442 or email honingtonandsapistonwi@gmail.com to find out more.

From Joanne Hoyle

Calthorpe and Edwards Educational Foundation

Please start thinking about applying to us before September for grants that might help you - or the young people in your family. The Foundation was founded to help students in our area with a grant for studies in Further Education. This means University, Further Education College, Medical School and similar establishments. It excludes courses that could have been attended at School.

The Governors limit assistance initially for a maximum of three years and to people under 25 years of age. The period may, at the Governors' discretion, be extended a year at a time when appropriate, but not beyond the age limit. The grant is paid in three termly instalments of around £100.

Currently there are 3 students from Ingham, 1 student from Culford, 7 from Fornham St Martin, 19 from Great Barton, 6 from Ixworth, and 2 from Troston.

For more information contact Mrs Rosemary Boswell: phone 01284728199 or email: boswellrg444@outlook.com

From John Browning, Trustee

Farm News

So many more sheep to be seen in the fields around the village - it would be hard to count them! For arable farmers wanting to improve soil structure and fertility - and reduce weed burden without excessive chemical use, fodder crops grazed by livestock is an excellent approach.

A big plus is that sheep have minimal housing needs – temporary water and fencing allows them to be easily moved around the farm. Through their manure, sheep can contribute up to 35% of soil organic matter. This provides vital nutrients to crops and supports soil organisms that keep the soil healthy.

Combining crops, grassland and livestock also supports small mammals, pollinators and farmland birds - a win all round.

From John Pawsey

What has happened to our blackbirds?

You may have noticed fewer blackbirds in your garden? Beloved by Shakespeare and the Beatles, the blackbird and its sweet song have captured the imagination of Britons for centuries. But now this wonderful songbird is facing a rapid decline.

It is thought the bird is suffering from Usutu virus, a new mosquito-borne disease which is often fatal to blackbirds. The illness was first detected in London in the summer 2020 when numbers fell by 50% compared to 2019. It was first identified in South Africa and, with climate changes, has spread quickly across mainland Europe. It is now spreading across south-east England.

We will miss their complex song, which is very mellow and almost sounds as if it is in a major key. They deliver low-pitched, flute-like verses and are able to mimic each other, and other birds.

From Hugh Hanmer, British Trust for Ornithology

Bringing Back the Suffolk Pig

We were gifted two fine black pigs, both small in stature but meaty not fat. Great examples of the pig fraternity. However, we could find no reference to a breed of this type in all the usual reference places, i.e. The British Pig Association or The Rare Breed Survival Trust.

After further research, we discovered sometime in the 1900's it was thought not to be as commercially viable as its' larger black counterpart from Norfolk and the breed was forgotten - like so many of the UK's heritage live stock. Being a great believer in traditional farming, and with the knowledge that Suffolk had a very strong connection with pigs - the people of the past having used pig blood to colour their houses, hence "Suffolk Pink" - we took it upon ourselves to work towards recreating and reintroducing the breed back in Suffolk.

By using regressive genetics, that is, finding the closest current relation to the original breed mix, i.e., Large Black, Middle White and Berkshire pigs, and by using our own two fine specimens, we are continuing to work towards perfecting a consistent type that will, we hope, eventually, be recognised by The British Pig Association as a breed again in its' own right.

Please don't hesitate to support us "Bring back the Suffolk Pig" - we have a monthly pitch on the farmers market in Bury St Edmund's selling the finest cuts.

From Andy and Jo, Greenacres Farm

Tackling Rural Poverty

This month my team at Citizen's Advice reported the continued rise in poverty levels in our part of Suffolk. Not unexpectedly, households with children are more likely to struggle with essential costs than those without. It seems nearly one in four families with children have skipped meals to pay bills, and almost half have used credit to cover basic household expenses. Of course, the number of children parents choose to have is obviously a factor?

Financial strains are compounded in our predominately rural area, however, where relatively long distances between homes and supermarkets or essential services, coupled with unreliable public transport, make accessing affordable food and healthcare more difficult.

The closure of local shops, particularly in our smaller towns and villages, means that rural families are often forced to travel long distances to find reasonably priced groceries. This not only increases their transport costs but also limits their ability to purchase value-for-money nutritious food.

We hear brave talk from West Suffolk Council on expanding affordable public transport options or subsidising travel costs for low-income families. But what do we actually see being done to significantly ease the burden of transport costs, enabling families to access essential services and employment opportunities more easily?

Potential solutions could be to increase the availability of mobile food markets or support community food hubs and provide subsidies for local grocery stores in underserved regions?

Perhaps extending the social-tariff schemes for utilities such as broadband, water, and energy would reduce the financial strain on families in rural areas, where high utility costs and poor broadband connectivity are common?

Would these possible solutions get your support? Please lobby your MP (Dr Peter Prinsley) and your West Suffolk Councillors.

From Carole Eagles, Chief Officer, Suffolk West Citizen's Advice

Is your Home Safe and Warm?

We can help you with a £150 grant to help warm your house, fix damp and/or mould, fit safety-rails and provide steps to get around your home safely. It doesn't matter if you own your home or rent, privately or through a housing association.

For more information don't hesitate to phone me 0333 016 2000 or email healthandhousing@eastsuffolk.gov.uk

From Rosie Hubbard

School News

A busy start to 2025 for the school. We had an epiphany service, led by Vicar Karen, at the start of the term – you may have seen us walking through the village wearing our crowns and following the star!

Our Year 3 class have started Forest School sessions down by the river and we are continuing our *IRock* music lesson provision. We offer two lunchtime “Light-wave” clubs, run by Mrs Moore, and our after-school clubs this term are Multi Sports/Skills and Mixed Football.

From Carol King

Scout Group

We have Beavers for children aged 6-8, Cubs for children age 8-10½ and Scouts for children aged 10½ -14. We are run by a small team of dedicated volunteers and are always happy to welcome new adult volunteers to our team. Our usual meeting days are on a Monday 6.30-8 (Cubs), Tuesday 6.15-7.30 (Beavers) and Wednesday 7-9 (Scouts).

Last term our Scouts camped, hiked, learnt to use axes, knives and saws safely, and tried tomahawk throwing. Cubs camped, learned how to read a map, hiked, and had a singing lesson. Beavers learned how to ride their bikes safely, tried their hand at air rifle shooting, learned to tie useful knots, and went to Colchester Zoo.

This term our various programmes include Ten Pin Bowling, Highland Games, Pancake Making, Airfix Modelling, Laser Questing, Hiking, Knots, Fire Safety and Camps.

If you are interested in your child joining one of our Sections or you would like to volunteer, please contact Judy Brooks e- mail judy.brooks2010@btinternet.com, phone number 07805 777162 or Martin Brooks phone number 07531 560701.

From Andrew Freeman

Please Assemble

The government is producing (another) 10-year plan for the NHS. Indeed, like all health systems across Europe, the NHS is facing the twin pressures from labour shortages and an ageing population in poor health. The cracks are evident – for instance, in long waiting times for hospital care – and the decline in adult social care.

The solution we are told requires three shifts in NHS services towards more community-based care, prevention programmes and use of digital technology.

Have your say on the plans for the new hospital and community services in Suffolk at the *People and Communities Assembly*. Everyone is welcome!

The Assembly will be a regular gathering of healthcare professionals and people with lived experience who meet to identify ways to improve health and care services in West Suffolk. The group will develop and learn from each other – a community of practitioners and public voices who will co-produce and co-deliver improvements.

You can sign up to get involved via our Let's Talk SNEE platform: Be part of the People and Communities work | Lets Talk SNEE

On Monday March 24th the Assembly is meeting from 10am - 12:30pm at West Suffolk House, or you can join virtually on Teams, please register using the above link. su.Conquer@snee.nhs.uk 07729 826502

From Su Conquer, Communities Officer

Next Newsletter

Please email me possible items you think would interest local residents for the next Newsletter. The deadline is **15.00 8th May**. Articles may be edited, of course, to fit the space available.

Any opinions expressed in these articles will be solely the author's and do not necessarily reflect my opinions or of the Parish Council.

If you would like a copy (blind) emailed to you every two months please send me your address: graemenorris46@gmail.com

From Graeme Norris, Editor
