



TROSTON PARISH NEWSLETTER

January 2026

HAPPY NEW YEAR TO EVERYONE!

Troston Village Hall

Happy New Year – and hopefully it will be a busy year for the village hall.

The committee would like to thank everyone who supported the Quiz Night and the Bake Sale at the end of last year to help kick-off events to raise funds for essential improvements and repairs to the village hall.

And a huge thanks to Richard Balaam for the unexpected donation of £238 received before Christmas. Thanks to the support we have received so far, we have been able to agree electrical works to be started to improve lighting inside the hall and outside in the car park area.

Event dates for your diary:

Coffee mornings – free hot drinks and biscuits, open to everyone, 10am to 12 noon on Friday Jan 23rd, Feb 6th, Feb 20th, Mar 6th and Mar 20th

Quiz Night – Saturday 7th March, 7pm – fun entertaining evening, teams of up to 6, £10 per person includes food (bring your own drinks), cash prize to the winning team, raffle, contact Paul on trostonvillagehall@outlook.com for details/tickets

Rural Coffee Caravan – Wednesday 11th February, 10am to 12 noon (inside village hall during colder months) – free refreshments, plenty of cheer and access to a raft of information on local and national agencies, organisations, activities and support services.

More exciting news – would you like to enter our new Village Lottery?

For just £2 per number per month you could win a cash prize and support the village hall. Draws will be held every other month, each draw will have three prizes. Provided we attract 100 entries each draw will pay out a first prize of £100, second prize of £60 and third prize of £40 – this means half the lottery money is given out as prizes and the other half goes towards village hall improvements and repairs. If the number of entries are higher or lower than 100 then the prize money will increase or decrease accordingly.

The lottery will be open to all residents, friends and family over 16 years of age – you can have multiple tickets per household or person.

Payments would ideally be made by bank transfer or standing order either monthly, six monthly or annually, but other payment methods can be accepted by arrangement.

Village hall committee members will be dropping information leaflets door to door from Saturday 24th January, so they may knock on your door, and they will be able to answer any questions you may have.

[Small society lotteries registration number – SL06286]

Finally, there are some future events that are being considered or waiting to be confirmed:

Spring Sale – plants, cakes, crafts, refreshments – Apr/May

Monthly Gardening Club, Bingo Night, Ceilidh Night, Summer Garden Party, Monthly Ladies Breakfast.

If you would like to hire the hall for an event or register an interest in any of the events mentioned or have any other ideas for future fundraising events, social events or clubs you would like to attend at the hall, please get in touch, trostonvillagehall@outlook.com

From the Village Hall Management Committee

Troston Parish Council

Grant funding has now been received from West Suffolk Council and Suffolk County Council for the purchase of another Vehicle Activated Speed Sign for the village – the solar powered unit will be ordered and installed as soon as possible.

The Parish Council are pleased to confirm that a village resident has volunteered to become a Troston parish tree warden – they will be registered with the Tree Council and will have the opportunity to attend training events, receive guidance and offer support and advice on tree matters within the parish.

Since the recent cold/icy weather it had been noted that the grit bin opposite the pub is running low on grit. This has been reported to Suffolk County Council Highways Dept and they will refill it when they have available resources.

The bad weather has also caused deterioration of the roads all over the county – leading to more potholes, eroded shoulders and verges, damaged road surfaces etc – we are trying to encourage all residents to report any highways issues on the Suffolk Highways online reporting tool. The more

reports received for an issue the higher priority it receives from Suffolk County Council – please use this link <https://highwaysreporting.suffolk.gov.uk/>

It has been confirmed that the glass recycling bins (bottle banks) in the playing field car park will be staying in place after the new household recycling waste scheme is introduced in the summer of this year. West Suffolk Council will monitor the use of the bins over a period of time to see if they are economically viable to remain. The Parish Council receives payments in regard to the recycled glass and would like to encourage residents to use this facility as the additional funds are used towards village improvements.

Looking forward we have set the date for our Annual Village Meeting, Tuesday 14th April 2026 at 7pm in the village hall – this is not a standard Parish Council meeting, this meeting is an informal gathering for all local residents to discuss village issues, ask questions, and influence local decisions. We would like to encourage as many residents as possible to attend.

From Diana Bilverstone, Chair of Troston Parish Council

Two Proposals

The Council considered the two proposals for Local Government Reform:

1. One unitary authority - from Suffolk County Council, and
2. Three smaller authorities - from The District and Borough Councils.

The “One Suffolk” proposal emphasises savings and better integrated services - reducing duplication and postcode lottery effects. The claim is that one simple organisation, with fewer but more powerful Councillors, would enable Suffolk to better attract investment and coordinate strategic functions like housing, transport and education.

The “Power of 3” model highlights localised power and community connections. The key arguments are that it delivers services closer to the communities being served, offering stronger local control and solutions tailored to local demand.

After discussion, our Parish Council decided to support the “Power of Three” proposal. Of course, the decision rests with central government who are suspected to prefer the “One Suffolk” option! The decision is expected in early 2026 but implementation some 2 years later...

Elections postponed?

Running in parallel to these discussions, Suffolk and Norfolk are part of a programme that will see them share a mayor. The mayoral election was due to happen in May next year but has now been postponed to May 2028.

The ongoing restructuring debate means that Suffolk County Council elections have also been postponed. However, as I told Parliament before the Christmas recess "should a council say they have no reason to delay their elections, there should be no delay."

From Alison McGovern, Minister for Local Government

Rise in Council Tax

In the meantime, what ever decisions are made (or not made) Suffolk County Council are proposing to increase council tax by 4.99%

The increase would mean a band B property will pay £25.90 per week and a band D property £33.30 per week for its services. The bill for district and borough councils, of course, needs to be added to that to give the full council tax to be paid by households.

It has to be noticed that the largest proportion of the savings outlined in the draft budget will again come from cuts to adult social care and children's services. Again the folk of Suffolk are facing tax rises with important services being trimmed to the bone. We have a broken model of financing local government that directly puts the discretionary filling of potholes etc up against providing mandated social support and community health care.

From Vikki Irwin, Political Journalist

Church News

Monthly Services:

- Second Sunday of the month: Holy Communion at 11am.
- The fourth Sunday of the month: An informal service of discussion with refreshments at 3pm.

All services within the local area can always be found on The Blackbourne Team Ministry Facebook page as well as the Troston Facebook Page.

From Jane Harland

Women's Institute

In December we were delighted to invite Charles Garland to speak about all things Dad's Army! There are so many local aspects about Dad's Army so it

was great to hear from Charles on the background of the show - as well as how the characters made it one of the most loved comedy shows.

We would be delighted to see some new faces and invite any women to come and join in! If you have any questions about what we do or how to join, please contact us on this email - honingtonsapistonwi@gmail.com.

Upcoming meetings range across topics from a talk from an Emergency Medical Charity, learning how to perform CPR - and egg dipping decoration!

We meet at Honington and Sapiston village hall IP31 1RU, every 2nd Tuesday of the month, the meeting starts at 7.30pm. But note: meeting in February is a change of date to 9th.

Come for friendship and stay for fun.

From Joanne Hoyle, Co President

Farming News

Another year, another problem! Farmers are currently fighting a pest that destroys sugar beet. Last year's warmer weather encouraged an increase in beet moths - whose caterpillars are about 1-2cm long. Among the worst affected areas are the dry and sandy Brecks in west Suffolk and west Norfolk. It is now found in at least 50% of the sugar beet fields around Troston.

Dr Alistair Wright, head of crop protection at the British Beet Research Organisation said:

"The moth bores into the leaf stalks and eventually defoliates the canopy so that the plant can't make any more sugar and makes it susceptible to rot — so the beets can't be stored either."

The government has given emergency authorisation for chemical treatment. This included working with chemical manufacturers to look at new insecticides and a range of alternatives like ploughing so the pupae are buried and when they emerge they can't get up to the soil surface.

"New traps have been deployed this year using AI to determine the number of moths caught, which will help us get the correct insecticide at the right time as well as other interventions," Dr Wright added.

From Clare Phillips

Education, Education, Education

Do you remember that mantra from the Blair years? So what improvement do we see? Little it seems... Our Survey published before Christmas suggests:

- Suffolk is in the bottom 20% of areas in England for education - and with less-qualified workforces we have a poorer economy, with fewer well-paid jobs.
- Indeed, the trend across Suffolk is for a lower number of young people leaving school and entering further education and training - and, perhaps unsurprisingly, fewer finding employment.
- Suffolk's labour productivity per worker is forecast to take around 14 years to reach the current UK level, by which time the UK figure is expected to have grown by around 15%. Labour productivity across Suffolk is expected to remain at less than 90% of the UK average.

No wonder compared to the rest of England, Suffolk has a statistically significant lower percentage of people working in "professional occupations" (30% v 40%), and a statistically significant higher percentage of people working in "home caring, leisure, and other service occupations" (12% v 8%).

In essence, relatively poor educational levels have long been a driver of relative deprivation in Suffolk. Much, much much more must be done to help our young people on whom the future depends.

The coming re-organisation and elections are a chance to scrutinise the actions proposed by candidates - and results achieved!

From Chris Bally, Ian Gallin and Helen Pluck, the Chief Executives of East Suffolk, West Suffolk and Ipswich Borough Council respectively.

Ixworth Surgery News

An updated Practice Booklet has been produced

<https://www.ixworthsurgery.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/Ixworth-Surgery-Practice-Booklet-2025-1.pdf>

While vaccines are some of our greatest medical achievements, immunisation rates are slipping across Suffolk. We hear some parents are wary about the unintended side effects of inoculating their children. From our professional experience, let us assure you, the probability of the serious effect of not getting vaccinated is far higher than the likelihood of a bad reaction. In fact, some of our patients report some beneficial side effects...

Consider, for example, the shingles vaccine it seems to protect against dementia and lower the risk of cardiovascular conditions like stroke and heart attacks. People recently vaccinated against tetanus also seem to have a reduced likelihood of developing Parkinson's disease. A new study has linked the hepatitis B vaccine, typically taken by healthcare workers, with a reduced risk of diabetes. Now recommended as routine for all babies.

It is one of society's conundrums, even if vaccines protected against only the infections they are indicated for, their benefits to the vast majority far outweigh any risks - but, we need to appreciate for a few individuals there are underlying conditions to recognise early.

From Josh Williams, Senior Practice Manager, and Grace Wade, Research Scientist with the NHS

The Financial Inclusion Service

Are you struggling with increases in the cost of living?

West Suffolk Council provide a service to help residents with cost-of-living issues, including checking eligibility for benefits like Pension Credit, reducing outgoings, and providing general advice. The Financial Inclusion team can:

- check you are getting all the benefits you are eligible for;
- check if you can apply for any grants;
- provide information about discounts and deals to help reduce spending;
- if necessary, help you on a pathway to deal with debt.

They would be pleased to help with specific queries as well as more general support with your finances. They can also connect you with other local support services where necessary. You can contact them by:

Telephone: 01284 757660 Email: financial.inclusion@westsuffolk.gov.uk

LIFT

I know it sounds rather Big Brother but the Government has an AI software and database called LIFT - the Lower Income Family Tracker. It combines data from the DWP, the Electoral Register, Social Surveys and bits of information from the various Local Authority agencies. The idea is to be able to focus help on those believed to be at most need. For example, West Suffolk Council recently wrote to households in Troston who they think may be eligible to claim pension credits but are not doing so.

(Please be reassured that this is not a scam letter. However, if you would like to check, you can contact the Financial Inclusion team on the telephone number provided. West Suffolk Council will never ask you for your bank details).

Pension Credit

If you are or have friends or family over State Pension age (currently 66), ask them if they have checked their eligibility. They can find out more here [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk) - Pension Credit Overview or by phoning 0800 99 1234. Applications

can be made online or over the phone. You can ask for your claim to be back dated.

Pension Credit is not just help with heating costs. Getting Pension Credit opens the door to additional benefits such as help with the cost of dental work, glasses and transport to hospital; help with rent or mortgage interest; and help paying Council Tax. Also a free TV Licence for those aged 75 and over.

From Liz Evans, Financial Inclusion Service

Getting Old

We are constantly being told the number of over 65's in the population is increasing. Should we worry? As a retired statistician in my early 80's I wanted to see the numbers.

Would it surprise you to know that in Suffolk less than 2% of over 65's are living in a care or nursing home - and that number is forecast to continue falling. Indeed, the period of frailty at the end of life is not increasing. In fact, it is reducing.

We are living healthier for longer. This is particularly so in Suffolk. Some 95% of folk between 80 and 84 are living quite happily and safely at home - sometimes with some help with the cleaning etc. It is only at ages above 90 that about 20% need more support.

Living safely in your own home may be as simple as installing a handrail to get in and out of the bath. Or you might benefit from installing a walk-in shower instead of a bath. There is a range of handy equipment available that may help you retain your independence at home for longer. This could be as simple as a 'reacher' to avoid bending down to pick things up. Or you might benefit from a digital assistant smart speaker to help you remember to take medication.

Carers can help you with tasks that you're struggling to manage on your own, such as cooking, cleaning, washing, dressing or shopping. Home care in Suffolk is usually arranged either privately by individuals and their families, or through financial support from Suffolk County Council.

From Prof. John Bateson

Note:

This Newsletter is funded by Troston Parish Council. Any opinions expressed in these articles are solely the author's and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Parish Council - or the Editor!
