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THE COMMUNITY MAGAZINE FOR ONEHOUSE,
HARLESTON AND SHELLAND

OHSMag

FEBRUARY 2025

ISSUE 604



Congratulations Sally Turner, third winner in our photography competition

Andrew Bingham
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Dear Readers,

Welcome to the February edition of OHSMag. As we inch closer to spring, it's heartening to see our villages bustling with activity.

This month, we're proud to showcase the third and final winning photograph from our photography competition, taken by Sally Turner. Thank you to everyone who took part in the photography competition – the quality of entries was outstanding! Don't forget to have your say in voting for the overall winner, who will receive an additional prize. Details on how to vote can be found on page 18.

On pages 28 and 29 you can read an update from Liz, who has recently been volunteering in Kenya. Closer to home, please see the final details for our Curry Masterclasses on page 11. Classes take place in March and April, making a fantastic Mother's Day gift.

Lastly, we're searching for a new editor for OHSMag. If you're passionate about our community, we'd love to hear from you. Please email clerk@onehouseparishcouncil.gov.uk for more details.

Enjoy the issue!

Laura Cross

Circle dancing

Gentle (mostly!) dances to world music.

1st and 3rd Tuesday of each month. £6/session
2pm-3pm at Trinity Hall, Onehouse
No partner needed.

Jen Larner 07896 495574



Next Mobile Library Visit

Friday 21 February 2025

9:30am-9:55am	Northfield Road
10am-10:20am	Onehouse Church Room
10:25am—10:45am	Harleston Postbox

Council Reports

Onehouse Parish Council

OPC met 13th January 2025. Councillors and residents addressed local concerns and developments for the parish.

Public Forum

Public comments highlighted concerns about safety along Footpath 28 due to recent accidents, prompting plans for signage to warn users of the slippery conditions.

The success of the new Little Owls Baby and Toddler Group was also noted with positive feedback from attendees. Ways to alleviate parking issues during these sessions have been suggested.

County Cllr Otton discussed the significant changes in local governance proposed by the government, including the potential abolition of district councils in favour of larger unitary authorities. This aims to simplify local government but raises concerns about maintaining local representation. Cllr Otton also shared detail on several motions passed by Suffolk County Council some of which included:

- Opposition to the government changes for Agricultural Property Relief
- Opposition to major energy projects which reduce agricultural land, in favour of solar panels being prioritised on new housing & commercial buildings plus retrofitting panels to existing buildings such as schools and libraries

Cllr Matthissen echoed these sentiments before reporting on new housing targets and budget proposals, emphasising the need for infrastructure improvements to keep pace with development. He also shared that the MSDC budget is in surplus, this is partly due to extra revenue generated by Gateway 14. One further item briefed out by Cllr Matthissen were the grants available as part of the Pride In Your Place scheme aimed at projects within our communities.

Planning matters included a new drop kerb application, which received no objections, and the approval of a single-storey extension at The Cedar House.

Financial reports revealed a total balance of £35,729.43 across accounts, with a unanimous decision to set the precept for 2025/26 at £27,000.

The council discussed light pollution issues within the village, which raised safety concerns among residents. It was agreed this would be followed up further.

Councillors discussed the current councillor vacancy and agreed advertising for the role. Also under discussion were the roles of Clerk/RFO, Safety Officer, Safeguarding Officer and Tree and Footpath Warden.

An update was given regarding the ongoing work within the Pauper's Graves, and a request for an Elfin Tree project within the area was respectfully declined to maintain the site's sanctity.

Councillors agreed the number of OHSMag magazines printed should be raised to 670 due to increased property numbers. The council was informed that following the OHSMag editor's decision to step down, as yet there has not been anyone interested in the position.

It was agreed that consideration for a village show would be discussed further at the next meeting. The council decided not to respond as a body to the Suffolk Police and Crime Plan consultation, whilst councillors are free to respond independently.

The next meeting is scheduled for 10 February 2025

Penny Otton – County Councillor for Thedwastre South

Motions Passed at Council

At Council on Thursday 12 December, three motions were passed more or less unanimously by councillors. The first was a Conservative motion opposing government's changes to Agricultural Property Relief, which mean that from April 2026, Suffolk farmers will only have relief from inheritance tax for up to £1m of combined agricultural and business property.

The Conservative motion also opposed industrialization of the

countryside by major energy projects, including solar farms.

The motion brought by my group also related to solar farms, specifically the need to prioritise rooftop solar over solar farms and lobby for changes to planning so that new housing and commercial developments have solar panels, and priority is given to retrofitting solar to buildings or brownfield sites over new solar farms which take good quality farmland out of food production. For example, in France solar panels are often mounted on canopies above car parks to maximise space. As well as contributing to the country's net zero targets, solar panels could significantly reduce energy bills for Suffolk schools and libraries.

The final motion was tabled by the Conservatives on knife crime and proposed that a knife crime action plan for Ipswich be discussed at the next meeting of the Safer, Stronger Communities Board in March 2025.

Suffolk Economic Strategy

At Cabinet on Tuesday 3 December, a new economic strategy was tabled which followed the creation of the Suffolk Business Board earlier in 2024. The Board produced a strategy for the county for the next five years, listing the areas which are most important to the Suffolk economy, including clean energy, agriculture, tourism, and ports and logistics. It also outlined how the Board hopes that digital innovation, AI and robotics can help drive improvements and growth in these areas.

We also expressed concern that the strategy barely mentioned arts, heritage and culture, and that no arts or cultural organizations were represented on the board. The plan was approved by the council's cabinet, and the Suffolk Business Board will now finalise how it plans to deliver the strategy, and will report back to Cabinet every year on their progress.

Children's Services Improvement Plans

The Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Committee met on 5 December to review the plan for improvement following the Ofsted inspection of the council's children's social care provision earlier in the year. The Ofsted report was published in August 2024 and the

council learned it had dropped from being rated Outstanding in 2019 its current grade of Requires Improvement. The council had to produce an action plan for improvement which it has submitted to Ofsted and the Department for Education. There will also be a new Strengthening Services for Children and Families Board, which will chaired by the council's Chief Executive, Nicola Beach. The council particularly needs to improve services for care leavers and consistency of practice and quality assurance. This work is separate to the council's improvement work for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). This is subject to a separate inspection process by Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC).

Devolution and Council Reorganisation

Following the new government's shelving of the previous devolution deal for Suffolk, the Government has published a white paper outlining the approach they wish to see in reforming local government, including the abolition of district councils. Elected mayors and large (500,000) unitary authorities are the goal for the largest local government reform since 1972, when the two (three including parish councils) tier local governance structure was introduced.

While there are obvious benefits to having a 'one stop shop' for all things local government, if this is to be introduced without losing the 'local' from local government the minimum resident number needs to be more flexible. With the recommended figure in the paper being a minimum 500,000 residents per council, this means only one council for the whole of Suffolk (760,000 residents) would fit this requirement.

We will know more about this over the coming months.

News from your District Councillor - John Matthissen

Representing Onehouse, Great & Little Finborough, Combs, Harleston and Shelland

Support during winter months

The District Council is keen for any resident experiencing hardship this winter to check the Mid Suffolk website for a range of support that might be available. Anyone in receipt of state retirement pension should visit the 'pension credit' section to check their entitlement as this support is worth, on average, £3,900 per year. There is also a dedicated cost-of-living page which contains plenty of resources -

www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/cost-of-living

Devolution White Paper

Last December, Government announced major reform of local government. This is likely to mean one elected Mayor to represent Norfolk and Suffolk combined, who will have powers and funding to move forward the Government's agenda. Our two-tier system of district and county councils will be replaced with large new unitary councils, probably one for the whole of Suffolk, which Mid Suffolk is very likely to oppose as being too large. Discussions are ongoing at both district and county level as to the various benefits and losses of these proposals, and how best to prepare for the major changes ahead.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Changes have been made to the NPPF to assist with the Government's housebuilding plans. This includes mandatory housebuilding targets for councils, with a priority on brownfield sites. The new plans have sparked both praise and backlash. Mid Suffolk's portfolio holder for Heritage, Planning and Infrastructure Cllr Andrew Stringer has commented on the new proposals – his comments can be found by searching on the Mid Suffolk website for 'Statement in response to Government's National Planning Policy Framework announcement'

Local Issues

I am pleased to be contacted should local issues arise including regarding planning, street cleaning, bin emptying and leisure centres. If you have concerns that a local development under construction is unauthorised or is failing to work to agreed planning requirements, it can be quicker and easier to go direct to Mid Suffolk's Planning Enforcement team by emailing planningenforcement@aberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk . The identity of anyone contacting Enforcement is always kept confidential.

Locality Budgets 2024/25

I have some funding remaining for the current year and applications for a Locality Budget grant are still welcome from local community groups. The scheme closes late March, so you are strongly advised to apply soon. The application form is available with information on the website: <https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/web/mid-suffolk/w/locality-awards>



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The course will consist of demonstrations on how to cook and prepare a number of Indian dishes, some will be available to take-away and eat the same day.

Each attendee will be provided with a 'starter kit' of 10 Indian spices, recipes for each dish demonstrated and some useful background information on Indian cooking, including a wider range of Indian spices available to use.

The cost of the course is £30 for 2 main meals, £10 for 2 starters and £10 for 2 side dishes, the starters and side dishes are optional.

Dishes available for takeaway are:

Starters: Lamb keemas and/or Tandoori chicken

Mains: Butter chicken and Beef rogan josh

Sides: Potatoes with ginger and garlic and/or sweet and sour okra.

Other dishes demonstrated are: Freshly made papadums with Yoghurt/mint sauce and tamarind sauce, pilau rice and a whole baked chicken in foil.

The courses will be held from 11am–2pm on the following dates:

Saturday 1st March

Saturday 29th March

Saturday 5th April

Saturday 26th April

All costs are provided free so all the money raised goes to supporting the OHS Magazine.

To book a place, or buy a gift voucher, please email
robertcaley1953@outlook.com

Happenings in Harleston

Lottery

Last months lottery was won by Hilary. I would like to say thank you to all who support the lottery, it generates much needed funds for our church.

Hilda's Lights

Hilda and Terry's Christmas lights made £474.97 for East Anglian Air Ambulance. Bigger and better this year! Well done to you both.

Thanks

Bubbles (Sylvia) Brown has asked me to pass on her thanks all her very kind friends and neighbours for helping her through a difficult time when she badly injured her ankle. She much appreciates their kindness.

Coffee Caravan

Bernie has been in touch, and sadly it seems that the caravan has had to be written off due to damp issues. They're trying to raise funds to replace it - hopefully by April, when the weather will allow us to be back on the green.

These are the proposed dates going forward;:
(thought you might like to note these dates on your calendar!)

St Augustine's, 1pm - 3pm (times subject to change)
Jan 13th, Feb 10th, March 10th.

On the green, 2pm - 4pm

April 14th, May (to be confirmed) June 9th, July 14th, Aug 11th, Sept 8th, Oct 13th,

St Augustines, 1pm - 3pm
Nov 10th, Dec 8th,

St. Augustine's

Our Carol Service on Christmas Eve was very well attended, it was good to see the church so full, even in the choir stalls!

The church looked very festive with Christmas displays, which looked lovely in the candlelight.

We were also pleased to welcome a wedding just after Christmas. Together with the coffee caravan, our church has been quite busy !!

New Year's Honours List

Last year, I made reference to all the people we have in our village who had helped in one way or another — whether this is looking after the village or the people in it. Again, there are too many to mention, so will just say how lucky we have so many people who care and look out for each other.

See you next month, when hopefully spring will be round the corner. The daffodils are already blooming near the copse!

Ursula 737845

Message from Wendy Mercer

Wendy Mercer would like to say a big thank you and farewell to all her friends and neighbours in Onehouse. Wendy lived at Long Barn, Lower Road for 22 years. Since losing her husband Ian in 2022 Wendy now feels it's time for her to leave Onehouse and is starting over in St Agnes, Cornwall. She will miss her friends and neighbours very much.

Special thanks to Colin Tween and Bev Anderson for their support and help in making Wendy's move as smooth as possible.

Stowmarket Eco Future Group



The deadline for magazine articles is quite early which means that I am writing this in early January, when a lot of the past two weeks has been sitting around indoors. The natural world outside has done fog, snow and heavy rain in that time, temperatures have ranged from below freezing to 11 degrees. It is so easy (unless you have a dog that needs walking) to miss what is going on outside. I also know that I rely completely on air and water to live day to day, although I don't often remember it. I depend on the natural world for my breathing, my food, for the decomposition which cleans up around me. In February we think about people we LOVE. For an eco-perspective, how about thinking about the things you LOVE in the natural world? Landscapes, seaside, breezes, trees, sunrises, creatures, plants, the spring bulbs which are just starting to show and by the time you read this, may be flowering. We enjoy it all, and depend on it all for our very life, every day. It is said that we will **protect what we love**, so step outside or look through your window – see the things you love and value them, protect them, they are precious resources.

We are restarting **ECO CAFÉ** (after a break for personal reasons). The February Meeting will be on **Friday 28th February 1-3pm** at the **Osier Café**, St Peter and St Mary Church in the Centre of the town. We will discuss the question above – sharing our enthusiasm for things we value in the natural world and looking at the various ways we can care for them.

Eco Café will alternate afternoon and evening meetings and vary the days. Our March meeting will be an evening one. See website for more information.

Collection of hard to recycle items:

2-4pm on at Red Gables (2nd Sunday of each month)

Repair Café:

2-4pm
9:30am–11:30am

2nd Sunday of each month at Red Gables
4th Thursday of each month at Market Place

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The OHS Photography Competition

We are thrilled to announce the third and final winner of the OHS Photography Competition!

Congratulations to Sally Turner –winner in the over 65's category. Sally's entry has earned her a £50 prize and features as this months front cover.

The over 65s was a hotly contested category—with by far the most entries. Thank you to everyone who took time to enter the competition. You can see some of the other entries from this category on the right.

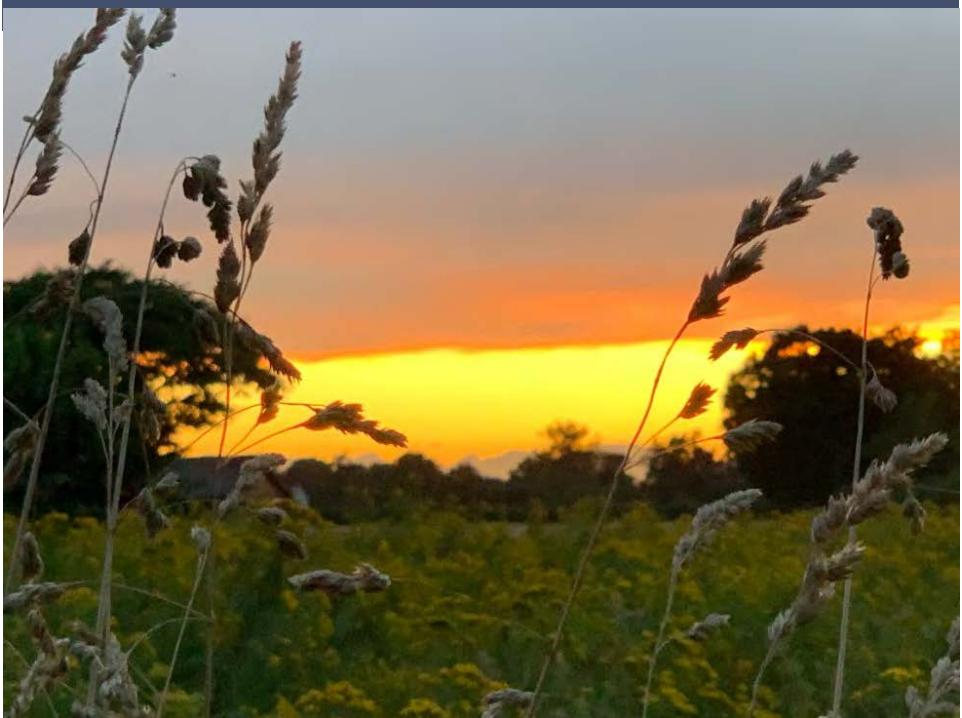
We now open the reader's vote. This is your opportunity to vote for your favourite photo overall. Please note there were no entries in the 12–21 age group so there are three contenders for overall winner. The winner for each category will receive a £50 prize. The photo voted overall winner by our readers will receive an additional £50 prize, generously donated by Bob Caley. See page 18 for details on how to vote.



Hancy at Harleston Remembrance Service by Ursula



Top left—a small skipper butterfly taking nectar from knapweed, taken at Harleston Jubilee Wildflower Meadows, submitted by Mark Brewster. Top right—Janet Sheldrake captured a crisp blue sky looking across the fields. The photo below was submitted by Karen Wilcox—looking out from her garden looking across the adjacent field.



Voting for your overall favourite...

Please use the QR code to register your vote. If you would prefer to submit a paper vote please use this page as a voting slip—tick your choice below and deliver to 36 Northfield Road, Onehouse.

Voting closes on Saturday 15th March 2025



Tick to Vote for Photo 1

Buddy - winner in the
under 12s category

Featured on
December's cover



Tick to Vote for Photo 2

Sarah - winner in the
under 22-64 age
category

Featured on January's
cover



**Tick to Vote
for Photo 3**

Sally - winner in the
over 65s age
category

Featured on
February's cover



Meet Your Neighbours. This Month:

Richard Cook—No Shrinking Violet

How do you describe a man like Richard Cook? Many of you know him: many more have doubtlessly heard him before they've seen him! He moved to live in Onehouse forty years ago with his wife, Anita and his two young sons. Being foreigners in those days



(he originated from Felixstowe and Anita from Ringshall), they still managed to settle in and become part of the community. When asked when he truly started taking an active part of the village, it was probably when he took along his son to auditions for the Jubilee Players panto soon after arriving in 1984.

Ben his son, was given a part of a baby bear in the upcoming production. Richard too, was roped in as an extra. Thus, he became hooked and with the exception of a few years break, he has been a feature of their shows ever since. Currently, he is chair of the Players, but he is better known for his roles as a pantomime dame or as the occasional arch villain, the latter being a role many think needs no rehearsing! Whilst he doesn't aspire to perform Shakespeare on stage (he'd be more inclined to play Omelette than Hamlet!), he does like to tread the boards, so to speak, on a regular basis. And believe us, when Richard treads, things tend to stay trodden!

Since then, there hasn't been an aspect of village life he has not engaged in. Indeed, his community CV is mightily impressive, as too is his manner. He does not suffer fools gladly: mind you, this also goes for friends, enemies, neighbours and probably the world in general according to those who know him! With a voice that could sink a

thousand ships, he is surprisingly a man of few words. A doer rather than a talker best describes Richard. For the uninitiated, thekey words in his vocabulary which associates refer to are: opinion, of which we are all entitled to his, of course, choice, the language he can be known to use, and subtle, although come to think of it, that word may need editing out of this article as it may have strayed from the profile of someone else, we've written about! He has his faults, but being wrong is not one of them!

But, his somewhat gruff manner is never to be taken that seriously. At least, not all the time! He's at his best in convivial company when people return his banter and spar with him. Few, if any can out last him, however!

Beneath the façade however, lies a deeply supportive guy, a devoted family man and a force for good in the community. He has invested time, energy and commitment to help support and enrich the lives of many within the three villages. Despite this gruff exterior, whether it's an overhanging tree that needs lopping, a shed needs fixing, or a hole needs digging, he is always one of the first to be there. He's quite handy with a brick in his hand, but happily for all the right reasons! His background as a skilled craftsman has always meant that if you do a job in whatever capacity, it should be done properly and well. He also has the knack of rounding up a posse of fellow helpers when a task needs doing although it would take a brave man to say no! He has been instrumental in helping re-shape and invigorate the Community centre alongside such stalwarts as Jackie Jones, her husband Bryan, Dawn Roberts and others. As its present chair, Richard has used his professional skills to physically improve the structure of the building, a fact few are aware of. Indeed, true to his real nature, he neither seeks or feels comfort from praise.

He has also been a member of the Paupers' Grave team for the past twelve years who have transformed a forgotten and overgrown graveyard into a place of peace and tranquillity. The group of eight or so meet regularly as readers of OSHMAG have learnt through the

story told by "General" Ray Taylor in a recent edition. Each of the group have been given a military rank by Ray. However, it's the only known regiment where a Lance Corporal can bark orders to all the senior ranks!

He also had a brief flirtation as a member of the Onehouse parish council. True to his nature, however, that didn't last long. He wasn't being disrespectful though. He's a doer and would rather leave the debating to others.

Anita his wife, is the perfect foil for him. A quiet and patient manner is edged with a steely resolve. The phrase "long suffering" or "she having the patience of a saint" have long been directed towards her!

People use the phrase "larger than life", to describe people who stand out from the crowd, and in this instance, this might apply to Richard. He is no angel, (That's why they always made him a shepherd in Nativity plays!) but he has made vital contributions to the life of our community and long may it continue.

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News from St. Johns

A belated 'Happy New Year' to all our readers. We apologise that there was no St John's report last month. We somehow missed the deadline!

Fortunately, there were not any dates of too much importance to report for January. Our Services are always reported elsewhere in OHSMag, as well as in this report. Most importantly, Services are held in Trinity Hall during the first three months of the year. Then, from Mothering Sunday and the Services onwards, as always, we will be back in Church. We look forward to welcoming people and families to all of our Services, but especially on Mothering Sunday when we highlight our thanks and love for those dear to us, especially our mothers.

Well done to our 'Carolers' who braved the cold weather to sing 'Carols Around the Village' and to those who sang so beautifully at the Shepherd and Dog. The Crib Service was well attended on Christmas Eve and the young people who took part did remarkably well. On Christmas morning, again it was heart-warming to welcome families who worshipped and celebrated the birth of baby Jesus.

'World Day of Prayer' will be held in Little Finborough Church on Friday, 7th March. I am aware that members of the congregation from Little Finborough have shown interest in being involved, but if anyone else would like to join in the preparation of the Service please contact Carole on 01359 302271 or 07743 303222.

On behalf of the Onehouse PCC, we would like to say a very big thank you to everyone who contributes towards the smooth running of the Services and in any way when help and assistance is required. The clergy, organists, flower arrangers, cleaners, sides people and those who cut the grass and hedges in and around the Churchyard. We cannot express enough how grateful we are.

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Eco Futures Group Information

Collection of hard to recycle items:

2-4pm on at Red Gables (2nd Sunday of each month)

Repair Café:

2-4pm 2nd Sunday of each month at Red Gables
9:30am–11:30am 4th Thursday of each month at Market Place

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Letter from Combs Rectory

As I sit and write this letter the ceasefire between Israel and Gaza has just been announced. Although it won't come into force until Sunday, we can only pray that both sides will uphold this agreement and that the fighting and killing will come to an end. More than anything at the moment we need hope, hope for our world to become more loving, caring and accepting.



Easter comes later this year, not until 20th April, so those events that we would normally experience in February, Shrove Tuesday and Ash Wednesday, are delayed until March. So where does this leave us in February? Well, there are signs of hope beginning to show all around us as we see the earth bring forth fresh shoots, I've already seen snowdrops in gardens which brings joy at this time of the year. And it won't be long before we see lambs in the fields and birds beginning to return to our shores from warmer climates. These are all things to look forward to, that bring us hope, as we emerge from the dark and cold of the winter months.

There is so much despair and sadness in our world, and it always feels more intense during the darker months of the year. Loneliness can be crippling and it's good to remember that

there are a number of events that take place regularly across our benefice that will help people get out and socialise.

In Combs we have Meet Up Monday twice a month, the Rural Coffee Caravan visits Combs, Harleston, Buxhall and Finborough Court in Great Finborough every month, there is a weekly coffee morning in Onehouse and a monthly Tea Room held in the village hall at Buxhall. And if you have neighbours who live on their own please do keep an eye on them over these colder months.

If we can continue to hope, to care for one another and to love our world then we can rest assured that we will get through the winter months and await the joy of Easter and the warmth of Spring.

With blessings
Revd Sarah

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The Combs and Finborough Benefice

Buxhall, Combs, Gt and Lt Finborough, Harleston, Onehouse and Shelland Services in February 2025

Rector: The Rev'd Sarah Jenkins, The Rectory, 135 Poplar Hill, Stowmarket IP14 2AY 01449 676065
Associate Priest: The Rev'd Canon Pauline Higham, The Rectory, Woodland Close, Onehouse IP14 3HL 01449 771791

Sunday Services

Please contact the Reverend Sarah Jenkins at revdsarahjenkins@gmail.com
if you would like details of how to join any of the Zoom services

2nd February: Presentation of Christ in the Temple, Candlemas

9.00 am	Holy Communion	Little Finborough
9.30 am	Morning Worship	Harleston
9.30 am	Spiritual Communion	Zoom Service
11.00 am	All Age Worship	Combs Church Hall

9th February: Fourth Sunday before Lent

9.30 am	Morning Worship	Shelland
9.30 am	Holy Communion	Buxhall
11.00 am	Morning Worship	Great Finborough
11.00 am	Holy Communion	Onehouse Trinity Hall

16th February: Third Sunday before Lent

9.30 am	Holy Communion	Harleston
11.00 am	Family Communion	Combs Church Hall
3.00 pm	Evensong	Little Finborough
6.00 pm	Healing and Wholeness Service	Great Finborough

23rd February: Second Sunday before Lent

9.30 am	Morning Worship	Buxhall
9.30 am	Holy Communion	Shelland
11.00 am	Morning Worship	Onehouse Trinity Hall
11.00 am	Holy Communion	Great Finborough

Weekday Services

9.30 am on Wednesday	Holy Communion	Onehouse Trinity Hall
10.00 am on Saturday	Morning Prayer	Zoom Meeting

All Welcome! Whether you are a regular worshipper or a visitor to our churches, you will find a warm welcome at all of our services

Mission Direct trip to Narok, Kenya

A great big THANK YOU to all those who so kindly contributed for the materials to help build the dining facilities for the girls at 'Mission with a Vision' in Narok, Kenya.

As some of you know, 'Mission with a Vision' is a non-religious Kenyan charity set up by Bishop Patrick Ngigi and his wife, Josephine, twenty-seven years ago to offer a safe-house for girls at risk of FGM and child marriage. They have given sanctuary to more than 1,500 girls in that time allowing them to continue with their educations and marry at their own choosing. Their aim is to ensure that girls leave them with the ability and skills to be independent, and they now have civil rights lawyers, civil servants, teachers, amongst other professionals, who have passed through their doors. They also offer hair and beauty training, as well as tailoring, to girls so that they will have skills to



enable them to earn a living.

Girls are usually brought to the sanctuary by the authorities, although they make no financial contribution, and have a home there until they wish to leave, usually once they have graduated. They are provided with safety, accommodation, food and an education, as well as a caring, supportive environment.

I spent 2 weeks volunteering on the dining building project last October. Due to people's generosity we were able to build the walls up to the ring-beam and enough funds were procured for the roof to be erected after our departure. I feel very strongly about the charity's work and intend to return this August. If anyone feels able to donate please access my Just Giving page (justgiving.com/page/liz-beale) and if anyone would care to join me please contact Mission Direct via their website!

- Liz Beale

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Are you looking for a new car for work, but I can't afford to buy a new one, so you've been looking at second-hand options?



**citizens
advice**

For many people, the process of buying a car can seem daunting and complicated. But don't worry, there's lots of information on the steps to take when buying a car and what you can do afterwards if something goes wrong.

First, where are you going to buy the car? If buying from a trader, choose a trustworthy one with an established name with a good reputation. Ideally, they will be part of a trade association or follow the industry's code of practice. If buying via an auction, this is much riskier as you'll have fewer legal protections like the right to returns or refunds so carefully read the terms and conditions before you bid. If buying from a private seller, there's a few extra steps to take. For instance, try to inspect the car at their home address so if something goes wrong later, you have a record of that.

Make sure the car's details are correct by using the DVLA's free online vehicle information checker. You'll need the registration number, MOT test number, mileage and make/model of the car to do this check. Also, check the car's MOT history. Keep a copy of both these results (take a screenshot or download the information) as well as the original advert or description of the car. You might also consider getting a private history check to see if the car's been reported stolen, still has money owing on it, or has been in a serious crash.

Inspecting the car is crucial before buying. Ideally, do this during the day when it's not raining (scratches are harder to see on a wet car) and take it for a test drive for at least 15 minutes and on different types of roads if possible. Check you have the appropriate insurance for a test drive.

Once you've decided on a car, don't be afraid to negotiate on the price. If you take out a loan or finance to buy it, make sure you can afford the repayments over the lifetime of the contract. If you pay with cash, you will have fewer protections than other options like debit. **Often, despite doing all these checks, you might find something wrong with the car after you've bought it. You may have a legal right to a repair, the cost of a repair or some money back but it's on a case-by-case basis.**

Citizens Advice Mid Suffolk can provide advice on many issues, including debt, finances, employment, benefits and family/relationships. You can contact them by phone on 01449 676060, visit in person at Milton House, 5 Milton Road South, Stowmarket IP14 1EZ or use the contact form at midsuffolkcab.org.uk/contact-us.

Opening hours are Monday-Thursday 9.30am – 3.30pm and Friday 9.30am – 12.30pm.



Jay Drury — They say the older blue tits get the brighter the plumage becomes after each subsequent moult.



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