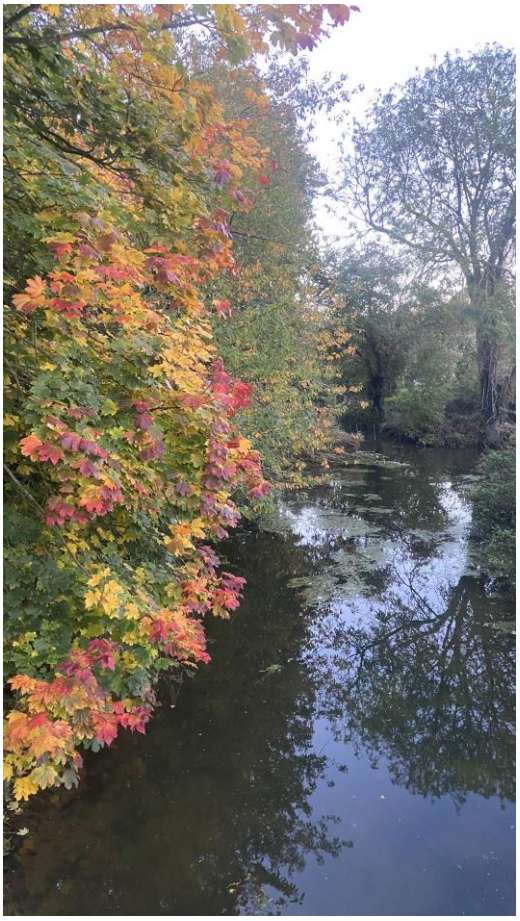
Within Reach



December 2024 /January 2025



Courtesy of Rosanna Moseley-Gore







Courtesy of Rebecca Fordham



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From the Editor



So Christmas is upon us!

This year the switch on of the Christmas Tree lights took place on the 1st of December, so we'll have the maximum benefit of what is a lovely tree, superbly decorated with brand-new lights which will last us a good few years going forward.

The Cambridge Brass Band came and played and were excellent, as ever. If you want to see them again then have a look at page 15 and you'll see they are playing in St Giles Church, Castle Street, Cambridge on Saturday 14th December at 7.30pm.

The next village event is the **Seniors Christmas lunch** which will be on Thursday 12th December, starting at 12.30pm in the Village Hall. And our **Advent Windows in Reach** event has already started – see who's participating and when, on the Events Team page 5.

So many village events revolve around the **Village Hall** – we are a very lucky village to have such a facility. Its usage continues to increase bringing the necessary revenue to pay for routine maintenance. However, there won't be enough funds to repair the roof and this is where a grant or grants will be needed. The committee have applied for funding via the Cambridge Community Foundation, starting with a Letter of Intent (LOI) which will be evaluated in January by Thalia (who we have applied to for funds). You'll be kept informed of progress – fingers crossed!

Thalia
Waste Management

Finally, may I take this opportunity of wishing you all an outstanding Festive period!

David Parr



About the Magazine

The purpose of *Within Reach* is to serve the whole village by circulating information and interesting articles free to every household. Additional copies are available at a charge of £3.00. Issues are published bi-monthly covering the months of Feb/Mar, Apr/May, June/July, Aug/Sept, Oct/Nov and Dec/Jan.

Copies of *Within Reach* magazine and its predecessor *Out of Reach* can be found on the village website www.reach-village.co.uk. This magazine (which is fully funded from advertising) is printed by Burwell Print Centre, an excellent social enterprise which trains and supports adults with learning disabilities and provides high quality design and print capabilities.

The Team

Editor	David Parr
Distribution	Freda Lloyd, Claire Halpin-McDonald and Grahame Radford
Photographer	Rosanna Moseley Gore
24Acres	David Thomas
Anglesey Abbey	Issy Vetoshkina
Church	Eleanor Williams
Cookery	Catherine Gibson
Cricket	Ross Clark
Events Team	Debbie Quilter
Gardening	Danuta Gibson
Neighbourhood Watch	Kevin Evans
Reach Riders Group	Sue Cameron
Rosanna's Ramblings	Rosanna Moseley Gore
Then and Now	Chris Patterson
Village Hall	Sue Elliott
Village Matters	Alex de Giorgio-Miller
Wicken Fen	Ajay Tegala
Wildlife	Nick Acklam

Village Update



It feels like winter has finally arrived now and boots, hats, scarves and gloves are littered round our hallway. Despite being forever cold and bundled in multiple fleece layers, I do love this time of year – the cosy evenings in and the anticipation of the holiday season.

The annual 'discussion' on the correct time to put the Christmas decorations up (not until December!!) is already underway. The girls are already designing our advent window and the calendar is filling up with lots of events being planned in the village - we feel very lucky to live in such a wonderful community.

The Council prepares for winter . . . .

Preparations for winter are well underway with the county council's fleet of 37 gritters and two quad bikes already on stand-by to keep the county's roads, paths and cycleways safe for residents in the colder months. The council's salt barns are fully stocked with 10,000 tonnes of rock salt ready for the start of the cold season, and grit bins across Cambridgeshire have been refilled. For live updates on the council's gritting operations, follow Cambs_Traffic on X.

In addition, local volunteers can help to keep their community moving in freezing weather by taking part in the Community Gritting Scheme. Volunteers can sign up to grit local footpaths using equipment provided by the council. If you would like to know more or wish to volunteer, please visit the CCC website which has a Community Gritting Training Pack and registration form. https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/travel-roads-and-parking/roads-and-pathways/gritting-roads-cycleways-and-paths/help-with-gritting-and-clearing-snow

. . . . **and gives advice on being 'Winter Wise'**

The 'Be Winter Wise' campaign with Olly the Owl is returning for the winter season, helping Cambridgeshire residents to keep warm, safe and healthy throughout the colder months. The Cambridgeshire County Council led campaign will have advice on:

- Help with the cost of living such as warm hubs and Pension Credit (financial support for people over the State Pension age and on a low income)
- Ways to protect your health, for example making sure you have any vaccinations you are eligible for
- Tips on how to heat your home efficiently
- Where to find free, physical activities for all the family across Cambridgeshire this winter
- Advice on how to prepare for extreme weather conditions, such as freezing temperatures and flooding
- Winter gritting schedules and staying safe on our roads, particularly when it's cold and dark.

Cambridgeshire County Council say that "we understand that winter can be a difficult time for many of our residents. The Be Winter Wise campaign is a way of giving everyone access to the information and resources they need to stay well, warm and well-prepared for the months ahead. For more information, search #BeWinterWise on social media channels.

Pension Credit

An estimated 600 pensioners in East Cambridgeshire could be missing out on Pension Credit. Pensioners on a low income are being advised to apply for Pension Credit now to be in with a chance of qualifying for this year's Winter Fuel Payment. Pension Credit is available to people of a pensionable age on an income below the £218 a week threshold (£333 for couples). Those above the threshold may still qualify if they are carers, have a disability, or have savings under £10,000.

Anyone who needs help with applying for Pension Credit can contact the community advice team at East Cambridgeshire District Council or attend one of the council's drop-in sessions. These take place at The Grange in Ely Monday to Friday, from 10am until 4pm. Drop-in sessions are also held at Soham Library each Wednesday, 10am until midday and in Littleport Library from 10am until midday on a Friday.

Housing support fund

As living costs remain high, East Cambridgeshire District Council is continuing to assist residents on a low income through the Household Support Fund. This current round of government funding, which is being made available between now and the end of March 2025, aims to support households struggling to meet essential housing costs including food, energy bills and other essential items. The council is able to apply to the fund on residents' behalf, as well as offering advice and support with completing applications. Residents in East Cambridgeshire can seek assistance by calling 01353 665555 or visiting the Community Advice drop-ins as above. You do not have to be in receipt of benefits to get help. If you are in receipt of benefits, they will not be affected if you receive a payment from the Household Support Fund scheme.

Further details of the Household Support Fund and other cost of living advice is available on the council's website.

Keep well and warm and happy holidays to all!

Alex de Giorgio-Miller

Village Hall



Good news at last! After huge efforts by the committee to seek and agree estimates for the repair of the roof after the theft of the lead flashing in October 2022 and after many frustrations with builders and our insurance company, we now have a real chance that we can begin work soon. We are greatly indebted to David Parr who has already spent a lot of time preparing the forms to seek funding for the estimated cost of circa £35,000.

The other good news is that David Thomas has agreed to remain as Chair for part of the next year. David has worked very hard to lead us through many complex issues involving our lease, local government legislation and policies plus day to issues of bookings, income and decisions on running the VH.

The VH has a good team with the talents of David, Andrew Trump as Treasurer and Tony Fordham and Rebecca as Secretary, plus new members Paul and Diana Greer who have undertaken the bookings process and Rowan whose contributions are always appreciated.

The issue of choosing and paying for the replacement of the oil heating system is the next huge project to be faced. There are many alternative heating sources and a number of village halls are confused by them or suffering from hasty decisions in choices made.

Bookings are good and thanks to Helen and Claire for a delightful programme of sewing and gatherings the VH is being well used, so we say Happy Christmas and Happy New Year to all our customers.

Sue Elliott

Bottisham and Burwell Photographic Club

Our meetings continue and members are enjoying a variety of photographic lectures and competitions during our 2024/2025 programme.

An evening of note was a Zoom presentation by Gary Friedman from Massachusetts, USA on 'Computational Photography – How Our Smartphones are Beating the Big Cameras'. The smartphone will cover most, but not all, of the techniques required for amateur photography, but it will no doubt sometime in the future.

Our programme continues during the Winter months and into next year; some of the highlights are listed below:

Nov 19 'Scotland Behind the Lens' by Stephen Ball of Stephen Ball Photography. Zoom presentation.

Dec 3 'Along the Stour & Wildlife Photography during the Pandemic by Liz Cutting, ARPS DPAGB BPE5, Norfolk.

Dec 10 Christmas Quiz led by Sarah Horsley.

Jan 7 'Iceland in Winter' by Colin Westgate FRPS MFIAP APAGB MPAGB, West Mersea. Colin has visited Iceland many times and has some stunning images.

Jan 14 Panel Pics/Creative Board Competitions. Themes chosen by members – up to 3 Panel Pics and up to 3 Creative Boards. Judge: Jonathan Vaines LRPS CPAGB AFIAP

Meetings are held Tuesday evening from 7.30 pm to 9.30 pm at Swaffham Prior Village Hall High Street, Swaffham Prior, CB25 0LD (except the third Tuesday in the month an online Zoom meeting) and new members are always welcome.

Visitors can attend a lecture for a small entrance fee of £4.00, which includes refreshments. Our annual subscriptions are £55.00 for Adults, £30.00 for Students, plus a weekly attendance fee of £1, which includes refreshments. If you would like to join us we would love to see you. A copy of our programme for 2024/2025 can be obtained from our Secretary, Debra Bennett, at secretary.bandbpc@gmail.com.

Wishing you a very Happy Christmas and a Healthy New Year.

Daphne Hanson DPAGB HonPAGB

Chairman

The Events Team

The lights switch on seems to have been appreciated by all who came along. The tree is lovely, big thanks go to Rob and Suz for that.

And special thanks go to Matt who devoted a huge amount of time to sourcing the new lights that we have this year and then meticulously arranging them on the tree.

Our next Event is the **Senior's Christmas Lunch** will be on Thursday 12th December in the Village Hall.

And then on Christmas Eve 6-7pm we will sing a few **carols around the tree**.

The lovely **Christingle Service** in our Church on the 23rd at 5.00pm – not to be missed!

For further information on all of these activities please go to https://www.reach-village.co.uk/news.html

And the event that is currently underway is our Village Advent Calendar – se below for the houses that are taking part and which day their windows will be revealed



DYKE'S END

Festive Calendar 2024

November

Fri 1st Music: Clare Hayes & John Wright, 8pm

Wed 6th Food Truck: Manna Seoul, 5pm-8pm

Wed 13th Food Truck: Papas Locas, 5pm- 8pm

Sat 16th Italian Supper Club with La Cucina Italiana

Wed 20th Food Truck: Steak & Honour

Sun 24th Dyke's End Festive Sunday Roasts start

Wed 27th Dyke's End Christmas decorations

Wed 27th Food Truck: Pizza Mondo, 5pm- 8pm

December

Wed 4th Food Truck: Taco Man, 5pm-8pm

Fri 6th Music: Chris Newman & Stella Hensley, 8pm

Wed 11th Food Truck: Wrapunzel, 5pm- 8pm

Thur 12th Dyke's End Christmas Quiz, 8pm - 10pm

Wed 18th Food Truck: Steak and Honour, 5pm- 8pm

Tue 24th Christmas Eve Open 5pm- 10.30pm

Wed 25th Christmas Day Open 12pm - 2pm

Thur 26th Boxing Day Open 12pm - 3pm

Tue 31st New Year's Eve 7pm - 12.30am

January

Wed 1st New Year's Day Open 12pm - 5pm

Sat 25th Burns Night with Ranald Scott from 7pm

Rosanna's Ramblings



I've just got back from a few days away in Paris with my daughter. If I tell you it was to celebrate my 60th birthday and that I turned 60 on 2 April 2020, you will get the picture. It didn't – couldn't – happen then for reasons we all know. And for various reasons things conspired to make it tricky to organise a second attempt for more than four years (one of which was the apparent plague of bed bugs in Paris hotels a year ago … for some reason, we just didn't fancy going then!).

Anyway, I got back just before the deadline for this piece and promptly lost my voice. Now you might be thinking, "Well, that's not going to stop her writing, is it?" and no, indeed it doesn't … hasn't … for here am I sitting in front of the fire on a very dark and chilly night tapping away and following a rather random train of thought. Except that I never really feel thoughts are ever that random.

The current mental rambling is going something like this. Before I left on the Eurostar, we'd had a deeply depressing and extended period of mild, grey, still and DULL weather. It had gone on for weeks! Every single one of my patients moaned to me about it. I moaned to them about it. Charles, who does love a good moan about the weather, especially if he can add a bit of portentousness into the mix, had been channelling existential gloom about it for what felt like months. It wasn't, but it felt like it. And I don't know about you, but that flat dullness gave me a strange sense of nothingness, like being in a thick fog and losing one's bearings. So, I have to admit to feeling a disproportionate sense of excitement and relief when, a few days before heading for France, there was a slight chill in the air, even an occasional nippy wind. I felt I needed my duvet coat on when taking Milo out for his late-night walk.

I'm somewhat addicted to consulting the weather apps on my phone – I have five of them currently, that way I can choose to believe whichever one appeals most to me for my current purposes. And it looked like it was going to be similarly nippy in Paris, so I resolved to wear thinnish clothes under the duvet coat to cover all indoor and outdoor bases. This was a decision I regretted almost immediately. Oh fickle, tricksy apps – Paris turned out to be grey and dull and mild, most of the time, so I steamed in my coat while we did impressive numbers of steps on the pavements of the streets and boulevards that still somehow managed to be charming and elegant and beguiling even when seen in *grisaille*, as the art historians would say.



While we were there – for three nights and only two full days – both my daughter and I realised that we were feeling under the weather, literally and metaphorically. We had both been having a stressful and exhausting time in the lead up to the break and we just didn't have the juice to be super-active. If I'd been away with Charles, this lack of juice would have been overridden, but daughter and I just made a decision to pause and sink into an autumnal torpor. We did make it out of our hotel room (though the extreme comfort of the beds made this harder than it might otherwise have been), but mostly we pottered and visited many delightful yarn shops.

I'm a knitter and she's got a current enthusiasm for crochet which I'm keen to encourage. Excellent antidote to stress and burn out, yarn creativity. And we gave ourselves permission to buy food to take back to our room in the evenings, so we didn't have to brace ourselves for the 'venturing out to find somewhere to eat' challenge when we were tired out and snuffly and a bit whimpery, to be honest.

We did catch up on a lot of talk and I read a Whole Book and did some knitting and precariously played many games of patience on the bed while she snoozed.

And on the last morning we got up early, walked to the Gare du Nord and then waited … and waited … and waited for our Eurostar train. The it was delayed due to a technical issue (always worrying, that – will they really have fixed it??), but the good thing was that it was delayed enough to be able to claim compensation. Seeing as I bought the tickets nearly five years ago and have kept bumping the dates, getting some money back will feel a bit like Christmas coming early.

Well, I didn't actually see that neat seasonal segue coming when I started to write this! You know, the "How do I write in the autumn for an issue coming out in December when the festive juggernaut will have started its inexorable roll towards us?" Because I love, love, love autumn – and we've had some spectacular autumn colours that have penetrated even the misty murkiness (my favourite bit in the village having been the extraordinary glow of the yellow field maple leaves mounded up around the little metal bridge to the Hythe).



So, I never even want to start thinking about Christmas until December. But I know it's on its way – diaries have been discussed with my kids, friends who might be on their own have been extended a possible invitation, I've even thought, vaguely about some presents. But mostly what I – we – want to do is be thoughtful and quiet, once we've been to Midnight Mass in Cambridge. Last year, in the absence of any family, Charles and I took Milo for a long walk at Lode on Christmas Day and then had venison steak for dinner and it was just perfect. This year, who knows? Whatever, the dog will need to be walked and will doubtless roll in something nasty. He'll think it's the best present he could give us.

Rosanna Moseley-Gore

Nature in Reach



Readers venturing onto the fenland surrounding Reach will have noticed that it has been usually busy of late. In addition to autumnal farming activity, clearance of ditches by the Internal Drainage Board (IDB) and removal of reeds from the Lode by the Environment Agency, the National Trust has been at work. At one point six excavators were active.

The National Trust has been creating clay 'bunds' or banks on land it owns on Tubney and Burwell Fens to retain winter rainfall and water abstracted from the lode. The lie of the land here meant that, in the past, water was quick to run off into IDB ditches. However, in winters of high rainfall, temporary shallow ponds have developed which have been a magnet for birdlife. The Trust's engineering works should ensure that the ponds develop every winter and the damper ground throughout the year should encourage a broader range of plant life to colonise the areas.

Retention of water on these sites will also assist in preserving the peat that underlies much of Tubney and Burwell Fens by preventing oxidation and thus loss of carbon to the atmosphere.

As mentioned in previous articles, the Trust has plans to create a pond on land it has retained at the 24Acres. The pond will be fed by a spring that flows through the site. A planning application, supported by the Parish Council, has been submitted to ECDC. The hope is that work can begin in early 2025. In addition to the pond, a steeply banked ditch crossing the centre of the site will be re-profiled so that it is more attractive to wildlife especially arable bird species, including the turtle dove.

Over time these small engineering projects should have a positive impact on nature throughout our parish. They are listed as actions in the parish's nature recovery plan https://www.reach-village.co.uk/NATURE%20RECOVERY%20PLAN%20-%20JANUARY%202024.pdf.

In terms of sightings:

21 September: I spot an almost black, grey squirrel close to Harrington's Farm. A bit of research reveals that there are around 25,000 black or melanic squirrels in the UK, concentrated in Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire and Cambridgeshire. They are judged to be the result of interbreeding between grey squirrels and fox squirrels, both of which are alien species originating in America.

Black squirrels were first recorded in the wild here in 1912 probably after fox squirrels escaped from a private collection and cross-bred with grey squirrels that had been introduced to the UK some decades previously.

22 September: After a summer lull, the volume of bird song has increased markedly with robins being prominent along the hedge of Straight Drove and the scrub of the Hythe. A large group of long-tailed tits moves through the same hedge unseen, the birds' presence revealed by their chinking calls. On the west bank of the lode I spot the skin, skull and spine of a small grass snake. It has been expertly dissected by an unknown predator.

23 September: I recover the corpse of a brown long eared bat from our driveway.



This is the sixth bat species recorded in the parish in recent times. In May 2022 a survey was conducted in Reach by Richard Sewell, a local bat expert, supported by villagers. It detected the presence of four species of bats in the vicinity of the village - common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle, serontine and noctule. Daubenton's bats had been detected by Mr Sewell on an earlier visit to Reach. Mr Sewell concluded that 'Reach is endowed with excellent habitat for … bats'. This latest recovery, shared with Mr Sewell, strengthens that assessment.

27 September. Ten pied wagtails forage for insects on our lawn. Although wagtails will roost together in large numbers this was a slightly unusual daytime sighting. The collective noun for wagtails is, I understand, a 'volery'.

28 September: The first grass frost of the autumn - on the fen at least.

30 September: An immature hen harrier is disturbed by our approach and flies onto Burwell Fen from scrub on the droveway between the Hythe and the 24Acres. Its flight is low and acrobatic and its long, pale speckled wings are very obvious.

Hen harriers gather at Wicken Fen over autumn and winter but, at this point, there had been no harrier sightings there.

3 October: Penny and Ron Greenhill see three buzzards circling over the field to the east of the village.

4 October: A late sighting of a grizzled skipper butterfly resting on an ash tree on the by way from Fair Green to Reach Wood.

7 and 23 October: A Cetti's warbler sings from the tall hedge at the base of Straight Drove.

13 October: Hilary Fielding reports that a great egret flew up in front of her horse and carriage near the stables at Spring Hall Farm.

Mid-October: Several villagers report evening murmurations of starling over Tubney Fen, some being the largest for several years. Rosie Almond captured a couple of spectacular and uplifting displays. They can be viewed by going to:
https://www.reach-village.co.uk/news.html,
then the first of the Concluded Events includes the two videos.

I witness the slightly comical aftermath of one such murmuration on the morning of 16 October when starlings leaving reed bed roosts attempt to regroup on the electricity pylons crossing Tubney Fen (see photograph).



The birds jostle each other noisily, determined to perch on the pylons, despite the ready availability of immediately adjacent cabling.

17 October: The sad sight of a dead barn owl on the edge of the equestrian arena at the 24Acres. The cause of death is unclear.

26 October: Several jays are very active in the centre of the village. Their white rumps are very prominent in the gloomy conditions.

27 October: Tim and Dafila Clutton-Brock have a great view of a pair of common cranes on Burwell Fen from the lode bank north of the cycle bridge. Dafila judges that the pair were prospecting for nesting site come next spring. The cranes stay for about 40 minutes, then take off and circle higher and higher until they are just specks in the blue sky. Eventually they head off north, perhaps to join the flock of 60 cranes present on the Ouse Washes at this time.

On the same walk Tim and Dafila see over 400 lapwings resting by a pool on the edge of Burwell Mere. The presence of a marsh harrier prompts the lapwings to take off, circle and then settle - a dazzling display of black and white against bright green vegetation. They also spot a pair of Egyptian geese, some mallards, moorhens, egrets, cormorants, a buzzard, three golden plovers and a dabchick.

30 October: Hilary has eye-to-eye contact with a tawny owl perched on the bumpy road warning sign on Little Fen Drove.

2 November: I see my first redwing flock of the season in the hawthorns along Old Bar Drove. This is quite late in the season. Whilst it is always likely that I missed earlier arrivals, large numbers here are usually associated with colder weather on the continent and it has been a mild autumn. Six roe deer run at pace on land to the west of Little Fen Drove, startled by nearby rough shooting.

3 November: Hilary has a close encounter with a rather oblivious heron hunting on the grass verge on Little Fen Drove near the Tubney Fen entrance. The bird is so engrossed in looking for prey, that Hilary is able watch it for about five minutes before it becomes aware of her presence and flies away.

4 November: A large flock of goldfinch and greenfinch move north along the hedges of Straight Drove.

17 November: I watch a carrion crow persistently mob a buzzard over the village. The raptor calls plaintively throughout and the corvid eventually gives up its pursuit.

17 November: Hilary sees a flock of fieldfares at her paddock on Tubney Fen. The birds feed on hawthorn berries in the surrounding hedge which is also regularly hosting flocks of long tailed tits.

Throughout the period: Jonathan Maitland reports a wide variety of wildlife seen on and in the margins of the Catchwater Drain at the bottom of his garden.

He has almost daily sightings of European water voles, occasional 'flashes' of kingfishers and in mid-October, sees a little egret. In mid-November Jonathan records a pile of large fish scales at the same spot. The predator is unclear. Jonathan comments that the pair of mute swans resident on the Catchwater have become quite aggressive in demanding food. A sparrow hawk kills and eats a pigeon on Jonathan's lawn and he recovers an owl pellet from outside his kitchen.

Ron and Penny report they have at least two hedgehogs living under one of their garden sheds. We, too, have a hedgehog resident in our garden for the first time in several years. Hopefully these are signs that the local hedgehog population is beginning to recover after a period of steep decline.

Nick Acklam

Aunty Daisy Said

One Christmas Aunty Daisy said "Don't put any more water in my whiskey because the doctor said I shouldn't drink too much.

This was in the nineteen fifties. I was about four at the time.

Just down the hill from Chiswick Park Station, next to the Fullers Pub on the high street, Aunty Daisy said I was not allowed to press the button for crossing at the traffic lights. She said the button was only for use in an emergency, for instance, if you had to go to hospital.

Aunty Daisy baked a fruit cake every week, on a Saturday. She said you could only stir it round one way. If you then went back the other way it would unstir all the air out of it and the cake would not rise. She would not let you in the kitchen when it was in the oven, because opening the door would make it collapse.

When I was four, she took me to Llandudno. We stayed in a hotel near the station. The highlight of the trip was to visit the undertaker to watch the man making her gravestone. When we returned to London my parents were appalled to hear about this. Of course, I thought it was dead good.

When Lonny Donegon and his skiffle group played in the Christmas panto at the Chiswick Empire, around 1956, we all heard electric guitars for the first time ever - including "Oh the rock island line is a very fine line!" It was deafeningly loud. The maiden aunts Dolly, Enid and Daisy were horrified and left

.

When I was older, I learnt they never married because all their young men were killed in the war, along with their one brother, John.

Both my parent worked and so Aunty Daisy lived with us and looked after me and my older brother when we were little. It was not all plain sailing. She was often bad tempered. One day when she was away on holiday, my family did a runner and moved, into a new house quite far away without telling her. When she got back, we were gone. I was nine at the time.

Aunty Daisy owned a house in Shepherds Bush, near to where the BBC was later to set up. It was full of Irishmen. The were very polite. Years later when she died, she left it to me.

Her sisters disagreed, contested the will, sold it and split the value of the house between themselves, giving me five hundred quid. I was quite happy with that at the time. It paid for a nice skiing holiday. Had we held on to it - next door to the beeb – would be worth a few bob today. I never really appreciated it, but Aunty Daisy clearly loved me. **© 2024 Nick Webb**

Wicken Fen



Xmas at Fen Cottage (NT Mike Selby)

Winter is the perfect time for a wildlife walk at Wicken Fen. Whether its misty, frosty or beneath a fiery sky, the calls of ducks, geese and wild swans carry on the breeze. So why not wrap up warm and head out along one of the many trails across the wider nature reserve.

The Docky Hut Café has a selection of warming comfort food, festive hot drinks and tasty treats. In the visitor centre, dogs receive a warm welcome and a stamp in their National Trust Pooch Passport. While you can browse our selection of festive goodies in the gift shop, perfect for a bit of yuletide shopping. And don't miss the secondhand book stall, which also stocks a collection of jigsaw puzzles. Both the café and visitor centre/gift shop are open 10am – 4.30pm daily (not Christmas Day).

A new winter trail will be open throughout December and early January, where families can help lost Highland calf Parsnip find her way back to the herd, meeting resident and visiting animals along the way.

For nature lovers, it's well worth standing by the visitor centre at dusk to look out for roosting hen harriers, Wicken's Sedge Fen is a renowned wintering ground for this rare bird of prey.

Peat project

Our exciting Peatland Restoration Project is well underway, with works taking place on Burwell Fen, Verrall's Fen and Tubney Fen. Contractors have been constructing clay banks (known as bunds) around areas of deep peat on Burwell and Tubney Fens to wet them up. This locks in carbon, therefore helping mitigate climate change and creates important habitat for both wintering and breeding birds. The footpath through the middle of Burwell Fen will be closed until March 2025, but there is access via the National Cycleway Route 11 and along the Burwell and Reach Lode-banks.

Follow the progress of our Peatland Restoration Project on our website:
www.nationaltrust.org.uk/visit/cambridgeshire/wicken-fen-national-nature-reserve/peatland-restoration

Excavation works along Spinney Bank, on the far west side of the Fen, uncovered the foundations of an historic old drainage windpump and a glass bottle (possibly an old lemonade bottle) made in Burwell at the old Guyatt and Droford Mineral Works, which closed in the 20th century.

The £2million project is predominately funded through the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) 'Nature for Climate' Peatland Grant Scheme (NCPGS) managed by Fens East Peatland Partnership (FEPP), with funding from corporate partners including Starling Bank and Anglian Water.



Lapwings (Nigel Puttergill)

Details of our events and trails can be found on our website at
www.nationaltrust.org.uk/wicken-fen-nature-reserve/whats-on

And for the latest reserve information, please go to www.nationaltrust.org.uk/wicken-fen

Ajay Tegala

Anglesey Abbey



Courtesy of Mike Selby National Trust

Come and experience an enchanting new Christmas at Anglesey Abbey. The House will be richly decorated for all to enjoy and the wider estate offers walks around the sensory Winter Garden, festive shopping, tasty treats and wintry adventures in the woodland play area.

We're Going on a Bear Hunt!

We're delighted to have 10 beautifully painted, life-sized bear sculptures currently exhibited around the gardens. In collaboration with Wild in Art and Walker Books, the trail is one big, enchanting journey through art and adventure. Have you visited yet? Pick up a trail map and enjoy some grr-eat games and activities along the way. The trail is free and runs from 19 November 2024 to 5 January 2025; normal admission to Anglesey Abbey applies.

Christmas in the House

The Jacobean-style country house at Anglesey Abbey is beautifully decorated for the Christmas season, with festive displays highlighting Lord Fairhaven's vast and significant collection. From 23 November 2024 until 5 January 2025, step inside to discover a treasure-trove of history and admire the treasure-themed Christmas decorations in each room.

You can also meet Father Christmas in the house – there are just a few spaces left on Fridays. For more information and to book, please visit the Anglesey Abbey website.

Snowdrops

From mid-January to February, the gardens will be full of beautiful snowdrops. The snowdrop collection at Anglesey Abbey boasts over 500 varieties of these delicate white flowers and you can join a specialist tour to learn more about them.

We will be closed on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day but open again on Boxing Day. From all of us at Anglesey Abbey, we wish you a very merry Christmas!
nationaltrust.org.uk/angleseyabbey

Issy Vetoshkina
Senior Communications and Marketing Officer

Swaffham Prior Parochial Charities

Once again the time has come to remind everyone who lives in Reach and who considers themselves to be eligible for our Christmas Grant, now is the time to apply.

The majority of applications come from pensioners, in particular those who have to manage on the State Pension and it may be that in the present times of uncertainty, support is required.

If you are in need of help or know someone who may be in difficulty but who are unlikely to apply on their own behalf, please do get in touch. The Trustees will always be happy to consider requests for assistance and confirm ALL applications will be dealt with in confidence.

Financial support is available throughout the year, not only at Christmas. Please apply to:
Pam Waters, Clerk to the Trustees, 01638 741035

Mobile Library

The mobile library is visits Reach on the 3rd Tuesday of the month from 10.10 to 10.30am. This is route F16 and it parks at the Fair Green Bus Stop. They have a great selection of books for all, free NHS hearing aid batteries and walking stick ferrules. You can join Cambridgeshire Libraries on the bus if you are not already a member.

Burwell Surgery
Patient Participation Group

Attracting New Members

The Burwell Surgery Patient Participation Group (PPG) is a group of patients and GP practice staff who meet four times a year to discuss practice issues and patient experience to help improve the service. In partnership with the practice, the PPG aims to:

- act as an advisory group providing perspectives and concerns from patients that can influence how services operate at the practice
- communicate to the practice areas of patient concern with a view to influencing change
- act as a consultative group for any changes at the practice
- encourage and support the role of the practice in involving patients in their own care
- monitor complaints and comments received about the practice

In Burwell there is a strong group, but we are very keen to have more involvement from younger patients and patients with young families. The PPG would welcome any of the following:

- Younger patients and patients with young families to join us at one of our meetings to discuss the services the Surgery provides. You don't have to come every time – feel free to dip in and out if you have other commitments. To find out more about the PPG, visit our webpage on the Burwell Surgery website at https://www.theburwellsurgery.co.uk/patient-group/
- We offer the possibility of attending meetings by remote access as we understand that those with young families are busy and it may be difficult to attend evening meetings.

We would also appreciate help from leaders of groups running activities for parents and young people. Perhaps you could:

- Attend a PPG meeting to represent the views of younger people
- Invite PPG members to meet with your group so we can provide more information on what the PPG does and hear your feedback about the Surgery.

Members of the PPG will be available in the Village Green Coffee Shop on Friday 6 December between 3-4.30pm - please come and chat to us! If you are interested in joining the PPG, please get in touch by contacting the surgery at:
cpicb.burwellsurgery.admin@nhs.net

We look forward to hearing from you!

Food Focus

Christmas Cake



Years ago some neighbours of ours in Cornwall invited us in for a piece of the most delicious Christmas cake I have ever tasted. The secret, according to the cook, was just a Delia recipe with double the fruit. Until this year I haven't got around to making one (Charity cake stalls at Christmas Fairs have provided perfectly).

But this year I felt compelled to have a go. Enthusiastically veering from tradition, I even made it a week before Stir up Sunday (apparently the 24th November this year) giving me plenty of time to "feed" said cake with brandy at intervals before icing it. There are only 2 foods which I strongly dislike, one is celery and the other is shop bought marzipan, so I've decided to have a go at making my own when the time comes (nice easy looking recipe below). I love almonds but loathe that flavour of Bakewell Tarts which comes from the fake and concentrated taste of almonds. The other problem I've encountered is that all shop bought icing (which I was planning on using) contains palm oil – so I've still got to navigate that problem too.

In the end I used the Delia recipe below (but not double the fruit – I'm not sure that would have been possible). I incorporated a few of my own adaptations as I'm not wild on glace cherries and I fancied some elements of the second golden recipe. Fingers crossed it tastes good. True to my northern roots we will be enjoying it on Christmas day with Lancashire cheese – must remember to order that.

Delia Smiths Classic Christmas Cake

Ingredients

For the pre-soaking:

- 450g currants
- 50g chopped glacé cherries
- 175g sultanas
- 50g mixed chopped candied peel
- 175g raisins
- 100ml brandy

For the cake:

- 225g plain flour
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ¼ level teaspoon nutmeg, freshly grated
- ½ level teaspoon ground mixed spice
- 225g dark brown soft sugar

- 4 large eggs
- 1 dessertspoon black treacle
- 225g spreadable butter
- 50g chopped almonds (skin on)
- zest of 1 lemon and 1 orange

For feeding and topping:

- Armagnac or brandy to 'feed' the cake
- 100g whole blanched almonds (only if you don't intend to ice the cake)

Method

You should get the pre-soaking ingredients ready the night before you make the cake.

Put all the fruits in a bowl and mix them with the brandy, cover with a cloth and leave them to soak for a minimum of 12 hours.

When you're ready to cook the cake, pre-heat the oven to 140°C, Gas mark 1. All Delia's recipes are tested thoroughly using conventional ovens. For fan-assisted ovens, if you are not able to switch off the fan function, we suggest you reduce the temperature by 20 degrees centigrade, or check the manufacturer's handbook, although cannot guarantee the results in the same way we can for conventional ovens.

Now all you do is sift the flour, salt and spices into a very large roomy mixing bowl then add the sugar, eggs, treacle (warm it a little first to make it easier) and butter and beat with an electric hand whisk until everything is smooth and fluffy. Now gradually fold in the pre-soaked fruit mixture, chopped nuts and finally the grated lemon and orange zests. Next, using a large kitchen spoon, transfer the cake mixture into the prepared tin, spread it out evenly with the back of the spoon and, if you don't intend to decorate the cake with marzipan and icing, lightly drop the blanched almonds in circles over the surface.

Finally take a double square of baking parchment with a 50p-sized hole in the centre (for extra protection during the cooking) and place this not on top of the mixture itself but on the rim of the brown paper. Bake the cake on the lowest shelf of the oven for 4 hours until it feels springy in the centre when lightly touched. Sometimes it can take 30–45 minutes longer than this, but in any case don't look at it for 4 hours.

Cool the cake for 30 minutes in the tin, then remove it to a wire rack to finish cooling.

When it's cold, 'feed' it by making small holes in the top and bottom with a cocktail stick and spooning in a couple of tablespoons of Armagnac or brandy, then wrap it in parchment-lined foil and store in an airtight tin. You can now 'feed' it at odd intervals until you need to ice or eat it.

Equipment

You will need a 20cm Round Loose-based Cake Tin (or similar), greased, with base and side lined plus some baking parchment. Tie a double band of brown paper around the outside of the tin for extra protection.

Waitrose Golden Christmas Cake

For the cake

- 300g raisins
- 300g sultanas
- 200g glacé cherries, roughly chopped
- 250g dried apricots, roughly chopped
- 200g mixed peel
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon
- 1 tsp ground ginger
- 2 balls stem ginger in syrup, roughly chopped
- 100ml golden rum, plus extra for feeding
- 1 large orange, juice and finely grated zest
- 2 tbsp golden syrup
- 300g butter, at room temperature
- 300g light brown soft sugar
- 4 British Blacktail Large Free Range Eggs
- 300g self-raising flour
- 100g ground almonds

For the decoration

- 500g golden marzipan
- 1 tbsp smooth apricot jam
- 400g royal icing
- 1 gold glitter spray

The day before baking your cake, mix all the dried fruits, mixed peel, spices and chopped ginger together in a large bowl and pour over the rum, orange zest and juice and golden syrup. Cover and allow to soak overnight.

Preheat the oven to 150°C, gas mark 2 and line a round, 23cm loose-bottomed cake tin with a double layer of baking parchment, allowing a few centimetres to stick out at the top.

Beat together the butter and sugar by hand or in a stand mixer until light and fluffy. Crack in the eggs one at a time, beating well after each addition. Once combined, add the flour and ground almonds then mix until just combined. Stir in the soaked fruit and any soaking liquid and mix until it is incorporated.

Spoon the mixture into the lined cake tin. Smooth the top with a spatula. Bake for 2 hours 45 minutes to 3 hours, rotating the tin halfway through cooking to ensure an even bake and covering it with foil if it looks too dark. Test to see if the cake is ready by inserting a skewer into the centre. A few crumbs should stick to it, but no raw mixture should be visible if it is cooked.

Allow the cake to cool completely in the tin before turning out, piercing it all over with a skewer and feeding with a drizzle of rum. Wrap tightly in parchment and foil and leave in a cool dark place, feeding every few weeks with rum, until ready to decorate.

When you are ready to serve the cake, roll the marzipan out into a disc roughly the same size as the top of the cake. Brush the top of the cake with apricot jam, then apply the marzipan disc and trim the edges. Pipe the royal icing over the top, then dust with gold stardust and allow to harden before serving.



Easy Marzipan

- 175g golden caster sugar
- 280g icing sugar sifted, plus extra for kneading and rolling out
- 450g ground almond
- seeds scraped from 1 vanilla pod
- 2 eggs beaten
- ½ tsp orange or lemon juice
- 3 tbsp apricot jam
- warmed then sieved

Step 1

Mix the sugars and almonds in a large bowl, then rub in the vanilla seeds until even. Make a well in the middle, then tip in the eggs and citrus juice. Cut the wet ingredients into the dry with a cutlery knife. Dust the surface with icing sugar, then knead the marzipan briefly with your hands to a smooth dough. Don't overdo it as the paste can get greasy. Add a bit more icing sugar if it seems too wet. Shape into a ball, then wrap and keep in a cool place until ready to cover the cake. Can be made up to 2 days in advance.

Step 2

Lift the cake onto a cake board or plate, then use a pastry brush to cover evenly with a thin layer of jam. Dust the work surface with more icing sugar, then roll the marzipan into a circle about 40cm across, dusting underneath the marzipan with more icing sugar and turning it a quarter turn after every few pushes of the rolling pin.

Step 3

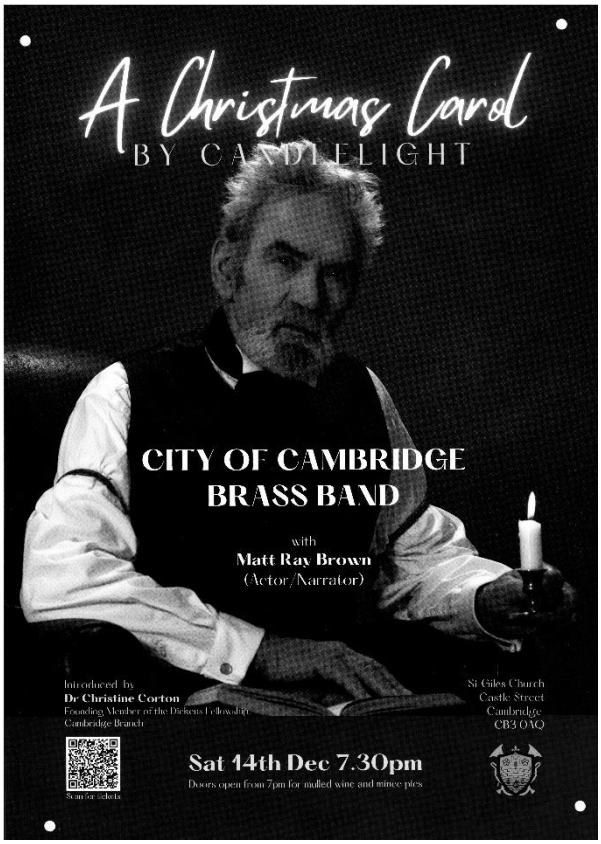
Flip the top of the circle back over your rolling pin so you can see the underside of the marzipan, then lift the pin up and lift the marzipan over the cake. Stop once you can see that the edge of the marzipan nearest you is about level with the bottom of the cake. Flop the front of the marzipan down. Smooth the paste over the cake using the palms of your hands, then trim with a sharp knife. If any cracks appear, simply pinch the paste back together and smooth. Leave to dry for at least 24 hrs, or up to 3 days, before covering with icing.

Step 4

How long does homemade marzipan keep?

Although homemade marzipan contains raw eggs, the amount of sugar and lack of moisture, prevents bacteria growing when left at room temperature, so your cake should last for 1-2 months iced. The most important thing is that you don't scrimp on drying time – once you've covered your cake in marzipan it should be left to completely dry out, before you then cover it with icing. If you want to make marzipan before you are ready to cover your cake, then wrap it well in cling film and keep in a fridge for up to a week – as wrapped in a ball it will still contain a little moisture.

Catherine Gibson



Burwell Museum

We had a spectacular final event to end our season, we welcomed The Young'uns who came to sing in our barn on Saturday 26th October – you can watch this performance on You Tube (2 parts) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gaKwVbm0WlU.
What a lovely way to celebrate the newly opened up central Barn area!

We plan to use it again for our special Christmas Event on the 1st December. This will take the form of Father Christmas visiting us in the Mill (pre-booked tickets only), storytelling in the Barn, Stir Up Sunday in our exhibit kitchen and our resident spinning ladies in the living room exhibit. Come and join us for some mulled wine, mince pies and potentially a sing along – please see our website for further details.

2024 has seen many changes at the Museum with both Trustees and Volunteers coming and going. We would like to take this opportunity to publicly thank a couple of people without whom the Museum would not be where it is now. Sara Phipps - for her dedication and determination in modernising the public areas of the Museum and for picking up our finances/admin when both our Treasurer and Administrator left, not an easy task! And to Andrew White, who has been heavily involved with our Windmill going back to around the time of the Lottery project back in 2012.

Even before we closed, we have been working with our Volunteers to agree our Winter Works Plan. We have some exciting changes that we hope to make over the winter – more of which will be revealed in the next issue of this magazine.

So, what were the stats for 2024 – well here we go. We welcomed **2,500 visitors**, our Volunteers have given us almost **5,000 hours,** we had **40 cars** and **5 bikes** to our Classic Car Show, our blacksmith demonstrated on **12 days** and our mill team have completed the replacement of all **140** great spur wheel teeth!

Once again, we have an Appeal for you! Our Collections Team who are working on a new exhibition, have asked us to reach out and ask for anything relating to Burwell Industries - Guyatt bottling plant, The brickworks, Tillotsons, The Clunch pits, Coal merchants, Carpenters, Butchers or anything relating to the old shops in the village. They are also still looking for anything connected to the weaving and spinning industry in the village.

Please remember, we are happy to loan an item if it's a family heirloom! Just send us a message on museum@burwellmuseum.org.uk with a photo of the item and we will come back to you.
Even though we are closed to the public, we are always happy to welcome new Volunteers. So, come along on a Tuesday and see what we are about, or maybe you would like to help bring the Museum to Life for our 2025 Season by Volunteering for our Front of House Team? Either way, we would love you to become involved – there is something for everyone!

Season Tickets for our 2025 Season will be available in December so why not buy one for a loved one for Christmas – we hope to have these and lots of exclusive gifts at the December Farmer's Market.

Finally, we would like to thank you our Volunteers and Visitors, for your support in 2024 and we wish you a very healthy and Happy Christmas – see you in 2025!

Trustees of Burwell Museum



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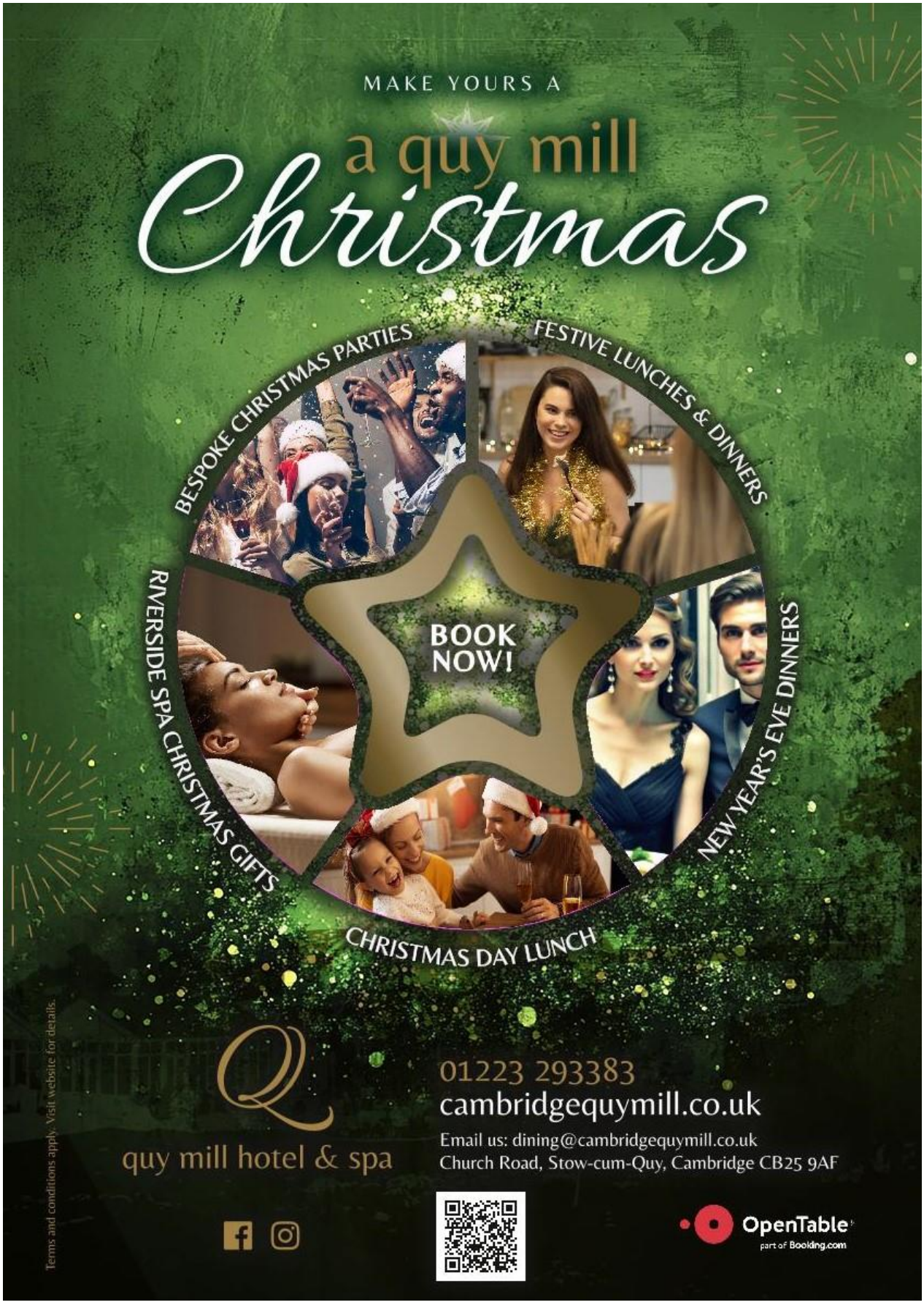
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Letter from the Vicarage



A well-known atheist was being interviewed on Radio 4. When asked how he spent Christmas, he said that he went to Midnight Mass at church. "But you're an atheist", his interviewer protested. "Yes", he replied, "but what they celebrate at Christmas is the most beautiful story ever told."

This is the story that will be rehearsed again this Christmas, in children's nativities, in hymns and carols, in Bible readings and sermons all over the country, a story of hope, of love and of heaven touching earth. When there is so much bad news, this is the best news of all – that we are not alone. God has come among us, as a tiny, helpless baby, into the middle of all our human messiness, to show us just how much we are loved. This Christmas, why don't you take some time to revisit that beautiful story and find out what it could mean for you.

All are welcome at any of our Advent and Christmas services and events, as we explore the meaning of Christmas together. In Reach we have a Christingle service on Monday 23rd December at 5.00pm and all are welcome to join us for this very special candlelit service.



A new venture for St Mary's this year is a Christmas Tree Festival. Individuals, businesses and community groups have been invited to enter trees or decorations to be displayed in the church. All should be in place by 8th December and in the lead up to Christmas anyone can come in to have a look and admire the creations. The church will be open every day in daylight hours. Contact Angela Bellis for information about taking part: angelajd.bellis@ntlworld.com or 07812 318240.

As part of the Christmas Tree Festival, Lucy Bunce, harpist and singer will be joining us on Thursday 12th December for 'Songs for Christmas'. The evening will begin with mulled wine and time to view the trees and decorations before the concert at 7.30pm. More about Lucy on her website www.lucybunce.com.



In St Mary's, we'll have our Remembering Tree in place from early December and all are welcome to write the names of loved ones on stars for the tree and service for those who have been bereaved, or find Christmas difficult in other ways, we have Quiet Christmas on Sunday 15th December at 3.00pm.



OUR SPECIAL SERVICES FOR ADVENT & CHRISTMAS at St Mary's Burwell and St Etheldreda's Reach

Sunday 1st December
4.30pm Christingle Service at St Mary's

Sunday 15th December
3.00pm Quiet Christmas Service

Sunday 22nd December
6.30pm St Mary's Carols by Candlelight

Monday 23rd December
5.00pm Christingle Service at Reach

Christmas Eve 24th December
3.00pm Crib Service at St Mary's
11.30pm St Mary's Midnight Communion

Christmas Day 25th December
8.30am Christmas Communion at Reach
10.00am Christmas Morning at St Mary's

Burwell Food Support Group

Pop-up Pantry & Ely Foodbank
working together
to support our local community
at Burwell Day Centre
Fridays 2.00 - 3.00pm
and Wednesdays as advertised

Pop-up Pantry is working towards reducing waste and offers short life food and more as is available.
Donations towards the Pantry are gratefully received and can be dropped off at the Day Centre.
A voluntary contribution of £2 is helpful towards running costs.
Ely Foodbank provides food for 3 days and can help with issues such as benefit changes, low incomes and more.
Citizen Advice join the team on 1st Friday of month.
If you require help from the Foodbank please ring 01353 468626
or email info@ely.foodbank.org.uk

Burwell Food Support Group links individuals and groups working to support those in need in our community, and includes Burwell Help Group, Open Arms, St Mary's Church, Burwell Baptist Church, Burwell & District Day Centre, Burwell Co-op

If you'd like to find out more about who we are and what we do, or get more involved in the life of St Mary's and St Etheldreda's, please get in touch and also if you would like to chat or if we can pray for you, if you are struggling financially, or know someone who is, or need help accessing Ely foodbank.

The Pop-up Pantry is open every Friday 2.00 – 3.00pm at Burwell Day Centre.

May that beautiful story bring you the hope, peace, joy and love of Christ this Christmas.

Eleanor Williams Vicar of Burwell with Reach
01638 741262 vicar@stmarysburwell.org.uk
www.stmarysburwell.org.uk
https://www.facebook.com/stmarysburwell/

Burwell and Reach Car Scheme



The Burwell and Reach Car Scheme offers those with travel restrictions or mobility issues a drive to the doctor, dentist, hospital, optician, hairdresser, shopping or just a visit to a friend, at a cost of 30p per mile. Just leave a message on 07399 154913 with your requirements and someone will get back to you. Or contact me, Pam King in Reach on 07484 852889. If anyone in Reach would like to volunteer to drive we are always grateful for extra people. Just leave a message on the answerphone 07399 154913.



Tales from a Reach Garden



Richard and I have been enjoying the autumn leaf colour this year. Autumn took some time to get going possibly because the trees have been well-watered this year thanks to all the rainfall we've had. Autumn does seem to be lengthening each year with different trees changing leaf colour at different times, even within the same variety.

We have a row of young self-sown ash trees at the back of the garden, which I have noticed are dropping their leaves at different rates and different times. Foliage turned yellow before leaf-drop on one tree, yet its neighbour dropped its leaves a couple of weeks later while still green. The maples are usually among the first to change foliage colour and drop their leaves, especially when we've had a hot summer, like in 2022 when the trees were bare by the end of September, but this year has been different, here we are in the third week of November and the field maples are only just dropping their leaves and that is because of the frost we've had this week.



Field maple still clinging to its leaves in November

After a damp growing season, we had a cold snap in September, which brought this year's summer growing season to an abrupt halt.

This was followed by mild wet weather in October, then dry gloom for a couple of weeks and now a few bright and frosty days this week. Some of the plants are reacting strangely to this combination of weather conditions. The tips of some of our snowdrops are poking through the soil already. One of our evergreen shrubs, a "*Choysia ternata*", normally blossoms in May, but didn't do that this year, but it is flowering now, in November instead. A clump of rhubarb, which is normally dormant in winter, is extending fresh new leaves and stems above the soil.

In any case, late autumn and winter involve a lot of tidying up in the garden. The paths and patios have to be swept, or risk them becoming slimy and the lawns have to be raked clear of leaves. Any leaves that fall on the flower beds or among the bushes we leave to decompose near where they've fallen. Tree leaves from the paths and lawns are heaped up in wire mesh containers to decompose there. Unlike ordinary compost which needs some warmth to get going, cool damp conditions are ideal for the microbes and fungi that break down the lignin in leaves from trees to form leaf mould, making a good mulch and soil conditioner for the garden. It's a good time to mulch flower beds and vegetable beds before it becomes too cold. Mulching provides extra protection for roots and bulbs over the winter months. Organic mulch, such as compost, well-rotted manure or leaf mould, is gradually broken down by soil invertebrates like worms that help to aerate and feed the soil.



Is it spring already? Choisya Ternata in flower in November

The plants in the garden maybe unsure as to the time of year, but the local wildlife are behaving as if winter has arrived. We had a huge crop of fruit this year, including crab apples which did not pass unnoticed by the local fauna. The birds and squirrels have gorged on the crab apples and stripped the tree bare of fruit. Normally there are a few crab apples still on the tree in January, but not this winter. Even the medlar trees have no more fruit on them, but normally they are ignored until the crab apples have been eaten.

The cotoneaster bushes too have been shorn of their berries already and the squirrels have raided the pots and beds where they had hidden their walnuts.

I wondered why there has been so much frantic foraging, then the penny dropped… The one tree that appears to have had a barren year in our garden is a copper beech standing in front of our house. In every year that we have lived here, our copper beech produces a crop of beech nuts. In some years, the so-called "Mast years", it produces a lot more nuts than in other years. Last year was definitely a "Mast year" as supply far exceeded demand. In fact, it was excessive, we were sweeping the shells away for months. However, this year our beech tree has dumped a lot of leaves but little else. I chatted to Richard about it and we realised that we hadn't seen any beech nuts at all this autumn. Normally we see animals pecking and nibbling the beech nuts where they have fallen but it hasn't happened this year. It is surprising how much impact the loss of food from one tree has on local wildlife. We'll definitely be filling the bird feeders this winter and keeping them topped up!

Danuta Gibson

Know Your Parish Council

Your Parish Councillors are:

Edward Hall	Chair
Nick Acklam	Councillor
Hilary Fielding	Councillor
Rowan Foster-Marian	Councillor
Catherine Gibson	Councillor
Tim Quilter	Councillor
Vacancy	Councillor

Please contact Susan Bailey if you are interested in being co-opted onto the Parish Council.

Also:

Charlotte Cane	District Councillor
John Trapp	District Councillor
Joshua Schumann	County Councillor

Meetings normally take place in the **Village Hall** on the first **Tuesday** of each month. They will in future start at **7.30pm** (note new timing) and all Reach villagers are welcome to attend. The next meeting will take place on Tuesday October 1st.

Your Clerk is **Susan Bailey**
29 Great Lane Reach CB25 0JF 01638 743794
clerk@reachparishcouncil.org

Know Your District Councillors



Operational Services Committee agreed that the Council implements the Waste Collection and Street Cleansing proposals, to wit:

- collect food waste in a separate container, on a weekly basis by 31 March 2026,
- the collection of residual waste in a 180litre wheeled bin fortnightly,
- a free fortnightly garden waste collection service and the possibility of a second garden waste bin for free,
- fortnightly collection of recycling as at present

The aim is to increase the re-cycling by residents; we pay for waste taken to the waste depot but receive a rebate for that which is re-cycled. Exceptions will be made for larger households and those houses that have no storage facilities which will be given coloured bags as for now. Provision has been built into the budget to pay for the extra bins. Comprehensive information will be disseminated to all residents well in advance to help with a smooth transition.

It was also agreed to retain the current street cleansing service specification and review it in one year's time and to proceed with using East Cambs Street Scene Ltd (ECSS) even though it was still not performing to target.

The following decisions were made at the **Finance & Assets Committee** meeting on Thursday 26 September:

- introduction of a £70 fine for misdeclaration of Council Tax discounts

- Council Officers now predict an 'overall increase in costs' for the planned crematorium at Mepal, and an attempt by Liberal Democrats on the committee to refer the cost rises to a Full Council meeting next month was rejected by a block vote of Conservative Councillors;
  The details of the increased costs were in a confidential report, but the published papers state that the rise is 'largely made up of a gap in the projects contingency budget and an increase in build costs'; the escalating costs for the crematorium, already predicted to cost over £9 million, have substantial implications for the project and further work is being undertaken and further costs are being incurred without this coming back to the Full Council for consideration of the new information; Charlotte pointed out that the tight timescale and restricted times of year for working on a biodiverse site would also lead to cost increases; John said that changing the scheme to keep it within the budget would not deliver the graceful project the Council had approved.

Two motions were passed at the **Full Council 17 October 2024** meeting:

- one was to increase the Council's local awareness campaign which has been underway for several weeks now, to alert those eligible for Pension Credit to apply by the deadline of 21st December 2024, see below for more information.
- the other one was on the banning of sea toilets on the waterways in the District; the discharge of sea toilets is permitted by regulation on all inland waterways unless specifically banned; the Council is to request the Environment Agency to take the necessary steps to achieve a ban on the Great Ouse and its tributaries.

Council unanimously agreed to create a working group in order to prepare a Local Plan (the document that defines where new housing, industrial and recreational buildings can be built within the District). Our current Local Plan is almost ten years old and it must be replaced by an up-to-date version within two years to stop speculative building.

Hundreds of pensioners in East Cambs could be missing out on Pension Credit

An estimated 600 pensioners in East Cambridgeshire could be missing out on Pension Credit.

Pensioners on a low income are being advised to apply for Pension Credit now to be in with a chance of qualifying for this year's Winter Fuel Payment.

East Cambridgeshire District Council has launched a promotional campaign encouraging as many people as possible to apply for Pension Credit before 21 December. Applications received after that date will not automatically receive the £300 Winter Fuel Payment.

Pension Credit is available to people of a pensionable age on an income below the £218 a week threshold (£333 for couples). Those above the threshold may still qualify if they are carers, have a disability, or have savings under £10,000.

Anyone who needs help with applying for Pension Credit can contact the community advice team at East Cambridgeshire District Council or attend one of the Council's drop-in sessions. These take place at The Grange in Ely Monday to Friday, from 10am until 4pm.

At the last Full Council meeting (17 October) the council unanimously passed a motion to request changes to the government's decision to means test the Winter Fuel Payment, which in previous years had been paid to all pensioners.

The Council will be carrying out several actions including:

- writing to people who are registered for its assisted bin collections to see if they are eligible to apply for Pension Credit before 21 December
- contacting Parish Councils, community groups and charities operating in East Cambridgeshire to ask for their help to ensure all eligible pensioners are supported in claiming their entitlement
- encouraging as many people as possible to sign up to Age UK's petition to Save the Winter Fuel Payment

With all best wishes for Christmas and the New Year,
Cllrs Charlotte Cane MP and John Trapp

Cllrs Charlotte Cane
07976 607512 charlotte.cane@eastcambs.gov.uk
and **John Trapp**
01223 812120 john.trapp@eastcambs.gov.uk

Our MP's Report

It's hard to believe, but we're already four months into my time as your MP for Ely and East Cambridgeshire. It's been full of new experiences both in Parliament and here at home and I wanted to take a moment to share some highlights and updates with you.

Earlier this month, I made my maiden speech in the Commons and it was a memorable experience. I spoke about our area's incredible mix of industries, from agriculture and the horseracing community to cutting-edge tech businesses we can be proud of. I also highlighted our beautiful natural landscapes, including the chalk grasslands, Wicken Fen, the Devil's Dyke and the iconic "ship of the fens" - Ely Cathedral.

The Chancellor's recent decision to increase National Insurance employer contributions is a worrying one for many of our local healthcare providers and public bodies. I've called on the Chancellor to reconsider this rise, which risks putting even more pressure on already overstretched services. Our local NHS teams, care homes, and charities need support, not additional burdens.

In rural areas like ours, reliable broadband is still a luxury rather than a given. I recently joined a debate on broadband provision and am now seeking a meeting with the Minister to push for better connectivity in our villages and towns. It's not just about convenience; poor internet access affects businesses, schools, and families across Ely and East Cambs. I'm determined to make sure our voices are heard on this issue.

This month I've also had the privilege of voting to remove hereditary peers from the House of Lords. This vote marks an important step towards modernising our political system. I've long believed that the Lords should be a place of expertise and experience, not inherited privilege, so it was an honour to play a part in making this change at last.

I've been out and about in the constituency recently, meeting residents at my surgery, visiting farmers across the region, celebrating the opening of the new Community Diagnostics Centre at the Princess of Wales Hospital, visiting the Social Club in Haddenham, Cottenham Village College, Wicken Fen, Cambridge Regional College and Queens Court Care Home - just a few of the many engagements I've had the pleasure of attending as your MP.

It was an honour to lay a wreath at the Remembrance Service in Ely, while my representatives did the same at local ceremonies in Littleport, Soham and Reach. I was moved to pay my respects alongside so many of you, honouring those who have served and sacrificed for our country.

It's been a busy few months of recruitment, too, but I'm pleased to say that we now have my MP office team in place. I know that some of you have been waiting for a reply and I appreciate your patience while we prioritise emergency cases. We are working hard to respond to your emails and calls as quickly as possible and will be in touch with everyone still waiting soon.

I will end my report as I ended my maiden speech - by reiterating my pledge to be a strong voice for our community and to work tirelessly as your local MP. If you want to get in touch, please email me at charlotte.cane.mp@parliament.uk.

Charlotte Cane MP

December 2024



Able Community Care

Able Community Care is a Norfolk, family owned, Home Care provider which was established in 1980. We are often asked by our clients, carers and members of the public, questions across a wide range of care issues. Care information is often time-consuming and difficult to access, so we are happy to share some of our questions and answers with you.

Question – Can I find out what personal information is held about me from my Council Social Services Department?

Answer – Yes, you can request a copy of the information held about you, called a Subject Access Request (SAR). This could include your housing file, social care file and any other information held about you by the Council.

- Currently, GDPR does not specify any time limitation for a data subject requesting their personal data and usually there is no fee to pay.
- The time limit for responding to a subject access request (SAR) is usually one month from the day the organization receives the request

Angela Gifford, Managing Director

Able Community Care Limited
www.ablecommunitycare.com 01603 764567

Minutes of Reach Parish Council meeting held in the Village Hall on Tuesday 1st October 2024 at 7.30pm

Attendance

Edward Hall	Chair	Present
Catherine Gibson	Councillor	Present
Nick Acklam	Councillor	Present
Hilary Fielding	Councillor	Present
Tim Quilter	Councillor	Present
Rowan Foster-Marian	Councillor	Present
Vacancy	Councillor	*Vacancy*
Susan Bailey	Clerk	Present
C Cane	District Councillor	Present
Joshua Schumann	County Councillor	Not Present

Apologies for absence – received & approved.

Forum for members of the public – none present.

Declaration of Interests – there were none.

1. Acceptance of office forms to be signed
Signed and approved.

2. Co-option of new Councillor
Unfortunately, no one had come forward to apply for the additional vacancy. ***Clerk*** to contact those who applied previously.

3. Election of officers
Following the resignation of Councillor Cane there are 2 vacant roles which were filled.
Vice chair – Councillor Quilter, nominated Councillor Gibson, seconded Councillor Hall, approved.
Village hall rep - Councillor Foster-Marian, nominated Councillor Hall, seconded Councillor Gibson, approved.

Councillor Cane was also a PC representation on the Burwell EDF solar farm committee. There is now not a need for this. There will be one meeting a year which the Chair & Vice Chair will attend. Discussion took place regarding the available funding for Reach village and the still evolving processes of this scheme.

4. Planning
There were none.

5. District Councillor Report
Operational Services Committee The following was agreed at this meeting on Monday 23 September:
- the Committee was currently projecting a yearend overspend of £135,000 on revenue, when compared to its approved budget of £7,134,292; the Committee has a projected capital programme outturn of £3,656,199, an underspend of £1,000,000 (allocated to new bins, see below) when compared to its revised budget.
- the Council implements the Waste Collection and Street Cleansing proposals, to wit:

1. collect food waste in a separate container, on a weekly basis by 31 March 2026,
2. the collection of residual waste in a 180lt wheeled bin fortnightly,
3. a free fortnightly garden waste collection service the possibility of a second garden waste bin for free,
4. fortnightly collection of recycling as at present,

The aim is to increase the recycling by residents. Exceptions will be made for larger households & those houses that have no storage facilities which will be given coloured bags as now. Comprehensive information will be disseminated to all residents well in advance to help with a smooth transition.
- retain the current street cleansing service specification, and review it in one year's time
- to proceed with using East Cambs Street Scene Ltd even though it was still not performing to target.

Finance & Assets Committee - The following decisions were made at the meeting on Thursday 26 September:
- introduction of a £70 fine for misdeclaration of Council Tax discounts,
- there is a projected underspend of £197,000 on revenue,
- there is a projected underspend of £1,000,000 on capital, due to the loan to ECTC not being fully taken up,

- The Hedgehog Recovery Design Guidance Supplementary Planning Document was formerly adopted, after comments from consultees had been considered,
- ***Net Zero Villages Grant Scheme was approved; £150,000 to be allocated to villages for improving community premises; applications for up to £30,000 to be sent in by the end of the year. This grant is open to Parish Councils and community organisations.***
- Council Officers now predict an 'overall increase in costs' for the planned crematorium at Mepal, and an attempt by Liberal Democrats on the committee to refer the cost rises to a Full Council meeting next month was rejected by a block vote of Conservative Councillors;

the details of the increased costs were in a confidential report, but the published papers state that the rise is 'largely made up of a gap in the projects contingency budget and an increase in build costs'; the escalating costs for the crematorium, already predicted to cost over £9 million, have substantial implications for the project, and further work is being undertaken and further costs are being incurred without this coming back to the Full Council for consideration of the new information; Charlotte pointed out that the tight timescale and restricted times of year for working on a biodiverse site would also lead to cost increases; John said that changing the scheme to keep it within the budget would not deliver the project the Council had approved.

6. County Councillor Report

ADULTS & HEALTH New Director of Public Health Cambridgeshire County Council has a new Director of Public Health, Sally Cartwright, who joins us from Luton in January. The Director of Public Health is responsible for identifying and improving the health and wellbeing of residents, reducing inequalities in health outcomes, and protecting local communities from public health hazards, such as infectious diseases and environmental threats.

Vaccination update Vaccinations are now available for eligible people against a range of conditions including Covid, flu, pneumonia, shingles, and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV). Local GP practices are calling up eligible patients, or you can find out more at https://www.cpics.org.uk/the-vaccinators/ and book with a local pharmacy or attend a convenient drop-in session without an appointment.

CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE -School place appeal panel volunteers

Volunteers are urgently needed to hear appeals when children are not offered a place at their preferred school. All parents or carers have the right to make an appeal to an independent appeal panel if their child is not offered a place at their preferred school. The role of the panel is to decide whether a child who has been refused a place by Cambridgeshire County Council should be given a place.

All parties involved must be given an appeal hearing that is transparent, accessible, independent, and impartial. The appeal panel is independent of the local authority and its decisions are binding on all parties, unless overturned by the courts. Volunteers will sit on the independent admission appeal panels and ensure that parents feel they have had a fair and independent hearing and have been given every opportunity to put their case and have been taken seriously. Panel members must be able to listen to two sides of a case and weigh up evidence objectively and impartially. They must also be able to:

- Communicate effectively with a wide range of people
- Read and assess information and identify key points
- Listen to key information
- Ask questions to obtain information and clarify points being made
- Analyse information and use it to form opinions and conclusions
- Obtain and weigh up evidence to reach a decision
- Work as part of a team, take advice, and develop their own skills

All volunteer Panel Members receive initial and annual refresher training and will be fully supported by the Appeals Service. The time commitment depends on how much time volunteers are willing to give. While appeals are held throughout the year, the peak months are between April and July. The appeals are arranged either for half a day or a full day, and hearings are currently held online using Microsoft Teams. Anyone interested in applying or who would like an informal chat about the role should contact clare.cronk@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

New homes for children with complex needs Cambridgeshire County Council's Assets & Procurement Committee has selected two former farmhouses close to each other in Soham as a pilot project to increase the number of local places available for children and young people with complex needs. Both properties, currently vacant, are owned by the Council. They will be fully refurbished, and a provider will be offered a contract for up to ten years to provide care services to best meet the needs of the children. Locally and nationally, there is a growing need for placements, with children having to be placed out of the county due to a lack of local places and a limited number of registered settings being available. This project offers an opportunity for local and more stable placements, as well as avoiding over £635,000 of costs each year on private placements.

Looked after children The Council's residential strategy for looked after children will be referred to the Strategy, Resources & Performance Committee. There remains a shortage of care placements for looked after children across the country.

ENVIRONMENT & GREEN INVESTMENT - Climate change progress report and carbon footprint

The County Council's Environment & Green Investment Committee will receive on Thursday 3 October a progress report on its Climate Change & Environment Strategy, and the annual Carbon Footprint report.

This is the sixth annual Carbon Footprint report, and covers both the County Council's own carbon emissions, and those of Cambridgeshire as a whole. Carbon emissions are classified into three 'scopes'.

- •Scope 1 is direct emissions such as from gas or oil boilers and vehicles.
- •Scope 2 is emissions from purchased electricity.
- •Scope 3 is indirect emissions such as those of contractors and suppliers

The Council's Scope 1 and 2 are 42 per cent lower than in the baseline reporting year of 2018/19. Scope 2 is now always zero as the Council buys electricity through a zero-carbon contract. The Council's Scope 3 emissions for 2023/24 account for around 99 per cent of its carbon footprint and were 111,307 tonnes CO2e excluding the Council's rural estate—39 per cent lower than in 2018/19.
During 2023/24 the Council procured expert support to identify baseline carbon emissions for its rural estate, and more work needs to be done to agree an achievable target.
For Cambridgeshire as a whole, in 2022—the most recent available data—total greenhouse gas emissions were 6.45 million tonnes CO2e, a three per cent fall from 2021. Transport (27 per cent) remains the highest emitting sector in the county, followed by land use, land use change and forestry (LULUCF) (23 per cent), agriculture (15 per cent) and domestic energy use (13 per cent).
The risk of not reaching the Council's carbon targets has reduced but still remains considerable. Delivery of these targets relies on collaborating with our partner organisations.
Newly discovered Roman town given heritage protection
A newly discovered Roman small town south of Great Staughton has been given heritage protection as a scheduled monument by the Department for Culture, Media & Sport on the advice of Historic England.
Cambridgeshire County Council is responsible for maintaining information about scheduled monuments in the county and requested that test trenches be dug at Great Staughton during archaeology prior to the submission of proposals for a solar farm. As a result of the findings, panels will not be installed on that part of the site. This site is now Cambridgeshire's second largest Roman Scheduled Monument after the walled town of Durobrivae, five miles west of Peterborough, I was delighted to be asked on to BBC Radio Cambridgeshire to talk about it.
HIGHWAYS & TRANSPORT - Local Highways Improvement schemes
The Highways & Transport Committee meeting on Tuesday 1 October is asked to agree which Local Highways Improvement (LHI) bids will be approved for the coming year.
In East Cambridgeshire, the complex schemes recommended for approval are
- Improvements to the crossing point at the B1102 crossroads (Lode)
- A speed limit change on Malting End Road and Woodditton Road (Kirtling)
- Speed reducing measures on Mildenhall Road (Fordham)

A further six schemes were not recommended because the first three schemes would use up all this year's available budget for complex schemes in East Cambridgeshire.

The non-complex schemes recommended for approval are
- Signing and road marking on Brinkley Road (Brinkley)
- An options report for the A1123 near Wilburton (Wilburton)
- Signing and road marking on Dane Hill Road (Kennett)
- Buffer zones on Bradley Road (Burrough Green)
- Mobile speed activated signs (Coveney)
- Parking restrictions such as double yellow lines or controlled parking on Bell Road, Tunbridge Lane, and High Street (Bottisham)

Unfortunately, the Local Highways Improvement process, though extremely popular, is very much a lottery, depending on officer or councillor scoring and the number of applications in any given year. I raised this with officers, and they have now proposed that any unsuccessful complex schemes like Sutton's are also added to the transport planning database for prioritisation through the council's Delivering Transport Strategy Aims programme. Unfortunately, as officers admit, 'this is also a process with a limited amount of funding which is competitively prioritised.'
The application window for the next LHI application round will be as follows.
- Application window opens: Friday 1 November 2024
- Application window closes: Friday 10 January 2025
- Feasibility studies undertaken: February—May 2025
- Panel meetings: June—July 2025
- Report to committee including prioritised list for approval: October 2025

20MPH schemes Local 20MPH schemes still prove hugely popular, with 91 schemes submitted by local communities for consideration, and a further eleven withdrawn for consideration under other proposals.
Only eight of the 91 schemes are recommended to the Highways & Transport Committee on Tuesday 1 October for implementation this coming year, again for lack of funding:
- Waterbeach (village-wide)
- Stow cum Quy (village-wide)
- Elm (village-wide)
- Bottisham (village-wide)
- Little Paxton (village-wide)
- Earith (majority of village)
- Swavesey (majority of village)
- Steeple Morden (central area of village)

A petition is being brought to the County Council's Highways & Transport Committee on Tuesday 1 October against the 20MPH installation in Ely.
Mill Road (Cambridge) closure - A special meeting of the Highways & Transport Committee takes place on Friday 4 October to determine afresh the application for a Traffic Regulation Order. This would restrict traffic over the bridge by motor vehicles, except local buses, taxis, Private Hire Vehicles, blue badge holders' registered vehicles, and other authorised vehicles. Access would be maintained for cyclists and pedestrians.

The Mill Road decision quashed by the court in August, and the statutory consultation relating to it, is not being taken into account, and the matter is being determined by a different group of councillors.
The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority has now been released from the 'Best Value Notice' placed on it in January 2023 as the Government has recognised the improvement in the organisation.
The Authority's Transport & Infrastructure Committee is recommending that the Board allow older people and those with disabilities to use their bus passes before the current 9:30AM start.
The new Tiger Pass offers bus travel for £1 per journey for those aged up to 25.Details of how to apply for the new pass can be found athttps://cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk/onepoundbusfare/
The Vision Zero road safety project is being revived. Its aims are to reduce the numbers of people killed or seriously injured on our roads and the social and financial impact of this, and to develop financially sustainable models of road safety activity. The original prospectus in 2020 aimed for zero killed or seriously injured by 2040 though this seems unlikely to be met.
A reminder that the Combined Authority's consultation on bus franchising continues until 20 November. Short and long questionnaires can be found at https://cpca-yourvoice.co.uk/bus-franchising-consultation/

7. Minutes of previous Meeting
Approved as correct.

8.1 Reach Grant Fund
Nothing to report

8.2 Finance
New signatories for the PC bank account need to be set up. Clerk had contacted the bank & removed the old signatories and obtained the required forms. Councillors Acklam & Gibson agreed to be the new signatories and will complete the forms. ***Clerk*** to return the forms and arrange with the bank.

8.3 Parish Council Members
Nothing to report

8.4 Play Spaces
Discussion took place regarding whether the PC pays for the playground to be tidied or whether local parents/grandparents could form a group to care for the general upkeep of the area. Discussions will continue.

8.5 Rights of Way
CCC had carried out surface repair work to the section of Byway 14 between Delver Bridge and Reach FP 1.
Councillor Fielding to monitor and report back to CCC regarding the success of the resurfacing.

The PC had received a request for a resident to arrange the cutting back of the hedges along the byway from the centre of Reach wood to the byway at the back of Ditchfield. Only a small section of this is owned by the PC and they are very grateful for this offer. The PC would also like to give its support to the ensuring that byways are kept clear and open for all legitimate traffic.

8.6 24Acres Committee
A letter from the PC to ECDC supporting the application from the NT had been drafted and was approved. It will be submitting to ECDC once the application is submitted.
Plans to undertake hedge laying at the 24 Acres in early 2025continue to develop. Cambridge Conservation Volunteers would lead the project. There was also the possibility of coppicing hazel from Reach Wood in late 2024 to help the hedge laying. Conversations with the Woodland Trust, which owns the wood, also continue.

8.7 Friends Of Reach Wood
Nothing to report

8.8 A to B1102 Group
Nothing to report.

8.9 Nature Recovery Plan
Nothing to report.

8.10 Hythe Restoration Group
Cllr Acklam had established from County Archive maps of 1813 and 1910 that at these times the Hythe was classified as community land in exactly the same way as the Drying Ground and Fair Green. This strengthens the likelihood that the land occupied by the sewage works was compulsorily acquired from the community of Reach in the 1960s, probably without payment. A request for Anglian Water's records covering this acquisition has so far gone unanswered. Investigations continue.

Councillor Hall left the meeting and Councillor Quilter took the Chair.

9. Remembrance Sunday
Councillor Cane as Chair had previously attended and taken part in the service both at the memorial and inside the church. ***Clerk*** to liaise with Councillor Hall and Eleanor Williams, Vicar, & to purchase a wreath.
Charlotte Cane MP had asked if she or her representative could lay a wreath at Reach war memorial during the service. Approved.

10. Parish Council Communications & Website, an update
The process continues and the website will go live very soon. The website will allow the PC to add news items and updates quickly and easily which will improve communications with the village.
A communications officer will be required.

11. Defibrillator update
An article in the village magazine has been published asking for interest in sessions on how to use the defibrillator. The resident has offered to take a look at the defib and ensure it is in working order. ***Councillor Gibson*** to continue to liaise.

12. PC meetings use of the small meeting room
A group within the village would like to use the large meeting room of the village hall on Tuesday 5th November, the day of the next PC meeting. Following discussion, it was agreed that the PC would use the small meeting room for this one event, but going forward would like to preserve the use of the large meeting room for the PC. This will allow easier and full access to the meeting for members of the public.

13. Grant fund charity update
The Clerk to transfer any remaining funds from the PC and close the account. Applications will now be made to the new Reach Village Community Fund. Documents and application form to be updated and added to the website.

14. Payments

National Trust – 24Acres lease	£10.00
E.on Next – power on the green	£27.80
CR Contracting – Mowing contract	£451.00
S Bailey – Clerk Salary	Confidential
A de Giorgio-Miller – Sports day – Grant fund	£57.25
N Bridgeman – Sports day – Grant fund	£37.82
Transfer of remaining funds to new Grant Fund	£94.95

Draft Minutes of Reach Parish Council meeting held in the Village Hall on Tuesday 5th November 2024 at 7.30pm

Attendance

Edward Hall	Chair	Present
Catherine Gibson	Councillor	Present
Nick Acklam	Councillor	Present
Hilary Fielding	Councillor	Present
Tim Quilter	Councillor	Present
Rowan Foster-Marian	Councillor	Not Present
Vacancy	Councillor	*Vacancy*
Susan Bailey	Clerk	Present
C Cane	District Councillor	Not Present
Joshua Schumann	County Councillor	Not Present

Apologies for absence

Forum for members of the public – A member of the public attended to ask the PC for their thoughts on the solar farms & battery storage facilities being planned for the Fens on the edge of the village.
Two new proposals are now at the consultation stage, Grenergy at battery storage facility & Kingway Solar a solar farm of 1500 hectares. Paperwork also refers to a new Burwell South National Grid substation of which details are unknown.

The PC has very little powers, particularly as these areas are outside of the parish, although they will have significant effect on the village. The Neighbourhood Plan may be useful with this regard. ***Councillor Hall*** to contact Burwell PC to establish their views on these schemes. The Kingsway development will affect most of the surrounding Parishes and there maybe the opportunity to group together to oppose these schemes.

The PC will be monitoring the situation & any developments closely.

Declaration of Interests – there were none.

1. Co-option of new Councillor
Nothing to report.

2. Planning - 24/01024/LBC Hill Farm 28 Fair Green, Installation of 4 roof windows to the rear wing roof over the kitchen, internal alterations to the existing rear lean-to to create a wc & utility room. Minor alterations to the first & second floor to create bathrooms. Installation of a roof window to the rear roof slope.

Local Plan The site lies inside the development envelope of the village as defined by the Reach Neighbourhood Plan 2024, & inside the Conservation Area as defined by the ECDC Local Plan 2015. It has a prominent place in the village, being very central & the site of the Proclamation of the annual Reach Fair.
Previous applications/appeals 00/00398/FUL & 00/00399/LBC Convert existing single storey brick/clunch barn to two storey dwelling Approved 12.09.2000, 22/00255/LBC Replacement of an existing window with a door Permitted. 24/00259/LBC -Side and rear extensions, associated alterations plus rear dormer window, remove part of a mono pitch roof structure on outbuilding.
Loss of sunlight N/A
Overshadowing/loss of outlook N/A
Overlooking and loss of privacy There does not appear to be overlooking or loss of privacy, but there should be conditions on the Velux windows to ensure no overlooking or lack of privacy.
Highway issues: Traffic generation Vehicular access, Highway safety The Parish Council has no concerns about the proposed moving back slightly of the existing gate to the courtyard.
Noise or disturbance resulting from use, including proposed hours of operation N/A
Smells and fumesN/A
Capacity of physical infrastructure N/A
Deficiencies in social facilities N/A
Storage and handling of hazardous materials and development of contaminated land N/A
Loss or effect on trees No trees to be removed. The protection of the existing tree should be made a condition.
Adverse impact on nature conservation interests and biodiversity opportunities N/A
Effect on listed buildings and conservation areas Hill Farm itself is a listed building (Grade II) & in a Conservation area.
Incompatible or unacceptable uses N/A
Local financial considerations offered as a contribution or grant N/A
Compliance with Reach Design Code Most of the proposed changes would not be visible to the public, so the Parish Council expresses no views on those.
Compliance with Reach Landscape Analysis N/A

Conclusion of outcome: Fully support

3. District Councillor Report
No report received.

4. County Councillor Report
No report received.

5. Minutes of previous Meeting
Approved as correct.

6.1 Reach Village Community Fund
Clerk had asked for volunteers to join the new Reach Village Community Fund. Three had come forward, which is very much appreciated. Should you be interested in joining, please contact the PC Clerk.
An application had been received for the 3 annual Christmas events, and another application for money to help with the roof of the village hall. These had been past to the Reach Village Community Fund committee.
The power on the green payments will also be passed to the new Grant fund for payment.

It was noted that if an event is to take place on land the PC is responsible for, and PC insurance cover will be used, a risk assessment & list of participants must be supplied to The Clerk prior to the event.

6.2 Finance
Clerk had returned the new signatory forms to the bank; confirmation had not yet been received.

6.3 Parish Council Members
The Clerk reported that a notice had been place on the BT telephone box stating that it was to be removed. The box is listed as a building of note in the Neighbourhood plan. Resident concerns had alerted The Clerk to discuss with ECDC planning who were unaware of the situation & are now investigating. Planning did however state that it will be difficult for the village to keep the telephone if BT produce evidence of its lack of use. The PC would then need to decide whether to adopt the box.

The new parish council website is now live, https://reachparish.gov.uk/
It is still a work in progress, and Councillor Hall asked that the Councillors & Clerk took some time to view, assess & supply anything to add.

6.4 Play Spaces
Further to the discussion, at the October meeting regarding whether the PC pays for the playground to be tidied or whether local parents/grandparents could form a group to care for the general upkeep of the area, the PC are very grateful to a resident who had offered, via Facebook, to check and tidy the playground as & when necessary.

6.5 Rights of Way
Hedge cutting had been an issue alongside the byways and footpaths of the village and the PC would like to reiterate that it is the landowners responsibility to keep all hedges cut back to allow clear access along all public highways. Over hanging trees and hedges can be reported on the CCC highways website
https://highwaysreporting.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/

Councillor Fielding to write an information article for the new website detailing landowners responsibilities.

6.6 24Acres Committee
Hedge Laying: Cambridge Conservation Volunteers (CCV) have agreed to undertake hedge laying on the southern edge of the 24 Acres on Sunday 2 February 2025. A small number of villagers will be involved under CCV direction. It is unlikely that the entire hedge will be laid this season. ***Councillor Acklam*** hopes to meet the CCV leader on site before beforehand to confirm requirement. As the task is on PC tenanted land, a risk assessment will be submitted to the PC for approval in advance of the task. Organising the harvesting hazel at Reach Wood to support the hedge is proving more problematic. Meeting the stipulations of the Woodland Trust, the owner of the wood, has been challenging. Something may still be able to be organised, again led by CCV, & deploy there in January 2025. However, CCV have assured the PC that a hedge can be laid without hazel stakes & binders.
Pond Construction: The National Trust has submitted a full application for pond construction to ECDC. Clerk has submitted the letter of support agreed at the last PC meeting. On an associated issue, engineering work to retain winter rain on Tubney Fen for the benefit of wildlife has also begun.

6.7 Friends Of Reach Wood
UK Power Networks visited Reach Wood to trim the tops of trees and bushes that were getting close to the power lines. This is a very different approach to their visit a few years ago when they cut down (coppiced) a row of hazel shrubs and some other trees and bushes.
Additionally Reach Wood Meadow has been mown and the arisings raked-off, as per the management plan.

6.8 A to B1102 Group
As requested the PC has informed the A-B1102 group of the condition of the bus stops & that there is no electricity is available at either bus stop. Having made changes to the bus routes, A-B1102 will start working with GCP to improve bus stops to make them more attractive for users and provide live information (where possible). A-B1102 are aware that bus stop maintenance is a PC responsibility and so funding is being sought for this work as part of the project.
The PC previously agreed to contribute £200 to the A-B1102 group but no bank account was set up, & this money was never paid by Reach PC.
The Group will be asking for this money as it has been operating on loans made by various committee members and this needs to be rectified, the PC again approved this payment & thanked Andrew Trump & the A-B1102 group for their work.
The car parking at Cambridge North Station is gradually being reduced as office space is built. This is an area of concern as there is no means of getting to Cambridge North from this area by public transport & so this is an area the A-B1102 group is going to work on.

6.9 Nature Recovery Plan
Nothing to report.

6.10 Hythe Restoration Group
Councillor Acklam had met representatives of Anglian Water (AW) at the Hythe on 24 October to agree maintenance works on land belonging to AW. This included pruning the large weeping willow at the tip of the Hythe to restore views & amenity & to prevent the tree's intrusion into neighbouring property. Councillor Acklam reiterated the PC's aspiration that AW would remove the redundant sewage works and return some of the land it holds to the village.

7. The Reach Bus service
The new bus routes were franchised on 2nd Oct. & will go live by the end of Nov. The 2 routes will be named T4 and T5.
The PC is very disappointed that the village will lose its direct service into Cambridge city centre.
T4 will run from Newmarket to South Cambridge, via Reach, Bottisham & the Wilbrahams. It will go to Addenbrookes & then down Hills Road & back up Cherry Hinton Road & so will serve Long Road, Hills Road & the Oakes colleges.
T5 will be the fast route from Soham to Fordham & then direct along the B1102 into Drummer Street & will not come through Reach. To access Drummer Street & Cambridge City centre, Reach residents will need to change at Swaffham Prior.
The latest draft timetable has interconnection wait times at the Cage Hill shelter in Swaffham Prior as
Outbound (to Cambridge) – between 9 minutes and 14 minutes
Return (to Reach) – between 7 and 19 minutes
The wait times are minimised at peak times; however, long wait times are concerning. The A-B1102 group are aware of this concern.
A Stakeholder Group Meeting will take place on the 6th November, ***Councillor Quilter*** try to attend .

8. Maintenance of the byways
CCC highways had carried out maintenance work on straight drove, which is very much appreciated. However, the middle section which did not receive enough material is already starting to cut up.
This will be monitored and may need work over the winter. The PC may seek volunteers to assist with this if it becomes too bad.

9. Grenergy - Hightown Drove battery energy storage system development
As discussed at the beginning of the meeting the PC are very concerned about the increasing number of applications & approved schemes in our local area. There are currently approximately eight or nine separate proposals that affect the landscape of Burwell Fen & local area. Although these are all located outside of our parish they will have significant impact on the Weirs Drove substation & wider East Cambs area.
The PC agreed to write to Grenergy expressing concerns about its proposal, particularly public safety & environmental risks arising from battery fires & seeking clarification on mitigations.
The PC will continue to closely monitor the situation.

10. Payments

CR Contracting – Mowing contract	£421.00
S Bailey – Postage & Wreath	£25.25
S Bailey – Backdated Clerk salary pay increase	Confidential



Diary Dates and Bus Timetable

December	Event	Location	Time
Sunday 1	Christmas Tree Lights Switch-on	Village Green	5.00pm
Tuesday 3	Parish Council Meeting	Village Hall	7.30pm
Tuesday 10	Recycling Day (Brown/Green)		
Thursday 12	Senior's Christmas Lunch	Village Hall	12.30pm – 3.00pm
Tuesday 17	Recycling Day (Blue)		
Wednesday 18	Holy Communion	St Etheldreda's, Reach	10.30am
Monday 23	Christingle Service	St Etheldreda's, Reach	5.00pm
Tuesday 24	Recycling Day (Brown/Green)		
Tuesday 24	Carols around the Christmas Tree	Village Green	6.00pm to 7.00pm
Wednesday 25	Holy Communion	St Etheldreda's, Reach	8.30am

January	Event	Location	Time
Thursday 2	Recycling Day (Blue)		
Sunday 5	Holy Communion	St Etheldreda's, Reach	8.30am
Tuesday 7	Parish Council Meeting	Village Hall	7.30pm
Wednesday 8	Recycling Day (Brown/Green)		
Tuesday 14	Recycling Day (Blue)		
Wednesday 15	Holy Communion	St Etheldreda's, Reach	10.30am
Tuesday 21	Recycling Day (Brown/Green)		
Tuesday 28	Recycling Day (Blue)		

STEPHENSONS

Service No. 11 - Newmarket to and from Cambridge

Monday to Saturday only	NS	SO	NS	SO										
Newmarket, The Guineas Bus Station	--	--	700	700	820	920	1020	1120	1220	1320	1420	1520	1620	1745
Newmarket, Academy	--	--	703	703	823	923	1023	1123	1223	1323	1423	1523	1623	1748
Newmarket, Studland Park Centre	--	--	710	710	830	930	1030	1130	1230	1330	1430	1530	1630	1755
Burwell, Ness Road	639	649	721	721	841	941	1041	1141	1241	1341	1441	1541	1641	1806
Burwell, Hawthorn Way	641	651	723	723	843	943	1043	1143	1243	1343	1443	1543	1643	1808
Reach, Great Lane	653	703	--	--	855	--	1055	--	1255	--	1455	1555	1655	1820
Swaffham Prior, Cage Hill	658	708	737	737	900	957	1100	1157	1300	1357	1500	1600	1700	1825
Lode, Fassage Close	--	--	--	--	--	1004	--	1204	--	1404	--	--	--	--
Stow cum Quy, Station Road	708	718	751	747	910	1012	1110	1212	1310	1412	1510	1610	1710	1835
Fen Ditton, Cambridge Airport	718	728	804	757	920	1022	1120	1222	1320	1422	1520	1620	1720	1845
Cambridge, Drummer St Bus Station	732	742	816	811	934	1034	1134	1234	1334	1434	1534	1634	1734	1859

NS = Not Saturdays, SO = Saturdays Only

Cambridge, Drummer St Bus Station	650	750	850	950	1050	1150	1250	1350	1450	1550	1715	1815	1915
Fen Ditton, Cambridge Airport	702	802	902	1002	1102	1202	1302	1402	1502	1602	1727	1827	1927
Stow cum Quy, Station Road	712	812	912	1012	1112	1212	1312	1412	1512	1612	1737	1837	1937
Lode, Fassage Close	--	--	920	--	1120	--	1320	--	1520	--	1745	--	--
Swaffham Prior, Cage Hill	723	823	926	1023	1126	1223	1326	1423	1526	1623	1751	1848	1948
Reach, Great Lane	728	828	--	1028	--	1228	--	1428	--	1628	--	1853	1953
Burwell, Hawthorn Way	738	838	938	1038	1138	1238	1338	1438	1538	1638	1803	1903	2003
Newmarket, Studland Park Centre	752	852	952	1052	1152	1252	1352	1452	1552	1652	1817	1917	2017
Newmarket, Academy	759	859	959	1059	1159	1259	1359	1459	1559	1659	1824	1924	2024
Newmarket, The Guineas Bus Station	802	902	1002	1102	1202	1302	1402	1502	1602	1702	1827	1927	2027

Then and Now *(see facing cover page for pictures)*

This photo was obtained from a postcard and probably dates from the interwar years although for some reason it looks older. The railings, no longer present may have been a casualty of metal scarcity during the Second World War.

Chris Patterson

Contact Information

Parish Council – see "Know Your Parish Council"			
Village Hall			
	Chair	David Thomas	01638 742676
	Finance	Andrew Trump	01638 743335
	Bookings	Diana Greer	rvhcb25@gmail.com
	Secretary	Sue Elliott	01638 742268
Tents and Village Games Bookings		Claire Halpin-McDonald	01638 743330
Church			
	Vicar	Eleanor Williams	01638 741262
	Curate (Duty days Wed, Fri and Sun)	Reverend Paula Spalding	07545 868549
	Priest in Retirement	Rev David King	01638 742924
	Churchwarden	Dr Stephen Martin	01638 611235
Emergencies			
	Electricity (Eastern Electric)		0800 783 8838
	Police (Emergency) Police (Non-Emergency)		999 101
	Water (Anglian Water)		08457 145145
Doctors, Burwell			
	Contact Phone Numbers	01638 741234, out of hours dial 111	
	Surgery Hours	Mon to Friday, 8.30am to 6.00pm	
	Website (Surgery)	https://www.theburwellsurgery.co.uk/index.aspx	
	Website (Patient Participation Group)	https://www.theburwellsurgery.co.uk/patient-group	


ERECTED
TO THE MEMORY OF
THE MEN OF REACH
WHO DIED IN THE
GREAT WAR 1914-1919
R. I. P.


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In October I ran a fund-raising Art Event for Eastern region members of national charity, The Donkey Breed Society. Budding artists spent the day following step by step guidance to create a picture of their favourite donkey.

The morning session involved drawing with waterproof ink pens and the afternoon overlaying watercolour washes. A sociable shared lunch broke hours of concentration and time flew by.

By the end of this creative day delightful interpretations had been produced, paintings to be really proud of. All within the lovely light and spacious interior of Reach Village Hall.

Joss Goodchild