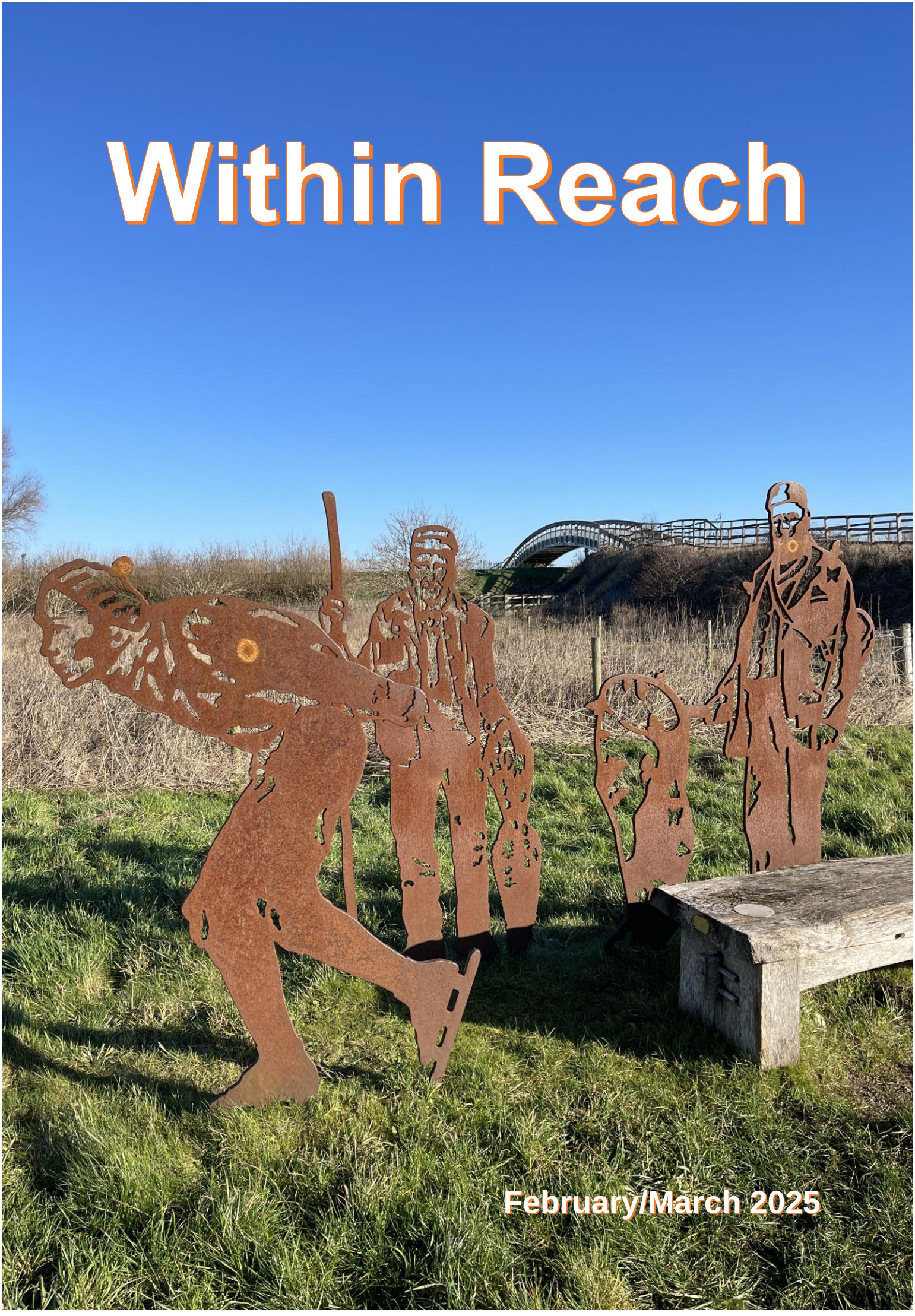
Within Reach



February/March 2025



Our customary Senior's Christmas Lunch Photo!

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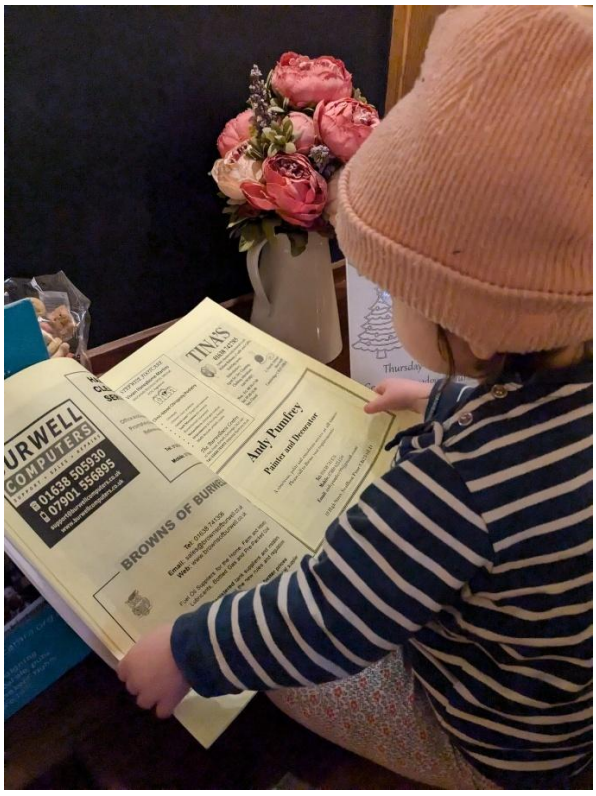
From the Editor



So now we're into winter, properly. As I write this, there is thunder and lightning, plus rain and hailstones and my weather app tells me there is plenty more to come. But when you look at what various parts of the world have had to contend with over recent times then yet again, we are lucky to live where we do.

Nick Acklam has been busy; as well as his regular Nature in Reach article on page 8 he has also identified a mystery regarding a stone – go to page 9 for further information. And Nick is keeping us informed on the progress of solar farms scheduled not too far away from us, see page 10.

As regards the magazine, this is the busy time of year when I ask our advertisers to continue advertising. Its going quite well but one or two have fallen by the wayside and need to be replaced, which I am working on.



And you can never be too young to start enjoying the benefits of the magazine. Here we see Lila checking out the adverts section, she's probably looking for a reliable internet provider . . . .

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
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24Acres	David Thomas
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Church	Eleanor Williams
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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	David Thomas
Village Update	Alex de Giorgio-Miller
Wicken Fen	Ajay Tegala
Wildlife	Nick Acklam

Village Update



Happy New Year!

I hope you have had a relaxing Christmas period – I know it can be a difficult time for some people but I hope you have found some joy. The children are desperately upset that they don't have the snow that their cousins 'up North' have had, but as a big fan of the summer months, this is plenty cold enough for me! Hopefully by the time this publishes I will have to wear less thermal layers!

Frozen bins

In some areas, freezing temperatures may cause green waste to stick to the inside of waste bins. Crew members will try their best to remove this, however, should material not come out, crews will leave a tag explaining that they have tried to empty the bin. The council are unable to return in these circumstances but will attempt to empty the bin again on the next scheduled collection.

Actions you can take to reduce the chances of your bins freezing include:

- putting the bin in a sunny place or close to a wall (or if possible, storing it in a garage or shed), and then putting it out on the morning of collection before 7am
- wrapping food waste in newspaper or brown paper packaging
- putting a piece of cardboard at the bottom of the bin (please only do this when a chilly period is forecast as normally cardboard should go in the blue lidded bin)

The council do not advise residents to lean into bins to loosen material as this may result in accidents occurring!

Helping rough sleepers during severe weather

If you know someone who will be facing sleeping on the streets during severe weather, call the District Council on 01353 665555 or (07710 978900 out of hours). The council and their partner agencies are committed to doing all they can to protect the health and wellbeing of rough sleepers during periods of severe weather. This includes providing emergency accommodation so that when the weather gets bad, there is a warm safe place available at night for anyone who would otherwise have to sleep out.

New District Council Website

The District Council have launched a new website www.eastcambs.gov.uk to improve the service they're able to provide to residents. New features include an advice hub for residents needing help with housing, benefits and cost of living support and a community directory detailing a wide range of charitable, sporting and locally based organisations.

You can also use the website to search for updates on their emerging Local Plan and information about waste collection services.

The website also contains information on Council Tax, business rates and benefits and advice on how best to explore East Cambridgeshire and find out what's happening at the vibrant and historic Ely markets. You can also continue to self-serve to carry out regular actions, such as making safe and secure payments, report a missed bin or notify the council of a fly-tip.

Keep well and warm and happy new year to all!

Alex de Giorgio-Miller

Village Hall



The Village Hall continues to make good progress, with bookings up year on year. It is also progressing well with its application to the Cambridge Community Foundation for a much-needed grant to repair the roof of the building.

After a review by Thalia of our "expression of interest" application, **we have been formally asked to fill in a full application** – which is a big step forward.

Bottisham and Burwell Photographic Club

For our first meeting after the Christmas and New Year holidays, we were treated to a talk by Colin Westgate from West Mersea entitled 'Iceland in Winter'. Colin talked about the people and landscape of the country, having visited many times over the years. This was a digital presentation, his images were breathtaking and we were honoured that he agreed to give us this talk as he is no longer visiting clubs, all his talks will be via zoom.

The following week on 14 January was our first competitions of the year, a Panel Pics competition for panels of five images each on a chosen theme, and a Creative Board competition comprising of more than one print on a board on a chosen theme, specifically to show creative skills. Both competitions were won by husband and wife team, Debra and Jim Bennett, Debra for the Panel Pics competition and Jim for the Creative Board. It was a very enjoyable evening judged by Jonathan Vaines from Bedford. Future meetings are listed below:

28 Jan: PDI League Competition No. 2

4 Feb: 'The Little Print Show' Print Talk by Jonathan Vaines, Bedford

11 Feb: Print League Competition No. 2

18 Feb: 'The Faroe Islands, Norway & the Lofoten Islands' by Matthew Clarke, Ipswich. This will be a digital image presentation by Zoom.

25 Feb: 'The Power of Sport' by Peter Milsom, Beyond Group. This will be a projected digital presentation.

4 Mar: PDI League Competition No. 3

11 Mar: Portrait Workshop led by John Wilderspin.

18 Mar: 'Creative Composites' by Glenys Garnett. This will be a digital image presentation by Zoom.

25 Mar: Print League Competition No. 3

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.

A copy of our programme for the rest of our season can be obtained from our Secretary, Debra Bennett, at secretary.bandbpc@gmail.com.

Daphne Hanson DPAGB HonPAGB
Chairman

Reach Riders



Reach riders continue to have a strong membership and use of the arena has been high during the summer and autumn.

A festive ride was organised on the 29th December. This was very well supported with 19 riders enjoying a ride around Swaffham Prior Fen. Thank you to the committee for the sausage rolls, mince pies, sherry and other refreshments.

We are planning an Easter ride, with an Easter Egg hunt for the children, so everybody welcome! You don't need to be a member. We may need volunteers to help hide the eggs and hold ponies for the little ones while they hunt ! Something to look forward to

The committee will be planning events for the year ahead very soon, so if there is anything you would like to see or be part of, please do let us know.

More pictures from our festive ride are on the back cover of this issue.

Happy New Year!

from Sue, Liz, Helen, Sadie and Claire

Party Leader and our Member of Parliament visit Burwell Print

The media turned up in their droves when both Liberal Democrat Leader, Sir Ed Davey and Charlotte Cane, MP for Ely and East Cambs, paid a visit to local charity Burwell Print Centre on 10th January.



The planned visit had been organised through Charlotte's London office liaising with the Managers at the Print Centre just before the Christmas break.

Eager to learn more about how Burwell Print – which is a Social Training Enterprise – delivers services to adults with learning difficulties as well as producing a wide range of printed items and crafts, Ed and Charlotte spent around 90 minutes at the charity's premises just off The Causeway in Burwell.

Charlotte has lived in Cambridgeshire for over 30 years and assumed the position as MP for Ely and East Cambs following last years' General Election in July and lives locally in Reach. She said: *'It's a great opportunity to have Ed here and show him a bit more of the constituency – he has been to the constituency before but generally to Ely – so it's to show him some of the other areas and also to come to a Social Enterprise like Burwell Print and see what sort of things we do and the way in which the community works together.'*

'There are a number of other Social Training Enterprises around this area and they are incredibly important and deliver a really valuable service. For example, this Print Centre is able to print the village magazines for the local villages, so everyone knows what's going on in their local area.'

Both Sir Ed and Charlotte were given a tour of the Print Centre by two of the 'Printers', Adrian and Dan – who were also part of the welcoming committee and showed the guests the vast range of work carried out each day by the charity.

Following the guided tour, both Ed and Charlotte donned a Burwell Print branded apron and joined in with a clay craft activity, which is another creative element of the charity's work – producing decorative glazed clay items and jewellery which are sold in their shop Hidden Treasures, on The Causeway.



The visit concluded with Sir Ed and Charlotte being interviewed, filmed and photographed by the *BBC*, *ITV*, *PA News*, national and local press and *Greatest Hits Radio* to mention a few of the media who turned out to support the visit. Ed later commented on 'X' (@EdwardJDavey) *'Spent today admiring the incredible work of Burwell Print Centre …This fantastic organisation is providing adults with additional needs the chance to gain skills, confidence and opportunities. Loved every minute of it.'* (And interviews made the news that day too!)

Of the visit, John Smith, Chair of Trustees said: 'We were delighted that the superb work Burwell Print delivers through their dedicated team, led by our three Managers – Sarah, Jane and Jess – was able to be highlighted.' He continued, 'And watching our "Printers" proudly explaining to our guests how we produce our work, as well as stating why Burwell Print was such an important part of their lives highlighted the importance of this Social Training Enterprise.'

Mary Hammond, MCIPR, NUJ

Vice Chair, Burwell Print

Mobile Library

The mobile library 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

Rosanna's Ramblings



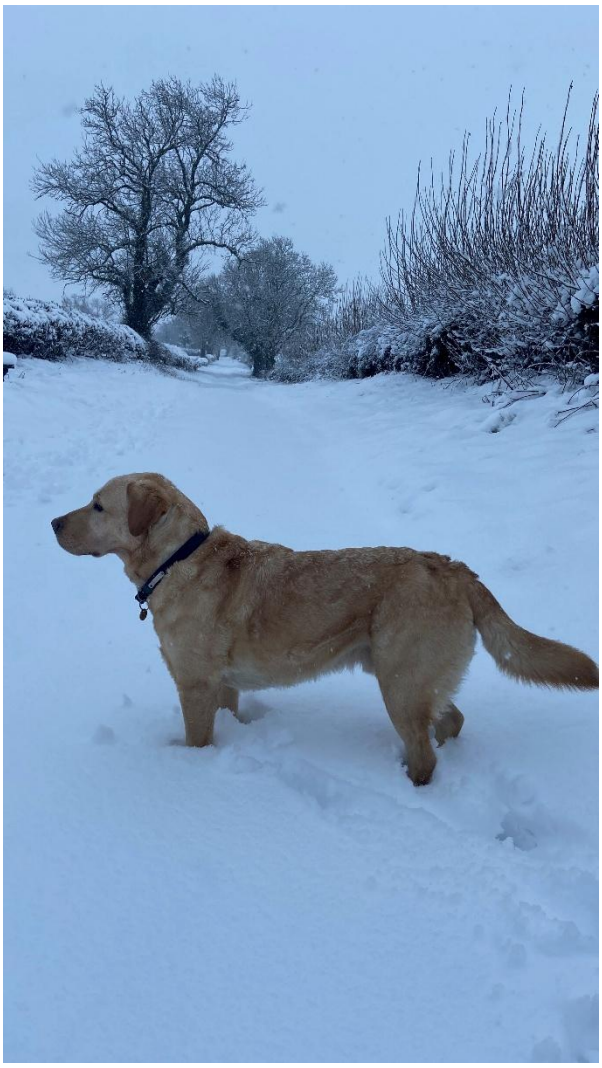
I'm always hugely relieved once it gets to January, not being a lover of the enforced jollity with which society apparently demands one engages on New Year's Eve. I like the feeling of starting afresh, though I normally steer well clear of making resolutions which will fail and leave me feeling like a failure for failing.

So, to my surprise, by the time I had finished my video chat on New Year's Day with my sister who lives in France, I found I had made a resolution to join her in a plan to walk 2025 kilometres in 2025. It felt like a suitably long-term goal which would allow for daily, weekly and monthly variations depending on circumstances. The total when averaged out didn't seem absurdly ambitious (it's about 39 kilometres/week, or 5.5 kilometres/day – which with the Pacer app on my phone is a do-able 7000-8000 steps).

In the same way as when, back in 2015, I resolved to walk every day for a year and post about it on Facebook, I announced I would do a weekly update on Facebook this time with one photograph to illustrate a moment in that walking week. It's good to feel accountable to someone, to one's 'public' as it were! And in this way, I've made myself account to my sister, my FB friends, and most importantly to myself. It's already reaped some rewards, that accountability, in that I've found myself taking advantage of small gaps between patients at work to take a brisk walk around the block when otherwise I might have read a few pages of a book or knitted a few more rows of my latest yarn project. I've challenged the Winter Couch Potato persona to morph into Winter Wrap Up Warm and Walk persona. She feels a lot more energised as a result. Good old endorphins, they never fail to gee one up!

Now, it being winter, we Reach residents all know that it's the slimy season out there on the droves and paths. I think I must have been doing this column for too long, this is my 57th Ramblings and that means more than nine years, so at least eight winters in which to mutter darkly about mud and off-roaders. I'm trying not to repeat myself, even if nothing has been done about them (grr). So, in order to get my steps in, I'm sometimes opting to walk Milo out of the village onto the bumpy fen road rather than going mud-skating and rut-skiing. He doesn't care, even on an extending lead he manages to find unsuitable rotting things to wolf down and unspeakable stinky things to roll in. What's not to love?

But a couple of weeks ago, we were fortunate enough to be Up North during the weekend the snow came. We had managed to get across from Cumbria to friends in North Yorkshire before the snowfall began, though we did have to contend with night-time freezing fog, which was unpleasant, to say the least. The next morning, we woke up to a Christmas-card-perfect "winter wonderland" – sorry for the cliché but it truly was. Six or seven inches of snow and still it was falling.



We weren't due to be heading back down south until the next day, so there was no stress. Our host and his cockerpoo were still asleep, so Charles, Milo and I ventured out into a world that the dog found at first disconcerting, then almost immediately – remembering he was a Labrador and would obviously love this strange cold stuff – crazily entrancing. Charles regretted not having packed his skis. I did not regret not having packed my non-existent skis. We simply went on an utterly marvellous walk, on pristine deep snow on perfect green lanes. It was cold, silent in that unmistakeable way that snow brings. It was both dull with cloud and bright with light. It was utterly joyous and we shared this delight with the occasional other early dog walkers we met.

There must have been thousands upon thousands of people around that Sunday morning, wherever the snow was falling, who didn't just share their joy and wonder verbally, but whose faces were composed into that archetypal expression of open-mouthed delight, an expression of both excitement and calm. Something was set to right on that walk, something temporarily washed clean and new. And even though we knew the snow still lay on top of mud and grime and grimness in our beautiful but ugly world, for a bit the new year felt hopeful.

Of course, we had to return the next day and while I love living in Cambridgeshire, it would be a lie to say that driving southwards down the A1 is anything other than a dreary chore at best. But on that occasion it was at least interesting because of the extraordinarily sharp delineation of Snow and No Snow (around Doncaster, with the exception of the north-facing slopes of the Lincolnshire Wolds). And the traffic was unusually light for a Monday morning, southbound at least, presumably because of many people being snowed in further north. And there was the Reach mud to look forward to.



Well, that certainly fulfilled its promise. The weekend had apparently been appallingly wet in a wetting way, rather than a wonderland way, in Reach. The house held a sepulchral damp chill when we returned in the early afternoon and it was warmer to brave the mud than to stay indoors. I tried to keep the crystalline brightness in my heart and mind for a bit longer, helped along by Milo having completely forgotten about it and being engaged in that admirably doggy way of being happy in the moment. We're all encouraged to do that, but clearly dogs are more spiritually evolved than humans and can connect with their higher selves In The Now effortlessly. Being of a rather depressive and cynical nature myself, I both envy their obliviousness to the woes of the world and understand that it's an oblivion responsible human beings can't afford. But I enjoyed being pulled along behind Milo's joy at being "Home!!!"

And my walking total thus far (18 January as a write)? 80.2 kilometres. Not bad. Could do better.

Rosanna Moseley-Gore

Events Team

Following the successful tree lighting and the again excellent Village Advent Calendar (well done everyone who participated and to those who braved the weather to visit the windows) we had our Senior's Christmas Lunch.

The customary colour photograph can be seen on the inside front cover but below you can see what the table looked like just before the event.



For the first time we had a Christmas Tree to look at, courtesy of Matt and Thomasina beautifully decorated the table with village greenery and candles. As ever, it was a lovely event and thanks go to all of those who contributed their time and effort in making it so.



Our final Christmas Eve event, when we sing carols around the tree was very well attended and thanks go to Graham for compering it.

Nature in Reach



The National Trust's civil engineering on Tubney and Burwell Fens is close to completion. On Tubney Fen, sluices are being installed to control water levels. The clay bunds are already retaining winter rain and bird life has responded positively.

In early December, four herons were patrolling the flooded area along with pied wagtails and a cluster of herring and black headed gulls. In late January the National Trust is scheduled to dig a pond and re-profile the ditch on land it retains at the 24Acres to improve biodiversity. In terms of sightings:

From late November onwards we regularly see solitary redshank on Tubney Fen.

24 November: Tim and Dafila Clutton-Brock are walking in Wicken Fen the middle of Storm Bert. They spot six pairs of gadwall on the mere to the east of Harrison's Drove along with a shoveler, some lapwings and black headed and herring gulls. They also witness an amazing fen blow which turns the air around them hazy and leaves sky dark grey-brown near the horizon. On the Cam washes they see a family of Whooper swans with three cygnets. They also report the presence of a buzzard and a kestrel in their garden in recent days as well as the usual blackbirds, wrens, robins, blue and great tits and goldfinches.

28 November: at the bottom of their garden, Tim and Dafila hear whooper swans calling from the fen. That evening, they count 39 of the birds flying in to roost on the pools of Burwell Fen.

1 December: there are over 100 whooper swans gathered on the newly cultivated fen soil to the north of Tubney Fen. There is superficial irony in the swans' preference for land of intensive agriculture right next to the National Trust's efforts to improve biodiversity. The swans don't see it that way of course and will go where food is available. Thereafter, whooper swans are a regular and uplifting presence in this area. On 3 December, Claire Acklam saw two flights of 15 birds in total, cutting across Split Drove.

Kingfishers have been regularly spotted close to Reach Lode and the Catchwater. Tim Clutton-Brock spotted one close to the cycle bridge on 11 January and Jonathan Latchford expended a lot of effort attempting to get a clear photograph of a kingfisher perched at the foot of his garden. As his photograph shows, the bird was not especially co-operative!



11 December: Ron Greenhill spots a treecreeper foraging in the bark of one of the trees that line Great Drove on the way to Upware. The collective noun for treecreepers is a 'spiral', due to their habit of spiraling up a tree trunk in the hunt for insects.

22 December: I watch a buzzard fly from the field behind the Village Hall onto Burwell Fen. The bird labours as it is carrying carrion in its talons. This could well be a 'gift' from Ron's pheasant preparation work.

2 January: great tits have resumed calling in the scrub around the Hythe.

6 January: the winter weather encourages larger groupings of roe deer. There are seven in fields next to Little Fen Drove on this date and Bob Wood reports a temporary herd of 30 on fields next to Newnham Drove on Burwell Fen.

8 January: at dawn, a tawny owl flies low across Great Lane and out onto the fen, barely clearing the hedgerow. I also see two buzzards perched some distance apart on the fen. The significant variation in plumage of these birds is noteworthy. One has a very pale body with very little patterning. The other is very dark greyish brown in entirety.

9 January: a clear night sky offers excellent views of Venus and Saturn to the southwest of the village and Jupiter to the east.

11 January: Tim spots a fox on the lode bank at Pout Hall and two Egyptian geese in the air. The meres and pools of Tubney and Burwell Fens are now frozen as the cold spell extends to several days.

12 January: a pencil thin grass snake lies on the footpath by Straight Drove. It shows no signs of injury and has probably fallen victim to the freezing temperatures.

14 January: in daylight, a barn owl hunts at length over the arable field closest to the village on the east of the lode. A little further up the lode bank, a very dark dog fox casually walks away from Claire and the dogs.

Mid January: Tim and Dafila report fifty or more fieldfares feeding on the fallen apples in their orchard. Blackbirds, pigeons and moorhens are also feeding there during the cold weather. Lots of goldfinches, greenfinches, great tits and bluetits are coming to their bird feeders. Dafila comments that, before the freeze, a little egret regularly fishing in the branch of the Hythe by their garden.



Nick Acklam

The Mystery of the Stone

In late 2024 the Conservation Officer at East Cambridgeshire District Council contacted the Parish Council. He was trying to trace the market cross recorded on Fair Green in the National Heritage List for England (MARKET CROSS, Reach - 1126361 | Historic England) but which he couldn't recall ever seeing. He asked if we could shed any light on its fate.



We cast round in the village for comments and ideas. Nobody could remember a standing market cross or even the vestige of one in the village.

We were unable to find any reference to a market cross in Reach in historic records. However, Steve Boreham and I recalled seeing a large lump of dressed masonry hidden in the undergrowth where the Devil's Dyke meets Fair Green. We had spotted it when doing the annual PC tree survey. We went back and dug it out.

It is a stone base of Jurassic limestone, possibly Barnack stone, of approximate dimensions 600mm x 600mm x 450mm. It has been roughly dressed and contains a lead lined socket within which sits a stone insert. There is also evidence of a recess for a plaque on one of its sides. Photos are attached.

The stone is very similar to the description in the Historic England List although we can find no evidence that it was ever located at the point referenced.

Thanks to help from Chris Patterson, we have photographic evidence that the stone had sat in the garden of White Roses from at least the mid 1950s. Tim and Dafila Clutton-Brock confirm that it was donated to those building the village sign in the mid 1980s. It was evidently not used and we believe it was then parked at its current location. The stone was underlain by late 20th century rubbish which supports this timeline.

ECDC's Conservation Officer rather lost interest when we confirmed that there was no market cross in the village and asked us to report the stone base to the Archaeology Team at Cambridgeshire County Council which we have done. The Archaeology Team's response is awaited.

Those in the village who have so far expressed a view are sceptical that the stone formed the base for a market cross. Nonetheless, it is clearly of some archaeological significance. Its past link to White Roses which has a strong association with the church in the village and contains stone from the former chapel of St John in its porch has led to the suggestion that might be the font base from the chapel. There are other possible explanations too. Charles Moseley has suggested that it might be the base of a preaching cross. We would welcome readers' views. Furthermore, we would also be interested in hearing about pieces of carved or dressed stone that might be lying in villagers' gardens. I have a lump of masonry and Tim and Dafila have a collection. We suspect there is more in the village and examination of them all might just clarify things.

One outstanding question is how Historic England ever came to attribute to Reach a market cross that never appears to have existed. The date of the listing, its location on Fair Green close to the village sign and the description of stone base suggests that somebody from Historic England visited Reach in the mid 1980s and drew some hurried and false conclusions.

Nick Acklam

acklam@reach-village.co.uk

Energy Developments Near To Reach

This article is an update of a post on the village Face Book page in December 2024

In late 2024 most residents of the village received, through the post, a consultation newsletter from Kingsway Solar. Kingsway Solar is proposing to build a very large solar farm, comparable to the now approved Sunnica scheme, some miles to the south of Reach and to feed the electricity it would generate into the national grid at Burwell.

The proposed electricity feed would be by overhead cable and pylon (OHL) and whilst the proposed route has yet to be finalised, areas of our parish, including much of the 24Acres, are included in what Kingsway has called 'connection corridors'. The corridors are shaded in grey on the map (see facing page). Kingsway cannot yet say where, within the connection corridors, the OHL should run. At this stage, the most obvious route (for a developer at least) would be parallel to the existing OHL that crosses Burwell Road close to Weirs Drove. It seems likely that the route would be on the Reach side of the existing OHL, 75 metres or so closer to the village.

Part of the reason that Kingsway Solar is unable to be more precise about the route for its proposed OHL is that it has not been given a location to connect to the national grid to feed the electricity from its proposed solar farm.

National Grid has indicated that a new substation, termed Burwell South, would be needed to accommodate the electricity feed and that it would be built close to the existing substation at Weirs Drove. National Grid has not yet said exactly where or how big it would be. However, it seems probable that it will be to the south west of the existing substation and would add significantly to the footprint of transformers and switchgear. If so, its visual impact will be very obvious from, for example, the 24Acres or along the Burwell Road.

Kingsway's current proposal is laid out here: https://kingswaysolarfarm.co.uk/proposals/

A growing number of villagers have expressed concern to the Parish Council about the visual impact of this proposed development on our neighbourhood. The PC shares this concern and has written to Kingsway Solar and to the Planning Inspectorate (which will advise Government on whether the proposal should go ahead) expressing reservations. The proposal is at an early (and we think under-developed) stage and the PC's next steps will be determined by the responses to our letters and crucially, sentiment in the village. We need to know how other residents of Reach feel about this proposal.

Some villagers have also voiced concern about another energy scheme close to the village - a battery storage complex on land adjacent to Reach 24Acres and less than 700 metres from homes in the village (numbered 7 on the map). Again, the PC has written to Grenergy, the developer, expressing concerns about the environmental and public health risks of locating battery storage at this site. We have asked Grenergy to present to a public meeting in the village. At present, they are unwilling to do so. Again, the PC would welcome views on this specific proposal.

These proposals should not be viewed in isolation. As the map shows, they form two of eleven energy developments on Burwell Fen. Some are already constructed, others are being built or are in the planning system. Most are not in the parish of Reach but are or will become, very visible from homes and recreational areas of the village. We also understand that other such developments are under consideration and there is no economic reason why similar projects could not be proposed in our parish.

It is the broader picture of incremental development changing the landscape to the east and now possibly, the south of the village that gives the PC greatest concern. The map lays out the scale of potential change.

The PC supports the principle of de-carbonising the country's energy generation and accepts that Burwell Fen will see some development associated with the transformation of the UK's energy business. However, our view is that the combined impact of these proposals is too much. The PC is also concerned about the absence of detailed guidance to planning authorities and developers on the density and layout of such schemes or on how to gauge cumulative impact. We have written to the Director of Planning at ECDC asking that measures are developed including in the draft Local Plan to ensure that the distinctiveness and recreational value of Burwell and other fenland surrounding the village are recognised and protected.

Further steps by the PC depend on the community's collective view of these developments. We would like to know how you feel about these changes to our surroundings.

Subject to your responses, we may hold a public discussion of energy developments that affect the village in the near future.

Let us know what you think asap, ideally to my email.

Nick Acklam

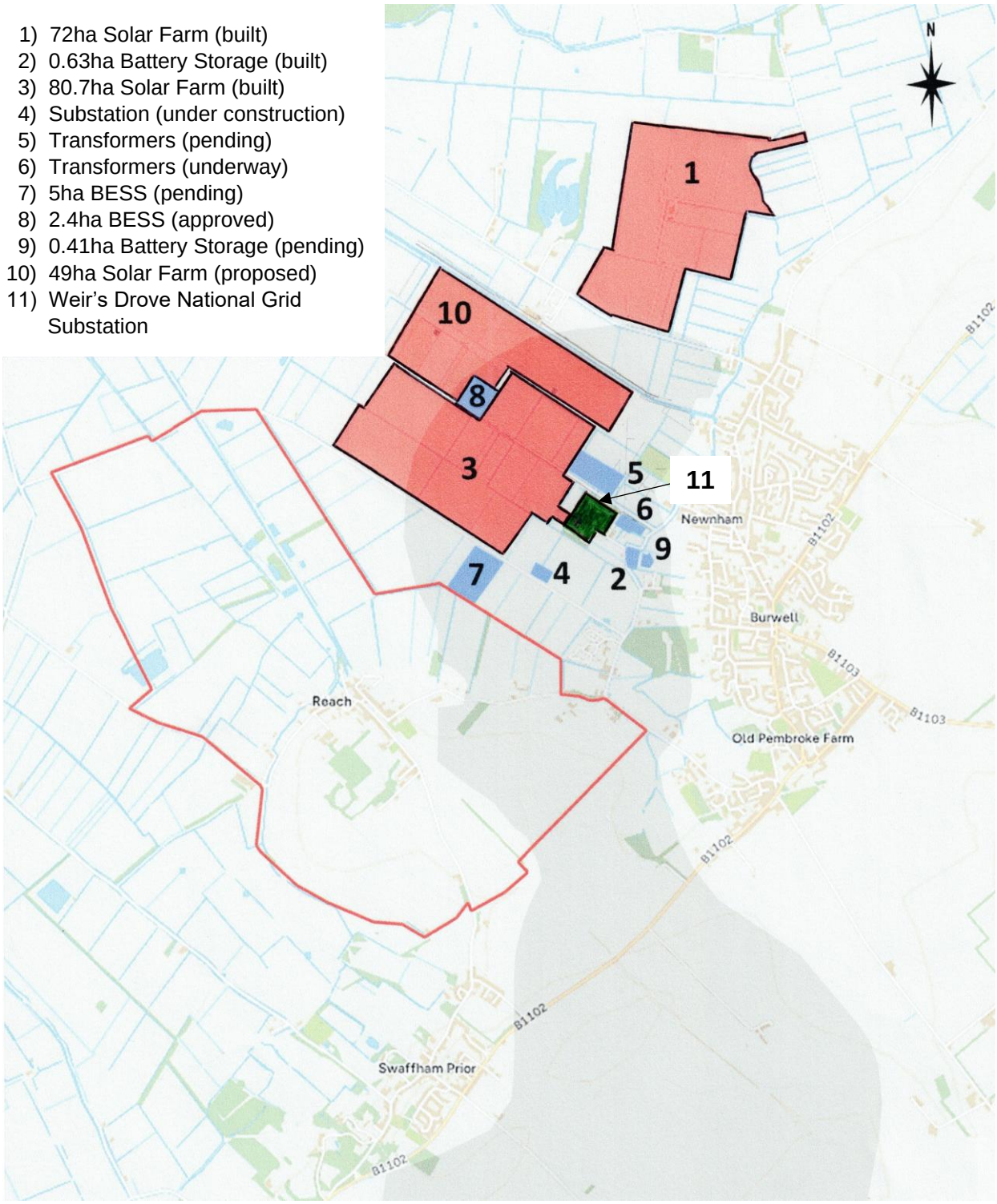
acklam@reach-village.co.uk

07379 411993

Ed: To see the map in full colour, click on the link on the Parish Council page of the village website: https://www.reach-village.co.uk/parish_council.html

Map of Energy Developments Near To Reach

1) 72ha Solar Farm (built)
2) 0.63ha Battery Storage (built)
3) 80.7ha Solar Farm (built)
4) Substation (under construction)
5) Transformers (pending)
6) Transformers (underway)
7) 5ha BESS (pending)
8) 2.4ha BESS (approved)
9) 0.41ha Battery Storage (pending)
10) 49ha Solar Farm (proposed)
11) Weir's Drove National Grid Substation



Wicken Fen



Courtesy of National Trust - Mike Selby

February, while still very much winter, is a time of optimism, as daylight hours gradually increase and we hear the first drumming great spotted woodpeckers of the year on the Fen; a sign that spring is not far away. So why not wrap up and head out on a nature walk, keeping an ear out for birdsong and an eye out for early emerging plants. Then treat yourself to something tasty at the Docky Hut café, where – like in our visitor centre – a warm welcome awaits!

For dog owners, the National Trust's pooch passport scheme runs until the end of February, so visit as many participating places as you can to collect your passport stamps.

February, of course, also means Half Term and we have lots of family activities available here at Wicken. On 17th February, let your imagination run wild in our brand new 'Beetle antics – stop frame animation workshop' for families to enjoy together. Free make your own garden bird feeder sessions will be running in our visitor centre on 18th and 21st February for you to drop into. And, on 20th February, delve into the fascinating world of owl pellets to discover what's on the menu for the owls of Wicken Fen.

We also have a seasonal Photofinders Trail on the Boardwalk, running from 15th February to 2nd March. Test your powers of observation with this new family trail. At the end, you can tally up your points and discover if you are as keen-eyed as a kestrel!

Find out more on our website
www.nationaltrust.org.uk/wicken-fen

Ajay Tegala

Anglesey Abbey



Courtesy of National Trust – Justin Minns

Snowdrop season at Anglesey Abbey

Anglesey Abbey is famous for its snowdrop collection and the gardens are home to over 500 different varieties of snowdrop now. Throughout February, you can see thousands of delicate snowdrops along the woodland paths, Jubilee Avenue and in among the daffodils and hellebores in the Winter Garden.

You can also join an exclusive **Specialist Collection snowdrop tour** – a chance to see some of the snowdrops that are not usually visible to the public and hear about the intriguing stories behind how there came to be such a vast collection at Anglesey Abbey. Head to our website for more information and to plan your visit.

If you're visiting us in **February half-term**, you can pick up a nature spotter-sheet, enjoy an adventure in the Woodland Play Area, build a den and walk among the beautiful snowdrops throughout the grounds. The House at Anglesey Abbey will also be open in February – you can enjoy exploring the ground floor from 11am to 3.30pm daily or join a tour to see the upstairs of the house and some conservation in action on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. Looking for even more fun?

We are excited to host Wild in Art's Find the Flock trail at Anglesey Abbey from 1 March to 27 April 2025. Pick up a trail map and embaa-rk on a journey around the gardens at Anglesey Abbey in search of twelve ewe-niquely designed **Shaun the Sheep** sculptures.
Each super-sized sculpture, standing tall at 160cm, will be displayed at iconic locations around the estate and each one has been painted with bright colours and funky, bold patterns. Find the Flock is put on in collaboration with Wild in Art and Aardman animations and, just like the recent Bear Hunt trail, is set to delight both children and adults alike.

www.nationaltrust.org.uk/anglesey-abbey

Issy Vetoshkina
Senior Communications and Marketing Officer

Burwell Surgery
Patient Participation Group

Free Health Checks

Happy New Year! Those of us who finished the last of the festive treats with a resolution to lead a healthier lifestyle in 2025 might be interested to know about the free NHS Health Check service.

Who is eligible for a free Health Check?

The Health Check is for people who are aged 40 to 74 and it is targeted at those of us who do not already have a pre-existing condition (these patients are already being monitored on a regular basis).

Why have a Health Check?

By having a Health Check, we can lower our risk of getting conditions that affect the heart and blood vessels, such as heart disease, stroke and kidney disease. Many of the warning signs for these conditions, such as high blood pressure and high cholesterol, do not have symptoms.

The Health Check helps us to find out if we are at risk of getting these conditions so we can take action to improve our health. This could include making lifestyle changes or taking medicines.

The risk factors assessed during the health check are often shared by other conditions, including type 2 diabetes, preventable cancers and respiratory illness. A Health Check helps us to reduce the chance of getting these conditions too. Dementia and heart disease also share common risk factors.

What is checked and how long does it take?

The Health Check takes about 20 to 30 minutes and usually includes: measuring your height and weight; measuring your waist; a blood pressure test; a cholesterol test; and possibly a blood sugar level test, which is usually a finger-prick blood test. You may be asked to have a blood test at or before the Health Check. You'll also be asked some questions about your health, age and ethnicity, since these could all have a bearing on risk.

When do I get my results?

You'll usually be told your NHS Health Check results during the appointment. You'll be given your cardiovascular risk score of developing a heart or circulation problem, such as heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes or kidney disease, over the next 10 years. Those receiving the Health Check are then invited back for another Health Check every 5 years.

How do I get my free Health Check?

If you think you are eligible for a Health Check, but have not already been invited, contact the Surgery via AskMyGP (or by phone if that is not an option) to get booked in. The Surgery does a number of Health Checks directly, but when it is struggling for capacity it will refer you to Healthy You which undertakes free Health Checks across the county.

You can also self-refer to Healthy You at:
https://healthyyou.org.uk/services/health-checks/.

Next PPG meeting – all welcome – why not join us online if you can't make it in person!

The next meeting of the PPG is at 6.30pm on Tuesday 15th April 2025 at Burwell Day Centre – all welcome. If you would like to attend the PPG for the first time, or if you can't attend in person but can join via Microsoft Teams, then please contact:
cpicb.burwellsurgery.admin@nhs.net

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 – I am finding that climbing my stairs at home is becoming more difficult and I am thinking about getting a stair lift but know nothing about them. How can I get advice about this and possibly other helpful equipment for my home?

Answer – Stair lifts, other equipment and adaptations are changes you can make to your home to make it safer and easier to move around and do everyday tasks.
Your local council offers a service that assesses your home and recommends changes to help, stair lifts are included. It is called Home Assessment, it is free and carried out by an Occupational Therapist, usually taking about an hour.

You can call your local Council to arrange, or you can apply online by going to: NHS UK – home adaptions – social care and support guidance.

Football Report



It was a fantastic December and January for Bottisham U10 girls football team. With wins over Isleham & Godmanchester home and away and an 8 nil victory over Cottenham the girls are making great progress expecting to win every game they play now!

Pictured is Lacey Bridgeman and Elodie Brown, both from Reach, with their Player of the Match Awards.

In addition to the U10 Bottisham team the Swaffham Prior and Swaffham Bulbeck Primary schools will be entering two Swaffham United Teams into a football tournament in Fulbourn on 30th January. The two teams are made up of 9- and 10-year-old boys and girls from both Primary schools. Hopefully when I next write we will have a good tournament report.



Elodie Brown



Lacey Bridgeman

Nathan Bridgeman

Charity Star Shine Night Walk 2025 in Cambridge and Wisbech!

Arthur Rank Hospice Charity's Star Shine Night Walk will be back with two events this year. Their flagship Cambridge event will take place on Saturday 21 June at 7pm. Choose between a 10- or 5-mile route and get those steps in as you watch the sun set on the longest day of the year.

Or, for the first time ever, you can join the Wisbech Star Shine which is taking place on Saturday 17 May at 7pm. This 6km route starts and ends in the beautiful grounds of Elgood's Brewery and is sure to be a talking point of the town!

Whichever walk you choose and whichever distance you go, you'll be helping to raise much-needed funds for hospice care. For more information, visit arhc.org.uk/ssnw

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Food Focus

Brownies 3 ways



Who doesn't love a brownie? One daughter has just discovered how easy they are to make and how delicious they can be as an alternative to cake or warmed with vanilla ice cream for pudding. She asked – "surely we could just make a brownie cake?"

I can remember thinking the same thing when I first discovered the simplicity of them – no need for all that beating of butter and sugar together or wondering if you've whisked in enough air for the wretched thing to rise! For some strange reason I never have attempted to make one, but perhaps it should go on the to-do list for 2025.

I'm enclosing 3 brownie recipes. The first is Nigella's and the way I discovered brownies myself. It's delectable, ridiculously indulgent, so fattening and expensive to make, but reliable. I think the walnuts add a special something to the bite of the brownie and are essential, but maybe they are vital because they cut through the rich ingredients too. I also made some delicious flour-free brownies not long ago, to cut down on the carbohydrate content of them. They use almond flour instead which keeps them moist and works really well. There are plenty of good recipes on line.

Ingredients: Makes: maximum of 48

375 grams soft unsalted butter
375 grams best-quality dark chocolate
6 large eggs
1 tablespoon vanilla extract
500 grams caster sugar
225 grams plain flour
1 teaspoon salt
300 grams chopped walnuts

Method:

You will need a tin measuring approximately 33 x 23 x 5½cm / 13 x 9 x 2¼ inches

Preheat the oven to 180°C/160°C Fan/350°F/gas mark 4. Line your brownie pan — I think it's worth lining the sides as well as the base — with foil, parchment or Bake-O-Glide.

Melt the butter and chocolate together in a large heavy-based pan. In a bowl or large wide-mouthed measuring jug, beat the eggs with the sugar and vanilla. Measure the flour into another bowl and add the salt.

When the chocolate mixture has melted, let it cool a bit before beating in the eggs and sugar, then the nuts and flour. Beat to combine smoothly and then scrape out of the saucepan into the lined pan.

Bake for about 25 minutes. When it's ready, the top should be dried to a paler brown speckle, but the middle still dark and dense and gooey. And even with such a big batch you do need to keep alert, keep checking: the difference between gungy brownies and dry brownies is only a few minutes.

Hannah is doing D of E and cooking as her skill element. She decided to find her own brownie recipe as she didn't want to put nuts in; I have to admit I was cynical. There really are such things as bad brownies and what a waste of calories they are. I seriously doubted anyone's ability to create a recipe as good as Nigella's – luckily for all of us I was proven wrong. This recipe from the fairly recently renamed "good food" website (previously BBC Good Food I think) was very good and the in-village assessor Thomasina, whole heartedly agreed!

Ingredients:

185g unsalted butter
185g best dark chocolate
85g plain flour
40g cocoa powder
50g white chocolate (she substituted for what we had in the cupboard)
50g milk chocolate
3 large eggs
275g golden caster sugar

Method:

Step 1 Cut 185g unsalted butter into small cubes and tip into a medium bowl. Break 185g dark chocolate into small pieces and drop into the bowl.

Step 2 Fill a small saucepan about a quarter full with hot water, then sit the bowl on top so it rests on the rim of the pan, not touching the water. Put over a low heat until the butter and chocolate have melted, stirring occasionally to mix them.

Step 3 Remove the bowl from the pan. Alternatively, cover the bowl loosely with cling film and put in the microwave for 2 minutes on High. Leave the melted mixture to cool to room temperature.

Step 4 While you wait for the chocolate to cool, position a shelf in the middle of your oven and turn the oven on to 180C/160C fan/gas 4.

Step 5 Using a shallow 20cm square tin, cut out a square of kitchen foil (or non-stick baking parchment) to line the base. Tip 85g plain flour and 40g cocoa powder into a sieve held over a medium bowl. Tap and shake the sieve so they run through together and you get rid of any lumps.

Step 6 Chop 50g white chocolate and 50g milk chocolate into chunks on a board.

Step 7 Break 3 large eggs into a large bowl and tip in 275g golden caster sugar. With an electric mixer on maximum speed, whisk the eggs and sugar. They will look thick and creamy, like a milk shake. This can take 3-8 minutes depending on how powerful your mixer is. You'll know it's ready when the mixture becomes really pale and about double its original volume. Another check is to turn off the mixer, lift out the beaters and wiggle them from side to side. If the mixture that runs off the beaters leaves a trail on the surface of the mixture in the bowl for a second or two, you're there.

Step 8 Pour the cooled chocolate mixture over the eggy mousse, then gently fold together with a rubber spatula. Plunge the spatula in at one side, take it underneath and bring it up the opposite side and in again at the middle. Continue going under and over in a figure of eight, moving the bowl round after each folding so you can get at it from all sides, until the two mixtures are one and the colour is a mottled dark brown. The idea is to marry them without knocking out the air, so be as gentle and slow as you like.

Step 9 Hold the sieve over the bowl of eggy chocolate mixture and resift the cocoa and flour mixture, shaking the sieve from side to side, to cover the top evenly.

Step 10 Gently fold in this powder using the same figure of eight action as before. The mixture will look dry and dusty at first and a bit unpromising, but if you keep going very gently and patiently, it will end up looking gungy and fudgy. Stop just before you feel you should, as you don't want to overdo this mixing.

Step 11 Stir in the white and milk chocolate chunks until they're dotted throughout.

Step 12 Pour the mixture into the prepared tin, scraping every bit out of the bowl with the spatula. Gently ease the mixture into the corners of the tin and paddle the spatula from side to side across the top to level it.

Step 13 Put in the oven and set your timer for 25 mins. When the buzzer goes, open the oven, pull the shelf out a bit and gently shake the tin. If the brownie wobbles in the middle, it's not quite done, so slide it back in and bake for another 5 minutes until the top has a shiny, papery crust and the sides are just beginning to come away from the tin. Take out of the oven.

Step 14 Leave the whole thing in the tin until completely cold, then, if you're using the brownie tin, lift up the protruding rim slightly and slide the uncut brownie out on its base. If you're using a normal tin, lift out the brownie with the foil (or parchment). Cut into quarters, then cut each quarter into four squares and finally into triangles.

Step 15 They'll keep in an airtight container for a good two weeks and in the freezer for up to a month.



A friend of mine consistently makes these Jamie Oliver brownies – which are delicious with the sour cherries adding a different but equally good texture as the walnuts above. I also find these are a bit lighter weight and probably not quite so unhealthy!

Ingredients:

200g quality dark chocolate (70%)
250g unsalted butter
optional: 75g dried sour cherries
optional: 50g chopped nuts
80g quality cocoa powder
65g plain flour
1 teaspoon baking powder
360g caster sugar
4 large free-range eggs

Preheat the oven to 180°C/350°F/gas 4. Line a 24cm square baking tin with greaseproof paper.

Snap the chocolate into a large bowl, add the butter and place over a pan of simmering water until melted, stirring regularly. Stir through the cherries and nuts (if using).

Sift the cocoa powder and flour into a separate bowl, add the baking powder and sugar, then mix together.

Add the dry ingredients to the chocolate, cherry and nut mixture and stir together well. Beat the eggs, then mix in until you have a silky consistency.

Pour the brownie mix into the baking tin and place in the oven for around 25 minutes. You don't want to overcook them so, unlike cakes, you don't want a skewer to come out clean – the brownies should be slightly springy on the outside but still gooey in the middle.

Allow to cool in the tray, then carefully transfer to a large chopping board and cut into chunky squares. Delicious served with a dollop of crème fraîche or yoghurt mixed with some orange zest.

Catherine Gibson

Burwell Museum



Thank you to everyone who came to our Christmas Grotto event on the 1st December and helped make it such a success. We thoroughly enjoyed it and Santa has said he will come back again next year so please see the dates below and put them in your diary!

We are pleased to announce our main programme of events for the 2025 season (Easter Sunday being our opening day):

Easter Sunday – *20th April*

National Mills – *10th/11th May*

Made in the Fens – *21st June*

1940's Burwell – *13th July*

Classic Car Show – *17th August*

National Heritage – *14th September*

Halloween – *25th October*

Christmas Grotto – *6th/7th December*

You can enjoy free entry* to all of these events by buying a season ticket, the price of which is staying the same for 2025:

Single	**£20**
Joint	**£30**
Family	**£40** (2 adults and up to 4 children)

* cost of Easter Egg Hunt and Christmas Grotto is extra.

This year we are also offering **Lifetime Membership** at a cost of **£250**.

As a member, you will be supporting the work of the Museum, making sure that the history of life in the Fens, is there for future generations to enjoy.

The Museum will be having anther stall at the Farmers Market in April where all season tickets and Lifetime Memberships can be purchased in advance of our opening, along with some of our exclusive books and gifts.

Winter maintenance and new exhibit/refurbishment works at the Museum are going well, with the Volunteer Teams working really hard. We are also progressing with installing our Observatory which will be opening in 2025, kindly donated by the family of Barrie Bushell.

On Saturday 1st March, we will be holding another Volunteer Recruitment Day. We are specifically looking for people to join our Front of House Team.

We specifically need people to help with - welcoming our visitors on our open days, serving in the Tea Room, event organisation (help arrange and run an event in a small committee) and helping us bring our museum to life for our visitors. If you think this is for you, please either visit us on 1st March (further announcements on facebook nearer the time) or scan the QR code to go to our website and complete the volunteer application form.

We are looking forward to an exciting year at the Museum and we look forward to telling you more in the next edition of Within Reach.

Until then……

Burwell Museum Trustees

Letter from the Vicarage



It's February and love is all around, with Valentine's Day and all the hearts, flowers and chocolates. But love is for all year round, not just one day and it's wider and deeper than shop-bought Valentine's Day cards can describe. You do not see many Zimmer frames, wheelchairs or hearing aids on Valentine's Day cards, but for many the reality of love is that it a marathon, not a sprint, with many challenges along the way: 'For better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health.'

And love takes different forms – romantic love, perhaps short and sweet, but also the kind of love that is able to reach out to those who are not like us, who behave and speak differently, to welcome and to include. One of the most popular readings chosen for weddings is 1 Corinthians 13, with the beautiful description of love: 'Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonour others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.' That's the kind of love I want to be able to live out, though I know I will fail.

But as the Church's year turns to Lent on March 5th and then Easter, we are reminded again of the love of Jesus Christ, the one who showed us the full extent of God's love and made it possible for us to know forgiveness, no matter who we are or what we have done. Perhaps this Lent could be a time for finding out more about how much God loves you.

As we come into wedding season and if you are planning to get married, but not yet sure about where to go get married, why not think about a church wedding at St Etheldreda's in Reach or St Mary's in Burwell? For many couples it represents a link to family and to tradition and the 'right place' to celebrate with friends and family, as you make your vows before God. The Church of England website has an excellent section, 'Your Church Wedding' with a lot of useful information, including the practicalities of arranging a church wedding.

Alongside our regular activities we have some special events coming up: on 30th March at 10.00am is our Mothering Sunday Thanksgiving Service at St Mary's, where posies of flowers will be given out. Please get in touch if you would like more information about these or any of our events or services, including weddings, christenings or a baby thanksgiving service for the gift of a child, or to find out more about the Christian faith, or just if you'd like a chat. All are welcome.



Eleanor Williams Vicar of Burwell with Reach
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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



I'm not fond of January, especially when it is cold and gloomy, or even worse: gloomy, mild(er) and wet.

I prefer crisp, bright days which are rarer but often very cold, then I wrap myself up in several layers of clothing plus the all-important thick, winter gardening gloves, before venturing out to do some pruning or tidying in the garden.

There are several things to do at this time of year, but Richard and I pace ourselves – it's best not to overdo things in the cold thanks to stiffening joints and muscles. In any case, with all the layers of clothing I'm not very flexible but Richard tolerates the cold better than I do. In spite of the cold, there are some plants that have been flowering throughout winter: the masses of yellow flowers of winter jasmine have brightened up the gloomier days and are starting to fade, but the daft "Choisya ternata" shrub which started flowering in November (instead of May), is still flowering now.



One of the mass of blooms of winter jasmine

One of my favourite gardening chores at this time of the year is planning what to grow in the vegetable patch and where. I check what seeds we still have and whether they are in date and I peruse the seed catalogues. Some seeds, such as tomatoes, seem to have a very long shelf life, provided they are kept somewhere cool and dry and in an airtight container. I have some tomato seeds which are well past their "sow by" date, but I sowed a few old "Oxheart" seeds last year and they still germinated and cropped well, so I'll be sowing them again this year. Other seeds, like parsnips, are only really useful in the year they're bought, even when they are within the sow by date, probably because they can be relatively slow to germinate. I do collect seeds from our homegrown aubergines, peppers and pumpkins - they don't always develop as expected because of cross pollination, but it is worth doing. I first grew vegetables as a child by collecting seed from shop-bought vegetables, I even grew a tomato plant on my bedroom windowsill in Manchester and I enjoyed eating the tomatoes.

Every year we try to grow something different, either a new variety of one of our usual vegetables, or something we don't normally grow. It was after experiments like these that aubergines, Padron peppers and butternut squash became part of our normal crop of vegetables. Other less successful experiments were okra, sweet potatoes and soya, largely because they are so dependent on hot and damp weather conditions.

Occasionally the shop-bought packet of seed isn't entirely what you'd expect. Sometimes there's a "rogue" seed of a different variety in the same pack, but there is no way of knowing just by looking at them. On one occasion I had a plant of stripey aubergines instead of the expected purple ones. Last year I sowed two different types of sweet peppers, one was a long "horn" variety and the other one was a variety of bell pepper. Each pack contained several seeds and all of them were sown, but it wasn't until we ate some extremely spicy ratatouille made with large slices of our home-grown peppers that I realised that some of the so-called "sweet" peppers were actually chillis. After a process of elimination, we realised that out of the ten "sweet" peppers that were sown, there were only two rogue chilli plants, one was a "horned" variety and the other one was a small bell-pepper variety. In other words, there was just one rogue chilli seed in each pack of sweet pepper seeds. Coincidence? I imagine whoever packed the seeds sniggered to their colleagues as they added the lone chilli seed to each pack labelled sweet peppers. Those chilli plants also happened to have the best yields!



Danuta Gibson

Know Your Parish Council

Your Parish Councillors are:

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

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 start at **7.30pm** and all Reach villagers are welcome to attend.

The Parish Council now has its own website which you can access at: https://reachparish.gov.uk/.

You can also get to it from the **Reach Village website** on the **Parish Council page**.

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

Know Your District Councillors

This report is contained within the Parish Council January Draft Minutes on page 25 of this issue.

Our MP's Report

As we settle into the new year, the last few months of 2024 brought both celebration and hard work, with a busy schedule in Westminster and across our constituency.

One recent highlight was visiting the Repair Café at Littleport Village Hall. This inspiring initiative brings people together to fix household items, share skills and reduce waste. It was heartening to see the dedication of volunteers who give their time and expertise to support others. Projects like this not only foster community spirit but also champion sustainability, reminding us of the practical ways we can care for our environment while connecting with one another.

Amid these uplifting moments, my work continues to focus on issues affecting our area. Rising employer National Insurance contributions have been a recurring theme in discussions with local businesses. I recently met GPs at Staploe Medical Centre to hear how these costs are straining surgeries and I welcomed East Cambridgeshire farmers to Parliament to discuss their impact on agriculture. Supporting those who provide healthcare and food is vital for our community's future.

Agriculture, the backbone of our local economy, has been a focus. Joining the 'Traditional Fenland Celery' harvest near Ely and visiting a sugar beet farm in Stetchworth underscored the dedication of our farmers. They face mounting challenges and I remain committed to advocating for the support they need to thrive.

Infrastructure is another priority. The Ely Area Capacity Enhancement scheme (the proposal to upgrade the railway to allow more trains to run through Ely) is crucial for our region's future, promising growth and improved connectivity. Its omission from the Autumn Budget was disappointing, but I've raised the issue directly with the Secretary of State for Transport and will continue to push for action.

In Parliament, I faced one of my most difficult decisions: how to vote on the Assisted Dying Bill. After listening to all sides and reflecting deeply, I chose to support it at its second reading. This decision was not taken lightly and I will continue to engage with constituents and experts as the bill progresses.

Closer to home, concerns about shoplifting have been prominent in conversations with shopworkers across East Cambridgeshire. I've urged the government to provide our overstretched police with the resources they need. Meanwhile, the ever-present flood risk in our region requires urgent, long-term planning, which I emphasised in a recent parliamentary debate.

It's been a pleasure meeting so many local residents. Opening The Edmund Trust's new respite service in Milton was a particularly meaningful moment and thanking our hardworking posties at the Royal Mail delivery office in Ely was another highlight.

Education is the foundation of a healthy democracy and my visits to Bottisham Village College and Robert Arkenstall Primary School in Haddenham offered an inspiring glimpse of the creativity and ambition shaping our future.

My team and I are here to help. If you need assistance or would like to attend one of my surgeries, please get in touch via charlotte.cane.mp@parliament.uk.

Wishing you all the best for 2025.

Charlotte Cane MP

Member of Parliament for Ely and East Cambridgeshire

Parish Council Meeting Minutes

Minutes of Reach Parish Council meeting held in the Village Hall on Tuesday 3rd December 2024 at 7.30pm

Attendance

Edward Hall	Chair	Not Present
Tim Quilter	Vice Chair	Present
Nick Acklam	Councillor	Present
Nathan Bridgeman	Councillor	Present
Hilary Fielding	Councillor	Present
Rowan Foster-Marian	Councillor	Present
Catherine Gibson	Councillor	Present
Susan Bailey	Clerk	Present
John Trapp	District Councillor	Present
Joshua Schumann	County Councillor	Not Present

Apologies for absence
Received and approved. As Vice Chair Councillor Quilter chaired the meeting

Forum for members of the public
There were none.

Declaration of Interests – Councillor Gibson declared an interested in the planning discussion

1. Co-option of new Councillor
Nathan Bridgeman was co-opted on to the Council and joined the meeting.

2. Planning - 24/01216/FUL, 7 Fair Green, Telecommunications broadband transmission dish
This application had been received the day before the meeting. Following a short discussion on the history of the installation, ***Clerk*** to contact the agent and arrange for a meeting on site with Councillors Fielding & Acklam.

3. District Councillor Report
Operational Services Committee 18 November. Nothing much to report from this committee:
1. The collection of waste & re-cycling is improving, but still not quite on target.
2. Street cleansing is efficient, but there was no data on how many streets have been cleaned.
3. An operating deficit of approximately £325,000 partly due to lower numbers of planning applications & building inspections.
4. The Air Quality Strategy plan for the District was presented; mostly aspirational, & few concrete strategies for improving air quality. Perhaps the new Local Plan can incorporate some measures (e.g. no chimneys in new buildings) to improve air quality.

Finance & Assets Committee 28 November. This was also light on startling items:
1. The annual review of the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme (LCTRS) for the 2025/26 year is to be unchanged for next year. LCTRS is for those residents who are on Universal Credit & Council Tax support. John argued that the Local Council Tax should be reduced to zero & not 8.5% as it is now, to help households struggling with the cost-of-living crisis, but the Administration thought that all households should pay even a minimum sum.
2. Changes to the exemption from Council Tax for second houses that are empty & for sale or under probate was extended from one to two years which seemed to favour those who had second dwellings or were landlords.
3. That this Committee has a projected year-end underspend of £746,000 when compared to its approved revenue budget of £7,016,768. Some of this underspend occurs because vacant posts are not filled quickly.
4. Water fountains had been installed in the public conveniences in Ely and that this would be extended to other public conveniences in the District.

Extraordinary Council on 11 December. The Independent on the Council has formed a group with the Lib Dems, so that this new group & the Conservative group have an equal number of members. According to the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, there needs to be equal representation on each of the committees, & this will be resolved at this Council meeting.
Reminder All ECDC Council & Committee meetings are live-streamed & can be viewed either live or retrospectively. Details can be found on the Council website.

4. County Councillor Report
No report received.

5. Minutes of previous Meeting
Approved as correct.

6.1 Reach Village Community Fund
The group had met and approved all outstanding requests.
The power on the green payment was also discussed and it was decided that a single payment should be made to the PC for small items including the power on the green, as to lower the administration for the grant fund.
The PC will hold this money in a restricted reserve.

6.2 Finance
Nothing to report.

6.3 Parish Council Members
Councillor Foster-Marian & Councillor Fielding had both been approached by residents of Ditchfield with regard to the amount of children living there and playing in the road at the top. They would like some "children playing" road signs installed to make this safer. ***Clerk*** to investigate whether the Local Highway Improvement scheme at CCC is open and whether the PC are able to apply for some signage.

Councillor Acklam had complied a letter to Grenergy which Clerk had sent and a reply offering a video call had been received. ***Clerk*** to ask if they could physically attend a meeting in Reach.

Councillor Acklam had investigated the other solar and battery application which surround the village. He requested that the PC approve his continued work including
- to raise awareness within the village, with the NT & with our MP
- Make contact with PCs facing the same or similar challenges
- Seek a meeting with a planning officer responsible for strategy at ECDC, Councillor Trapp & Gibson will also try to attend this meeting.
- Send an initial response to Kingsway Solar.

ECDC conservation officer had contacted the Clerk regarding a Market Cross which he was trying to trace which is recorded on the green in the National Heritage List for England. Councillor Acklam had done some investigations with other residents and had managed to locate the base of what is assumed to be the market cross. This work continues.

6.4 Play Spaces
Nothing to report.

6.5 Rights of Way
Nothing to report.

6.6 24Acres Committee
Hedge Laying:
Councillor Acklam is still struggling to get approval from the Woodland Trust for the harvesting of Hazel for the hedge laying. Something may still be organised, but as a contingency ***Councillor Acklam*** will apply to the Grant Fund to purchase stakes from CCV in January if required.

6.7 Friends Of Reach Wood
Nothing to report.

6.8 A to B1102 Group
Nothing to report

6.9 Nature Recovery Plan
Nothing to report.

6.10 Hythe Restoration Group
Councillor Acklam had had a response from Anglian Water regarding the PCs aspirations for AW to remove the redundant sewage works and return some of the land it holds to the village. Report to follow.

7. Budget for year End 2025/26
Clerk had produced a budget for the next financial year. Following discussion, it was decided that the PC would like to meet its previous commitments to add to restricted reserves for future spend on the playground, tennis court, tree works, legal fees and elections. A final budget figure is required for the IT & new website provision.
A final Precept figure will be brought to the January meeting for approval before submission to ECDC.

8. BT phone box
BT will be removing the telephone form the box on Fair Green, due to lack of use. As the box is Grade II listed this does not involve the box's physical removal. Following discussion, the PC agreed that the box be adopted and that the defibrillator be moved into the box. This is very common and the red telephone boxes are become the "normal" go to place to look for a defibrillator. ***Clerk*** to make the arrangements.

9. Parish Council Communications & Website, an update
Due to Councillor Halls absence this item was not discussed.

10. Council Chair
Councillor Hall had announced that due to family commitments he no longer had the capacity to be Chair of the Council, he would be staying as a Councillor. The Councillors present would very much like Councillor Hall to remain as Chair and therefore offered to redistribute all his PC commitments if he would continue to be the Chair. ***Clerk*** to discuss with Councillor Hall.

11. Payments

CR Contracting – Mowing contract	£421.00
E.on – power on the green	£36.10

Draft Minutes of Reach Parish Council meeting held in the Village Hall on Tuesday 7th January 2025 at 7.30pm

Attendance

Edward Hall	Chair	Present
Tim Quilter	Vice Chair	Present
Nick Acklam	Councillor	Present
Nathan Bridgeman	Councillor	Not Present
Hilary Fielding	Councillor	Present
Rowan Foster-Marian	Councillor	Present
Catherine Gibson	Councillor	Present
Susan Bailey	Clerk	Present
John Trapp	District Councillor	Not Present
Joshua Schumann	County Councillor	Not Present

Apologies for absence
Received and approved.

Forum for members of the public
Two members of the public attended to speak about a planning application, telegraph poles on the village green, and the energy developments.

BT had installed a telegraph pole on the village green at the start of Clunch Pit Lane, this , it was felt, is out of keeping with the conservation area and goes against the design code of the Neighbourhood Plan.

It was felt that the broadband mast was very important to the area as there is no fibre on the outskirts of the village including all of Great Lane. The mast also supplies properties in Swaffham Prior.

Discussion took place regarding the Kingsway Solar Farm project, in particular reference to the connection corridor.

Declaration of Interests – There were none.

1. Energy Developments on Burwell Fen

Councillor Acklam gave a brief update on the situation on Burwell Fen.
Genergy - The PC had asked for a representative to attend a village meeting to allow the public to gain clarity on their planned development. They have so far refused to attend.

Councillor Acklam was thanked for all his work on the energy development situation and particularly for his work on a response to the Kingsway Solar farm consultation, the PC response was approved, proposed Councillor Gibson & seconded by Councillor Fielding and will be sent by ***Clerk.*** Response below. The PC also agreed to join a group of local PC's mostly closer to the solar farm site.

"Reach Parish Council has reviewed Kingsway Solar's Environmental Impact Analysis Scoping Report (SR) and listened to the views of concerned members of the community we represent. In its current form, we consider the SR an inadequate basis for producing an Environmental Statement (ES) and thereafter an Environmental Impact Analysis (EIA).

Firstly, the SR has significant omissions. The SR makes no reference to Reach's Neighbourhood Plan (NP) which was made in February 2024 following a turnout of almost 60 per cent of the electorate. This extremely high level of engagement demonstrates our community's commitment to preserving and enhancing our neighbourhood and its unique landscape.
A copy of the NP is attached to this letter. It details those things that make Reach a special place to live, and about which residents are very clear they wish to protect. In the context of Kingsway Solar's proposal, Policy RCH 6 is most pertinent:
As appropriate to their scale, nature and location development proposals should:
i. have regard to, and conserve or enhance, the rural character and the setting of the village as identified in the Reach Landscape Appraisal;
ii. not result in the erosion of the settlement gaps identified on the Policies Map; ensure that there is no unacceptable impact on the key features of important views identified on the Policies Map and described in the Appraisal of Important Views; and respond positively to the Landscape Appraisal Development Guidelines, identified in Table 1 of the Neighbourhood Plan.
Elsewhere the Reach NP articulates the key landscape features of our neighbourhood that we believe are worthy of protection, noting 'there are significant areas of national archaeological, historical, and environmental interest within its (i.e., the neighbourhood of Reach's) bounds. The village's form strikingly reflects its rich past and its relationship with the landscape. It is remarkably unchanged for several centuries. It is defined by an artificial spine of the Devils Dyke - Fair Green - The Hythe and Reach Lode that runs through the entirety of the neighbourhood and reflects land use going back to at least the Saxon Period. The Devils Dyke is the largest Anglo-Saxon earthworks in the country.' It follows that Reach PC expects Kingsway's ES and subsequent EIA to meet the requirements of RCH6 of the Reach NP wherever its proposal impacts on the neighbourhood of Reach. We also expect the ES to acknowledge and accommodate the wider sentiments of residents of Reach as articulated in the NP. The SR omits reference to the following assets of the village:
- community orchard, native woodland, and equestrian arena at the 24 Acres
- Village Hall
- Church All could be adversely affected by this proposal. The SR fails to list the National Trust (NT) as a consultee despite recognising that the land within the proposed connection corridors is hydrologically linked to Wicken Fen (4.2.7) and the lands of the Wider Wicken Vision (WWV) for which the NT is responsible and despite the potentially highly significant visual impact on some of this land were this proposal to be approved. For example, much of the proposed eastern connection corridor is visible from the NT Adventurer's Car Park, a key gateway into the WWV. Approximately two thirds of the neighbour-hood of Reach lies within the WWV area. On the specifics of what is in the SR, Reach PC's concerns focus on the

visual impact, at a landscape scale, of the proposed construction of a 440kV overhead pylon and cable (OHL) to connect the proposed PV arrays to the national grid at a new substation, termed Burwell South, which we infer is needed primarily or solely because of Kingsway's proposal. Kingsway's SR states that National Grid has yet to determine the exact location or footprint of the Burwell South substation. The SR offers no date on which this clarification will be made. It is possible that the new substation will be located closer to Reach than the existing substation which lies in the parish of Burwell. Wherever it is located, by dint of the layout and outlook of Reach, it is likely to have a profound visual impact on our community. Rather than Rather than delineating a precise route for cabling connecting the PV arrays to the national grid, the SR offers two broad 'connection corridors' to mitigate un-certainty about the location the substation. The corridors are in places 3 km wide and together they occupy an area in excess of 40 square km. No field studies or initial visual impact assessments have been undertaken. However, as the SR acknowledges, the landscape and ecology within the corridors varies considerably. In these circumstances we are sceptical that a sufficiently forensic or granular examination of the impact of connecting the proposed scheme to the national grid could be produced on the basis of this SR (see elements of 6.2.2 for example). This is particularly important as the sentiments of the SR are to downplay the impact of an OHL on our neighbourhood and more widely. As a point of important detail on the parameters of a Visual Impact Assessment, we do not accept that the 3 km 'buffer' proposed by Kingsway (beyond which there would be limited impact) is acceptable given the flat and open landscape to the north and west of the proposed connection corridors.

In summary, we consider that such vagueness and uncertainty in respect of key elements of Kingsway's SR would lead to an EIA that is equally imprecise and inadequate for all parties. We therefore request that the EIA process is delayed until Kingsway is able to:

- clarify its preferred connection route and to narrow its width to enable a meaningful landscape impact assessment to be undertaken

- say exactly where connection to the national grid would be made

- outline the infrastructure required at the new substation to import the electricity into the national grid.

These requests will clearly require Kingsway to collaborate with National Grid to a greater extent than is evident at present. However, we consider the exclusion of the environmental impact of a new substation at Burwell South required to accommodate the feed from Kingsway's proposal would be perverse if consideration of this proposed NSIP(s) is to be rigorous and comprehensive. Finally, we note that Kingsway makes reference to the possibility of placing its connection underground (2.8.3). Whilst Kingsway's preference appears to be for an overhead connection, we advise that the Sunnica Solar Farm scheme (which is of similar scale and distance from a national grid connection to Kingsway's proposal) adopted underground connection to the national grid from the outset. This strongly suggests that an underground connection would be technically and financially feasible. We therefore request that an underground connection option is assessed in exactly the same way as OHL routes for the entirety of Kingsway Solar's chosen route."

2. Planning

24/01216/FUL, 7 Fair Green, Telecommunications broadband transmission dish

Despite attempts Councillors had not been able to visit this site but still hoped to arrange a meeting with the applicant to clarify the long term plan for the transmission dish. However, the PC was concerned that the mast which had been approved as a temporary arrangement in 2009 was visually intrusive to some residents. The PC was keen to obtain a clear timescale from the applicant for its removal.

Councillors approved that Councillors Acklam & Fielding should continue to arrange the meeting and report back to the PC and to ECDC planning as they see to be necessary.

24/01235/FUL. 8 Great Lane. Replace existing flat roof with pitched, altered & additional openings for replacement windows & doors throughout. Widen driveway entrance to ease access.

Councillors had not been able to visit this application therefore no discussion or comment could be made.

3. District Councillor Report

Extraordinary Council on 11 December

Due to equal numbers on both political Groups, it was resolved that the four main Committees (Finance & Assets, Licensing, Operational Services, and Planning) would have 12 members with six from each Group, & that other committees would be increased by one to make the membership even numbered.

The four main Committees have almost half the number of ECDC members, & both Charlotte & John supported the motion that was seconded by the Independent that the membership ought to be only ten. With the ruling that members of the F&A Committee cannot be members or substitutes on the Audit Committee, it means that all 14 members of each group are members or substitutes on these two committees.

Furthermore, it was resolved that the Chairs & Vice-chairs of each Committee would be elected at the special Council meeting in May, as is done by other Councils in Cambridgeshire.

4. County Councillor Report
No report received.

5. Minutes of previous Meeting
Approved as correct.

6.1 Finance
Nothing to report.

6.2 Parish Council Members
A resident had complained about rubbish being dumped in a field behind Reach Wood. ***Clerk*** to pass details to ECDC.

The defibrillator had been used & therefore requires checks to be carried out. ***Councillor Gibson*** to contact the resident who offered to help with this. ***Clerk*** to add as a discussion item at the next meeting.

The new grant find intend to add one extra person as this is all that is allowed outside of an AGM. The next step is to complete the necessary documents to allow the process to be publicised to the village.

6.3 Play Spaces
Nothing to report.

6.4 Rights of Way
Councillor Acklam had written to CCC Highways to highlight the continued problems on Straight Drove in the area which did not benefit from road planings earlier in the year.

6.5 24Acres Committee
A risk assessment had been received for the hedge laying.
Names of volunteers would be supplied to the Clerk prior to the day for insurance purposes.

6.6 Friends Of Reach Wood
Nothing to report.

6.7 A to B1102 Group
Nothing to report

6.8 Nature Recovery Plan
Nothing to report.

6.9 Hythe Restoration Group
Nothing to report.

7. Updated Budget for 2025/26 – to be approved
The increase of 10% in the updated budget, which allows for all previously agreed amounts to be set aside into restricted reserves was approved, proposed Councillor Fielding & seconded by Councillor Quilter. ***Clerk*** to forward to ECDC.

8. New Parish Council Chair
Councillor Hall was happy to continue as Chair with the reduced additional responsibilities as agreed at the previous meeting.

9. LHI Scheme
Councillor Foster-Marian had enquired about children at play signs for Ditchfield but unfortunately these are not available. ***Councillor Fielding*** to discuss with the residents of Ditchfield.

11. Payments S Bailey – Clerk salary Confidential

Diary Dates and Bus Timetable

February	Event	Location	Time
Sunday 2	Holy Communion	St Etheldreda's, Reach	08.30am
Tuesday 4	Parish Council Meeting	Village Hall	7.30pm
Tuesday 4	Recycling Day (Brown/Green)		
Tuesday 11	Recycling Day (Blue)		
Wednesday 19	Holy Communion	St Etheldreda's, Reach	10.30am
Tuesday 18	Recycling Day (Brown/Green)		
Tuesday 25	Recycling Day (Blue)	Village Green	6.00pm to 7.00pm

March	Event	Location	Time
Sunday 2	Holy Communion	St Etheldreda's, Reach	8.30am
Tuesday 4	Recycling Day (Brown/Green)		
Tuesday 4	Parish Council Meeting	Village Hall	7.30pm
Tuesday 11	Recycling Day (Blue)		
Tuesday 18	Recycling Day (Brown/Green)		
Wednesday 19	Holy Communion	St Etheldreda's, Reach	10.30am
Tuesday 25	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

Please note that major changes are planned for this and other local bus services – please check with the village website https://www.reach-village.co.uk/bus_service.html for confirmation of this timetable

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

This photo probably dates from around 1904-1911 and is by well-known local photographer Frederick Walter Gillson who was born in Cheveley in 1878 and lived and worked in Burwell until 1921.

The white house sitting to the left of the 'White Horse' in the older photo is situated on a plot of land that was densely overgrown and impenetrable during my childhood in the village during the 1960's. We never ventured there. I have no knowledge as to when it was demolished, today it is the Lambert residence that occupies the site.

At first glance the white house and the 'White Horse' can be easily confused until examined in detail.

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
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	

Then and Now pictures – see facing page







Clare Stapley on Cyrus leading up



Lisa Greenhill on Vinnie with Peanut the Shetland



Ruby May on Maisie

Reach Riders Festive Ride 2024



Faith on Gary



Albie on Thistle



Rebecca Gregory on Cisco