

The Gossip

No. 93 Spring 2022



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“Mole had been working very hard all the morning spring cleaning his little home..... spring was moving in the sky above and in the earth below and around him..... It was small wonder, then, he suddenly flung down his brush, said ‘hang spring cleaning’ and scabbled and scratched at the earth until at last his snout came out into the sunlight.” So begins Kenneth Grahame’s beloved book ‘The Wind in the Willows’.

After two years of covid dominated life and the dark days of winter I am sure we can all empathise with Mole and long to re-emerge into the sunshine. By the time this issue of the Gossip lands on your doormat the snowdrops will have been and gone but the days are getting longer, daffodils and tulips will be bursting forth and the dawn chorus will be in full voice.

The village, likewise is slowly coming out of hibernation with many of the normal clubs and activities resuming and the promise of more to come as the year progresses with plenty of them advertised in this issue. New experiences, new friends and new opportunities are all to be found in our village of Watlington so perhaps it is time to emulate Mole, discard the spring cleaning brush and embrace the renewed enthusiasm for life that the season brings.

And finally.....You may not be able to go messing about on the river with Ratty but be careful you don’t encounter Mr Toad sitting in the middle of the Tottenhill road murmuring ‘Poop-poop!’

Watlington Gossip

Published by The Volunteer Committee of
Watlington Community Magazine

Your Editorial Team

Editor

Colin Vince

01553 769171; watgossipeditor@gmail.com

Advertising

Brenda Leedell

01553 810848; watgossipads@gmail.com

Deputy Editor

Brian Rogers

01553 813090; cmotdbrian@gmail.com

Jean Golding (Chairman)

01553 811362; jean@goldings.biz

Andy Prior

01553 810863; apriorgossip@gmail.com

Website and Distribution

Keith Leedell

01553 810848; watlingtonnorfolk@gmail.com

www.watlingtonnorfolk.co.uk



The Queen's Platinum Jubilee 2022

Celebrations

Thursday, 2nd June to Sunday, 5th June 2022

Her Majesty The Queen will become the first British Monarch to celebrate a Platinum Jubilee after 70 years of service. The Queen has ruled for longer than any other Monarch in British history, becoming a much loved and respected figure across the globe.

Watlington's Picnic-in-the-Park

Friday 3rd June 2022

Watlington's theme will be a modern version of the street party. As part of the proposed celebrations, the Parish Council invites villagers to celebrate this momentous occasion by having a picnic on the green open spaces around the village or in their front gardens.

The Parish Council hopes there will be an array of gatherings with rugs, picnic chairs, refreshments and overall enjoyment prominent throughout the village and we hope you all have a wonderful time celebrating

Our Queen's Reign.

Advertising Rates for one year (4 issues)

1/16th page £35; 1/8th page £55; 1/4 page £80
1215 copies distributed each quarter

The Watlington Community Magazine is compiled by volunteers from the village and relies upon advertisers for its continued funding.

The committee does not accept any responsibility for the accuracy or otherwise of any article or advertisement appearing in the pages of the Gossip, nor does it necessarily agree with any of the viewpoints expressed by our contributors in articles or other items in these pages.

Front Cover The Gossip Team.

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Deadline for the Next Issue

The deadline for **Issue 94** of the Gossip is
1st May for publication by 1st June 2022

Village News and Views

The Saga of The Moving Footpath

Many of you may have noticed a lot of changes on the grassed area to the side of the Village Hall. The two large storage containers belonging to the Football Club and the Watlington Players have had to be relocated to be alongside the side wall of the Village Hall.

This is because NCC (Highway Authority) informed the Parish Council that the containers were blocking the designated route of Watlington Public Right of Way (PRoW) No. 5 as defined on the definitive map and required them to be removed by the end of February 2022.



This initially came as a surprise to everyone involved as the well trodden path to the side of the containers had been used for many years without a problem and was still being used until the Football Changing Rooms were placed over it and a complaint was made to NCC. (Not by anyone in the village we understand.)

Not only have the containers had to be moved, but the



Glebe land to the South has to be cleared and levelled of a lot of soil etc which is obstructing the continuation of the PRoW to the South. The Parish Council have until

the end of April to complete this due to the bad weather conditions precluding the use of heavy machinery.

This clearance of the PRoW is not optional, it is a legal requirement and NCC can, and are prepared, to enforce this.

Once the designated pathway has been cleared and levelled people will be encouraged to use the designated path and improved surfaces will be installed alongside the Sports & Social Club and the West end of the Village Hall grassed area. Hopefully this will make a general improvement in access and general appearance of the whole area.

Meantime, walkers will need their wellies.

Proposed Pavilion Consultation

Watlington Parish Council is proposing to build a Pavilion in the southeast corner of the Church Recreation Field. This will consist of changing and showering facilities and a social area.

Please let the Council have your views on this and suggested uses as soon as possible by writing to the Parish Council Chairman, Jean Golding.

You can leave written comments in the Gossip Box on the Post Office counter, at the Parish Council Office at the Village Hall or by email to jean@goldings.biz.

Please submit your comments by 31 March 2022.

Thank You



Monthly

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25 March 2022

“Spring into Easter (Extra Stalls etc)

22 April 2022

27 May 2022

(Sponsored by Watlington WI - Charity No 1018009)

No internet access? Pop your article or letter into the Gossip box in the Post Office or in the letterbox outside the Parish Council Office at the Village Hall.

Village News and Views

Watlington Neighbourhood Plan

The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group has made considerable progress over the last few months. Thanks to the results of the village-wide survey we conducted in 2021, we have been able to gather evidence of and assess green spaces and key heritage assets in the village that require current and future protection under the Neighbourhood Plan, as requested by the Watlington community. These sites for protection will be included within the draft plan.

The Steering Group has commissioned an architectural Design Guide Report by Aecom to serve as technical guidance in producing plan policies regarding future building in the village.

The Steering Group has had several meetings with Aecom and walked the village with them. We are pleased with the content of the report and it has been circulated to Parish Councillors for their information.

We have also commissioned a Housing Needs Assessment Report, which is currently under discussion.

The Steering group is working with a Planning Consultant to identify village issues that will translate into policies within the Neighbourhood Plan. This activity is ongoing.

Next steps include identifying local green corridors that can be developed into a Plan policy for the expansion and future connection of wildlife. We anticipate having a draft Neighbourhood Plan in early spring.

Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group



Ely Cathedral | 18 October 2021

Canon Appointment

Our Rector Revd Dr David Karoon has been recently made a Canon of Ely Cathedral. At Evensong on St Etheldreda's Day (18th Oct) David was installed into his stall in the Choir at Ely by Bishop Stephen and Dean Bonney of Ely.

The photograph was taken following the service.

Watlington Grand Village Fete

11th June 2022

The New Year has started very much like the old for the working group for the Grand Village Fete, the AGM gave us a new Chairman and Treasurer, and kick started our organising of this year's fete.

Thanks were given to the outgoing Chairman and Treasurer for all their assistance in organising last year's event, which being the first weekend out of lockdown, was a great success.

We already have some positive news for the day, with various stallholders expressing their wish to attend along with fairground rides, stalls, and some of the entertainers.

If you know of anyone who would like a stall, please direct them to our **Facebook page** <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1402483176440009>

We are always open to new ideas and suggestions and we would be delighted for new people to join to help us with the organising of this year's fete. Help is always welcome on the day.

Our meetings are on the first Monday of the month, so if you would like to join us, please contact us at **watlington-fete@gmail.com** or **07858 663872**.

Emma Burry, Chairman

WATLINGTON PARISH COUNCIL & BCKL&WN COMMUNITY INFORMATION POINT

Office Opening Times

Monday CLOSED

Tuesday OPEN 10.00am – 2.00pm (closed on the day of a Council Meeting)

Wednesday CLOSED

Thursday OPEN 10.00am – 2.00pm

Friday CLOSED

If you would like to make an appointment to see the Clerk or a Member of the Council outside the opening hours, please email watlingtonparish@hotmail.co.uk or call **01553 810777** in order that this can be arranged. Thank you.

Watlington Parish Council, 42 Church Road, Watlington Village Hall, Watlington, King's Lynn, Norfolk, PE33 0HE
Parish Clerk, Mrs Sara Porter

Millennium Green Christmas Decorations

I would like to congratulate the Millennium Green Committee for the Christmas Tree decorations and the Merry Christmas flag which featured on the pole which was a surprise. Those together with the many homes which were lit up, helped to bring festive cheer to the village.

I know how difficult it is to organise volunteers to help with the Green and I think they did a splendid job. Thank you all involved.

Penny Cooke

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Watlington Medical Centre News

Make Hay While The Sun Shines.

Spring is springing and nature is waking up for a new year, from my window I see snowdrops and some cheeky bright daffodils nodding in the spring breeze. What a wonderful time of year. The promise of longer, warmer days and hopefully COVID numbers waning as winter passes.

We all look forward to COVID restrictions lifting. We will be wearing masks and PPE in the surgery for some time to come but as the world opens up for spring and summer it gives us an opportunity to reflect on the past 2 years of pandemic.

Lockdowns and restrictions have affected people differently some have been isolated and lonely, some have enjoyed a switch to working from home and more family time. Some have seen businesses crushed while others have boomed. One unifying theme I have heard time and time again from my patients is that they have learnt to take opportunities when they arise. I would encourage you all to do the same.

For most people the coming brighter months will give the opportunity for topping up their Vitamin D levels. Vitamin D also known as 'the sunshine vitamin' is converted in the skin to its active form and is helpful for keeping bones and teeth healthy.

Government advice is that everybody should take a vitamin D supplement in the winter months but that certain groups should take supplements year round eg children, house-bound people and individuals with darker skin. (check on www.nhs.uk/conditions/vitamins-and-minerals/vitamin-d for more information or to check if you are in an at risk group).

I mentioned in my last article we have scored very well for patient access and satisfaction in the recent survey (<https://www.gp-patient.co.uk/report?practicecode=D82043>) but we are always looking for ways to improve so if you have energy for fundraising and you'd like to be part of the patient participation group (PPG) then please contact reception and we'll be in touch when our next meeting is planned.

It's been a tough couple of years for my NHS colleagues, to all of you that have used services sensibly and sent messages of support we thank you.

Wishing you all a happy, healthy spring.

Dr Nichol

Watlington Medical Centre Website

watlingtonmedicalcentre.co.uk

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Thursday 08.30 - 13.00 14.00 - 18.30

Friday 08.30 - 13.00 14.00 - 18.30

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Outside of the above times call 111

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2022 Bank Holidays

The Pharmacy will be closed on the following dates

Good Friday	Friday 15 April 2022
Easter Monday	Mon 18 April 2022
Early May Bank Holiday	Mon 2 May 2022
Spring Bank Holiday	Thurs 2 June 2022
Platinum Jubilee Bank Holiday	Friday 3 June 2022
Summer Bank Holiday	Mon 29 August 2022

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Watlington Wednesday Club

We started the new year of 2022 with a games afternoon in January which was well attended by members who not only talked and listened to each other in companionable conversation but also enjoyed playing Scrabble, Dominoes, Bananagrams and Card games.

As I am writing this the days are noticeably getting longer, winter aconite are glowing yellow at the bottom of the garden, snowdrops are poking their sword like heads through the grass, I love the French name for snowdrops 'pierceneige', piercing the snow, and we had that wonderful Wolf Moon in January, just little things to get us through the dark winter days.

After the last two years of Covid lockdowns and precautions it is wonderful to be able to meet in relative normality with the protection of vaccine and hygiene precautions. It seems likely that this will be a near normal year with our usual mix of speakers and homegrown talent, summer strawberry tea, croquet and petanque.

For those who don't know about Watlington Wednesday Club, we are an afternoon social club which meets in the Village Hall on the second and fourth Wednesdays of the month at two o'clock, we have been meeting for over twenty years. We try to be inclusive, hoping to meet the interests of all who come along and are always looking for fresh ideas to add to the old ones.

Our programme for the next few months looks like this:

March 9: Talk on Kings Lynn Town Hall by Rachael Williams – Learning and Engagement Officer

March 23: Beetle Drive

April 13: Hot Cross Buns plus

April 27: Quiz with Pat and Richard Aisthorpe

May 11: Clubs Birthday Party

May 25: The Magpie Centre, Riding for the Disabled

June 8: Royal memorabilia brought along by members

If anyone would like to know more about the club or would like a lift, please do get in touch. If you have recently moved into the village, it can sometimes be quite hard to walk into a group where you don't know any one at all but please be assured you will receive a warm welcome!

Barbara Church, Chairman

barbarachurch@phoncoop.coop

01553 810584

Considering advertising in the Gossip?

For further information contact Brenda Leedell
watgossipads@gmail.com or 01553 810848

Advertising rates on Page 3

Watlington Village Hall

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Saturday 2 April 2022

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Teams of 4 to 8 people

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Watlington Gossip Grants

Does your activity group want to purchase an item but can't quite afford it? Then the Gossip may be able to help. We have funds available and usually are able to give out grants in the range £200 - £300. And no form filling, honest!

There are a couple things though:

- ◆ We don't contribute towards running costs.
- ◆ We ask you to submit an article about your group for publication. We can help with this if you want.

Contact any member of the Gossip Team for information.

We awarded the Following grants last year:

Watlington Gossip Grants 2021

Church Roof Repair Fund	£250.00
YWPS - Microphone	£300.00
Fete Rosettes	£27.20
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Village Hall Curtains	£300.00



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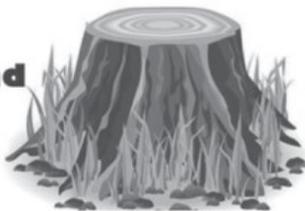
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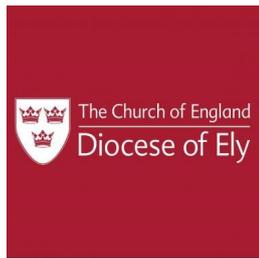
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Watlington Church News



The Festivals of Christmas and Epiphany are over, it was lovely to see so many people sharing in the Christmas Carol Service and the Preschool children, families and staff at their short Christingle.

The period of Lent starts in March this year with the great Festival of Easter in April. Mothering Sunday which comes in the middle of Lent is on the 27th March, so do come and join us at this special service as we remember all those who have cared for us.

The celebration of Mothering Sunday began centuries ago. During that time, life was so very different from what it is today. Because many families were poor and could not care for all within the poor household, younger children were sent away to live with wealthier families. There, these younger children became "domestic servants" and would be assigned to one or more household chores including washing clothes, lighting morning fires, cleaning, scrubbing floors, washing dishes, and any other chores assigned by the wealthy family members.

One day a year was set aside which allowed these domestic servants to return home to visit their mother, their families and their church. This day was called Mothering Sunday. As these children were walking home for their visits, they would stop and pick wildflowers, which would be given as gifts to their mothers.

Such a lot has changed but very often we still give flowers on Mothering Sunday.

There is always a Sunday service in Watlington Church at 11am, with the second Sunday of the month being Holy Communion. All our services are on the West Norfolk Priory group website or on noticeboards around the village. WNPNG westnorfolkpriorygroup.co.uk.

Looking ahead to the summer the Church will host a Flower Festival in June to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. All are welcome to come and put an arrangement in the Church however big or small, whether as an individual, a family or representing an organisation. Look out your royal memorabilia and let's make this a real celebration. Please get in touch with us, the more the merrier!

And last, but not least, thank you so much to the Football Club which gave £128.50 to the church, a percentage of their lottery proceeds.

John Murfitt 01553 811086 Barbara Church 01553 810584
(Churchwardens)
Val Dagnall 01553 810201
(Church Secretary)

From The Vicar

Dear reader,

As I write, Coronavirus restrictions are being eased and there seems to be some light at the end of the tunnel. We rejoice in this good news while continuing to share the sorrows of all those who have suffered or lost loved ones during this pandemic. Only history will tell just how painful these past two years and more have been for so many people all over the country and all over the world.

We are thankful for the sterling service of the NHS, for the advancement in scientific and medical research and for the swift response of the government. But is it too much to suggest that behind all these secondary causes there is a Higher Hand, the Ultimate and First Cause? And do we not have reason to thank Him? The ancient sage who had seen so much for so long wrote these words of wisdom:

*"Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it:
except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain" - Psalm 127:1*

With prayerful good wishes,

DK

The Revd Canon Dr David

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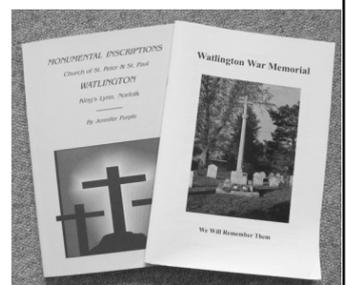
Saturday 5th March 7pm: QUIZ in the Village Hall

Saturday 14th May 9.30am: Coffee Morning for Christian Aid in the church.

2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, June: Grand Jubilee Flower Festival in the church.

Watlington History

If you are interested and/or actively researching your ancestors in Watlington then there are two books which are a must have on your shelf. Watlington Church Memorial Inscriptions, compiled by Jennifer Purple (£3) and Watlington War Memorial and Roll of Honour by Brenda Leedell (£2) now both available to purchase in Watlington Church (open every day). Proceeds to Church Funds.





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Community Primary School

Despite a cold north wind, the school is full of the anticipation of spring, from the first buds of our daffodils, to the content of our topics in class as we make the most of showing our children the joys this time of year brings.

Our youngest children in Acorn Class, have become 'Natural Navigators'. They have been learning about the natural world around us as well as prehistoric reptiles and dinosaurs. The children have been exploring where they lived, what they ate and why they had certain features, such as sharp teeth and long necks. This has formed a part of the Early Years curriculum 'Understanding the World Past and Present, and therefore children have been able to make links between the present day and the past.

We will be going back in time soon using a time machine to find the dinosaurs, but when we will get there, they will be missing, inspiring the children to write some 'missing' posters. We have also started exploring healthy eating and this has linked in nicely with our literacy text 'The Enormous Turnip' as we all start to think about how planting our crops and seeds in spring leads to delicious food for the summer. The children always enjoy changing the stories when it comes to writing their own versions, so we can't wait to see what they imagine!

Year 1 (Apple Class) have returned to school full of enthusiasm and enjoying their new topic 'Come Rain, Come Shine', which is particularly apt amongst the spring storms we've experienced. We are learning all about the changes in the seasons and are looking out for these early signs of Spring. The children are also enjoying exploring the natural environment, monitoring the changes in weather and how this links with the seasons. The topic has also enabled us to explore good and bad times in history which have brought change; for example, we are learning all about Florence Nightingale and Mary Seacole and how their compassion and determination changed the way in which the soldiers during the Crimean War were cared for. As we move through the term, we know the children can't wait to plant some seeds and watch them grow and see our school and gardens around the village start to bloom.

This term in Rowan Class our learning has focused around our Great Fire of London topic, including Fire Safety in our Wellbeing and Lifeskills lessons, creating models of Tudor and Stuart houses in DT, and making collages and pastel drawings of fire in Art. A real Firefighter from the London Fire Brigade came to visit us to teach us about fire safety and show us the special fire resistant clothing firefighters wear when responding to a fire. The theme of all things fire and flame has also been reflected through our class story of George and the Dragon. We went on a dragon egg hunt around the school grounds and found some magical, sparkly

eggs. We wondered what type of dragon the eggs might belong to and wrote poems about the different types of dragons we might discover. In Science we have been learning about the Environment and we have conducted an investigation into the effects that greenhouse gases have on climate change. We used cling film to replicate the greenhouse gases and covered a tray with ice in and left the other tray uncovered. We discovered that the ice in the tray that was covered melted faster, showing that greenhouse gases trap heat in and contribute to the world becoming warmer.

This term our learning in Oak Class has taken a twist as we now turn our focus to the Titanic! Children are always fascinated about the iconic ship and its devastating maiden voyage. We are spending time not only learning about the events that led up to the moment the ship struck the iceberg, but will also spend time researching some of the passengers and crew. In our Art work, we are exploring how artists of the past have used colour and texture to replicate the conditions at sea and will work collaboratively to create an image of the ship itself.

May you have fair winds and following seas as spring gives way to summer and we enjoy all that it has to bring.

Watlington Community Primary School

WATLINGTON YARD SALE
Sunday 22nd May, 9am-1pm

£5 to have your place on the map

Maps, Raffle and Refreshments (including Bacon roll and tea/coffee) available at Watlington Preschool, 22 Rectory Lane

Payments for places on map would be appreciated via bacs or paypal, but cash can be accepted if preferable.

To book your place on the map please either contact Tracey on 07443584951, or tj.b13@hotmail.co.uk final date for booking a space on the map is 9am Friday 20th May

Suggested parking at the village hall for a nice walk around the village yard sale

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Your Parish Council News

30th November 2021 Parish Council

- ◆ After a lengthy Open Forum discussion, Council agreed the appointment of John Stephenson, Architect, at a cost of £1000, for architectural /planning work for the proposed Sports Pavilion.
- ◆ The Council agreed a revised cost for the Martingales knee-high fencing project (CIL grant already awarded) of £5,750.00 + VAT increasing the total net cost by £416.67, The job must be completed by 31/03/2022
- ◆ Council agreed the purchase of a new laptop at £499.99 to replace outdated existing equipment.
- ◆ Council agreed the purchase of resin picnic tables to go beside the Gym Equipment on the Recreation Ground at a cost of £1750.
- ◆ The Council agreed the sale of land adjacent to the householders at 2 Thomas Close for £4500 plus legal fees, the land to be used as garden land or for parking.
- ◆ The Council agreed to the relocation of the Watlington Players' container and the Football Club containers to be adjacent to the west end of the Village Hall and that the Football Club temporary changing rooms be left in situ, to meet the requirements set by NCC to restore the line of the Public Right of Way (PRoW) along the west edge of the Glebe Field. The Council also agreed the surplus soil in the vicinity be landscaped appropriately for the PRoW, the work to be done by the East of Ouse Internal Drainage Board at £35.00 per hour (4-5 hours work expected).
- ◆ .400 mixed trees have been delivered free by the Woodland Trust for planting around the village.
- ◆ The Neighbourhood Planning Group have advertised in the local press for smaller parcels of development land in the village.
- ◆ The Recreation Ground Trod completion is expected by March/April.
- ◆ For the Parish Partnership Scheme 2022/2023, bids for paths at Warren Close - Medical Centre link (cost £1550), for the improvement of PRoW 5 from the Village Pump (£2800) and at the Glebe Field (£1280) were made.
- ◆ On the Planning Application for the construction of a dwelling on land at 10 Fairfield Lane, the Council expressed strong concerns that the Lane, a public footpath, should not be the site access point.
- ◆ The Council objected strongly to the proposed variation of the planning conditions of Plots 7 & 8 Rowan Close, which would result in narrow and overbearing walls on the new footpath link to the Warren Close Play Area. This will mean a reduction in natural surveillance, which will increase the opportunity for crime and anti-social behaviour.

- ◆ The Council has a lodged a planning breach complaint regarding the Rowan Close to Warren Close Play Area Path.

18th January 2022 Parish Council

- ◆ The Council supported the planning application for the development of 40 dwellings on land east of 2 Thieves Bridge Road, subject to a number of concerns being addressed relating to the maximum number of dwellings, building size, parking allocation, site egress, species protection and village infrastructure.
- ◆ The Council wholeheartedly refused the application for a variation of planning permission on 7 and 8 Rowan Close on the grounds that the applicant has continued to submit applications to amend the original planning approval, the proposed workshop would be a disturbance to neighbouring properties and the Warren Close Play Area, and the proposed narrow and overbearing walls would result in an unsafe footpath environment.
- ◆ The Council donated £25 to Norfolk Citizens Advice Bureau as a contribution to help towards their services.
- ◆ Council approved the Precept (Parish Council element of Council Tax) for the financial year 2022/2023 of £61,000, an increase of 3.95% or £2.72 a year on a Band D property.
- ◆ The Council allowed Grays Fair and Hoggies to set up their facilities on the Recreation Ground on Friday, 10th June 2022 for the Village Fete on Saturday, 11th June 2022.
- ◆ To restore the public path (No.5) as required, a dip by the gable wall of the Village Hall had been filled in with soil in preparation for the relocation of the two steel storage containers (Football Club and Watlington Players) on 31st January 2022. The County Council have agreed a short extension until the end of April to complete the project.
- ◆ The Council approved a donation by Watlington Football Club a goal post to be erected by the Parish Council on the Glebe Field at the Village Hall end.
- ◆ A Sports Pavilion Working Party was formed consisting of Cllr Bellamy, Cllr Berliner, Cllr Golding and three Football Club representatives. The Council approved a one-off payment of £50 to Mr John Stephenson, to attend a meeting of the Sports Pavilion Working Group, if required.
- ◆ The Council agreed to place an article in The Gossip inviting residents to provide their feedback on a proposed sports pavilion on the Recreation Field.
- ◆ Council agreed to seek a Tree Preservation Order on the Oak tree on the Millennium Green and that the Oak tree in Fairfield Lane and the Silver Birch tree planted in 1973 by the Women's Institute be considered.

Your Parish Council News

- ◆ Cllr Sheldon reported that the 400+ trees had been delivered to her house in December 2021 and were ready for planting in April 2022. Residents have volunteered to help with the planting of the trees on the Martingales Green. Councillors were asked to consider other Parish Council owned areas where trees could be planted and report back at the March meeting.
- ◆ Neighbourhood Plan Progress: See pages 5 and 25.
- ◆ The December statistics from the SAM2 speed monitoring signs prior to the agenda revealed
- ◆ Magdalen Road facing towards Watlington 58472 vehicles - 34.29mph average speed limit (75mph highest recorded speed) and Station Road facing towards Railway Crossing 119052 vehicles - 27.73mph average speed limit (80mph highest recorded speed).
- ◆ Council agreed that given the reported good state of the church clock and the high estimated cost of renovation (£4,500) that unlike previous Jubilee celebrations, no refurbishment would be done this time.
- ◆ An article was to be put in The Gossip advising residents of the 'Picnic in the Park' theme for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. Further announcements would be placed on the village Facebook page nearer the time.
- ◆ A plaque commemorating the Jubilee would be placed on one of the new benches, which were due to be ordered and placed near the MUGA. The WI requested that they could make a gift to the Parish Council of £250 towards one of the benches and have a plaque placed on it stating that a contribution had been made by them.
- ◆ The Recreation Field trod is delayed until April 2022.
- ◆ The following bids for the Parish Partnership Scheme had been submitted to Norfolk County Council: a) Link the original Warren Close trod to the new footpath leading to the Medical Centre and create an additional trod across the play area. B) Resurface, level and widen the footpath adjacent to the Sports & Social Club to the wall boundary from the Pump on Church Road to the existing Public Right of Way, Watlington Footpath 5.
- ◆ Due to the high electricity costs the floodlights on the MUGA court had been switched off.
- ◆ The former Chairman and Treasurer of the Fete Committee had resigned and Cllr Burry and Cllr Sheldon had been appointed to these roles.

Future Meetings of the Parish Council

7pm Village Hall

1 March 2022

5 April 2022 (following the Annual Parish Meeting)

17 May 2022 (following the Annual Parish Council Meeting)

Interested in following up on any of the Parish Council news items?

- ◆ Full minutes and agenda of meetings are available at the website: <http://watlington.norfolkparishes.gov.uk/>
- ◆ All local planning applications and decisions can be viewed at west-norfolk.gov.uk, follow the links.
- ◆ The Parish Council Office at the Village Hall will re-open Tuesdays and Thursdays but times may vary. Please call 01553 810777 to confirm that the office is open.)
Full contact details for the Parish Council are on page 34.

NO Allotment Vacancies

There are **no** plots available to rent on the Council allotment sites at the time of going to press. Please contact the Parish Clerk if you would like to join the waiting list.

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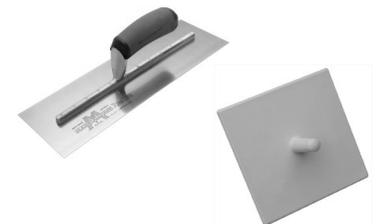
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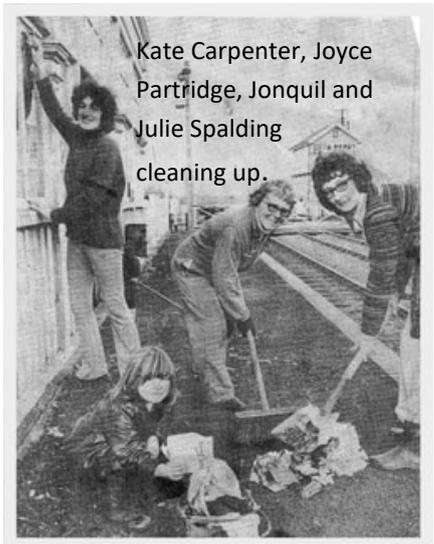
The Campaign to Reopen the Railway Station May 1975

The railway station at Watlington was originally opened in October 1846 and was renamed Magdalen Road Junction in 1875. I can remember seeing the name cut into the long hedge on childhood visits to the area. The station not only served the King's Lynn to London route but was also a junction of the Wisbech line enabling travel to the Midlands. Sadly, it fell foul of the Beeching Reports and was closed in 1968, depriving this area of a valuable transport link. I fulfilled my long-held wish to move to Norfolk in 1987 and was drawn to Watlington because of the rail links. So, what had happened since 1968? Sadly, only Kate Carpenter and Dr Hugh Lacey are left of the original campaigners, so over to Kate for the full story-

In the early 1970s British Rail began a "Transport for 2000" initiative. Our local signalman, Mr Ron Callaby, was aware of the volume of rail traffic just passing through the village and felt that there was a good case for reopening the station. A meeting was arranged in King's Lynn with a representative of British Rail which was attended by Dr Lacey, Joyce Partridge and myself. The outcome was that BR had no objection to the reopening but had no funds to do so-if we could raise £535.00 to finance it, there would be no problem. That seems like a small sum now but in 1974 it was a fair amount! We prepared a questionnaire for the village asking what interest there was in the reopening, emphasising that the station would provide easy access to the technical college and greater work opportunities for local people as the local bus services were not extensive. We had a response rate of over 50% which impressed the BR liaison officer greatly. And now all we needed was the money!

Being the youngest of the group, I undertook the fund-raising initiatives helped by friends and neighbours. We held dances and tombola, great fun but so busy! We also received donations, as our campaign had made the national press - one memorable gift from a lady who wanted us to make the station garden pretty. With it we bought a trough for the station which our WI ladies kept tended and supplied with blooms. The trough is now under the village sign (sadly, people used it as a seat) and the WI still look after it. The villagers, helped by the retired staff from the station, worked hard to clear the brambles and weeds and to renovate the paintwork. Even our young children gave a hand! BR were unable to contribute financially but they did help with some maintenance and repair in support of our activities.

After 18 months of hard work BR made a formal announcement on 4 November 1974 that the station would reopen in Spring, the first station in the UK to be reopened due to action by local residents. I was unable to speak to the reporters as I was a little busy - my third son was born on that day. Our success also made the national press and I have many clippings of our moment of fame!



Kate Carpenter, Joyce Partridge, Jonquil and Julie Spalding cleaning up.

The Media and BBC on Reopening Day



The grand reopening was in May 1975. The BR publicity chap asked for 400 children from our local school to line the platforms -as you will guess he was not a local! However, children from neighbouring villages were drafted in - which very much tied in with our hopes that not only Watlington but our nearby neighbours would benefit from the station. The first train through had a special badge "The Magdalen Road Special" and we had a ribbon cutting ceremony attended by local dignitaries. All in all, a very satisfying outcome and a happy day for the village. When the Watlington Oxfordshire Station was closed in 1989, our station was able to reclaim its original name of Watlington.

There it is – a story of determination and hard work. The train service has contributed to the growth of the village and ease of getting about especially for non-drivers. We are so fortunate in being able to nip off to King's Lynn, Downham, Cambridge and London for a spot of shopping or nightlife, getting to the theatre and other cultural events, all of which enrich our lives. The foresight and energy of those involved is still making our village a great place to live-and I am sure you will join me in thanking Kate and Dr Hugh for their efforts.

Elaine Carpenter

[Photos: Lynn News and Advertiser and Keystone Press.]

Nature Notes with Chris Dyson

At the time of writing, the end of January, our winter weather in Watlington has not been too bad. We have had some strong winds at times but not the damaging gales that other parts of the country have experienced. We have had frost on a number of days and there have been some beautiful sunrises and sunsets. There is still time for some more severe winter weather but we are getting nearer to spring as each day passes.

The frosts have led to more and more birds visiting our garden to feed. We have at least eight Blackbirds visiting regularly. Of these one hen bird is the boss and she will see off any other Blackbird, male or female, until she has had her fill. We have almost a flock of very well fed Woodpigeons and the same goes for Collared Doves. Occasionally, a Sparrow Hawk will pass through or over our garden and this results in all the other birds suddenly disappearing. Whilst House Sparrows are impossible to count as they are continuously on the move between the bird table, our small pond and the hedge.

On trips into Kings Lynn via St Peters Road I regularly observe a Buzzard and sometimes two perched on the telegraph poles. Also Kestrels either perched on the poles or hovering above the roadside verge. On walks around the village it amazes me how many Robins there are, they can be heard singing everywhere.



Although we are obviously still in winter there are obvious signs that spring is on the way. I observed the first Hazel catkins on 13th January in the shrubbery surrounding the school playing field. Whilst in our garden the Snowdrops are almost in bloom. I expect that people who have more sheltered gardens will already have Snowdrops and Aconites in bloom. I have also observed Blue Tits inspecting nest boxes so they obviously think that spring is on the way.

So by the time this edition of the 'Gossip' reaches you spring should certainly be on its way. Plants will be starting to grow and some will soon be in bloom. Depending on the weather birds will definitely be thinking about nesting and it will not be too long before the first of the summer migrant bird's return.

Spring!

The most capricious season of the year
Weather changing constantly, neither here nor there
Sometimes you need thermals and woolly socks
Then a few days later- you're wearing summer frocks.
You plan an early barbecue and get in all the stuff
On the day, it's freezing and you need a coat and muff!
But, oh-when Spring is kind and fair
And blossom scents the evening air
There's nowhere I would rather be
Than sitting 'neath my cherry tree
And listening to the birds and bees,
Sipping a drink, a good book on my knees.
For even on days wet and cold
The earth's treasures start to unfold
The beauty of flowers, the comfort of crops
Watching in awe as each green shoot pops
Into the sun, to grow and survive
After winter's dark, we are once more alive.
Springtime- when even the old feel young
So many songs still to be sung.
Earth's magic once more weaves its spell
The yearly promise that all will be well.

Elaine Carpenter



One of the many Robins around the village

Watlington Preschool

Hopefully by the time you are reading our article we will be busy playing in our garden, enjoying Springtime, the sun will be out and our daffodils and crocuses will be peeping out of our raised bed and flower pots.

Since the start of the year we have been enjoying pretending to be pirates- making telescopes and making our own treasure maps, we made our own soft play area and have been getting very good at putting our own coats on and off.

Two activities that we focus on daily are physical development/keeping active and books and stories. Apart from the obvious physical activities such as running, chasing around our garden, riding scooters and bikes and using climbing equipment we like to start every day with some “moving and grooving” to get us ready to play and keep healthy.

The adults and children take part in a variety of different routines where we follow a video especially for young children that will involve running on the spot, star jumping, stretching etc and often counting too. It’s great fun and hopefully will encourage our little ones to follow a healthy active lifestyle.

Stories and encouraging our little people to enjoy books is also a favourite and important part of our learning through play. We have our own large stock of books, a lending library where our children can choose a book to take home to share and we also borrow lots of books from the great selection at the Downham Market and Kings Lynn libraries.

We tell stories everyday 1;1 with the children, in small groups and at circle time. It’s quite amazing how a very young child can join in with and recall stories, talk about favourite characters and even sit in front of the group and tell the story themselves. It is a crucial part of a child’s early learning to hear lots of spoken language in story, song and conversation form and it’s just a great way to interact and have fun.

Hopefully as the weather improves lots of you will be out walking around the village enjoying Springtime. If we are playing in the garden, give us a wave as you go by.

The Blue Team

Village Tree Planting

The Parish Council has been donated 400 trees by the Woodland trust for planting in public spaces. If you have any suggestions about suitable locations then please contact the Parish Council (Details p.34).

You might like to also contact the Council if you might wish to volunteer to help with the tree planting.

Watlington Brownies and Guides

Last term, we met online again - the evenings were far too cold to be shivering in our hut! Being online didn’t stop us working towards our “Be Well” badges though. The Guides planned and made a nutritious meal containing as many food groups as possible, and the Brownies learned to give themselves a relaxing hand massage.



As the evenings start thinking about getting longer, we start thinking about moving our meetings outdoors!

This term, the **Brownies** are going coo-coo for birds as we work towards earning a badge from the RSPB. We’ve got 8 challenges to complete, including making a nest, identifying animal tracks, and listening carefully to different birdsong (that’s if we can be quiet long enough to hear the birds!).

The **Guides** are looking forward to an action-packed term. We will be visiting the Downham Heritage Centre soon to delve into the museum where we will learn about Victorian life, and we hope to practice our bushcraft skills with Inside Out.

If you’d like to join Brownies (7-10 year olds), Guides (11-14 year olds), or volunteer to help out, please contact Chloe on watlingtonbrownies@gmail.com. Subs are £25 per term. We meet on Thursday evenings during term-time.

1st Watlington and Runcion Holme Brownies & Guides

Meet at the Scout Hut in Runcion Holme

Brownies (7 -10 years old) Thursday 6:00 - 7:15 pm

Guides (11 - 14 years old) Thursday 7:30 - 9:00 pm

Email Chloe at watlingtonbrownies@gmail.com for more information

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Watlington Sports & Social Club



WS&SC is situated opposite the Village Hall and is a family members club with lots to offer for all age ranges.

We offer good quality drink and snacks at affordable prices. The kitchen is still closed for the time being. We will look to start food service as soon as practical.

We are signed up to both Sky and BT TV, which enables us to show all the big games on the large screens throughout the club. The club has 2 pool tables, dart board, juke box and puts on numerous events throughout the year for adults, children and families.

Current Opening Times

Monday to Thursday : 17:00 - 23:00,

Friday: 16:00 - 01:00,

Saturday: 12:00 - 01:00

Sunday: 12:00 - Close

These are under constant review and any changes will be displayed within the club and emailed out to members.

The Social Club is home to Watlington Men's Football Team, 5 Youth Football Teams (ranging from U7's through to U15's), Green Bowls Teams and Crib League.

The Crib league has now resumed on Tuesday Evenings.

Bowls. Anyone wishing to play bowls this year, or know of anyone who would like to play we are looking for players for Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday night teams, please message Pete Drew on Facebook, leave a comment or contact the club and leave your details, Thanks

A local **Jazz Band** rehearse in the Club on the 2nd Monday of each month from 7.30pm. Please come along and enjoy the music.

www.watlingtonssc.com

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Watch out on Facebook for updates

Also on Instagram

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Watlington Short Mat Bowls Club

Watlington Short Mat Bowls Club meet twice weekly at the Watlington Village Hall which we hire every Monday morning from 9.30am to 12.30pm and Friday afternoons from 12.30pm to 5pm.

As the sport is played indoors, we play throughout the year. It provides an excellent opportunity for social interaction and gentle exercise. We have 3 mats available for use at any one time, are a friendly bunch, with players of all standards and it is our usual practice to hold in-house competitions, outings and Club lunches on a regular basis according to numbers participating.

The cost is £3 per meeting, with refreshments at half time. There is also an annual membership fee of £10. If you have never played bowls before, coaching and the use of a selection of Club bowls is available completely free.

We comply strictly with current Government legislation on the Covid pandemic and the Hall is wheelchair friendly.

Come along and watch a session or two and see if it is for you, just pop in, no appointment necessary. All we ask is that you wear flat soled shoes that you don't wear outside (carpet slippers will do) so that the mats are not damaged.

WATLINGTON BADMINTON CLUB

We are back !!

*

Every Wednesday
in the Village Hall

*

Juniors 5pm and 6pm

Seniors 7pm onwards

Jim's Monthly Collection Box

The monies collected in the charity box on the counter in the Watlington Post Office Store are donated to local charities.

November 2021	£75.70	Angel Field Millennium Green
December 2021	£29.00	Magdalen Church Medieval Glass Renovation Fund
January 2022	£87.90	RH & Watlington Scout Group

Thanks to all the customers who contributed.

Thanks to Jim and Ann and to June for her assistance.

Jim has extended the distribution area to local villages that use Watlington shop and Post Office. If you know of a worthy cause in Runcton Holme, Tottenhill, Wormegay or Magdalen please let us know - watgossipads@gmail.com.

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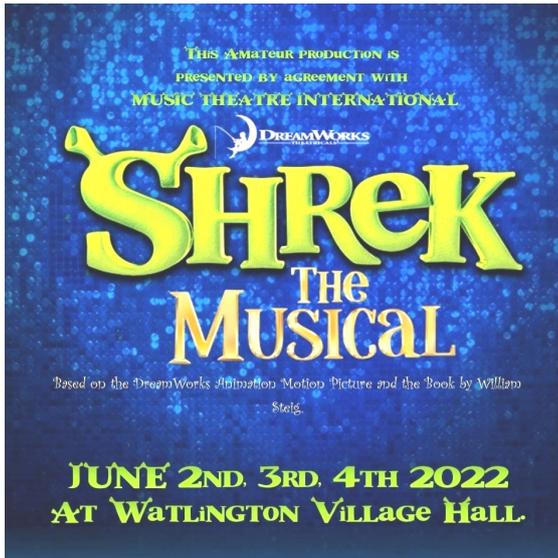
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Watlington Players



Shrek

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www.ticketsource.co.uk/watlingtonplayers

Tickets should soon be on sale.

This year we are performing Shrek the Musical.

Shrek the Musical is based on the well known animated adventure/ hilarious fairy tale in which curses are lifted, monsters get the princess and donkeys and dragons find love.

Grumpy green ogre Shrek lives alone in his swamp, just the way he likes it. The world fears him, and he is more than happy to leave the outside world just there, OUTSIDE.

Suddenly, his hermit existence is thrown open, when a talking Donkey and a group of homeless fairy-tale characters — Pinocchio, the Gingerbread Man, the Three Little Pigs, and more — get dumped in his swamp, by the cruel, vertically-challenged Lord Farquaad. On follows a quest to rescue a princess and find the true meaning of love!

www.facebook.com/watlingtonplayers

www.watlingtonplayers.com

Runcton Holme Newsletter VOLUNTEER NEEDED

Help is required to put the Runcton Holme Village Newsletter together in preparation for the printer.

Do you have experience of desk-top publishing and/or use of Publisher or similar programme?

Articles etc are provided but need to be arranged on the pages in a readable format.

If you think you can help please contact Brenda Redfern on bjredfern42@aol.com.

Watlington Young Players

We raised over £300 for Children in Need at our Mini Fete in November. Thank you to all WYPS, their parents and friends from the village who came to support us.

Since we returned after Christmas we have been reading through the script for Lionel Bart's **Oliver** – the Music Theatre International Broadway Junior version – and have been delighted to welcome back Sheena Ainsworth-Lilley, who has been coaching the singing.

We are in the process of casting the show which is a very difficult task as we have so many talented members of the group. Sheena has been and will be travelling down from Staffordshire, where she lives, and we are very grateful for her support.

The performances will be on Saturday evening **16th July** and Sunday afternoon **17th July**, so please look out for posters nearer the time to book your tickets. It would be a real encouragement to our young people to have two full houses.

Penny Cooke

The Magpie Centre - A New Website!

The Magpie Centre, home of West Norfolk Riding for the Disabled Association began 2022 in good style, thanks to a new website, funded by the National Lottery Community Fund.

Easy to navigate, and with a fresh, engaging layout, the site provides instant access to news, upcoming events and suggested ways of supporting us.

Chief amongst these is the Pony Sponsorship scheme, under which for £15 per year, you or a loved one will receive a photo of 'your' horse or pony, together with a sponsorship certificate and news of what your new friend has been up to.

Although riding and carriage driving lessons have resumed since previous lockdowns, our fundraising events are still limited, so sponsoring one of our lovely ponies will help us to cover the ever-increasing costs of hay, farriery, vaccinations and insurance.



Alternatively, you might prefer to donate towards the Friends of Magpie Arch, where for a minimum of £10, a horseshoe, accompanied by a name plaque, will be put up on

the Friendship Arch, leading to the Sensory Garden beside the indoor school.

Do pay us a visit at www.rda-westnorfolk.org.uk, and click on the 'Shop' tab.

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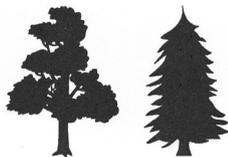
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Watlington Village Hall



Both halls have been very busy recently with new bookings for several keep-fit classes both daytime and evening on top of the usual groups being back post-Covid. Unfortunately, the Thursday youth group The Swan Project, has had to close due to lack of support. There have been several Bingo and Quiz evenings and more in the pipeline and the Pantomime was a great success.

The bar area is looking much smarter and the new bar fridge has arrived making the bar a much more usable space especially for weddings and celebrations etc.

The committee are looking into updating all the lighting in both halls to LED which will save a lot on the cost of electricity and help the environment.

More of the old curtains have been removed and replaced with modern and more efficient blinds. We feel that both halls are much more 21st Century now and look forward to more bookings.

To check availability of any of the 3 rooms please phone:

Village Hall Bookings: 0300 3110234

Check out the website for more information. (see page 34)

Website: www.watlingtonvillagehallnorfolk.com

Email: watlingtonvillagehallnorfolk@gmail.com

Watlington Village Hall 200 Club

Each number costs £1 per month (£12 a year) and is entered into a draw each month, which takes place on the 3rd Wednesday of the month in the Village Hall at 8pm.

Every 4th month the 1st prize is £100

The profits from the draw all go to the Village Hall and will help to fund several ongoing refurbishment projects.

There are still numbers available.

Please contact Vicky on vling@hotmail.co.uk or Sara (Parish Clerk) in the Parish Council Office on Tuesdays and Thursdays Tel: 01553 810777

Recent Winning Numbers

	£100	£40	£15	£10	£5	£5
Nov 2021	-	126	61	62	88	193
Dec 2021	4	-	143	74	91	30
Jan 2022	-	55	77	119	140	172

The Neighbourhood Plan Progress Report

The Neighbourhood Planning Group reported to the January meeting of the Parish Council their current activities. These are set out below:

Call for Sites for Housing: The “Call for Sites” to land-owners for sites below 0.5 hectares has only delivered one small site. It is therefore the recommendation of the Steering Group not to progress with allocating sites for housing within the Neighbourhood Plan.

Green Space Designation in the Neighbourhood Plan: Evidence gathering and assessments of green spaces in the village that require protection under the Neighbourhood Plan has taken place. These will be included within the draft Neighbourhood Plan.

Key Heritage Assets: Evidence gathering and assessments of heritage assets in the village that require protection under the Neighbourhood Plan has taken place. These will be included within the draft Neighbourhood Plan.

Design Guide Report: This report has been produced by Aecom as technical guidance for the Steering Group in producing Plan policies. The Steering Group has had several meetings with Aecom and also walked the village with them. It is still in a draft format but the Steering Group is pleased with its content and hence the draft has been circulated to the Parish Councillors for their information.

Housing Needs Assessment Report: We have received a draft report from Aecom and are currently in discussion with them over its content.

Issues and Options Analysis: We are currently working with CCP (the appointed Planning Consultant) to identify village issues that will translate into policies within the Neighbourhood Plan. This activity is ongoing.

Next Steps

Green Corridors: Identify local green corridors that can be developed into a Plan policy for expansion and future connection.

Local Green Space Designations under the Plan: Correspondence to be issued by the PC to the relevant landowners, so they have an informal awareness of the designations prior to the Regulation 14 Consultation (when they will have the opportunity to put forward their views under a formal process). CCP will provide correspondence templates.

Draft Neighbourhood Plan: CCP anticipate having a draft Neighbourhood Plan for the Steering Group to review by late February 2022.



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Watlington WI



The programme for 2022 has been finalised and copies handed to all members, we think there is something of interest everyone. Contact a committee member if you haven't had yours yet. Keep an eye on the website for updates and future plans including some outings.

Membership is up with some new members have recently moved to the area and are looking forward to making new friends and getting involved after the doldrums of the last 2 years it is good to get back to some sort of normality.

Craft morning and Book Club have resumed and the Rainbow Café has been very busy and vibrant with several craft and produce stalls becoming regulars.

Have you recently moved into the local area or are in need of a little diversion? Come along to a meeting and get to know people. We have members of all ages from several local villages. You only need be 18 or over to join. You don't need to be able to cook, sew or knit and not many of our members make jam so don't let that put you off.

The WI page on the Watlington Norfolk website is a good starting point to see what is planned. If you are interested in becoming a member or prefer to just come along to see what we are about, please contact Emma on 01553 811521 for more info.

Email: watlingtonwomensinstitute@gmail.com

Website: www.watlingtonnorfolk.co.uk – WI pages

Facebook: Watlington WI

Watlington Knitters & Stitchers



I am glad to say we have started our knitting group again, we are a small group and would welcome some new members. **We meet at 16 Warren Close, on the 3rd Monday of the month, 2pm to 4pm.**

We are part of Norfolk Knitters and Stitchers group with a local branch in Kings Lynn, this is where the items are sorted to go to Care homes, Hospitals, International Aid and many places where there is need.

They have lots of patterns of things required on their website, so if you enjoy knitting, come and join us for a friendly chat, tea and cake.

I am happy to receive any knitted items or donations of wool at any time. Also I collect used postal stamps for Parkinson's.
Janet Jones 01553 810868

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Harbingers of Spring on The Millennium Green

How many harbingers does it take to make a spring? Whilst this may not be English or indeed Norfolk it's always good to use a word that rarely sees the light of day. For my money an early sign of spring is the longer daylight hours often combined with a little more warmth and a little less rain.

Plant life is certainly quick to respond to this and amidst the green shoots and ripening buds on the trees there is the odd dash of colour. Many gardens and churchyards have a good show of aconites and snowdrops already mixed in with some occasional well sheltered violas and pansies.

More magical than this are the catkins, already dangling on the hazels again. These first yellow catkins look particularly spectacular in these leafless days of winter. Rosemary Tilbrook in her book 'A Year in the Countryside' wrote "Hazels are beautiful not only for their lambs tails, but also for their pollen grains which are shed in millions, like gold dust; each catkin consists of a string of male flowers, producing about two and a half million grains of pollen. The pollen grain develops a microscopic tube which grows down through the stigma to unite with the egg which swells and becomes a hazel nut." Who knew such amazing things were going on under our very noses?

Besides Hazel catkins it is also worth looking out for Alder catkins, arguably thicker and more beautiful than those of the hazel. These catkins change colour over the five months of spring and summer and result in small woody cones which stay on the tree over winter.

The approach of snowdrops in their fuller glory, with primroses and bluebells are life affirming spectres showing us the way to warmer and sunnier days and light nights to allow greater enjoyment of the outdoors. Snowdrops are believed to have been introduced to Britain by the Romans and are often referred to as 'The Fair Maids of February' and remain one of the sought after delights of spring – hence the various gardens around which hold snowdrop events for us all to enjoy.

As spring gets a greater hold on the year the green's show of cowslips comes into its own. It is a delight to see them spread and brighten up much of the green as well as providing a feast for the bees and other insects who are busy searching out food sources to keep themselves alive and ready to nurture a future generation.

Around the borders of the green there are occasional blackthorn bushes to be found which provide some of the earliest brilliant blossom to cheer us up as we come through the winter. More elegant and decorative are the pussy willows. Silky soft, exquisitely tactile and furry, pearly-grey

pussy willows have a smooth velvety beauty all of their own. The colours do change with hints of silver, green and gold commonplace jewels amongst the hedgerow.

Early risers will have noticed an increase in bird chatter and there is some evidence of increased excitement in the bird population around the green. We are always hopeful that the various bird boxes put up around the green will prove to be a desirable residence for the many birds that scout the environment looking for that ideal place on just the right letting terms. The songs welcome early mornings and either deter competition or attract a partner ready to raise another family (or two) over the warmer months.

We hope you enjoy the variety of life around as you walk through the green.

Mike Carter



Images of Springtime

The yearly Mart lights up the sky
We know that Springtide is now nigh.
Valentines' day - such fun for the single
Cards sell fast, florist's pockets jingle.
Pretty girls in promenade glory
Eastertide - the greatest story.
Birds that sing in blossomed trees
Playful lambs at their mother's knees
Hot cross buns in every shop
Eating chocolate 'til you drop.
Walks through woods, alive with flowers
Every day has more bright hours.
Daffodils shining from the verge
Trying to resist the urge
To take a dip in the cold bright sea-
That's what Springtime means to me!

Elaine Carpenter

The Railways of Norfolk - A Personal Memory

If one looks at a map of Norfolk prior to around 1965 you will see that the county was covered by numerous railway lines, sadly many of which no longer exist. Historically, the railway came to Norfolk in April 1844 when a single-track line, costing £10,000 per mile to build, ran from the newly completed Thorpe station at Norwich to Great Yarmouth. In July 1845 the long-desired connection with London was made when a double-track line was opened from Trowse (Norwich) through Wymondham to Brandon, which joined the existing London to Brandon railway. In West Norfolk lines were opened in 1846 from Kings Lynn to Downham Market and Narborough and extended to Ely the following year.

The network of railways gradually grew, done piecemeal by different companies. In 1862 the different companies were amalgamated as the Great Eastern Railway Company. In the 1870s and 1880s lines were built in northern and eastern Norfolk by the Midland and Great Northern Joint Company. In 1923 the Great Eastern became part of the London and North Eastern Railway.

I am not a train fanatic/spotter, but in the early 1960s I worked for British Railways in and around Norwich



when most of the lines on the old maps were open and in use. There were four stations in Norwich - Thorpe, City, Victoria and Trowse (not open for passengers). At that time, Victoria and City (only recently closed for passengers) were goods traffic only.

In this area there were two stations in Kings Lynn. The current one in the town and another at South Lynn. Also there was a branch line from the station at Watlington (then named Magdalen Road) to Wisbech and a line from the main Kings Lynn station up to Hunstanton.

My career with British Railways started as a clerk in the Goods/Outwards station at Norwich Thorpe Station. This was a very busy station responsible for dispatching goods from businesses in the city including the many shoe manufacturers that existed there. The goods were collected and brought to the station on small articulated vehicles hauled by Scammell three-wheeled tractor units! These small artics also delivered the incoming goods. I also worked in the Goods/Inwards department at the same station as well as the City and Victoria Stations which were goods only.

Shortly after my experience in the Goods departments I spent a few weeks as extra clerical staff at Wroxham station

during the summer season where this station dealt with many more passengers arriving to spend holidays on the Norfolk Broads. The station, which was a small rural one, had a station-master (regarded as an important member of the community) and a full complement of porters and signalmen. This was the case for every single station in the country, however large or small.

My next move was to the Train Enquiry and Ticket Office at Norwich Thorpe station. This was of course pre-internet days



so all the train information we gave out was from hard-copy train timetables covering every region of the country. Enquiries came in both from passengers on the station as well as by telephone. We also made seat reservations on the trains.

The ticket office was of course non-computerised and each ticket was an individual piece of card with the journey details and fare on which had to be date-stamped before issue. Also, all transactions were cash except for those passengers travelling with a warrant, such as members of the armed forces. Around this time conductor/guards were introduced on the local trains and we had to take in and check the tickets and takings at the end of their shift.

I also spent time in other departments including the Traffic Managers Office. During this period I joined a team to do what was called "wagon chasing"! This involved travelling around the county noting the number of and serial numbers of railway wagons in the sidings and goods yards so that they could be moved to be available for the transporting of sugar beet to the factory for processing. In the Norwich area this was at Cantley.

What I have described was of course pre-Beeching when drastic closures were made to the railways throughout the country, including Norfolk. A few of these lines are open now as heritage railways such as North Norfolk Railway and Mid-Norfolk Railway. Well worth a visit if you are interested.

Mike Cooke

Spring Traditions and Celebrations



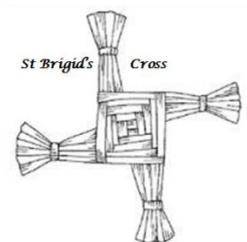
For centuries, cultures throughout the world prepare to celebrate the seasonal transition from Winter into Spring. Celebrations and traditions are copious during this time as the Spring promises fresh beginnings filled with new growth. The Spring Equinox, also known as the Vernal Equinox, marks the first astronomical day of Spring for the Northern Hemisphere where across the globe the Autumnal Equinox occurs in the Southern Hemisphere simultaneously. The word 'Equinox' literally means 'equal night' in Latin; *aequus* (equal) and *nox* (night, referring to how day and night are approximately 12 hours each during the Equinox). This is due to the tilt of the Earth's axis in relation to the Sun which happens twice a year, in March and September. For some cultures, the Spring Equinox coincides with a New Year bringing about spirited festivities. For others, it is a time of honouring the past and making room for new beginnings. One of the inner mysteries of Druidry is the Druid's egg. Life-giving, it is the egg protected by the hare, which is the symbol of Alban Eilir – still celebrated by the giving of Easter eggs by the Easter bunny! Within the Nations of the UK, there are similarities (predominantly those rooted in Celtic lore) and differences. Here is a glimpse of just some of these remarkable rituals ...

In England, The Spring Equinox is an important astronomical event for Druids, Wiccans and those who follow Earth-based (pagan) traditions, drawing on beliefs following nature adoration. Gatherings at Stonehenge before dawn dressed in a mix of robes, natural materials, and staffs mark the event. Here, they greet the rising sun, which they celebrate as *Ostara*. *Ostara* comes from the Anglo-Saxon Goddess name, *Eostre*. Visitors are only allowed access to the inner circle of the stones until the sun has risen. After a period of warm greetings, visitors hold hands, forming a circle, to take a druid's vow. From the centre of the stones, the groups will then welcome Spring by giving thanks to the east, west, south, and north by raising their hands and turning to each point. As the sun slowly begins to rise on the east side of the stones, the pagans and druids quietly watch the rising sun and embrace the first rays as they emerge.



There have been many traditions and superstitions linked to Spring in Scotland with many omens said to predict the health of families, crops and livestock for the year ahead. In Celtic mythology, the Spring Equinox was known as *Alban Eiler* - a powerful time for magic and nature! To harness this unique time of year, many rituals were carried out. In the Western Isles, a large dish of porridge made with butter and various other ingredients was tipped into the sea in the faith it would wash valuable seaweed ashore. So, it was believed that sending the fruit of the land into the sea, the fruit of the sea would come to land. The 'Big Porridge Day' was held in late Spring or on the Thursday before Easter. Then, it was known as Shore Thursday or Maundy Thursday. Allegedly, the ritual would be at its most effective if carried out on a stormy night.

St Patrick's Day is celebrated in Ireland (and across the world) within a few days of the Spring Equinox. It was *he* that brought the 'light' of a different sun, the son of God to Ireland. The Irish Celts may have simply rebranded or 'Christianised' the Spring Equinox festival to St Patrick's Day, celebrated on March 17th (the reputed date of St Patrick's death in 461AD). Another celebration takes place during this season for the Goddess, Brigid. Known as the Goddess of fire, poetry, and healing, she was much celebrated throughout the land in ancient times. According to legend, the Christian Church couldn't fully remove the love ancient people had for her, so the Celtic Pagans were appeased by her transformation into a saint. The feast day of St Brigid falls on February 1st, much earlier than the Equinox. The making of 'Brigid's crosses' is still widespread in Irish primary schools on this date because this is widely believed that this signifies the beginning of Spring.



Long seen as the ancestors of Wales' bards, the druids celebrated something they called 'Awen', meaning something along the lines of 'divine inspiration'. The Druids used the Vernal Equinox to honour the Welsh Goddess of fertility, *Blodeuwedd*, the first 'flower woman,' who was said to be created by magicians out of nine flowers—broom, meadowsweet, oak, chestnut, primrose, cockle, nettle, bean and hawthorn—and said to possess their qualities or powers. In the Welsh collection of stories called the *Mabinogion*, *Blodeuwedd* was presented as a wife to the hero of Welsh mythology, *Llew Llaw Gyffes* because his mother had put a curse on him that he would have no companion. *Blodeuwedd* was therefore created to sabotage the curse. She was unfaithful, however, and conspired with a lover to kill *Llew*. The attempt failed and she was changed into an owl as a punishment!

Watlington Football Club

The season is around mid-way through and to date, have been incredibly lucky in that there has been no disruption due to Covid. This has allowed us to start up sessions called Mini-Kickers for young players ranging from 5-8 years of age and it is very pleasing to see Boys and Girls of all abilities participating.

These have been running for a couple of months and I am pleased to say it has been going very well, We have had consistent numbers for the age groups and are lucky to have four coaches who have agreed to take on an U7 & U9 team for the season 2022-2023. We are hoping to gain friendlies and hopefully manage to participate in a couple of tournaments allowing the young players to gain experience and most importantly the enjoyment of playing football.

Mini Kickers is on Saturday 10:00 – 11:15 at Watlington Sports and Social Club if anyone is interested then please get in touch on the email address below.

With the addition of these two new teams, The club will have six youth teams and two adult sides. This is real promising for the future of this great club.

Under 10's 7V7 Format (Non-Competitive) Wayne And Martin have enjoyed a particularly good start to their management roles, They have been playing very well and above all the enjoyment is noticeably clear to see. Long may this continue and look forward to watching them play very soon.

Under 12's 9V9 Format (Competitive) Having now played fourteen games the team are well settled in this league; They have been playing some good football and are improving weekly. The side are really enjoying their season and currently sit in fourth place on 22pts having W7 D1 L6.

Under 14's 11V11 Format (Competitive) It has been a tough season so far in an incredibly competitive league. Having competed in most games they have often come out on the wrong end of results. With ten games remaining I am confident they will be able to turn this around. Currently sitting second from bottom having played twelve games. W1 D3 L8

Under 15's 11V11 Format (Competitive) It has been an up and down season so far; they have played very well in some games and have found others extremely hard. I am sure they can turn it around and put a run together and get themselves away from the bottom of the table. So far W0 D2 L14

Men's Reserves 11V11 Format (Competitive) A solid start to the season for the Reserves a good mixture of young players along with experienced heads sees them sit in seventh after 13 games. W5 D0 L8, This is a real bonus to see these younger players coming through allowing the club to thrive in the years to come.

Men's First 11V11 Format (Competitive) The Firsts have had a particularly good season and look like promotion is in their grasp. Gaining some impressive results and consistently picking up points sees them top of the league 5pts clear and with a game in hand over second place. Having played thirteen games, they have W12 D1 L0. We are hoping they will be able to continue this form and win the league allowing us to apply for promotion to the Anglian Combination which would indeed be an outstanding achievement for the club.

Sponsorship

We would like to thank our sponsors who without we would truly struggle:

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We are always on the lookout for sponsors so if you know of any person or business that would like to donate, please contact the below. Anything from match balls to kit would be appreciated.

Tony Leggett
legosw6@gmail.com



Is Your Home Hard to Heat?

If you live in private rented accommodation, and your home is hard to keep warm, the Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk may be able to help.

Your landlord must make sure your home is not unreasonably hard to heat by making sure it meets energy efficiency standards.

It is unlawful for landlords to let out a property with an Energy Performance Certificate rated F or G (in properties where an EPC is legally required).

The council can advise people about EPC standards and may act to make landlords undertake relevant improvements.

The council is also ready to support landlords with advice about how to access grants that may help meet the cost of making energy efficiency improvements.

Information is available online at :

www.west-norfolk.gov.uk/mees

Mobile Library is back!

Thursdays 17 March 14 April 12 May

Route number: DOW403

Our mobile library service has restarted, and we have updated some routes - see the information below for more details on specific routes. Please note the libraries will not visit nursing homes yet.

Read the following guidelines before visiting the mobile library.

- We welcome the wearing of face coverings on our mobile libraries
- Remember to bring your library card with you
- Hand sanitiser will be available for use on the way in and out and surfaces that are commonly touched will be regularly wiped down

We look forward to welcoming you back on board.

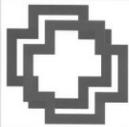
Please note this information is subject to change or amendment both on a permanent and temporary basis.

For all enquiries relating to mobile libraries, email the team at central.mobiles.lib@norfolk.gov.uk

Facebook @NorfolkLibrariesUK

YouTube Norfolk Library & Information Service

For all enquiries about this route please call 01603 222303.



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2nd Runcton Holme and Watlington Scout Group

Wow, where does the time go? It only seems like a couple of weeks since I wrote the last newsletter for the group. We are now back to face to face meetings with The Scout Association changing our COVID readiness level for England back to green, which of course for our young people is great news. We continue to see new members join the sections and it appears that this is also continuing across the UK in most scout groups.

To help run the section meetings we are actively looking at recruiting adults for uniformed and non-uniformed leadership roles, occasional helpers and also members for the executive committee. Whatever your skillset, if you can lend a hand, for as little or as much time as you can spare, we promise you'll get more out than you put in.

We provide the training. You show up, get stuck in, and make memories for life. Sound fun? Worthwhile? It is! Could you spare a few hours a month?

If you are interested in finding out about Beavers, Cubs or Scouts or volunteering as an adult helper, please contact **Bob Keens or Andy Nicol (Contact details and meeting times below).**

All sections attended the Remembrance Day parade at St. Peter and St. Paul's Church in Watlington and it was a pleasure to hear some really nice comments from members of the public on how smart and well behaved our young people were. There was some amazing singing during the church service and we also invited the congregation to join in and witness the investitures of several of our Beavers investiture.

In December all sections took part in Jambowlree at Strikes in King's Lynn. This is a 10 pin bowling competition for scout groups from all around the world. The results were published at the start of February and I was over the moon to discover our Beavers were 17th out of 81 teams, and were 7th in the UK, our Scouts were 16th out of 169 teams, and were 9th in the UK. Our parents, carers and leaders team were 20th out of 66 teams, and were 6th in the UK. Some amazing results and a fantastic time was had by all who attended.

The Beaver section had a district panto trip to Hunstanton in December to watch Aladdin, "Oh no they didn't! Oh yes they did!" They enjoyed the coach trip with other local Beaver groups and visited a not quite Sunny Hunny! Audience participation was at a maximum through the panto and they even enjoyed an ice cream treat during the interval. Activity badges have been awarded for Communicators, Book Reading, Collections and Skills. Busy, busy Beavers!

The Scout section welcomed some new members over Christmas and the New Year Lynn, which has led to a second patrol being formed and a newly elected Patrol Leader. The patrols have been super busy working on team working tasks, creative skills, astronomy and arts and crafts. All in all, a really busy end to 2021 and start of 2022.

2022 is the 40th anniversary of 2nd Runcton Holme and Watlington Scout Group. We have an action packed year to look forward to and plan to be out and about in our local communities; helping out in numerous ways and hosting lots of weekend activities at the Scout hut, from BBQ's to adventurous activities. We will also be taking part in celebrations for Her Majesty the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, marking 70 years of service to the people of the United Kingdom, the Realms and the Commonwealth.

Throughout history, Scouts have played all sorts of useful roles in society, and this legacy continues today. We are hosting a family fun day at The Red Barn on Saturday the 19th of March. This is to help raise funds towards a defibrillator for Runcton Holme. From 10am to 4pm we invite the good people of West Norfolk to join us and try out some exciting Scouting activities. The activities will be hosted by our young people, parents, carers and leaders. There will also be refreshments available throughout the day. The activities will be free of charge and all we are asking is if you are able to make a small donation it would be appreciated.

In the evening from 7pm to 11pm we have an evening of live entertainment planned. Three local live bands, two local DJ's, a local magician performing close up magic, a BBQ, a licenced bar and a charity raffle. The evening event is ticketed and tickets can be purchased via the QR code on the Fun Day posters. We hope to see you all there to help our young people make an amazing impact on our local community.

Thank you

*Skip (Andy Nicol) Scout Section Leader
2nd Runcton Holme and Watlington Scout Group
School Road, Runcton Holme, Norfolk PE33 0AN*

2nd Runcton Holme & Watlington Scout Group

Meet at the Scout Hut in Runcton Holme near the school

Beaver Scouts (6-8 year olds) Monday 6:00 to 7:00 pm

Cub Scouts (8-10½ year olds) Wednesday 6:30-8:00 pm

Scouts (10½-14 year olds) Monday 7:15- 9:00 pm

Bob Keens: Group Scout Leader 01553 810855
b.keens@hotmail.com

Andy Nicol: Scout Section Leader 01553 811201
andy-nicol@hotmail.co.uk

Useful Telephone Numbers

Parish Council - Village Hall Office 01553 810777

Clerk: Mrs Sara Porter; 42 Church Road, Watlington Village Hall,
Watlington, King's Lynn, PE33 0HE
watlingtonparish@hotmail.co.uk

(Urgent Matters outside office hours 01366 502165/07941 105697)

Mr J Bellamy 07771 755233 jabbazxr@gmail.com
Mr M Berliner 07879 628243 martin@martinberliner.com
Mrs E Burry 01553 618885 emburry@googlemail.com
Mr A Culy 07885 990624 antony_culy@hotmail.com
Mrs R Davidson 07776 367036 reaandbarry@aol.com
Mrs J Golding 01553 811362 jean@goldings.biz (**Chairman**)
Mr M Jordan 07921 818589 matthewjordan87@hotmail.com
Mrs B Leedell 01553 810848 brendell48@gmail.com
Mr R Rockcliffe 01553 810331 richard@rockcliffe.co.uk
Mrs S Sheldon 07824 353555 sarahholmes8019@hotmail.com
Mrs K Smith 07900 822005 ksmith.pg@gmail.com

Borough Council: 01553 616200

Borough Councillor: Jim Bhondi 07542 229013 / 01553 810263

County Council: 0344 800 8020

County Councillor: Brian Long 01945 430169

MP: Elizabeth Truss: 01842 766155

Medical Centre: 01553 810253

Emergency: (out of hours) 111

Pharmacy: 01553 811045

Health Visitor: 01366 389249

Patients Group: tba

Hospital: 01553 613613

Community School: 01553 810468

Preschool: 01553 811035

Under 5s: Contact through Facebook

Village Hall Bookings: 0300 3110234

Village Hall Website: www.watlingtonvillagehallnorfolk.com

Village Hall Email: watlingtonvillagehallnorfolk@gmail.com

Watlington Players Box Office: 0845 052 9645

Sports & Social Club: 01553 810171

Churchwarden: John Murfitt 01553 811086

Churchwarden: Barbara Church 01553 810584 or
barbarachurch@phonecoop.coop

Angel Pub & Restaurant: 01553 811588

Post Office Stores: 01553 810263

Rodwell's Fish & Chips: 07943 844133

Norfolk Flooding Helpline: 0344 800 8013

Police: Non-emergency 101

Gas Emergency: 0800 111 999; **Electricity Emergency:** 105

Public Road Water Leak: Anglian Water 0800 771 881

Street Light Faults: 0344 800 8008 or www.norfolk.gov.uk

Coming Events (At the Village Hall unless stated)

March 2022

01 - Parish Council 7pm

05 - Church Quiz 7pm

08 - WI: *Oxborough Restoration* - Anne Guymer

19 - Defibrillator Fund Raiser (South Runcton Barn) See p27

25 - Community Café 09.00 - Noon

April 2022

02 - Village Hall Quiz 7.30pm

05 - Annual Parish Meeting & Parish Council 7pm

12 - WI: *Norfolk Hygge - wellbeing*

22 - Community Café 09.00 - Noon

23 - Ladies' Night 7pm

May 2022

01 - Gossip 94 Deadline

10 - WI: *Resolutions and Quiz*

14 - Christian Aid Coffee Morning 09.30 (At the church)

17 - Annual Parish Council 7pm

22 - Watlington Yard Sale 9am See Page 11

27 - Community Café 09.00 - Noon

June 2022

02 to 04 - Players' *Shrek* 7.30pm

02 to 05 - Grand Jubilee Flower Festival (At the church)

03 - Picnic On The Green

11 - Grand Fete Day

Church Services p.11

Wednesday Club Meetings p.18

Sports & Social Club Events p.21



Facebook Directory

We have drawn together a list of local Facebook community sites known to us. Not on the list? Contact us through Facebook.

Watlington Village People (Norfolk) - issues and events

Watlington Gossip

Watlington WI

Watlington Sports & Social club

The Angel Watlington

Watlington Grand Village Fete

Watlington Lottery



The Gossip Photo Gallery



Afternoon Tea Fund Raiser for the Church



January Sunset at the Station (Photo: Amy Camp)



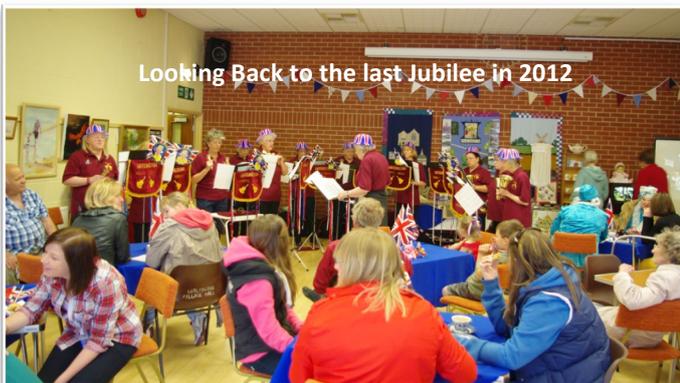
Preschool - Morning Exercise Routine



Winter Sun on the Millennium Green



Headphones: A Fun Way to listen to a story at Preschool



Looking Back to the last Jubilee in 2012



Storage Containers Relocated - See p.4



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