

...YOUR FREE LOCAL NEWS

SEPTEMBER 2025

# SAXMUNDHAM NEWS



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### EXPERIENCED CLEANER REQUIRED - THORINGTON

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## A NOTE FROM OUR EDITOR



Once again Sax Fest was a great success and drew huge crowds – I don't recall seeing queues before! I feel a bigger field may be needed next year. A great community event and an opportunity for local musicians to showcase their talent. Well done and thank you to Terry Barrow and his team of volunteers for all their hard work!

Please get in touch if you have anything to share with our readers or if you have an event coming up why not consider increasing your footfall by placing an advert in the Tide Collection?

I would love to hear from you, email me at: [lou@tidecollection.com](mailto:lou@tidecollection.com). Our cover photo, of a sedge warbler was taken in Wheatacre, Norfolk by the very talented Caroline Tillet

### QUOTE OF THE MONTH

Of all the things I've lost I miss my mind the most.

**Ozzy Osbourne**

## INSIDE YOUR MAGAZINE...

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## VJ80

On Sunday, 10th August, Reverend Mandy Tucker led a brief service to commemorate all those lives lost in the Far East and to celebrate the final end of hostilities worldwide, 80 years ago, known as VJ80.

The service was attended by local residents and representatives from the Town Council, local British Legion and Poppy Appeal at the Memorial Garden on Rendham Road.

In his address, Council Chair, John Findlay stated

*"Today we gave thanks for the safe return, to Saxmundham, of 22 of the 29 former POWs held captive by the Japanese. We remember in particular the seven servicemen from the Saxmundham area who did not return - 4 are buried in Commonwealth War Grave cemeteries in the Far East and 3 have no known grave"*



## FLIPSIDE FESTIVAL

This autumn, FlipSide Festival returns to Framlingham with a bold and timely theme: *Un/Making the World – Art, Life and Meaning*. Against the backdrop of an increasingly complex and uncertain world, the festival asks how art and imagination help us make sense of change and how they might offer not just reflection, but transformation. In a day packed with readings, talks and conversation, leading writers and thinkers come together to explore how story, image, politics and memory shape the world we live in - and the one we hope to build.

**Festival highlights include:** Costa Book Award-winning novelist **Ali Smith** and filmmaker **Sarah Wood** in conversation about the intersection of words, images, justice, and belonging. **Geoff Dyer** examining memory and identity in post war England, weaving landscape and self into a powerful cultural reflection. **Philip Hoare** delivering a striking, contemporary reading of *'William Blake'*, revealing the enduring urgency of his poetry and art. **Tony Peake** discussing his definitive biography of filmmaker and activist Derek Jarman, a visionary voice for queer and countercultural creativity. **Laura Cumming**, acclaimed art critic (The Observer) and author, exploring the emotional and cultural role of art within families and personal histories. **Melissa Benn** offering a deeply personal perspective on political legacy and generational activism through the life of her father, Tony Benn.

Join us for a day of inspiring conversation, reflection and discovery. For full programme details and ticket bookings, visit: [www.flipsideuk.org](http://www.flipsideuk.org). Follow us on social media: <https://www.facebook.com/FlipsideFestivalUK>, <https://www.instagram.com/flipsideinsta/>

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'GEOFF DYER  
'LAURA CUMMING  
'MELISSA BENN  
'PHILIP HOARE  
'TONY PEAKE**

**Saturday 27 September 2025, 10am-6pm**  
The Old Theatre, 10 Church Street, Framlingham, IP13 9BH

Tickets and further information from  
[www.flipsideuk.org](http://www.flipsideuk.org)



# SAXMUNDHAM MUSEUM

Saxmundham Museum is thrilled to have taken possession of a World War II Battledress that was actually worn on Day on 6th June 1944. The battledress was owned by Sergeant Ronald James Carpenter Cooper of The Royal Corps of Signals and was actually worn by Sergeant Carpenter during the D Day Landings on Juno Beach in Normandy on 6th June 1944. The battledress was kindly donated to Saxmundham Museum by Christine Cooper, daughter of Sergeant Carpenter.

The Museum arranged for it to be mounted and framed with special UV protected glass, courtesy of a small grant from The Association of Suffolk Museums. Donna Foster, from Saxmundham Museum stated *"We are thrilled to give a home to this exciting exhibit, which will be displayed alongside our other WWII memorabilia"*.

The photo (right) shows Christine Cooper and her sister with The WWII Battledress that was worn at the 'D Day' Landings

Our monthly film evenings continue to be popular and are usually held on the last Thursday of the month.

The next couple of months feature the following:

**Thursday 25th September: Barefoot In The Park (1967)** - a Neil Simon comedy starring Robert Redford and Jane Fonda.

**Thursday 30th October: Whatever Happened to Baby Jane?**  
- an eerie, shock laden thriller, starring Bette Davis and Joan Crawford.

To reserve your seat for one of our film evenings, please contact Peter and Sally on 07836 324692. Suggested donation £5 per head.



## Art Exhibition at Great Glemham Church

Gill Benson  
Katie Bicknell  
Jo Burbage  
Naomi Brangwyn  
Alison Calvesbert-Rearden  
Paddy Dean  
Alfie Demmon  
Neil Hanger  
Alan Kay  
Bob Keeley  
Rob Leveritt  
Diane Minns  
Cath Prince  
Rob Prince  
Alan Williams  
Ann Wilson



**Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> Sept and  
Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> Sept 2025  
11am - 5pm**

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## SAXFEST SUCCESS!

### **SaxFest 2025 delivers a feel-good weekend of music, community, and celebration**

The town came alive on Friday 8th and Saturday 9th August as SaxFest, Saxmundham's free community festival, welcomed over 2,500 visitors for a sun-drenched weekend of live entertainment, food, and family fun.

The festival buzzed with a fantastic community vibe, bringing together residents, visitors, and performers in a celebration of local talent. The festival grounds played host to more than 20 different acts, most of whom hail from Suffolk, delivering performances that ranged from soulful acoustic sets to high-energy tribute acts.

The headliners drew a huge crowd, with tribute acts UK Queen and ABBA Chique lighting up the main stage, alongside popular bands, such as Cat's Squirrel, Reno and Rome, and Smokin' Sons of Stratford.

Saxmundham Market also joined forces with SaxFest to create a lively pop-up market experience at Seaman Avenue play park. The market featured an array of artisan goods and handmade crafts, offering something for every interest. For families and children, the festival offered a packed programme of free creative activities, from music workshops and arts and crafts to circus skills and magic shows.

Festival organiser Terry Barrow said: *"We are absolutely delighted by the success of SaxFest. The support from our sponsors, tireless volunteers, and the wonderful local community made this weekend unforgettable. Perfect weather helped, but it was the spirit of Saxmundham that truly shone. We thank everyone who joined us in celebrating this special town and its talent."*

Early feedback has been overwhelmingly positive, with visitors praising the festival's atmosphere and community spirit.

**Photos: Steve Mac – Wild Bloom Studios**



## PISCES SWIMMING CLUB

The Pisces Swimming Club was set up in 1992 specifically to benefit people with any type of disability where being in water helps with mobility, or an invisible disability such as mental health issues. Our aim is to provide a friendly and safe environment where our members, together with their families and carers, can swim in comfort and privacy. We have all the equipment to assist people with physical disabilities. The Club pays a weekly fee to the Leisure Centre for the hire of the pool, which is exclusive to our members during our session. We meet on Saturday afternoons 2.30pm to 3.30pm so some along! We charge £2 a session and £1 for carers.

**Tel:** 07403384561. **Email:** [pisces.swimclub@yahoo.com](mailto:pisces.swimclub@yahoo.com) or [pisces.swimming@yahoo.com](mailto:pisces.swimming@yahoo.com)



# ALDE VALLEY SUFFOLK FAMILY HISTORY GROUP

**Interested in family or local history? Want to track down that elusive ancestor or date your old family photos?**

Following on from last October's highly successful event, the Alde Valley Suffolk Family History Group will be hosting another **Open Day on Saturday 27th September**, this time at the Long Shop Museum in Leiston. At least a dozen other groups and individuals will be taking part, with displays including wartime memories, farming in the 19th century, and aviation heritage, to name but a few. Among other attractions, to celebrate 200 years (to the day!) of Train Travel, there will be a special display of stations and trains on the East Suffolk Railway line.

Adding to the attractions, this year's event will also include a couple of talks; the first full of tips on using Ancestry to best effect; the second designed to help you understand how Ancestry DNA testing can help with Family History research. There will also be free advice and assistance with personal family history research, using computers and Internet.

Have you got any old family photos that you can't put a date to? Bring them along and let our expert Janet Huckle advise you – her help with dating photographs is always in demand.

Forever popular, Peter Drew has kindly agreed that his historic local postcards will be on display, and we also plan to have books by local authors for sale - after all, the Open Day is not only about promoting family history but also serves to highlight the rich heritage of the beautiful part of the world in which we live and the talented people who help bring it to life.

Light refreshments available. Free Parking at the Waterloo Centre, IP16 4HE. Visitors to the event will also gain free entry to the museum on the day.

**Monday 15th September: 'Transported to Tasmania' - Kelly Cornwell.**

Kelly Cornwell's talk to the Alde Valley Suffolk Family History Group is to help us discover more about female convict ancestors; demonstrated via a case study of a young girl convicted and transported, and her adventures in Tasmania. Kelly is a professional Genealogist, Family History Tutor and Speaker. She has a special interest in Transported Convicts and has experience of researching family histories across the UK, Ireland, the USA and Australia. Kelly started her business, 'Who am I? Family Tree Research' in 2016.

This hybrid talk takes place at the Fromus Centre, Street Farm Road, Saxmundham, IP17 1AL (behind the library), and, for members only, on Zoom. Kelly will be speaking to us on Zoom. The talk starts at 2.30pm. In-person attendees can just turn up, no need to book - at £1 for members, £3 for visitors, including tea/coffee/biscuits.

Only members can take part in our meetings on Zoom, but it only costs £8 for a year's membership – see <https://avsfhg.org.uk/membership/> and Zooming is free.

**Iron in the Blood – a true history of Suffolk's notorious 'Garrett Gang' – Fraser Hale.** A packed room at the Fromus Centre was treated to an informative, absorbing and highly entertaining talk about the famous Garrett family, by Fraser Hale, Director at The Long Shop Museum, Leiston. Many of the attendees were probably already familiar with the headline achievements of Elizabeth Garrett Anderson (as the first qualified Medical Practitioner in England and one-time Lady Mayor of Aldeburgh); her sister Millicent Fawcett (née Garrett), a prominent member of the Suffragist movement; and the earlier pioneering achievements of the brothers Richard and Newson Garrett (the entrepreneurial founder of Snape Maltings). However, Fraser's far-ranging talk also touched upon many other fascinating facts about the Garrett family and the evolution of the famous Long Shop itself. These included:

- The early passage of Harmon Garrett to Massachusetts circa 1639, where he established himself as a gunsmith in Charleston, leaving his wife and children behind in Wickham Market until his return to Suffolk in 1652, just 4 years before his death.
- The involvement of Garrett and Son's Leiston works with the Great Exhibition of 1851, where the business came away with more orders for their growing range of products than the owners believed they could fulfil in a timely fashion. The Garrett stand at the Crystal Palace was also one of the largest at the exhibition. Remarkably, the then owner, Richard Garrett (1807-1866) also paid for all of his employees to attend over a number of days, transporting them by ship from Slaughden Quay to Horseferry in London.
- A meeting at the Great Exhibition between Richard Garrett and Samuel Colt (inventor of the famous Colt revolvers) sowed the seeds in the former's mind for more efficient production of threshing machines, leading to the birth of the Long Shop, Leiston as the first production line in Britain and the World, predating American Henry Ford's version by half a century.
- At its peak during World War One, the Leiston Works employed around 2,000 people, with women representing the majority of the labour force. At this time, production was largely focused on the manufacture of munitions, producing some 7,000 12-pounder shell cases a week.
- In order to secure her qualifications as a doctor and, in light of the 'Establishment's attitude towards women, Elizabeth Garrett Anderson was obliged to learn French to the required technical standard, before studying medicine in France.
- Louisa Garrett Anderson, the lesser-known daughter of Elizabeth, followed her mother into the medical profession and, following the outbreak of World War One, formed the Women's Hospital Corps (WHC) with Dr. Flora Murray. Knowing that the British Authorities would decline any offer of help to tend to the needs of re-patriated soldiers, the WHC approached the French Red Cross and were permitted to convert Claridges Hotel in Paris into a hospital. Subsequently, they were given access to a 120-year-old workhouse in Islington, London, which became the famous Endell Street Hospital.



One of the questions asked of Fraser following his outstanding presentation concerned records of ancestors who may have worked at Leiston Works. Fraser explained that the Long Shop archives include a number of apprenticeship indentures; however, beyond that there was much reliance upon mainstream genealogical datasets, extant third party research and local knowledge. It was also suggested that Alde Valley Suffolk Family History Group was on hand to help with specific enquiries.

**Chris Broom**

**Further programme: all at 2.30pm at the Fromus Centre, Saxmundham:**

**Monday 20th Oct:** 'Great Ashfield House, Suffolk' - Dave Steward (Not on Zoom)

**Monday 17th Nov:** 'My two husbands, and the effect of war on young men' - Manette Baillie (not on Zoom). Please note this is a change from the originally published speaker

**Mon 15 Dec:** 'Non-conformist Ancestors' - Liz Yule (hybrid)

**The packed audience in the Fromus Centre listening to Fraser Hale**



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# PROJECT UPDATE

## SEPTEMBER 2025

You may have read, Sizewell C has announced the new shareholders of the project, with the government the largest shareholder, alongside EDF, Centrica, La Caisse and Amber Infrastructure. Further details on the final investment decision can be found on our website [sizewellc.com](https://sizewellc.com).

We also announced the location and designs of the College on the Coast. This post-16 education facility will be located on the eastern edge of Leiston on King George's Avenue, opposite the Sizewell C Ancillary Construction Area. The college will include an apprentice hub and have space for 150 students, 20 full-time staff and drop-in space for 50 apprentices.

We also launched the East Suffolk Trust (EaST), a new grant-giving charity, set up to enhance biodiversity and restore landscapes in east Suffolk and the wider county. This includes at least £78 million over the next 70 years, with the aim to make East Suffolk the most ecologically diverse and resilient area in England.

### OUT ON THE ROADS

Everyone in the area will have noticed a significant uptick in road improvements along the A12. We know this disruption can be annoying, but the various speed limits have been introduced for the safety of workers and road users. We continue to review speed limits and will adjust if appropriate.

We have installed average speed cameras along the B1122 and B1125 to enhance road safety in the new 30mph speed limit. On the B1122 the average speed cameras are in operation between Yoxford and Leiston, and the B1125 speed cameras are between the B1122 junction and Westleton. The speed limits are now enforceable with legal penalties which are enforced by Suffolk Constabulary. To further enhance this, from 11 August, permanent 30mph signs along B1122 will begin to be installed.

A further 30mph speed limit has been implemented along the A12 for the duration of the works around the Friday Street site, Northern Park and Ride site (Darsham) and Yoxford. This is to ensure the safety of the public and our workforce during construction. Further traffic calming measures have also been installed including lane management cones and lining. As work progresses, further traffic management and some smaller road closures will be required, which we will publish once timelines are confirmed.

We will start the upgrade work to the layby on the northern carriageway of the A12 near to the B1078 in mid-August. This work will help us to manage our Abnormal Indivisible Loads which are escorted by the police. There will be a lane closure along the dual carriageway section of the A12 during this time.

## FORUM

## SCHEDULE

All forum timings  
18:30 - 20:30  
(Arrival from 18:00)

<b>Southern Transport Forum</b>	Wednesday 3 September 2025	Stratford St Andrew Riverside Centre
<b>Main Development Site Forum</b>	Wednesday 8 October 2025	Leiston Town Athletic Association
<b>Northern Transport Forum</b>	Wednesday 5 November 2025	Darsham Village Hall

For more information and for all 2025 forum dates visit [sizewellc.com/community/forums](https://sizewellc.com/community/forums)

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# SAXMUNDHAM TOWN COUNCIL

## A Lasting Tribute to a much-Loved Saxmundham Character

Last month, a plaque was unveiled in Saxmundham to honour the late John Troughton, a familiar and much-loved local figure. John moved here from London over 25 years ago and was often seen watching the world go by from the Market Hall bench, where his friendly chats brightened many days.

Following his passing, townspeople placed flowers on what had long been affectionately known as 'John's bench'. Recognising the special place he held in local hearts, the Town Council agreed that a lasting tribute would be most fitting. High Street jeweller Jackey Phillips kindly offered to donate a commemorative plaque and worked with John's sister, Janice, to ensure the wording truly reflected John's life and the fondness felt for him.

The Council arranged for the installation of the plaque and the refurbishment of the bench, which was carried out at no cost to the Council, by the Community Payback Team, with paint generously provided by Janice.

The plaque celebrates John's lasting impact on the community. The Town Council thanks all involved for their contributions, ensuring that John's presence in this town centre will be remembered for years to come.



Janice and Jackey either side of John's commemorative plaque

## Market Hall Temporarily Closed for Flood Repairs

Following the severe storm in June, Saxmundham's historic Market Hall has unfortunately had to close temporarily to allow for assessment and repairs to flood damage. While the hall was initially brought back into use after specialist cleaning, a professional inspection revealed lasting damage to the flooring in several areas. To protect this valued community asset for the long term, repairs are now essential. We apologise for any inconvenience this closure may cause and thank residents for their understanding. We are especially grateful to the Fromus Centre for stepping in so quickly to host many of the clubs and groups that usually meet at the Market Hall. At present, we cannot confirm how long the closure will last, but we will keep the community updated as the renovation work progresses.

## Saxmundham Town Council in Action: Live updates from the Town Council's current projects, shaped by your priorities.

We've raised concerns over idling Sizewell C freight trains causing noise-disturbance at Saxmundham Station overnight. As a result, construction project managers have asked for trains to be held outside the station and we are arranging a joint meeting with councils, Sizewell C, and Network Rail. This remains a priority, and we'll keep residents updated.

We're aware of growing concerns over road closures and increased traffic from infrastructure projects. The Town Council will share updates on our social media – please follow us to stay informed.

Plans for new play equipment at Seaman Avenue have been redesigned following community feedback. We're now working to secure funding and make the improvements happen.

### Dates for your diary:

**Saxmundham Saturday Market:** Saturday 13th September; Saturday 11th October; Saturday 8th November, 9am - 3pm

**Saxmundham Christmas Fayre:** Saturday 6th December, 3 - 7pm. Festive market, grotto, entertainment, late-night shopping – fun for all the family in the town centre.

# Hello Saxmundham

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## ST ELIZABETH HOSPICE FUNDRAISER

Saxmundham Club hosted the Stephen Mew Memorial Cribbage Tournament on Thursday 31st July for the second year, raising money for St Elizabeth Hospice - what a thoroughly enjoyable evening it was too! As well as the games and a magnificent buffet prepared by the Saxmundham team, we raffled off some fabulous prizes and managed to raise a whopping £566.83 for the charity. People's generosity was overwhelming.

Stephen's family made the journey to the club to support us and present prizes. Last year's winners were the recipients of this year's 'bunch of bananas' for the least amount of games won. Nikki and Judy managed runners up and the winners this year, Alan and Rita Hostler, will have their names engraved on the shield.

Kelly from St Elizabeth Hospice was delighted to receive the cash and told us how much money is needed to help the charity support people living with progressive and life-limiting illnesses in our area. A happy bunch of people left the Club, all looking forward to next year.

**Lorraine Lloyd**



**Alan & Rita receiving the winners' shield**

## SAXMUNDHAM PRIMARY SCHOOL NEWS

We have had an incredibly busy summer term at Saxmundham Primary School and we would love to share some of our highlights with you.

Our year five brass pupils represented the school brilliantly at the annual WCET festival at Trinity Park. Every child in year five at our school has the opportunity to learn a brass instrument and to celebrate a year of hard work, children from schools across Suffolk come together to play together and make music. They performed a range of styles but the highlight had to be a rousing performance of 'I'm a Believer!' It's always amazing to see the progress that the children make in a year and we were complimented on how well our children performed.

Pupils in years two, three and four took part in music technology workshops led by Conductive Music. They used chromebooks to explore and create call and response melodies before moving on to learn about graphic notation and chords. They also explored how our bodies can be used as conductors - who knew that a high five could result in transferring musical sounds? Finally, pupils built a more advanced instrument, turning a ruler and tin foil into a piano! It was such a different experience and the children were fascinated.

We were extremely proud of our choir, who performed at Snape Maltings as part of a Celebration of Schools Music. They started the performance with an acapella performance of 'After the Storm' by Sarah Watts - a very brave thing to do on such a big stage! This was followed by Zaira in year six playing her own piano composition. The choir then sang two more original songs, including our school song 'Proud of Me'. We were the only school to perform our own compositions and the children sang so beautifully and with such confidence.

Pupils in year six were lucky enough to be invited to take part in a day of sailing and rowing. This was the first time many of our pupils had been out on the water and they showed real bravery and determination in everything they were asked to do.

They also really enjoyed jellyfish spotting along the shore! It was a beautiful day - many thanks to Aldeburgh Sailing Club for providing the children with such a wonderful experience that they will no doubt remember forever.

Our year six pupils also had the opportunity to spend a day looking around Anglia Ruskin University in Chelmsford. It gave them a great insight into possible options for the future.

Finally, we must say a very fond farewell to all of our amazing year six pupils who are moving on to secondary school in September. They have been such a fantastic group of children to work with: so kind to their buddies in reception, resilient, hardworking and creative.

We are proud of all of them and we wish them all the very best for their next adventures.





*Welcome inside*  
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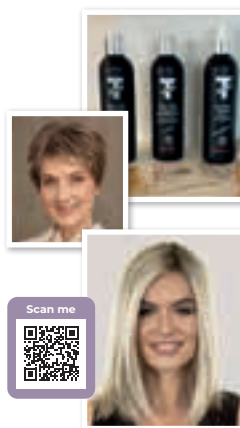
*Following on from the launch of my mobile wig business, Wigs & More To Your Door, back in May 2023, I am so excited to now officially open the doors to my new wig studio, situated in the IP12 area.*

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In addition to offering an appointment within the new studio I am still happy to provide my personal home consultations which have always been at the core of my bespoke business. This extra option, however, now allows me to offer my caring and compassionate service to more people and to be able to reach out to those who live outside my usual area.

So if you, or anyone you know, could benefit from my personal and friendly service, please don't hesitate to get in touch and I look forward to hearing from you.

*Allison*



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## BRIAN FROM MELTON

Melton's famous resident, Brian, shares his stories, views and observations on everyday life with his very own column, exclusive to The Tide Collection magazines.

The nights are pullin in now which mean the summer is coming to an end, but we hed sum luvly nights in the past few weeks int we? It will soon be time to get me autumn blankets out and put the summer duvey away.

I give the garden shed a coat of fresh stain, with a drop of that old one coat stuff, which needed three coats in the end as it wuz so watery. It was so running, I ended up with as much on me as the shed did.

I hed a nice time at the Aldeburgh Carnival, but blast that wuz busy and I got right fed up wiv people bumping into me cuz they were looking at their phones instead of watching where they were gorn. After waiting for nearly an hour for a tail of cod and chips and some scraps, I sat up on the beach ready to tuck in and along come a groot ol seagull who wanted my bit of fish. The ruddy thing got hold of my bread roll and I ended up sitting in the shelter and that seagull sat on the sea wall watching me the hole time.

They tell me there's a lot more warsp nests about this year. Me mate Ticket, he hed one in his old outhouse and only found owt wen he went in there to get his mower owt. He dint get stung but hed to get some bloke come out to get rid of it and he still int hed the bill.

I'm orf to Henham Steam Rally in September and I int bin there for a good few years. I like looking round all the old traction engines, horses and fairground organs. Like I say, I int bin there for years and the last time I went I took mother with me and all she did was moan about the smell of the smoke that was warftin our way.

I love the smell of steam and the sound the engines make. I've always wanted to hev a go on a proper steam train, so I might hev to do that one day.

Before I go, I just wanted to say that I'm gorn over to record a thing called a podcast soon, which you'll be able to hear on community radio or something or other. I int got a clue what a podcast is, but thas something to do with the interweb and I'll let you know more when I know wen as gorn owt so you can hev a listen.

**You can hear Brian from Melton chatting with Mark Murphy every Saturday morning at 9.20am on Alde and Blyth Community Radio and listen out for the new Brian from Melton podcast, also coming soon to: [www.abcradio.co.uk](http://www.abcradio.co.uk).**





# SAXMUNDHAM HORTICULTURAL SHOW

The annual summer Horticultural Show was held at the Fromus Centre, Street Farm Road, Saxmundham on Saturday July 19th. The number of entries was up from last year by about a third, and the Judges both commented on the standard of entries. Altogether a very successful show, with visitor numbers up as well!

John Witney



## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

### SEP 3 Free Magic Show for all ages!

Between 11.30am and 1.30pm, Daniel the Magician who's appeared at CentreParcs, the Cambridge Folk Festival and latterly SaxFest - will not only put on a magic show but also move among the cafe tables and provide close-up table magic! He's also president of the Ipswich Magic Society! The SMILE Cafe opens 9.30am - 2.30pm, in the main hall of the Saxmundham Fromus Centre (IP17 1AL)

**SEP 13 Saxmundham Saturday Market and Craft Fair.** 9am – 3pm at Fromus Square and the Market Hall.

### SEP 16 On y va! French Dance Club.

If you enjoy ceilidhs, salsa etc come and dance to Tour de Dance. 8.15 to 10.30pm at Fromus Centre, Saxmundham. £5 including tea/coffee or BYO. Tel: Lin 07919188549 or email Monica - frenchdancer2006@yahoo.co.uk

**SEP 20 Dance to Woodwose.** A trio based in UK and Germany. Self-penned and traditional tunes. 8 to 10.30pm at Saxmundham Market Hall. £10 in advance or £12 on the door. BYO refreshments. Contact: 07919188549 or frenchdancer2006@ya hoo.co.uk.

### OCT 11 Optics 'Music for the Soul'

**at Sibton Church.** A Night with Optics - Mowtown, Funk, Soul with gospel-influenced vocals. Light show, Bar. Food by Cheryl's Suffolk Catering. Tickets: (Cash only): Adults £15, U18s (must be accompanied by an adult) £5, on sale at the door, or from Weavers Tearoom Peasenhall, Peasenhall General Stores and Eventbrite. Ample free parking on the church's car park at IP17 2LX. Organised by The Friends of St Peter's Sibton (reg.charity Nr.1063822). Visit <https://www.sibtonstpeter.com>. 19.00 - 22.00 at Sibton Church (IP17 2NB).



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 Thurs 11th Sept at 7.15pm

**THE LIFE OF CHUCK** 15

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 Mon 15th - Thurs 18th Sept at 3.00pm & 7.15pm  
 Fri 19th Sept at 4.00pm & 7.15pm  
 Sat 20th Sept at 7.15pm  
 Sun 21st Sept at 6.00pm  
 Mon 22nd Sept at 3.00pm & 7.15pm  
 Tues 23rd Sept at 3.00pm  
 Wed 24th & Thurs 25th Sept at 3.00pm & 7.15pm  
 Fri 26th Sept at 4.00pm  
 Sat 27th Sept at 7.15pm  
 Sun 28th Sept at 3.00pm  
 Mon 29th Sept at 7.15pm  
 Tues 30th Sept at 3.00pm  
 Wed 1st Oct at 3.00pm

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 Mon 29th Sept at 3.00pm  
 Tues 30th Sept & Thurs 2nd Oct at 7.15pm

**THE ROSES** 15

Sun 28th Sept at 6.00pm

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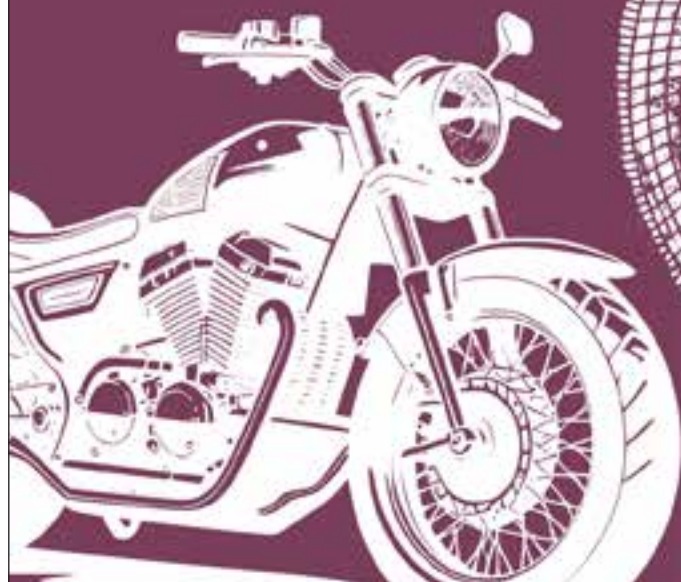
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# SOLAR FARMS: THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE DIVERSITY

As District Councillors, we are often involved in planning applications for solar farms in our communities. These can be controversial, and it is understandable when communities resist yet more energy development in our countryside.

The government plans to triple solar generation by 2030. Suffolk, as a largely flat agricultural county, can expect to see a good proportion of this generation. Large solar farms (over 50 MW) are decided by national government. Smaller applications go to the District Council for approval. These need to satisfy statutory consultees, and to meet planning 'tests' against national planning policy. There may be good reasons to refuse a mega-solar farm if it is placing an undue burden on a host community. The views of communities are always taken into account, but ultimately any application can only be refused on the recommendation of a statutory consultee, or failure of the planning tests. A particular preference of this Council is more small-scale Community Energy solar schemes which are planned and owned by the community, bringing electricity and any excess profits directly to residents in the host parish.



**Ground-mounted solar panels on a farm in East Suffolk**

## Do solar farms threaten food security?

There are some misconceptions about solar farms, which are important to address, given the urgent need to decarbonise our energy system and play our part in the global battle against a warming planet. One persistent allegation against solar arrays on farmland is that they threaten food security. Yet recent reports by DEFRA present climate change, in the form of increasing extreme weather events, flooding and drought, as the greatest threat to food security. DEFRA also cites soil degradation as a result of intensive farming, biodiversity loss, water insecurity (a real issue here in Suffolk), and ecological breakdown, particularly the loss of insects. They do not cite solar farms as a threat. Solar farms are one of the cheapest and quickest renewable technologies to implement and so play an important part in the phase out of carbon emissions that lead to climate change. More than this, they present significant opportunity for nature recovery and improved soil health, as solar panels mounted on former intensively farmed land allow the soil to regenerate, free from pesticides, tilling and soil compaction. This enables a greater diversity of species to thrive and ultimately improves the land for food production at the end of the solar lease.

In some cases, food production can even continue. So, in fact, solar generation can support food security. With additional planting and management, which should always be prioritised in any solar scheme, it can also increase the abundance of insects and other plants and animals.



**Rooftop solar panels on a farm building**

## Why don't we put all solar panels on brownfield sites and rooftops, instead of farmland?

In an ideal world, we would, but it's not so simple. Any solar farm is only viable once it has land rights and a connection to the electricity grid. However, following decades of inaction to prepare our national grid for the transition to renewable energy, there remains limited capacity for new connections, and developers are led by those sites which can absorb new generation. Solar developers are also in competition with housebuilders for brownfield sites, so that these become commercially unviable due to the limited lifespan of solar farms, against the costs of converting the sites. We should be placing more solar generation on rooftops, and recent government announcements on a Rooftop Revolution are welcome, as is the long overdue Future Homes Standard, putting solar panels on new homes by default. But rooftop solar can only be part of the equation. Solar farms are designed to produce high volumes of electricity that feed into the power grid to supply millions of people, to electrify our cars, heat our buildings and power industry. Rooftop solar panels are primarily intended for self-consumption in homes, businesses and community settings.

## We are here to work with you.

As we work within a national planning system, communities may find it a challenge to stop a solar farm in their community. But your councillors will always support you to engage with developers, preferably before plans are submitted for approval. Together we can help shape solar projects to minimise impacts on the community, maximise the gain for nature, and get the most payback from community benefit schemes.



**Councillor Katie Graham**

Katie.Graham@eastssuffolk.gov.uk.

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# THE SAXONS 5 MILE RACE

## A celebration of running

The Saxons are celebrating their twentieth anniversary as a running and fitness club based at Carlton Park in Saxmundham.

A highlight of the club's running calendar is the hosting of the annual 5 Mile Race, which takes place this year on Sunday 5th October. On offer is a multi-terrain course on footpaths, fields and roads, open to all runners aged 15 and over and this year is part of the Suffolk Grand Prix fixtures 2025. A popular junior fun run is also held before the main race.

This year's Race Director is Sarah Vick. Sarah has been a member of Saxmundham Running & Fitness Club since it began in 2005 and is also the Club's Treasurer. Thanks to the Club's input and with hard work and training, Sarah has achieved success in races across the globe. Competing at Championship level and representing Great Britain, she has run 19 marathons with an impressive personal best time of 3hrs 40 mins 1 second.

*"Members owe a lot to Gordon Merfield, the founder of the Club and Lifetime President. Without Gordon the Saxons wouldn't be in existence. Gordon got a number of us, who joined initially to try different things. He'd always done triathlons so there were people doing triathlons, adventure races, duathlons, cross country; it wasn't just road running."*

Sarah progressed to running three or four marathons a year and following the Felixstowe half marathon qualified for a place in the 2007 New York Marathon. That same year a Club place enabled Sarah to take part in the Great North Run. Sarah said: *"That was a great experience as it was at the height of Paula Radcliffe's success. Myself and other club runners were in the pen behind and saw her warm up. That was my half marathon personal best, a time of 1 hour 33 mins 55 seconds. If I could get anywhere near that now I'd be ecstatic!"*

Other of Sarah's running highlights include the 2008 British Masters Marathon Championships in Anglesey when world champion hurdler Colin Jackson presented Sarah with a gold medal. In 2009, at the European Half Marathon Championships in Aarhus, Denmark, Sarah won a bronze medal and Gordon lent her his Great Britain top to stand on the podium.

Today Sarah continues to represent the Club at events across the county. In twenty years the Club has grown from approximately 30 to over 80 members.

*"I'm proud to have been a part of The Saxons for twenty years. Our race this year is an opportunity to take part in a friendly local race with a great atmosphere and we're proud to be part of the Grand Prix Series this year. We are also extremely grateful to our sponsors for their support."*

The annual Saxons Five Mile Race takes place at 11 am on Sunday 5th October at Carlton Park, IP17 1AT. The junior fun run starts at 10.15 am and costs £3 to enter, and the main race for ages 15 and over starts at 11 am. Registration costs £17 or £15 for affiliated club runners.

Each runner receives a commemorative medal and goody bag, plus cakes and refreshments are available to purchase.

The Saxons would like to thank all the 2025 race sponsors including My Mortgage Planner, Marshall and Lilley Opticians, Fairweather Law, Flick & Son, The Poachers Pocket, Priority Ltd, Fuller Fencing Ltd, Stay in Suffolk, Christies Care, Wag & Bone, Emmerdale Farm Shop, Coes department store and Angel Podiatry.

Peter Crawley, Director of My Mortgage Planner, with branches in Ipswich and Saxmundham comments: *"The Saxons Five Mile Race is a fantastic community event and I see running as a brilliant way to bring people together - regardless of ability or experience. That's one of the things I love most about the sport; it's inclusive, accessible, and encourages everyone to challenge themselves in a supportive environment. I'm really looking forward to being there with my family and colleagues, soaking up the atmosphere and supporting everyone taking part. It promises to be a fantastic community event and we're proud to support something so positive in the local area"*

To enter the race visit [www.thesaxons.org.uk/saxons-5-mile-race](http://www.thesaxons.org.uk/saxons-5-mile-race)



Peter Crawley with Sarah Vick



Sarah Vick with Colin Jackson in 2008.





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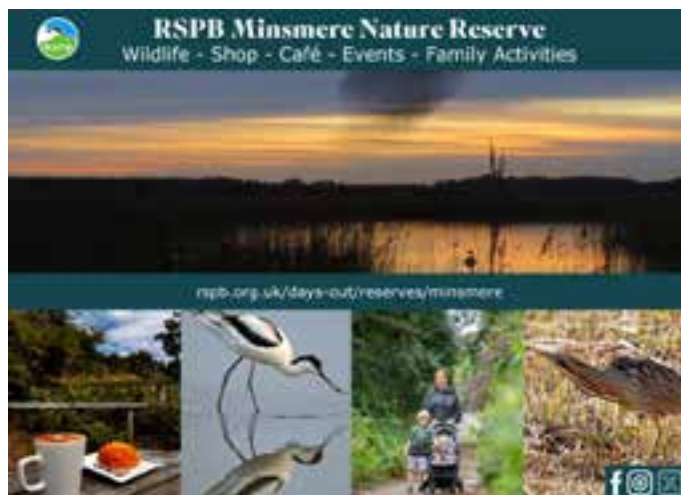
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# FROM YOUR COUNTY COUNCILLOR...

The Saxmundham Community Festival - blessed with fine weather - has come and gone, the commemoration of the 80th anniversary of Victory over Japan (VJ) has taken place - I laid a wreath at a memorial at Leiston's Long Shop Museum - and school holidays are coming to an end, so perhaps we should regard summer as over. Certainly, the Meteorological Office does so, as it regards summer as only the months of June, July and August. I prefer the more traditional understanding of the seasons, with autumn clicking in at the equinox on 21st September, meaning that, as you are probably reading this early in the month, that there are still a few more days of summer left.

But this is a time of year for taking stock, as the calendar moves on remorselessly and the light evenings grow ever-shorter. If you have been able to have a break away from home, I hope it went well and that travel arrangements worked as they should - flawlessly! Certainly, now at the County Council it is 'heads-down' time, remorselessly until Christmas, when the now customary extended break is much needed. I have to prepare the County's budget for the 2026-27 financial year, and that is a long-drawn-out, complicated task, as by law we have to present a balanced budget, with projected expenditure being no more than anticipated income. As I write this, the first projections, allowing for inflation and continued rising demand for our care services, show a spending gap of £33 million. To put this in some context, the County Council this year has a budget of £804 million, but reducing this gap to nil is the primary task in the period between now and Christmas.

Most of the work has to be done by then as the proposals have to be presented to the cross-party Scrutiny Committee for comment, then formally put before the County's Cabinet before being debated and voted upon by a full meeting of the County Council on 12 February 2026. All of this is necessary so that Council Tax bills can be calculated and sent out to you by the end of March.

Although the County Council spends a great deal of money, a very large proportion has to be applied to services which we supply under the law of the land. The number of school-age children with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND) and those with Educational and Health-Care Plans (EHCP) have doubled over the last decade, and continue to rise, leading to ever-greater expenditure, which is unfunded. Suffolk County Council is carrying a deficit of over £100 million whilst waiting for national Government to act. Our problems are not isolated as much of the upper tier of local government across England is suffering financially and reforms are promised in a Government White Paper this autumn. Elsewhere, our obligations to adults also continue to grow, with supplying services such as day centres to adults with disabilities and paying the care home fees in full of residents whose savings fall below £21,000.

All-in-all, this costs hundreds of millions of pounds each year and finding savings in this sensitive area is almost impossible. But savings and efficiencies within the wider budget will have to be identified over the next few months.

Apart from these evident financially problematic social care areas, which consume 77 pence in every pound spent by the County Council, there are success stories. Suffolk Community Libraries are now wholly back under the control of the County Council. There was much debate, protest and concern about bringing them back under our control but the transfer proceeded smoothly and the service our much-treasured libraries offer is unchanged. Increasingly we hope that libraries throughout Suffolk (and there are 45 of them across the county) will become community hubs. Actual book-borrowing numbers fall each year, but libraries continue to be busy places because of the range of associated services they offer, fuelled by the dedication of their staff. Saxmundham library is a fine, typical example. If you haven't visited our branch in Street Farm Road recently, why not do so soon?

Highways are another area where everyone has strong views. We are plagued by potholes during the winter months because they are difficult to fix properly in those wet, frosty months. But at this time of year the backlog has been dealt with and other activities such as re-surfacing roads and renewing white lines is underway successfully. We certainly do not have the funding necessary to keep our roads to the very highest standard which they deserve but, by prioritising available expenditure carefully, the highest hazards are always addressed quickly, and general maintenance carried out as and when funding allows.

Every pound we spend needs to be spent wisely and productively, but it is true that we never have enough money to do all we want. But we can do startling things. An example you may be aware of is the new Gull Wing Bridge over Lake Lothing in Lowestoft. Opened last September it has had a dramatically positive effect on the traffic of the town. The funding was shared roughly 50-50% with the Government and the bridge was completed at a total cost of around £146 million. Recently I was at a meeting on Lowestoft quayside and, by chance, the bridge was raised. It was an impressive sight and I know Lowestoft is trying hard to reap the benefits that the new bridge has brought to Suffolk's second town.

Back in Saxmundham we are still being plagued by works connected with the Sizewell C development. I have not been able to get satisfactory explanations as to why the widespread imposed 30 mph speed limits, especially on the A12, start so far before the work and continue so far after it. But I will not give up, as I owe an explanation to you as citizens and electors. Unfortunately, I think we all know that community disruption in many forms, will continue whilst huge amounts of earth are moved from and around the site, new and improved roads are constructed, and other predicted and unseen problems occur. The development should be complete before the end of the 2030s so patience is a virtue that we will all have to learn, willingly or not...

As usual, please feel free to contact me on any matter which is within the responsibilities of the County Council. My contact details are below.

**Richard Smith**

[richard.smith@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:richard.smith@suffolk.gov.uk) 07545 423817



# SIZEWELL C COMMUNITY FUND AWARDS

An East Suffolk radio station has been awarded £30,000 from the Sizewell C Community Fund to increase its hours of transmission and broadcast live from community events. Alde and Blyth Community Radio, better known as ABC Radio, said it could now buy specialist equipment and licences to reach more local listeners. The internet-based station, which broadcasts from Saxmundham, was among six diverse projects to have been awarded grants in the latest round of funding.

Wayne Burns, Director of Programming at ABC Radio, said: *"Having the equipment to do outside broadcasts is really important to all the directors and presenters. We can now invest in equipment which will not only enhance what we already do but also help to make us future proof."*

*"We want to get out there, engage with our listeners and spread the word. It's a real boost and something quite special, and all thanks to the Sizewell C Community Fund."*



Wayne Burns

Managed by Suffolk Community Foundation, the Sizewell C Community Fund – worth £23m in total – awards grants to projects in the East Suffolk Council area which promote the economic, social or environmental wellbeing of the communities closest to and most impacted by the construction of Sizewell C, and which enhance people's quality of life.

**The latest recipients of the fund, sharing a total of £490,000,**

**are:**

**ABC Radio**, which serves the Leiston and Saxmundham areas, has been awarded £30,000 over three years. The community radio station will use the money to buy extra equipment and licences so that it can cover more outside broadcasts and increase its hours of transmission from four days a week to seven by 2028.

**Alde Valley Suffolk Family History Group**, which has been given £9,562 over three years to develop a new, user-friendly website with added functionality which volunteers will use during outreach sessions.

**Leiston Book Festival**, which has been awarded £54,137 to run the festival for the next three years, as well as outreach activities such as workshops, talks and school visits.

**Leiston-cum-Sizewell Town Council**, which has been given £10,000 to create a new, accessible path to Haylings Pond so that more people can enjoy the area. It comes after Leiston Youth and Community Angling Society were awarded Sizewell C Community Funding last year to buy angling equipment and carry out an environmental survey.

**The Long Shop Museum** in Leiston, which has been given £331,625 over three years to repair and improve the building, create new exhibits and hold community activity sessions and restoration workshops.

**Suffolk Football Association**, which has been awarded £53,832 towards the cost of replacing the 3G pitch and upgrading the floodlights at Barnards Meadow Football Centre in Lowestoft. The pavilion will also be refurbished to create a venue that can be used as a community health and wellbeing hub.

The latest awards take the total distributed since the fund was launched a year ago to nearly £2.5m. For more information about the Sizewell C Community Fund, visit :[www.suffolkcf.org.uk](http://www.suffolkcf.org.uk) or call 01473 602 602. The fund is open year-round. The current round closes to applications on 28 September.

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