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FEBRUARY 2026

# SAXMUNDHAM NEWS



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## A NOTE FROM OUR EDITOR



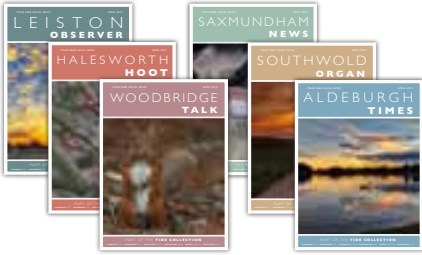
Aside from the numerous road closures, sometimes with alternative routes closed also, 30mph limits and endless traffic lights I feel I must jump on the band wagon and mention pot-holes! I am now of the opinion that it may be cheaper to have an increase in council or road tax to get them fixed. Admittedly my car has seen better days but I recently had a puncture, followed by a puncture of my spare, in use whilst awaiting repair of cracks in the original wheel – expense x 3, all caused by pot-holes that aren't apparent until you have a few vertebrae dislodged by what feels like a fair ground ride drop - without the fun! Road rage rant over.....

Please drop me a line to boost your business by advertising in the Saxmundham News or any of our other five titles. My email is: [lou@tidecollection.com](mailto:lou@tidecollection.com)

### Quote of the Month

We are not permitted to choose the frame of our destiny. But what we put into it is ours.

Dag Hammarskjold



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# SAXVETERANS BREAKFAST CLUB

Saxveterans Breakfast Club (SVBC) has been operating for a year now and has almost forty members and is growing rapidly. Keith Cartwright-Jones of Saxmundham Judo Club has been instrumental in forming the group with Jane Anderson and paving the way for a recognised veterans' group in the area.

SVBC is run for veterans in principle, to offer peer support for those living within our community, to combat veteran social isolation by providing a relaxed, safe and welcoming space for all ranks and services (serving and veterans) to meet, share experiences and build camaraderie over breakfast and regular social meet ups.

During the Christmas break a walk was organized by Stuart (ex-para) from Sizewell to Thorpeness in which members were joined by Military Preparation College for Training (MPTC) Juniors in Ipswich.

16 to 19 yr olds got an opportunity to enjoy fresh air, exercise and talk to veterans of their experiences in the forces.

A shot of homemade sloe gin, upon finishing was very welcome, thank you Stuart. If you wish to join us and be included in the many events and breakfasts that are planned for 2026 please get in touch with either Jane or Keith:

Keith: Email: judokeef@gmail.com; Tel: 07939 059788  
Jane: Email: saxmundhampao@gmail.com



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# SAXMUNDHAM TOWN COUNCIL

**Your monthly update, February 2026 - Delivering improvements and working on your priorities.**

**Current work in progress, driven by what matters to you.**

## Have Your Say on LionLink

The consultation for LionLink, a proposed electricity link between the UK and the Netherlands, is now open until 10 March 2026. As part of the project, NGV is looking to build a converter station near Saxmundham, with underground cables and related infrastructure.

## How you can get involved:

- View or collect the full consultation documents at the Town House during normal opening hours.
- Share your thoughts – the Town Council is reviewing the proposals and will submit a formal response.

## Town Council Response:

The Council is currently scrutinising the consultation material in detail and will prepare a robust and considered response to the proposals within the consultation period. The Town Council's initial review is:

- The Town Council remains opposed to the proposal to site a converter station on the outskirts of Saxmundham.

- NGV's planting plans are encouraging, but more needs to be done to offset the environmental impact. The Town Council is encouraging restoration of the historic Great Wood, lost decades ago.

The Town Council will share updates as the process continues. Visit [www.nationalgrid.com/national-grid-ventures/lionlink/](http://www.nationalgrid.com/national-grid-ventures/lionlink/) for more information.

## Town Council 2026-2027 budget approved

The Town Council has approved its budget and precept for the 2026-27 financial year. The precept, which is the Council's portion of Council Tax, will be £181.65 per year for a Band D property - equivalent to £3.49 per week. This represents an increase of £16.51 per year, or 31p per week, compared with last year.

## People and projects shaping Saxmundham

### Market Hall Update:

The Market Hall, a much-loved and historic community space, has been closed since August following flood damage caused by a severe summer storm. The closure has been keenly felt, particularly by the clubs, groups, and societies who regularly use the hall. We're pleased to report that contractors are replacing the damaged flooring.

The Market Hall is currently expected to reopen in March, and we look forward to welcoming users back very soon. Keep an eye out for news of events and activities returning to the Market Hall in the coming weeks.

## Community Calendar

**Town Council Meetings: Monday 9th February @ 7pm, Monday 9th March @ 7pm & Monday 13th April @ 7pm**  
**Saxmundham Saturday Market: Saturday 11 April 2026**

## Short updates and reminders

- The deadline for community grant applications is Wednesday 25 February. Any local group, charity, or organisation can apply for funding to support projects that benefit Saxmundham residents. To apply, email [community@saxmundham-tc.gov.uk](mailto:community@saxmundham-tc.gov.uk) or download an application form from [www.saxmundham.org](http://www.saxmundham.org).
- The Town Council's Annual Delivery Plan 2026-2027 is now available to view at [www.saxmundham.org](http://www.saxmundham.org). It outlines the priorities for projects and services, translating the Council's five-year strategic plan into clear actions for the year ahead.
- East Suffolk Council have confirmed that Saxmundham's new Street Cleanser has started work. They will be in Saxmundham for four hours per week, helping to keep our town looking fresh and tidy.

# BEAT THE WINTER BLUES WITH IP17GNS

When winter feels long, cold or a little lonely, **Beating the Winter Blues** offers a simple invitation: come in, warm up, and enjoy some company. Open every Sunday, this friendly community space is designed to help people feel comfortable, welcome and connected

Drop in for a **free bowl of hot soup and a warm drink**, pull up a chair and take the afternoon at your own pace. You might choose to chat with others, play a game, read a book or bring along a craft project - or you can simply sit quietly in the warmth. There's no pressure to join in and no need to explain why you've come.

Beating the Winter Blues is open to everyone and especially welcomes those who may be finding it hard to heat their homes, who feel isolated, or are just in need of a friendly place to spend time. Children are very welcome too, though the sessions are kept calm and relaxed. There's no booking, no cost and no expectations - just a warm room, good company and a reminder that you don't have to get through winter on your own.

Don't forget we have a range of free activities across the week for you to enjoy. Find us at the Gannon Rooms in Saxmundham - everyone is welcome!

**Social Supermarket & Café:** Tuesdays 9.30 - 11:00am. Shop a range of subsidised groceries to help stretch your budget. (£5 to shop, café is free)

**Gannon Games:** Wednesdays 12.30 - 3pm. Games club with refreshments and a little light rivalry.

**Gather & Grow:** Thursdays (term time) 9.15 - 10:45 am. Stay and play session for pre-schoolers.

**Men's Breakfast:** First Sunday of every month 9.30 - 11am. Have a fry-up and a chat.

**Beating the Winter Blues:** Sundays 11am - 4pm. A calm, warm space - company, a bowl of soup and hot drinks.

# CITIZENS ADVICE EAST - STAYING WARM

As temperatures drop, many households are feeling the pressure of rising energy bills. Whether you are struggling to pay for a tank of heating oil, worried about a prepayment meter running low, or living in a cold, draughty home, East Suffolk Council and its partners have several support schemes available to help you stay safe and warm this winter.

For those in urgent financial need, the Local Welfare Assistance Scheme (LWAS) can help. Managed by Suffolk County Council, it offers financial help for essentials like heating and electricity. Generally, this is targeted at households with an income below £30,000 and limited savings. If you have not received one of these payments since 1st October you can apply on-line at <https://residents.suffolk.gov.uk> or ask Citizens Advice to help you apply. If you use a prepayment meter and are at risk of self-disconnecting because you cannot afford to top up, East Suffolk Council has a dedicated support team, they can be contacted by emailing [prepay@eastsuffolk.gov.uk](mailto:prepay@eastsuffolk.gov.uk) or calling 07769 366229. You can also contact Citizens Advice for access to vouchers.

The Surviving Winter Scheme, run in partnership with the Suffolk Community Foundation and Citizens Advice, provides direct grants toward heating costs for elderly and vulnerable households in fuel poverty.

For residents who rely on heating oil, the council has partnered with Eastern Savings and Loans to offer interest-free loans of up to £500. This allows households to purchase a bulk delivery of oil and spread the cost over 12 months, avoiding the high prices often associated with smaller, emergency orders.

The Warm Homes Healthy People project from East Suffolk Council can provide help and advice to make your home more energy efficient and therefore cheaper to keep warm. There is further information at: [www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/housing/energy-efficiency-and-warm-homes](http://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/housing/energy-efficiency-and-warm-homes).

Warm Homes Suffolk offers significant grants for home improvements such as loft and cavity wall insulation, air source heat pumps, and solar panels.

These grants are typically available to homeowners or private tenants whose properties have an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating of D or lower, and a household income of less than £36,000. You can check your eligibility by visiting [www.warmhomessuffolk.org](http://www.warmhomessuffolk.org) or by calling 03456 037 686.

Beyond financial aid, the Council supports a network of 'Warm Welcomes' (formerly known as Warm Spaces). These are local libraries, community centres, and church halls that open their doors to provide a heated environment, a hot drink, and a friendly face during the day.

If you are struggling, do not wait for a crisis to occur. Contact the above schemes or us through our website: [www.caes.org.uk/email-service](http://www.caes.org.uk/email-service). You can also phone us on 0808 278 7866 (lines open 10-2 Mon-Fri). We have a dedicated Energy Team who can help you.

Our website [www.caes.org.uk](http://www.caes.org.uk) also gives details of our drop-in outreach sessions and how to make an appointment at one of our offices.

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# BENHALL & STERNFIELD HISTORY GROUP

**Edward George Ayden known as Ted (1897 - 1971)**

## Do you remember Ted Ayden?

He used to run the Post Office in Benhall Green and knew everyone in Saxmundham and the surrounding villages. He was appointed Assistant Postman in Saxmundham in 1914 but as well as delivering telegrams he told old stories, wrote poems, sang and performed, was a Saxmundham First Aider in WWII and was instrumental in getting Benhall Club built and the annual Flower Show started. He was quite a character!



**1939 Saxmundham's Mobile First Aid Unit under Dr. Ryder Richardson - Ted Ayden far right.**

A lane was named after Ted in Benhall (Ayden Way) and the Benhall Village sign was erected in memory of Ted and can still be seen today at the entrance to Benhall Green off the B1121.

Perhaps you remember Ted with his performing dog Pal? Graham Smith from Saxmundham remembers, "Ted used to dress him up. Ted would take off his hat and put it on the dog, then take off his horned rimmed glasses and put them on the dog, then his pipe, then his scarf and so on!"



**Ted Ayden & Pal entertaining children at Snape Village Hall**

Graham Smith, Bob Sharman and Benhall's centenarian, Manette Baillie, will be co-hosting a conversation about Ted Ayden on **Friday 27th February 2026** at 7pm in Benhall Club IP17 1HE.

An oral recording of Ted will be played. Everyone welcome. Come and listen or join in with your own memories!

## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

### **FEB 7 Waterloo: A Tribute To ABBA.**

The iconic lyrics composed by Benny and Björn are sung in wonderful, captivating harmony from the opening refrain to the final sing-along chorus featuring a full live cast & band, stunning costumes, and breathtaking choreography. 7.30pm at Spa Pavilion Felixstowe. Disclaimer: Please note that this is a tribute production and is not affiliated or endorsed by the ABBA Estate. Email: [boxoffice@felixstowespa.co.uk](mailto:boxoffice@felixstowespa.co.uk), phone: 01394284962. Website: [spapavilionfelixstowe.ticketsolve.com/ticketbooth/shows/117366](http://spapavilionfelixstowe.ticketsolve.com/ticketbooth/shows/117366)

### **FEB 8 & 22 Halesworth Harmony**

**rehearsal at The Cut.** Come along for a free taster session - no experience is necessary, everything is taught by ear, and you'll receive a warm welcome. 10.30am – 12.30pm. For further details, email: [halesworth.harmony@gmail.com](mailto:halesworth.harmony@gmail.com).

**FEB 10 RSPB Minsmere Safari.** Our guides will take you on an exclusive tour in our 4x4 vehicles, introducing you to some of Minsmere's special wildlife, habitats and hidden history. An excellent photographic opportunities. Four people maximum per vehicle. All ticket prices include reserve entry fees and a hot drink in the cafe. Email: [minsmerer@rspb.org.uk](mailto:minsmerer@rspb.org.uk), phone: 01728 648281. Website: [events.rspb.org.uk/minsmerer](http://events.rspb.org.uk/minsmerer)

**FEB 18 Aldeburgh and District Local History Society (ADLHS) Lecture.** The new year brings fresh discoveries, with Sally Sibley giving an update on the latest archaeological work at Sutton Hoo following the return of the Time Team to the world-famous Anglo-Saxon burial site. The talk will reveal some of the findings from the most intensive period of excavation there in 25 years. 6pm at the Old Generator Station, Kings Field.

**FEB 24 Halesworth Repair Cafe @The Cut Arts Centre, 2 - 4pm**

**FEB 26 Saxmundham History Society meeting. 'GHQ Auxilliary' by Christopher Pratt.** We meet on the fourth Thursday of the month at 2.30pm in the URC, Chapel Road, Saxmundham. IP17 1BJ. Visitors £3. Annual membership £18. Enquiries to Jenny 01728 604608.

**FEB 27 Everyman Folk Club. Steve Turner.** With one of the best voices on the folk scene, he accompanies himself on the cittern, as well as playing mandolin and tenor banjo. A masterful performance of traditional and newer songs. Tickets £10 in advance or £12 on the door. 7.30pm at The Riverside Centre, Gt Glemham Road, Stratford St Andrew. IP17 1LL. Email: [everyman@wheatstone.co.uk](mailto:everyman@wheatstone.co.uk)

# PROJECT UPDATE

FEBRUARY 2026

There has been good progress on the Sizewell C project in the first month of 2026.

We will continue to keep the community informed throughout the year and our Works Tracker will be continuously updated. We will also be making further improvements throughout the year including overlaying the Causeway one.network traffic management website with the Works Tracker to ensure consistency and live traffic management updates. To sign up for email and/or SMS updates, please create an account by visiting [www.szcworkstracker.co.uk](http://www.szcworkstracker.co.uk) and clicking the subscribe button.

A key focus of the project in the first half of 2026 is getting the Friday Street and Yoxford roundabouts linked to the A12 and open to the road network, which we expect to be in late spring. This will require necessary traffic management (two-way traffic lights and cones) in place as the roundabouts are prepared to be connected to the A12, and weekend closures of

the A12, which are outlined on the Works Tracker. Both the Southern Park and Ride (Wickham Market) and Northern Park and Ride (Darsham) will open in phases, with full openings later in the year.

From the New Year, works along Sizewell beach will start including, the construction of the temporary Main Bulk Import Facility and installation of the Temporary Marine Outfall pipeline, which will eject clean surface water from the main site. This will require footpath restrictions, which will be lifted over the weekends (17:00 Friday - 17:00 Sunday).

The first part of the bridge across the Site of Special Scientific Interest, that links the Temporary Construction Area to the Main Construction Area, has been successfully installed. The bridge will streamline vehicle movement between our sites and will reduce traffic on the local road network.

Thank you for your patience as we work towards the completion of many of the road schemes and as always if you need to speak to us please contact us via the **FREEPHONE 0800 197 6102\***.

## FORUM SCHEDULE

**Forum timings**  
2026 | 18:00 - 20:00  
(Arrival from 17:45)

|                                 |                |                                      |
|---------------------------------|----------------|--------------------------------------|
| <b>Northern Transport Forum</b> | Wed 4 February | High Lodge Darsham                   |
| <b>Southern Transport Forum</b> | Wed 4 March    | Stratford St Andrew Riverside Centre |
| <b>Community Forum</b>          | Thurs 19 March | Sizewell Sports and Social Club      |

For more information and for more forum dates visit [sizewellc.com/community/forums](http://sizewellc.com/community/forums)  
\*Calls to 0800 numbers are free from UK landlines. Call costs from mobile and international numbers may vary.

VISIT THE WORKS TRACKER SITE



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# FROM YOUR COUNTY COUNCILLOR...



January was a busy month at the County Council and that busyness will continue for me through until 12 February when the annual debate on the proposed budget for 2026/27 takes place, and with it comes the likely rise of 4.99% in Council Tax for the next twelve months.

I wish there could be no rise at all. Indeed, I presented four consecutive annual budgets in the 2010s when Council Tax rates remained frozen. Alas, times are very different now! The Government has instructed local government that it expects all local fundraising powers to be utilised to the full. If we fall short then we run the very real risk of having grants we receive from central Government reduced accordingly, so we really have to do what we are told to avoid what is already a very difficult financial position all-round from becoming even worse.

I have said in this column before, but it deserves worth repeating, that over 77% of all our net spending goes on social care and its associated public health costs. That leaves under 23% of each pound spent to cover everything else, including funding the Fire and Rescue Service, repairing roads, disposing of domestic waste and a host of other duties. Put bluntly, but honestly, local government does not have the funding resources it needs to do its job properly.

I wish I knew where that money could come from, as levels of taxation following last November's budget are set to reach the highest level they have been at outside wartime conditions, and finding new sources is difficult in the extreme.

So, we have to manage as best we can within the finite resources we have. This is why the roads are not in the near-perfect condition they should be as, with limited funds, the most urgent defects have to be prioritised and tackled first, with less serious problems dealt with as and when funds allow. Safeguarding vulnerable children and caring for disabled and elderly adults have to be the priorities, alongside the statutory duties borne by the County Council, such as paying in full the care home fees for residents whose savings fall below £21,000. This duty alone costs around £300 million each year, and its impact needs to be judged against our proposed net total spend throughout Suffolk in 2026/27 of £850 million. Surely the facts speak for themselves?

Local Government Reform is now looming large in County Council thinking. From 1 April 2028 there will be Unitary Government in Suffolk, replacing the present two-tier system. Whether that will be a 'One Suffolk' solution as the County Council wants to see, or the less efficient and far less cost-effective system of three Unitary Councils covering Suffolk as the District Councils and Ipswich Borough Council propose, is a decision to be made by the Government. But whatever solution is chosen, a huge amount of administrative work is needed over the course of the next two years to ensure everything is in place for the new arrangements work from day one. These arrangements for change are not just complex, but expensive too, and it has not yet been agreed how and from where this extra cost is to be found.

A single future Unitary Council has been costed and, when in operation, will save money for you and me as Council Taxpayers.

The three-Unitary system will cost additional money and will make no net savings.

Three Unitary Councils will have boundaries not based at all on historical geographical dependencies, meaning that Stowmarket will for some unknown reason be within the new East Suffolk (when it traditionally looks towards Bury St Edmunds in West Suffolk).

Felixstowe and south Suffolk will be amalgamated with Ipswich, which has not been received favourably. I know from much experience that people do not understand the division of power and responsibilities between the present County Council and East Suffolk District Council, let alone having further challenges with previously-understood and comfortable common boundaries and community relationships being severed. And I have to say that if the three Unitary system is chosen, then Suffolk will face difficulties with three authorities covering the one county, each consisting of just over 250,000 population, which is very small in the unitary world, and they all risk quickly becoming financially unstable. That cannot be good for those of us who love dearly all parts of our county of Suffolk.

We should know what the Government decides in March, hopefully. Only then can the really detailed, forensic planning begin and that huge tranche of transitional work commence. And at the same time much extra work also needs to be done to prepare for the election of a Mayor of Suffolk and Norfolk in May 2028. The holder of that Office will be very influential and will be crucial to bidding for funds from central Government and in also attracting other investment (and jobs) into our region. The very least we can do is prepare for that election so that whoever wins can hit the ground running and be an effective advocate for us all from day one. I know the work being done now will ensure that situation becomes reality, just as the future administrative government of Suffolk will work smoothly from the 2028 day of transition.

Challenges and difficulties along the way over the next two years must and will be overcome!

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 07545 423817

What's On at  
**Leiston**  
 Film Theatre

Fri 6th & Sat 7th Feb at 7.15pm  
 Sun 8th Feb at 6.00pm  
 Tues 10th Feb at 7.15pm  
 Wed 11th Feb at 3.00pm  
 Thurs 12th Feb at 7.15pm

**RENTAL FAMILY** 12A

Fri 13th & Sat 14th Feb at 7.15pm  
 Sun 15th Feb at 6.00pm  
 Tues 17th & Wed 18th Feb at 2.00pm  
 Thurs 19th Feb at 3.00pm

**KANGAROO** PG

Tues 17th & Wed 18th Feb at 7.00pm  
**AVATAR: FIRE AND ASH** 12A

Fri 20th, Sat 21st, Tues 24th &  
 Thurs 26th Feb at 7.15pm

**PRIMATE** 18

Sun 22nd Feb at 6.00pm

**HAMNET** 12A

Sun 22nd Feb at 3.00pm  
 Wed 25th Feb at 7.15pm

**I SWEAR** 15

Fri 27th Feb at 7.15pm  
 Sun 1st Mar at 6.00pm  
 Mon 2nd Mar at 1.00pm  
 Tues 3rd Mar at 7.15pm  
 Wed 4th Mar at 3.00pm  
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# ALDE VALLEY SUFFOLK FAMILY HISTORY GROUP

## 'Army Records' – Graham Bandy

This talk will include researching soldiers' papers, regimental diaries & uniforms. Graham Bandy has had a passion for military history since he was a young child. He is a very well known speaker and lecturer for the Society of Genealogists.

The talk takes place on **Monday 16th February** at 2.30pm, in person at the Fromus Centre, Street Farm Road, Saxmundham, IP17 1AL (behind the library) and, for members only, on Zoom. The speaker will be talking to us on Zoom. No need to book – just turn up - free for members and £5 for visitors, including tea/coffee/biscuits. Good, free car-parking. Only members can take part in our meetings on Zoom, but it only costs £10 for a year's membership – see <https://avsfhg.org.uk/membership/> (website under construction) and Zooming is free.

If you have any photographs of military uniforms or medals that you would like to ask Graham Bandy about, please send them to [sec@avsfhg.org.uk](mailto:sec@avsfhg.org.uk) several days before the talk.

## Tracing Your Non-Conformist Ancestors – Report of a talk by Liz Yule

Marking its final monthly meeting of 2025, Alde Valley Suffolk Family History Group (AVSFHG) was delighted to host a return visit from the seasonally named Liz Yule, Director of Research at the Institute of Heraldic and Genealogical Studies, Canterbury.

Liz began her talk about non-conformity with a thought-provoking slide charting the see-sawing of the dominant religion in England following the Reformation and the inevitable confusion for worshippers. Having neatly set the scene with definitions of several key non-conformist groups, Liz then walked us through numerous key dates and associated legislation impacting religious persuasions. Spanning a period of some 300 years, these included the 1558 Act of Uniformity, that required all to attend Church every Sunday, the 1689 Act of Toleration, providing Protestant dissenters with some freedom to worship away from the Anglican church, and the Catholic Relief Acts of 1778 and 1829.

Liz ended this part of her absorbing talk with the surprising fact that in 1851, 87% of the Welsh population was classed as non-conformist.

Her attention next turned to the records created by non-conformists, pointing out that no formal registers are likely to be found before the beginning of the 18th century, with Catholic registers generally absent until the 19th century. In this section she highlighted the creation of the Protestant Dissenters Library at Dr. Williams' Library, London. Largely devoted to birth records of Baptists, Independents and Presbyterians, this collection amounts to some 87,000 records, some dating back to 1716.

Before concluding her talk with an interesting case study focused on her East Anglian LEMAN forebears, Liz also highlighted various 'clues' signposting non-conformist ancestors. Some of these were more obvious, including the descriptions of the deceased in burial registers as 'Papists', others were more obscure, for example biblical forenames such as Abraham, Isaac or Ruth, not reflective of Protestant monarchs.

There followed an extremely lively question and answer session during which it was suggested to Liz that further research might reveal an ancestral connection with the Sir John Leman High School in Beccles. A couple of other attendees also referenced pictures in their possession of baptisms in local village ponds, again suggesting non-conformist beliefs.

**Chris Broom**

**Further programme:**

**Monday 16th March: Members' Brick Walls**

**Monday 20th April: Annual General Meeting**

**Monday 18th May: Apprenticeship Records by Richard Holt**

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# BENHALL PRIMARY SCHOOL NEWS

Squirrels have had a very busy December! Alongside rehearsing for their nativity, they have been writing letters to Father Christmas and learning all about shapes.

Acorns have been learning how to write newspaper articles inspired by the story *The Lonely Beast*.

In Art, they have also been exploring printmaking techniques and creating some fantastic designs.

Oaks Class have been enjoying their Antarctica topic, writing diary entries in role as crew members on Shackleton's expedition and bringing their learning to life through drama. They also joined a live assembly from Antarctica with explorer Robert Swan.

In maths, they have been tackling multiplication and division, while in science they continued investigating shadows and how they change.

Woodlands have been reaching the exciting conclusion of *Brightstorm* - what a fantastic book it has been! In PE, they have been developing their teamwork and communication skills and applying them across a range of activities.

Our Nativity was truly something special this year, each performance filled with joy, heart and wonderful talent. Pupils performed in front of the school, family members and to Alde Valley Lunch Club. We couldn't be prouder of everyone involved.

The children were absolutely delighted to visit the Ipswich Regent theatre to watch the pantomime.

Thank you to the PTA who helped make this unforgettable outing possible with their generous contribution.

We were thrilled to have four pupils compete in the cross-country finals at Hartismere, with two finishing in the top five. An amazing effort from every one of them!

Our Christingle service was absolutely beautiful. Such a special moment to come together and it was wonderful to be joined by so many of our families.

This year, we have gifted every child in the school a book for Christmas. Each book was selected by the class teacher because they believed that they would enjoy it. A massive thank you to Miss Jeni for supporting us with this initiative.

We had an amazing morning with the St. Catharine's College Choir! Beautiful live music, festive sing-alongs and heartfelt readings made it truly special.

KS2 had a brilliant time at the panto' at Alde Valley - full of laughs, music and magic. Extra special to see some former Benhall students shining on stage!

A Huge thank you to our amazing PTA for coming in to make Christmas crafts with all of our pupils this month!

Prospective parents are welcome to come for a visit. Paul Parslow-Williams or Daniel Millican are always keen to offer a personal tour of the school. Please call us to book an appointment on (01728) 602407.



## SAXMUNDHAM W.I.

President Jo welcomed members to our January meeting. The subject of the meeting was this year's W.I. Resolutions. Last year each W.I. was invited to send in a resolution which members feel we could discuss, research and run a campaign to raise awareness.

The National W.I. began to mount campaigns in 1918. Campaigns have covered social, health, and environmental issues, to increase public awareness and to bring about change. In 1954 a campaign to 'preserve the countryside against desecration by litter' became 'Keep Britain Tidy.'

In 1964 'Smoking in public places' was raised and in 1971 a resolution was about 'Plastic Pollution' to name a few.

This year's resolutions covered 'Accessible Public Toilet Facilities', 'Action on Women's Homelessness', 'Getting closer to nature for physical health and mental wellbeing', 'Women self-checking for early diagnosis of the rare vulval cancer' and finally 'The need for volunteers to visit and befriend children in the care system'.

Members of the committee gave a presentation of the various resolutions.

Each of our members had one vote to choose the resolution they felt was most important: the Action on Women's homelessness came first. All W.I.'s will submit their chosen resolution and the most voted one will go to the National A.G.M. in June.

Saxmundham W.I. meets on the third Thursday of the month in the U.R.C. Chapel Road, Saxmundham.

The next is on **Thursday 19th February**, with Eric Punak's poems and songs.

# S K C CHURCH

**A Benefice comprising of St. John's Church, Saxmundham, St. Mary & St. Peter's Church, Kelsale @ St. Peter's Church, Carlton.**

It is amazing how time can feel both fast and slow. I feel like Christmas wasn't that long ago but then January also feels incredibly long. Now we're in February that means the arrival of Lent on Wednesday 18th. Lent is one of those times that, at the outset, feels like it will take forever and then suddenly Easter is upon us.

Lent is an opportunity for reflection and self-discipline. How you respond to that sentence partly depends on your personality. Some of us have a natural tendency towards reflection and find discipline and structure helpful. Others find this sort of thing more difficult. I am definitely someone who leans towards structure and discipline!

For forty days Christians all over the world will take time to think about the choices and actions that they take. Many will choose to give something up to give space for reflection and discipline, others will choose to take something up instead.

The time of Lent reminds us of the time Jesus spent in the wilderness and his trials and temptations. I find it helpful to be reminded that Jesus went through the same temptations that I do, it also brings to mind the Christmas message that Jesus is Immanuel, 'God with us.'

Interestingly, this year Lent and Ramadan coincide. In Ramadan Muslims dedicate themselves to fasting (giving something up), praying, reflection, and charity/good deeds. I find it fascinating that this year roughly half of the world will be spending time in reflection at the same time.

Whether you believe in God or not, can I invite you to reflect this Lent? You could ask yourself the question 'do my actions match the type of person I want to be?' In church we talk about this and whether our actions match what we believe. Why not join us at some point and reflect with us?

If you're the type of person to take something up as a challenge why not try coming to church this Lent too?

With love,

**Dave Preece**

Rector Saxmundham with Kelsale cum Carlton

**Sunday 1st February: 9:30am** informal service in St John's, Saxmundham, and **11:00am** Holy Communion in St Mary and St Peter's, Kelsale.

**Tuesday 3rd February: 10:30am** reflective Holy Communion in St John's, Saxmundham.

**Sunday 8th February: 9:30am** informal service in St Mary and St Peter's, Kelsale, and **11:00am** Holy Communion in St Johns, Saxmundham; 6pm Worship and Prayer Evening

**Sunday 15th February: 9:30am** informal service in St John's, Saxmundham; **11:00am** Holy Communion in St Mary and St Peter's, Kelsale.

**Sunday 22nd February: 9:30am** informal service and **11:00am** Holy Communion both in St John's, Saxmundham; **4pm** Wild Church outside Kelsale Church

**St. Peter's Church, Carlton.**



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