

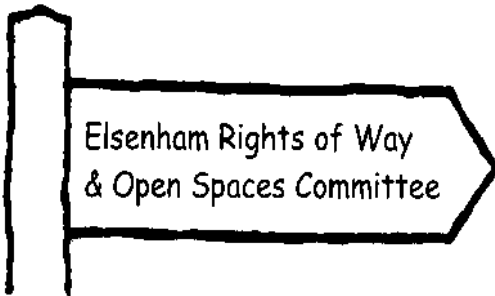
Elsenham News



Our very own regular Cookery Corner (see page 45) might be the best starting point to enter the Village Bake Off Contest– see page 6.



Nicola Berg with Layla Ellis and her sister, Scarlett see page 33 for the full story



A Good Friday ramble and more. See page 21



It could be a magic night for you. There's a lot happening at the Bowls and Social Club. See page 39



Elsenham Village Regular Monthly or Quarterly Activities

Parish Council 1st **Monday** of month 7.45pm (excl. Bank Holidays) Memorial Hall
 Elsenham EAGLES 4th **Monday** of month 7.30-9pm Bowls and Social Club
 Henham & District Garden Soc. 1st **Tuesday** of month 2 for 2.30pm Memorial Hall
 Community Choir 1st & 3rd **Tuesday** of month 7-8.30pm Village Hall
 Natter Night 2nd **Tuesday** of month 7.30pm The Crown
 Life Drawing 2nd & 4th **Tuesday** of month 7.30-9.30pm Village Hall
 Village History Society 2nd **Wednesday** of month quarterly 7.45pm Memorial Hall
 Women's Institute 3rd **Thursday** of month 7.45pm Memorial Hall
 Church Lunch Club 2nd & 4th **Friday** of month 12.30pm Memorial Hall
 Women's Wellness Breakfast Club last Friday of month 9.30am Bowls & Social
 Elsenham Farmers' Market last **Saturday** of month 12.30-2.30pm Village Hall

April 2026 diary

Fri 3	Good Friday Ramble	Playing Field Top Car Park 2pm
Sat 4 & 18	Bingo	Bowls & Social Club 7 for 7.30pm
Tues 7	District Councillors' Surgery	Memorial Hall 9.30am
Tues 7	Henham & District Garden Soc.	Memorial Hall 2 for 2.30pm
Tues 7 & 21	Elsenham Community Choir	Village Hall 7pm
Thurs 9 & 23	Community Supermarket	Memorial Hall 1.30-3.30pm
Fri 10 & 24	Church Lunch Club	Memorial Hall 12.30pm
Mon 13	Parish Council Meeting	Memorial Hall 7.45pm
Tues 14	Natter Night	The Crown 7.30pm
Tues 14 & 28	Life Drawing	Village Hall 7.30pm
Thurs 16	WI	Memorial Hall 7.45pm
Sat 25	Farmers' Market	Village Hall 12.30-2.30pm
Sun 26	Cricket Club Open Day	Stansted Rd, CM24 8ST 3-5pm
Mon 27	Elsenham Eagles	Bowls & Social Club 7.30pm



Mobile Library
Every third Saturday stopping at Glebe End
9.30am to 10am Next visits: 4 & 25 April 2026

Elsenham Village Regular Weekly Activities

Day	Time	Activity	Location
Monday	9.30-10.30am	Zumba	Memorial Hall
	10.30-11.30am	Health walk	Start at De Mandeville Green
	4-4.30pm	Rascals (3-4yrs)	Memorial Hall (term time)
	4.30-5.30pm	Rascals (5-7yrs)	Memorial Hall (term time)
	5.30-7pm	Rascals (8-12yrs)	Memorial Hall (term time)
Tuesday	9.30-11.30am	Village Café Coffee	Memorial Hall
	12.15-1pm	Touchpoint Food Share	Memorial Hall
	4.45-5.45pm	Rainbows	Memorial Hall (term-time)
	4.45-5.45pm	Beavers	Ugley Village Hall (term-time)
	6-7.15pm	Cubs (Wolf Pack)	Ugley Village Hall (term-time)
	6-7.30pm	Brownies	Memorial Hall (term-time)
	7.30-10.30pm	Tennis Club night	Tennis Courts
Wednesday	8pm	Fitness Yoga/Pilates	Memorial Hall
	9.45-11.30	Tots and Toddlers	Memorial Hall
	6.30-7.15pm	Women's strength and Mobility	Village Hall
	7-9pm	Scouts	Ugley Village Hall (term-time)
Thursday	7.30pm	Aerobics	Elsenham Village Hall
	9-10am	Teddy Bear Music	Memorial Hall (term-time)
	6-7.15pm	Cubs (Bear Pack)	Ugley Village Hall (term-time)
Friday	6.45-7.45pm	Jump Fit	Elsenham Village Hall
	10-11am	Little Fishes	Memorial Hall (term-time)
Saturday	8.15am-1pm	Tarte au Citroen	Playing Field
	8.45am-12pm	Youth boys & girls football	Playing Field
	9-11.15am	Forte Dance Class	Memorial Hall
	8.45-9.30am	Little Kickers Mighty	Village Hall (term time)
	9.35-10.20am	Little Kickers Junior	Village Hall (term time)
	10.25-11.10am	Little Kickers Tots	Village Hall (term time)



Now it is getting warmer and a bit lighter, we are all getting excited about summer not too far off, why not come out and celebrate by visiting our **village Farmers Market on Saturday March 28. We are open from 12.30-2.30pm.** So, if you haven't been for a while, do pop by. You will not be disappointed.

We have a great range of products being sold, and we try hard to ensure that we only sell consumable produce or allied products by small independent sellers. Everything is as local as possible.

Our sellers can vary from month to month, and their products can also be seasonal, but the quality is always tip top and there is always something for everyone. If you are not sure there will be anything you want, why not come and meet a friend, enjoy a coffee and cake and look at the produce at the same time, it's a win, win!

Most of the produce is homemade, so not only do you get these fabulous treats once a month, you are also supporting local businesses as well as coming together with our fabulous community, you might even make a new friend!

These are the dates for the first half of 2026: -

25th APRIL
30th MAY
27th JUNE

The markets for the rest of the year are on **JULY 25, AUGUST 29, SEPTEMBER 26, OCTOBER 31 and NOVEMBER 28 (all things festive & more!).**

No charge for entry; just enjoy and immerse yourself in all the gorgeous produce!

We look forward to seeing you.

Best wishes
Elsenham Farmers Market Team

THE NEWS REPORT

From The Editors



As we emerge from the winter months and make our way through spring, our village organisations and associations begin to bring us their events and plans for the rest of the year.

In this issue you will find everything from the opportunity to compete in a village bake off (see page 6) to a night of magic (Elsenham Bowls Club, see page 39) through to the Cricket Club open day (see page 27).

If all these events weren't enough, we have all the regular contributors hoping to bring you something of interest. Organisations like the History Society (see page 11), the WI (page 15) and the Community Choir (page 29).

If you truly want to do something in the village, or to do with the village, we are sure you will find it here in Elsenham News.

To understand more about what is happening in your community and make sure you stay aware of what's likely to affect you, we would encourage you to read the reports on pages 7 (Parish Council) and 9 (Development Developments).

Finally, let's hope that summer comes early and we can enjoy the many outdoor sports and events in and around the village that are on offer.

Elsenham, a great place to live.

The Editorial Team
Elsenham News

Regular features

Parish Council	7	Elsenham Cricket Club	27
Development Developments	9	Community Choir	29
Village History Society	11	Aubrey Buxton Nature Reserve	31
U3a	13	St Clare Hospice	33
Elsenham WI	15	Newport & District Flower Club	35
District Councillors' Report	17 & 27	100 Parishes	37
Elsenham EAGLES	19	Bowls Club & Social Club	39
EROWOS	21	Parish Registers	41
Ray's Reflections	23	Book Review	43
Church Calendar	25	Cookery Corner	45

JOIN US FOR THE

Charity Village Bake off



SUNDAY 28TH JUNE 2026 2PM - 5PM
Elsenham Bowls & Social Club

£5 to enter your cake into the competition! Cakes must be ready for judging by 2:15pm latest.



You never know you might even get yourself a handshake from one of our judges!

Cakes must be NUT FREE!

After judging, all cakes to be sold to raise money for charity. There will also be teas, coffee and soft drinks. So please bring a friend and make an afternoon of it!



There will be **RAFFLE PRIZES TO BE WON!** All proceeds will also be going to charity.

Cupcake and cookie decorating for the children!

Supporting Habitat for Humanity

The money we raise will help Habitat for Humanity support families and communities in need.

Later this year, I'll be travelling to Nepal to help build homes with a volunteer team and all monies we raise will go into this amazing work.

SCAN HERE TO FIND OUT MORE AND DONATE OR DONATE ON THE DAY

Looking forward to seeing you all for a fun afternoon.

Thank you all,
Colette, Leigh Drive, Elsenham



ELSENHAM PARISH COUNCIL

By Fiona Gardiner, Clerk & RFO

parishclerk@elsenhams-pc.gov.uk ☎ 07456 791727

📄 www.elsenhams-pc.gov.uk/

📄 www.facebook.com/elsenhams/



Over the past month, hedge maintenance has been carried out around the village. A new grass cutting contractor has been appointed and will begin work from April 1.

The Flowerbed Committee have been very busy planting bulbs and maintenance has started on the village flowerbeds. Their ongoing planning and efforts will soon start to show as the spring flowers begin to emerge.

We are also pleased to report that the last of the vacant allotment plots has now been let.

The Climate Change Committee have been making good progress. They have arranged for new LED bat and insect-friendly lighting to be installed in the village streetlights. In addition, they will be purchasing several bird boxes, which will be installed around the village soon.

Due to increased use of the village clothes bank, the collection frequency has been temporarily increased until a second clothes bank is installed.

The Traffic and Parking Working Group have recently carried out assessments of parking concerns on Station Road and New Road. Once the report is prepared, the group will be contacting Highways to discuss the findings and any next steps.

A new footpath has been installed through Alsa Wood, from the entrance on Isabel Drive to the motorway bridge. We have had wonderful feedback so far from walkers, especially those with prams and wheelchairs. The path has already settled nicely. Thanks to Elsenham Rights of Way and Open Spaces Committee for helping to making this happen.

Lastly, we're currently looking for a few more volunteers to join our Community Speedwatch team. It's a simple but important way to help keep our village roads safer by monitoring vehicle speeds and encouraging drivers to slow down. If you'd like to volunteer, please contact me for more information.

The next Parish Council meeting will be on Monday 13 April at 7.45pm in the Memorial Hall. All residents are welcome.



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Elsenham News - We want your ideas!

Now we are online only, we want to appeal to as wide an audience as possible. To help us, we would like your ideas on any improvements or additional services we could provide as part of an online service. This could include areas such as:

- Articles
- Interactive features
- Organisations
- Layout
- Guest articles

Please send your ideas and thoughts to: elsenhamnews@hotmail.co.uk We hope you will just take a few minutes to drop us a line and give us your thoughts. Thank you.

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DEVELOPMENT DEVELOPMENTS

By *Graham Mott* ☎ 812516 ✉ motts@grahammott.plus.com



Uttlesford District Council's Planning Committee met on 11 March, and approved the full application by Bloor Homes for another 130 dwellings ('Phase 3'), with access from Crocus Drive on Henham Road through the schemes for 350 and 200 homes already under construction.

The application was approved on the basis that a development for 110 was included in the new Local Plan, which is expected to receive final approval at a meeting of the District Council on 25 March. Planning officers explained that the extra 20 is allowable because the Local Plan is dependent on UDC being able to show a five-year housing land supply. They know the supply is there, but Government has not got round to publishing the figures which UDC has given them, and Uttlesford are in a state of slightly nervous uncertainty. No, it doesn't make much sense to me either.

The developers of the site off Robin Hood Road have commenced their depredations by felling trees along the boundary, including two at the north of the site, one sturdy oak and one field maple. They were not scheduled for removal in their *Tree Report*. Uttlesford Enforcement explained that the trees were outside the 'red line' boundary on the plans which indicates the extent of the development. There was no Tree Protection Order and therefore the developers can do what they like. Highways reckoned that the sturdy oak was probably on their boundary, but weren't inclined to get even slightly excited about it..

Objections were also raised with Uttlesford that work has taken place before the planning condition is satisfied whereby there must be a Construction and Environment Method Statement agreed before commencement. Highways and the Parish Council have both made objections to the draft which has been submitted. Enforcement's Alice in Wonderland explanation is that as the condition has not been discharged, they are unable - or unwilling - to enforce its provisions. This surely makes no pretence to make even the semblance of sense.

Essex Highways have improved the footpath through Alsa Wood leading from Isabel Drive to the footbridge over the motorway, with funds made available as part of the agreement for the Dandara site, now completed, comprising 99 homes divided between Woodland View and Crown Drive. The amount from Dandara was nowhere near sufficient; Highways made up the remainder, and also agreed to surface a short stretch beyond the end of Sandford Road, omitted when Dandara improved the remainder of the footpath running north alongside Alsa Wood. The quality of Highways' work is greatly superior to that achieved by developers' various improvements. For instance the surface of the Dandara footpaths is poor, both alongside Alsa Wood and at the northern end of Crown Drive, being unduly sandy and mucky when wet. The management company for the Franklin Drive development seems to have given up on their attempts to provide a surface for the trim trail which does not have channels gouged into it by heavy rainfall.

Developers get away with a lot, all things considered.

ELSENHAM VILLAGE HISTORY SOCIETY

By Mike Rea, Secretary ☎ 813634 ✉ evhs12@hotmail.co.uk

🌐 www.elsenham-history.co.uk



It was in 1968 that Hammer Studios released their film *Witchfinder General* that chronicled the career of Matthew Hopkins, Witchfinder. Was this a figment of a screenwriter's imagination or did he actually exist?

Well, yes he did. He was mainly active across East Anglia from 1644 until his death in 1647 and claimed to hold the office of Witchfinder General, although that title was never bestowed by Parliament. Over these few years, he and his partner John Stearne were responsible for the deaths of more women accused of witchcraft than in the previous sixty years.

Essex in particular had large witch trials the largest being in St Osyth in 1582 involving 14 accused. During the largest period of persecution in 1645, 28 women were convicted in Manningtree of which 19 were hanged. Between the time of the first executions in 1566 until the last in 1647 at least 74 witches were hanged in Essex and 36 died in gaol. This was largely the work of Matthew Hopkins who wrote a book - *The Discovery of Witches* – in 1647 not long before his death of tuberculosis around the age of 26. Methods outlined in Hopkin's book were later used at the infamous Salem Witch Trials in America in 1692 and 1693.

By comparison in Hertfordshire, there were far fewer executions, around fourteen, that started around 1595, the last being in 1649 or thereabouts. Early records cannot be trusted.

So, why was Essex harder on witches than other counties? It's not really known but its closeness to London and the seat of Government led to the early adoption of laws. Also, its several trade routes to Europe led to an exchange of ideas. Hertfordshire by contrast was further away from London and looked on Essex as being rather too zealous.

Elsenham had very few witches. The first trial of an Elsenham witch was in 1576 when Alison Berden was accused of bewitching Thomas Barclay such that his life was despaired of. She pleaded not guilty and was indeed found not guilty. In 1646, Deborah Naylor (widow) was accused at the quarter sessions that she bewitched to death John and George Pakeham but found to be innocent.. She was indicted again in 1650 for John Pakeham's murder but the case was dismissed.

Our next meeting will be held on Wednesday June 10th at 8pm in the Memorial Hall. Our speaker for the evening will be Martin Rose who will talk about the "Railways Around Audley End". Having recently written a book on the same subject, our speaker is extremely knowledgeable and this promises to be a most interesting and informative evening. Do please come along, all are welcome and visitors pay just £2.00. We look forward to seeing you there.

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By *Julia Cook*



Had he lived Freddie Mercury would now be in his 70s. Many in the u3a are his contemporaries and this was demonstrated when Danielle Barnett began her presentation called “Freddie’s kind of Magic” with a recording of Freddie singing.

Joy crept into the room and radiated through the sizeable audience, until everyone was clapping along to the always stirring sounds of Queen. Danielle, a super enthusiastic presenter, supplied a review of a life that produced an iconic soundtrack for the time.

Another large audience sat entranced by the expertise of Dr.Helen Fry, who gave a talk recently on the incredible Intelligence work that took place under the leadership of MI6 Colonel Thomas Kendrick during World War Two. Helen’s historical research uncovered the fascinating work carried out at Trent Park, Wilton and Latimer House, where German military elite prisoners were held. They were treated extremely well, little knowing that the walls surrounding them “had ears” and they were being bugged continually. Deep below them, their conversations were listened to closely and the vital military information gleaned from their conversations substantially affected the war effort.

Yet more interesting and delightful talks are in store at the u3a. To give examples of the variety, talks will include: ‘Wildlife of Britain and Europe’ by photographers Graham and Mary Brace and Mike Dodsworth on ‘The Witches of Essex’.

The treats at every monthly meeting, can be seen on the u3a website. The website also presents information about the **40** different activities available through the u3a. To give but one example, the Gardening group, in April, will be visiting the gardens of Benington Lordship - an ancient private home with wonderful landscaping and an impressive diversity of plants.



Elsenham Tots & Toddlers Group



We meet in the Memorial Hall on Elsenham Playing Field

Wednesdays at 9.45am to 11.30am (Term Time only)

All are welcome - Mums to be, babies & toddlers up to 5years - with mum or dad, grandparent or carer

MEET OTHERS

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Lots of Toys



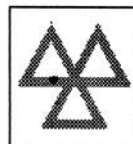
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ELSENHAM WOMEN'S INSTITUTE

By Moyra Jackson ☎ 647351



I am writing this on the fourth foggy day in a row; where is the lovely spring sunshine I was hoping for?

Bringing his own sunshine to our meeting this month with "Reach for the Stars" will be Paul Read. You might be thinking you have heard about this talk before, and you would be right. Paul was due to speak to us before but sadly had to cancel at the last minute, so we are delighted that he will be coming along this month. Paul's talk is all about his experiences as a dresser in London's theatreland, where he worked with many household names. The competition for members is something beginning with "S".

Over the next few months we have some excellent meetings lined up for you:

May 21 – Annual Meetings

June 18 – "How to Age Well" with Maria Fernandez

July 16 – Helen Wiseman, local water colour artist

Our membership year starts this month, so there is no better time to join. We are always happy to welcome visitors and new members so please come along, especially if you are new to the village. It really is a great way to get to know people and make friends. If that's not enough, then there's always cake!

In addition to that we have a lot of outings and events coming up too including Essex Federation's Annual Meeting to see Patrick Grant from the Great British Sewing Bee and a night out at Hunters Meet. There are also our trips to The Crown for natter night and our lunch group's monthly meet ups.



Details of our programme, events and activities can be found on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram – search for Elsenham WI. Visitors are welcome to our monthly meetings so please come along. We meet at 7.45pm on the third Thursday in the month in the Memorial Hall.

Elsenham WI – There's a lot going on!

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DISTRICT COUNCILLORS' REPORT

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☎ 07941 880279

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☎ 07713 074656



This is the final year that funding will be available through the Ward Initiative Grants. Over the years we have been proud to support many local groups and village organisations. We have helped Elsenham school with a number of projects to help maintain its welcoming and supportive environment for village children, contributed for fire alarms in the Memorial Hall, supported the Scouts and the Buffy Bus.

Council vehicles used for essential services, including bin lorries and grounds maintenance vans, are now running on hydro-treated vegetable oil (HVO) made from waste oils. This change will reduce the council's carbon emissions from these services by around 34%.

A few reminders:

- Small electrical items should be placed in a plastic bag on top of your rubbish bin (please remove batteries first).
- Please leave your bins with the handles facing the road. (We know lots of you do – thank you).
- All public bins in the village can be used for dog waste.

Business Awards – Sustainable Uttlesford sponsored some businesses. Entrepreneurs, innovators, and community champions came together for networking, recognition, and celebration at the Uttlesford Business Awards in March.

Attendees enjoyed tasty light refreshments prepared by students from Stansted Airport College and live performances by jazz musicians. The Uttlesford Business Awards are a celebration of the passion, innovation and commitment that define our local business community. It was a delight for us to attend and present awards. There was an award for Customer Service, (we are not on the judging panel). We hope to see Elsenham Post Office nominated for the Customer Service Award next year, so please remember to submit nominations when they open next year.

Domestic Abuse Support – J9 Initiative with Uttlesford.

Domestic abuse can affect anyone and often remains hidden. The J9 initiative helps people experiencing abuse access support safely and discreetly within their community. Venues displaying the J9 Safe Space logo are places where someone can quietly ask for help, access information, and use a telephone to contact the police or specialist support services. Simply asking for “J9” alerts trained staff that support may be needed.

The training is delivered by Alpha Vesta, a leading organisation in domestic abuse awareness, and is supported locally by the Uttlesford Community Safety Partnership, which includes Essex Police and Uttlesford District Council. Nearby

Continued on page 27



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ELSENHAM EAGLES (Elsenham Action Group for Local Environmental Sustainability)

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Spring is Sprouting: An Update from EAGLES

The latest EAGLES meetings were a hive of activity as we transition from winter planning to spring planting.

There is plenty happening at the **Community Garden** on Isabel Drive, and we would love for you to be a part of it.

We are currently in a race against the calendar for our more structural projects. Efforts to source a **Willow Dome** are ongoing; while the planting window is narrowing, the wet conditions actually offer us a bit of leeway for winter planting.

Work also continues on bringing a **permanent water connection**. We are working closely with contractors and Anglian Water to meet a spend deadline of late March. This crucial step will ensure our garden stays lush and hydrated through the warmer months without the need for endless watering cans!

Save the Date: The Green Picnic

We are thrilled to announce that our **Green Picnic** (part of the Uttlesford Big Green Festival) will take place on **Sunday 7th June (1pm–4pm) at the Community Garden**. This will be a classic “bring-your-own” community event with a wild twist. We’ll be building bug hotels, creating reptile habitats, and running a bug hunt for the younger (and young at heart!) residents. It’s set to be a fantastic afternoon celebrating our local biodiversity.

Growing the Group

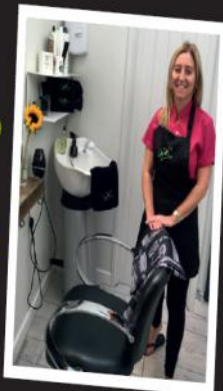
Our community is getting bigger! We’ve seen a wonderful influx of membership inquiries via Facebook recently. To keep the momentum going, we’ve also approved a **Wildflower Seed Ball project**. We have distributed 250 wildflower seed balls, enough to cover 12 square metres in vibrant, pollinator-friendly blooms. Keep an eye on the village notice boards and our **Facebook** page for weekly updates. Whether you’re a seasoned gardener or just want to help the local environment, there’s always a place for you at **EAGLES**.

We meet at the Bowls & Social Club on the fourth Monday of each month at 7.30pm.

Please email for more information on joining our small positive team:
[Elsenham.action@btinternet.com](mailto:elsenhham.action@btinternet.com)

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EROWOS

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By Margaret Shaw

Elsenham Rights of Way
& Open Spaces Committee

Good Friday Village Ramble

Please join us on our next village ramble on Good Friday April 3.

This is a long-standing village tradition and is a good chance to catch up with friends and acquaintances during a relaxed ramble on local footpaths. A great way to discover safe local walks and meet new people if you are new to the area.

Meet at 2pm at The Playing Field top car park (dogs outside the gate please)

Everyone welcome. Bring the children and dogs (dogs on leads please).

Unfortunately, the paths are probably too difficult for prams or wheelchairs.

Can't wait till our next organised walk? There are plenty of walks around Elsenham available, just check on the links above.



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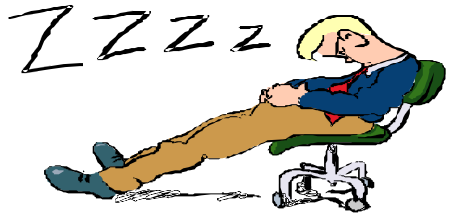
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MINER MEMORIES

The 1984 Orgreave miners' strike was significant industrial action by the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) in a protest against the National Coal Board's plan to close coalmines across Britain. It became a *cause celebre* for Arthur Scargill, President of the NUM, a fight he felt had to win.

The event is remembered as one of the most violent clashes in British industrial history. It concluded in March 1985, with most of the miners' demands being met. However, the coal mine closure, as warned by Arthur Scargill, continued.

This event had echoes within Elsenham. At the entrance of "Isabel Drive," just off Stansted Road, once stood a fine house, "The Gables," owned by Bill Sewell. To the rear of the property was a lorry park. This housed the fleet of "Sewell Transport." Some of these lorries had been used to transport coal.

One evening there was forced entry, fuel lines were cut and diesel fuel ran over the ground, killing adjacent trees.

Ray
Franklin

GARDEN HINT *By Sue Johnson*

Prune lavenders: Trim over any untidy or frost-damaged growth on lavender plants, using shears or secateurs. Avoid cutting into old wood (brown, twiggy growth with no leaves) as it won't regrow.

ST MARY'S CHURCH ELSENHAM

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Thought For The Month by Rev Louis Wilson

There was no execution in the ancient world more contemptible than crucifixion.

The Romans used it often, yet everything about the practice of nailing a man to a cross (a *crux*) was repellent to them. In fact, they considered it so barbaric, so tainted that no one talked about it and no one wrote about it.

Therefore, only four detailed accounts of crucifixion have survived from antiquity, and they all describe the same execution which took place on a hill outside Jerusalem some 2000 years ago.

In his account, the Gospel writer Luke describes how there were three crosses that day, because two criminals were also crucified either side of Jesus Christ. Above Jesus' head, someone had nailed a handmade sign: "This is the King of the Jews."

One of the criminals railed against Jesus. But the other rebuked him: "Don't you fear God? We are punished justly but this man has done nothing wrong." Then turning to Jesus, he said: "Remember me when you come into your kingdom." Jesus answered: "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise." (Luke 23: 43)

Someone has imagined what happened next to that criminal - let's call him Joe. He steps into the splendour of heaven, and a figure approaches him. "What are you doing here?" asks the angel.

Joe is nervous and confused. "What are you doing here?" repeats the angel. "I don't know" says Joe. What can he say? "I think I better get my supervisor" says the angel.

The senior angel, his presence exuding authority looks Joe up and down. "Right, we'd better go through the checklist. First, are you clear on the doctrine of justification by faith?"

Joe scratches his head: "I'm sorry, I've never heard of that." "Never mind" says the angel. "When and where were you baptised?" Joe shifts uncomfortably: "I wasn't."

There's a pause. A long pause. The angels exchange glances. Finally the senior one asks: "Then on what basis are you here?"

Joe's face softens as he remembers something too wonderful for words: "The man on the middle cross said I could come."

The man on the middle cross said I could come. That is the whole point of Easter - the truth that confounded religious expectations then - and today.

Joe didn't have time to go to Bible studies or church, to get baptised or give money to charity. He had no time to do anything most people associate with being religious, and yet Jesus promised him heaven. No theological tests. No religious achievements because heaven isn't earned. It's a gift. A free, unearned, undeserved gift.

One day, at the end of our lives, like Joe, we will all stand before God. What will we answer when he asks why should he let us into his heaven. Will I list my achievements hoping they will be enough? Because I.... Or will I simply say "The man on the middle cross said I could come"?

CHURCH EVENTS IN OUR VILLAGES FEBRUARY 2026

Church Services

Friday 3rd April - Good Friday

- 10:00** Getting Ready for Easter at
Elsenham Village Hall
- 12:00** Hour at The Cross, Ugley Church

Sunday 5th April - Easter Sunday

- 09:30** Joint Easter Service,
Elsenham Church
- 10:00** Easter Holy Communion,
Ugley Church
- 10:30** Easter Service, Henham Church

Sunday 12th April

- 10:30** All Together All Age Service,
Henham Church
- 18:00** Sunday@6, Henham Church

Sunday 19th April

- 08:45** Prayer Book Holy Communion,
Elsenham Church
- 10:00** Holy Communion,
Ugley Church
- 10:30** Morning Praise Service,
Elsenham Village Hall

- 18:00** Sunday@6, Henham Church

Sunday 26th April

- 08:45** Prayer Book Morning Prayer,
Elsenham Church
- 10:00** Morning Service, Ugley Church
- 10:30** Morning Praise Service,
Henham Church
- 18:00** Sunday@6 Communion,
Henham Church

GETTING READY FOR EASTER



Come as a family for an Easter activity morning!

10:00-12:00
Elsenham Village
Hall, CM22 6DD



Other Regular Events

SUNDAYS:

**Elsenham & Henham Sunday Club/
Explorers (Reception-Y5)**
(Y1-Y6) Leave Morning Praise
Service, 10.30am Sundays: 19th & 26th

Pathfinders (Y6-Y9)
Henham Church 6.00pm - leave from
service to meet in the New Church
Hall, Henham. Sundays: 19th & 26th

Crammin' (Y10-Y13)
Henham Church 6.00pm - leave from
service to meet in the New Church
Hall, Henham. Sundays: 19th & 26th

MID-WEEK AND SATURDAY:

Start the Week with Prayer
Old Frank's, Elsenham 9.30am
Mondays: 13th, 20th & 27th

Seekers After School Bible Club
(Y3-Y4) Old Frank's 3.20pm
Mondays: 20th & 27th

Christian Play (Y1-Y2)
Rowan House, Elsenham 3.15pm
Tuesdays: 21st & 28th

Little Fishes Pre-School Group
New Church Hall, Henham 9.15am
Thursday: 23rd & 30th

Little Fishes Pre-School Group
Elsenham Memorial Hall 10.00am
Fridays: 24th

Church Lunch Club
Elsenham Memorial Hall 12.30pm
Fridays: (2nd & 4th Friday of the month):
10th & 24th

For information on all these events,
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Continued from page 17

communities, including Dunmow, Newport, Thaxted and Stansted Parish Council, are already taking part, and venues such as Newport Pharmacy and Pam's Palace in Thaxted are registered Safe Spaces.

Domestic abuse is never acceptable and help is available. If you see the J9 logo, know that help is nearby – no one should face abuse alone. Uttlesford District Councillors are also undertaking J9 training as part of our commitment to supporting residents and raising awareness in our community. Help is always available at Uttlesford Council.

Essex County Council Elections

The Essex County Council elections will take place on Thursday 7 May. Make sure you are registered to vote so your voice can be heard. If you would like to vote by post, you can apply now to ensure your postal vote is processed in time.

This month, an announcement on Local Government Reorganisation is expected. As noted in previous magazines, we, along with ten other councils in Essex, support the creation of smaller unitary councils, which we believe would be more accountable and local. Essex County Council does not support this approach.

The next Councillor Surgery will be on Tuesday April 7 at Elsenham Community Café at the Memorial Hall 9.30 Elsenham. Residents are welcome to drop in without an appointment. As always, you can also contact us directly by email or phone with any questions about this report or any district council matters.

STANSTED HALL & ELSENHAM CRICKET CLUB

By David Brown

☎ 831011

✉ david1.r.brown@gmail.com



OPEN DAY

Stansted Hall & Elsenham Cricket Club are holding an 'Open Day' on Sunday April 26, please come and join us.

You will be offered a cup of tea, some light refreshments and a look around of our beautiful ground and facilities. A match will be in progress providing the weather is kind to us. Please arrive between 3pm and 5pm and you will be shown around by one of our members. We are hidden away on the road between Stansted and Elsenham, postcode CM24 8ST. A sign will be on the road. You could be looking for a new club, your child is considering playing cricket (we take children from the age of 5 years), or you may live in the village and have not visited us before, just pop along.

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So why don't you try doing something wonderful? Come and join us on the first and third Tuesday of every month at 7.00pm until 8.30pm in Elsenham Village Hall (by Elsenham Primary School).

There are no auditions at our choir, everyone is welcome, just come along and sing!

Please just turn up or find us on our **Elsenham Community Choir Facebook page** or ☎ **07962 586825**.

DEMENTIA FRIENDLY

📄 www.blossomhomecare.co.uk

✉ olivia@blossomhomecare.co.uk

By Olivia Houlihan



We are launching a Dementia-friendly pub afternoon project starting in April at two pubs in Elsenham and Stansted. The project is a collaboration between Uttlesford District Council, who have funded it, Alzheimer's UK who are training the pub staff, my company, who are providing trained and experienced staff to run the sessions, and local rural pubs who are providing free space. The intention is to extend to more pubs across Essex within the next few months.

The groups will provide a safe, accessible, and familiar environment for those living with Dementia and/or at risk of social isolation and their loved ones. They will involve games, activities and opportunities for cognitive stimulation as well as signposting to services and organisations which attendees may find useful (Essex Fire Brigade, Community Champions, Active Essex etc. will attend to share resources).

At the Crown Inn every fourth Wednesday of the month starting from April.



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THE AUBREY BUXTON NATURE RESERVE

✉ communications@essexwt.org.uk

By John Welham, Warden



Last month we did some planting out of trees that we have been growing on in our tree nursery. The planting was made easier by the soft ground conditions after all the recent rain.

The nature reserve has a wide variety of tree species thanks to its origins as a private wildlife park created by Lord and Lady Buxton. We have planted out cherry, oak, hawthorn and field maple.

We planted cherry to replace the mature trees that are now dying out in the reserve. Cherry trees are relatively short lived and ours are all reaching end of life at a similar time. By helping to replace them we will ensure a future for all those insects that rely on them including the bird cherry ermine moth, possibly our most numerous moth in the reserve.

We have planted hawthorn to maintain our hedges and to provide winter berries and we have created a new small stand of field maple, a tree that isn't currently well represented in the wood.

Field maple is a frequently overlooked tree species but it is a good addition to a mixed woodland. Apparently it has wood with a good density that provides excellent resonance, making it ideal for making musical instruments such as harps or for making intricate wood carvings.

TRANSPORT UPDATE

By Ray Franklin

The recently published "Passenger News" shows there is NO CHANGE to the times for the 7 & 7A Buses. It goes on to say that £68 Million has been secured from Government funding to improve bus services within Essex.



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On Sunday 12th April at 10.30am, hundreds of runners will line up at the start of St Clare Hospice's annual 10k run, raising vital funds with every mile. And there's still time to sign up for anyone looking to take on a meaningful challenge for a great cause.

Among this year's runners is 19-year-old Layla Ellis, from Stansted, Essex, who is taking on the challenge in memory of Nicola 'Nicky' Berg, a family friend, who died in 2025 after a courageous five-year battle with breast cancer. Layla has already raised an incredible £1,380 for St Clare Hospice, inspired by the care Nicky and her family received.

'I'm taking on the 10k run in memory of Nicky, who I can only describe as my second mother. Nicky has been part of my life for as long as I can remember; my parents, Carol and Jamie, became best friends with Nicky and her husband Andy more than 30 years ago. Nicky was one of the strongest and most positive people I've ever known, and anyone who met her remembers her warmth, kindness and smile.'

She continued, 'Nicky bravely faced Stage 3 Triple Negative breast cancer for around five years. Even on the hardest days, she chose hope and focused on the good. When her illness progressed, she was referred to St Clare where the care she received was extraordinary. The team supported not only Nicky, but also Andy and their boys, Max and Louis, and welcomed all of us who came to visit. Knowing she spent her final days so beautifully cared for, surrounded by love, brings us comfort.'

On her training and fundraising, Layla added: 'I couldn't run for more than a minute when I started, so I began with walks, built up my stamina in the gym, and then took on park runs with my sister. My goal is to cross the finish line - not chase a time. Whenever I feel like stopping, I think about everything Nicky went through with such dignity, and it keeps me going.'

Fundraising has already topped £1,000 - an amount that could cover the cost of running the hospice's GriefLine for over a week - which shows how loved Nicky is and always will be.

If anyone is considering fundraising for a charity event, my advice is to just do it - stay consistent and let love and kindness fuel you.'

Anyone interested in taking part in the St Clare Hospice 10k Run on Sunday 12th April 2026, from 10.30am-1pm, can still sign up. Entry costs £21 for standard runners, £19 for affiliated runners, and £19 for wheelchair racers, and those who raise £200 or more will receive a free personalised running vest. Register now at stclarehospice.org.uk/stclare10k.

To support Layla as she runs in memory of Nicky, visit: stclarehospice.enthuse.com/pf/layla-ellis.

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By Sandra Honour ✉ ugleybunchflowerclub@gmail.com



As I write, the sun is shining – at long last – the daffodils are in bloom and the leaves on the bushes and trees are starting to burst. Spring is around the corner!

To welcome the start of our year, the lovely and very talented Gill McGregor showcased her talents once again at our February meeting. Gill first began to compete in flower arranging competitions at the age of 11, managed a West End London florist at the age of 20 and at 22 was already teaching. She has demonstrated all over the world, still teaches and shares her floral design and arrangement ideas in the many books she has written. As a testament to her popularity, Ugley Village Hall was bursting at the seams!

Her wonderful arrangements filled the hall and delighted members and visitors alike. Some were lucky enough to go home with one of her designs, won in the raffle.

Our next meeting was on Wednesday March 18 and was led by another talented NAFAS demonstrator and club member, Lorraine Gagen. This meeting was a workshop and Lorraine showed us how to design our own crescent arrangement to take home.

April 15 will be our annual AGM followed by a fun quiz with sweet and savoury nibbles. Visitors always welcome. To contact us, please use the new email address shown above. You can also follow us on Facebook at Ugley Bunch Flower Club.

We meet at 7pm for a 7.30pm start on the third Wednesday of the month at Ugley Village Hall, Cambridge Road, CM22 6HR.



A display by Gill McGregor

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THE HUNDRED PARISHES SOCIETY

By Ken McDonald, Secretary

 www.hundredparishes.org.uk



Horses were once very important in everyday life. This changed quickly with the advent of tractors, trucks and the motor car.

Horses were used extensively in agriculture; they also hauled delivery carts and buses and everything in between. Some of us may remember the horse-drawn milk float or the coalman and rag-and-bone man. There were blacksmiths, smithies and forges in most towns and villages.



We still have blacksmiths who work in metal, making gates, weather vanes, tools and farm implements, as well as shoeing horses. A farrier is a specialist in equine hoof care.

Whilst blacksmiths and farriers are quite rare today, there are reminders of this aspect of our heritage around The Hundred Parishes, for example in the names Forge Green at Hildersham, Anvil Cross in Great Hallingbury and

Smith's End Lane in Barley. The area has five pubs called The Three Horseshoes – a name which probably came about because they had a nearby farrier, ready to deal with a customer who arrived with a horse that had lost a shoe.

Today, dwellings with names like The Old Forge or Anvil House often reveal their earlier lives.

Much Hadham Forge is still in use, part of Much Hadham Forge Museum. The museum usually opens Friday to Sunday, April to December, 11am to 5pm. It is housed in a series of listed buildings, dating from the 15th to 19th centuries. The forge itself dates from the 17th century; today's blacksmith runs forge experience days.

Ashdon once had three blacksmiths in the village. Now, one of Ashdon Museum's excellent displays is a representation of a blacksmith's shop with all the tools and equipment that he would have used. The museum is open April to October from 2pm to 5pm on Sundays and bank holidays and is well worth a visit.



Matching Green – Forge Cottage

The Hundred Parishes is 450 square miles of northwest Essex, northeast Hertfordshire and southern Cambridgeshire that is largely unspoilt and is richly endowed with many fine examples of agricultural and built heritage. The area has shared a common history which shaped and preserved its distinctive landscape of small and medium-sized farms linked by winding lanes and ancient rights of way to hamlets, villages and then to small market towns. For more information visit www.hundredparishes.org.uk.



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ELSENHAM BOWLS AND SOCIAL CLUB

www.elsenhambc.org.uk

By David Thomas



It's good news for bowlers: the green opens on 24 April!
So please put the date in your diary and look out for the notices to sign up for games in the next few weeks.

We are very pleased to have had solar panels installed on the club house roof. This project is part-funded by the UK government through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and will reduce our carbon footprint significantly.

We had an excellent race night on 28 March. The evening was sponsored by Elsenham Post Office, Elsenham Golf Club, Options Hair Salon, Therese Clear, Garretts Garage Services, Bloor Homes, Keith Merrifield and Solar barn. Our thanks to all our sponsors who made the night such a success.

Don't forget to book your place at our charity evening on 9 May, raising funds on behalf of the Air Ambulance. The Ilford Magic Circle will be joining us for this very different evening which will include close-up magic tricks and a floor show provided by their members. We are grateful to the Ilford Magic Circle for providing this unusual and rare evening of entertainment to support our charity evening. Please book your place early before the tickets disappear!

Tickets are available now at £8 for members and £13 for non-members. Availability is limited, so please call Trevor on 07445 437437 to secure your ticket.

Regular bingo sessions continue at 7 for 7.30 pm on April 4 and 18, plus 7.30 for 8pm on May 16.

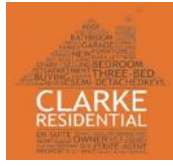
As always, our Friday social evening continues throughout the year, from 7pm. Don't forget that rollups start at 6pm from 24 April. There is also short mat on Monday afternoons and crib and darts during the week.

For full details about Elsenham Bowls Club including membership and our opening times please see our website.

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From **1 May 2026**, new rules for renters in England are coming into force. These changes, brought in through the **Renters' Rights Act**, affect anyone renting a home and aim to stop unfair evictions, limit rent increases, and give tenants more protection and support.

Some of the key changes include:

- Instead of renting for a fixed period like 6 or 12 months, tenancies will continue without an end date, giving tenants more security while still allowing them to leave with notice if they wish
- Landlords **can't evict without a reason**
- Rent can only go up **once a year**, and you can challenge increases
- Rules stop large upfront payments and unfair bidding for homes
- Stronger protection against discrimination
- New ways to complain and get help, including an independent ombudsman.

Tip: Keep a copy of your tenancy agreement, it may be useful if any problems arise with your landlord.

FROM THE PARISH REGISTERS

Enquiries about thanksgivings, baptisms, weddings and funerals should be made in the first instance to Anna Hicks at the Church Office.

Church Contact Telephone Numbers, E-Mail and Web-Site Addresses

Vicar	01279 850480 louis.wilson@heuchurch.co.uk	Rev. Louis Wilson
Curate	petetibbott@heuchurch.co.uk	Pete Tibbott
Church Office	01279 814285 office@heuchurch.co.uk	Anna Hicks
Church website	https://heuchurch.org	

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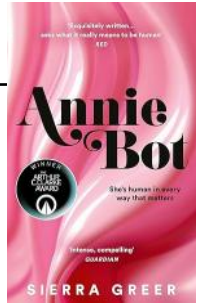
Tel: 01279 871245

ANNIE BOT BY SIERRA GREER

Reviewed by Marion Giles for Elsenham Book Group

'She's human in every way that matters.

Annie is the perfect girlfriend. She has dinner ready for Doug every night, wears the outfits he buys for her, and caters to his every sexual whim. Maybe her cleaning isn't always good enough, but she's trying really hard. She was designed that way, after all.



Annie is a robot. But what happens when she starts to rebel against her stifled existence and imagine the impossible – a life without Doug?...’ So says *the blurb on the back of the book*.

'An exquisitely written, empathetic novel that asks what it really means to be human' RED

The Amazon AI says: Customers find the book a satisfying and thought-provoking read with brilliant writing and powerful exploration of trauma. The story receives mixed reactions, with some finding it interesting while others miss opportunities for character development. Customers appreciate the book's emotional depth and its believable portrayal of Annie's struggles.

This was the choice of the book group this month. The reaction was negative overall and we were united in the view that there were missed opportunities to explore deeper and more interesting topics instead of just focussing on her sexual role, which was relentless and slightly unnecessary. One member commented that she didn't need to hear 'silky panties' again anytime soon.

The placing of the novel in time is not clear but it is set in a futuristic America. It is a world where anyone can own a robot, providing one has enough money to buy one. There are three versions available, one for housekeeping, one for nanny duties and one that can be used for sexual purposes, sadly known as a 'cuddle bunny.'

Doug, a thoroughly unpleasant man, purchases a sexual mate after his marriage breaks down. He asks for modifications to ensure she looks a little like his ex-wife. He names her Annie and ensures she is slim with ample bosom. Annie is set to autodidactic mode, meaning she can learn and adjust her behaviour as she develops. The company who service her are thrilled with her progress and consider Doug a good 'trainer' of a sex slave. This is in part because he has mood swings which might result in Annie being punished and locked in a closet. She can only wear the clothes he buys and cannot leave the apartment. Annie does start to question these behaviours and starts to break her programming as she learns. We felt Annie did cut a sympathetic figure despite being an AI android and we were always on her side. There are parallels to domestic abuse relationships. The sci-fi is not original and sometimes the writing is a little too economical and underdeveloped. For a slim novel it did seem to be a long read.

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COOKERY CORNER

By Sue Johnson ☎ 812704



At this time of year, it is good to make the most of delicious young rhubarb while it is plentiful. Its flavour goes well with all sorts of others, especially ginger.

RHUBARB AND GINGER CRÈME BRULÉE (Serves 6)

400g (14oz) rhubarb, chopped into 3 cm pieces
40g (1½ oz) caster sugar
4 balls stem ginger in syrup, chopped
2 teaspoons cornflour

For the custard

500ml (18fl oz) double cream
150g (5oz) caster sugar
1 vanilla pod, split lengthways
3 large eggs
5 tablespoons demerara sugar

Put the rhubarb in a pan with the sugar and chopped ginger. Cook over a low heat for 10 minutes or until the rhubarb has softened and begun to break down. Mix a little of the rhubarb juice with the cornflour in a small bowl, then pour into the pan and stir until thickened. Pour into the base of a round 20cm (8 inch) dish. Leave to cool completely.

For the custard, pour the double cream, sugar and vanilla pod (as well as the scraped-out seeds) into a pan and bring to a simmer. Scoop out the pod and discard. Whisk the eggs in a bowl and gradually pour over the simmering cream, whisking continuously. Pour the mixture back into the pan. Cook over a low heat, continuously stirring for around 10 minutes or until it is thickened. Pour the custard over the cooled rhubarb, smooth to an even layer and chill overnight. Sprinkle demerara sugar over the top and caramelize using a blowtorch until deep golden brown.

CHEF'S RECOMMENDATIONS

If you don't have a blowtorch, either leave off the demerara sugar or put under a hot grill for 2-4 minutes to caramelize. But keep a close eye on it, as it may go runny.

Editorial Information

Articles

The **last day** for editors to receive articles, advertising and letters, which must contain the author's name and address (which may be withheld), is the 12th of each month.

Articles should ideally consist of a half page of A5 or a full page of A5. Articles over these sizes or letters containing more than 500 words may be edited depending on space.

Copy submitted after the 12th may not be accepted but will, if deemed appropriate, be held over to the next month. We are happy to receive hand written articles which ideally should reach us earlier than the 12th to allow for scanning etc.

Dates for the Diary must include date, event, venue and time.

Please submit all articles, adverts, letters and queries to the editorial team at: elsenhamsnews@hotmail.co.uk

General Notes

Whilst every effort is made to ensure that information is correct, the editorial team cannot be held responsible for any inconvenience caused through errors or omissions.

The views expressed within this magazine are not necessarily the views of the editorial team or Elsenham Community Association (ECA).

The editors and the ECA can accept no responsibility for the goods or services advertised in the magazine. Advertisements are included in good faith. The editors reserve the right to allow replies to letters/articles to be made in the same edition when appropriate.

The editors' decision is final.

Wanted/For Sale items: individuals may submit short details of items wanted or for sale etc at no charge. These will be included in the next available issue of the magazine subject to space and acceptance by the editors.

Subscriptions

Elsenham News is available online on the ECA Website. Contact elsenhamsnews@hotmail.co.uk

Advertising

The costs are as follows:

	Single Insertion	Annual Cost (11 issues)
Quarter Page	£3.00	£25.00
Half Page	£7.00	£45.00
Inside Page	£12.00	£100.00
Back Page	Contact us	

Village organisations attract reduced rates for adverts depending on number of insertions required. Please contact us to discuss.

To place an advertisement:

If you have any queries, please email us. Please send your advert as Word or Publisher via email to: elsenhamsnews@hotmail.co.uk

Advertising Editor: TBA

Business Advertising

Cheques should be made payable to "**Elsenham Community Association**".

Editorial Team: Gary Williams
Emma Bailey
Marion Giles
Patricia Davis
Anne White
Angie Wenlock

Previous issues of Elsenham News are available on the ECA Website

www.ElsenhamCommunityAssociation.org.uk

UPCOMING EVENTS

Magic Circle at the Bowls & Social Club May 9
 Elsenham Flower Show Society Plant Sale May 16
 Big Green Festival Picnic, Community Garden June 7

VILLAGE CONTACTS

Airport Roadside Parking		0800 731 2385
Beavers	1sthenhamandelsenham@gmail.com	
Bowls Club	Therese Clear	07759 158859
Brownies	elsenhambrownies@gmail.com	
Church Office (Old Frank's, High St, Elsenham)	Anna Hicks	814285
County Councillor (Stansted)	Ray Gooding	813103
Cricket Club	David Brown	831011
Cub Scouts	1sthenhamandelsenham@gmail.com	
ECA (Chair)	Sue Waite	07956 899326
ECA (Secretary)	Chris Richardson	07940 465627
ECA Website	www.ElsenhamCommunityAssociation.org.uk	
Elsenham Eagles	elsenham.action@btinternet.com	
Elsenham Farmers Market	elsenhamfarmersmarket@gmail.com	
Elsenham Surgery	www.elsenhamsurgery.nhs.uk	814730
Elsenham C of E Primary School	Linda Todd Headteacher	813198
Elsenham Church PCC Secretary	David Hill	812397
Elsenham Rights of Way website	www.e-voice.org.uk/erowos/	
Friends of Elsenham School (FOES)	Louise Judd	foespta@hotmail.com
Henham & District Garden Society	Moyra Jackson	647351
History Society	Mike Rea	evhs12@hotmail.co.uk 813634
Member of Parliament	Kemi Badenoch	0207 219 5214
Memorial Hall Bookings		
www.elsenhamcommunityassociation.org.uk/hiring-elsenham-memorial-hall		
Parish Clerk - Fiona Gardiner	parishclerk@elsenham-pc.gov.uk	07456 791727
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St Mary's Fabric Fund	Elizabeth Barker	813543
Tennis Club	Petra Studholme	814667
Tots & Toddlers	Dawn Temple	07944 841358
Uttlesford District Councillors	Petrina Lees	07713 074656
(for Elsenham & Henham)	Bianca Donald	07941 880279
Village Hall Bookings	elsenhamvillagehall@gmail.com	
Womens Institute Secretary	Gill Hathaway	813385
Youth Football Club (Chairman)	Ricky Lambourne	info@elsenhamyfc.co.uk

If you would like your village organisation contact to appear regularly in the magazine, please contact one of the editors, see opposite for details.

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