

COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

COVERING BATTISFORD, COMBS, LITTLE
FINBOROUGH AND MOATS TYE

March 2026



CONTENTS INCLUDING:

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- And Much More



🌸 Don't forget, the clocks
spring forward by an hour on
Sunday 29th March! 🌸

The next Community Newsletter is due out in July 2026, with a deadline of Friday 19th June for any articles.

We would love to hear from you with your comments about the newsletter or suggestions for future editions.

If you have any comments, an article or photos you wish to be included or are interested in advertising your business, please get in touch

EMAIL: [COMMUNITYNEWSLETTER @BTINTERNET.COM](mailto:COMMUNITYNEWSLETTER@BTINTERNET.COM)

Mid-Suffolk District Council Recycling



Nearest Locations:

- * Iliffe Way car park, Stowmarket
- * Mid Suffolk Leisure Centre, Stowmarket
- * Elmswell train station
- * New Green Community Centre, Thurston
- * Station Yard car park, Needham Market
- * Buckshorn Lane car park, Eye.

You can now recycle small broken electrical items, like coffee machines, kettles, mobile phones, tablets, and anything smaller than a 4-slice toaster in these bins.

Larger items will still need to be taken to a Suffolk Recycling Centre.

Community Tuesdays - Free Events At Battisford Village Hall

Have you got an idea for a group or an event you would like to run at Battisford Village Hall? Introducing Community Tuesdays. We are trialing free two hour slots at the Village Hall on Tuesdays for community events of your choice. These events will be run by you, (the residents of Combs, Battisford, Moats Tye and Little Finborough) and will be for local people to attend free of charge.

Sessions can be weekly, monthly or even just a one off. Some ideas include toddler groups, crafting groups, boardgaming or dance sessions. The Village Hall has its own carpet bowls and table tennis equipment that groups could make use of. Any ideas will be considered, as long as they meet the criteria below:

- Be free to attend for anyone from Combs, Battisford, Moats Tye or Little Finborough (There will be an opportunity for those attending to give a voluntary contribution to the Village Hall if they wish);
- Comply with all Village Hall Policies, licences and insurance requirements;
- Not be of a political, religious or contentious nature;
- Not be motivated by personal financial gain;
- Events will be held at the discretion of the Village Hall Management Committee and their decision will be final.

If you have an idea for an event you would like to run, please contact us at battisfordvhmc@gmail.com or message 07731 897790



BATTISFORD & COMBS LITTER PICK

Join us for an hour or so to help keep our villages free from litter, and full of life!

DATE	TIME	MEETING PLACE
Saturday 21st March	9:30	Battisford Village Green play area to cover Battisford area
Sunday 22nd March	9:30	The Tannery car park to cover Combs and Moats Tye

Please wear a high-vis jacket if you have one, as we have a limited supply. We have litter pickers and plastic bags.

For further information please contact either
clerk@combsparrishcouncil.gov.uk

or

clerk@battisford-pc.gov.uk





Mobile Post Office

Outside the Punch Bowl
Inn every Friday
13.45—14.45

It provides all the
facilities of a general
post office



Ipswich Mobile Library

Outside St Mary's Church, Church Rd,
Battisford @ 11.35—11.55

every 4th Thursday

The next visits are

19 March

16 April

14 May

11 June

9 July

further details can be found on

<https://suffolkcommunitylibraries.co.uk/visit/mobile-libraries/>

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Battisford Parish Council

Dear Residents

As reported in my last update, we have recently been pleased to welcome new faces to Battisford Parish Council, meaning we are up to our full strength of 7 Councillors. An introduction to all new councillors can be found later in this newsletter. We are fortunate to have such a willing group of Councillors representing a wide cross-section of our community.

Battisford's litter pick is scheduled for Saturday 21 March, commencing at 09: 30a.m - start location is the Village Green car park - all volunteers very welcome. Combs' litter pick is Sunday 22 - so if you can't make ours, please support our neighbours.

We have recently completed our annual Health and Safety/General Check of Battisford Cemetery, including a check (the 'topple test'), where headstones are assessed for security. Possibly due to the wet winter, an increased number of memorials failed this test and were made safe. Whilst we understand the potential for upset to be caused, this is a recognised and necessary action - we will reinstate headstones and undertake routine site maintenance as the weather improves. Other work here has seen re-setting of the Cemetery entrance gates, largely financed through County Councillor Kay Oakes.

By the time you read this we should have a set of white traffic calming gates installed by the Village Green on Straight Road in pursuance of our continued efforts to moderate vehicle speeds. Again, this activity has been largely supported by Pride in Your Place grant funding from Mid Suffolk District Council, for which we are very grateful.

In response to requests, we will be installing additional benches at the Village Green. We propose to replace the wooden Jubilee Bench (which has suffered the ravages of time) with a combined Jubilee/memorial seat, and provide additional seating near the play area.

Lastly, I wish again to put on record thanks to the many individuals who assist in maintaining and improving our local environment and infrastructure - from residents who litter-pick on a regular basis to those who helped with the cemetery hedge cutting 'heavy lifting'!

Jon Cook

Chair, Battisford Parish Council
joncook@battisford-pc.gov.uk



News from District Councillor - John Matthissen

Representing Onehouse, Great & Little Finborough, Combs, Harleston and Shelland

Better Recycling : You should receive a leaflet of explanation soon, if not already, to be followed by the additional bin ahead of the changes being introduced in June.

The Ecofutures stall for hard to recycle items will be available as usual, and on March 26th will be accompanied by a stall from the council with a team to answer questions about Better Recycling.

Recycling & Repair Café

Dates - Repair Café & Recycling - Red Gables Sunday March 8th - 2-4pm,

Market Stall Thursday March 26th - 9.30-11.30am. You can find out more about the Repair Café here:

<https://stowmarketecofuturegroup.co.uk/repair-cafe/>

Transport Options : There is welcome news that improved scheduled services between Hadleigh and Stowmarket, calling at Great Finborough, are to be introduced in April.

Community Nature Recovery Grant : This offers up to £50,000 for projects that protect and expand wildlife corridors and habitats within the district – including tree planting, wildflower meadow creation, or other environmental initiatives to safeguard natural spaces for future generations. As well as boosting biodiversity by working in partnership with charities and organisations such as environmental groups, schools and town and parish councils, the scheme will help to restore natural ecosystems and create opportunities for residents to 'get back to nature'.

River Catchments and Flood Alleviation : There is also a fund to support wider projects which study and improve river catchments to help nature and reduce flooding downstream. This is of particular interest for the River Ratt, where projects are already being considered. I will be pleased to hear from land-owners aware of places where water tends to collect during heavy rain, to see how the flow can best be managed. See also <https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/w/biodiversity-action-plan>

John Matthissen: councillor@matthissen.net Phone 07976 308128

Council Phone No is 0300 123 4000

Or write to me at 2 Brick Kiln Cottages, Barretts Lane, Needham Market IP6 8RZ



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Chairman's Message - Combs

Dear Residents of Combs

Spring approaches after a long stretch of winter wetness and gloom. In the meantime, your council has been busy. First, we were irritated by Anglian Water's several road closures that caused huge disruption. Cometh the hour, cometh Cllr Cliff Ratcliffe whose persistent lobbying has resulted in them agreeing for the first time to notify us beforehand. We'll publish information on the parish notice boards as we get it.

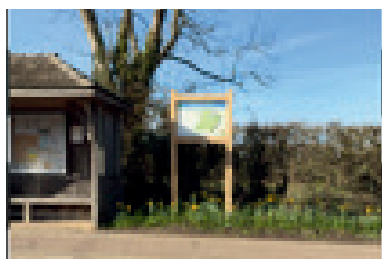
Second, we have been in contact with both county and district councils and the secretary of state for local government to present our view that it would be undemocratic to delay local elections. We are pleased to see that these will now be taking place after all the legal challenge.

Third, some very good news. We will be installing road signs near Oaks Meadow warning of the possibility of pedestrians in the road. This is the result of an excellent joint exercise with local resident Kevin White conducting a survey; our county councillor Kay Oakes lobbying hard to overturn an initial refusal; and district councillor John Matthissen stumping up half the funding. The work is due to take place between now and May and there may be some disruption but it'll be worth it in terms of increased pedestrian safety.

We bid a fond farewell to Cllr Terry Betchley MBE who steps down after 5 years of service. Terry looked after the cemetery and acted as liaison between the council and Oaks Meadow in the early days of that project. He also provided occasional but discrete words of wisdom to your chairman that were always valued.

Happily we are delighted to have been joined by two new councillors. Sarah Penman and Keith Harding have both been co-opted onto the council and introduce themselves later in this newsletter. We still have room for another: please read Tony Bamber's 'What Does a Parish Councillor Do?' article if you'd like to find out more about what we get up to.

Tony Kitson
Chair, Combs Parish Council



The Spring bulbs planted as part of our PIYP Project are now starting to bloom



Spring Events for Little Finborough Church

Everyone is invited to join us; you will be most welcome!

EASTER EGG HUNT – Saturday 28th March from 10am until noon Little Finborough Church

Collect eggs from the churchyard to win your prize, and enjoy the games and refreshments. Children must be accompanied by responsible adults. £3.50 for each egg hunter. Proceeds will be for church funds.



PALM SUNDAY PROCESSION AND SERVICE – Sunday 29th March

Procession starts at the Punch Bowl Inn at 9.30am.

Holy Communion at Little Finborough Church at 10am

The Procession from the Inn to the church commemorates Jesus' entry into Jerusalem, accompanied by people waving palm leaves. Everyone is welcome to join the procession and the service of Holy Communion. Children must be accompanied by responsible adults.



EASTER DAY HOLY COMMUNION – Sunday 5th April at 9am

Begin your Easter Day in the traditional way. Join us at Little Finborough Church for Holy Communion, to celebrate the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

PLANT SALE – Saturday 9th May from 10am until 2pm

Orchard House, Battisford, IP14 2LZ

Come along to choose from the large selection of flower, vegetable and herb plants and shrubs. Tea and coffee will be available. Payment may be made by cash or card.

Proceeds will be for church funds.



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Introducing our new Parish Councillors in Combs And Battisford

Sarah Penman (Combs) - My name is Sarah Penman and, having recently been co-opted onto Combs Parish Council, I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself to fellow residents and share a little about my background. I have lived in Combs since 2017, when my husband and I moved here from the Saffron Walden area with two of our four children. We have never regretted relocating to Suffolk and feel very fortunate to be part of such a welcoming community. I previously served as a parish councillor in our former community, so I have an understanding of the important role organisations like these play in supporting and enhancing local life. Now that I work part-time, I am able to dedicate the time and commitment needed to serve effectively in this role. Throughout my career as a nurse, I have developed a wide range of transferable skills, particularly in policy development, procedural writing and implementation. I hope to bring this experience to the council and contribute positively to our village. I very much look forward to serving the community in this new capacity.

Keith Harding (Combs) - I moved to Combs in 2024 having emigrated from Reigate, Surrey in order to find a more peaceful existence away from the constant strain of the noise from the M25 and the planes going in and out of Gatwick. My maternal grandmother was a Sudbury native so Suffolk seemed to beckon me and I soon found my delightful little cottage in Combs. I grew up in a small rural village and served on its parish council becoming vice-chairman and also its representative on the Surrey Association of Parish & Town Councils. For the past 8 years I had been the co-ordinator of the Community Speedwatch group that monitored and reported vehicles exceeding the 30 m.p.h limit in the village. Hopefully I will be able to make a similar contribution to Combs Parish Council.

Ben Ince (Battisford) - I'm Ben, your newest member of the Battisford Parish Council. I currently serve as the Youth & Pastoral Worker at Battisford Free Church, which means I spend much of my time with local teenagers through clubs and events, as well as visiting and supporting people in their homes. A large part of my work is simply being present- listening, encouraging, and helping build meaningful connections across generations. I have a genuine heart for people and community life. I care deeply about seeing Battisford continue to thrive as a place where people feel known, supported, and able to contribute. I hope that my involvement on the Parish Council can build upon the strong foundations already in place and help strengthen the sense of community we all value. I live in nearby Stowmarket with my wife Jess, our seven-month-old son Levi, our two cats, Theo and Nef, and a rather enthusiastic collection of fifteen aquariums which keep me busy when I'm not out and about in the village!

Eleanor Newman (Battisford) - Hello, my name is Eleanor and I live in Battisford with my partner Scott, our rescue dog and cats and our camper van! I originally trained as a nurse but have been a Social Worker working with children and families for nearly 34 years now. I believe that our lovely village and the countryside around us is a wonderful place to live and I feel lucky to be part of such a warm community where I can switch off from what can at times be a stressful job. My motivation to join our Parish Council was to help my fellow residents in serving our community and doing what we can to keep it such a Suffolk gem!

Lucy Durrant (Battisford) - I have lived in the village all my life, along with my husband and our 3 children. We are a local farming family, and are passionate about doing our best to support the village and community. I have been involved in helping with the Combs and Battisford fete in the past, and also the community run pub The Punch Bowl. I now look forward to being able to support the village and local community through the parish council.

Battisford Village Hall



Battisford Village Hall
Straight Road
Battisford
Suffolk IP14 2HP

01449 674852

battisfordvhmc@gmail.com

Battisford Village Hall Solar Project

The latest project to make Battisford Village Hall as sustainable and resilient as possible is underway. The Management Committee are in the process of applying for grants to help fund the installation of solar panels.

As well as generating electricity, we are also hoping to include an emergency power supply battery system, which will provide the Village Hall with a backup energy supply if there is a power cut. The Village Hall could therefore be used as a Warm Hub should residents in Combs, Battisford, Moats Tye or Little Finborough be impacted by a prolonged power outage.

If you would like to find out more about the project, or have ideas and thoughts you would like to share, please contact us at battisfordvhmc@gmail.com

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What does a Parish Councillor do?

Most people think instinctively of 'The Vicar of Dibley'. (No no no no yes...). However the TV series uses some artistic licence and can give people the wrong impression. The word 'parish' is commonly associated with the church but a parish council has no connection with the parish church (google antidisestablishmentarianism!). Historically both institutions operated within the jurisdiction of their parish, being an administrative area, but over the years many parish councils have seen their boundaries change as towns expand into the countryside.

The parish (or town if not rural) council is the lowest tier of local government for an area. It is there to manage such local services as the village may have, and is the first point of contact for residents. It raises funds by way of a portion of council tax, and uses these to employ a clerk and to maintain and improve community facilities. The councils are made up of unpaid councillors (up to a maximum of seven in the case of Combs), who are usually elected to serve for a term of four years. In small parish councils there will only be one employee – the parish clerk, who is also the responsible financial officer, and who is the point of contact for the council. In larger parishes, the parish council may also employ gardeners, caretakers and assistants. If a villager has a village-related concern, the clerk is usually the best person to attend to it or pass on to the parish councillors or the appropriate authority.

As they sit on the lowest rung in the government ladder, parish councillors can be seen as the eyes and ears on the ground, to convey and represent the views of local people. In the case of planning applications, while the decisions are made by higher authorities, the local knowledge can be essential where decision makers have no knowledge of the area.

Sitting above the parish council in the hierarchy is the district council (at least for now), and above that is the county council. Combs falls within the boundary of Mid Suffolk District Council (more latterly Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Council, but possibly soon to change again), with Suffolk County Council sitting at the top.

The district council is responsible for local services, such as waste collection, planning, housing and council tax.

The county council is responsible for the administration of the whole county, being responsible for education, social care, highways (including footpaths), fire and rescue and the environment.

Both district and county councillors are elected officials, generally affiliated to a national political party but not necessarily. Neither the district nor the county councillors are paid but they receive an allowance.

They have a locality budget that they can use with discretion on local projects.

If you appreciate the village then please consider helping – either by volunteering to participate in any initiatives the council takes on, or by talking to the clerk or one of the councillors about joining the council.

Cllr Tony Bamber, Combs

Please refrain from leaving behind extra boxes, as they take up valuable seating space and transform the bus shelter into a cluttered and chaotic area!



Letter from the Rector at Combs and Little Finborough



As I write this I am looking forward to the clocks moving forward an hour at the end of March and the days getting lighter, a welcome return after the cold and dark of winter! Within the church we are still observing Lent but on Sunday 29th March we will celebrate the joy of Palm Sunday, when Jesus entered Jerusalem on a donkey with the crowds cheering him. This year we will have a service at Little Finborough which will involve a procession from the Punch Bowl pub in Battsford Tye, starting off at 9.30am, to the church for a service at 10am and refreshments will be served afterwards. Do come and join us if you can!

One question that is often asked is why does the feast of Easter move from year to year? In the West, Easter this year will be observed on Sunday, April 5th. Easter is a “movable feast” that is always held on a Sunday between March 22nd and April 25th. You may wonder why do the Easter dates change but Christmas doesn't? The reason for this is that Easter Sunday always occurs on the first Sunday after the Paschal Full Moon which is specifically the first Sunday following the full Moon that occurs on or after the 21st March or spring equinox - quite confusing!

We have a number of different services taking place across our group of seven churches, from Palm Sunday on 29th March, through Holy Week to the celebration of Easter on Sunday 5th April. You will be able to find details of these services on the A Church Near You website (www.achurchnearyou.com) under the relevant church and we look forward to welcoming you to our churches at this Easter time.

Wishing you all a very blessed Easter
Revd Sarah



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EASTER EVENT

SUNDAY MARCH 29TH 2:00-4:30PM

EASTER EGG HUNT
CAKES
COLOURING
COMPETITION
EASTER GAMES
AND MUCH MORE



LAUNCH OF THE
SUPER SPRING
RAFFLE
1ST PRIZE £100

This event is to raise funds for the upkeep of the play equipment and general running costs of Oaks Meadow facilities. Your support is much appreciated

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www.oaksmeadow.org.uk



OAKS MEADOW PROJECT

Bildeston Road, Little Finborough IP14 2LA

Spring is here and the Oaks Meadow volunteers are ready to spring into action. If you would like to join us in any capacity, email oaksmeadow@gmail.com.

2026 is set to be an exciting year. Following on from the questionnaire you completed last summer and the mandate you gave us to look at constructing a community room on Oaks Meadow, the Oaks Meadow Project group have been consulting with MSDC planning department and an architect. We now have some concept plans drawn up for the proposed community room. These plans will be available for you to view and make comment over the weekend March 28th & 29th in the 'Shed' at Fenns Farmhouse from 10:30 am to 4:30 pm both days.

**In addition, there will be an Easter Event on Oaks Meadow, on Sunday March 29th 2:00 - 4:30pm
There will be an Easter Egg Hunt, a Colouring Competition, Cakes, Easter Games and
The launch of our SPRING RAFFLE with lots of eggciting prizes!**

**This event and the raffle are to raise funds for the maintenance contract on the playground equipment and general upkeep of the meadow. Please support us if you can.
Raffle tickets will be on sale throughout March and April.**

A programme of educational sessions will be advertised soon now that District Councillor John Matthissen has funded the purchase of pond dipping and life-saving equipment for the pond, for which we are very grateful. The platform was paid for by your fundraising efforts last year, thank you. Fortunately, it was constructed just before the rain started.

**YOU ARE INVITED TO VIEW CONCEPT PLANS FOR A COMMUNITY ROOM
TO BE CONSTRUCTED ON OAKS MEADOW**

**SATURDAY MARCH 28TH & SUNDAY MARCH 29TH
10.30am – 4:30pm**

**The display will be in 'The Shed' at Fenns Farmhouse, Fenns Meadow
Bildeston Road, Combs IP14 2JZ**

There will be a consultation form for you to comment on the proposals and to make suggestions and give your personal opinion. If you cannot attend these dates the plans and forms will be available on the website www.oaksmeadow.org.uk

The closing date for this consultation will be April 11th 2026



Combs Green IP14 2NP
from 10am – 12 noon
on the 2nd Thursday of each
month

Next visits are

12 March
9 April
14 May
11 June
9 July

At the Rural Coffee Caravan we know that isolation doesn't have to mean loneliness. To ward off loneliness people of all ages need connection. We would like to offer you the opportunity for a catch up with your neighbours! Simply come for some company and we'll put the kettle on for you, providing free tea, coffee, biscuits or cake, and plenty of cheer. Or come and chat with us to see if there are any concerns we might be able to help you find answers to. We have access to a raft of information on local activities, services and organisations to help you stay happy, healthy, independent at home, and more connected to others in your area. All Welcome! We look forward to seeing you.

For further info, visit our website
www.ruralcoffeecaravan.org.uk
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Spring is in the air at the Punch Bowl Inn Battsford!

What a start to the year! A huge thank you to our fantastic local shoots who kept us busy throughout January - your continued support brings such energy to the pub during the winter months, and we're so grateful to be part of your season. As always, this place simply wouldn't run without our incredible community. To our volunteer gardeners, maintenance heroes, bar workers, electricians, plumbers and everyone in between - THANK YOU. You give your time, skills and heart to keep the Punch Bowl thriving, and it truly shows. And of course, a massive shoutout to our amazing staff and management team, who are absolutely smashing it together. The teamwork, positivity and passion behind the bar and behind the scenes is something we're incredibly proud of.

 **MAY BEER FEZI 1st-4th May** Our spring festival is back and it's going to be bigger & better than ever!

Live Music:

Friday: Jess Simmons


Saturday: The Harvs


Sunday: Under the Bridge and Joe Keeley

Monday: The Brawlers

Drinks:

10 Local Ales and 5 Ciders

And NEW for 2026... a selection of mouthwatering cocktails! 

 **Street Food:** From light bites to full-on box meals - think chips, burgers, vegan options, loaded goodness PLUS desserts and our crowd-favourite ice cream float milkshakes!

 And yes... the bouncy castle is back too!

Volunteers Needed!

We're looking for volunteers to help run the ale, cider and cocktail bars during the Fezi. If you'd like to get involved, please register your interest at the pub. It's a brilliant way to support your local and be part of the fun.

Sponsor a Keg

Support your local while promoting your business (or just your great name!) by sponsoring an ale or cider keg for £80. It's community spirit at its best - and hugely appreciated.

Live Music All Year Round

The Fezi isn't the only time we bring the tunes! We've got regular live music lined up throughout the year, so make sure you're following our socials to stay up to date with what's coming next.

Easter Plans

While our chef takes a well-earned break, the kitchen will be closed from 2nd-12th April but don't worry, we've got something VERY exciting planned...


Welcome to The April Takeover! A fantastic line-up of visiting food vendors bringing flavour from around the world to Battsford - a great opportunity to try something new while keeping the pub buzzing over Easter:

Friday 3rd & Saturday 4th April: BELLE'S KITCHEN - Fresh takes on burgers and loaded fries using local ingredients - seriously tasty stuff.

Thursday 9th April: REAL THAI FOOD - Authentic heritage Thai cuisine to transport you straight to the streets of Bangkok.

Friday 10th April: BADBOI BURRITOS - Two local Suffolk lads serving authentic Mexican food - and oh my, they deliver on flavour!

Sunday 12th April: SAVANNAH SMOKE GRILL - A mobile BBQ serving wings, boneless jerk and sensational sides.

The Punch Bowl continues to be powered by its community - thank you for being part of it. Here's to a fantastic spring and an unforgettable summer ahead - we can't wait to see you at the bar! 

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Battisford & District Gardening Club

battisfordgardeningclub.org.uk



We are well into our year of activities: one more meeting to go and then three visits, before we are back in the Village Hall for more fascinating talks. Our usual first Monday schedule gets adjusted because Easter and the May Bank Holiday

Final Winter talk

13 April : Seasonal Tips for Late Spring by Karon Saunders in Battisford Village Hall.

Summer Visits

11 May : 18 Raven Way, Hadleigh. This is a private garden and is restricted to 20 visitors. We will be collecting names at the March and April meetings or by email. Cost is £5 for members and £10.00 for non-members. Meet there at 6.30 or Village Hall for sharing lifts at 6.00 p.m.

1 June : NGS garden in Bradfield St. Clare. £7.50 members. £12.50 non-members which includes tea and cake. Plants for sale.

Summer Talk

6 July : Ruth Goudy : How to plan a beautiful border. Village Hall

Autumn Talks

7 September: The Fascination of Fungi. Tony Brown. Village Hall.

5 October : AGM and Japanese Gardens talk. Village Hall.

2 November : Hellebores. Chris Wiley. Village Hall.

28 November : Wreath making. Village Hall.

7 December : Christmas Quiz. Cricket Club, Moats Tye.

All are welcome. For more details or to be on the list for one of the visits, please drop me an email at denis@wicking.me



Battisford & District Cricket Club

The first cricket match of the season should be taking place on 18th April; however, the groundskeeper is struggling at the moment to get onto the outfield because of the standing water, so let's hope that the next few weeks are dry!!

We have had a few events in the closed season including a race night, Casino Royale themed New Year's Eve event and a curry and quiz in February. We are holding a Bingo night with Fish and Chips at the end of March and we continue to be open for a drink on Monday (5pm-7pm) and Friday evenings (5pm - 8.30pm). You are very welcome to join as a social member for £25 a year. It means you can come along and watch a game in the sunshine and have a refreshing drink or two.

We have had a new treatment plant installed by Skinner Building Services with funding from the Mid Suffolk Community Infrastructure Levy fund, and are looking to reconfigure the nets (funding permitting) this year.

This season we continue to have two teams playing on Saturday and Sunday, a women's and girls team on Sundays and a midweek T20 team. We are also going to have a number of junior teams from under 7s- under 15s. We hold our junior coaching on Friday evenings. 5.30-6.30pm. So if you are interested in joining either as a junior or senior player then please get in touch.

The clubhouse is available to hire and is a great venue with the bar for birthday parties, weddings and wakes.

We had a great season last year and are confident that we can build on this going forward.

For more information please use any of the methods below

Website

<https://battisforddistrict.play-cricket.com/>

X @BattisforDCC

Facebook @BattisfordAndDistrictCricketClub

Or contact Julia Stephens-Row Administrator for BDCC on 07449310295



St Marys Battisford

As ever, this first addition of the newsletter looks back to the end of last year, providing an opportunity to thank those who supported our Christmas Fayre at the Punch Bowl. The pub made us very welcome for this fund-raiser/social get together. Many thanks, too, to Claire for her lovely Christmas window arrangements and to Bill for supplying, transporting and putting up an excellent tree for us in church.

We were delighted to welcome a full church for "Carols by Candlelight" on Christmas Eve to sing the Christmas story together in the well-loved words.

We are still DESPERATELY seeking a treasurer !! (who would not need to be a church member). CAN ANYONE HELP? As noted before, Mags would happily explain the (really straightforward) processes involved and be on hand for any advice and guidance needed.

Lent will have begun on Ash Wednesday (18th Feb.) so our March services lead up to Easter in early April:

1st March – Morning Prayer 11.00 am

8th March - Holy Communion 11.15 am

15th March - Mothering Sunday 9.00 am, Gt. Bricett, 11.00 am Offton

29th March - Palm Sunday, 8 Parishes United Service 10.00 am Barking (Don't forget that the clocks go forward today!

2nd April Maundy Thursday Holy Communion 7.00pm Battisford

3rd April Good Friday Devotional Service 2.00pm Flowton.

Saturday 4th April in Flowton Church.....Workshop and Coffee Morning, 10.00am

...making bird boxes, various activities and children's Easter egg hunt.

5th April Easter Day Holy Communion 8.00 am Flowton, 9.30 am Willisham

Easter Blessings to everyone from all at St. Mary's, Battisford.

A different view of St. Mary's, Battisford, probably dating from the 1920's.....
the lime trees had just been planted.



These limes are now huge trees, pollarded by Nick Holmes in 2001, but 25 years

later, grown again to great heights. They are *Tilia europaea*, not the small leaved lime which once formed a large part of our native woodland, but a cross between it and the large leaved lime. Sacred to Lina in pagan times, (especially in Baltic countries) the Church, as so often, transferred the associated symbolism of the lime (or linden) to Christianity and the tree stands today for justice and integrity, its heart-shaped leaves signifying love, peace and unity. Courts were held beneath the branches to settle disputes and ensure fair judgement as it was considered impossible to lie when questioned under a linden tree. Lime has become the preferred wood for painted icon panels because it does not warp and can be given such a smooth surface. Musical instrument makers, turners and carvers also value its stable properties. Probably we, too, should be using our limes, perhaps for linden-flower tea or an infusion from the seed pods, maybe young leaves in salads or cordage from under-bark fibres (a use since neolithic times). Their bounty is not wasted entirely, however. Our resident wild bees are intoxicated by the honeyed flowers, one tree supports our owl box, fallen twigs make handy nest material for the tower jackdaws and the squirrels take them back aloft to replenish their dreys in the treetops.

We like to think that people can still find peace and tranquillity in the shade of our churchyard limes.

All aboard! Come and volunteer at Battisford's miniature railway.

For several years we've been running Peverels Orchard Railway, a private sit on railway in Battisford. The trains carry passengers of all ages on our scenic track. Now we need your help to open it up to the local community.

If you have ever dreamt of being a train driver, both steam and electric and are prepared to volunteer some time each month, our dream to welcome you to Peverels will become a reality. With more support, we can operate a regular service and YOU can help make it happen.

Volunteer roles include:

- Engineers and maintenance crew - to build and maintain the engines and coaches.
- Drivers and Guards - to operate the trains.
- Signallers - to operate and maintain our safety systems.
- Grounds and track maintenance - to maintain the track and floral baskets.
- Guest services - to include refreshments and help maintain the friendly railway atmosphere for visitors.

No experience necessary, training will be given. Please note that age restrictions apply to some roles for safety reasons.

Want to get involved?

If you are keen on learning new skills, we will be holding a volunteer experience day at the railway in April, so please get in touch by the end of March to register your interest in volunteering.

For further information or to register, please contact Adrian.

Email: ip14gardenrailway@gmail.com.

Or ring Adrian on 01449 775184

Looking forward to welcoming you on board!



Monday Teas at the Punch Bowl Inn Battisford

Everyone is welcome to come along on the second Monday of every month to enjoy hot drinks and delicious savoury and sweet home-made treats. We meet from 3.00 p.m. until around 4.00 p.m. No need to book, just come along.

A small donation towards costs is optional. We look forward to welcoming you soon.



My council tax bill is due in March, and I'm dreading it as it seems to rise every year. My income hasn't increased, but everything else costs more, leaving very little left over. I'm worried about how I'll cope if my payments go up again.

Many people are feeling the same pressure as bills increase. You're not alone, and importantly, support is available.

Some people are entitled to council tax discounts depending on their circumstances. Your bill may already include an automatic reduction, or you can contact your local council to check if you qualify.

If you're the only adult living in your home, you should receive a 25% single person discount. When councils calculate how many people live in a property, certain people are not counted. These are known as "disregarded people" and include under-18s, student nurses, apprentices, and others. You can find the full list on the government website: www.gov.uk/council-tax/who-has-to-pay.

If someone has recently moved out, it's important to tell your council, as this could change your eligibility. Any discount you're entitled to can be backdated to the date they moved out, even if you inform the council later.

If you're on a low income, you may qualify for a Council Tax Reduction. This applies whether you're working or receiving benefits, although having other adults living with you can affect how much support you get. Only one person in the household needs to apply. The council will assess your income and circumstances and issue an updated bill if you're eligible. You can apply via www.gov.uk/apply-for-council-tax-discount.

Extra support may also be available if you've reached State Pension age. The rules differ depending on whether you or your partner receive certain benefits such as Universal Credit, income-related ESA or pension credits. Details are available at www.gov.uk/state-pension-age.

Even if none of these apply, councils can sometimes reduce or cancel council tax through a discretionary reduction if you're experiencing severe financial hardship. This is available even if your immigration status restricts access to public funds. Council tax is a priority bill, so it's important to stay in contact with your council if you're struggling. Citizens Advice can help you explore your options and find a way forward, without judgement, and alongside you every step of the way.

Citizens Advice Mid Suffolk can provide in depth advice on this issue and much more, including debt, finances, employment, benefits and family/relationships. You can contact them by phone on 01449 676060, visit in person at Milton House, 5 Milton Road South, Stowmarket IP14 1EZ or use the contact form at midsuffolcab.org.uk/contact-us. Opening hours are Monday-Thursday 9.30am – 3.30pm and Friday 9.30am – 12.30pm.

Does your dog need company during the day?

Do you need help walking your dog?

Do you want to go on holiday?

I'm Jodie. I am 13 years old and I live in-between Combs and Battisford. I love dogs and I am looking for opportunities to spend more time with them. Please would you consider asking me to help with your dog?

I'm home educated, so I am available throughout the day and also in the school holidays. I am young and quiet but also competent and trustworthy.

Pocket money would be appreciated.

If interested please contact me on:

Phone: 07547 475872

or

Email: jodierhart12@gmail.com



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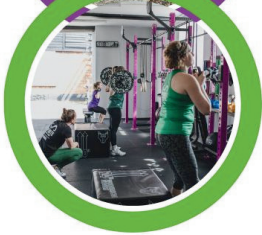
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Key Contacts

Parish Council Chairmen

Battisford - Jon Cook 07592 775059
Combs - Tony Kitson 07711 380597
Lt Finborough - Paul Marriage 01449 612815

District Councillors

Battisford - Dan Pratt 01473 658398
Combs - John Matthissen 01449 258894

County Councillor

Kay Oakes: 07702 339971 or 07724 700695
kay.oakes@suffolk.gov.uk

Doctors' Surgeries

Bildeston Health Centre 01449 720254
Combs Ford Surgery 01449 678333
Needham Market Practice 01449 720666
Stowmarket Violet Hill 01449 776000

Advice

Citizens Advice 0800 144 8848
Samaritans 116 123
Age UK 0800 678 1602
MIND 0300 123 3393

Buses

Suffolk Taxi Bus - call 01449 866899 or go to swifttaxicabs.com
Hadleigh Community Transport Group (accessible transport) - 01473 826242

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FLOORING - BEDS - HOME

Have you visited our showroom yet?

Come and visit us at Combs Tannery and see what we have to offer.

We have an extensive range of carpets, vinyl & luxury vinyl tiles. Unable to make it? Don't worry, we can also come to you, with our at home estimating and planning service.



NEW FOR 2026!!

We are increasing our home and giftware selection! Throughout the year we will be adding locally sourced crafts and gifts, to compliment our existing collection of scented candles, DCUK ducks and natural blankets

Need a new bed or mattress?

We are extending our mattress and bed collection with names like Julian Bowen and Durabeds.

High sleepers, Divans, Ottoman bases, Wooden and metal frames, we can offer them all.



To book an appointment call us on: 01449 257077
Combs Tannery, Tannery Road, Combs, IP14 2EN
Email; sales@pureflooring.co.uk



Dates for your diary

Further details can be found inside this newsletter

Date

Every Monday
Every Wednesday
Every Thursday
Every Friday
Every 3rd Monday
Every 2nd Monday

March

Monday 9th
Thursday 12th
Tuesday 17th
Thursday 19th
Saturday 21st
Sunday 22nd
FSaturday 28th
Saturday 28th
Sat 28th / Sun 29th
Sunday 29th
Sunday 29th

April

Friday 3rd / Sat 4th
Sunday 5th
Thursday 9th
Thursday 9th
Friday 10th
Sunday 12th
Monday 13th
Monday 13th
Thursday 16th
Tuesday 21st

May

Thurs 1st - Mon 4th
Saturday 9th
Monday 11th
Monday 11th
Tuesday 12th
Thursday 14

June

Monday 1st
Monday 8th
Thursday 11th
Thursday 11th
Tuesday 16th

Event

NEW ZUMBA CLASSES at Battsiford Village Hall
Snooker Club at Battsiford Village Hall
Yoga at Battsiford Village Hall
Mobile Post Office outside the Punch Bowl
Dolly's Pizza Truck outside the Punch Bowl
Monday Teas at the Punch Bowl

Combs Parish Council meeting
Rural Coffee Caravan @ Combs Green
Battsiford Parish Council meeting
Mobile Library
Battiford Litter Pick
Combs Litter Pick
Easter Egg Hunt at Little Finborough Church
Bingo and Fish & Chips at Battsiford Cricket Club
Oaks Meadow Community Room meetings
Oaks Meadow Easter Events
Palm Sunday Procession and Service

Belle's Kitchen @ The Punch Bowl
Easter Day Holy Communion
Rural Coffee Caravan @ Combs Green
Real Thai Food @ The Punch Bowl
Badboi Burritos @ The Punch Bowl
Savannah Smoke Grill @The Punch Bowl
Combs Parish Council Meeting
Gardening Club talk in Battsiford Village Hall
Mobile Library
Battsiford Parish Council meeting

The Punch Bowl Spring Festival
Plant Sale @ Orchard House, Battsiford
Gardening Club visit to private garden in Hadleigh
Combs Parish Council meeting + Annual Parish meeting
Battsiford Parish Council meeting + Annual Parish meeting
Rural Coffee Caravan @ Combs Green

Gardening Club - NGS garden in Bradfield St. Clare
Combs Parish Council meeting
Mobile Library
Rural Coffee Caravan @ Combs Green
Battsiford Parish Council meeting