

# Stapleford MESSENGER

January 2026

Volume 85 No 1

Ne Nuntium Necare!

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Find out more on page 41

*The Messenger* is the Parish magazine for the whole community of Stapleford



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# Who's who at St Andrew's

[www.standrewstapleford.org](http://www.standrewstapleford.org)

**Vicar: Simon Taylor**

email: [simontaylorstandrews@gmail.com](mailto:simontaylorstandrews@gmail.com)  
phone: 840256 or 07970 716163

**Churchwarden: Alastair MacGregor**

email: [armacgregor@ntlworld.com](mailto:armacgregor@ntlworld.com)  
phone: 843021 or 07855 269844

**Curate: Matt Lewis**

email: [curate@standrewstapleford.org](mailto:curate@standrewstapleford.org)  
phone: 07707 166834

**Parish Administrator/Johnson Hall enquiries:**

email: [admin@standrewstapleford.org](mailto:admin@standrewstapleford.org)

**Safeguarding Officer: Rob Needle**

email: [safeguarding@standrewstapleford.org](mailto:safeguarding@standrewstapleford.org)  
phone: 844227 or 07877 055934

**Director of Music: Tim Kwan**

email: [music@standrewstapleford.org](mailto:music@standrewstapleford.org)  
phone: 07745 803972

For more Church contacts please see [standrewstapleford.org](http://standrewstapleford.org).

## SERVICES AT ST ANDREW'S

See the St Andrew's Noticeboard in this magazine for this month, and the church website, [standrewstapleford.org](http://standrewstapleford.org), for full details. The services include:

9am BCP or CW Communion

10.30am Various, including Communion, Sunday Worship, All Age, Messy Church or Messy Forest Church

6pm Evensong

## SERVICES AT OTHER CHURCHES

**Our Lady of Lourdes, Sawston (Roman Catholic)**

Monday to Saturday: 9.30am. Sundays: 8.45am and 11.15am

**Shelford Free Church (Baptist)**

Sundays 10.30am

# From the Rev Matt Lewis

WELCOME to another New Year, or at least a New Calendar year in the West. At this time of year many make New Year Resolutions. Perhaps you're happy with your accomplishments last year, having stuck with resolutions and seen it through. Perhaps, like many, the resolutions waned in late January. Some dislike the tradition. I do, preferring instead to commit to resolutions throughout the year. Oscar Wilde disdained resolutions. In *A Picture of Dorian Grey*, Lord Henry dismisses Grey's excuses, saying "Good resolutions are useless attempts to interfere with scientific laws. Their origin is pure vanity. Their result is absolutely nil... They are simply cheques that men draw on a bank where they have no account." Rather than considering what we think about New Year resolutions, have we considered where this tradition comes from?



The practice of New Year resolutions is one that pre-dates the calendar we use. They go back to around 2,000 BC, where ancient Babylonians reaffirmed their king and made promises to their gods over a 12 day festival. These promises usually amounted to affirming that there would be a better year ahead, in a similar manner to our concept of New Year resolutions. In later centuries, when Julius Caesar reformed the calendar, 1 January became a date for a resolution for better behaviours in ancient Rome, including paying off debts and making pledges of goodwill. By 1671 we have resolutions related to biblical pledges from the Scottish writer Anne Halkett, writing in her diary on 2 January, showing an example of early and personal resolutions. The concept of personal resolutions emerged fully in the 19th century as the New Year resolutions we know today (although the phrase likely comes from an American newspaper in 1813).



I find this history comforting, because I can write off my slightly cynical view as one that is more historically informed: the concept predates the calendar that it is ascribed to. At least, that's what I'll tell myself. In essence, resolutions to live better aren't limited to our New Year! It could be any new beginning, or even a seasonal change. This also means that the many resolutions that don't stick by the end of January need not be lost as the calendar moves on. A resolution to live a better life and to do better by others can develop throughout the year.

Living a better life ought to involve how we treat others as well.

Allegedly, Marie Curie made a New Year resolution to help more women in science. I write allegedly only because I doubt whether this was a New Year resolution, or just a resolution she made to see a change in science. A similar claim is made about Mahatma Gandhi, although I doubt his resolution to promote non-violent resistance had much to do with a calendar. Both were resolutions for the greater good, orientated outwardly. I find it inspiring how they are resolutions to support others more than self.

In this season of Epiphany some of the bible narratives we read are to do with some sort of resolution. Some of these may have sounded outlandish at the time. In Matthew's Gospel, a group of wise men from the east made a resolution to follow a star. In Luke's Gospel, a woman called Anna made a resolution to wait in the temple and pray. Each of these resolutions had more to do with another person than the development of self. Each person sought Jesus in some way. Come to one of our Sunday services this month to hear more, or have a listen online.



*Image by Angeles Balaguer from Pixabay*

None of these resolutions were facile or self-centred. I imagine they were hard to keep. I know I find my resolutions to change throughout the year a challenge! Perhaps their resolutions seemed bizarre to those around them, or led to ridicule for what they did. That seems to have been the case for Curie and Gandhi as well. What I do find comforting is that the bible records how Jesus was tempted in every way. When I am tempted to break my resolution, I know that even Jesus has experienced temptation. Following Jesus' example, temptation can be resisted.

In the end the challenge of a resolution ought to give us comfort that it is worth persevering. The difficulty is part of the point, and overcoming temptation is beneficial to us. Each example here, and many others, show that resolutions to do something differently are worth it because they are difficult and lead to worthwhile change. Wilde's character Lord Henry was wrong about resolutions. They point us to consider how we change ourselves in order to help others. May this be a Happy New Year to you. And may our resolutions, now or at any time, help us to focus outside ourselves to the good of others.

Every blessing now and in the months to come. **Matt.**



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# Stapleford Messenger

## Deadline for the February Messenger

Please submit copy **NO LATER THAN FRIDAY 9 JANUARY**

By email (Word or similar attachment) to [staplefordmessenger@gmail.com](mailto:staplefordmessenger@gmail.com)

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### Messenger contacts

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# St Andrew's Noticeboard

4 JAN	9 AM	BCP COMMUNION
	10.30 AM	CW COMMUNION FOR THE FEAST OF EPIPHANY Isaiah 60.1-6; Matthew 2.1-12 <i>The Magi</i>
5 JAN	7 PM	MONTHLY PRAYER MEETING
11 JAN	9 AM	BCP COMMUNION
	10.30 AM	SUNDAY WORSHIP ON THE BAPTISM OF CHRIST Isaiah 42.1-9; Matthew 3.13-17
	10.30 AM	MESSY CHURCH in the Johnson Hall
	6 PM	CHORAL EVENSONG Joshua 3.1-8, 14-17; Luke 3.15-22
15 JAN	10.30 AM	THIRD THURSDAY MIDWEEK COMMUNION 1 Samuel 4.1-11; Mark 1.29-39
18 JAN	9 AM	BCP COMMUNION
	10.30 AM	CW COMMUNION Isaiah 49.1-7; Matthew 4.1-11 <i>Tempted</i>
25 JAN	9 AM	BCP COMMUNION
	10.30 AM	ALL AGE & FAMILY SERVICE Isaiah 9.1-4; Matthew 4.12-25 <i>Follow me!</i>
1 FEB	9 AM	BCP COMMUNION
	10.30 AM	CW COMMUNION FOR CANDLEMAS Malachi 3.1-5; Luke 2.22-40 <i>A light for the world</i>

The church is open every day as a place to come and pray or enjoy a moment of quiet reflection.

## FROM THE REGISTERS

14 DEC – BAPTISM OF ELIJA SESTOKAITE  
30 DEC – INTERMENT OF ASHES OF JOHN DEAN

# Cool, calm and collected

WRITING in the first week of December 2025 for the January 2026 Messenger feels strange. One year quickly to the next. Cool, calm and collected? Not really. Walking through the Grand Arcade recently I heard a band playing carols. Wonderful. The Salvation Army calm and focused. Yet shoppers scurried past. Sadly that sincerity, simplicity and humility I remember is becoming lost. Now it seems a massive spending spree often with unforeseen consequences. My mind is unsettled. I am not anchored. Too much going on. Commitments to honour and trials to overcome. At sea, adrift and not alone. Many struggle through Christmas sensing insecurity. The build up is enormous. Daunting. Expectations are high. Underlying excitement metered by anxiety. Difficult to remain cool, calm or collected.

Confused, clicked and collected may be more appropriate. The deep meaning of this time is becoming lost. It is not about the biggest and best. My favourite carols are In The Bleak Mid Winter and It Came Upon The Midnight Clear. The verses have strong messages well worth reading.

We can only try our best. Good days and bad. The jigsaw of life. There are times when envy creeps along seeking a willing client. When feeling low hearing talk of grand plans for the future can make that green mist settle. It would not have a chance if we were sensitive and considerate. Who knows what is going on in someone's head or behind closed doors? With understanding and delicacy envy will retreat. Listening and truly hearing is a skill helpful for us all. We do need each other, particularly in adversity. When my late husband was ill I found strength to help him. Loved playing a leading role. In sharing what I called treats we both benefited. Now I find those recollections comforting. The memories of sharing are strong and steadfast. They underpin the future. Two quotes I like are; "Kind words can be short and easy to speak, but their echoes are endless," from Mother Teresa. The second from Emily Dickinson, "That it will never come again is what makes life so sweet."

2026. Bells ring. 6 January Epiphany. Diaries wait for words. Calendars show seasonal pictures. Time to look forward as we smile over the flickering flame of hope. Happy New Year. **Judith Lee**



*The Bleak Mid Winter*

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## Letter to the Editor

Please include a contact postal address with all correspondence.

**From:** Laure Ramond

**Re:** Guiding Glow

MY name is Laure, I am 9 years old and I go to Brownies every Thursday evening in Great Shelford.

We do a lot of fun activities, for example we slept at an aquarium, we did a campfire (and ate a lot of marshmallows!) and did a stall at the Shelford feast.

I really like it because we can make lots of new friends and learn new things.

Each term we do a new theme, for example this term we do express myself and if we do some activity related to the theme we get a badge! I already have many badges: World Thinking Day, Dancing, Baking, Grow your own and First aid!

I am preparing the 'Guiding Glow' badge and I want to spread the guiding glow to all Stapleford!

If you want to learn more about the Brownies, go to the brownies website: [girlguiding.org.uk/what-we-do/brownies](http://girlguiding.org.uk/what-we-do/brownies).

## St Andrew's Stapleford Messenger Fund

THE Messenger Fund is about to make another round of donations. We do have some already under consideration, which we will process soon – many apologies for the delay – but would be happy to receive more.

We are especially glad to support any worthy causes in the village or nearby, or with some link to the village. In the past we have supported the school/PTA, Community Warden Scheme, Nachingwea Link, SSYI, YouthInc South Cambs, playground refurbishment, Scouts and the football and cricket clubs. Repeat applications or new ones are both welcome.

Applications can be made by email to [simontaylorandrews@gmail.com](mailto:simontaylorandrews@gmail.com) by **4 pm on 7 January**. Just let us know the organisation applying, contact details, how much you need and what it is for – we do not need huge detail, but need to see where the money is going and what it will do. **Simon Taylor**



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# Stapleford-Nachingwea Link

## The joy of a wheelchair

WHEN we heard that some children who should have been attending Nachingwea Primary School weren't able to go because they couldn't walk and others were kept at home because they had hearing difficulties, we felt we had to act. We are now delighted to see the joy on the faces of three children in the Special Needs class who have received wheelchairs (see photos) and to hear that another three children have had their hearing needs assessed and now have hearing aids. We can only imagine what an improvement these aids, which here in the UK would be taken for granted, must make to the lives of these children. Their teacher, Siamini, has written via WhatsApp, saying "The wheelchairs and hearing aids have truly made a big difference in the lives of the pupils. Thank you for your generous support and care."

Robert and Liz, who visited Nachingwea on our behalf this summer, suggested that it would be very helpful if our chair of our Link, Trish Maude, and their chair, Kevin Bushiri, could speak directly via the internet. A date was set and with great anticipation both chairs joined WhatsApp only to find that they could not hear each other. It was a great disappointment, but we are eagerly looking forward to our next attempt.

Finally, a huge thank you to all who came to our second Christmas Tea in the Pavilion on 30 November. What a lovely social occasion, with old friends catching up and new friendships being made. Thank you to all who made the delicious scones and cakes or who gave raffle prizes. All of the £1,000 profit will go to our next projects in Nachingwea.

We look forward to another exciting year as the Link between Stapleford and Nachingwea continues to flourish.

**The St Andrew's Stapleford Link Committee**



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# Mothers' Union



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WE very much enjoyed hosting other Branches from the Granta Deanery to the Advent Service in December – it was good

to see some old friends again.

We start in January with our 2026 programme, the theme for the year being Join Us! Join In! On 22 January, Rosey Fuell is coming to speak to the Branch about her voyage to the North-West Passage – usual time and place, 2.30pm in the Johnson Hall.

The Branch is planning a concert of music to celebrate this special year for the Mothers' Union – 150 years since it was founded by Mary Sumner – so details later of the concert in May.

Best wishes to members for the New Year. **Hilary Street**

## Stapleford Warden Scheme



All residents of Stapleford are invited to come to a coffee morning organised by Juliet Hawksworth, our Age UK Cambridge and Peterborough Community Warden on Monday, 12 January 10 to 12pm in Cox's Close Community Room CB22 5SP.

Future coffee mornings will be on the second Monday of the month (tbc).

For more information about the scheme contact Juliet on 07436 102733 or at [juliet.hawksworth@ageukcap.org.uk](mailto:juliet.hawksworth@ageukcap.org.uk). **Juliet Hawksworth**

## Friends of Great Shelford Library

### Annual General Meeting



THE Friends of Great Shelford Library Annual General Meeting will take place on Tuesday 20 January at 7.30pm in the library.

There will be a talk by Terri Lewis, District Library Manager for South Cambridgeshire on 'Eat, Meet, Art', a project to integrate refugees into local communities.

Everyone is welcome to attend the meeting where seasonal refreshments will be provided. **Sarah Coppendale**



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# Puzzle Corner

## Happy New Year words

All the answers can be made from the letters of

HAPPY NEW YEAR

The letters A, P, Y and E can be used more than once

### 3-letter words

pale	cyst
mimic	crude
epoch	novel
taxus	wonder
conflict	criticise

### 4-letter words

dad	cry
yarn	fruit
close	region
quarry	enclose

### 5-letter words

weary	long
diaper	animal
tearful	conscious

### 6-letter words

seem	bird
occur	relative

### 8-letter word

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*Set by Hermes – Answers on page 19*

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## Women's Institute



OUR members turned out in force for the final meeting of 2025. There was a lovely atmosphere of fun, friendship and enjoyment as we began our meeting by listening to an array of tunes played by the St Andrew's church handbell ringers. Some of our own members play in this talented group and it was highly appropriate and a delight for everyone that the first tune played was 'Jerusalem'. We were treated to a wide ranging programme including folk tunes and finishing with popular Christmas songs and carols.

Refreshments including mulled wine, soft drinks and mince pies were served and then followed our business meeting.

The evening then continued with a fun craft activity led by Gillian Pett. If we folded, cut and followed instructions correctly our piece of paper was turned into a free standing Christmas tree. There was much laughter while we did this. Before members departed there was a secret Christmas raffle drawn and thanks are due to Jean Hore for the large number of beautifully wrapped mystery prizes.

As you look ahead to this coming year and possibly consider finding a new interest, wish to make new friends or would like to try any of the many activities offered by both our WI group in the village, and the Cambridgeshire Federation, then please come to a meeting as a visitor. Our next meeting is on 22 January where a speaker, Marion Lepper will talk about Winnie Cobb, the first lady taxi driver in Cambridgeshire. We meet on the fourth Thursday of each month in the Pavilion. Further details can be found on our website [staplefordwi.weebly.com](http://staplefordwi.weebly.com) or you can speak to Sallie Dixon on 843847. **Joyce Dobson**



## Thank You



THANK you to all friends, neighbours, villagers and the church congregation for your generosity once again towards our annual toiletries collection for the Cambridge Women's Refuge. Everything is gratefully received by the Cambridge Women's Refuge, especially at this time of the year – we collected an enormous amount of very useful items, which were very welcome by the Refuge. **Hilary Street**

# Come & Sing Evensong!

Sunday 8 February 2026



**Rehearsal 3.45 pm  
Evensong 6 pm**

*- everyone welcome  
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# Time to renew or take out a subscription to the Messenger

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We look forward to delivering village news and info to you through 2026! **The Stapleford Messenger Team**

## Puzzle Corner answers

### Happy New Year words

3-letter: WAN, WEN, APE, RAW, ERA, NEW, YEW, AWE, WAR, PAN

4-letter: PAPA, WEEP, TALE, PEAR, NEAR, AREA, PREY, WRAP

5-letter: TIRED, YEARN, NAPPY, HYENA, WEEPY, AWARE

6-letter: APPEAR, PEAHEN, HAPPEN, NEPHEW

8-letter: ANYWHERE

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## Tree project



NOW winter is here we have been planting more trees around the village and, with a very enthusiastic group of children, at the school. You are welcome to come along and help at one of our friendly planting sessions every Sunday afternoon from 2pm. Meet on the allotments at the Community Plot and bring your own spade and gloves if you can. We are having a session on 25 January to specifically plant trees up Haverhill Road where there is no roadside hedge, and we would love some people to help us - contact Sophi if you'd like to come along or want more information. We will continue to plant around the village every Sunday throughout January, February and early March (weather permitting).

We really need some more 'adopters' to take on the watering of the new trees we plant this season. Please contact Sophi on the email address below for details. The small whips don't have much of a root system, so do need watering for the first couple of growing seasons. We lost very few trees this summer due to the loyal waterers!



You will see that trees we have planted on public land are numbered, and we have compiled an inventory of the trees we have and their species, and where they have gone to. This list is on the Parish Council website so you can see what's planted where. We have been monitoring the trees' growth and keeping a record of their progress. The few that have died have been replaced.

Thank you to people who have donated to the project. We have had to buy more trees, guards, and stakes for this year's planting, so donations are always welcome.

So, ways you can help are by joining a planting session, adopting a tree, or making a donation. Or consider planting a tree in your own garden.

For more information about the project, see [staplefordparishcouncil.gov.uk/stapleford-tree-project](http://staplefordparishcouncil.gov.uk/stapleford-tree-project), or contact [sophiberridge@gmail.com](mailto:sophiberridge@gmail.com) if you have any questions. To register your interest or to donate to the project, fill in the form at the above address, scrolling down to 'register here'. **Helen Hale**

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# Making best use of the Pavilion

STAPLEFORD Parish Council are running an exercise to get feedback from residents regarding the Jubilee Pavilion. The village has changed a lot since it was built in 2012, so we're looking at ways to modernise the space and increase usage.

Thanks to everyone who braved the horrid weather in November and came to the drop-in Pavilion consultation. We've already got some great feedback and ideas! Popular themes so far include better hall acoustics, improved lighting, better kitchen facilities, a standalone website and some outside toilets. People shared lots of ideas for new uses including games clubs, remote working hubs, bingo nights and more!

The online survey runs until the 18 January, so if you didn't get the chance to add your thoughts, you can by scanning the QR Code or going to [tinyurl.com/Stapleford-Survey](https://tinyurl.com/Stapleford-Survey). After that, the Parish Council will consider all the inputs and report back on any suggested short-term improvements and longer-term plans. **Rebecca Trigg**



## CamSight peer support groups



CAMSIGHT runs monthly groups across Cambridgeshire for adults living with low vision and blindness, their carers, and their family members. Members enjoy a range of different

activities from guest speakers, entertainment, quizzes, and light refreshments. Members are kept updated on the newest equipment and support available from CamSight and other local and national organisations. The group provides a reassuring space for people to discuss their daily challenges and share ideas on how to manage them. By sharing tips on how to do things differently and helping one another, great friendships are formed.

The Stapleford group meets on the first Thursday of each month from 2pm to 4pm at: Cox's Close Community Room.

The next few 2026 meeting dates are: 5 February, 5 March, 2 April, 7 May and 4 June. For details phone: 420033 or email [info@camsight.org.uk](mailto:info@camsight.org.uk).  
**Julie Moncur**

# Stapleford Strollers: Short Walk 27

## Commercial End: A Short Walk from Swaffham Bulbeck

### To get to start of walk

TAKE the B1102 past Anglesey Abbey to Swaffham Bulbeck. Just before leaving the village in the direction of Swaffham Prior and Burwell and after the double bend in the main road, turn left on to a road signed Commercial End. Keep on this road, parking on the left shortly before a T-junction with Fen Lane (CB25 0HP)

### Distance of walk

Just under 3 miles. It is generally easy underfoot, flat and rarely gets over-muddy. It makes an excellent walk on a nice, crisp winter's day and is equally good in summer. There is often a herd of roe deer in view; they can be often seen on both sides of the lode described in the notes below.

### OS Map

Explorer map 226. You can also use your phone app, run off a free map extract using [maps.the-hug.net](http://maps.the-hug.net) or simply use the route map provided

### Extra information

Commercial End in Swaffham Bulbeck was the part of the village where, as the name suggests, most commerce took place as it was at the end of the lode - the watercourse that connects Swaffham Bulbeck to the River Cam. These days it is a very attractive street, but The Old Brewery and The Merchant's House, near where you will park your vehicle, are evidence of commercial activity in the past. The lode was navigable and active for transporting agricultural goods and coal until the 1920s.

### Route of the walk

Walk towards Fen Lane and turn left when reaching it. Walk carefully along the side of this very minor road for about  $\frac{1}{3}$  mile until turning right up a rough track immediately before a drainage lode. The bridge over the lode, known as Cow Bridge, has NRDC carved on it (Newmarket Rural District Council - now long gone). You can park here, in the old farm loading bay just beyond the bridge, if you wish to shorten the walk to  $2\frac{1}{4}$  miles.

Walk up the track passing a field on the right, after the first house, that often has alpacas in it. Carry on until reaching a metal bridge over the lode. This is an old railway bridge; cross it. On the other side of the lode, walk ahead with the watercourse to the right, for about  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile, when a grass track will be seen to the left leading away from the lode.

Follow this track as it first swings left and then continues straight ahead with a drainage ditch to its left. This was an old cattle drove road. Just before a farmhouse is reached, the path goes right at a footpath sign and then swings left round the end of the farmhouse, now heading straight ahead once more on a wide track. This eventually meets up with a very minor road.

Turn left along the road and it will take you back past the bridge with NRDC on it that was seen earlier in the walk. There is very little traffic usually, but take care. Keep on the road beyond the bridge and return to your vehicle in Commercial End. **David Barnes**

*The Stapleford Strollers do not accept responsibility for any accident or mishap that may happen to any person who follows this route*



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## Girlguiding



SHELFORD Brownies enjoyed singing and s'mores at a campfire one evening in early November. Many have now completed their Know Myself Theme Award, working on one of the new Brownie badges in the process (e.g. Folklore, Guiding Glow and Passions). The Brownies also enjoyed participating in the Remembrance Sunday service and Act of Remembrance in Great Shelford, making Santa decorations for their entry to the Christmas Tree Festival at St Andrew's Church, and making gingerbread-style houses from biscuits, icing and sweets.

Shelford Guides have had a lot of fun both indoors and out. Highlights include a rugby session with Cambridge Rugby Club, a campfire, a night hike, making Christmas decorations and confectionery, and a visit from a computational chemist for a session about computer algorithms. They've also been learning money skills and other practical life skills for the Live Smart badge.

Coffee morning: Saturday 17 January 10am to 12.30pm at Scout and Guide HQ, Woollards Lane, Great Shelford (entrance opposite the skate park).

Please join Shelford Guides for coffee and cake to raise funds for a trip for local Girlguiding members (aged 14 to 18) to Kenya in 2026. £5 entry per adult/£1 per child - refreshments included. **Lisa MacGregor**



## Sawston Cinema

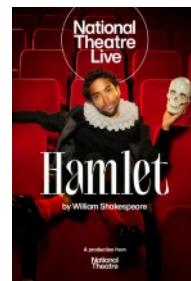
### Hamlet (12A)

A National Theatre Live production.

National Theatre Deputy Artistic Director Robert Hastie (Standing at the Sky's Edge, Operation Mincemeat) directs and Olivier Award-winner Hiran Abeysekera (Life of Pi) is Hamlet in this sharp, stylish and darkly funny reimagining of Shakespeare's tragedy.

Thursday 22 January 7pm (doors open 6.30) £10.  
Running time 180 minutes

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## 2G3S



DR Bike continues to hold its volunteer-run weekly bike repair sessions at the Old Slaughterhouse in Stapleford, 3pm to 5.30pm every Tuesday. Children are welcome to come and learn how to look after their bikes and do simple maintenance and repairs, but please attend with them (for safeguarding reasons). For more information, contact [drbikestapleford@gmail.com](mailto:drbikestapleford@gmail.com). You can also book a time slot at that address, though this is not essential. The Saturday sessions may resume in Spring.

**Planning Meeting** – our next planning meeting is on Monday 5 January at the community room in Cox's Close, Stapleford, where we will be arranging our upcoming events. Do come along and meet us, and suggest activities you might like us to do.

**The Future of Water** – we are organising a conversation evening about water, a very important issue around here. We will have speakers from Cambridge Water and Cam Valley Forum (or another water quality organisation), and our councillor Peter Fane will talk about planning issues. It will be on Thursday 22 January at 8pm at Cox's Close Community Room in Stapleford. Check our website or Facebook page nearer the time to confirm details.

**Repair Café** – if you missed our last one, the next one will be on Saturday 7 February at Great Shelford Free Church, 2pm to 5pm. Do try and book your repair in advance, bookings can be made at [cambridgecarbonfootprint.org/events](http://cambridgecarbonfootprint.org/events). This helps us plan our schedule so we can avoid people having to wait, and also means we can do our homework in advance to assess the repair.

We can tackle a wide variety of repairs including jewellery, electrical and electronic devices, as well as clothes and fabrics. The repairers are brilliant and can fix a lot of things but there are no guarantees.

Please note that we will not be able to replace cracked screens on phones or tablets. But we will collect small portable non-working (unfixable) electrical items and ensure these are properly disposed of.

**Good News evening** – we held this event at the end of November, and people came along with items of good news and shared them over refreshments. We all felt a little more cheerful about the state of the environment and had hope for the world by the end of the evening. We heard about groups of people getting together to change things, such that more traction is building to bring about change at government level. At international level we considered how although COP30 didn't achieve much

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Repair Café is FREE, but donations are welcome.

Tea/coffee and cake will be provided!

## Great Shelford Free Church

## 7th February 2026 2pm - 5pm

Venue: Ashen Green, Great Shelford, CB22 5EY

For more details & to book in an item for repair  
scan the QR code or visit:

[bit.ly/m/2G3S-RepairCafes](https://bit.ly/m/2G3S-RepairCafes)

Email: [2G3Srepaircafes@gmail.com](mailto:2G3Srepaircafes@gmail.com)



Great Shelford  
Free Church



Cambridgeshire  
REPAIR CAFE  
Network

in relation to phasing out fossil fuels, there was progress for indigenous groups' voices to be heard. Jonathan Porritt, a well-known green campaigner for many years, has written that solar and other renewables will promote energy security, democracy, fairness, and reduce climate change, referring us to evidence that this will be so. The magazine 'Positive News' discusses lots of issues such as these and can be seen at Cara Café in Great Shelford (care of one of our members). We heard about an artist with Cambridge Carbon Footprint, Hilary Cox Condron, who has designed the mural on a bridge along the Chisholm Trail. She has also worked with local schools to express through art their lives, what they love about where they live and about nature, and their dreams for the future, including making pledges to improve their local environment in some way. What the primary school children said in her video was very impressive, so articulate and informed. Another member reported on how a group of villagers in Fowlmere have collated the times of the various different buses that call in the village to make one simple timetable, which they posted through every letterbox and displayed at the bus stops. Bus usage has increased since this has been done, thus helping to ensure the bus services continue to be run in the future. And locally, we heard from the Stapleford Tree Project, which has planted well over 100 trees around the village, mostly on public land such as verges or street corners, and at the primary school with the help of children, and are continuing to plant this season. Stapleford St Andrew's church has a link with a church of the same name in Nachingwea, Tanzania, and for many years they have raised money to support projects to help life in the African village and its surroundings improve, from donating bicycles, sewing machines, school libraries, educating girls, and a number of other projects that have been identified by people in the two villages communicating and visiting. Most recently they have facilitated the setting up of a women's group to meet regularly and make sanitary towels that can be washed out and reused. Girls used to miss school because they didn't have adequate protection, and it's a big societal step that the women can meet regularly and talk about periods, contraception, and other problems that were considered taboo.

It was heartening to talk to people who have got up and done something to help make the world a fairer, greener, kinder place to be. Perhaps, thinking about new year resolutions, we could all be kinder to each other and our surroundings, consume less, and spend our money wisely.

**Greater Cambridge Local Plan** - Cambridge City Council and SCDC have released a draft of the new local plan for 'Greater Cambridge' for the next 20 years. This includes, in our part of South Cambs, small housing

## CONCERTS

**Fibonacci Quartet****Friday 16 January | 7:45pm**

Ludwig van Beethoven, Florence Price and Béla Bartók performed by one of Europe's leading string quartets, renowned for their dazzling performances and meticulous attention to detail.

**Fabienne Ambuehl Quartet****Saturday 17 January | 7:45pm**

Acclaimed jazz singer and pianist Fabienne Ambuehl leads a stellar quartet with music that seamlessly blends song and instrumentals, characterised by compelling rhythms, mesmerising soundscapes and crystal clear vocals.

**John Kirkpatrick: A Victorian Farmer's Year****Sunday 25 January | 3:00pm**

One of folk's greatest traditional music exponents, John Kirkpatrick presents a year in the countryside, with buoyant seasonal working songs that kept spirits high amidst the hardships of late 19th century agricultural life.

**Ian Buckle: A Nordic Collection****Saturday 31 January | 5:00pm**

A seasonal collection from Scandinavia: Ian Buckle's programme interweaves 20 jewels from the treasury of piano pieces by Edvard Grieg and Jean Sibelius, evoking a distinctive Nordic musical landscape.



developments, a new settlement of 6,000 houses near Little Abington, expansion of the Cambridge Biomedical Campus into the Cambridge Green Belt and plans for large logistics warehouses adjacent to the A14 and A11. There is obviously a risk that these further conversions of countryside and farmland into built environment will increase pressure on water resources and cause a loss of habitat for wildlife. More information can be found at Greater Cambridge Shared Planning. A public consultation on the draft plan runs until 30 January, so do voice your concerns if you have them.

If you are interested in green matters and the environment at all levels (individual, local, national, international), send an email to [mail2G3S@gmail.com](mailto:mail2G3S@gmail.com) to sign up for our monthly newsletter, or to get more information about our meetings. We are a friendly group and welcome anyone who wants to come along to one of our events or to find out more about how we can live sustainably. Also see our Facebook page and our website [2g3s.staplefordvillage.org.uk](http://2g3s.staplefordvillage.org.uk). **Helen Hale**



## Jeeves and the British Empire

**A talk by Dr. Sean Lang**

What ho! How the creator of Jeeves and Bertie Wooster helped bring down the bally British Empire.

The Pavilion, Tuesday 13 January, 7.45pm

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# January at Great Shelford Library

## Happy New Year

WE look forward to seeing you in the library during January. We welcome our new librarian Vikki in the afternoons.

Great Shelford Library would like to say a huge thank you to the Shelford Wednesday Country Market and the Feast who have both made donations to the library in 2025. These funds will help us buy more adult books and update some of the rugs and furniture in the children's library.

We will be running our usual events in January.

**Craft & Chat** – Every Friday morning 10.30am to 12pm. No need to book.

**Tea & Games** – Every Friday afternoon 2pm to 3.30pm. No need to book.

**Engage Talk** – The History of Papworth Village Settlement – Wednesday 28 January 2pm to 3.30pm. A donation of £2 is appreciated. Please stay for a drink after the talk. Please pre-book in the library or via [Cambourne.referral@cambridgeshire.gov.uk](mailto:Cambourne.referral@cambridgeshire.gov.uk)

**Story, Rhyme & Duplo Time** – Every Tuesday at 10.30am

For children aged 0 to 4 years. Come and enjoy stories and rhymes led by our wonderful volunteers. This is a free drop-in event. Parents/carers please stay with your children.

**LEGO and Duplo club / Children Games Club** – Alternate weeks, Mondays 4pm to 5.30pm. Suggested donation £1. Suitable for ages 2 to 10. Parents/carers please stay with your children during all library activities.

**Art Club** – Every Saturday morning 10.30am to 12noon. Suitable for ages 4 to 10. Drop in event. £2 donation. Parents/carers must supervise their children at all times.

**Stay and Play** – Every Thursday 2pm to 3.30pm. For children aged 0 to 3 years. A relaxed drop in session for families with young children. £2 per family. Toys provided. **Mel Abbiss and Vikki Keppey - Community Librarian Assistants**

### Library opening hours

Monday	3pm-7pm	Friday	10am-1pm and 2-6pm
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*The Travelling Companions*, Augustus Leopold Egg, 1862. Birmingham Museums Trust via Unsplash.

# Stapleford Twinning Association



THE Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Stapleford Twinning Association was held on 20 November. The Chair, Tony Hore, and the entire committee were unanimously re-elected. Following the meeting, members enjoyed a social

gathering with a glass or two of Vouvray, which was kindly provided by our French twinners, and delicious desserts prepared by the committee.

Stapleford has been twinned with Villedômer, a small village near Tours in the Loire Valley of France, since 1979. This makes it one of the most long-lasting Twinning Associations in the country. The association visits each other's countries in alternate years. In 2026, it will be Stapleford's turn to return to Villedômer over the weekend of May 22 to 25. The method of travel—air, train, or coach—is yet to be decided. New members are very welcome to join the association and to join us on next May's visit to Villedômer. Being able to speak French is not a requirement!

The association will be showing a French film starring Jean Paul Belmondo on 7 March.

For more information on the visit or the film, please contact visit the Twinning website: [twinning.staplefordvillage.org.uk](http://twinning.staplefordvillage.org.uk), Tony Hore by email at: [smokytone@aol.com](mailto:smokytone@aol.com).



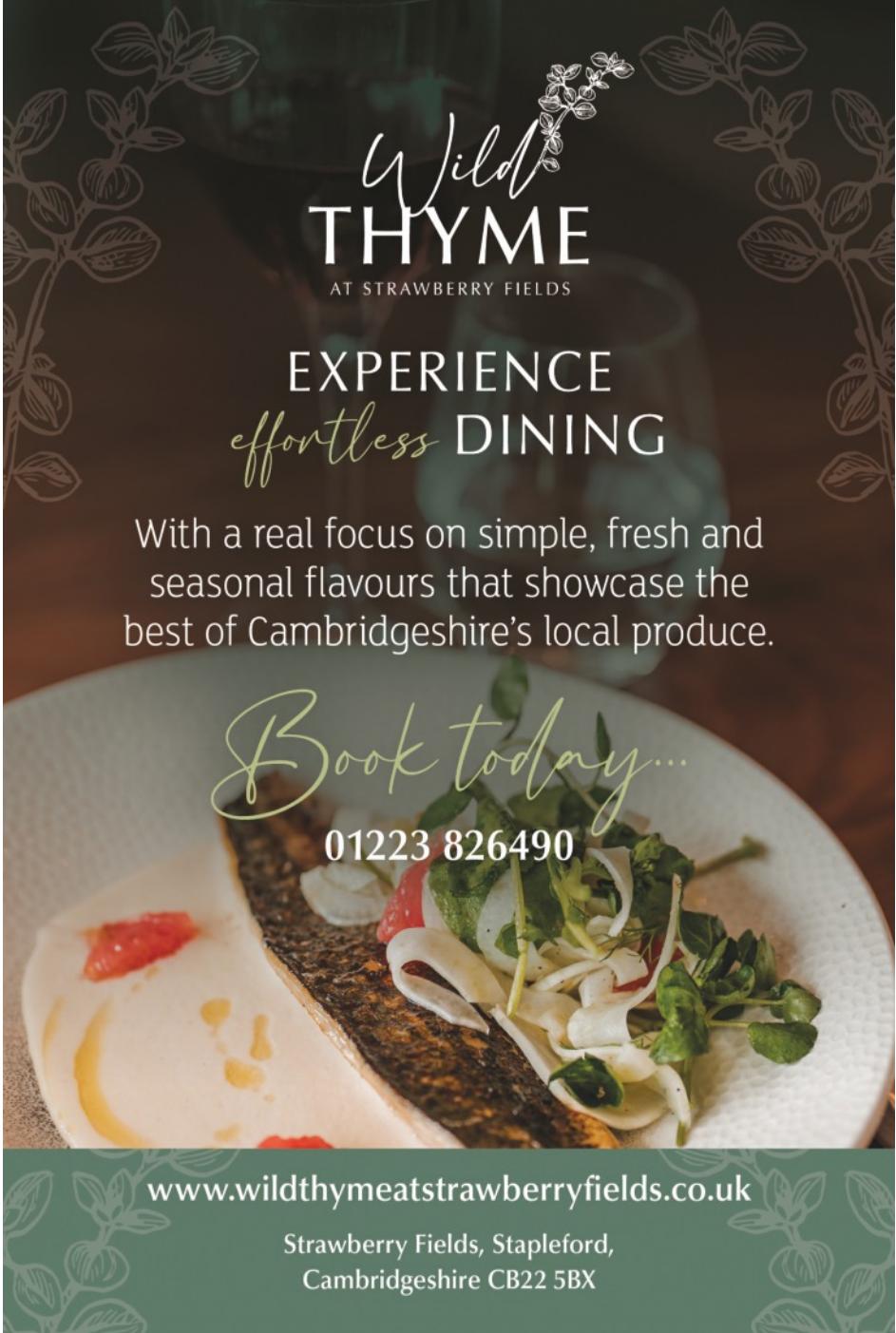
Jean Paul Belmondo in 1962  
Photo credit: Jack Metzger – Comet Photo AG (Zürich)

## Financial difficulties?



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# Stapleford Wind Sinfonia concert



STAPLEFORD Wind Sinfonia would like to invite you to their next free concert at St Mary's Church, Sawston, on 7 February at 3pm. The programme includes pieces by Nigel Hess and Adam Gorb, plus a host of other great tunes. Please come along, with family and friends, for music guaranteed to cheer up a winter afternoon. **Margaret Burleigh**

*SWS after their concert at St Mary's Church Sawston 18 October 2025*

## Thermal imaging for a cosier home



CAMBRIDGE Carbon Footprint is offering residents and organisations across Cambridgeshire the opportunity to borrow and learn how to use a thermal imaging camera for free. You can join a one-hour online training session to learn how to interpret thermal images, identify draughts, gaps in insulation, and heating problems, and to make your home cosier and more energy efficient. Great for homeowners and renters alike! Cambridge Carbon Footprint also encourages individuals, organisations and community groups to undertake training to survey multiple properties within their community.

**Cameras are only lent to people who have attended the training.** Loan periods are: Friday afternoon to Monday morning, or Monday afternoon to Friday morning, and cameras can be picked up from one of 18 volunteer camera hosts around South Cambs, Cambridge City and Huntingdonshire.

Thermal Imaging Training Dates:

Wednesday 7 January 7.30pm to 8.30pm

Monday 9 February 7.30pm to 8.30pm

More information can be found at [cambridgecarbonfootprint.org](http://cambridgecarbonfootprint.org) where you can book for these events - look under What you can do/events.

**Fran Sutton, Cambridge Carbon Footprint**



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## 'Spore Shooters' on the Down

RANGER Claire Beale recently spotted two unusual mushrooms on Magog Down – the White Saddle *Helvella crispa* and the Elfin Saddle *Helvella lacunosa*.

Named because of their saddle-like caps, these interesting fungi belong to a distinct division called 'spore shooters'.

The spores form inside sacs just beneath the surface of the wrinkled caps of the mushroom. The tiny dust-like particles shoot out when they are ripe and germinate wherever conditions are suitable. (The other distinct fungi group are the 'spore droppers').

Both of these mushrooms have irregularly-shaped convoluted lobes. The lobes of the White Saddle are whitish, with pale buff or tan undersides. The Elfin Saddle has grey to blackish lobes, with the undersides paler. The stems of both are deeply furrowed and hollow.

The White Saddle grows in grass as well as deciduous woodlands, appearing from the end of summer until the end of autumn. It can be seen along path sides in the woods on Magog Down, especially under beech trees, and also along well-trodden grassy paths. The photo was taken on North Down.

The Elfin Saddle is also found in mixed woodland in summer and autumn. This photo was taken in Colin's Wood.

Warning – Some species of fungi are poisonous. Visitors to Magog Down are reminded that they should not eat or touch any fungi found on the Down. **Claire Beale - Ranger**



White Saddle *Helvella crispa* - Photo by Claire Beale

## Stapleford Horticultural Society

OUR next talk will be on Thursday 8 January, when Kerry Austen will be presenting 'Kerry's Guide to Rose Care'. Kerry is Head Gardener at the Royal National Rose Society so should know what she's talking about!

As usual it will be held in the Johnson Hall starting at 7.30pm, and guests paying the meeting fee of £3 are welcome.  
**John Sherwell**





## DAVID FOX CARPENTRY

### *Workshop closing*

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# Royal British Legion



AS I write this, the Branch is looking forward to a New Year with a new set of challenges and of course opportunities.

We are finding that our membership is slowly getting older and less able to engage with the activities that the coming year will bring, and so I think back to the huge number of people who attended the service held at the War Memorial on Sunday, 9 November. It was estimated that there may have been more than two thousand which clearly shows that it still holds a hugely important role in the life of the village. However, unless we can recruit a few more members, it is unlikely that we shall be able to honour those who lost their lives, in a similar way for many more years. The duties and responsibilities are falling onto fewer shoulders.

If anyone thinks that they might consider the Royal British Legion as a worthwhile local charity and organisation to belong to, then please do get in touch with us. The next branch meeting is on Wednesday, 28 January at the Chapelfield Way Community Centre, Sawston at 7.00pm. Anyone interested in the work of the Legion can attend without being a member.

It is a very social occasion and we always begin with a booked speaker covering all sorts of topics.

The January speaker will be our own Alan Osborne, telling us about 'Rosalind Franklin – the Dark Lady of DNA'. The talk is then followed by tea/coffee and cake! Hoorah!

We then move onto the business session of our Branch and aim to end around 9.30pm.

Anyone can attend without being a committed member – so please come and find out what we are all about and what our future plans are. You never know – you might actually know some of us! We are a friendly lot and it would be lovely to see some new faces!

**Ann Barton - Branch Secretary**

## We're waiting for your story!

HAVE you a story to tell or an event to publicise? Or perhaps you have an opinion to share on an issue that is important to you. If so, drop us a line on [staplefordmessenger@gmail.com](mailto:staplefordmessenger@gmail.com) - after all, it's your magazine and we would love to hear from you.

# Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service



CAMBRIDGESHIRE  
FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE  
Working together to improve community safety

GET your chimney swept and keep your home fire safe!

The Service attends around one hundred fires a year involving chimneys, most of which could be avoided by following some simple safety tips:

- Appoint a skilled and technically competent chimney engineer. To find your nearest local HETAS Approved Chimney Sweep visit: [hetas.co.uk/find-chimney-sweep](http://hetas.co.uk/find-chimney-sweep)
- Keep the flue shafts clear and ensure they are well maintained
- Only use properly treated wood to build a fire
- Always use a fireguard to protect against flying sparks from hot embers
- Make sure embers are properly put out before you go to bed.

We always advise getting your chimney swept at least once a year, preferably before lighting it for the first time when the cold weather arrives. There could be a buildup of debris that's accumulated over the year, which can be set alight when heating the home and could cause a significant fire.

Some will also be looking at using a chimney for the first time, that may not have been used for many years. It is really important to make sure it is swept and inspect the brickwork before lighting it for the first time.



## Stay fire safe in your kitchen

More than half the fires the crews attend in the home start in the kitchen. This can be down to a number of things.

Below are some simple safety tips to help you stay fire safe in the kitchen:

- Avoid leaving children in the kitchen alone when cooking on the hob. Keep matches and saucepan handles out of their reach to keep them safe

- Take care if you're wearing loose clothing – this can easily catch fire
- Keep tea towels and cloths away from the cooker and hob
- Double check the cooker is off when you have finished cooking
- Don't store items on top of hobs
- Take care if you need to leave the kitchen whilst cooking, take pans off the heat or turn them down to avoid risk
- Make sure saucepan handles don't stick out – so they don't get knocked off the stove
- Keep electrics (leads and appliances) away from water
- Check toasters are clean and placed away from curtains and kitchen rolls
- Keep the oven, hob and grill clean and in good working order. A build-up of fat and grease can ignite a fire.



### Help your local community – become an on-call firefighter!

Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service is looking to recruit more on-call firefighters to help local communities by responding to emergencies.

On-call firefighters are a vital part of your fire and rescue service. They respond to a wide range of incidents, from fighting fires and attending road traffic collisions to rescuing people and animals in need. They also respond to medical emergencies.

In addition to responding to emergency incidents, on-call firefighters support their communities by providing a range of safety advice helping people to keep safe in their homes.

Being an on-call firefighter has many benefits. As well as being paid an annual wage and for the time spent at incidents or training, there are also opportunities to develop first aid skills and heavy goods vehicle driving qualifications.

Find out more about becoming an on-call firefighter by visiting our website: [bit.ly/CFRSOncall](http://bit.ly/CFRSOncall) .





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# Parish Council Chair's report

AT the last Parish Council meeting of 2025 we welcomed another coopted Parish Councillor, Nel Clark. This takes the Council to its full complement of 11 councillors, the first time in many years.

The recent accident involving the cycle path to Sawston was discussed and concerns expressed, again, for the safety of those using the path particularly at the pinch point next to Bridge End Cottage. Cllr Peter Fane, County and District Councillor present at the meeting said he would discuss this with South Cambs Safety Officer. A previous request for a 30mph speed limit before the bridge was turned down.

The Council agreed to send a letter objecting to the proposed development of land between Mingle Lane and Hinton Way on the grounds of harm to the Green Belt, loss of separation between Stapleford and Great Shelford, traffic and access problems, pressure on local services, environmental and biodiversity impacts and changes to the landscape and character of this area. This land, although removed from the local plan for development at present, could become a Grey Belt area in future and a site for development, because of the government's position on development.

A debit card use policy was agreed, and this will improve accounting processes. The budget for next year was approved. The precept will rise by 6.5% meaning that for a band D household there will be an increase of £2.37 per year. The precept is used by the Parish Council for local services such as grounds maintenance, improvements in the village etc.

An agreement was reached with the tennis club to move forward with a vision of safety, availability, inclusivity and self-funding. Stapleford Tennis Club will operate the MUGA under a Licence to occupy. A Sports and Recreation Advisory Group will be established.

**There will be a drop-in session for the public consultation on the Local Plan on 15 January 5 to 7pm at the Jubilee Pavilion and all are encouraged to attend.**

The Parish Council wishes all residents a happy and prosperous 2026. The next meeting of the Parish Council is on 8 January at 7pm in the Jubilee Pavilion and residents are invited to attend and air their views.

## Used stamps

Please would you place used stamps in the box in the St Andrew's Church porch? I will forward your stamps to the fund-raising project of the Bible Reading Fellowship. Thank you. **Trish Maude**

# Stapleford Parish Council

[staplefordparishcouncil.gov.uk](http://staplefordparishcouncil.gov.uk)



## COUNCILLORS

Gillian Pett (Chair)

Howard Kettel (V Chair)

Rosie Brown

Nel Clark

Mick Davies

Anna Disley-Stevens

Matthew French

Juliet Hawksworth

Duncan Kerr

Barbara Ann Kettel

Rebecca Trigg

Please address any matters needing attention from the Parish Council to the clerk.

## CLERK

Max Barrett 07472 398823

[clerk@staplefordparishcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@staplefordparishcouncil.gov.uk)

## SOUTH CAMBS DISTRICT COUNCILLORS

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843861 / 07802 256 861

Will Jackson-Wood

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Laurence Peter Damary-Homan

[Laurence.Damary-Homan@cambridgeshire.gov.uk](mailto:Laurence.Damary-Homan@cambridgeshire.gov.uk)

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*Stapleford Parish Council normally meets publicly on the first Thursday of every month. Please check our website for the latest details*



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The advertisement features a black background with a gold decorative border at the bottom. In the center, there is a photograph of a wine glass and a white square dish containing a meal, possibly a curry. To the left, there is text about the restaurant's awards and a logo. To the right, there is a stylized logo for 'Zara'.



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