

# CRATFIELD NEWS

February 2026



**RIP**  
**Margaret Thompson**

Our deepest sympathy and condolences go to Ian on the loss of Margaret who passed away on January 11<sup>th</sup> after a difficult illness.

One of Margaret's main aims in life was to quietly offer help and support where needed and to promote community spirit within the village. She gathered people together for social purposes and for fund raising events, be it for the church, charities or international crises. This, with Ian's backing and willing helpers, was successfully achieved on so many occasions, Christmas Fairs, an Auction of promises, the Swing Band, Nativity productions, coffee mornings to mention but few.

Margaret will be deeply missed by all whose lives she touched.

Margaret's burial will take place at St. Mary's Church, Cratfield on Monday February 2<sup>nd</sup> at 12 noon, afterwards hot food at the Fressingfield Baptist Chapel, (*School Road, Fressingfield IP21 5RU*) followed by a service celebrating her life.

All welcome, no dress code or flowers.

There will be a collection for one of the charities Margaret and Ian supported.

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### **New Year Update from Fressingfield Medical Centre:**

Dr Jim Morris, who has worked at Fressingfield Medical Centre for almost 28 years, is retiring at the end of March 2026 and Dr Henry Johnson has joined us.

Dr Johnson grew up in Suffolk and after training in Dublin and working in London and Kent, he has relocated back to Suffolk with his young family.

Once Dr Johnson is settled, Dr Morris' patients will be moved over to Dr Johnson, as their named GP and we will contact affected patients when this happens. Dr Morris will continue working with us for a couple of days a week for the next few months to ensure a smooth transition to Dr Johnson.

We would love to collate some thoughts, memories, stories, pictures and well wishes for Dr Morris for a memory book. To celebrate his career and contribution to us and our community.

Please hand to reception at either Stradbroke and Fressingfield, or drop anything through the door or post, for the attention of Clare Good, Practice Manager.

Alternatively, please go to the link on the front page of our website and complete the form there.

We need to have any thoughts by the end of **February**, to allow us time to collate through March. Thank you.



# Soup Lunch

at Cratfield Village Hall

Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> February

12 noon to 2pm

Come along and enjoy a  
warm bowl of soup,  
bread and tea and cake

*All welcome!*



Lotty Barbour will be bringing along a selection of Cratfield Beef  
for sale at the Soup Lunch

## Village Plant/Garden Sale

A few brave daffs are showing their heads and birds are flitting purposefully in and out of the hedgerows. Whether that's a good strategy remains to be seen. However, the gardening year is definitely turning and this is a reminder that we are planning our Village Hall garden table top sale in June. We're asking everyone who can to grow a plant or six, to help produce a wide range of flowers, shrubs, fruit and veg plants for sale. Funds will go to the village hall, but it's a great opportunity to buy something new for your own garden at reasonable cost. As always, the event will involve cake.

We also plan to have a Garden bric-a-brac stall so any good quality stuff you no longer want - terracotta, bygones, old watering cans or that six foot carved angel you brought back from the salvage yard... if you no longer want it and think someone else might, please let me know.

I can be contacted via the Village Hall email address at [cratfieldvillagehall@gmail.com](mailto:cratfieldvillagehall@gmail.com).

Natalie

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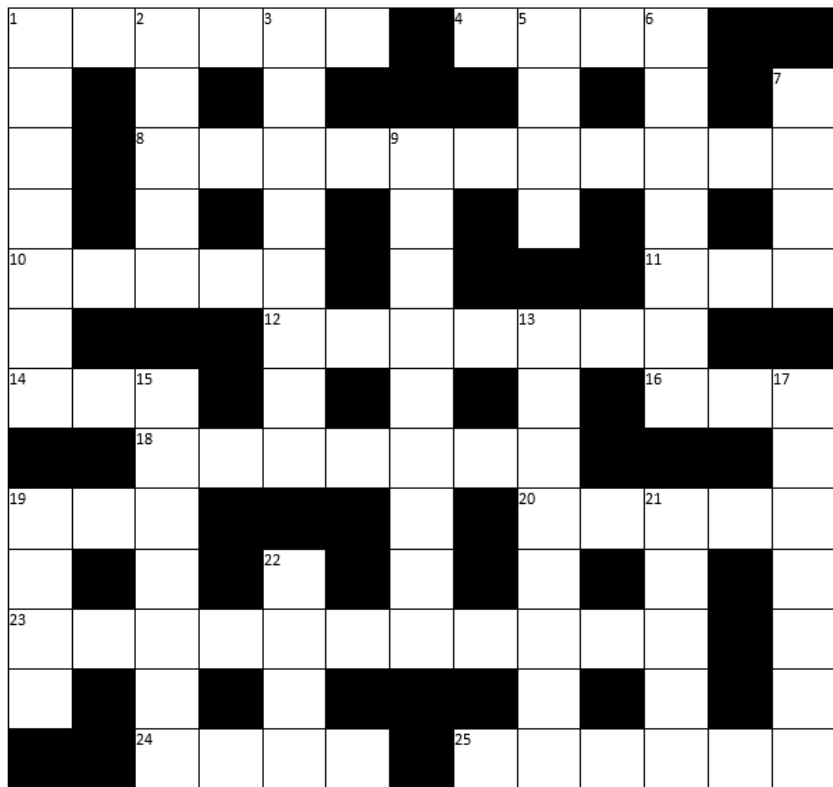
## BUNTING RETURNS

'We're back at the Village Hall on the **7th March 2026 (2.00pm – 5.00pm)** to continue our bunting making! Whether you're a cutter, sewer, pinner or iron-er, there's a job for everyone! We will be adding to the fabulous bunting lengths we made in November, ensuring we have plenty for all future Village Hall events.

We had such a wonderful afternoon last time, and it would be fantastic to see everyone who joined us before, along with as many new, enthusiastic crafters as possible, to help finish what we started.

As with everything Cratfield, tea, coffee, cake and a glass of Prosecco to round off the afternoon.

Please email Caroline Hay Davison at [c.hay-davison@sky.com](mailto:c.hay-davison@sky.com) just so we know how many cakes to make!"



Winter  
2026

Cryptic

Cross  
word

By

Liebre



**ACROSS**

- 1 Grate trouble? (6)
- 4 Entrance of one distinctly indignant Norse is chief (4)
- 8 Without Lincolnshire, perhaps, it's naught (3,1,7)
- 10 In that place, singly; doubly is soothing (5)
- 11 Being French, she loses energy at length (3)
- 12 Knit: look, purls are not OK when these light up (4-3)
- 14 Manhandle map awkwardly, essentially (3)
- 16 Cleaner not right for brew (3)
- 18 Chief uncertainty declared to be cause for retreat (7)
- 19 Prosecute fourth, seventh, and ninth (3)
- 20 The Spanish French end is petite (5)
- 23 Addict under sway is a definite case (3,3,4)
- 24 Pronounced shock can last some time (4)
- 25 Dealt regularly in eternal dread (6)

**DOWN**

- 1 Generate from the best sheep (5,2)
- 2 Extent of what is embraced by holier angels (5)
- 3 Pete trod roundabout, having done trifling tasks
- 5 Splatter plaster (4)
- 6 Exotic Eastern state is as close as can be (7)
- 7 Setter with large whine (4)
- 9 Braid also constitutes simple vessel (9)
- 13 Covert action to loiter in old city (8)
- 15 Filed or soundly dampened (7)
- 17 Irritated by the dreadfully anodyne (7)
- 19 Especially arising from what primarily has charm under siege (4)
- 21 On the contrary, unneeded affection embodies what has paled (5)
- 22 The littlest lost its head and went dark (4)

MICHAEL OLIVER

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*Cllr Richard Chivers Tel: 07900 187350 - Silverleys Green collection*

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## We aim to please.....

In my day, naval guns had three main roles – naval bombardment in support of operations ashore, anti-aircraft fire and surface fire. Of the three, surface firings were the most satisfying to exercise - plenty of noise and the smell of cordite, a reasonable chance of seeing the target (usually nine to ten miles away) and even better the possibility of seeing the target hit. Most frigates and destroyers of that period had guns of 4.5-inch calibre, compared to the 15-inch guns of WW2 battleships.<sup>1</sup>

In the spring of 1979, HMS Ashanti was taking part in large scale, multi-ship exercises for around ten days, 100 miles or so off the coast of Morocco. We were scheduled early one morning for a surface shoot practice against a radar-enhanced target, towed by a tug about 1000 yards ahead of the target. Our little fleet was fairly well scattered across the West Atlantic and, in those pre-GPS days, it was sometimes difficult to know exactly where you were, or where the other ships were, particularly since it tended to be very misty in the early mornings. However, in due course, we found our tug and prepared to conduct a training shoot against a moving target at a range of about nine miles, whilst ourselves manoeuvring a little more skittishly and realistically.

The biggest safety hazard was, of course, the risk of landing one's shells close to a merchant ship or civil aircraft, innocently going about their normal business. There was a clear procedure for publishing an international warning notice in advance but (shall we say) they were not always read attentively. Consequently, there were other safety rules in place, including a drill immediately before opening fire in which I, as Captain, received reports that the range was clear visually and by radar, and the gun mounting was trained on the right target, before I gave permission to open fire.

All this was done properly, and I gave permission to fire. The guns roared and we congratulated ourselves when suddenly, over the radio, came a startled voice from the tug saying "Check, check, check" – this demanded an immediate cessation of firing and an investigation. In this case, we had straddled the tug with our first two-gun salvo.<sup>2</sup>

This produced several interesting results. Firstly, there was soon a helicopter from the flagship hovering over us bringing the Fleet Gunnery Officer to investigate – demonstrating that knowing where the other ships were was not quite as difficult as it had seemed. Secondly, we were told we were not to fire again until a dockyard had had a look at the system. Thirdly, we had an immediate on-board investigation.

It transpired that a device called, inspiringly, "Box 10", which was used to control the guns in a surface shoot had a small handwheel under the Box 10 desk for manual training of the gun if necessary<sup>3</sup>. It so happened that our surface gun controller was a large man and that his knee was squashed against this handwheel. As a result, the wheel could be turned slightly without his knowledge. On this occasion,

when the ship turned at speed and heeled over, Murphy's Law<sup>4</sup> ensured that this shifted the bearing of the guns by exactly the number of degrees necessary to move the guns from the target to the tug 1000 yards ahead of it. In a way this was comforting, since it showed that our shooting was accurate - too accurate indeed! I must admit that this reflection of mine was not too well received by the Fleet Gunnery Officer and we were banned from surface shooting until we found a smaller surface controller or a lock for the handwheel. At this point the FGO, rather older and more experienced, but fortunately junior to me, left us puffing and cursing and we had an unexpected break before the next exercise.

I sent a signal to the Master of the tug, apologising for the error, hoping that his morning coffee had not been too disturbed, and thanking him for his assistance in helping us to work up. A little later my own morning coffee was interrupted by the receipt of a reply from the tug. It read "We aim to please. You aim too, please." Sadly, we were not given the opportunity to have another go at a surface target during this particular series of exercises, but I am sure the FGO's temper improved as a result.

### **Jeremy Blackham**

1. Today's most modern ships have 5inch guns with extended range and guided shells.
2. The Tribal Class Frigates were the last class of ships in the RN to have two gun turrets, one for'd and one aft. Today, although all surface combatants have guns, their main armament is usually a mix of missiles.
3. In those days ships often had manual backup systems in case action damage made that necessary.
4. Murphy's Law "If something can go wrong, it will."

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**Mobile Library Dates**

**Silverleys Green 14.00-14.20                      The Poacher 14.30-14.45**

**Feb 17<sup>th</sup>, Mar 17<sup>th</sup>, April 14<sup>th</sup>, May 12<sup>th</sup>, June 9<sup>th</sup>, July 7<sup>th</sup>, Aug 4<sup>th</sup>, Sept 1<sup>st</sup>, 29<sup>th</sup>,  
Oct 27<sup>th</sup>, Nov 24<sup>th</sup>, Dec 22<sup>nd</sup>.**

**For more information including timetables and locations visit; - [suffolkcommunitylibraries.co.uk/mobile-libraries](http://suffolkcommunitylibraries.co.uk/mobile-libraries)**



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## **VILLAGE HALL UPDATE - FEBRUARY 2026**

### **CRATFIELD POP UP PUB - Friday 6<sup>th</sup> February**

Dispel the winter blues and celebrate the lengthening days at the **Cratfield Pop Up Pub** on 6<sup>th</sup> February, 6pm-10pm at the village hall. Another excellent opportunity to catch up with Cratfield neighbours and friends. There will, naturally, be a barrel of local beer – plus a choice of wines, cider, lager, soft drinks, G&T and a great atmosphere to boot. The bar accepts card & cash payment.

**Cratfield Kitchen** will be at the Pop Up so give the stove a rest for the evening! Cash only for food. The kitchen takes orders from 6.30pm so arrive in good time to avoid disappointment.

### **INDOOR BOWLS AT THE VILLAGE HALL**

There's nothing much on the wireless or television so why not try indoor bowling this month? Just turn up at the door and join the friendly regulars at the village hall, 7pm, every other Tuesday (well, usually – see dates below). No prior experience needed and tea and coffee (and biscuits!) are on offer. Suggested £2 donation for use of the hall.

Dates for 2026 are:

February 3<sup>rd</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> /// March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> /// April 14<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> /// May 19<sup>th</sup> /// June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> /// July 21<sup>st</sup> /// August 4<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> /// September 1<sup>st</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> /// October 13<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> /// November 17<sup>th</sup> and /// December 8<sup>th</sup>.

### **Village Hall Events - 2026 Dates for the Diary:**

#### **BUNTING RETURNS – Saturday 7 March**

After the tremendous team effort in the autumn, the bunting marathon continues on 7<sup>th</sup> March. Come and join the fun, creating new bunting for the Village Hall, in whichever capacity suits you best. There are opportunities for cutters, sewers, fixers, stitchers and ironers - refreshments will be provided. This is a brilliant Cratfield effort!

#### **CRATFIELD TALKS – Saturday 21 March - *Cake for Breakfast, Lobster for Tea***

Come and join us for an insight into how the big restaurant chains successfully and more importantly, consistently, cater for thousands of people every day.

Following a long career working for some of the most recognisable brands, most of whom still have restaurants today, Caroline Hay-Davison will take us through the menu development process from the scientific research through to the far-flung factory visits sprinkled with anecdotes from the fun-

ny to the slightly frustrating.

There will be an opportunity to test your own taste buds.

Please reserve your place(s) in advance by emailing [cratfield-villagehall@gmail.com](mailto:cratfield-villagehall@gmail.com) and collect your tickets (**cash only**) on the door. Ticket price **£6 per person** for a fascinating night! The bar will be open from 6pm, accepting cash and card payment. Talk starts at 7pm.

**CRATFIELD ACOUSTIC SPECIAL NIGHT RETURNS** - Saturday 18 April - "Save the Date!"

After the amazing success of Acoustic Special in October 2025, we can all look forward with great excitement to Acoustic Special Two! Again, this will be to raise funds for St Elizabeth Hospice and the performers will all be a surprise! Two acts already booked and a third waiting to confirm.

April 18th 2026....another absolute must for your diary!

**CRATFIELD DOG SHOW 2026 – Sunday 3 May**

The popular Cratfield Dog Show will return with pedigree and fun classes to please every dog lover – and dog! Details of the day, and classes, to follow.

**PLANT SHOW – Sunday 7th June**

A call to all keen Cratfield gardeners! This year we will hold a village plant sale to raise money for the on-going upkeep and maintenance of our village hall. So please pot up those extra seedlings and maximise the use of your propagator, ready for a fun, flora-filled day (there will, of course, be refreshments!).

We also hope to run a garden "Bring and Buy" stall and welcome such items as surplus tools working garden equipment, pots, trays, plant supports, watering cans etc. When you tidy your garden sheds and greenhouses in the spring please keep anything you may no longer have a use for until nearer the date.

**CRATFIELD VILLAGE HALL 100 CLUB – FEBRUARY WINNERS**

This month's 100 Club winners are: first prize (£15) number 32 – Carolyn White; second prize (£10) number 23 – Andy Edmonds; and 3<sup>rd</sup> prize (£5) number 27 – Bernice Muskett. Draw by Tom Britton. Many congratulations to the winners!

***If you have submitted a 2025-2026 100 Club form/paid your subscription but have not yet had an acknowledgement by email/paper, please text or call Helen on 07818046955.***

**VILLAGE HALL FOR HIRE!** Don't forget our hall is available for hire for a very reasonable price! For any future booking enquiries please contact us on [cratfieldvillagehall@gmail.com](mailto:cratfieldvillagehall@gmail.com)

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Last month's History Corner evoked some memories for Chrissie Kitchen:-

"Miss Smith was my teacher at Laxfield Primary School. I remember her being very kind and gentle. At the end of each day I would look forward to her reading to us, Miss Smith on a child's chair and us kids cross-legged on the floor around her. I remember her beautiful stiff petticoats, fashionable at the time, an amazing ensemble of layers in pink, yellow and white. (A kid's eye view from the floor! But I guess petticoats are a thing of the past). Miss Ethel Smith later became Mrs Sidney Ayers, Sidney was a builder from Laxfield, their son, William, became a friend of my family."

When I responded to Chrissie with a simple memory of my own primary school days, she came back with another:-

"Prior to arriving in Laxfield in 1954 I had been at Kindergarten in Germany. Mum had made me a cardigan with buttons down the front resembling British soldiers. A girl with thick black plaits asked me to stand in front of a chest of drawers and one by one took hold of each button and closed the drawer, hence breaking each one. I was scared of her and did not tell anyone until my mum found the cardigan and 'went ape'. She ran to the Kindergarten demanding who had done this and screamed and shouted at the girl. My father said it was my mother's fault for putting Soldiers (British at that) on the cardigan so soon after the war."

My memory is far less traumatic!:-

I went to a Catholic prep school, Notre Dame, St.Helens. Most of the staff were nuns. Sister Loretta was retired but she ran a lovely little library where every week each class had a reading session. There were little rugs and large cushions on the highly polished floor, lots of books and a budgie in a cage! We could choose our own books and read for half an hour or so. It was also seen as a privilege to be allowed to clean out the budgie's cage! But Sister Loretta was incredibly strict, while we queued up in the corridor for our library time, if there was so much as a whisper, the culprit would be discovered and spend the session standing alone in the corridor in shame. If the Head Mistress happened to come by and see you there, well....another mortal sin to be atoned for! However, if you were lucky enough to have your library session on a Friday afternoon and your class had behaved in an exemplary fashion Sister Loretta would throw sweets on the floor and we would all scrambled for them! (In those days if you didn't manage to grab a sweet it was just tough luck!)

I'm sure there must be lots of memories out there. Just a snapshot of your time at a primary school somewhere, good, bad, funny, sad. It will make interesting reading, so come on send an email please [suecraatmag@aol.com](mailto:suecraatmag@aol.com)

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## Exploring the Scottish Islands – with a collapsible bike!

### Orkney Mainland (Pop. 17,805) – Part 2.



**The Italian Chapel:** The 550 Italian prisoners of war who built the causeways known as the ‘Churchill Barriers’ (*described last month*) were captured in North Africa and brought to Orkney in 1942. 200 of them were held at the previously uninhabited Lamb Holm (an islet included in the causeway project) and it was agreed that a place of worship was required for the prisoners. Two Nissen huts were placed end to end and from very limited materials, the prisoners created their own Italian chapel. The exterior is beautiful but the interior takes your breath away: the artistry is exquisite, with ornate metalwork and frescoes. Plain glass has been painted to take on the appearance of stained glass. The illusion of masonry has been painted throughout and the

shape of the building altered to more resemble a church. How the Italians had access to the myriad of paint colours required during war-time beats me, but they also had to be incredibly creative in other areas: the altar and altar rail were constructed from concrete left over from work on the barriers, the light holders were made out of corned beef tins – and the baptismal font was made from a car exhaust covered in a layer of concrete! The main ‘artist in residence’ was Domenico Chiochetti and he stayed on after the war to finish his newly consecrated chapel. The Orcadians so appreciated his work that he and other ex-POWs were invited back to the island to work on a restoration programme in 1960. He again returned in 1964, but was too ill to travel in 1992 to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the POW’s arrival in Orkney. He died in 1999, but in 2014, a

special Mass was held at the chapel to mark its 70th anniversary: during the Mass, Domenico’s daughter, Angela Chiochetti, sang *Parisi angelicus*. ‘The Italian Chapel’ is now one of the foremost tourist attractions in Orkney.



**Maes Howe:** As previously mentioned, Orkney is littered with prehistoric monuments. Maes Howe, built in 2,800 BC, is Britain's largest chambered cairn (ie Neolithic burial monument) and its grass mound hides a complex of passages and chambers built of crafted slabs of flagstone weighing up to 30 tons. You approach it by crouching and awkwardly making your way down a 36' long slab-lined tunnel, which is aligned so that the rear wall of the central chamber is illuminated on the winter solstice. On reaching the end of the entrance tunnel, you straighten your back and find yourself inside a cavernous tomb, lined with vast stone slabs with huge buttresses at each corner. You have now entered the late Stone Age! The slabs used in the construction are immense: smaller chambers come off at the sides and these are floored and roofed with single massive stones. Viking raiders plundered the tomb in the 12<sup>th</sup> century, leaving behind runic graffiti: in fact, there are over 30 carved messages, representing the largest single collection of such carvings in the world. The longest inscription has been translated: "These runes were incised by the best runester in the west, using the axe that Gauk Thrandilsson once owned in south Iceland." There are other messages that relate to conquests (not of the land invasion kind) that are perhaps best not printed in this publication! The remains of a settlement around Maes Howe have also been discovered, as recently as in 1986 – and a Neolithic low road connects Maes Howe with many other historic sites... to be described in following chapters. Prehistory seeps out of the very pores of Orkney's islands: a fascinating place to visit!

*Inside Maes  
Howe*



**Next month:** More historic Orkney!

**Andrew Weight**

# Cratfield Parish Council

All meetings are held in The Village Hall, Manse Lane, Cratfield, IP19 0DJ

## Meeting Dates 2026

Tuesday 13th January 2026 at 7.30 pm

- Tuesday 10th March 2026 at 7.30 pm
- Tuesday 12th May 2026 at 7.30 pm – Annual Parish Meeting & Annual Parish Council Meeting
- Tuesday 14th July 2026 at 7.30 pm
- Tuesday 8th September 2026 at 7.30 pm
- Tuesday 10th November 2026 at 7.30 pm

Agendas (3 days before the meeting) are on the noticeboards & website:

[www.cratfield.onesuffolk.net](http://www.cratfield.onesuffolk.net)

Planning meetings are arranged as and when required.

*~ Members of the Public are Welcome to Attend all Meetings ~*

**For further details contact the Clerk:**

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June 5<sup>th</sup> : Woodfire Cooking - The Basics

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Letter from the Vicar

Dear Friends,

I have recently been reflecting upon my faith journey with some friends and wondering how we might encourage others to do something similar, so watch this space!

I must confess to living a mantra throughout my working life which says that if I don't learn something new every day then I might as well stay in bed. And I do! Learn that is!! I have so many books on my desk to read at the moment including 'The Epic of Eden' which is about the Old Testament and 'Reverberations of Good News – The Gospels in Context Then and Now' written by George Van Kooten. Professor George who is the Lady Margaret's Professor of Divinity (1502) at the University of Cambridge was invited by Bishop Martin to give a talk to all those from across the diocese who deliver sermons to share his research on the Gospel relevant to each liturgical year. The last talk was in 2024 at Framlingham College when we were preparing for the Gospel of Luke from Advent in that year. And I realise that throughout my ongoing learning, Jesus invites us to look beyond success, status and possessions, and to measure life by what truly lasts. When we listen carefully to his words and interpret them through the lens of love, we discover that following Jesus does not take life away from us. It leads us to life in its fullest meaning.

So, what works for you? I would love to hear your story.

Prayers and blessings as we move towards Lent 2026.  
Reverend Chrissie Smart – 07803 134301

## February Services Cratfield

Sunday 1st	Sunday 15th
Malachi 3:1-5 Hebrews 2:14-end Luke 2:22-40	Exodus 24:12-end 2 Peter 1:16-end Matthew 17:1-9
9.30am Village Worship	9.30am Holy Communion

## BENEFICE SERVICES

February	1st	8th	15th	22nd
Bedfield		10.30am Morning Prayer		10.30am Holy Communion
Brundish	3.00pm Café Church		11.00am Holy Communion	
Laxfield	10.30am Celtic Morning Prayer	10.30am Holy Communion	9.30am Chatty Church	6.00pm Hartismere House
Monk Soham	11.00am Family Service	11.00am BCP Morning Prayer	11.00am CW Holy Communion	
Tannington		11.00am Morning Prayer		
Wilby	11.00am Holy Communion		10.30am Village Worship	10.30am Morning Prayer
Worlingworth	11.00am Holy Communion		11.00am Let's Celebrate	11.00am Morning Prayer

**Should there not be a service at your local church, you will be warmly welcomed to any sister church in the Benefice.**

# DIRECTORY:

## Local Officers:

### **Church:**

Priest in Charge of the Four Rivers Benefice

Rev'd Chrissie Smart [rev.chrissiesmart@gmail.com](mailto:rev.chrissiesmart@gmail.com) 01986 743339  
07803 134301

Assistant Curate Rev. Clive Mobbs 07340 838639

### **Parish Council:**

Chairperson Lotty Barbour 01986 798099

Parish Clerk Sally Chapman  
[clerk@cratfield-pc.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@cratfield-pc.gov.uk)

07774 734411

Parish Council Website

[www.cratfield.onesuffolk.net](http://www.cratfield.onesuffolk.net)

Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator

### **Village Hall:**

Chairperson TBC

Vice Chair Jo Cerullo  
01986 798656

Bookings Robert King 01986 798975

### **Laxfield All Saints C of E Primary School**

Head of School Mrs Minns 01986 798344

### **Doctors' Surgery**

Fressingfield 0379 586227  
Stradbroke 01379 384220

### **Cratfield News**

Editor Sue Eade 01986 798725  
[suecratmag@aol.com](mailto:suecratmag@aol.com)

Treasurer Graham Nixey 07748 907099

Production Manager Peter Sparrow 01986 888505  
[peter-sparrow@outlook.com](mailto:peter-sparrow@outlook.com)

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