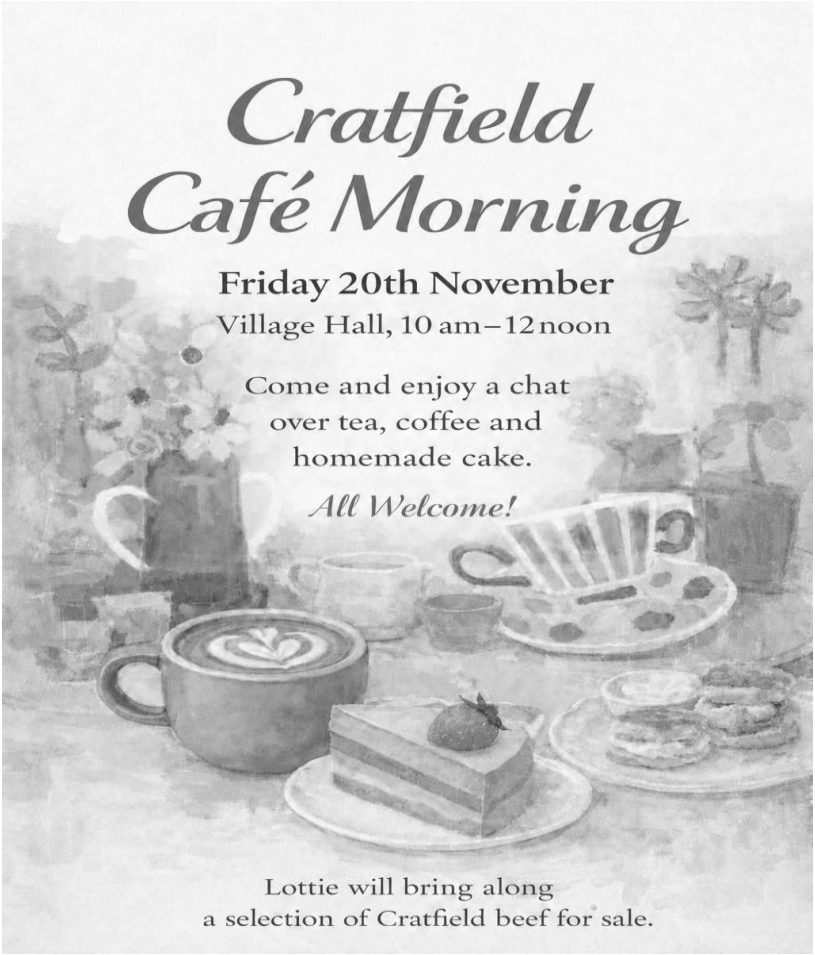
CRATFIELD NEWS

September 2026



New Noticeboard at Bell Green



Cratfield Parish Council is pleased to announce that a new noticeboard has been installed at Bell Green, next to the play area.

The old noticeboard had become difficult to look through as the perspex had become cloudy, making it hard to read the notices displayed inside. The new noticeboard provides a clear and smart replacement and will continue to provide a useful place for local information and community notices.

The cost of the new noticeboard has been covered by a kind grant from our County Councillor, Annette Dunning. Cratfield Parish Council would like to thank Annette for her generous support.

THANK YOU

Chrissie Kitchen would like to send her heartfelt thanks to all of those who have offered her support in so many ways during her recent illness, gifts, visits, transport and more. She is extremely touched and grateful.

"You reap what you sow" Chrissie. You have done so much for so many over the years and are always there to help others. (Sue Ed.)

FOR SALE

Men's new black work trousers 36" waist, regular leg, £5
Oil table lamp with + glass shade, £25.o.n.o.
Large electric frying pan + lid, rack + instructions, used about 3 times but too big for 1 person, £15
Halogen oven with rack + 2 receipe books, £25.o.n.o.
tel no:- 07810 720327

REMEMBER REMEMBER CUT YOUR HEDGES IN NOVEMBER
especially at road junctions and narrow sections of lanes.
A.V.M.

CRATFIELD ACOUSTIC NIGHT

Saturday 14th November 2026 – Cratfield Village Hall

After 2 'Acoustic Specials' we are reverting to the old format for this event with a collection for charity – this time it will be for the St. Elizabeth Hospice. We will have local performers including Natalie Mckay and Paul Marfleet as well as Cratfield Acoustic firm favourite – the ever youthful Jonny G! There will be other performers new to Cratfield as well, so don't miss out on this fun evening. Bring cash for the collection please and be prepared to join in with the choruses! The bar will be open (cash or card) and doors open at 7pm for a 7.30pm start.

See you there.

SAVE THIS DATE AT ALL COSTS: 17TH APRIL, 2027!

We are very pleased and proud to announce that we have secured an **internationally famous** VIP to come to Cratfield Village Hall to present a talk.

We know that next April is some way off, but such is the demand for this person that this was the best available date. The evening will take the style of "An evening with..." consisting of a talk that will relate some heart-stopping experiences – and there will be plenty of time afterwards for questions and answers. We cannot adequately stress what a coup this is for Cratfield Village Hall: without question, this will be an absolute sell-out, so start planning now!

It's possibly a bit soon for 2027 diaries, so whether you write the date on your bedroom wall, or have it tattooed on a close family member, **do** find a way of saving this date! We're staying tight-lipped for now, but further information (including the identity of the person!) will follow in the New Year.

Thank you for your attention in this matter. Best wishes, Mr Cliff Hanger.

FOR SALE

Mountfield 1530H ride on mower, 33inch cut. Bought 2023, light use
Surplus to requirements in new property, £800 o.n.o.
Call/text Bob Smith 07508 270147

Cratfield Community Act of remembrance Sunday November 8th 10.45



As last year we are planning to hold a short open air act of remembrance in line with the National Act of Remembrance Sunday November 8th.

If you would like to take part please congregate around the **Village Sign at Bell Green at 10.45** when we will remember the people from our community who died in the First or Second world Wars, before joining the national silence at 11.00 for all those who have lost their lives in the service of our country.

We will also remember those who live with the physical and mental wounds from having served their country and there will be an opportunity to make a contribution towards the work of the Royal British Legion.

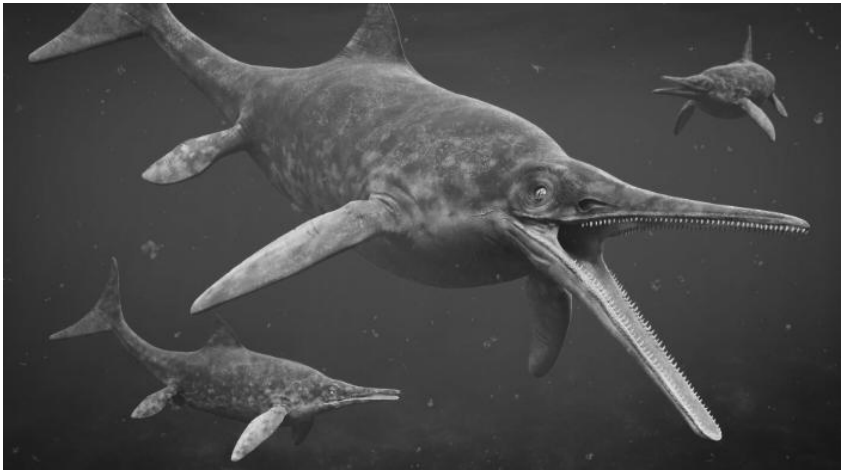
If you would like to help at our act of remembrance or lay a wreath on behalf of a village club or group please contact Rev. Clive Mobbs (07340 838639)

Weather advice – Please come dressed for the weather of bring and umbrellas as this short Act of Remembrance will take place out doors except for exceptionally wet of windy weather when we will congregate inside the Church.

Vigil for Peace – In the evening at 18.00 hours there will be a short vigil for peace in the church for those who wish to pray and reflect on war and conflicts past and present and bring their prayers for peace before God. Please contact Rev. Clive Mobbs if you have any resources (prayers/prose/music or poems for instance) that you would like to share at this event.

Dorsal vertebrae from an ICHTHYOSAUR

Two vertebrae have been discovered in fields in Ubbeston. The first was found a little while ago by Eddie Baker, a Laxfield farmer. He consulted experts at the Natural History Museum, who verified the first of the two specimens:
'*The bedrock in Laxfield is from 5 million to 12 thousand years old and is much too young for* ***ichthyosaurs****. They went extinct around* ***95 million years ago.*** *It is probably from the glacial till* [a mixture of clay, sand, gravel and boulders deposited directly by glaciers] *in the area and has been brought from much further north to Suffolk during the last Ice Age.'*
A second vertebral fragment was found more recently near the site of the first by metal detectorist, David Steadman.
You never know what is below your feet!
Come and see the finds in the Museum – open until the end of October. The coffee morning advertised for 17th October is postponed until next spring. Ceilidh tickets for 24th October are on sale now. info@laxfieldmuseum.org.uk.



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"Isfahan is Half the World"[1]

In the far off 1960s, servicemen sent abroad for a year, or more, were entitled to two weeks "station leave" if they could be spared, to be taken "on station"[2] since there were then no cheap flights and few flights at all to the UK from Bahrain. I took advantage of Beachampton being docked for a while to go to Iran for a fortnight with a friend from the HQ staff.

We needed two passports because Iran did not recognise Bahrain, whose territory they claimed, and we had to fly indirectly via Dhahran in Saudi Arabia to Shiraz. Shiraz was beautiful. It is a very historic and highly cultured town, with much glorious Islamic architecture, and the beautiful gardens much beloved by the ancient and glorious Persian culture, where water was so prized that it was used to beautify the gardens. It was the home of some of the world's greatest poets (Hafeez, Sa'adi and Rumali) and, surprisingly today, it was famous for wines, giving its name to a well-known grape variety. A couple of hours bus ride into the desert were the majestic ruins of Persepolis, once capital of the Persian Empire and one of the wonders of ancient history. Words fail me. Look at Google and then try to imagine a reality many times more impressive.

Long-distance buses became our method of transport across the desert landscape and our next stop, after an all-day journey, was Isfahan. "Isfahan is half the world" said an old Iranian proverb, and a wonderful half it was, certainly in those days, when tourism was encouraged and Isfahan was a major crossroads in the Middle East. There were tiled mosques of wondrous beauty, a huge and labyrinthine suq (bazaar) filled with the bustle and noise of the East, in which it was easy to get lost, but where you could find wonderful rugs, jewellery and sweetmeats to be haggled over, whilst sipping coffee. The Nagshe Jahan Maidan is a huge square lined with glorious buildings, where centuries earlier polo was played and where the light changed subtly throughout the day to make it even more beautiful. And in the three-hundred-year-old Shah Abbas Hotel, once a caravanserai, you could lie on Persian rugs, sipping more coffee, while a traditional storyteller spun his tales.[3] And much more, including very pretty young women who slightly dropped their veils and smiled as they passed you in the street – something that would

certainly not happen today. And, of course, wonderful Persian food. We could happily have idled there for weeks.
But sadly, after a few days we were back on the bus heading across the desert, via one night in Teheran, for the Caspian Sea. We stopped briefly in the Elburz Mountains in the shadow of the perfectly shaped volcano, Damavand, eating a honeycomb which an enterprising local was selling at the roadside. By late afternoon, we were on the shores of the Caspian Sea, booked into a small family hotel just outside the seaport of Babolsar, run by an Azerbaijani family, whose 15-year-old daughter was the most beautiful young woman I have ever met – and was appropriately very carefully guarded! We felt that we were in the Garden of Eden, as we ate fruit on the beach and swam in the sea.
The Caspian Sea is an entirely inland sea, fed by the great river Volga and renowned for its sturgeon and caviar. It is flanked on both sides by vast deserts, which supported a large oil extraction industry, happily well out of sight. To the north lie the vast plains of the Russian and Siberian steppes. It has no outflow and so is very salty, though less so than the Dead Sea (which is another time and another story). However, it is easy to float on your back, look at the sky and think of nothing very much, before returning to the sun-drenched sandy beaches to think about even less – something that young naval officers have always been rather good at. And it was almost empty of people. All this and being paid too!
Sadly, after only four nights at Babolsar we had to catch the bus back to Shiraz by the way we had come and return to the real world and our working lives in Bahrain, but not without two other rather surreal encounters which deserve their own chapter.

1. Isfahan "Nesf-e Jahan" an old Persian proverb
2. And subject to immediate recall of course.
3. This was truly wonderful and relaxing even though the tales were told in Arabic and Farsi!

Jeremy Blackham

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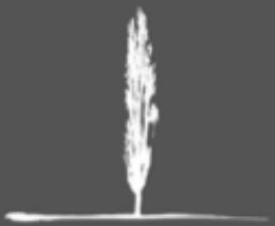
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VILLAGE HALL UPDATE - November 2026

CRATFIELD POP UP PUB - Friday 6th November

Autumn has finally arrived so come along and warm yourselves at the **Cratfield Pop Up Pub**, 6th November, 6pm-10pm. What better way to spare your heating for the evening than with your Cratfield neighbours and friends, new and old?!

Plus, the **Cratfield Kitchen** team will be back behind the counter, serving Judith's legendary range of delicious and warming meals to hungry pop-uppers from 6.30pm. Arrive early to avoid disappointment!

Do join us for a pint of local beer, glass of wine, cider, G&T, soft drinks etc., with or without food. There aren't many better Suffolk ways to spend a cool November Friday night.

Remember it's cash to purchase food but the bar accepts card and cash payments.

INDOOR BOWLS AT THE VILLAGE HALL

Just turn up at the door and join the friendly regulars for carpet bowls at the village hall, 7pm on November 17th and December 8th. No prior experience needed. Suggested small donation for use of the hall.

Village Hall Events - dates for the Diary:

CHRISTMAS WREATH MAKING WORKSHOP – Saturday 7th November 2026, 2pm

Join the very talented Kirsten and enjoy a fun and relaxed afternoon creating your own Christmas Wreath. Booking via k_asbury@sky.com. £55 per person to include all materials and seasonal refreshments.

ACOUSTIC NIGHT RETURNS – 14th November 2026

This promises to be another excellent evening of music so save the date!

CRATFIELD CAFÉ COFFEE MORNING – Friday 20th November 2026, 10am-12 noon

Meet fellow villagers and locals from the surrounding area for tea, coffee and cake on Friday 20th, hosted by our wonderful team of village volunteers. This is a great way to meet other people living around Cratfield - as well as an opportunity to taste some very impressive local baking. Any contributions for refreshments are entirely voluntary.

CRATFIELD CHRISTMAS FAIR – Sunday 6 December 2026

The Cratfield Christmas Fair returns on the first Sunday of December 10am-1pm. As in previous years, we anticipate there will be a fabulous range of goods on offer - as well as refreshments served up by our team of friendly volunteers - so make sure you save the date and take the stress out of your Christmas shopping by buying your festive fare very, very locally!

There are still limited opportunities for stallholders to reserve a space for just £10 per table. If you are interested in running a stall, or would like further information about doing so, please contact us by email (cratfieldvillagehall@gmail.com) or message the village's Facebook page.

CRATFIELD VILLAGE HALL 100 CLUB – NOVEMBER WINNERS

This month's 100 Club winners are: first prize (£15) number 10 – Nicola Betts; second prize (£10) number 61 – Bryan Leveratt; and 3rd prize (£5) number 52 – Tim Ackerley. Draw by D Britton. Many congratulations to the winners!

If you have not yet joined the Cratfield Village Hall 100 Club for the 2026-7 season it is not too late! Email helenjerry@outlook.com to join the fun for just £12.

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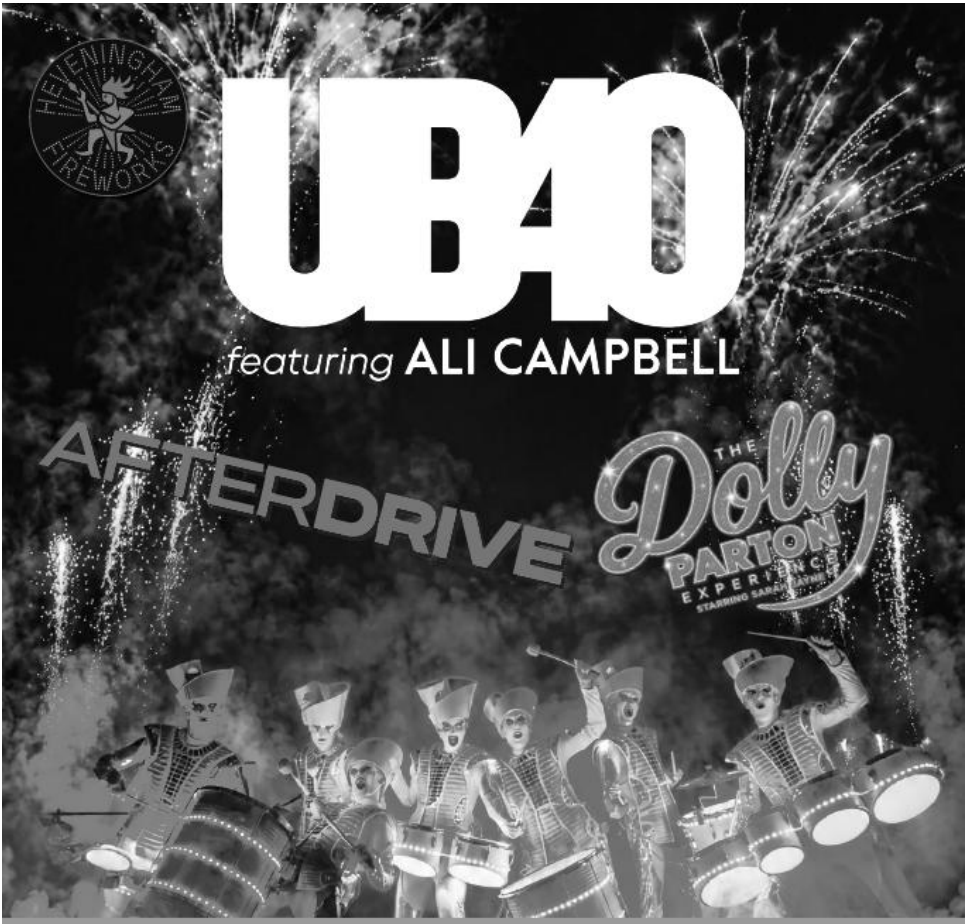
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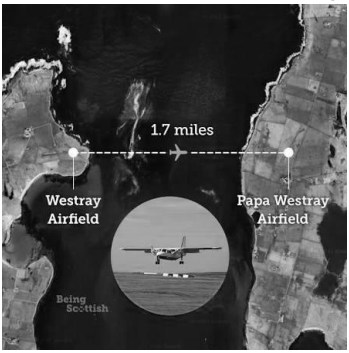
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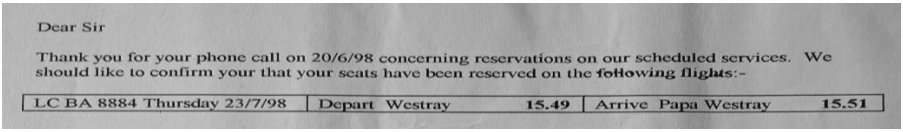
Exploring the Scottish Islands – with a collapsible bike!

Westray and Papa Westray: Part 2.



Last month I ended mischievously with a cliffhanger, which went: *There is, however, something that makes Westray and Papa Westray very different. Unique in fact. Unique in the whole world!*

Well, there is an air service between the 2 islands and it is acknowledged in the Guinness Book of Records as the shortest scheduled air-flight in the world. I had to book myself a ride! .....And everything about it was funny! Our baggage was weighed on a set of Avery scales which reminded me of an old-fashioned butcher weighing a leg of lamb or ham hock! The aeroplane was itself pitifully small: we stowed our own baggage in the fuselage and with just 8 seats, the accommodation was 'intimate' for 8 people who had never met before. Judging by the joviality - which bordered on hilarity - I reckon that all 8 of us were tourists experiencing this for the first time. (A local would surely find the journey routine, and be bored silly by daft tourists having giggling fits!)



Dear Sir

Thank you for your phone call on 20/6/98 concerning reservations on our scheduled services. We should like to confirm your that your seats have been reserved on the ~~following~~ flights:-

LC BA 8884 Thursday 23/7/98	Depart Westray	15.49	Arrive Papa Westray	15.51

The novelty of the situation caused continous amusement and the jokes that were being cracked – asking about in-flight movies and meals – must've been heard by the pilot 1,000 times before, but he took it in good heart. Once we were all squeezed in, the pilot took his seat and became a sort of 'bus driver and conductor' all rolled into one. Turning around in his seat to address the sardines onboard, he looked like a teacher about to commence a school coach trip. "Now then", he said, "Someone hasn't paid!"



A slightly embarrassed passenger, taking the role of sheepish schoolboy (wouldn't you know it, seated right at the very back) dug his hand into his pocket and retrieved his air fare. The pilot then said, "OK, thank you. Please pass it to me." And so a ten pound note and assorted coins was passed by hand, from one passenger to another... to another, to another... until it finally got to the front, reaching the pilot/bus driver/conductor. He cracked his one and only joke: "That started off as £15.00!" implying that his sardines were light-fingered/finned. ...Then the safety talk commenced, which, in a macabre way, was as oddball as everything else about this flight. "Basically", said the pilot (adding to his multiple-personality

disorder now acting as an air hostess giving a safety demonstration), “If we land in the water, the windows kick out.” Everyone knew that this advice was utterly futile, but we knew that he was obliged to give it. For such a short flight, the likelihood was that if the engine failed, we’d land on one island or the other, in which case the windows would probably fall out anyway.
Then the revs began to pick up and we were trundling on the grass. Even at a low speed, it felt surprisingly bumpy and I thought, “This plane is going to fall apart before we get to take-off speed!” I was hoping no-one was wearing any dentures onboard – but if they were, that they were keeping their mouth firmly closed – as the rattling and bumping became quite alarming; and then suddenly, the engine note rose and so did the plane. It reached its high note (Top ‘C’ in aircraft terms) within about 30 seconds of becoming airbourne and, just as it reached the peak of this crescendo, the engine note started to drop once more – and so did we. The narrow watery bit between the islands was dealt with in seconds and before we barely had a chance to look out of the windows, we were back on the grass – Papa Westray grass this time – rattling and bumping again once more. ....When we came to rest, I heard a noise behind me which sounded like someone looking for their dentures underneath my seat – and the pilot proudly told us that we were a whole 30 seconds ahead of schedule: the official scheduled flight-time is 2 minutes (though actual air-time is 60 – 80 seconds) - and the total flight time record is 53 seconds, an impressive record which was greatly assisted by tailwinds! The Scottish island did it again: unforgettable memories, and with a certificate to prove it!



Next month: North Ronaldsay **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

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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Mace

Letter from the Vicar

Dear Friends,

We were fortunate enough to join the St Edmundsbury Diocese' Pilgrimage to Iona last month. Many of you know that I enjoy Celtic Prayer in the morning and the evening and also the Celtic Holy Eucharist. In fact, for almost six years, Celtic Prayer has been delivered by Zoom on Wednesday evenings and Friday mornings and live services of the same now feature in some of our churches as well as Celtic Communion.
Some of you will have heard me talk of the 'thin places' where I feel particularly close to our Lord, and I had thought that I would easily discern that at the Abbey on Iona. The truth is, that 'thin space' was all around me on the island but not in the building and that made me sad until, upon reflection, I realised that I do not need to be in anywhere special to find those 'thin spaces' and that here in the Four Rivers there are many places where I do feel very close to the Holy Spirit.

There is an old Celtic saying 'that heaven and earth are normally about three feet apart, but in a thin place, that distance shrinks to almost nothing.' No wonder then, I feel closer to the Lord there and would love to hear if any of you have had similar experiences of a thin place. These can just as easily be a quiet kitchen table, a morning walk, or the soft breathing of a sleeping person. After all, God is not locked to a postcode. He is just waiting for us to pay attention. I think that I have come to realise that we don't just stumble into thin places but create them with a grateful heart, an open hand, and a willingness to be still.

Prayers and blessings,
Reverend Chrissie – 07803 134301 – rev.chrissiesmart@gmail.com

Weekly Holy Communion	Celtic Prayer 7pm	Celtic Prayer 9am
Nov 3 Worlingworth 9am	Nov 4th	Nov 6th
Nov10 Laxfield 9am	Nov 11th	Nov 13th
Nov17 Worlingworth 9.am	Nov 18th	Nov 20th
Nov 22 Laxfield 9am	Nov 25th	Nov 27th

November Services Cratfield

Sunday November 8th	Sunday November 22nd
	Ezek 34:11-16, 20-24 Ephes 1:15-end Matthew 25:31-end
11.00am Remembrance Service	9.00am Holy Communion

BENEFICE SERVICES

November	Sunday 1st	Sunday 8th	Sunday 15th	Sunday 22nd	Sunday 29th
Bedfield	930am Holy Comm All Saints & Souls	10.45am Remembrance Service	11.00am Morning Service		
Brundish		8.00am Holy Comm Remembrance on Green 10.45			
Laxfield	10.30am Celtic Morning Prayer + Baptism	10.00am Remembrance Service CS/Tim Mawson	9..30am Chatty Church Katie de Bourcier	6.00pm Hartismere House	10.30am Benefice Celtic Holy Communion
Monk Soham	11.00am Family Service	Remembrance at Bedfield	11.00am BCP Holy Communion	11.00.am BCP Morning Prayer	
Tannington	11..00 Holy Comm				
Wilby		10.45am Remembrance Service	10.30am Holy Comm	10.30am Celtic Morn Prayer	
Worlingworth		Remembrance at Bedfield 12.15 Act of remembrance at W memorial	11.00am Morning Prayer	9.00am Holy Communion	3.00pm Benefice Advent Carol Service Archd Rich

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