



THE PRATTLER

The Heyford Village Newspaper

February 2026

Issue 486



The Prattler

The Prattler is run by a voluntary committee comprising of Sue and Tony Boutle, Vicki Hamblin, Mary Rice, Jez Wilson and Mick Watts. If you would like to submit articles or have any suggestions for future issues, please get in touch with us by email or leave a message in Heyford Meats. Articles can also be dropped through the door at Sunrise Cottage, 15 The Green.

The Newspaper is supported by donations from the Parish Council, the Parish Church, the Baptist Church, Heyford W.I., Heyford Singers, the Bowls Club, the Village Hall and Heyford Picturedrome as well as the advertisers.

Thanks are also due to the volunteers who distribute it every month. It is all very much appreciated.

Sue (Prattler Ed)

Cover Photo: Wassail 2026

The blessing of the community orchard took place on Saturday January 17th to ensure a good harvest of apples this coming year.

Credit: Robert Stow

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PARISH COUNCIL NOTES

The January 2026 meeting took place on the 5th of January at the Baptist Church Rooms.

The Chair reported the resignation of Cllr L. Dilkes; and thanked her for her long and diligent service as a Councillor. Lesley had been a member of the parish Council since 2013 and had served as both Chair and Vice chair. She was always a diligent councillor and involved in all the committees and various projects, as well as being heavily involved in the youth club. She will be much missed.

West Northants Councillor report Cllr PB reported that the government required additional housing to be built, but that the criteria for calculating the number required from each community had been changed. Heyford would now be required to have 72 houses in the next five years. A consultation is due to take place. The village confines have not been changed (whereas they have in Bugbrooke). Nether Heyford will get section 106 money from the new developments. The new local Plan brings together the previous SNC, Daventry and Northampton policies as well as the new Government policies.

Road signs at bottom of Furnace Lane All of the road markings need repainting. This would be done in Spring. Clerk to apply for new double yellow lines to restrict parking on the corner of Furnace Lane and The Green.

Community Resilience/Flooding Issues The group has been rather quiet over Christmas and there have been no further flooding issues. LI would try and get things going. The shed had been ordered, and LI said that it could be delivered to her address. The delivery address would have to be changed.

The official Flood report is due. AW felt that council needed to get additional expert reports on the causes.

Assertion 10 – to discuss compliance Council has a .gov.uk address and is therefore compliant.

To set a budget for 2026/27 Subsequent to the Finance Committee meeting in December it was recommended that a budget of £155,000 should be set. Resolved. Budget of £155,000 set.

To set a precept for 2026/27 Non-precept income of £2100 predicted. Resolved. Precept of £153,900 set.

The precept is slightly higher than last years which was £152,300.

Reports

Environment DM reported that he was now the local champion for the environment, and that he had been in contact with Bugbrooke's environmental group with a view to forming a wider group.

Hedges at 20 and 32 Furnace Lane felt to be overgrown. Clerk and IP to report to Fix My Street.

Infrastructure, Chicane IP reported that the installation seems to have been deferred for a further 6 months. IP felt that the latest speed cam reports suggested that a speed gun exercise should be conducted by police or the PCSO.

SID - Grant application Cllr PB had agreed to be referee. Match funding was required and council agreed that the figure asked for should be reduced.

Sign on A5/Furnace Lane Junction had been reported.

Lights new lights had been requested from the contractors.

20mph limit Discussion deferred.

Parish Council meetings in 2026 will normally be on the first Monday of each month, (unless a Bank Holiday) and would start at 19.30.

Reporting Canal Issues can be done by phoning **0303 040 4040** during normal office hours.

Reporting Highway and Footpath Issues - The Clerk will report issues that the council is made aware of, but the council would encourage residents to use the Fixmystreet service to report issues themselves as there will then be no time lag; and first-hand reports are almost always better than 2nd or 3rd hand reports. The service can be found here

<https://www.fixmystreet.com/>

It is easy to use; you can have your own account and can check up on any issues you have reported.

Streetlights within the village can be reported to the Clerk, who will report them to the maintenance company. **Please do not report to Balfour Beatty** as they deal only with major Highway lights – i.e., motorway, A5 and A45.

Roadworks locally & nationally can be seen on this site

<http://streetworks.org.uk/live-traffic-works-map/>

Councillor list with responsibilities and preferred means of contact.	
Linda Hall linda.hall.netherheyford@outlook.com	Chair, Website, Finance
Mrs L. Eales – 3 Church Lane, Nether Heyford Tel. 01327 341707 e-mail lyndaeales@aol.com	Councillor, Allotments, Youth Club
Louise Isgar. louiseisgar@gmail.com	Councillor, Village Hall Rep.
D. Musson. 16 Rolfe Crescent, Nether Heyford NN7 3NG Tel: 01327 344461 davemusson073@gmail.com	Councillor, Footpaths. Tree Warden
Ian Parris, 1 Winston Close, NN7 3JX 07909 514916 ianparris@ianparris.com	Councillor
Karen Rivett. 12 Watery Lane, Nether Heyford. NN7 3LN yartahk@gmail.com 07711 312069	Councillor, Finance.
A. Williams 26 Church St, Nether Heyford, NN7 3LH anthony.k.williams@talk21.com	Vice Chair, Chair of Planning, Finance, Council rep to School Trustees
K. Sanders-Moody. 07702 701862	Councillor, Police Liaison
C. Leggett chriseurolog@outlook.com	Councillor
J. Leggett justineeurolog@outlook.com	Councillor, Play Area rep.
Councillor Phil Bignell - West Northamptonshire Council, The Forum, Moat Lane, Towcester NN12 6AD. 07969 919779 phil.bignell@westnorthants.gov.uk	Strategic Planning Committee (Chair)
Councillor Debra King. West Northamptonshire Council, The Forum, Moat Lane, Towcester NN12 6AD.	

Clerk. Guy Ravine, Tel:07935 931787.

E-mail: netherheyfordparishcouncil@gmail.com

Next Meeting: Monday Feb. 2nd at the Baptist Church rooms.



Parish Church of St. Peter and St. Paul

Services for February 2026

Sunday 1 st	10:00 am	Holy Communion at Church Stowe
	11:00 am	United First Sunday Service at Flore Church
	6:00 pm	Evening Prayer at Heyford
Sunday 8 th	10:00 am	Benefice Communion Service at Church Stowe
	10:00 am	Morning Worship at Flore Chapel
Sunday 15 th	10:00 am	Holy Communion at Heyford
	10:00 am	Partnership Service at Flore Chapel
	6:00 pm	Holy Communion at Upper Stowe
Wednesday 18 th	7:30 pm	Holy Communion (with Ashes) at Heyford Church
Sunday 22 nd	10:00 am	Holy Communion at Flore
	10:00 am	Family Service at Upper Stowe
	10:00 am	Morning Worship at Flore Chapel
	4:00 pm	Café Church at Nether Heyford

Midweek Services:

Holy Communion at 10:00AM every Thursday at Flore Church

Flore Church is open for private prayer every Thursday between 2:30PM and 3:30PM. (Not 5th Feb)

Morning Prayer on Zoom every Friday morning at 9:00AM. Please contact the Rector for an invitation - all welcome.

Prayer: During February we shall be praying for people living in Hillside Rd and Hillside Crescent here in Heyford, Sutton St, Yew Tree Gardens and Sutton Acre in Flore, The Manor in Church Stowe and the Gate House and the Old Dairy in Brockhall.

Dear Friends,

The beginning of a new year is often a time of fresh starts and optimism, but this year feels different. Writing recently on the BBC News website, veteran war correspondent John Simpson said that 2025 was the most worrying year he's known. Less than a month in, 2026 has continued in that same, worrying vein. The world feels more precarious than it has for decades. What can we do in the face of all that is going on in the world?

In pondering this question recently, I was introduced to the idea of the 'long defeat', first coined by JRR Tolkien in *The Lord of the Rings*. Tolkien, a devout Roman Catholic, fought in the trenches of the First World War. The carnage and horror he witnessed changed him forever. Having seen the worst of humanity, his hope for the human race was demolished. Yet he didn't abandon hope all together. The 'long defeat' suggests that in the struggle against evil, the best efforts of humanity alone are doomed to failure, but good will still triumph in the end. Those who have read the *Lord of the Rings* will know that over the course of the trilogy, good prevails, even though each member of the fellowship is flawed and prone to failure. Even when Middle-earth's very best try to do right, things go wrong. But there is still a victory: the One Ring *is* destroyed.

Why fight the long defeat? Because the alternative—not fighting—is intolerable. Despair is a device of the Enemy. Furthermore, the 'long defeat' does not imply 'absolute defeat', only that all human attempts to bring peace, reconciliation and healing to a broken world are doomed to be incomplete or even failures. Even so, we should keep doing all we can because that's the right thing to do. And maybe, with God's help, our actions – small as they might be – will be glimpses of a final victory.

If we turn from Middle Earth to the Bible we find that the overarching story of God and his creation, of God and humanity, is a story that leads ultimately to victory. One that leads to a new heaven and a new earth, where there will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain. It is a story grounded in the belief in a divine purpose that cannot and will not be thwarted by the best laid schemes of humanity – which have an infuriating tendency to go wrong. Here, in this story is hope. This hope is not derived from the natural processes of the cosmos, which tend towards decline and failure. This hope depends not on processes but on a Triune God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit – with good and loving purposes for humanity, the world and the cosmos. This is what our Christian hope relies on - God is working his good purposes out through events big and small. What can we do in the face of all that is going on in the world? We can move into the new year with hope, looking forward with confidence, transforming the present, shaping the future, giving glimpses of the ultimate victory we know will come.

With my prayers and blessings for 2026.

Rev Stephen (Tel 01327 344436)



Nether Heyford Baptist Church

Love is one of those subjects everyone thinks they've mastered... until we try to explain it. It's a bit like making a decent cup of tea: everyone has an opinion, no two methods are the same, and someone will always insist you're doing it wrong. Yet whether you've been part of church life for decades, haven't been in years, or have never been involved at all, love is something we all recognise when we encounter it.

One of the most well-known descriptions of love comes from 1 Corinthians 13. Many people hear it at weddings, but it was originally written for a community learning how to live well together. (Some things, it seems, are timeless.) It describes love as patient and kind, not jealous or boastful, not easily angered, and always hopeful. If love were a fitness regime, most of us would be asking for the beginner's version and a sit-down halfway through.

But the beauty of this passage is that it doesn't wag a finger at us. It invites us. It paints a picture of what love can look like in everyday life:

- A neighbour who checks in
- A volunteer who gives their time quietly
- A friend who listens without rushing
- A stranger who shows unexpected kindness

Love isn't usually found in grand gestures or dramatic speeches. It's the steady, ordinary goodness that makes communities flourish, the sort of kindness that doesn't make headlines but does make a difference. And in our community, we see this kind of love all the time. It's in the friendly wave across the street, the patience shown in a busy queue, the shared laughter at local events, and the willingness to help when someone's having a tough day. You don't need a church background to recognise that this sort of love matters. It's the glue that holds neighbourhoods, and people, together.

That's why the passage ends with the famous line: **"And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love."** Faith and hope are wonderful, but love is the bit we can all give and all receive, regardless of age, background, or belief.

As we move through the coming weeks, may we keep practising this everyday love. Not perfectly, no one manages that, but sincerely, generously, and with a little humour along the way. After all, love may be patient and kind, but it also enjoys a good chuckle.

Blessings,

Pastor Lee - Nether Heyford Baptist Church

Sunday 1 st February 10:30am - 11:30am	Pastor Lee <i>Chapel</i>	Refreshments after the service
Sunday 8 th February 10:30am - 11:30 am	Pastor Lee <i>Chapel</i>	Refreshments after the service
Sunday 8 th February 4pm - 5pm	Pastor Lee leading <i>Friendship Hall</i>	Refreshments after the service
Monday 9 th February 11am - 1pm	Winter Warmer <i>Friendship Hall</i>	Come and join us for free Soup, Roll, refreshments and warmth!
Sunday 15 th February 10:30am - 11:30am	Pat & Dave Biddles leading <i>Chapel</i>	Refreshments after the service
Sunday 22 nd February 10:30am - 11:30am	Allan Pope leading <i>Chapel</i>	Refreshments after the service
Friday 27 th February 10 am to 12pm	Book Sale <i>Friendship Hall</i>	'Psalm 5'



WINTER WARMER

A Community Gathering for Comfort, Warmth and Connection

Join us every **second** Monday from October to March at Nether Heyford Baptist Church (Friendship Hall) 11am-1pm. Enjoy a warm bowl of soup and a roll, as we come together to share comfort and friendship during the colder months. Everyone is welcome and there is no charge. Let's create a warm community atmosphere together!

www.NetherHeyford.church
01604 389 405



Nether Heyford
Baptist Church

Other Dates for your diary -

Coffee Morning

Saturday 7th March 10-12

Lent Lunch,

Saturday 28th March 12-2

Slimming World

**With Vera @ The Baptist Church
rooms - 7.00 pm every Tuesday**

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Heyford Bowls Club

Happy New Year to everyone. We had a very successful Christmas Quiz and Christmas Party in December and our first Social Event in 2026 was a night of Bingo. Plans for the coming season's Social events are being worked on, the first being our Easter Quiz, although we might fit something else in between.

Fixtures for the coming summer months on the green are already sorted and we look forward to warmer days outside. We have a Bowls Tour planned for June so something else to look forward to.

Meanwhile Short-mat Bowls is ongoing every Wednesday at 2 o'clock and 7 o'clock all year. The first Competition is on Saturday, 21st February which is for The President's Cup. We begin at 1 o'clock and visitors/spectators are welcome to come and see what we're about. There is always a cup of tea and Raffle on these competition days.

Shirley Collins
shirleybcollins@hotmail.com

Heyford Allotments

And the Year Turns Round Again

A new growing season will soon be upon us and the prospect of again working our plots and reaping another good harvest is very appealing. If you have ever fancied growing your own fruit and veg then give it a go. It is immensely rewarding. We currently have a few vacant plots on the allotment site. Some of them have been strimmed and covered with landscape fabric, so taking on a plot should be less demanding. Slowly peeling back the covering and cultivating just what can be managed at any one time is a good way to come to terms with an allotment, especially if you are new to allotmenteering.

Rents are very modest and the allotmenteers in Heyford are a very friendly bunch. Help and advice is always on hand.

If you are interested, do get in touch with Lynda Eales from the Parish Council and she will appraise you of the current situation.

Contacts: Mrs Lynda Eales, 3 Church Lane, Nether Heyford tel. 01327 341707
email: lyndaeales@aol.com

Mike and Jill Langrish, 28 Manor Park, Nether Heyford tel.
07879777802
email: langrish_heyford@hotmail.com

Mike Langrish



Due to unforeseen circumstances, the 300 Club draws for Christmas 2025 and January 2026 will now take place at the end of January, after the deadline for this edition of the Prattler. Sorry for the delay but we will confirm the winners of these and also the February draw in the March edition.

Thanks to everyone for their continued support.

Heyford Sports Clubs Committee

Astronomy on the Green

This month I'm looking at the Ice Giants; they lie at the outer limits of our solar system (as we will see later, there is still much to learn beyond them). Uranus and Neptune are so far away from our Sun that their internal structure differs significantly from the gas giants Jupiter and Saturn. They are composed mainly of heavier elements, not hydrogen and helium, but oxygen, nitrogen and sulphur. The term ice, if used in planetary and astronomical definitions, refers to volatile chemicals with freezing points above about 100 K (Kelvin). The most common compounds are water (273 K or 0 C), ammonia (195 K or -78 C) and methane (91 K or -182 C).

The Ice Giant terminology came from the 1990's when information from Voyager 2 confirmed their structure as different from the gas giants. Both planets have a blue shade because of the presence of methane (2% in Uranus's case and 1.5% for Neptune). The other components are primarily atmospheric hydrogen and helium, making up only 20% of the planet, with the ices dominating below the atmosphere. Neptune is the coldest planet in the solar system at 72 K (-200 C), while Uranus is a blissful 78K (-195 C).

Clouds and storms are seen on both planets with wind speeds up to 1,200 miles per hour (slightly less on Uranus). The clouds are composed typically of hydrogen sulphide, ammonia or ammonium hydrosulphate. Because of the extreme pressure on these planets, water exists only as a supercritical fluid, and on Neptune, rain that is formed of diamonds (not water) falls.

Both planets are built around a rocky core that is around the size of the Earth. This structure is a problem; the core size of the gas giants will attract gases and, because of their gravity they will be able to hold on to them. This will not be the case for the Ice Giants as their gravity should be insufficient. Clearly, an unfamiliar process was involved, probably in the early days of the solar system when the giant planets were jockeying for position. Uranus bears witness to this, as it was knocked over and spins at around 98 degrees. Like Venus, it spins counterclockwise. Uranus and Neptune have dim rings of dark materials likely from former moons.

As mentioned, Voyager 2 flew by Neptune in 1986, ten years after its launch. It is still working today. During 2025, it flew through the so-called 'wall of fire' at the very limit of the solar wind's influence, where the dominant force becomes the interstellar wind. Both Voyager 1 and 2 experienced temperatures of 30,000 to 50,000 K. This is caused by the heating of charged particles colliding with each other. Both probes survived intact as the density of the particles (and therefore heat transfer) was very low.

Clear skies,

Tony Boulle



Heyford Picturedrome

Next Film

The Penguin Lessons

A disillusioned Englishman who goes to work at a school in a divided Argentina in 1976 finds his life transformed when he rescues an orphaned penguin from the beach.

Starring: Steve Coogan

NETHER HEYFORD VILLAGE HALL

THURSDAY 19th February

7.00pm for 7.30pm

ADMISSION: £6.00

TEA, COFFEE, BAR

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View from the Chair

The hall was busy during the Christmas holiday season with events held by our various groups, private parties and of course our Pantomime.

A very much smaller number of people attended the Pantomime this year. Around 60 came and had a fabulous and hilarious afternoon out. However, this number does not cover the cost of putting on such a show therefore the hall funds will make up the difference on this occasion. Very careful consideration must be given to putting on this event again if this is to be the case.

Could I take this opportunity also to ask that if you book the hall for a private party you report any breakages or damage and take all your party wear with you. As helpful as you may think it is to leave us your no longer needed IKEA glassware, decorations and in some cases food, it falls to someone else to voluntarily clear it out. Please help us to keep the hall as everyone would wish to find it.

Although it seems like a long time in the future, our grand village fete will come upon us in no time. If you have ideas, offers of performers, offers of donations, or offers of help please let us know.

All that remains is for me, on behalf of the Trustees to wish you a very happy new year.

*Carol Tuckley
Chair of the Trustees*



Food Bank

Don't go hungry – if you are in need of help, please contact Towcester Food Bank 07724 832043 (24 hours). www.towcester.foodbank.org.uk Leave a message and they will phone you back. They can issue vouchers for food as well as a delivery or collection service.

Alternatively if you wish to help, please leave donations for the food bank in the box outside the door of 15 Middle Street or the One Stop Shop where they are delivered to the bank once a week. Thank you.

PCSO Contact:

Emma Teagles C7155

Police Community Support Officer (PCSO)

South Northants Neighbourhood Police Team

Telephone: 101 ext 343029/07866933412

Email: emma.teagles@northants.police.uk

Address: C/O Wootton Hall police headquarters

U3A

Monthly meetings take place in Bugbrooke Sports & Community Centre, Camp Close, Bugbrooke NN7 3RW.

They are usually on the **third Monday afternoon of the month**, starting at 2 pm.

Monday 16th February – Nicky Hopkins, Keyboard Wizard by John Perkins

The life of a session musician to various famous groups.

Guests welcome at the monthly meetings – to learn more, visit our website

www.u3asites.org.uk/upper-nene

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In Nether Heyford

I should have been reporting back on our January meeting, informing you with my extensive knowledge of archaeological digs revealing items from Saxon times. It was not to be, however, Storm Goretti had other ideas. Heavy is the burden for she who has the responsibility of cancelling an event. The mind is racing with conflicting thoughts. "Well, they always over exaggerate the weather forecasts these days" "As we are in the middle of the country it may not reach us." "It might blow over." In the end, the doom-monger won out. "What if someone slips over?" "What if we all get stranded in the Village Hall?"

Yes, the meeting was cancelled, and I did feel a bit of relief when the snowflakes did eventually flutter down. I heard Goretti say "I told you so." We shall reconvene with our Saxon ancestors in May.

New Year is traditionally a time for resolutions. We are all going to be slimmer, fitter, and more affluent (vowing not to buy so many cups of coffee). Another resolution that crops up on my list every year is to get rid of a lot of the rubbish that has accumulated at our house. Help is at hand.

Our next meeting is on February 5th at 7.30 when we will welcome Judith Morris. The title of her talk is "Life Changing DeCluttering". I am practising hanging my head in shame for the duration of the evening, but am really looking forward to gaining inspiration and incite into the methods to achieve a clutter free life. AI tells us that "Clutter is a disorganized collection of items, often unnecessary, that create mess and confusion in a space" I'm not sure... you never know when you might need that thing that's been in the odds and ends drawer for 30 years. Perhaps that's where I have been going wrong and shows that I have so much to learn. If you need a nudge to get the Spring cleaning started, or would just like to listen, have a chat and a cuppa, then please do come along.

Jane Wareing
:01327 340875
netherheyfordwi1930@gmail.com

Stop Press

The next village Garage Sale will be held on Sunday 26th April 10 - 2pm. - Further details in the next issue.

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Cancer Support Group - Weedon



The Cancer Support Group in Weedon is for everyone affected by cancer living in Weedon, the surrounding area & all of West Northamptonshire. Whether you are newly diagnosed, going through or finished treatment, living with and managing cancer or part of the valuable support network of carers, relatives & friends. You are all able to share information, stories and anecdotes which will help others and be part of the cancer support network. The group is a place to come and chat over tea & cake, talk about whatever you want and have some time to relax with others. We have a selection of leaflets and information which may be useful and can help to source any other information for you.

The Cancer Support Group is held in the Chapter House at the rear of St Peter & St Paul Church, Weedon, NN7 4PL on the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of every month, 2.00 – 4.00 pm.

**Come along and join us on Wednesday
11th & 25th February 2026**

Wednesday 25th February 2026 – Mae Campbell – Community Connector with Spring - the community-driven support network, to support adults living in Northamptonshire with a long-term physical health conditions to manage their health and wellbeing. Mae will talk about her role within Spring organising and promoting the clubs, activities and workshops that are arranged for all members to participate, which aim to increase an individual's confidence, self-esteem, sociability and general wellbeing. Mae will also talk about the role of Spring in the community and the activities available in our area.

Access to the room is flat with no steps, parking is available under the railway arches at the side of the church or in Church Street. If you don't want to come alone, bring a friend.

Anyone who would like to come along and be part of the group, or would like more information, please contact Libby Hart on 01327 341816 or e-mail: csgweedon@btinternet.com.

Find us on Facebook- look for **Cancer Support Group - Weedon**

View from The Nature Reserve

First is the news that West Northants Council have initiated a scheme, appointing a Climate and Nature Champion (CAN Champion) for each parish in West Northants. I am now the representative for our parish. You will find online links to information about this on the Heyford Wildlife Association Facebook page. If you prefer not to use Facebook, you can find my own contact details among the list of Parish Councillors. We need more help. I am hearing that the West Northants Council will be offering training days and if all goes according to plan, you will be hearing more about this as the year goes by.

On the reserve we still need to put in the new fencing, as well as getting the roadside hedge trimmed. The Summer of 2025 was exceptionally hot and dry. In those conditions, young trees hold back from growing in order to conserve moisture. I know a lot of young trees were killed by drought last year but I think those we planted are still fine. They could be sending down roots right now in order to have a good root system for the coming Summer.

Some readers will already know that The RSPB and the BTO (British Trust for Ornithology) are reviewing their advice on feeding wild birds. There are even reports advising us to stop feeding the birds altogether. One reason for this is a parasitic worm that is affecting some of our garden birds, causing the condition trichomoniasis, which causes blocked airways and throat in many bird species. At first Greenfinches were dying in large numbers, to the extent that these are now quite an uncommon bird in the UK. Then came Chaffinches. Right up until 2024 we could hear Cock Chaffinches singing in several places in the vicinity of our bungalow. We have not heard or watched the lovely "Parachute song flight" of a Cock Greenfinch for 5 or 6 years now and I didn't hear a Chaffinch song at all last year. It is known Goldfinches are now being affected by this as well.

BTO and RSPB research has found this is due to the spread of the above worm which kills by forming lesions that block the birds throat. This parasite is spread from bird to bird by saliva in food on the surface of feeding places. Many bird species are affected, some more than others. The same research has demonstrated we are encouraging the spread of this parasite by the types of feeders we use in our gardens. and the way we use them. It is known that the disease is spread in faeces and saliva. Therefore, BTO advises us to stop using flat bottom feeders of any description. Even the tall cylindrical feeders with a tray at the bottom are out. We need to regularly clean all bird feeding equipment with a disinfectant. I use a mild solution of household bleach. Move your feeders regularly so as not to get a build-up of food underneath the feeder.

What more can we do? As a nation, we do love feeding birds in our gardens. I have done a little research on the problem and right now a series of bird feeders called 'Finches Friend' seems to provide a solution. I suggest you look at the online products and listen to the presentation before you buy anything. I think that I will try one out.

Dave Musson

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*Hanging on by the tips of your fingers
And hoping you don't slip and fall
From February Stars - a song from
The Foo Fighters*

*Short Month, Big Dreams
Let's do this, February!
Unknown*

Here's to a Happy New Year to everyone – a little late as no January edition of The Prattler – from The Heyford Singers. We performed the Christmas Concert back in December to full houses, followed by an excellent Carols at the Foresters on The Green - with grateful thanks to Faye Brassett for her amazing hospitality. The mulled wine went down very well! And as it says above, hope you are all hanging in there.

We are now rehearsing for our Spring Concert with our Musical Director, Mary Rice's choice of favourite songs from over a twenty two year repertoire. These vary from Amazing Grace and Canon in D (some very high notes) to Razzle Dazzle and Girls Gone Abba, so an eclectic mix. We have already had some very good rehearsals with over forty of us energised for the Spring term. We will be dedicating this Concert to Olive Thomas from Flore who so sadly passed away at the end of last year much to everyone's shock. We had no idea that her family were planning her 90th birthday party which goes to show how young singing keeps you....

And as you Guardian readers will no doubt know, in June last year the Carlisle-based rock band Hardwicke Circus embarked on a 'Songs of Freedom' tour across Ukraine, which included both public concerts and private performances in hospitals and schools trying to provide some cheer to amputee soldiers and autistic children. And according to the news on the internet a soldier who had recently lost his leg was "singing along and applauding" and on another occasion they visited an area occupied by Russians and at a school workshop they met a traumatized teenage girl with autism who responded significantly to the music and her teacher noted that the performance helped her to "come out of her shell". The band donated all proceeds from the tour to local Ukrainian charities and also delivered vehicles and life-saving supplies to the front lines. They are reportedly the only British musicians to have toured war-torn Ukraine since the full-scale Russian invasion began. But what an achievement! The modern equivalent of Ensa, the primary organisation that dispatched entertainers to entertain British troops during the last world war.

We are extremely fortunate to have a Choir in our village which does everything it can to dispel the grey skies of February and concentrate on the blue ones ahead. Come and join us?

JRA

Condolences

It is with great sadness that I have to tell you that my mother Pam Green passed away on the 12th January 2026 at home in Weedon. I would like to thank our friends for their support and help. As many of you probably know, Pam lived in the village for many years.

Wendy Green

Bugbrooke and District Flower Society#

We look forward to welcoming members and visitors to our first demonstration of 2026.

Lee Berrill will present 'New Beginnings' Lee is a very talented demonstrator so it is sure to be a lovely evening.

If you love flowers do come along to the village hall on Monday 23rd February at 7.30 pm.

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