



# THE PRATTLER

The Heyford Village Newspaper

Mar 2026

Issue 487



## 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 - Spirit of the Valley Mosaic - Restored

Tom Dodd - see article inside this edition

  
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# PARISH COUNCIL NOTES

The February 2026 meeting took place on the 2nd of February at the Baptist Church Rooms.

**Casual vacancy** - There is now a vacancy on the Parish Council. Applicants may apply to the Clerk for an application form at:

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

**Play Area** - An inspection highlighted safety issues on one installation which has been removed. Others have been repaired. There are plans to refresh the whole Play Area.

### **Public Participation**

A resident reported that a 4-wheel drive had made a mess of the jitty from Watery Lane. She felt that brambles needed cutting and removing. DM to review and report to clerk.

A number of residents attended to express concerns about the proposed development on Church Lane. The time in which to comment was felt to be too short (council have applied for an extension until March 11th). Amongst the many issues raised were the future maintenance of the ancient hedge; traffic, the effect of flooding in the area, the effectiveness of proposed attenuation measures, the lack of pavements, lack of parking provision (1 car and 1 bike per house). Lack of local facilities, schools etc were all raised.

There were concerns that the social housing was pushed into the corners. It was also felt that the Neighbourhood Plan (NP) was being ignored. AW explained that in the current plan the expectation was for 29 units by 2029. However, WNC is now putting their new development plan together, and will have to meet new government directives, which will require 72 units in the period up to 2043.

The Parish council now has to decide if this site is best served by this development. AW suggested that the residents form their own group and get their questions and suggestions in by Feb 20th in order that they be put to the developers at the March 2nd meeting.

**West Northants Councillor report** - Cllr PB reported that the original maximum capacity of the site was felt to be 22, and preferably 15. He confirmed that the NP would an important consideration in the planning process. PB also confirmed that

both this application and the application for 81 Furnace Lane had been called in to committee.

**20mph limit. to consider** - It was reported that such speed limits were generally advisory and unenforceable. It was felt that obtaining some advisory 20mph signs was worth trying. Clerk to approach Highways.

**Community Resilience/Flooding Issues.** - LI reported that the shed had been delivered, but not all parts of it. When it has all arrived, it will be erected by members of the flooding committee.

Village emergency plan to be discussed at next meeting.

**Women's Charter** - KMS reported that this is about intent rather than action – to create safe space for women and girls in Northamptonshire. Resolved. To support the Women's Charter.

**Assets of Community Value** - AW explained that if registered, the sale of assets within the community (such as pubs/shops) can be held up for 6 months to allow the village to put together a bid. AW would research further

## Reports

**Environment** - DM reported that the Upper Nene Wildlife Group had been formed with other villages and that it was hoped that wildlife corridors could be created along footpaths etc.

**Wellbeing** - KMS reported that GP practices would be coming together to form a pilot scheme to enable same day appointments. Bugbrooke surgery will also be researching into stroke care.

**Infrastructure, Chicane** - Set to be installed in March.

**Speed Indicating Device for Weedon Road** - It may now be possible to receive the full amount of the project as this funding source has not been used before.

**Pavement widening quote** - Resolved to accept quote of £1,143.90.

**Flood report** for November 24 is still awaited.

**Heritage** - Mosaic to be installed on Sat 6th of February.

**Community** - PCSO. KMS, LH and the Clerk had attended a meeting about the change in the PCSO's contract. There would be no change in Heyfords contribution or part of the contract, but there were concerns that Harpole would tend to dominate PCSO times. The situation would be monitored.

**Play Area** - LI and KR had commenced work on initiating a new play area. A quote had been received for £11,000 to restore or replace faulty items in the existing play

area. Council is reluctant to spend this much at a time when replacement of the whole area is contemplated.

**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/>

## 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 16<sup>th</sup> March – Canada, The Rockies and Beyond**

A photographic journey by John Hammons.

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

[www.u3asites.org.uk/upper-nene](http://www.u3asites.org.uk/upper-nene)

<b>Councillor list with responsibilities and preferred means of contact.</b>	
Linda Hall CllrL.Hall@netherheyfordparishcouncil.gov.uk	Chair, Website, Finance
A. Williams 26 Church St, Nether Heyford CllrA.Williams@netherheyfordparishcouncil.gov.uk	Vice Chair, Chair of Planning, Finance, Council rep to School Trustees
Mrs L. Eales 3 Church Lane, Nether Heyford 01327 341707 CllrL.Eales@netherheyfordparishcouncil.gov.uk	Councillor, Allotments, Youth Club, Burial Board
D. Musson. 16 Rolfe Crescent, Nether Heyford Tel: 01327 344461 CllrD.Musson@netherheyfordparishcouncil.gov.uk	Councillor, Footpaths. Tree Warden
Ian Parris, 1 Winston Close, Nether Heyford 07909 514916 CllrI.Parris@netherheyfordparishcouncil.gov.uk	Councillor SIDs
Karen Rivett. 12 Watery Lane, Nether Heyford 07711 312069 Cllrk.rivett@netherheyfordparishcouncil.gov.uk	Councillor, Finance, Youth Club, Burial Board
K. Sanders-Moody. 07702 701862 CllrK.Sanders-Moody@netherheyfordparishcouncil.gov.uk	Councillor, Police Liaison
C. Leggett CllrC.Leggett@netherheyfordparishcouncil.gov.uk	Councillor
J. Leggett CllrJ.Leggett@netherheyfordparishcouncil.gov.uk	Councillor, Play Area rep.
L. Isgar CllrL.Isgar@netherheyfordparishcouncil.gov.uk	Councillor. Village Hall rep. Play Area
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 Meetings: Monday March 2<sup>nd</sup> and Monday Apr 13<sup>th</sup> at the Baptist Church rooms.**

# The Upper Nene Benefice

(The Benefice of Heyford with Stowe-nine-Churches, Flore with Brockhall and Weedon Bec with Dodford)



**Parish Church of**

**St. Peter and St. Paul**

## Services for March 2026

Saturday 1 <sup>st</sup>	6:00 pm	Evening Prayer at Heyford
Sunday 8 <sup>th</sup>	10:30 am	Benefice Holy Communion Service at Flore Church*
Sunday 15 <sup>th</sup>	10:00 am	Holy Communion at Heyford
Saturday 21 <sup>st</sup>	2:00 pm	Messy Church at Flore Church
Sunday 22 <sup>nd</sup>	4:00 pm	Café Church at Heyford Church Rooms
Sunday 29 <sup>th</sup> Palm Sunday	10:00 am	Benefice Holy Communion at Flore Church

\* Please note start time of 10:30am to allow people from Weedon and Dodford to join us. The visiting preacher at this service will be the Rev'd Haydon Spenceley, the Diocesan Director of Ordinands, talking about nurturing and supporting new ministry, with particular reference to the Training Curate joining us at the end of June.

### Midweek Services:

**Thursday** 10:00 am Holy Communion at Flore Church  
**Friday** 9:00 am Morning Prayer via Zoom  
Please contact the Rector for an invitation

**The Streets** we shall be praying for during March are: Close Rd, The Pound and The Peak in Heyford, The Avenue and The Glebe in Flore, The Old Dairy Farm in Upper Stowe and the outlying farms around Stowe and the Mews Houses in Brockhall.

Dear Friends.

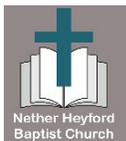
March 2026 sees a significant change in this benefice, the group of four parishes which has been in existence since 1997. From March 1<sup>st</sup> 2026, a new benefice of six parishes - Heyford, Stowe-nine-Churches, Flore, Brockhall, Weedon Bec and Dodford - comes into being. As reeling off the names of six parishes is a bit of a mouthful, the new grouping will be known as the Upper Nene Benefice.

The pastoral reorganization which has brought the six parishes together has taken some time, and we now begin the process of working together as an enlarged benefice to create a strong union, growing confident disciples, reaching out to our village communities in prayer and loving service. Again, this will take time and require grace, patience and a little compromise as we begin to move forward together. March 1<sup>st</sup> will mark the beginning of a period of transition, as we move from two existing patterns of services to a new pattern across the six parishes. Some timings will inevitably change, especially on Sunday mornings. We hope that the new service pattern will be established by the middle of April, but in the meantime please pay particular attention to the venues and timings of services as we go forward over the next five or six weeks. Other changes, perhaps to the way we govern and organize ourselves or communicate internally and externally might take a little longer. Looking at the list of services for this month, you will see one immediate change. The Prattler will only show details of united Benefice services - wherever they are held - and services in Heyford Parish Church. Details of all services across the Upper Nene Benefice are available on the Church Notice-board and The Prattler Website.

I'd especially like to draw your attention to the Benefice Communion Service at Flore Church on Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> March, which will begin at 10:30AM. The later start will allow people to join us from Weedon and Dodford to hear the visiting preacher, Rev'd Haydon Spenceley, the Diocesan Director of Ordinands. He will be speaking to us about nurturing new ministry, with particular reference to our prospective Training Curate, who will be joining the benefice at the end of June – another exciting development in the life of the Church in the village and beyond.

These are challenging and exciting times as we get to know one another and find new ways to work together to build God's Church and advance his Kingdom in this tiny corner of his creation, in which St Paul's words to Timothy offer a timely reminder of where our true hopes lay, *"we have our hope set on the living God, who is the Saviour of all people, especially of those who believe"* (1Timothy 4:10). In these times of change, our hope is in God, and that hope does not and will not disappoint us.

*Rev Stephen (Tel 01327 344436)*



## Nether Heyford Baptist Church

Spring has a habit of sneaking up on us. One minute we're scraping frost off the car and wondering if winter will ever loosen its grip, and the next we're spotting snowdrops, hearing birds who sound far too cheerful for that time of the morning, and debating whether it's finally warm enough to leave the big coat at home. (It usually isn't, but we try anyway.) There's a lovely moment in the Song of Songs that captures this shift beautifully:

"See! The winter is past;  
the rains are over and gone.  
Flowers appear on the earth;  
the season of singing has come."  
NIV – Song of Songs 2:11–12

It's a passage full of movement and promise. Winter doesn't last forever. New life pushes through. Songs return. And even if we're still waiting for the sun to commit to shining for more than an afternoon, there's something hopeful about this turning of the seasons. We all remember the hymn, *All things bright and beautiful*.

This year, that sense of renewal feels especially fitting for us as a church family. Nether Heyford Baptist Church is celebrating its 200th Anniversary, a milestone that speaks of God's faithfulness, the dedication of generations before us, and the quiet, steady witness of a community shaped by grace. Two centuries of worship, service, laughter, prayer, and the occasional wobbly table at a church lunch — it's quite something. As we step into this anniversary year, we're praying not only with gratitude for the past but with expectation for the future. We pray for continued growth — not just in numbers, but in depth of faith, in compassion, in courage, and in the kind of everyday discipleship that quietly transforms lives. We pray that the Christian faith will continue to take root in hearts across our village and beyond, just as it has for 200 years.

And like spring itself, growth often begins in small, ordinary ways:  
A conversation that brings comfort  
A welcome offered to someone new  
A prayer whispered for a neighbour  
A moment of generosity that brightens a day  
These are the seeds God loves to work with.

Throughout this anniversary year, we'll be hosting a range of events and services - moments to celebrate, to remember, to worship, and to look forward. Whether you've been part of the church for decades, have drifted away over time, or are simply curious about what goes on behind the chapel doors, you are warmly invited. This is your village, your community, and you are always welcome among us.

As spring unfolds around us, may we each notice the signs of new life — in nature, in our relationships, and in our walk with God. And may this season remind us that, in every generation, God continues to call, to renew, and to lead us into hope.

Blessings,

*Pastor Lee - Nether Heyford Baptist Church*

## **Dates for the Diary:**

**Coffee morning** - 10-12 - Saturday 7th March – in aid of NAB: Northamptonshire Association For The Blind

**Songs of Praise service** - 4-5 Sunday 8th March - Followed by refreshments

**Winter Warmer** (Final this winter) 11-1 Monday 9th March - Free Hot soup and rolls + refreshments

**Book Sale** - 10-12 - Friday 27th March - Books to Buy, and coffee to drink!

**Lent Lunch** - 12-2 Saturday 28th March - Free Hot soup and rolls + refreshments

**Palm Sunday** - 10.30-11.30 - Sunday 29th March

## **Special Request**

As we celebrate our 200th year, we'd love to gather photos taken in or around the chapel, or in our Friendship Hall. We hope to display a selection of these during our Open Weekend on 9th and 10th May. If you have any you'd be happy to share, please contact me at [Minister@NetherHeyford.Church](mailto:Minister@NetherHeyford.Church) or call 01604 389 405 (option 1).

Thank you to everyone That donated to our last coffee morning, we raised £200 for 'Reach for Health' and the Christmas meal, we raised £100 for Cynthia Spencer Hospice.

## Fred Goodman

It is with the heaviest of hearts we announce the passing of Fred Goodman, a resident of Nether Heyford since the day he was born 86 years ago. Ironically he passed away in the room which would have been next door to the room he was born in back in 1939. Fred never strayed far away from the village, save for a brief period where he moved from the Green to Furnace Lane, before returning to the Green where he remained till his final days.

He was someone who found joy in life's simple pleasures from the early days of serving milk to the villagers on a horse and cart, to playing football and cricket, and not forgetting his accomplishment for being part of the championship team of tug and war.

His steady presence, warmth, and deep roots in the community will be remembered fondly by all who knew him, and he leaves behind a lifetime of quiet memories woven into the village he always called home.



## 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](http://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.

# Slimming World

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

You'll find real support and real results through eating real food. You need never be hungry with Slimming Worlds Food Optimising Plan .

## **Church Street Coffee**

A huge thank you for the amazing support we have received by so many people within the village and beyond since news of the new coffee shop venture became public last year. Planning approval was finally granted in late November and since then we have been pouring heart and soul into developing the plan into a reality.

The road so far as been long and the to-do list is longer, but much is happening on and off site to create something special for the community, adding to our excellent existing amenities. As work takes shape, there may be a few extra vehicles and noise, and apologies to our neighbours for any inconvenience here, we will keep it as brief as possible.

We are working to open the doors and get brewing as soon as possible, our social media will be up and running as soon as we can ensure we've time to manage it, but in the meantime, feel free to pop in and say hello at 7 Church Street.

Thanks again,

*Annabel & Team*

## **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



## **Heyford Bowls Club**

We had a good start to our social calendar with 70 people turning up for Bingo in January. We may have to have another one shortly.

On Saturday 7th March we have a Murder Mystery at the Clubhouse at 7:30pm

On Saturday 21st March the Ladies Pairs Short Mat competition will be held in the village hall, starting at 1 o'clock sharp. Names to Rosemary Dunkley ASAP or on the notice board if you want to play.

Monday 23rd March in the Bowls Clubhouse is our Enrolment Evening at 7:00pm.

On Saturday 4th April in the Clubhouse we will be holding an Easter Quiz at 7:30pm.

The Short Mat bowls is held every Wednesday at 2pm and 7pm in the village hall, so if you would like to have a look or are thinking of joining, just turn up and watch and have a chat.

At last the weather seems to be improving and we are all looking forward to our Outdoor Season in April on the green.

If you have any questions about bowls, give me a call or email me and I'll try and answer any questions

*Shirley Collins*

(shirleybcollins@hotmail.com) 01327 342287

## Spirit of the Valley Mosaic Restored

Our village mosaic, originally sited near the River Nene for almost a quarter of a century, and which suffered some damage a couple of years ago, is now happily restored and was set in its new home opposite Bliss School today (Saturday 7 Feb).

Back in 2001, our neighbouring village Bugbrooke reported in their 'Link' newsletter that the...

Spirit of the Valley, Northamptonshire's Millennium Festival funded arts project is coming to an end. Based on the Nene Valley and the communities that live along it, the project resulted in many activities including guided walks, photography, performances, writing and visual arts. One of the last elements to be completed was the siting of three mosaic-based art works made by groups in three South Northamptonshire villages. Guided by Northamptonshire artist Carole Miles, Harpole Heritage Group, Bugbrooke Arts Society and Heyford Archaeology Group & Youth Club have each produced work that is their interpretation of the Nene Valley theme.

The finished pieces are all quite different and very beautiful. The success of the project was very much in the hands of these groups and all those involved should be congratulated on their commitment, hard work and imagination. The pieces can be viewed at the following sites:

Mosaic benches, Larkhall Lane, Harpole; Giant Fossils in Bugbrooke Millennium Green (behind Church) and a Roman Way Marker next to the road bridge between Nether and Upper Heyford.

(Anua Hayward, SNC Arts Development Officer)

So the Spirit of the Valley (Spiritus Vallis) lives on; after being found in the river, possibly due to vandalism, the damaged mosaic was rescued, dried out for some weeks, and the restoration work began. Carole Miles (the original artist managing the project) was contacted, and from her South Wales home, was able to refer me to the mosaic suppliers where the pieces were sourced over 20 years ago, and talk through how the mosaic had been constructed with the help of children from the village. Over 300 pieces were missing or needed to be reset, and the framework was damaged beyond repair.

Local villager Adam Dilkes constructed a hardwood frame and stand for the mosaic, and I rebuilt the design which includes trains, a barge on the canal, trees on the green, and of course the River Nene. After some weeks, I was able to protect the mosaic with a layer of resin, helped by Northamptonshire artist Sarah Pendred. Once dried and cured, the mosaic was ready to be sited. In order for more people to access the mosaic, and celebrate it as part of our more recent heritage, it sits on our wonderful Green, opposite Bliss School. Many thanks to Wym (everyone waves at him!) for his time and help to safely set the mosaic. Thanks too to the Parish Council who funded the materials for the restoration.

The children who placed those original mosaic tiles, some 25 years ago, might be walking their own children to school now, and will be able to tell them the story of how they were involved in being part of the Spirit of the Valley project at the turn of the new millennium, and I hope feel proud of what they left for future generations to see.

*Tom Dodd*



The latest draw was held on 27th January.

<b>Xmas Draw</b>	Winner £150	Pete Mullen	Ticket 191
<b>December Draw</b>	Winner £65	Elaine Young	Ticket 210
	Runner Up £30	Cricket Club	Ticket 11
<b>January Draw</b>	Winner £65	Rod Gatt	Ticket 45
	Runner Up £30	Alwyne Wilson	Ticket 76

*Heyford Sports Clubs Committee*

## **Bugbrooke and District Flower Society#**

On March 23rd Alison Suffolk will present 'Woodstock'

Visitors will be made very welcome at our friendly club and you may be lucky enough to win a lovely arrangement in the raffle.

We meet at 7.30pm in the Village Hall.

NETHER HEYFORD

# GARAGE SALE

SUNDAY 26<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2026

10am-2pm



Maps available on the day in  
Nether Heyford Village Hall - £1.00

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Tea, coffee & bacon rolls also available at Village Hall

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Please register before 19th April to be on the map.  
Application forms available in The Prattler  
and [www.netherheyfordvillagehall.org](http://www.netherheyfordvillagehall.org)

# Heyford Allotments

## Build an Ark?

It seems only yesterday that I was writing about the absence of rain and how it was affecting what we grew on the allotments (not to mention the amount of water we were having to carry in cans in order to keep things alive). What a difference a few months make. We now have so much of the wet stuff we might be better building arks instead of sheds.

I suspect the lesson to be learnt, not just by gardeners and allotmentees, is that we need to find better ways of conserving the rain that falls now, in order that have a ready supply in the drier months. Water is something that I fear everyone in this part of the world has taken for granted for too long.

Apart from storing as much water as we can, there are other practical steps that we can take to make the most of the wet ground. Mulch around fruit trees, fruit bushes and other perennial shrubs. Covering the wet ground with a good, deep layer of compost, leaf mould or woodchip will help keep the moisture in the ground as well as providing nutrients as it breaks down and offering protection to more tender plants when the ground is frozen

A big thank you to those good tree surgeons who have recently provided the allotments with a steady supply of wood chippings.

## Gentle Progress not a Sprint

When the sun does eventually make an appearance, it is very tempting to begin to think about sowing seeds and planting out. That can be a costly mistake and very dispiriting, as the weather in March is still very fickle. By all means sow and grow indoors but remember that even in April and May, many of those plants, you have nurtured so carefully and that have perhaps started to bolt, will not survive outdoors until the ground has warmed up and there is no chance of frost. Don't rush and don't panic, things sown or planted later have a way of catching up.

## Allotment News

We may not have been able to work on the land over these past wet months, but there have still been plenty of things going on at Heyford Allotments.

## The Wassail Evening

(an ancient custom designed to ensure a good fruit harvest) was held in January and was attended by about 200 people. There were lanterns, brasiers, Morris Dancers, lots of cider and even a shotgun to ward off evil spirits! It was a wonderful evening and a huge thank you to Mike and Faye at the Foresters Arms who organised the event with such enthusiasm and goodwill.

## Hedge Cutting

Annual hedge cutting was carried out in February, ensuring the trees and bushes

continue to provide a good, attractive barrier around the site. Where necessary, some new trees/fencing have been added to fill in gaps.

### **Wood chippings**

A new delivery of wood chippings has been made to the allotments and these are available free of charge for all allotmentees on a first come first served basis. They can be found in the parking area by the playing field road.

### **Rent Night and Vacancies**

All rent notices for 2026 have now been issued and a big thank you to those people who have paid promptly. If there are any allotmentees who have not paid and wish to give up their plot, please get in touch as soon as possible as we have a number of people who would like to take on a plot in the coming months

If you are interested in renting an allotment, 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](mailto:lyndaeales@aol.com)

Mike and Jill Langrish, 28 Manor Park, Nether Heyford tel. 07879777802  
email: [langrish\\_heyford@hotmail.com](mailto:langrish_heyford@hotmail.com)

## **Heyford Parish Church and Baptist Church**

Invite you to join them for a

# **Lent Lunch**



(Home-made soup, cheese and  
bread)

**on Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> March**

**12noon -2pm**

**In The Baptist Schoolroom**

**The Green, Nether Heyford**

*There is no set charge. Cash donations are invited for the Hope  
Centre, Northampton*

# Astronomy on the Green

As I sat contemplating this month's article, Sue suggested, 'the star that people think is a spaceship' as a subject. That piqued my interest; personally, I dismiss such articles as internet 'click bait'.

However, it is worthwhile explaining the origin and observed nature of what are ancient and rare interstellar comets. The debate originated with the 2017 arrival of 1I/Oumuamua in our solar system. These comets are exceptionally rare (there are only 3 recorded in history) and are atypical in appearance and habit from solar system comets.

An unexpected visitor from another star system barreling unannounced through our inner Solar System inevitably sparks great interest, and no shortage of speculation. The suggestion that this was an alien probe was largely driven by Harvard astrophysicist Avi Loeb, who cited their strange, non-natural, and highly elongated shape. A vast majority of astronomers rejected the alien hypothesis, arguing that the strange movements and lack of a visible tail, as with 'Oumuamua, could be explained by natural processes, such as out-gassing (the "rocket effect"). In addition, observations using radio telescopes looking for techno-signatures found none (so not a probe!).

Looking at the comets appearance; these objects are believed to be "dark comets" or interstellar icebergs (perhaps composed of nitrogen or hydrogen ice) that have been travelling in space for billions of years, making them unlike the comets typically seen within our own solar system. They may have originated in distant solar systems before our solar system existed such is their estimated age.

Then in 2025, comet 3I/ATLAS visited us; this time it was rumoured that this was a spaceship. Naturally, the same observations were made, just as with 'Oumuamua before. It was shown that this is a natural, and not an artificial object. Experts conclude that the interest in these objects is due to their nature as "interstellar wonders", fragments from other solar systems, not because they are signs of extraterrestrial technology.

The reactions to such unusual phenomenon's are understandable and thanks to the existence of social media linked with the desire for LGM (little green men) propagate swiftly. Science takes it's time to investigate all hypothesis's and reduce misinformation.

Sorry but there are no aliens yet!

Clear Skies

*Tony Boutle*



# Heyford Picturedrome Presents:



**19<sup>th</sup> March: doors open 7pm showing at 7:30**

## **The Ballad of Wallis Island**

12A Comedy Drama 2025 139 minutes

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**Soft drinks and wine at the bar.**



**Nether Heyford  
Village Hall**



## Nether Heyford Village Hall

Registered Charity, No. 304256

[www.netherheyfordvillagehall.org](http://www.netherheyfordvillagehall.org) [nhvhevents@gmail.com](mailto:nhvhevents@gmail.com)

### View from the Chair

Things are very busy at the moment organising events for this year. It would be very nice to hear from residents who feel that they could assist in any way with our endeavours.

First in the calendar is the garage sale on Sunday 26 April. Perhaps if you took up the offer of the WI to go to their talk in the hall about decluttering you will have plenty to pass on to enthusiastic buyers. We will look to advertise it far and wide so hopefully we shall have plenty of visitors. The hall will be selling refreshments in the form of hot drinks and bacon rolls supplied by our lovely village butcher so do come along, purchase a map for a pound and follow the bargain trail.

You can register and pay for your inclusion on the map via the form here in the Prattler or on our Facebook page. The more stalls we have, the more funds for the hall, the more visitors we will pull in and hopefully you will end up with healthy wallets and empty cupboards!

The Annual General Meeting will take place on Thursday 30th April. This is a public meeting in the main hall at 7pm and all villagers are invited to attend.

The next, and by far the most complex of our fundraiser events is our grand village fête scheduled for Saturday 6 June 2026. It would be nice to expand the fancy dress for children so get your thinking caps on. Heyford Hills Farm have kindly agreed to sponsor the event by supplying the prizes. We will have our usual grand raffle with a few different prizes this year and will be asking for cake donations as usual. Save the date!

Things are moving forward for the flood defence storage at the hall. A new shed will soon be arriving provided by the Parish and overseen by our volunteer flood warden Steve Corcoran. Hopefully this will coincide with a general tidy up outside and around the hall.

Finally here is your chance to see what goes on in the hall. March 16-20 is "Village Halls Week". Our regular clubs will be having an open event week where you can pop along and see what they do or try out an activity. If you look at the calendar on our website you can see what time and which club is taking place during that week.

*Carol Tuckley - Chair of the Trustees*



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## In Nether Heyford

Has anyone seen the sun recently? It should have been referred to Missing Persons during February. Definitely went AWOL. Probably by the time you read this, it will be unbridled sunshine every day and we will have forgotten the fact that February was grey and wet every day and dull, dull, dull. However, our WI meeting in February was really interesting. I appreciate that De Cluttering may seem a little dull, which it is, when you sit amongst the debris that has come out of the cupboard. There's the thrill of seeing something you haven't seen for a long time, and getting completely side tracked, versus that feeling of shame that you have just stuffed things away for years until the cupboards are overflowing.

Judith Morris talked to us about the psychology of why we get attached to things from our past or are unable to make decisions about throwing things away. A lot of this clutter is in our heads and we need to restore order, reexamine our personal beliefs (many of them take root in childhood) and feel the benefits of reducing the stuff in our lives. Judith has been on this journey for some years now and by gaining control of her life and reducing her anxiety, she is now in a good place and launches her autobiography in May entitled "Stepping out of Silence".

Resolutions. Every year each member is asked to vote on the resolution which they would like to go forward to the National AGM in June and which will form the basis of the WI campaign for the following year.

The effects of climate change are always high on the agenda and this year we are encouraged to combine our concerns about the environment and poor mental health, by increasing access to nature and raising awareness of the benefits of walking outside.

Social issues affect women's lives dramatically and this year Homelessness is highlighted. We have invited one of the charities to come to speak to us later in the year.

Better care and awareness of women's health is always a priority as women will often suffer in silence. Information is vital and we can get health care advice out to our members.

The one that was closest to our hearts, and received most votes from Nether Heyford was the campaign for more accessible public toilets. This affects us all, at different stages of our lives, from having to quickly find a loo for children and grandchildren, to the more senior relatives who need to visit more frequently.

Anyway, that's all a bit serious, so to lighten the mood; our next meeting is our AGM (boo) followed by cheese and wine (hooray) and then an evening of hilarious board games (double hooray).



Cheers Everyone.

*Jane Wareing*

01327 340875

netherheyfordwi1930@gmail.com



Easter

Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> March

2pm Flore Parish Church

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## View from The Nature Reserve

It is true we all have an interest in our wildlife and some of us have signed up as guardians of the natural environment. Our wildlife is decreasing at an unprecedented rate.

The UK's wildlife is continuing to decline according to a new landmark study published recently. Already classified as one of the world's most nature-depleted countries, nearly one in six of the more than ten thousand species assessed (16%) are at risk of being lost from Great Britain. However, this figure is much higher for some groups such as birds (43%), amphibians and reptiles (31%), fungi and lichen (28%) and terrestrial mammals (26%). Much loved species such as turtle dove, hazel dormouse, lady's slipper orchid and European eel now face an uncertain future. There have also been declines in the distributions of more than half (54%) of our flowering plant species, with species such as heather and harebell being enjoyed by far fewer people.

- World-leading study, State of Nature, finds no let-up in the decline of our wildlife, with one in six species at risk of being lost from Great Britain.
- State of Nature, the most comprehensive report on UK wildlife, also shows that the species studied have, on average, declined by 19% in the UK since monitoring began in 1970.
- Most of the important habitats for the UK's nature are in poor condition, but restoration projects can and do have clear benefits for nature and people, as well as climate change mitigation and adaptation

### Land Mark Study 2025

'The results are in, and they make grim reading. The latest State of Nature report shows that much of the wildlife in the UK and its Overseas territories is in serious trouble. In Great Britain (England, Scotland and Wales) 1,500 species are now at risk of being lost completely. In Northern Ireland, 281 face a similar fate if we don't take action. But there is reason for hope. We've never had a better understanding of the state of nature and what is needed to fix it.' (RSPB 2025)

The above quotes are from a Local Government Nature Recovery Strategy.(LNRS)

West Northamptonshire are in the process of publishing their LNRS using North Northants as model. To find out more about this all you need to do is to put Northants Local Government Nature Recovery into your search engine (is that what they are called these days?)and all will be explained.

All Parish Councils are encouraged to appoint a Climate and Nature (CAN) Champion whose role is still being worked out. I have been appointed to that role for Nether Heyford. HWA (Heyfords Wildlife Association) is expected to be heavily involved in nature recovery in this Parish.

*Dave Musson*

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# Flood Watch by J Arnold

Rain, rain and more rain describes the start of 2026 with historical rainfall records being broken for January and the Environment Agency recording over 100 flooded areas throughout the UK. The worst areas have been in the SW around the Severn valley with repeated flooding in a Welsh village resulting in the Local Council purchasing the properties as the Environment Agency claimed it was not cost effective to extend the existing flood barriers.

Locally strong winds up to gale force have been avoided but excessive rainfall in January, 240% and 175% of normal in the first two weeks of February resulted in three flooding events from the River Nene. In January storm Goretti (French Met Office) and storm Chandra (UK Met Office) caused alluvial flooding adjacent to the river. Atlantic high pressure to the west caused low pressure to be trapped over the UK, known as blocking, to bring continued periods of rainfall in February. It is clear that seasonal weather patterns are changing, and that there are clear indications of climate change Worldwide.

Whilst the EA provides individuals who register with e-mail or telephone flood warnings the use of on-line tools such as Shoothill GaugeMap give both river levels and rainfall data levels for the local area. To login use Kislingbury in which flooding events occur when river levels reach 1.7m and rainfall can be checked on the Dodford/Daventry monitoring stations.

The Parish Council notes in the Prattler have recently mentioned the availability of sandbags for individuals to protect their property in the event of flooding. Whilst useful in the short term they have a limited life of typically 3-6 months. Longer lasting bags made of polythene have a longer lifetime of several years. Sand bags alone will not provide a watertight barrier. However the addition of polythene sheeting will help to reduce seepage. By raising a permanent brick barrier of say 150mm high will improve the level of protection. This coupled with a watertight floodgate will provide the best protection. These can be bought at a cost or fabricated with a wooden or metal sheet with rubber seals attached. Water pressure from the flood water will further enhance the seal. Multiple flood barriers at an exterior wall and doorway entrance will further enhance protection to the property.

Readers may have noted the mention of a Community Flood Resilience document being prepared. Based on EA guidelines it highlights areas of the Village at risk of flooding and assigns a risk factor to each location. This enables the flood warden the opportunity to prioritise inspections at time of risk from both river, culvert and surface water. In addition regular inspection should be carried out at all locations to remove debris to avoid blockages. The document provides the telephone numbers of services that can assist at times of flooding. If flooded WNC can provide temporary accommodation until a property has been made ready for occupation. The election of a flood warden will be welcomed by all in the knowledge that areas at risk are being monitored and help is available to assist with flooding issues should they arise.

Further discussions have taken place with the EA re lack of culvert maintenance. Within the Village the E-W culvert was built in 1987 by Anglian Water and runs from the entry point at Heyford Brook to Horestone Brook designed to protect the most vulnerable area in the Village centre. A 10% overflow drains into the Victorian culvert under Church Street, designated N-S culvert. Camera inspection of both culverts circa 2017 revealed that the Church Street culvert had collapsed whilst the E-W culvert had areas of collapse and tree ingress. As these rate at grade 5 they should have received immediate attention, but still 9 years have passed with no action taken. The EA are attempting to reach agreement with Anglian Water and/or WNC for them to accept responsibility and undertake repairs. The remaining culvert flows from South View to the Bugbrooke Road where it has a separate outlet to Horestone Brook.

The Agency raised the issue of the limited capacity at the entrance to the E-W culvert possibly with a view to widening the culvert entry to avoid overspill into Church St. Whilst this may be a contributing factor the channel down to the culvert has limited capacity and would benefit from a storage area upstream and the use of a vortex outlet to control flow rates such as in the Weedon installation in 2002. The EA continues to adopt a no dredging policy that has reduced river capacity by 30% as flow rates increase during periods of heavy rain. In addition reed beds east of the road bridge are not being maintained on the basis that it reduces flow rates down stream in Bugbrooke.

Finally a recent TV documentary highlighted the national drive to build more houses and the unregulated use of floodplains. Examples were shown of properties in construction being flooded and failing standards of construction. Owners were claiming of problems to get remedial work carried out.



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*Be like the bluebird  
Who never is blue,  
for he knows from his  
upbringing what  
singing can do*

*Cole Porter*

After a very sad committee meeting for the Heyford Singers it was unanimously decided that Mary Rice, our beloved Musical Director, couldn't carry on conducting her Choir. She is just too poorly. She was totally in agreement with this and was about to broach this subject when we brought it up ourselves and she must feel an immense sense of relief that now she can come and go as she pleases, acting in a consultancy capacity and listening to how we are progressing. An end to a very fruitful and joyous era. But when one door closes.... We are so very lucky in that Lucy Mason, a young conductor friend of Mary's whom she has known for many years and who has inspired her in the music world, has agreed to conduct us for the next term and take us through to the Spring Concert. And of course we still have our accompanist, Graham Kinnersly, whose capacity for both music and fun has helped us through some difficult times.

Our first full rehearsals with Lucy were in the middle of February and we got to know her surprisingly very quickly. Her dynamic personality shone through and we saw how Mary's influence in her love of music translated to the feeling of the pieces we rehearsed. Our stumbling through John Rutter's *For The Beauty of the Earth* was quickly put to rights and we made a good attempt at *Ave Maria* so we didn't let Mary down and you could feel the Choir swell as we got into our stride.

We are very fortunate here in Northamptonshire in that there is music down virtually all our alleyways and byways and you can go to almost any pub in Northampton to be serenaded by fine musicians and singers. Lincoln Noel will shortly be playing and singing at The Sun Inn in Hardingstone and is a real treat. Those of you who have heard of him will know he graduated in music from The Royal Academy and his career spans 40 years of performing for the Royals, West end Performances in his role of Principal performer for The Council For Music in Care, touring with repertory theatre and performing in London's West end. And not forgetting The Hawthorns Retirement Village in Upton. Living locally he has provided entertainment for many a wedding venue and has the uncanny knack of reading a room instantly, modifying his playing and songs to suit the environment. A charismatic man who two years ago lost his wife after an eleven year battle with cancer, but carried on playing and singing, like the Bluebird above...

And so Heyford Singers go into March celebrating the daffodils which have taken over from the snowdrops and all the small signs of Spring and hoping that the dark, dank, rainy days are a distant memory as we sing our way into a new season.

*JRA*

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Or drop off at Heyford Meats or Sunrise Cottage, 15  
The Green.

<b>Editorial:</b>	Sue Boutle	07415 352550
<b>Proofreading:</b>	Tony Boutle	07415 352550
<b>Distribution:</b>	Mick Watts	01327 340041
<b>Adverts &amp; Payments:</b>	Vicki Hamblin	01327 341059
<b>Design:</b>	Nick Essex	
<b>Website:</b>	Jez Wilson	



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