

January 2026

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News, views and what's on, in and around Bottisham



First and foremost, may I wish you a very Happy New Year. I hope you have made your resolutions and I also hope you achieve them. It is almost a tradition for me to make 'good for me' resolutions, only to lose them out of the window and the will power with it! As the school report said, "Must try harder".



A quick word about the Village Christmas event, earlier in December. A great success, helped by the weather being kinder than last year. The Parish Council cover it elsewhere in their report, but I thought it would be good to highlight a flavour of the evening with the pictures opposite. By all accounts a great evening was had by all and plans are already in hand for a bigger and better event next year. Should be something to look forward to.

However, there is a lot of time till then and already you will be able to see and read about the various activities that are planned in this and subsequent Cresset magazines

This includes the plans for the New Cemetery. You will have received the opinion sheet both through your letterbox and printed in last month's Cresset. Do take the opportunity to put down what you would like to see at the new site. Perhaps some tree planting or dedicated seating in an area where people would be able to sit and contemplate.

There is a lot of information in the monthly Cresset and I am sure you, like me, keep it by on the shelf for reference throughout the month until the next months arrives and gets replaced. For those old enough, it acts a bit like a Thompsons Gazette with lists of trades people to contact should the need arise. We hope you find it useful.

Indeed I would like to ask for your comments about the magazine in general. Do you read it all? Or do you bin it when it arrives. Mind you if you do that you won't respond as you won't have read this! Are there things you like, are there things you would like to see included? Do let us know your thoughts.

The magazine this month also has the regular items including Gerry 'Bird Brain' Daish's article, this month about Gulls, not Sea Gulls, which apparently don't exist! As usual it makes for a very interesting read and painlessly educates us. I will take more interest now when I see the flock of birds following the tractor ploughing the field.

I have deviated slightly from the traditional New Year welcome cover, as I would like to highlight the benefit of the written word and as we are so lucky to have such a well organised library here in the village, I would encourage all, to use it. As you will see in their articles, they have lots going on.

As I write this of course I have yet to have the turkey with pigs in blankets. But I look forward to it all and I shall speak to you again after the festivities.

Peter



Copy deadline for next issue is 14 January.

Please send material to the editor at BottishamCresset@gmail.com

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News From Holy Trinity Church Bottisham

As I write we are just halfway through the Christian season of Advent as we wait and prepare for the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ on Christmas Day.

However, we have already enjoyed several seasonal events. On December 6th we had a full church when I recounted stories surrounding the 'History of Our Christmas Carols'. I am pleased that many told me how much they enjoyed the event and how much they learnt.

We enjoyed the beautiful voice of Sarah Maxwell who sang the first verse of each carol as well as

'Silent Night' when she accompanied herself on the guitar – which echoed the original instrumentation. Richard Ayres accompanied the other carols on the organ, ably as always. Just one day later we celebrated the second Sunday of Advent when the symbolic second candle was lit – representing 'Peace' – which was the theme of the Vicar's sermon – so relevant in the troubled world we live in today.

The residents of Hilton Park and Oaklands greatly enjoyed with us the traditional celebration of Lessons and Carols, as they always do. What is particularly rewarding is how many of them become more alert as we start to sing the familiar carols which they remember from their childhood. The following day the Bottisham Primary School Carol Service in the church was a wonderful and joyous celebration with congregational carols, Bible readings, choir and instrumental groups as well as the usual and highly popular Staff Orchestra – Boomwhackers! We are looking forward to Julie Bristow and her choirs for a candlelit concert in the church the day following the submission of this article.

We are particularly anticipating our own church's celebration of Christmas which will include our very popular Candlelit Service of Lessons and Carols and a shortened Holy Communion Service on Christmas Eve.

The Venerable Dr Alex Hughes, Archdeacon of Cambridge, has restarted his Visitations (now called Church visits) to check on how we are managing with the numerous rules and regulations by which we are now governed. These have expanded greatly in the last few years particularly emphasising the Safeguarding requirements of members of Parochial Church Councils as well as ramifications of the Equality Act 2010 and Fire Safety Order of 2005. I expect his visit to be sometime in January.

Our services and those of the Benefice return to the normal pattern for the New Year. Rev Max will lead us for our Holy Communion Service on Sunday 4th January at 10.30am while Sarah Maxwell will lead us in Morning Prayer at 10.30am on 18th January. Sarah will also lead the Zoom

'Compline by Candlelight', a short contemplative service at 8pm on Wednesday 7th January.

On behalf of all the members of the Church I would like to wish you a very happy New Year and hope to see you at one of our services.

Stuart Field, Churchwarden



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Services in the Anglesey Benefice

Sun Jan 4th	9am	Online service on Zoom
	10.30am	Holy Communion – Bottisham
Wed Jan 7th	8pm	C by C (a short contemplative service) – online via Zoom
Sun Jan 11th	9am	Online service on Zoom
		Holy Communion - Quay
	10.30am	Family Worship – Swaffham Prior
Sun Jan 18th	9am	Online service on Zoom
		Morning Prayer - Quay
	10.30am	Holy Communion - Swaffham Bulbeck
Sun Jan 25th		Morning Prayer – Bottisham
	9am	Online service on Zoom
		Holy Communion (BCP) – Swaffham Bulbeck
	10.30am	Holy Communion - Swaffham Prior
Every Thurs	10.30am	Holy Communion - Lode - (not January 1st)

Please check the Church notice board for any changes to these details; or email
admin@angleseygroupparishes.co.uk, which is also the address to request the Zoom link.

You are very welcome to attend any of these services.

Bottisham and District Gardening Club

Most people will have explored Wicken Fen and it was interesting to get some background from Tony Winchester who talked about its past, present and future. He has spent many years volunteering at Wicken which has worldwide importance as a wetland and was bought by the National Trust in 1899. In the early days one of its frequent visitors was Charles Darwin. It was once England's greatest wetland floodplain at 3,800 sq. km. but has now shrunk to less than 7.13sq.km. However, the National Trust have a 100 year vision to acquire land stretching down as far as Anglesey Abbey. Tony is mainly responsible for checking the Highland cattle and Konik ponies, which has to be done every day.

They are kept for conservation grazing and have been so successful that they are now having to resort to contraception to keep the numbers manageable. They are not fed or given any treatment but the ponies have a habit of settling disputes in ways that cause nasty injuries, but the policy is not to intervene.

Wicken is also home to many plant species which we might call weeds but have a range of medicinal properties. Living among so many therapeutic plants, could the animals be self-medicating?

Our next meeting will be on 27th January when Coral Hatley will be talking about the gardens of Tresco Abbey on the Isles of Scilly.

We normally meet at 7.30 p.m. on the fourth Tuesday of each month in the Poppy Room at the Bottisham Community Sports and Social Club. Membership is £20.00 a year and non-members are welcome to any meetings for a charge of £3.00.

We wish all our members, past and present, a Happy New Year.

Margret Coles

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Parish Council Report

The next full council meeting will be held by on Monday 5th January 2026 7:30pm at the Poppy Room, Bottisham Sports and Social Club. All Parish Council meetings are open to the public. Please note that the clerk to the council does not keep regular office hours. Replies to emails and phone calls will be attended to as soon as is practicable. Details of upcoming meetings and Councillor Details are available from the Parish Council Noticeboard and from the website bottisham-pc.gov.uk.

CHRISTMAS EVENT - The Parish Council would like to say a very warm thank you to everyone who joined us on the Triangle on 6th December for our Christmas celebrations. It was lovely to see so many families and friends coming together for the second year running.

A huge thanks goes to all those who helped make this event happen: to Bottisham Co-Op who never fail us and to Bottisham Scouts for their unwavering support (extra special thanks to Linda). Our Primary School Choir sang beautifully even with “fade-in” music moments! Thank you also to Barbara for her festive storytelling and to Dreams & Wishes for their fantastic face painting. We were delighted to welcome local business Tonic & Timber and enjoyed their delicious seasonal drinks whilst listening to Christmas songs by Kirsty Beckett. Thank you to The Bell for their support providing a cozy Grotto for Santa and his Jolly Elf to hear the children’s Christmas wishes and providing the venue for our local band Quattro del Soul to finish off our event with a superb performance. To our local businesses for their generous donations including; Bottisham Barbers, Bottisham Pharmacy and the Jasmine Chinese & Thai Takeaway.

A special thank you goes to Dr Tom Shackleton from our Medical Practice, who kindly switched on our Christmas lights this year. His support and commitment to Bottisham over many years are truly valued by us all.

So many thank you’s to be done as you can imagine and it really takes a lot of people pulling together; another one goes to Craig at Create Signs for the superb village banners promoting our event.

Finally to Urban Tree Forestry from Bury St Edmunds for their provision and installation of our lovely Christmas tree again this year. They too go above and beyond to ensure we have the best of the best.

Our appreciation also extends to Parish Councillors and their partners. I would however, like to give special thanks to Nadene Cundell, the Chairman of our Parish Council for her extremely hard work coordinating the event, making sure everything fell into place and that we were all doing what we needed to do.

After two very successful years, we are already planning ahead for December 2026. We are looking to form a small working group in February/March, so if you would like to help shape next year’s event, please contact either myself on: clerk@bottisham-pc.gov.uk and/or nadene.cundell@bottisham-pc.gov.uk.

Continued on page 9

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Continued from page 7

If you cannot join the group then please do save the date: Saturday 5th December 2026. We already have ideas for making the event even bigger and better and will share more details later in the year.

NEW CEMETERY - Our current cemetery is expected to reach full capacity within the next two years, so planning for the future is essential. Working with East Cambridgeshire District Council, we have begun the process of acquiring land beside Lode Road through compulsory purchase and have gone out to tender for the required works. By the time you are reading this, that tender process should be complete and we will be a step closer to work beginning.

A village survey is being undertaken currently gauging your support for this new cemetery. There is still time to complete this survey. Links and further information can be found on the Parish Council website, or requested from me by calling 07369 248998. Paper copies are also available at the Co-Op next to the black survey collection box. All responses need to be submitted by 16th January 2026. I hope to provide a more detailed update in the next edition of the Cresset.

In the meantime, if you would like to find out more about the New Cemetery plans, please come along to our drop-in information session at the Sports & Social Club on Saturday 10th January 2026, between 2–5pm, where Councillors will be available to discuss the project. Further information is also available on the Parish Council website.

COULD YOU BE A PARISH COUNCILLOR? - We are currently looking for new Parish Councillors. To borrow an iconic advertising tagline: “It Could Be You.”

There are many residents in our village who care deeply about Bottisham and have ideas about how to help shape its future. Being a Parish Councillor really does make a difference whether that’s supporting local projects or ensuring that residents’ views are properly represented.

You don’t need specialist skills or previous experience, just enthusiasm, common sense, and an interest in our community. The time commitment can be as little as a few hours a month, but the impact is very real. Many people join because they are passionate about one particular issue, have ideas they would like to see put forward, or simply want to be part of the “doing” rather than watching from the sidelines. We are a friendly and welcoming group with a mix of backgrounds and experiences, and there are several exciting projects in progress that would benefit from extra support. If you would like to find out more and have an informal chat about what the role involves or just come along to a meeting to see how things work, please get in touch.

A small commitment – a meaningful difference. Why not get involved? - If you need any further information relating to anything raised in this report or anything you wish to bring to the attention of the Parish Council, then please do not hesitate to contact me via email, clerk@bottisham-pc.gov.uk or via phone 07369248998.

Sam Chambers-Turner - Clerk to the Council



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District Councillors' Report

WITH ALL OUR BEST WISHES FOR THE NEW YEAR.

Operational Services Committee resolved to approve the draft Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) to address Vehicle Related Anti-Social Behaviour (e.g. racing around car parks, or down public roads) and to approve the proposals for public consultation on the draft PSPO.

Licencing Committee agreed an increase in taxi fares of approximately 20%, following a consultation which was broadly supported by the trade, and recognising the increase in vehicle costs.

Full Council agreed to develop a new Empty Homes Strategy by July 2026, replacing the 2006 and 2022 documents, with clear targets, resourcing, and an annual public report. This strategy is to reduce long-term empty homes and return them into use, and to list the full range of fiscal levers, including council tax premium rates, published local exemptions and deferrals for active renovation.

Local Government Reorganisation

- The Council voted for Option B (with East Cambs joining Fenland, Huntingdonshire and Peterborough) for the Local Government Re-organisation and this proposal and the business case will be submitted to the Minister for Local Government.
- Many parishes did not want to be aligned with this Option, and have voted for Option A (with East Cambs joining Cambridge City and South Cambs), despite the exhortations of the Leader.
- The Lib Dem and Independent group is sending an alternative letter to the Minister, supporting Option A. (Should you like to see the letter, please contact one of us.)
- The Government will be deciding on which options to pursue for the public consultation in the Spring. Finance and Assets Committee
- Approval was given to the transfer of some ECDC assets (car park, Public Conveniences, an adjoining green space) to Littleport for a nominal sum of £1 with a restrictive covenant on its future use. It was felt more appropriate to transfer these assets to the local community, rather than hand them over to the new unitary authority that may want to sell them to the highest bidder.
- Other ECDC assets could similarly be transferred to Parish Councils, and we shall be compiling a list of assets in your parish that the PC might consider taking over from the District Council.
- An additional CIL contribution of £190,000 was given to a community project that had gone over budget by £570,000.
- The Government has withdrawn match funding for Neighbourhood Plans, and it was agreed that ECDC would fund the creation or renewal of Neighbourhood Plans by match funding of up to £5000 to Parishes.

SURGERY - Thursday 15 January 2026 from half past six to half past seven o'clock at Reach Village Hall, followed by socialising at the Dyke's End in the same village.

*Cllrs Charlotte Cane MP (charlotte.cane@eastcambs.gov.uk) and
John Trapp (john.trapp@eastcambs.gov.uk)*

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- 7th Prize £15- Member No. 24
- 8th Prize £15 - Member No. 31

Charlotte Cane MP Reports

As we welcome 2026, it's a pleasure to wish you all a very happy New Year. This moment of renewal always reminds me how fortunate we are to live in such a vibrant and caring part of the country. Across Ely and East Cambridgeshire, our communities show extraordinary kindness and resilience — supporting neighbours, celebrating local life, and stepping up when challenges arise. Whether catching up with residents at winter events or speaking with you on the doorstep, I'm continually encouraged by the ideas and experiences you share with me.

In Parliament, I recently led a debate on the long-awaited upgrade to Ely Junction. This is a rail project with clear economic, environmental, and transport benefits: increasing rail capacity, reducing delays, and removing tens of thousands of lorry journeys from our roads each year. Although the Autumn Budget again failed to provide funding, Ministers have now agreed to meet with me and key stakeholders. I will continue pressing for the clarity and investment our region deserves.

I was also disappointed that the Chancellor again refused to introduce a 5% VAT cut for hospitality. At a recent meeting of my Publicans' Network — hosted by the brilliant team at the Black Horse in Rampton — landlords shared their concerns about rising costs and the lack of targeted support. Pubs are at the heart of rural life, and I will keep campaigning for policies that allow them to thrive.

It was equally valuable to meet local farmers for a festive cuppa, where we discussed issues ranging from the impact of the Family Farm Tax and the closure of the Fruit & Veg Aid Scheme to ensuring farmers receive a fair price from supermarkets. We also talked about improving health outcomes for those working in agriculture and the importance of helping children learn where their food comes from. Our farmers are the backbone of our food security and rural economy, and I'll keep fighting for fair treatment and meaningful support in Parliament.

Engaging with young people has been another highlight this winter — from hosting Student Question Time for local schools, hosted by Soham Village College, to joining the Dullingham and Stetchworth Scouts for lively debates during the recent UK Parliament Week. Their insight and enthusiasm give me great optimism for the future of our democracy.

Since being elected, I've now closed over 10,000 cases where residents have come to me for help or advice. Whether at surgeries, community events, or on the doorstep, I'm always here to listen and support you. Wishing you all a peaceful start to 2026,

Charlotte

P.S. This is just a snippet – to keep up with everything I'm doing, sign up to my newsletter at bit.ly/newsfromcharlotte.

Charlotte Cane, MP for Ely & East Cambridgeshire
charlotte.cane.mp@parliament.uk | 020 7362 1601



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Cambridgeshire County Council Report

Happy New Year everyone. I hope you have all managed to find some rest over the Christmas period and are looking forward to a positive year ahead.

#BEWINTERWISE

I would like to remind those needing support over the winter months to make use of the support and advice provided by the County Council. The link provided delivers practical advice and local support to stay safe, warm, and healthy throughout the colder months. <https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/council/communities/support-with-the-cost-of-living>.

CHRISTMAS CELEBRATIONS

It was delightful to visit so many of the village events leading up to Christmas, with church and parish groups pulling you together to raise money for charity, share their crafts, partaking in fun quizzes, singing a few songs and bringing the Christmas spirit to everyone in our communities.

If you were involved in organising anything, thank you. If you joined an event, I hope you enjoyed it. If you stayed out of the wet and cold, I don't blame you, but it is really worth joining in as much as you can next time. Bringing our communities together is so important at the moment.

WHAT WILL 2026 BRING?

We are sure to be hearing more about Local Government reorganisation and should have a public consultation shortly, once the government have decided which options they want to be considered. When this comes out, please do make every effort to engage. Talking to so many about this, we really need to be sure our area remains connected to Cambridge and its surrounding towns and villages, so we are at the table to influence the things that impact our lives. I will let you know more when we have news from central government.

I will no doubt have many more highways issues to help you resolve. In the past 6 months we have made headway, but the winter months will no doubt add to the managed decline our roads faced over so many decades. We will get there, but please do play your part. Reporting road, pavement and signage issues via the counties Report It site really does help. <https://highwaysreporting.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/en-gb>

When not looking after local issues, I will be focusing a lot of my time in the coming year helping to improve the counties Education and Child Care services. The past 5 years have seen spiralling costs nationally for both schools and local councils. This means change is needed to make sure our children and young people are receiving the benefits, not private companies.

Please do continue to message me with any issues you may need my help with.

Cllr Jonny Edge, 07974 348141, jonny.edge@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

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Letter from East Cambs. District Council

Dear All,

We've taken an important step towards simpler, stronger local government for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

Today, we joined Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire District councils in submitting the Option B proposal for Local Government Reorganisation to the government.

Option B sees the creation of two new unitary councils:

✓ **Greater Cambridge** (Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire)

✓ **North Cambs and Peterborough** (East Cambridgeshire, Fenland, Huntingdonshire and Peterborough).

The proposal sets out many clear benefits that make option B the preferred choice of the council including:

- **Financial security:** Independent analysis shows option B is the most financially sustainable option of the proposals developed by local councils this year. It would save up to £43 million a year, more than three times the saving of other options developed locally, paying back the cost of change in just four years. Future savings will be reinvested in frontline services, as residents have called for.
- **Fairness for all:** Option B creates two councils that are the right size to meet local needs, for both urban and rural communities. It avoids the risk of one area being left behind and ensures resources are shared fairly.
- **Respect for local identity:** The new councils will reflect historic communities and keep decision-making close to residents.
- **Supports growth and jobs:** Each council will focus on its strengths. Greater Cambridge has a world-leading science and tech economy and is a geography that directly aligns with the Government's ambitions for the area, whilst North Cambridgeshire and Peterborough is an industrial and agricultural powerhouse – creating more jobs and homes for its market towns and cities.
- **Future-proofed:** Option B meets government's tests for financial resilience, economic balance, and sustainable public services better than any other option.
- **Residents agree:** In a recent survey of Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire residents, 63.5% of respondents supported option B because it offers the best chance of delivering simpler, stronger councils that care about local communities, and in a survey of East Cambridgeshire residents a majority of respondents also supported option B.
- **Better services:** Residents told us they want councils that are easier to contact, more responsive, and focused on frontline services. Option B commits to more engagement with our residents on the design of the new councils, as well as working at the hyper local neighbourhood level.
- **Simpler, stronger councils:** One council for your area means less confusion and quicker decisions.

Continued on page 19

NAAFI Break

First Wednesday of every month from 10am to 11am,
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Cambridgeshire, CB25 9EJ



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Engagement

All seven councils in Cambridgeshire affected by Local Government Reorganisation committed to engaging the public across the region together. The goal was to develop a shared understanding of how residents, stakeholders, and staff feel about LGR and their priorities or concerns regarding the creation of new unitary councils.

We engaged 2,407 residents, 767 staff, and 231 stakeholders, who represent a broad cross section of the region. The findings show strong appetite for local government reorganisation, but only if it delivers better services, stronger local voice, and clear accountability. In compiling this business case we have reflected on the views and comments and incorporated them into our final plan.

Our Full Council then voted on 20 Nov that Option B would be the district council's preferred proposal for LGR.

Next steps

There are four proposals being submitted to the government today, options A, B, D and E (Option C has been withdrawn). As we receive the final versions we will add them to this page on our website:

Options for Local Government Reorganisation | East Cambridgeshire District Council

The government is expected to undertake statutory consultation on its preferred LGR options in early 2026, with a decision anticipated in summer 2026.

Shadow authority elections will take place in May 2027, and the new councils will come into being on 1 April 2028.

Thank you, - East Cambridgeshire District Council

Planning Notes

New applications:

25/01207/FUL (PP-14462187), Unit 2 56 High Street Bottisham Cambridge CB25 9DA.

Installation of two 600 x 600mm ventilation louvres to the rear elevation, replacement of existing entrance doors with aluminium-framed double glazed doors, and a new back-of-house security/fire door, along with new signage, LED lighting, MVHR units in existing screened enclosure, and a communal way finding sign at the front of the site to assist with legibility and visitor access|

25/01208/ADI (PP-14462187), Unit 2 56 High Street Bottisham Cambridge CB25 9DA.

New 2 No. illuminated signage and a communal way finding sign at the front of the site

Planning Applications approved by ECDC:

25/01151/LBC (PP-14337322), 1 Bradford Cottages Lode Road Bottisham Cambridge CB25 9DJ. Replacement windows and door to front elevation, garage doors repainted to match and replacement tiles to porch, hall and hearth. - Permitted

25/00034/DISA (PP-14451134), The Vicarage 86 High Street Bottisham Cambridgeshire CB25 9BA. To discharge Condition 4 (biodiversity improvements scheme) of decision 25/00034/FUL dated 9 July 2025 for proposed single storey side extension, two storey and single storey rear extension and front porch extension with new windows and doors. - Decided



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Happy New Year everybody.

New year, new topic. I'm going to venture a little way away from the garden and tackle what can be a bewildering group of birds in which the differences can be subtle, but I hope to illuminate what makes them fascinating (at least to me!)... the Gulls! Among the 50 species of gull worldwide, there are double-figures of different species regularly seen around the UK, including six regular breeders, and over the next two months I will attempt to look in depth at the four commonest – the ones you will find within a couple of miles of home in East Cambs.

Firstly, did you know that there is no such bird as a Seagull? It is easily forgivable to use the term as a collective noun for an unidentified bird, or flock, if it's not convenient in the moment to be more specific. But it is infinitely preferable to try and isolate exactly what gull we are talking about... just in case some inconsistency in plumage or behaviour suggests something out of the ordinary!

So we'll start with the smaller Gulls where, ironically, there is ready-made confusion in nomenclature! Our commonest gull – a small one which has adapted to almost all habitats, and one which you might see looking up from your garden – is the Black-Headed Gull. Slightly larger and much less common – although you might easily see some in field or fen – is the less-appropriately named Common Gull.

Let us consider what a gull looks like in general shape, plumage and behaviour, that makes it a gull in the first place. Gulls are predominantly light coloured, particularly on the breast and underparts, and have long, pointed wings, with a noticeable 'elbow', affording them a buoyant style in their mastery of the air. Naturally, they are birds of water – seafood comprising a substantial part of their diet – but they are equally happy on the ground – e.g. following tractors ploughing or planting in fields – scavenging for whatever edibles may be available. So, diet will include worms, insects and carrion as well as fish. Let's also consider the naming, which can often shed light in important differences between species.

Black-Headed Gull (*Chroicocephalus ridibundus*)

The genus name, *Chroicocephalus*, combines the Ancient Greek 'khrōikos' meaning 'coloured' with 'kephalos' meaning 'headed'. The specific suffix 'ridibundus' is Latin meaning 'laughing'. The word Gull, incidentally, has a Celtic root, coined in the 15th Century. This bird is actually never literally 'black-headed'!

In summer, it sports a dark chocolate brown face and top of the head, but in winter, after moulting, there remains only a dark spot behind the eye. Other features to note in adult birds are: light grey back, red bill, red legs, white tail, black tips to primary wing feathers, and a white leading edge to the wings (which is diagnostic... once you see this, you'll always see it, hopefully!). Size is somewhat variable, with males slightly heavier than females, but expect them to be c. 14in in length with a wingspan of c. 40in. They are sociable, quarrelsome, and likely to be seen in flocks when there is food about, especially in the winter.

(Continued on page 23)

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The Stable, High Street, Newmarket.



Monday - Jan. 19th - **Conclave** (12)

Monday - Feb. 16th - **Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid** (PG)

Monday - March 16th - **The Ballad of Wallis Island** (12)

Doors open at 6.45pm with the film starting at 7.30pm. Admission is £7 which includes free refreshments. If you would like to reserve seats, please email richardjbowler@outlook.com or phone 01638 666810.

(Continued from page 21)

Common Gull (*Larus canus*)

The genus name *Larus* is the Latin word for ‘seabird’ and the suffix ‘*canus*’ is Latin for ‘grey’. The genus, *Larus*, for many years included the Black-Headed and other gulls, but recent genetic studies have discovered ancestral differences, and the whole taxonomy of gulls was overhauled. The features of the Common Gull are plainer than the Black-Headed, in that the head is white – sometimes with a slightly grubby appearance, especially in winter – the back and wings are light grey, the bill is yellow and the legs are a greenish yellow. The wing tips are noticeably black and show white ‘mirrors’ within the black on the outer primary feathers. Size is larger than Black-Headed: up to 18in long with a wingspan of c. 45in. At a glance, the general plumage of Common most closely resembles that of the much larger Herring Gull but, to be sure... always look at the legs (Herring’s legs are pink)!

There are roughly three times as many breeding pairs of Black-Headed Gulls in the UK as Common Gulls (140,000 plus against under 50,000) but the distribution of Black-Headed is much more general, with Common mainly favouring coastal areas for nesting. The numbers of both species are swelled enormously during the winter months when birds from northern Europe enjoy the easier pickings in the milder climate of the British Isles.

One other gull worth mentioning in the context of ‘smaller’ gulls is the Little Gull (*Hydrocoloeus minutus*) – at 10in long – the smallest gull in the world. ‘Little’ is a bird of freshwater lakes and marshes, as well as the sea, and could turn up anywhere in the UK in winter, but it does not breed here. In summer plumage it has a black head, including nape, and its colouring resembles Black Headed, but its tiny size and exceptionally buoyant flight distinguishes it fairly easily from its relatives. A juvenile bird knocked around Kingfishers Bridge Nature Reserve for several weeks a couple of years ago but it is not a species that normally needs to be in your thoughts when identifying local gulls.

Stop Press... Bad news on Bird Flu is that there is still a big problem and visiting Whooper Swans seem to be particularly affected; but good news included Hoopoes breeding in the UK for the first time since 1996, and UK White-Tailed Eagle numbers reaching 160 pairs in 2025. Also, there was a commotion in Hampshire before Christmas when a Boat-tailed Grackle turned up at Calshot Spit on the south coast. This bird is never usually seen away from the Eastern USA and, given the proximity of Calshot to the port of Southampton, it was almost certain to have arrived ‘ship-assisted’! So – despite this being a first for Britain – alas, no ‘tick’ for the birders!

TTFN - Gerry Daish

Soft is the sky in the mist-kirtled east,
Light is abroad on the sea,
All of the heaven with silver is fleeced,
Holding the sunrise in fee.
Lo! with a flash and uplifting of wings
Down where the long ripples break,
Cometh a bevy of glad-hearted things,
’Tis morn, for the gulls are awake.

From ‘The Gulls’ by Lucy Maud Montgomery (author of *Anne of Green Gables*)





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Friday	4.00 pm – 11pm
Saturday	12 noon to 11pm
Sunday	12 noon to 9pm

HAPPY NEW YEAR EVERYONE

Happy hour or hours! Every Friday from 4:00pm until 7pm

£1 off every alcoholic drink.

Everyone is welcome, table tennis and other games available for the children too.

The Friday Meat Draw follows Happy Hour at 7:30pm

£100 worth of prizes each week.

Every Saturday Morning from 10am until midday is Sausage Saturday

Pop along to the Poppy Room for a bacon or sausage bap with refillable tea/coffee for only £2.50 - non-members are very welcome.

Last Friday of each month is 'Open Mic' night.

Your chance to entertain or just listen to the local talent - Entrance is free to all.

WHAT'S GOING ON

CLUB AGM - Monday 19th January 2026 at 8pm

Are you interested in helping to run the club - Join the committee!

We need new people and new ideas.

Friday 30th January - Open Mic Night

Music by our talented locals.

Entrance Free

Saturday 14th February - Valentines Dance

A romantic evening dancing the night away.

Entrance Free

Other events planned throughout the year

Disco's, Comedy Night, Bands,

Our Big Fun Day will be on the 6th of June.

Please refer to the website, www.bottishamsocialclub.co.uk, for the latest information. If you wish to be updated with the latest news, please email bottishamsasc@gmail.com
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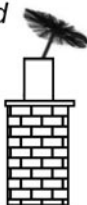
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News from Bottisham Medical Practice Patients' Participation Group

Retirement of nurses: At the end of December we say goodbye to Carol Miles and Michelle Turpie who had been at the practice between them for over 20 years. It is a big change to lose them both at the same time. We give a warm welcome to Isabel Gomes who takes over as our diabetes nurse and nurse (tba.) who takes over from Michelle.

On 1st October 2025 we commenced total triage. This has improved patient access to appointments and removed the 8am rush on the telephone. By the end of November 2025 80% of our requests now came via our website, the others 10% were via NHS app and 10% via the phone whereby reception complete the triage form on behalf of the patient. It has removed the need to queue on the phone. All requests are triaged within a few hours at most and a decision made for routine, 5 day or same day appointment. Patient feedback has been very positive regarding the new system.

How can you help us? We are contacting most of our triage requests within a few hours and sometimes within minutes of the request arriving. We are having problems with patients not answering the phone for us to book them in. If you have put in a request please be ready to accept an appointment! If you have a rash or a skin lesion please send in a photo with your triage request.

Medical students: Dr Keith is always on the look out for patients who are happy to meet medical students either at the surgery or on a home visit. We have students from the very first year of their training right up to the couple of weeks before they qualify. We particularly need patients with long term health conditions for them to understand how this affects your life. If you are able to help please call reception and Dr Keith will add you to her list (thank you in advance).

Closure: The surgery will be closed from 2pm on 15th January for training purposes. Triage requests will not be processed during this time and for urgent or emergency calls ring 111 or 999.

January PPG Meeting will be on Thursday 29th January, 6:30pm. Dr Keith will talk about: Recognition of cancer: symptoms to look out for and investigations which may follow.

With best wishes for a Happy and Healthy 2026

Letter to the Editor

Hello, my name is Dominic and I am a 16 year old student at Bottisham Village College. I intend going on a volunteering conservational adventure in the Galapagos Islands in July. I am partially able to fund this from my inheritance from my late Grandpa but am unable to fund this trip independently. Due to this fact I would like to ask if anyone would consider offering me the odd job along the lines of cutting hedges, cleaning cars or dog walking in order to earn some money but I am also very open to ideas.

Also, if there are any businesses willing to sponsor me, I have a letter of legitimacy and a fundraising link that I am happy to share. Please contact me via my mothers email address alicia.goodman@hotmail.com or phone number 07817227318.

I would like to share my adventures and thank anyone who has supported me in the Cresset after my trip.

Thankyou in advance for any help.



Wednesdays

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7:30pm

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All events, start at 7:30pm, at the Club, Members and Non-Members welcome, late-comers welcome, discover new hobbies and join your neighbours in a relaxed and welcoming atmosphere.

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- ✓ Visit the Bottisham Community Group Facebook Page

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BALA courses are held in the main hall at

Bottisham Community Sports and Social Club in Downing Close CB25 9DD starting at 10.30am.

We provide biscuits but ask you to bring your own drink.

The cost of the course is £25 with an extra £5 for non-members. New members are always welcome.

Any enquiries to Bottishambala@btinternet.com

Helen Cole

Thermal Imaging for a Cosier Home in Cambs.

Once again, we're delighted to offer residents and organizations across Cambridgeshire the opportunity to borrow and learn how to use a thermal imaging camera for free. Join a one-hour online training session to learn how to interpret thermal images, identify draughts, gaps in insulation, and heating problems, and to make your home cozier and more energy efficient. Great for homeowners and renters alike! We also encourage individuals, organizations and community groups to undertake training to survey multiple properties within their community.

In 2024, volunteers from communities across Cambridgeshire undertook surveys of 113 neighbouring homes and community buildings, adding to the 325 properties that were surveyed by individuals who had attended the training for their own homes.

"Really useful tool for assessing the home's heat loss and for planning improvements" - Borrower

Thermal Imaging Training Dates:

Wed 7th January 7:30-8:30 pm

Mon 9th February 7:30-8:30 pm

We only lend cameras to people who have attended the training. Loan periods are: Fri pm to Mon am, or Mon pm to Fri am, and cameras can be picked up from one of 18 volunteer camera hosts around South Cambs, Cambridge City and Huntingdonshire.

An excellent scheme - very much appreciate the opportunity to borrow the camera -thank you!

More information, and Interviews with experts, volunteers and organisers can be arranged on request. Contact Fran Sutton: fran@cambridgecarbonfootprint.org 07713841391

Working hours: Monday & Thursday 9:30-12:30pm, Tuesday & Wednesday 9:30-5:00pm

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WELCOME TO OUR FIRST NEWSLETTER FOR 2026.

The Museum is closed to the public for the winter, but that doesn't mean that we aren't busy. Some of the volunteers have been redecorating the museum and refreshing the walls and doors. It's surprising what difference a new coat of paint makes. One of the volunteers helping is Peter Dawson, our oldest working volunteer, who celebrated his ninetieth birthday on 28th November 2025.

On the 29th November, the museum Trustees held a thankyou party for the volunteers with takeaway and soft drinks. After the meal there was a quiz, and everyone was awarded a box of biscuits. A good time was had by all.

So, onto 2026. Work is in progress to prepare the museum for reopening to the public on Sunday 5th April. The vehicle group's new workshop is now complete, and they have been busy fitting it out. They will soon begin work on the projects they have lined up, including restoration of a WW2 Jeep.

The Museum celebrates two anniversaries in 2026. On 1st May it will be 80 years since Bottisham Airfield closed, and 27th September marks the tenth anniversary of the opening of the famous Flying Tractor Café at Bottisham Airfield Museum. The dates for the annual Bottisham at War/ 1940s weekend are confirmed for 27th and 28th June. Dates for our Classic Car Shows and other events will be announced in future newsletters when finalised, or for the latest information check our website at www.bottishamairfieldmuseum.org.uk.

If anyone has time to spare and would like to join our team as a Volunteer in museum or the café on Wednesdays or Sundays in 2026 please contact us via the website, we'd love to hear from you.

It only remains for me to wish you all a very Happy New year.

Charles Cook - Museum Volunteer

ARE YOU LOOKING FOR A LOCAL ALLOTMENT?

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The National Trust have some allotments in the village of Lode with plots currently available. One recently vacated plot is in particularly good condition and ready for planting.

**If you are interested please contact our Estate Management Officer,
Claire Taylor-Balls: Claire.taylor-balls@nationaltrust.org.uk**



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Red2Green is a registered charity celebrating 25 years of supporting and promoting adults 16+ with autism and learning disabilities. We are based across 2 sites in Swaffham Bulbeck and Bottisham; 2 converted barns (Harvey's and Granary) in Park End and our Community Garden on the Bottisham Village College site. We support 90 service-users, 5 days/week, 50 weeks/year.

WHAT HAVE WE BEEN UP TO?

A huge thank you to everyone who helped with, attended, or supported our annual Christmas Carol Service and Fair at the start of December. We are delighted to share that we raised over £600! The day was filled with festive joy, from beautiful singing and handbell performances to sharing the wonderful creations made by our learners and clients with the wider community. We look forward to welcoming you all again next year.

We were also incredibly grateful to be chosen as the beneficiary of the Swaffham Prior Christmas Fair Raffle, which raised an amazing £170. Our sincere thanks go to the organisers and to everyone who supported the raffle for their generosity.

More recently, our CEO Liz Taylor and Marketing and Partnerships Lead Anna Butler-Finbow visited Arm to deliver a Lunch and Learn session on the vital work Red2Green does supporting adults with learning disabilities and autism and discussed our Encompass service, which helps employers build inclusive, successful workplaces by championing neurodiversity and learning disabilities.

Do you or someone you know work for a company that could benefit from neurodiversity training, or would be interested in partnering with Red2Green? If so, we'd love to hear from you. Please get in touch at info@red2green.org or call 01223 811662.

WAYS YOU CAN GET INVOLVED:

There are lots of ways you can help support Red2Green:

- Volunteering opportunities
- Start a fundraiser in aid of Red2Green
- Visit our Community Garden in Bottisham and buy some plants (Mon-Fri, 9:30-4)
- One-off or monthly donations
- Sign up to our monthly newsletter
- Follow our social media pages and keep up to date with all things Red2Green

For more information about the wonderful work we do at Red2Green, please visit our website www.red2green.org or if you want to get in touch, feel free to email us at info@red2green.org or call us on 01223 811662.

Copy deadline for the next issue is 14 January.

Please send material to the editor at BottishamCresset@gmail.com





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Cats Protection is a registered charity 203644 (England and Wales), SC037711 (Scotland) and is listed as a Section 167 Institution by the Charity Commission of Northern Ireland. BC_1770

Our November meeting was joined by the Burwell Mother's Union. We shared an Advent Service, led by Revd Max Osbourne, where we considered the meaning of Advent and the preparations we have in the run up to Christmas. Max advised us not to rush into Christmas, but to spend time being ready. A time to consider others and how we might think about our faith. During Advent everyone has the opportunity to look at how we live our lives with God, 'opening a window to our soul' – or to shut that window firmly. Advent is a time for reflection and anticipation as we wait for the birth of Jesus and his second coming, with the word Advent coming from the Latin *adventus*, meaning 'arrival'. We know that many will be counting down the days with their little bits of chocolate from their Advent Calendars!

December is also a time when the Mother's Union prays particularly for 'RISE UP against domestic violence', and Max shared a prayer and some thoughts around this subject too.

We finished our meeting with some refreshments and another opportunity to raise funds with some more Bring and Buy.

Our next meeting is on Thursday 15th January, this time at 10.30am in Lode Church where we will share the Communion Service and stay for a soup lunch.

Let us know if you would like to join us.

Alison Martin 01223 811285

Bottisham WI

In November we collected a large number of toys, toiletries, wrapping materials and cash donations for the Salvation Army Christmas Appeal. It looks as if we exceeded last year's donations and everybody was thanked for their contributions.

Our speaker for the meeting was local Cambridge author Susan Grossey – already a favourite of many of our members. Following a lengthy career in finance together with her experience as a magistrate, Susan decided to take up a career in writing historical fiction. So far, she has published a series of 7 books set in the world of banking in London in the 1800s before moving on to a new series of books set in Cambridge. She's part way through this series of 5 books and is very much enjoying the extensive research required. Susan's books feature a mixture of real and fictional characters. Her books are available as ebooks and in paperback; she's currently working on audio books to enhance the collections.

Our first meeting of the New Year is on Tuesday 20th January when Ann Meade will be speaking about the work of the Cambridge Cancer Help Centre.

We have a full programme of speakers and activities for 2026 so do come and join us! We meet monthly – in the Poppy Room at The Bottisham Sports and Social Club starting at 7.30pm.

Jennifer Clark

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Bottisham Community Library Association

2026 NATIONAL YEAR OF READING

National Year of Reading is a UK initiative to promote reading for pleasure among all ages and change the nation's reading culture. It aims to address the steep decline in reading amongst children, young people and adults. And we plan to do our bit at the Library to support it and get the community reading again.

The best place to start is with the very young and we have a box of Board Books in the library to interest young children. Just getting your toddler to hold a book, turn the pages, look at the pictures and listen to the words can inspire them. There are the Spot books with the flaps to lift up, the series 'That's Not My' with different textures to feel, the rhymes in Slinky Malinky books and even books with sounds to listen to like Noisy Diggers. Come along and register your child, however young. Borrow 12 books for three weeks and it's completely free!



And where is your Community Library? We are at the Village College near to Reception but with our own entrance. We share the College Library space and it is a wonderful space. We are open:

Tuesday:	3.00 – 5.00	6.00- 8.00
Wednesday	10.00 – 11.30	
Thursday	3.00 – 5.00	
Friday	6.00 -8.00	
Saturday	10.00 – 12.00	

Our Fundraising Event – Quiz Night will be Saturday February 21st.

Lego Club and StoryTime will be on Saturday January 6th at 10.30am. Younger children will enjoy our collection of Duplo.

The date for the **Mobile Library** visit to Downing Close, Bottisham is January 22nd. And the visit to Lode will be Wednesday January 14th.

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Bottisham & Burwell Photographic Club

Our meetings continued through the autumn months and we enjoyed an excellent digital lecture on Tuesday 28 October by Alison Jenkins of Ware on the Dalmatian Pelicans of Lake Kerkini. Alison has a passion for these birds and runs photographic workshops twice a year for other photographers to enjoy these fascinating birds.

Our previous meeting on the 21st October was a Zoom presentation by local wildlife photographer Kevin Pigney. Kevin's talk called 'Passion for Scapes' included landscapes around the UK explaining long exposures, planning a shot, using filters, camera techniques and the kit required. Kevin will return to us next season to give his new lecture, 'My Top Thirty' which we are looking forward to.

A Portrait Workshop was held on 14 October led by our club member John Wildespin who provided two male models and all lighting equipment to enable members to practice the technique of portrait photography.

Before we close our meetings for Christmas and New Year, we do battle with Melbourn & Ely Photographic Clubs in a 3-way Friendly Print Competition hosted by Melbourn PS, finishing with 'It's a Knock-out' Christmas Quiz, a fun evening with nibbles and a raffle to round off the year.

Our meetings in 2026 include:

6 January: 'Spotlight on Hugh Milsom' featuring prints by this well-known award-winning photographer as told by Jonathan Vaines of Bedford.

13 January: Panel Pics/Creative Board Competitions judged by Naomi Saul, Shillington.

20 January: 'The Many Faces of China & People' by Mike Sharples from Stafford. Zoom presentation.

Our meetings are held Tuesdays at Swaffham Prior Village Hall, High Street, Swaffham Prior CB25 0LD, from 7.30 pm to 9.30 pm, the third Tuesday in each month being held via Zoom conferencing.

Visitors are always welcome for a small fee of £4.00 which includes refreshments.

If you are interested in joining this active club, please contact our Secretary, Debra Bennett, for further information and a copy of our programme. Email: secretary.bandbpc@gmail.com or visit our website www.bottburpc.org where you will find more detailed information and a gallery showing a selection of our members' work

I look forward to meeting you.

Daphne Hanson DPAGB HonPAGB, - Chairman

Copy deadline for next issue is 14 January.

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Village Litter Picks 2026

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Starting Location	Date	Month
Bottisham Village College (sports centre car park end)	17	January
Bottisham Community, Sports & Social	28	February
Bottisham Community, Sports & Social	14	March
Bottisham Village College (sports centre car park end)	18	April
Bottisham Community, Sports & Social	16	May
Bottisham Community, Sports & Social	20	June

All events, once a month on a Saturday, starting at 10:00am (except December)

Ways to keep in touch with updates:

- ✓ Join the [Bottisham Village Litter Pick WhatsApp Group](#)
- ✓ Visit either the [Bottisham Events Facebook Page](#)
- ✓ Visit the [Bottisham Community Group Facebook Page](#)

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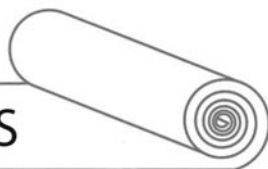


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