

GRAFFHAM

PARISH NEWS

ISSUE 419

FREE

JANUARY 2026



Festive jumper japes at Christmas market

The Woodcote tweaks its expansion plans

Hard on the gas to cut speed limit on our roads

Happy 2026 to all our readers!



On the cover: There were more festive jumpers at Graffham's Christmas Fair than plums in a decent pudding – and here are just some of them, with the lead of the team behind the event, Marie Bracey, in the green and white number in the middle. Read all about it on pages 28-33.

Contributions and contacts The editors are always pleased to hear from you at editor.graffhamparishnews@gmail.com

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Member editor 2025 Award Winner 2022
Association for Church Editors

Writing from the Rectory: Weighing it up

Have you seen much of Reverend Vivien lately? There have been lots of Advent and Christmas services and events so you might well have done. Even so, you may have seen more of her than you think. Sad to say, Reverend Vivien is a little larger than she was last summer. Probably larger than is good for her.

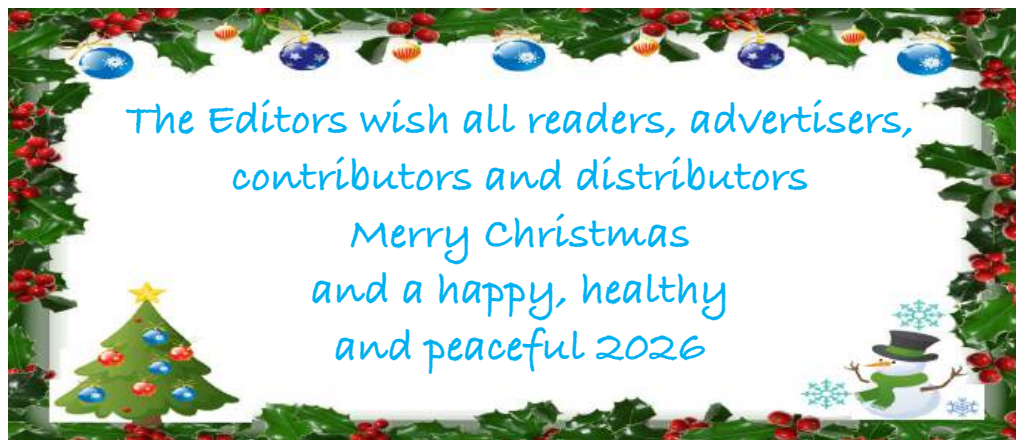
Given that this is a new year and time for new resolutions, it would be a good idea for her to resolve to do something about it – but how to go about it? I suspect she needs to look at the root causes. This is the usual thing – too much food and not enough exercise, probably caused by the wrong attitudes, including the temptation to comfort-eat when feeling stressed. Possibly much harder to address than she hopes, but worth a try.

Our attitudes of course are worth examining, whether or not we feel we have a weight problem. We all carry burdens we have the power to release ourselves from – like

► [Continued on next page](#)



Reverend Vivien before – though possibly also after!



► Continued on next page

Christian in John Bunyan's *The Pilgrims Progress* – and would be much better off doing so. That is a more essential focus of attention than dealing with an extra few physical pounds, stones or kilos in weight. The beginning of a new year is a good time to weigh it up. What would it do you good to shake off? Lack of patience? Predisposition to get cross about things? Determination to be in control? A sense of hopelessness? Greediness? We all suffer from this kind of thing, when it would be much better for ourselves and everyone round us if we could let it go.

We need help of course. So, here's a good reference for inspiration, if we wish to lose weight metaphorically, spiritually or physically this new year.

Therefore since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the sake of the joy that was set before him endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of God. – Hebrews 12.1-2

Good weight loss advice for us all. And, in Reverend Vivien's case, maybe also discourage her from taking that extra slice of cake!

Happy new year!



Reverend Vivien



Priest in charge: Reverend Vivien Turner
hello@stgilesgraffham.org 01798 867199

Churchwardens: Ginny Barrett 01798 867113
Cindy Bradley 07787 516522

Safeguarding Officer: Howard Pescott
01798 867029 safeguardinggraffham@gmail.com



stgilesgraffham.org



@stgilesgraffham



CHRISTMAS 2025

At St Giles' Church, Graffham*

Come and celebrate the birth of Jesus –
in the way only Graffham can!

COMMUNAL CAROLING AT THE FORESTERS
Sunday 21 December at 6pm

Join your neighbours for rousing renditions of your festive favourites,
with mulled wine and seasonal nibbles promised!

CHRISTMAS EVE CRIB SERVICE
Wednesday 24 December at 4pm

Re-telling of the Christmas story, bringing hope to our world. A service for all ages.
Tinsel, crowns and tea towels welcome! Costumes available for the key players!
Who knows which animals might fill our bell tower stable?!

CANDLELIT CHRISTMAS EVE EUCHARIST
Wednesday 24 December at 7pm

A quieter service, with traditional carols, marking the birth of Jesus Christ.

CHRISTMAS DAY FAMILY EUCHARIST
Thursday 25 December at 10.30am

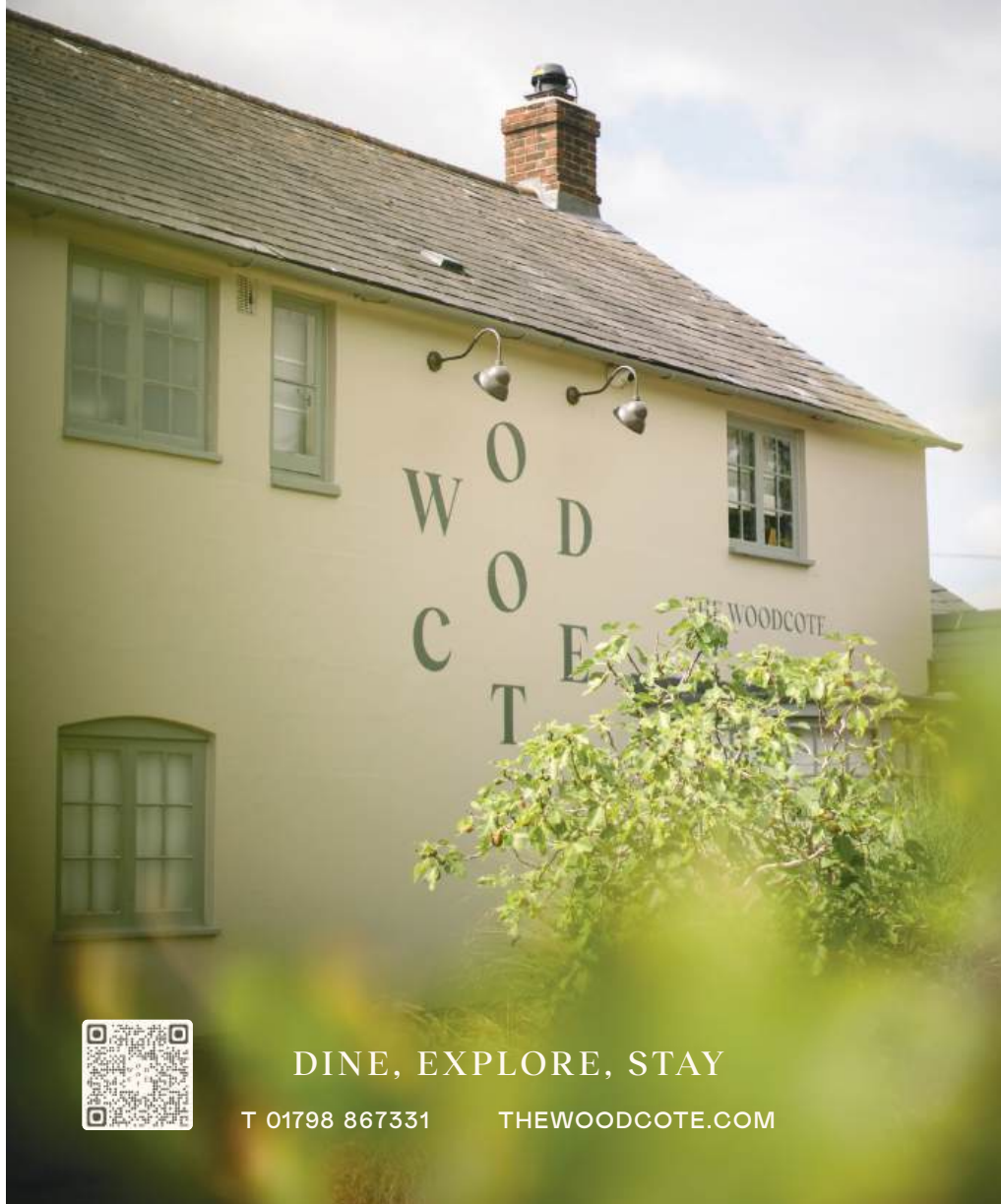
Carols, communion – and feel free to bring your favourite presents to church!

**Except where noted*

Seaford College's
Chamber Choir,
conducted by Sara
Reynolds, kicked off
the festive season in
Graffham with its now
traditional
performance at
St Giles Church's
Advent Service on the
early evening of
Sunday 30 November.



THE WOODCOTE



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THEWOODCOTE.COM



Sixteen shoeboxes were collected from Graffham in late November at the start of their journey to Ukraine – each packed by kind-hearted villagers with presents for children, teenagers and adults in the war-torn country. The activity was coordinated in our village by Jan Brind, who handed them over to Ellie Mulcahy, of Petworth Ukraine Relief, who is pictured with the boxes in the back of her car. Jan said: “Thank you to everyone who took part.”

Bin collections two days later after festivities

Bin collection days in Graffham will be a couple of days later than usual in the weeks after Christmas and New Year. Collection will be as normal up to Christmas, with the final call of the year on Wednesday 24 December. Then you'll need to wait until Saturday 3 January, followed by Friday 9 January and then Thursday 15 January before reverting back to Wednesdays from the following week, 21 January.

Chichester District Council has issued a reminder that the following festive items CAN be recycled in your red bin:

- Greetings cards and envelopes, and empty chocolate advent calendars.
- Wrapping paper and empty cardboard tubes but NOT shiny or metallic wrapping paper, ribbons or bows.
- Mince pie cases and other foil, plastic confectionary tubs and meat trays but NOT plastic film and wrapping.
- Cardboard boxes and packaging EXCEPT polystyrene.

You can use the garden recycling service to recycle your Christmas tree – or St Wilfrid's Hospice will do it for you in return for a donation. See www.stwh.co.uk

You can now also send off your empty flexible toothpaste tubes in your fortnightly recycling bin. Just squeeze out all the contents and replace the cap.

Coffee pods – aluminium and plastic – can now be recycled, too, but you have to take them to one of West Sussex's recycling centres.



Architects' drawings comparing The Woodcote's current frontage (left) with how it would look under its revised plans.

Meeting delayed on revised Woodcote plans

Graffham Parish Council postponed a meeting of its planning committee to consider revised plans for the expansion of The Woodcote at just a day's notice as it waited for key additional information from the restaurant-with-rooms' owners.

The session had been scheduled for Wednesday 10 December but was deferred as updated reports from the applicant on the implications of the development in terms of highways, flood risk and biodiversity net gain had not been provided in time.

A new date for the meeting will be set once these items are posted to the planning portal of the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA), which will rule on the application.

The SDNPA had given an assurance that it would still accept additional comments from Graffham Parish Council in line with this timescale.

Graffham Planning Committee Chairman Fiona Jacob said: "Given the importance of these updated reports to understanding the full impacts of the proposal, it would not be possible for us to hold a properly informed discussion at this stage. As all planning meetings must be public, holding one now would inevitably mean we would have to reconvene a second full public meeting once the outstanding reports are published.

"To avoid confusion, unnecessary duplication and any perception of reaching a view on incomplete information, our parish council planning committee will reconvene when the complete amended submission is available on the SDNPA planning portal. This approach ensures transparency and allows us to consider the application fairly and comprehensively before submitting the parish council's formal comments."

Members of the public will be welcome to attend the parish council planning committee meeting, when it is held. A date, time and location will be announced on graffham-pc.gov.uk and Facebook's Graffham Noticeboard. As at the June meeting to consider The Woodcote's original planning application, the numbers



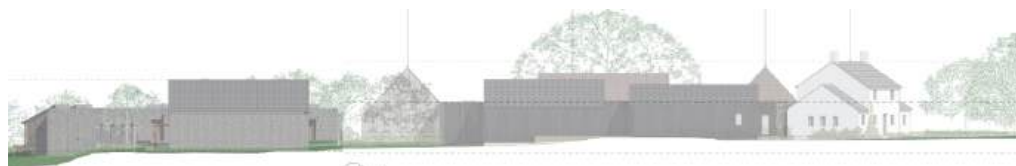
The Woodcote's building footprint as it is today (left), as proposed in March (centre) and as revised in its latest plans (right).

invited to speak and the amount of time given to each of them may be limited depending on demand, in line with the council's standing orders.

The Woodcote filed a total of 18 new planning documents for its proposed development with the SDNPA on 21 November – just after December's *Graffham Parish News* had gone to press – with seven more documents added a week later.

As before, the owners want to demolish the current six guest suites where former farm outbuildings once stood and erect 16 replacements in new lodges in the field further to the south. The current main building would become a bar and bistro with staff accommodation upstairs. A new structure on its south western side would form the replacement restaurant. These two buildings and new private dining rooms – which would offer seating for around 100 guests in total – would be linked by a single-storey block containing a new bar, kitchen and other support facilities,

► [Continued on next page](#)



Representations showing how The Woodcote would look from the east under its revised plans (above), compared with its elevations today (below).



► *Continued from previous page*

with a footprint of around five times that of the former pub building. In the revised plans, the main car park would be left directly in front of the current building rather than being moved entirely to the field to the west, although part of that field would still be given over to parking.

The barn previously intended to be built to the south in that field has also been scrapped in the latest proposals. More pitched roofs have been added to break up what was previously a large flat roof over the ‘back of house’ block and private dining area, and the area designated for waste storage moved.

The original proposals received more than 100 objections, including from the SDNPA’s own Landscape and Design Officers, Graffham Parish Council, CPRE The Countryside Charity (once known as the Council for the Protection of Rural England) and the Friends of the South Downs. They also attracted a number of supporters.

As the 5 December deadline passed for public comments on the revised plans, 30 objections and two messages of support had been received.

You can see the revised plans and read comments on them received to date by following the links from bit.ly/woodcote-planning



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Full speed ahead to cut speed limits

Graffham Parish Council is accelerating its aim to reduce the current 30mph speed limit within the village to 20mph – and wants YOUR help to bring this about.

It is asking anyone who supports the move, or who has witnessed drivers going along our roads too fast or dangerously, to send in details. It will then urge West Sussex County Council, which is responsible for these kinds of things, for a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) limiting the speed in the village to 20mph.

Chairman Gillian Charlesworth says: “We have been advised to make an application as soon as possible, as many villages wish to obtain funding for this sort of scheme. To support this, we need as much information as possible about road dangers in and around the village. Reports of specific incidents, near misses and accidents are particularly useful and important to include.”



You are asked to submit them to the parish council's clerk by email at clerk@graffham-pc.gov.uk as soon as possible, with a deadline of 7 January.

As part of its new village plan, besides reducing the current speed limit within the village, the parish council proposes to introduce ‘gateways’ with improved signage at the entrance to the village and to work with neighbouring parish councils to have the limit on roads between them and the A285, A286 and A272 to the east, west and north cut to 40mph, discouraging motorists from using these lanes as rat runs and making them safer for walkers, horse-riders and cyclists.

Village plan to be finalised this month

Graffham Parish Council expects to finalise its new three-year plan for the village at its first meeting in 2026, on 7 January, after making small revisions to the draft published in November based on comments received.



Chairman Gillian Charlesworth told the 25 November meeting of the council: “Most of the comments we’ve received, from half a dozen parishioners, indicates that there is general support for us having a plan. The biggest issue raised has been how the parish council collaborates with other village organisations. The key point to stress is that we are not trying to take over everything – but only suggesting that there may be scope for making things simpler for all by exploring potential areas for working together on things like admin.” To read the draft plan, go to graffham-pc.gov.uk/neighbourhood-plan/

Could you spare a few minutes to save a life?

A volunteer is being sought to carry out regular checks to ensure that two of Graffham's new defibrillators – at the Pavilion and in the former telephone box by Pescods on The Street – are in full working order. They should be given the once over at least every three months. Each check should take a matter of minutes. Full training would be provided. The Three Moles' landlord Tom Richardson checks the defibrillator in the old phone box opposite the pub and, since taking on the Maintenance Officer role at the Empire Hall, has offered to check on the defibrillator on its outside wall too.

If you are interested in volunteering for this potentially life-saving role, please email clerk@graffham-pc.gov.uk

Empire Hall defibrillator awaiting new battery

The defibrillator at The Empire Hall will be out of use from 1 January when its battery expires. There has been a global shortage of the replacement battery packs needed and, though these are now slowly coming on stream, it is likely to be a couple of months before this defibrillator is back in action. Meanwhile, the defibrillators at the Pavilion and in the former telephone boxes at Pescods and The Three Moles should be used if required.

Land sought for village allotments

An appeal has been issued to landowners in Graffham to see if any of them would be prepared to give or lease space to be used as village allotments. With more than six parishioners asking Graffham Parish Council to provide them, the council is obliged to investigate the feasibility of making them available. Chairman Gillian Charlesworth said: "As the parish council owns no land itself, the only way we might be able to make such a provision would be if someone was able to make an appropriate plot available on suitable terms." If you might be able to help, please contact clerk@graffham-pc.gov.uk

Progressing Graffham-East Lavington merger

After neighbouring East Lavington Parish Council agreed at its November meeting to pursue a merger with Graffham, the two parish councils are to approach Chichester District Council, which has an overseeing role in combinations like this, to map out the next steps.

Graffham Council donates £200 to Foodbank

Graffham Parish Council agreed at its meeting a month before Christmas Day, on 25 November, to make a donation of £200 to Chichester Foodbank, which runs the Foodbank service from Petworth that serves the town and surrounding villages like Graffham. The council agreed to make a donation after hearing that around half a dozen of its parishioners had sought the support of the foodbank in the past year. For the Foodbank's latest list of most needed items, see page 44.

Residents warned to be alert after incidents

Graffham residents and businesses are being warned to be extra vigilant after a couple of incidents in the village. On Friday 21 November, rogue workmen claiming to be from the council laid unwanted tarmac on the drive of a local business then menacingly demanded excessive payment for it. A night or two later, an attempt was made to break into the temporary office on a nearby building site.

Visiting band to chime in the New Year

A band of visiting bell ringers will be chiming in 2026 at our St Giles Church, to mark also November's 150th anniversary of its rebuilding. The visitors, from Steyning, are aiming to ring a full peal on New Year's Eve Wednesday 31 December, starting at 10am and expected to take some three hours to complete, with around 5,000 different permutations of orders of bells.

Canine Partners site to turn into vet hospital

Canine Partners' former centre in Heyshott is to be converted into a veterinary hospital under plans approved in late November by South Downs National Park Authority. The site has been vacant since the support dog training organisation decided to close it in June 2023. The vets taking over the premises intend to offer 24-hours-a-day care, with some in-patients remaining overnight for monitoring.



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Works go on to drain Graffham Common Road

Contractors were due to have completed drainage works at Graffham Common Road as this edition of *Graffham Parish News* went to press, after replacing a gulley pipe under the road by Selham House, where flooding has occurred regularly and construct a new concrete spillway and wall outside The Last Post, where there have been temporary barriers for many months. The road was closed between the Fitzlea Wood Road junction and Twin Cottage while the work was carried out. In November, new drainage was installed on Selham Road, close to St James' Church.

Closures will be in force again from 5 to 9 January on Graffham Common Road between its junctions with Perott Lane and Fitzlea Wood Road for Southern Water to realign a washout chamber. For details, see one.network/uk/westsussex

Our West Sussex County Councillor Tom Richardson said: "Hopefully, once these works are complete, we won't experience the flooding that we have for a number of years, making it easier and safer to get around during the wetter months."

RIP Tim Copeman 1933-2025

We were saddened to hear, as we were going to press, of the passing of Tim Copeman, who had lived for many years at Hazlewell House, by the Foresters Arms, on The Street. A full tribute is planned for our next edition.

Property watch

Homes for sale locally, posted at [rightmove.com](https://www.rightmove.com) since our previous edition:

4 Boderton Mews, Burton Park, Duncton GU28 0LS: Semi-detached house, three bedrooms, two bathrooms plus cloakroom, sitting and dining rooms, kitchen/breakfast room, hall. 128sq m (1,378sq ft). Parking. Access to estate's grounds. Guide £675,000. *RH & RW Clutton, Petworth 01798 303593. Listed 18 Nov.*



Planning applications and decisions

Details for Graffham, East Lavington and nearby filed with the South Downs National Park since our previous edition. For details, see bit.ly/sdnp-planning

Applications

Brook Orchard, Graffham Common Road, Graffham GU28 0PY: Erection of a replacement timber garden room. SDNP/25/04319/HOUS. *Validated 1 December 2025. Decision due 26 January 2026*



West Sussex wants a single unitary authority covering the entire county (left) while Chichester and the other districts prefer a two-way split.



Have your say on local government's future

Graffham and East Lavington residents – along with neighbours throughout West and East Sussex – are being urged to have their say on the future of local government across the counties. Westminster has launched a consultation on the differing proposals that have been put forward on how local government should be structured in our part of the world, as part of the national plans for devolution.

What is already agreed is that there will be an elected mayor heading the new Sussex and Brighton Combined Authority, overseeing transport, housing, economic growth, skills, public health, and policing across what are today West and East Sussex along with Brighton and Hove.

It has also been decided that both West and East Sussex along with the 13 district, borough and city councils within them, including our own Chichester District Council, will all be replaced with new single-tier authorities – but differing proposals have been proposed as to how these new bodies should shape up.

West Sussex County Council wants a single unitary authority across the geographical area it currently covers, with Brighton and Hove remaining separate.

Chichester and the other district and borough councils in the county, however, are recommending that there should be two unitary authorities in West Sussex – one including today's Chichester, Arun, Worthing, and Adur, and another covering Crawley, Horsham, and Mid Sussex – plus a standalone Brighton and Hove.

The national government is now asking residents for their thoughts on these proposals – with Sunday 11 January the deadline for responses. You can give your views online and find out more via chichester.gov.uk/devolution

Graffham Parish Council Chairman Gillian Charlesworth said: “The changes to local government structures the government is planning will have significant impact on our representation at district and county level with much larger bodies being created, covering wider areas, while we don't yet know what these reforms will mean at parish council level so the picture is not complete.

“While an aim of the reforms is to make efficiency savings, it's possible that council

tax will increase in some former districts such as our well-funded Chichester when it is joined together with other areas with greater social needs.

“It’s worth reading and commenting on the proposals in the consultation exercise as this is the biggest local government shake-up in decades. Even if you don’t comment, be prepared for the impact on our local services, local representation and perhaps costs from 2027.”

From Town Hall: Election of new Mayor on hold

Our representative on Chichester District Council, John Cross, provides his regular update on his key issues of focus right now.



The government announced last month, rather unexpectedly, that the mayoral elections for the new Sussex and Brighton and other strategic authorities were to be postponed by at least a year. I am baffled by this.

It means that these new bodies, which will be taking over many of the responsibilities from our current county, district and boroughs councils in 2027, will have no political leaders. A mayor will be appointed on the day they take effect in May 2027, meaning that the structure, organisation and key officer appointments will all be in place before the mayor!

Here, our new Sussex and Brighton Strategic Authority will have two delegates from West Sussex County Council, two from East Sussex County Council and two from Brighton and Hove City Council – and no elected leader.

Meanwhile, as I write, it is thought May 2027’s county council elections will still go ahead, as will the district council elections the following May (2028). It is highly likely, however, that the latter will be cancelled, as, with the county, district and borough councils across Sussex soon to be replaced by new unitary authorities, they will probably be ‘shadow’ bodies by that stage.

I hope you are getting the picture – local government is in a state of hiatus, decisions are being made at a local level in the hope the government doesn’t change its mind, yet other government-level decisions need to be made to enable the work to get organised and ready for this massive change to local government to happen in a very short period of time.

The senior management and elected members of the existing councils across West and East Sussex are of course preparing and doing what they can, but it is most frustrating. Happy New Year!

Graffham Village Shop Association needs YOU

A message from its Chairman Steve Dover.

The Graffham Village Shop Association (GVSA) was founded in 1994, when the community faced the impending closure of the then existing shop, as many longer standing residents know. Villagers came together and raised funds, subsequently supplemented by business loans, to buy and develop what are today the village shop along with the workshop and Chapel View, the residential rental unit next door.

GVSA owns the freehold for these three properties and the car parking area in front of them, with our tenants occupying and operating from the properties – Jeeva and Vasu, Stephanie Marx and the family in the house.

The association committee is responsible for looking after these assets on behalf of the members. As a community benefit society, the GVSA is restricted as to its activities and what we can and can't do with its assets. For example, the properties cannot be sold for profit – they can only be transferred to another association with similar objects.

When the GVSA was founded more than 30 years ago, nearly 350 villagers became members – virtually everyone living in Graffham itself at the time. Since then, many have died or moved away, with lots of newcomers moving into our village and the surrounding area – who may be unaware of the key role that GVSA plays





Graffham Village Shop Association owns the buildings used today by Jeeva and Vasu and picture framer Stephanie Marx, along with the residential unit between them – and is inviting more residents to become shareholders to help safeguard the future of these vital village assets.

in ensuring that, what is arguably the one of the community's most vital assets, thrives and survives. In fact, while Graffham and East Lavington today have some 580 adults (registered electors) living in 315 households, the village shop association now has only 150 members, some of whom are quite elderly.

If you are not a member of GVSA, you do not legally have a say on its operations or what happens with the shop and our other assets. For example, in a few years' time, when the lease of the picture framer's workshop expires, GVSA will have to decide what to do with that building. While the committee will consult with villagers and other community organisations, it will be the GVSA committee and members who will make the decision as to what we do.

The small number of members has a knock-on effect. Like many of the other organisations in the village, we struggle to get people to join our committee. We currently have only four committee members, and these stalwarts are not going to remain on the committee for the rest of their lives! Sadly, if people don't step up and come onto the committee, we run the risk of GVSA no longer being viable and able to operate. So, to paraphrase Kitchener, your village needs YOU!

It is very easy to become a GVSA member and therefore have a say in the running of these important village assets by buying a share – just complete and send in the form on the next page and pay £10 for your membership share.

If you have any questions or feel you can help in any way, please contact the GVSA secretary, Ros Britton on rosalind.britton@btinternet.com, or me (Chairman Steve Dover) on 07770 499223.

GRAFFHAM EMPIRE HALL

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SATURDAY 24 JANUARY 2026
DOORS OPEN 7PM • DANCING STARTS 7.30PM

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Dance practices in the Empire Hall:
Sunday 28th of December 2025,
Sunday 4th, 11th and 18th of January 2026
4-6pm, £2 per session



Graffham Village Shop Association

Share Application Form

I wish to apply for membership of and a share of nominal value of £10 in the association in accordance with its rules¹. I understand that if a share is issued it is not generally transferable, withdrawable or entitled to interest or dividend. If the share is forfeited or cancelled in accordance with the rules its value will become the property of the association. I understand that acceptance of applications is at the discretion of the committee.

Given name	
Family name	
Address	
Postcode	
Email address	
Telephone (optional)	
Signed	
Dated	

Please send your remittance to the association's account with Barclays Bank:

Account name: The Graffham Village Shop Association Ltd
Sort code: 20-67-49
Account: 73936279

For alternative payment methods, contact association treasurer Andy Jones at andy.jones@graffham.net

Please submit this application by email to the association secretary rosalind.britton@btinternet.com or in an envelope marked for her attention at Graffham Village Shop.

On acceptance of an application by the committee and payment of the remittance, a share certificate will be issued.

¹A copy of the rules is available from the association secretary on request.



Registration for our Reception Class 2026 is Now Open!

Seaford College Prep School is thrilled to announce that registration for our Reception Class for students aged 4-5, starting September 2026, is now open.

Alastair Brown, Head of Prep School, said: "Our Prep School offers a nurturing environment where children flourish. With after school wrap around care, small class sizes, personalised attention, and a diverse curriculum combining academic excellence with creative and practical learning, every child feels valued and supported.

Our outstanding facilities include a swimming pool, sports pitches, music rooms, dance studios, and creative spaces for Art, DT, and Cookery. Children enjoy outdoor learning opportunities, including our onsite Forest School, all within our beautiful grounds.

We focus on fostering independent thinking, leadership skills, and a love of learning, ensuring a seamless transition into Senior School with a strong foundation for future success."

Seaford Prep School launched the Reception Class in 2025, and the expansion has been very successful and reflects the continued growth and popularity of the College.

Seaford College has been awarded the highest possible rating of 'Excellent' in all areas in the ISI inspection.

To read more: www.seaford.org/life-at-seaford/isi-inspection-report

**Our next Open Morning is
Saturday 7th March 2026**



Contact Hayley, Prep School Admissions: receptionclass@seaford.org

Love to learn

Seaford names its new headmaster

Seaford College has named its new headmaster, who will succeed incumbent John Green when he retires at the end of the school year after almost a decade and a half leading the school. Matt Williams, currently Head of Warminster School, a co-educational boarding and day school in Wiltshire for two to 18-year-olds, will take up the post from September.

Matt started teaching 28 years ago and has always worked in boarding schools. He spent 14 years at Rugby School where he was a head of department and housemaster of a senior boys' boarding house, before moving on to deputy headship at Sidcot School in North Somerset. He has been at Warminster for the past six years.

He has always involved himself in all aspects of school life – coaching cricket and rugby, directing numerous drama productions, taking charge of clay pigeon shooting, as well as leading several international sports tours.

He is an Independent Schools Inspectorate team inspector, serves on the Board of the Society of Heads as well as chairing its Education Committee, and is a member of the Heads' Conference Public Benefit and Partnerships Committee.

He said: "I am hugely honoured to have been entrusted to be the next Head of Seaford College – a school that stands proudly and unapologetically for educating the whole person. Seaford has a warmth that is instantly palpable. On my visits, I noticed an instant sense of belonging and a strong feeling of community that I will work fiercely to preserve.

"John Green has done a remarkable job, and I am privileged to build on his excellent work, continuing to make the college a true beacon of holistic education. I look forward to meeting more of the community and working closely with John to ensure a seamless transition over the coming months."

Seaford's Chair of Governors Richard Venables Kyrke said: "My Board and I have great confidence in Matt's appointment, and that he is the right person to continue the success of our school. We are delighted to welcome Matt to Seaford College."

John Green has led the college since September 2013. The school today has almost a thousand pupils, aged from five to 18.



Seaford's new head
Matt Williams

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School report: Some special visitors

Graffham Infant and Duncton Junior Schools headteacher Charles Beckerson provides an update.

Roof work phase 1 finished It's wonderful to start this report by sharing some great news – this year's work on the roofs at both schools has finished! There will be a second phase at Graffham in the summer of 2026 to complete the job. Thank you for your patience and support during the works.

Encouraging monitoring visit We are also delighted to share that we've recently had two very positive monitoring visits from the local authority. The feedback was extremely encouraging. The inspectors were impressed with the quality of teaching and learning across both schools, which is a testament to the hard work and dedication of our staff and pupils.



MP presents prize We recently had a visit at Duncton from our local MP, Andrew Griffith. He came and presented one of our pupils with a prize as she was a runner up in his Christmas card competition. Well done, Clemmie! We are all very proud of you. Andrew Griffith enjoyed hearing from the children about their learning as part of our Parliament week – including debating whether homework and school uniform should be banned. He was very impressed with the children's singing of our Graffham and Duncton song.

New minibus You may have noticed that we have a new minibus. This was purchased with funding from West Sussex County Council. As well as being much newer and shinier than our old one, it also has disabled access. The minibus it has replaced has gone to a good home at an after-school club in Loxwood.



End of term As I wrote this report, the festive season was fast approaching, and we were looking forward to celebrating together – at the Graffham Nativity, the Duncton Christmas Carol Concert and the Christingle services in both Graffham's St Giles and Duncton's Holy Trinity Church. Then it is time for holidays, a welcome break – and the end of my first year here! Thank you, as always, for your continued support



GRAFFHAM
HEALTH SUPPORT
ASSOCIATION

GHSA volunteers will be calling throughout the Graffham neighbourhood during **March 2026** to encourage existing members to renew their subscriptions and to invite new members to join.

The annual fee is just £5 per person (under 21's are free).

Cash payments are accepted but your subscription can easily be made by standing order – use the information below to set up new payments direct from your bank account.

Bank Account - Business

Sort Code – 60 -14-22

Account Name – Graffham Health Support Association

Account Number – 55003346

Reference – Your Surname/Forename

Amount - £5 (1 person) £10 (2 persons)

Frequency – Annually

Date of Payment – the date the standing order is established

Please advise Zoe Jones* when your payment has been made

The association, in one format or another, has been caring for the community for more than a century, providing services not available from the NHS.

Lifts to medical appointments are undertaken by a group of member volunteers and every attempt is made to fulfil all requests.

The GHSA committee look forward to you becoming a member during 2026.

For further information please contact:

*Zoe Jones, Treasurer – zoe@graffham.net

Yvonne Churchward, Membership Officer – yvonnebutterick@hotmail.co.uk

GRAFFHAM HEALTH SUPPORT ASSOCIATION

Annual
membership
£5

The HSA provides the following to its members:

TRANSPORT FOR MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS

Volunteer drivers provide members with transport to local surgeries, hospitals and other medical appointments, e.g. opticians, dentists, chiropodists. The drivers use their own cars without any liability on their part or on the part of the Association. The HSA will also make every effort to provide transport for a member wishing to visit a close relative who is an in-patient in a local hospital.



PRESCRIPTION COLLECTION

Prescriptions are delivered weekly to the village shop from Petworth surgery, ready for collection on Wednesdays (unless it's a bank holiday). This service is provided for HSA members only and they must have made prior arrangement with the pharmacy. The HSA provides the collection service only and any queries regarding the prescription itself must be made to the surgery.



EASE INTO EXERCISE

Ease Into Exercise is a Seniors' fitness class, for both men and women. The class takes place in the Empire Hall and is subsidised by the HSA. For details see Graffham Parish News.



BENEFITS

The Association may, on a discretionary basis, be able to assist with part payment towards the cost of certain services and appliances not provided free by the NHS, e.g. spectacles & dental care. An applicant must have been a member of the HSA for at least 6 months to qualify for a cash benefit. (Maximum payable is £80 per member per year)



GHSa and its predecessors have been supporting the health of Graffham and East Lavington villagers for more than a century.

LOAN OF EQUIPMENT

Various items are available for loan, e.g. wheelchair, bath seat, commode. The equipment is inspected regularly and is borrowed at the members' risk.

GREAT FEET

Vikki Wood of Great Feet runs a foot health clinic in the Empire Hall every third week. The clinic is open to all HSA members, and future dates are on the notice board by the Empire Hall and on: www.empirehall.org.uk Call Vikki on 07825 185880 to book your appointment or for further information. You can also look at her website at www.great-feet.co.uk



More than **200** Graffham residents are members - this is around half the village's adult population



Annual membership subscription is £5 per person. Under 21 free. New members are always welcome

See the back of Graffham Parish News for contact details of the Graffham Health Support Association

A good neighbour scheme in need of more volunteers:

The Association would be most grateful to hear from anyone willing to become a volunteer driver. There is no pressure and it is perfectly fine to refuse a request if it is inconvenient. The larger the pool of drivers the less frequently volunteers are called upon. Fuel expenses are paid annually.

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Graffham Parish News' genial January quiz

Ten quick fire questions from Bill Barrett to test your local, topical and wider general knowledge. Answers on page 55 (no cheating!)

- 1 The ecclesiastical parish of Graffham merged with which other parish in 1846?
- 2 Edward Bradbrooke, Rector of the parish from 1966 until 1974, represented England in the British Empire Games of 1930 and 1934 in which sport: [a] high jump, [b] 440 yards (athletics), [c] 440 yards (swimming)?
- 3 What was unusual about the New Year Honours of 1902 and 1940?
- 4 Which former senior Church of England cleric might well be 70 on 6 January?
- 5 What is the title of Sir Thomas More's best known work, published in 1516: [a] *Dystopia*, [b] *Utopia*, [c] *Myopia*?
- 6 If you were having removable prosthodontic treatment, what would you hopefully end up with?
- 7 *Cambridge Dictionary* named which of these as its Word of the Year 2025: [a] parasocial, [b] paradiddle, [c] paralytic?
- 8 The exterior of Ranger's House in Greenwich is used for which racy Georgian drama, the fourth series of which premiers on Netflix this month?
- 9 The second series of which BBC sitcom, this one set in Tudor Elizabethan England, first aired on 9 January 1986?
- 10 How many beer cans were cleared away during the fourth Ashes Test at Sydney in January 1975: [a] 864,000, [b] 1,273,000, [c] 1,931,000?



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Father Christmas announces his arrival in the hall before setting up stall in his grotto with his elf and one of his youngest visitors of the day.

Santa rings in the crowds for Christmas Fair

Netting a grand total of more than £7,000, Graffham's Christmas Fair, on Saturday 6 December, lived up to its billing as one of the year's biggest fund raisers for our St Giles Church and all that it does for the community. And, as usual, virtually the entire village joined in one way or another – running a stall, baking cakes, cooking up preserves or sausage rolls, serving mulled wine, producing gorgeous gifts, donating bottles, washing up...



The Empire Hall was filled to the brim with joyful villagers and equally jolly visitors from further afield. The entrance desk, which charged £1 per adult, took a total of £213.50, though some generously gave more and others turning up with no cash were waived their entry fee so long as they promised to use their cards to spend the equivalent on the stalls inside.

There was lot for them to spend that money on



The Christmas Fair packed the Empire Hall with a steady stream of visitors.

inside, too, from the time the doors opened at 11am until everything was packed away at 2pm, to the musical accompaniment of St Giles organist Brian Lanaghan's selection of Christmas favourites at the piano.

The silent auction proved the biggest money spinner, with winning bids totalling £3,161 for the 20 or so lots on offer, with competition reaching fever pitch in the final few minutes before the gavel was banged down. A total of 1,255 raffle tickets was sold, at £1 a go, with more than a score of wonderful prizes generously donated. To find out who won what in the raffle and auction see page 33.

As ever, the home produce stand, overseen by Gillian Charlesworth, was heaving with copious culinary contributions supplied by Graffham's finest cooks, bringing in a total of £1,152. The 'café' team, comprising mainly St Giles' bellringers, supported by John Bracey in his Marigolds, chimed in with almost £600 worth of sales of mulled wine, coffee, tea, cakes, biscuits, sausage rolls and miniature quiches.

Making their Christmas Fair debut was Graffham's Knit and Natter group, whose handiwork, including a delightful home-knitted Nativity set, blankets, jumpers and toys, brought in some £500. Graffham Village Shop's Ardra beat off 207 other

▶ [Continued on next page](#)



Bidding heats up in the silent auction (left) while Slow Grown Farm's cheeses and charcuterie attract lots of custom.

► *Continued from previous page*

contenders to guess correctly the weight of the beautifully decorated Christmas cake (it was 9 lbs and 8 oz), baked by Ann Brown and iced by Barbara Edge. The raffle for another Christmas cake, baked by Ann Smith, the mother of the Foresters' Cindy Bradley, was won by yet another Ann (Beadsley), while Catalina Haverhals came closest to guessing the number of sweets in the giant jar (there were 470 of



CHARITY BRIDGE TEA

in aid of St Giles Church, Graffham

Thursday, 5 February 2026, 2-5pm **The Empire Hall, Graffham**

Donation of £60 per table

*For more information and to reserve a table, please contact
Nettie Lanaghan on 07798 624466 or at thornhills@aol.com*



Game for a laugh at the tombola, while visitors to the Knit and Natter stall included our local MP Andrew Griffith (right).

them). The tombola stall, overseen by Ant Forsyth, Chris Leaver and Holly Sabin, dealt out some 225 cards, again at £1 each.

Fiona Mackie, with the support of Yvonne Churchward, sold more than £150 of pre-loved jewellery and accessories – and a few more copies of the Graffham cookery book that she masterminded to mark the 150th anniversary of St Giles' rebuilding in November.

The secondhand book stall made a welcome return, thanks to Liz Jenkins, while the Aparicio and Bowden families kept the youngsters occupied before and after they had visited Father Christmas in a grotto that put London's top stores to shame, courtesy of the Bradleys.

Local artisans were also on hand to offer their wares, among them Graffham potter Jo Morris, Slow Grown Farm's Katie Sacks, Ben Marks with his venison and Andy Beadsley with his Made by Andy garden ironwork.

As Marie Bracey, who led the fair's organising team, pointed out: "Everything for sale in the hall was made, produced or cooked in the village! The fair was a great success – and it is all due to the hard work that so many people put into it over the weeks running up to it, particularly on the day itself and making all the final preparations the day before, and to all the generous donors of the amazing auction, raffle and other prizes. A very big thank you to every one of them.

"The hall looked lovely, the goodies for sale were delicious and the atmosphere was wonderful. It was an amazing community effort, making such a valuable contribution to our village life."

Graffham Empire Movies

Bringing cinema to the village – and raising funds for our Empire Hall



An eccentric lottery winner who lives alone on a remote island brings his favourite musicians back together to play a private show just for him – but old tensions surface between the duo.

Critics called it 'a big-hearted, consoling hug of a movie', 'a touching and funny ode to love, loss, and redemption', 'heart-warming, emotionally stirring, and amiably amusing' and 'a quiet gem'.

Certificate 12A

99 minutes

Saturday 17 January

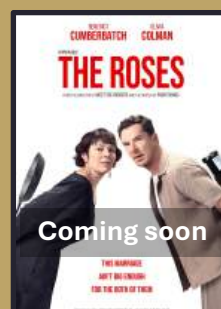
Empire Hall

Doors and bar open 7pm for 7.30pm start

Interval ice creams

Cocktails and mocktails

Tickets – £10 adults – from [ticketsource.co.uk/GEM](https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/GEM) or at the door



Who won what in the raffle



Graffham hamper	Jacqui, visiting Mathies
Bottles of Bouvet	Lewises
Box of crackers	Lanaghans
Bottle from Hennings	Karen Goodyear
Christmas wreath	Rowntrees
Pashmina scarf	Ann Rowney
Noel candle	Scarlett Thompson
Voucher from Bear	Jeeva
Candle and diffuser	Tom Richardson
Garden Group plant container	Sally Blunt
Fortnum & Mason hamper	Janine Pieterse
Picnic rug from Jo Ellen	Addisons
HUSKKE candle	Annabel Heaton
Signed Lucy Foley book	Diane Mitchell
Voucher from Allans	Stuart Mathie
Voucher from Faretti	Aparicios
Made by Andy garden stakes	Ann Brown
Slow Grown Farm charcuterie	Philip Trower
Hair box by Serena Jones	Deb, tel no supplied
Touch of Class massage	Dianne Hardcastle
RHS garden diary	Macqueens



A total of 1,255 raffle tickets were sold in the run-up to the fair and on the day itself.

Who won what in the Christmas Fair silent auction



Lot	Winning bid	Winner
Graffham Empire Movies tickets for two	£30	David Sanders
Curry party in your home cooked by Jeeva and Vasu	£200	Andrew Griffith
Riding at Westerlands	£35	Giles Sheehan
Case of wine	£40	Michael Blunt
Golf tuition from Seaford's pro Andrew Shakespear	£40	Steve Dover
Tickets to Seaford's Miss Saigon	£70	Nettie Lanaghan
A week in an Aviemore apartment	£365	Ann Brown
Cricket tuition with Seaford's Chris Adams	£100	Rich King
Canoe or paddleboard tuition	£60	Louise Hancock
Dogs Doing Better training	£25	Annabel Heaton
Exclusive use of a swimming pool	£31	Ian White
Golf and lunch for three at West Sussex Golf Club	£180	Chris Mackie
Lunch for two at The Woodcote	£125	Nettie Lanaghan
A Sue Hill painting of your pet or home	£140	Caroline Perry
Sunday lunch at The Three Moles	£45	Barbara Edge
Tennis coaching with Richard Hopp	£55	Caroline Perry
Simulated game shooting day for six	£1,350	Beetle Clay
Graffham Tennis Club family membership	£50	Brett Sacks
Two nights B&B at Foresters Arms	£220	Consalvis

Graffham Chronicles: A lovely grandmotherly lady

In her column this month, local historian Pauline Goodwin remembers a woman who played a central role in the life of the village – Mary Pescod.

I was delighted when Graffham Archivist Robin Brind recently found a wonderful article about Mary Pescod, a lovely lady (mentioned in passing in my feature in December's edition) whom I remember with great affection. She lived diagonally opposite me when I was a child at Hillside, in The Street.

The article about Mary that Robin uncovered was written by Don Skinner, a real Rustics (Graffham's long standing amdram group) trooper, who lived with wife Joan and son Andrew at The Potteries, near the campsite. Don was one of the many villagers on whom Mary made a significant impact.

Her great gift to the village was music. Indeed, in an era when villagers had only limited access to transport, home grown musical talent was the bedrock of entertainment here.

Music worked its magic on all-comers in the village, cementing the community together – and Mary was one of those who wielded a musical trowel to shape and bond participants. As she did with Don Skinner. She enabled him and many other total novices to walk the boards at the Empire Hall, providing entertainment of high quality for the village.

Mary was born in 1901 into the Goodacre family. Jesse, her father, was Schoolmaster at Kirdford School. When she was 14, her father was appointed Schoolmaster at Graffham School. He also became choirmaster and organist at St Giles. The musical association of the family with Graffham village life had begun.

So Mary grew up in Graffham and went on to meet and marry Jack Pescod, whose family had run Pescod Stores since the 1700s. Their first home was Suntrap, now called Mulberry Cottage, down The Street from their shop. Their daughter Anne was born there, and she too continued the family village musical tradition. She became another regular Rustics member – her name can be found in many of the programmes as she took soprano lead in several productions, on occasions singing opposite Don Skinner. Anne would travel down here from her home in London to take part in these productions and rehearsals.

Anne had married, becoming a Larkin, and had moved away from the family Graffham home when I knew her mother, Mary. The latter was one of those warm grandmotherly figures who would welcome village children into their homes. On

my visits, I was often accompanied by Penny Holland, daughter of John and Hilda Holland who took over as owners of Pescods Stores. Mary would entertain us with a whole range of activities from baking to looking at albums full of Woodbine cigarette cards.

Jack and Mary's subsequent move in the village produced another role for her. In the early 1940s, the Pescod family saw the need for an extended post office next to the shop. At this time, village

post offices had also become telephone exchanges and communication hubs for getting messages to villagers who did not have phones.

A house was built attached to this new post office – into which Jack and Mary moved. Jack became the village postmaster and Mary operated the telephone exchange, served at the counter and frequently pedalled around the village at night delivering telegrams and messages announcing births and deaths.

Following in her father's footsteps, she played the church organ every Sunday. In addition, her skills as a pianist were much in demand elsewhere in the village, especially as an accompanist, at which she excelled. She was enlisted in this role when Eddye Loring formed the Rustics in 1951 and went on to be associated with the ensemble for 21 years, attending rehearsals every Tuesday and Friday at 8.30pm. In keeping with her generosity of spirit, she always arrived with a large basket loaded down with biscuits and ingredients for coffee.

Don Skinner recalls how she and Jack tutored him, in their own home, to sing the harmonies "required when singing the duets and quartets". I recall watching Don perform on stage and am amazed that his excellent performances were achieved by someone with no musical background. It is true that the majority of his parts were comedy roles, but most were delivered in song. His performances were triumphs –

► *Continued on next page*



Mary (seated) in her long-run role as accompanist to the village's Rustics amdram troupe, at rehearsal with, from left: Eddye Loring, Vic Constable, Gwladys Davis and Francis Cruso.

► *Continued from previous page*

much like Mary's musical teaching skills. Don says: "Without the Pescod family's help, I would never have made the first night." Furthermore, he reminds us that he "was not the only one she helped in this way".

Mary's musical talents were in demand for many other village musical events held at the Empire Hall – Christmas carol singing, seasonal pageants, 'gang shows', after-dinner entertainment at Harvest Festival suppers and an assortment of musical productions with a range of talented individuals performing their turns. She was a gifted musician – but she never sought the limelight for herself and used her gifts to help others make the most of their talents to create the best performance possible.

Mary's husband Jack died in 1970. Some years later, Mary met an old childhood acquaintance from the days she lived in Kirdford. His name was Arthur Kirby. They wed, so she became Mary Kirby. They were married for six years until Arthur died. Mary then went to live with her daughter Anne in Surrey for some time before moving to a residential home where she entertained other residents by playing the piano for singsongs. She died just before her 97th birthday in 1998.

In May that year, a memorial service was held at St Giles for the late Mary Kirby, formerly Pescod, who had run the village post office and telephone exchange with her husband Jack for 40 years.

For much of those four decades, the shop and the post office were separate entities although both were run by members of the Pescod family.

It was only after John and Hilda Holland took ownership of the shop that the wall between the two units was knocked through and the two businesses became one. John Holland took on the postmaster role while running the shop with Hilda.

The sign Pescod Stores remained – but no Pescods worked or lived there anymore.



Pescods Stores pictured in the 1950s (left), with the telephone box to the north and the bakery just to the south, and (right) in the 1980s, long after Mary and Jack had run the shop, with, on the left, the old post office, with its separate entrance, and the extension where Mary and Jack had lived.

Bill's bygones: Bowie, Bertram, Blue Peter

A regular feature in which joint editor Bill Barrett looks back at what was happening in the village and the wider world this month in the past.

10 years ago – January 2016: After the death of villager Derek Williams, Philip Trower's address at his funeral is reproduced in Graffham Parish News together with Andrew Partridge's obituary. Graffham Parish Council express its regret at the closure of the Foresters which, its owners advise, is not for sale. *The Second Best Exotic Marigold Hotel* is screened by Graffham Empire Movies. Arlene Foster becomes the first woman to lead the Democratic Unionist Party and Northern Ireland's first female First Minister. Tim Peake is the first Briton to walk in space. New Year Honours are awarded to jockey AP McCoy (knighthood), actors Siân Phillips, Barbara Windsor (both DBE) and Idris Elba (OBE), and footballers Denis Law and Francis Lee (both CBE). Deaths of David Bowie (aged 69), Sir Terry Wogan (77), actor Alan Rickman (69), Ed "Stewpot" Stewart (*Junior Choice*, 74) and former Conservative minister Cecil Parkinson (84).

25 years ago – January 2001: Churchwardens Allan Findlay and Roger Mozley announce the appointment of Mark Gilbert as Rector of Graffham with Woolavington, and Chaplain to Seaford College. According to the 2001 census, the population of Graffham is 510, comprising 229 households (all "economically active") in an area of 1,181.24 hectares. Eric Kemp retires after 27 years as Bishop of Chichester. Wikipedia is founded. Apple launches iTunes. Sven-Göran Eriksson becomes manager of the England football team. New Year Honours go to Sussex-based astronomer Patrick Moore, actor Tom Courtenay and rower Steve Redgrave (all knighted), the latter's fellow Olympian Matthew Pinsent (CBE), broadcasters Floella Benjamin and Sue Lawley, and comedian Jim Davidson (all OBEs). Death of Colin Bertram (89), zoologist, of Ricardo's, Graffham.

50 years ago – January 1976: East Lavington Parish Council, which elects Mrs J Skinner as its Chairman, opts not to take up an invitation to join Sussex Rural Community Council on the basis the subscription cannot be justified in straitened times. It raises concern too about damage caused by heavy vehicles to the bridlepath between Upper Norwood Farm and the war memorial. Concorde makes its first commercial flight – from Heathrow to Bahrain. The second series of *It Ain't Half Hot, Mum* premieres on BBC1. In the New Year Honours list, actor/director Richard Attenborough is knighted and opera singer Janet Baker made a Dame. Death of Zhou Enlai, inaugural Premier of the People's Republic of China (77), author Agatha Christie (85), singer and activist Paul Robeson (77) and Jason, the Siamese (and first *Blue Peter*) cat (11).

Out and about: Backs against the wall

An occasional column by Jonathan Simons, amateur botanist and font of useless knowledge on so many things other people would rather avoid.

I always feel attracted to crumbly old walls and the plants that grow on them. In particular I always look for ferns. There are five species to be found in this part of West Sussex. They are all in decline due to habitat loss through rebuilding, repointing or weeding. If you have an old wall bristling with life that you want to 'tidy up' or replace, do spare a thought for these species.



Hart's-tongue Fern, *Asplenium scolopendrium*, is very common and instantly recognisable with its bright green single-bladed frond. It flourishes in shady alkaline spots but strangely also seems to cope with the conditions on dry exposed walls. If found on acid soils, such as those on our commons, it is invariably growing on buried bricks and mortar, a relic of human habitation.

Wall Rue, *Asplenium ruta-muraria*, is frequent but easy to pass over. The fronds are quite small, leathery bluish green and much divided. Although commonly found on limestone rocks abroad, you will only see it on walls around here.



Black Spleenwort, *Asplenium adiantum-nigrum*, is also frequent. It is generally bigger than Wall Rue with several shiny evergreen fronds. The stems of the fronds are black at the base hence the name. When I lived in the Horsham area, I only ever saw this on walls – whereas around Graffham I have seen it growing independently on sandy banks.

Maidenhair Spleenwort, *Asplenium trichomanes*, not to be confused with the non-native Maidenhair Fern, is perhaps the most attractive species. It is occasional on walls and quite easy to identify. It has a rosette of fronds lying flat on the surface with green pinnules (leaflets) on black stems. I saw this once on a sandy bank on the way to The Three Moles but it did not survive the summer of



two-way traffic scraping past. Sadly, it has also been lost from a wall of the house opposite Midhurst's old post office – repointed! However, it can be found somewhere on walls in all the towns and villages around here – in Graffham look near the War Memorial.

Rustyback, *Ceterach officinarum*, is almost ubiquitous in western parts of the UK but Graffham is on the edge of its range. It is my favourite of these species. It has simple lobed fronds with characteristic 'rusty' backs. Over the years I have been pleased to have been able to submit several new records for it to the county recorder. It seems



particularly attracted to railway brickwork and to have spread to us along these routes. One of my most amazing records is from Canada Barn near the Burgh up on the Downs above North Stoke. It seems about as remote as you can get but then it is within a kilometre of Amberley Station where there may be more Rustyback.

My other sites locally are in Cocking, Duncton Common, East Dean and Lodsworth. I was immensely proud of these records and thought myself something of an expert but was brought down to earth when I found one on a wall at Smoky House on Selham Common, near the old railway line, less than half a mile from where we live at Millburgh Hall. It just shows that 'botany begins at home'.

The first four ferns described above can all be seen on the walls of Graffham Churchyard. There are no plans as far as I know to repoint it – but better go up and check them out before someone changes their mind!



Graffham Garden Group New Year lunch
Wednesday 21 January 2025, 12.30pm for 1pm
Empire Hall
£19 a head, two courses including wine/beer, coffee and mints
Mains: Fish pie, beef lasagne or vegetable lasagne
Puds: Chocolate and pear pudding or lemon meringue pie
All members and partners warmly welcome
New memberships or renewals £2 on the day
Please book early to avoid disappointment by signing up in the village shop by 14 January. Payment in cash on the day.

Nature Notes: From the land of the ice and snow

A regular column by Sussex naturalist and wildlife guide Michael Blencowe, who can regularly be spotted in and around Graffham.

On soft, silent wings they came. Gliding over forests and skimming across the lowlands until the seemingly impassable dark sea stretched out ahead of them. But still they flew on.

The first signs of this Nordic invasion came one mid-morning in October. Observers stationed on the Norfolk coastline watched the first of them glide overhead. Another followed. Then another. By the time the autumn light was fading 46 had made it to England. Elsewhere along our eastern seaboard more silent invaders were arriving.

Short-eared owls are scarce winter visitors to Sussex. Swiss ornithologist Paul Geroudet described them as “nomads who camp where the table is laid”. Each winter these wandering diners are reported across our county and small parliaments (the collective term for owls, pub quizzers) linger around the meadows along our river valleys where they tucked in to a bountiful rodent buffet. In Sussex, we have



Work parties 2025-26

We are so fortunate to have the beautiful South Downs on our doorstep. Come and help maintain them for future generations to enjoy. Did I mention that delicious cakes, tea and coffee are provided?



Work parties meet at Graffham’s St Giles Church at 9.30am. You’ll need a pair of gloves, strong shoes or boots and warm clothing.

Please email jimkirke@hotmail.com if you plan to come along and say if you would like a ride up so that he can arrange transport.

	25 January	Sunday
7 February	Saturday	7 March
		Saturday

four breeding owl species. The most familiar is the tawny owl – whose hoots and twit-to-woos can be heard in and around our villages. The barn owl is that pale spectral spirit that may be glimpsed in the headlights along country lanes at night. The little owl was introduced here in the 19th century.



A winter visitor to Sussex, a short-eared owl is pictured here as it skims over a field, in this stunning photo by © Frank Hollis for the Sussex Wildlife Trust.

It eats worms. The long-eared owl is our rarest, most elusive species. So, when short-eared owls arrive in high numbers it really is something to get excited about. Our wet, rank meadows become popular destinations for owl obsessives with crowds gathering to observe these graceful daytime hunters.

And a hunting short-eared owl is a sight to behold. It's a large bird – with a one-metre wingspan – but agile. It twists, weaves and glides low over the ground before dropping hard on its prey. Its 'short ears' are just feather tufts. Its bright yellow eyes are set in a face which seems fixed in a permanent impatient, angry expression.

I led a walk in November to see these owls. Our group waited patiently. Our first sighting was high, distant and disappointing. But another hunting owl, seemingly oblivious to us, flew closer. And closer. And closer still. There is something eerie about the sound of 17 people not breathing – but as the owl passed by, we stood stunned and as silent as its wingbeats.

After hunting in the dimming afternoon, these short-eared owls will gather and roost, no doubt dreaming of Northern Lights, lemmings and the journey home.

- You can find details of Michael's upcoming events, wildlife sightings and adventures or book him for a wildlife survey of your garden or land at:



Need a helping hand...? Graffham with Woolavington's Parish Priest Discretionary Fund is available to help any parishioner in real financial need. Funded by donations to St Giles, it's already come to the rescue of multiple individuals and families in the village hit by the cost of living crisis. It could be the answer to your prayers. Contact Rev Vivien to find out more.



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Graffham Badminton Club

Ten members of Graffham's Badminton Club met for the annual bring and share supper and informal tournament in the Empire Hall, the venue for their regular Wednesday evening sessions. The pre-dinner doubles matches involved a rotation of players and opponents with each competitor's scores being tallied and averaged. Rohan Grace emerged as the individual winner after five unbeaten matches. Consumption of food and beverages seemed to affect performances after dinner, with the younger players seeming to cope better. Pairs were picked according to their individual results to ensure a fair competition and competed in a 'Challenger' format. Holding court to the bitter end were Louise Hancock and Matilda Shelton-Agar, seeing off some strong (albeit older!) pairs in the process.



Christina Federowicz and Philippa Sanders are ready to receive (far left) as Matilda Shelton-Agar serves before everyone sits down to their bring and share dinner.



Graffham Tennis Club

The damp autumn put paid to some of the league fixtures but the two results can be seen below. January sees the return As versus Bs fixture, with the B team looking to avenge October's 7-1 defeat.



Graffham Tennis Club East Hants results

23 Nov	Lost 7-1	Mixed Doubles B team	Div 2	vs Fernhurst A
25 Nov	Lost 8-0	Mixed Doubles A team	Div 2	vs Alton A

Upcoming home fixtures:

Graffham Tennis Club January home fixtures

4 Jan	1.15pm	Mixed Doubles	Div 2	Graffham B vs Fernhurst A
18 Jan	1.15pm	Mixed Doubles	Div 2	Graffham A vs Graffham B



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a pattern of worship from the Taizé Community*

Foodbank's 'most urgent' shopping list updated

Chichester Foodbank, which also covers Petworth and its surrounding villages, has updated its list of most needed items. You can contribute to the foodbank at its collection points in All Saints Chapel, directly opposite Graffham Village Shop, or at St Giles Church. Items currently most wanted include:



- Biscuits and treats.
- Instant coffee.
- Hot chocolate.
- Jam, honey, spreads.
- Laundry detergent.
- Longlife milk.
- Longlife juice.
- Nappies size 4.
- Rice pudding/custard.
- Shampoo, conditioner.
- Tinned fish.
- Tinned meat, stews etc.
- Tinned vegetables.
- Toilet roll.
- Washing up liquid.

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What's on at our village church and chapel

- All residents and visitors are welcome to all services.
- St Giles Church is at the far south end of Graffham Street, near the Downs.
- All Saints' Chapel is opposite Graffham Village Shop. Both are open daily.
- See stgilesgraffham.org or Facebook's @stgilesgraffham for any changes
- Bellringing practice is every Tuesday at 7.30pm (except on 30 December)

December				
21	Sun	10.30am	Parish Eucharist Advent 4	St Giles Church
		6pm	Communal carolling	Foresters Arms
23	Tue	9.30am	Morning Prayer followed by Pilgrims	All Saints Chapel
24	Wed	4pm	Crib Service	St Giles Church
		7pm	Christmas Eve Candlelit Eucharist	St Giles Church
25	Thu	10.30am	Christmas Day Eucharist	St Giles Church
28	Sun	10.30am	Parish Eucharist	All Saints Chapel
January				
3	Sat	9.30am	Come and Sing	St Giles Church
4	Sun	10.30am	Parish Eucharist Epiphany <i>Reading: Isaiah 60.1-6</i>	St Giles Church
6	Tues	9.30am	Morning Prayer followed by Pilgrims	All Saints Chapel
7	Wed	6pm	PCC Vision Meeting	Pavilion
8	Thu	10am	Graffham Infant School Assembly	St Giles Church
11	Sun	10.30am	Parish Eucharist with Brother John <i>Readings: Isaiah 42.1-9; Acts 10.34-43</i>	St Giles Church
13	Tue	9.30am	Morning Prayer followed by Pilgrims	St Giles Church
		2.30pm	PCC Community Meeting	tbc
14	Wed	12.30pm	Food with Friends	The Rectory
15	Thu	2.30pm	PCC Worship Meeting	Occam Cottage
		8am	BCP Holy Communion	St Giles Church
18	Sun	10.30am	Church Family Eucharist with Baptism of Matilda Whitfield <i>Reading: 1 Corinthians 1.1-9</i>	St Giles Church
		3pm	PACT Christian Unity Service	St Mary's Petworth
19	Mon	12.30pm	PACT Unity Prayers and soup lunch	Leconfield Hall
20	Tue	9.30am	Morning Prayer followed by Pilgrims	All Saints Chapel
		12.30pm	PACT Unity Prayers and soup lunch	Foresters Arms
21	Wed	12.30pm	PACT Unity Prayers and soup lunch	Tillington
22	Thurs	10am	Graffham Infant School Assembly	St Giles Church
		2.30pm	Messy Church	Empire Hall
25	Sun	10.30am	Parish Eucharist. <i>Reading: Acts 9.1-22</i>	St Giles Church
		6.30pm	Taizé Service of song and prayer	All Saints Chapel
27	Tue		No Morning Prayer or Pilgrims	

Christian Unity Week

Petworth Area Churches Together (PACT) holds its annual Christian Unity week from Sunday 18 January, starting with a service at the town's St Mary's Church that day at 3pm.

That is followed by three days of lunchtime talks with a soup and a bread roll, from 12.30pm for an hour, beginning on Monday 19 January back at Petworth, this time in the Leconfield Hall. Then its our turn, here in Graffham, at the Foresters Arms, on Tuesday 20 January. Finally on the Wednesday it's time for Tillington's All Hallows Church.

No need to book. All welcome.



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Other denominations locally

Methodist: Midhurst. *Minister:* David Muskett *Tel:* 01730 233436. *email:* superintendent@esanddcircuit.org.uk. *Web:* midhurstmethodist.com *Worship:* Sundays 10.00am, and Café Church 1st and 3rd Wednesdays 10.30am.

Roman Catholic: The Catholic Churches of Saints Anthony and George, Dunton, The Divine Motherhood and St Francis of Assisi, Midhurst, and The Sacred Heart, Petworth. *email:* petworth.abdiocese.org.uk. *Tel:* 01798 342169. *Web:* www.petworthcatholic.org

Mass					
Sun	8am	Dunton	Thu	9.30am	Petworth
	9.30am	Midhurst		12noon	Midhurst Convent
	11am	Petworth		6.30pm	Petworth
Tue	10.30am	Petworth	Fri	9.30am	Midhurst
Wed	9.30am	Midhurst		5.30pm	Petworth

Society of Friends (Quakers): St Anne's Community Centre, St Anne's Hill, Midhurst, GU29 9NN. *Web:* sussexwestquakers.org.uk *Meetings:* 2nd and 4th Sundays 10.30am.

RINGING and SINGING: To join Graffham's bellringers or occasional choir, contact Revd Vivien on 01798 867199 or at

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What's on in and around the village

For all Christmas services, see page 3. For all other church events, see page 45.

For weekly events, see page 51.

To see what's on in the village, locally and further afield for a full year ahead, see graffham-pc.gov.uk/graffham-village-diary

December				
20	Sat	9am-1pm	Petworth Farmers Market	Petworth
		6pm	Leconfield Singers Christmas concert	St Mary's Petworth
		7.30pm	Traditional Christmas Mummers Play	Three Moles
21	Sun		Shortest day of the year	
		9.45am	Graffham Down Trust work party (see p40)	Meet at St Giles
		6pm	Communal carol singing	Foresters Arms
24	Wed	4pm	Crib service – tinsel, crowns and tea towels welcome!	St Giles
		evening	Christmas Eve fondue	Foresters Arms
		7pm	Candlelit Christmas Eve Eucharist	St Giles
25	Thu		Christmas Day	
		10.30am	Christmas Day Family Service	St Giles
		12noon-3pm	Open for drinks	Foresters Arms
		11am-1pm	Open	The Three Moles
26	Fri		Boxing Day	
		12noon-4pm	Open for drinks and ploughman's buffet	Foresters Arms
28	Sun	Lunchtime	Vintage tractor run with BBQ	Three Moles
		7-10pm	Blues Night	Three Moles
31	Wed		New Year's Eve	
		evening	New Year's Eve Hootananny party	Foresters Arms
		5pm-1am	Open till late	Three Moles
January				
1	Thu	New Year's Day bank holiday		
4	Sun	4-6pm	Burn's Night dancing practice	Empire Hall
5	Mon	WSCC schools and Seaford College terms start – but Graffham and Duncton Schools and Midhurst Rother College INSET days		
6	Tue		Epiphany	
			Midhurst Rother College INSET day	
7	Wed		PCC 'vision' meeting	The Rectory
		6.30pm	Graffham Parish Council meeting	Empire Hall
8	Thu	2.30pm	Thursday Club talk	Empire Hall

11	Sun	4-6pm	Burn's Night dancing practice	Empire Hall
		7pm	Folk music night	Three Moles
15	Thu		Deadline for applications to enrol in September at Graftham Infant School	
17	Sat	7pm	Graftham Empire Movies presents <i>The Ballad of Wallis Island</i> (See page 32)	Empire Hall
18	Sun	4-6pm	Burn's Night dancing practice	Empire Hall
19	Mon	6.15pm	East Lavington Parish Council meeting	Seaford College
21	Wed	12.30pm	Graftham Garden Group new year lunch	Empire Hall
		6.30pm	PCC meeting	The Rectory
24	Sat	9am-1pm	Petworth Farmers Market	Petworth
		evening	Burns Night reeling and dinner (see p18)	Empire Hall
		7.45pm	Petworth Sessions presents Dominie Hooper with support Ruby Taylor	Leconfield Hall, Petworth
25	Sun	9.45am	Graftham Down Trust work party (see p40)	Meet at St Giles
			<i>Burns Night</i>	
		7-10pm	Blues Night	Three Moles
28	Wed	12.30pm	Lunch Club ²	Empire Hall
31	Sat	10-11am	Community garden work party	War Memorial

February

3	Tue	10.45am	Arts Society of Midhurst talk on <i>The Men Who Made Menswear</i>	Midhurst Methodist Hall
		2pm	Arts Society of West Sussex talk	Fittleworth Village Hall
5	Thu	1-110am	UKHarvest surplus food market	Sylvia Beaufoy, Petw'h
		afternoon	Bridge tea in aid of St Giles (see page 30)	Empire Hall
7	Sat	9.30am	Graftham Down Trust work party (see p40)	Meet at St Giles
			Six Nations rugby- England vs Wales	Twickenham
8	Sun	7pm	Folk music night	Three Moles
12	Thu	2.30pm	Thursday Club	Empire Hall
13	Fri		Seaford College half-term (to 22 Feb)	Seaford College
			Midhurst Rother College closed	
14	Sat		<i>Valentine's Day</i>	
			Six Nations rugby Scotland vs England	Murrayfield
16	Mon		WSCC schools half term (till 20 Feb)	
17	Tue		<i>Shrove Tuesday</i>	
25	Wed	12.30pm	Lunch Club ²	Empire Hall

¹**Great Feet foot health professional:** Available to Graftham Health Support Association members.

²**Graftham Lunch Club** meets on the fourth Wednesday of the month at 12.30pm for 12.45pm for a home cooked two-course meal and coffee, at £10 a head. Please book via Sarah on 01798 867567.

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Regular weekly activities (for notes, how to book, etc, see below)

Mondays	9-10am	Fitflows Fitness ¹	Empire Hall
	Daytime-evening	Osteopath ²	Empire Hall
	6pm in summer	Bowls Club practices – all welcome	Rec
Tuesdays	8.30am-12noon	Post Office	Empire Hall
	9-11am	Breakfast served	Three Moles
	Daytime-evening	Osteopath ²	Empire Hall
	7.30pm	Bell ringing practice – newcomers welcome	St Giles
Wednesdays	9-10am	Yoga ⁴	Empire Hall
	10.15-11.30am	Teddy Time toddler group ⁵	Pavilion
	11.15am-12noon	Pilates ⁶	Empire Hall
	1.45-2.45pm	Rusty Racquets adults tennis coaching ⁷	Rec
	5pm	Nina's Core to Floor ³	Westerlands
	7-8.30pm	Badminton ⁸ – all welcome	Empire Hall
	Daytime-evening	Osteopath ²	Empire Hall
Thursdays	Daytime-evening	Osteopath ²	Empire Hall
	10.45-11.45am	Ease Into Exercise ⁹	Empire Hall
	6-7.15pm	Yoga ⁴	Empire Hall
Fridays	9-10.15am	Yoga ⁴	Empire Hall
	9am-3pm	Physiotherapy clinic ¹⁰	Empire Hall
	Evenings	Tennis Club evenings	Pavilion
Saturdays	8.30am	Boxfit with Nina ³	Westerlands
	9-10.15am	Yoga ⁴	Empire Hall
	10am	Nina's Core to Floor ³	Westerlands
	10.30am	Yoga with Kate ³	Westerlands
	9am-3pm	Physiotherapy clinic ¹⁰	Empire Hall
Sundays	5pm	Pickleball ¹¹	Empire Hall
	5pm	Casual football ¹²	Rec

Empire Hall: For booking and contact details, see Directory, inside back cover.

¹**Fitflows Fitness:** Contact Susie Bush 07870 219956.

²**Osteopath:** Bookings required. To make an appointment, for daytime or early evening, contact Anna Shawcross on 01798 303557 or see www.annashawcross.co.uk

³**For all Westerlands events:** Book online at www.westerlands.com/experiences/wild-fit

⁴**Yoga:** Deborah Albon on 07790 367009.

⁵**Teddy Time:** No charge. All welcome. Just come along.

⁶**Pilates:** Contact Nicky Capes on 07990 517858 or 01730 812297.

⁷**Rusty Racquets:** Contact Richard Hopp at richard@hoppcoaching.co.uk, on 07904 069457.

⁸**Badminton:** Contact Christina Federowicz on 07900 055574. All welcome.

⁹**Ease Into Exercise:** Contact Susie Bush 07870 219956.

¹⁰**Physiotherapy:** Contact Serena Cooper on 07884 445983 or at serenacooper.physiotherapy@outlook.com.

¹¹**Pickleball:** Contact Beanie Bradley on 07500 080417.

¹²**Casual Football:** Contact Lucas Thornley on 07767 721997.

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Quiz answers (from page 27) 1 Woolavington. 2 [a] high jump. 3 There weren't any (the new King Edward VII had just announced a list on his birthday in November 1901 – they were however reinstated in 1903. They were deemed inappropriate in 1940 with the outbreak of war but were reinstated in 1941). 4 Justin Welby. 5 [b] *Utopia*. 6 Dentures. 7 [a] Parasocial. 8 *Bridgerton*. 9 *Blackadder*. 10 [a] 864,000.

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Did you know...? You can raise funds for St Giles Church whenever you shop online – and zero cost to you. To find out how simple it is, just go to stgilesgraffham.org/shopping-online

Directory: Useful local contact info

DOCTORS	Petworth Surgery	01798 342248
	Midhurst Riverbank Medical Centre	01730 812121
	Haslemere Minor Injuries Unit	01483 782334
DEFIBRILLATORS	Empire Hall temporarily out of use	Code is C240Z
	On outside wall of Pavilion	Code is C159X
	In phone box outside Pescods	Code is also C159X
	In phone box opposite The Three Moles	No code needed
FLOOD ALERT for Lods Bridge	To check river level	bit.ly/lodsbridge
POLICE	In emergency	999
	Non-emergency	101@sussex.pnn.police.uk 101
BURST WATER MAINS	Southern Water	0800 820 999
POWER CUTS	Scottish & Southern Electric	105 or 0800 0727 282
99 FLEX BUS	Linking Graffham with Chichester, Petworth etc	Book via Ring Pingo app 01243 858854
All Saints Chapel Trust	Chairman Clive Rowntree	01798 867536
Badminton	Christina Federowicz	07900 055574
Bees / Swarms	Wisboro' Green B'keepers	Tom Moore 07984 606214/01798 343470
	Local beekeeper	Murray West evenings 01798 867048
Chichester District Council		01243 534734
District Councillor	John Cross	jcross@chichester.gov.uk 07592 307027
Dog Warden	Office hours/Emergency	01243 534734/01243 785339
Citizens Advice Bureau		03448 487969
East Lavington Parish Council	Chairman Simon Longman	simon.longman@eastlavington-pc.uk
	Clerk Amy Harte	07889 979820 eastlavingtonpc@gmail.com
Empire Hall		empirehall.org.uk
Bookings	Anna Shawcross	bookings.empirehall@gmail.com 07971 204287
	Chairman	Ollie Boulton 07584 625059
	Maintenance	Tom Richardson 07932 865154
	Treasurer	Carole Sargent 01798 344790
	Secretary	Jonathan Simons 01798 867689
Foodbank	info@chichester.foodbank.org.uk	01243 773687
Foresters Arms	forestersarmsgraffham.com	01798 867386
Graffham Archive	Robin Brind	graffhamarchive@outlook.com 01798 867619
Graffham Bellringers	Tower Captain	Howard Pescott 01798 867029
Graffham Bowls Club	Secretary	Liz Pegram 01798 867770
Graffham Down Trust	Chairman	Jim Kirke 01798 867026
Graffham Garden Group		Carole Kirke 01798 867026
Graff'm Health Support Assc	Chairman	Sarah Lydiard-Wilson 01798 867567
	Membership	Yvonne Churchward 07808 781510
	Transport	07391 802541
	Prescription collection	Mary Taylor mkt.bythedowns@gmail.com
	Loan of equipment	Karin Skanberg 07920 091014
Graffham Lunch Club	Sarah Lydiard-Wilson	01798 867567
Graffham Nursery	School Office	01798 867324

Graffham Parish Council	Chairman	Gillian Charlesworth	gcharlesworth@graftam-pc.gov.uk
	Clerk	Amy Harte	clerk@graftam-pc.gov.uk
Graffham Parish News	Editorial and circulation:	editor.graftamparishnews@gmail.com	
	Advertising:	ads.graftamparishnews@gmail.com	
		See also inside front cover	
Graffham with Woolavington Parochial Church Council	Priest-in-Charge	Rev Vivien Turner	stgilesgraftam.org 01798 867199 hallo@stgilesgraftam.org
	Churchwardens	Ginny Barrett Cindy Bradley	01798 867113 07787 516522
	Treasurer	Dinah Lamming	graftampctreasurer@gmail.com
Graffham Rec Committee	Chairman	John Bracey	01798 867760
	Bookings Sec	Sonya Gillespie	graftamrecpavilion@gmail.com
Graffham Tennis Club	Chairman	Simon Longman	01798 867317
	Secretary	David Sparkes	07958 486211
	Coaching	Emma Amin	01798 867063
Graffham Village Shop		Jeeva and Vasu	01798 867700 graftamvillageshop.co.uk
Graffham Village Shop Assoc	Chairman	Steve Dover	07770 499223
	Treasurer	Andy Jones	andy.jones@graftam.net
	Secretary	Ros Britton	rosalind.britton@btinternet.com
Katherine Maud Guillod Fund	c/o Graffham PC Clerk		graftampc@gmx.co.uk
Lavington Estate	info@lavingtonstud.co.uk		01798 867275
Lavington Park Federation			graftamanddunton.w-sussex.sch.uk
	Graffham CE Infant School		01798 867324
	Dunton CE Junior School		01798 342402
	Friends of Graffham & Dunton Schools		01798 867324
Long Bostle Downland Soc	Gillian Brandt		01798 867276
MP Arundel & South Downs	Andrew Griffith	andrew.griffith.mp@parliament.uk	
Midhurst & Petworth Observer			01243 534163
National Trust (Lavington Common)			01730 816638
Neighbourhood Watch	Michael Crickmay		01798 867486
Osteopath	Anna Shawcross		01798 867523
Oil Buying Syndicate	Derek Bradnum	derekbradnum@gmail.com	
Pilates at Empire Hall	Nicky Capes		07990 517858
Potholes	To report a pothole or other road problem online	bit.ly/report-potholes-west-sussex	
Seaford College			01798 867392
Three Moles	Ollie and Tom	thethreemoles.com	01798 861303
Thursday Club	Secretary	Diane Bellis	01798 867444
West Sussex County Council	General enquiries		01243 777100
	County Councillor	Tom Richardson	07463 785039
The Woodcote (formerly White Horse)	thewoodcote.com		01798 867331
Yoga at Empire Hall	Deborah Albon		07790 367009



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**Please get in touch with our team in
Midhurst to find out more**

**01730 812357 midhurst@jackson-stops.co.uk
Market Square, Midhurst, West Sussex, GU29 9NJ**