



THE SKYLARK

Longstowe Parish Newsletter

December 2024



What's On in and around Longstowe

Date/Time	Event	Location
Sun 8 th Dec 3pm	Carol Concert	Parish Church
Thus 19 th Dec 7:30pm	Parish Council Meeting	Village Hall
Wed 25 th Dec 10:30am	Christmas Morning Service	Parish Church
Tues 25 th Feb 7:30pm	History Society meeting	Village Hall
Sun 12 th Jan 10:30am	Holy Communion	Parish Church
Sun 26 th Jan 9:30am	Morning Prayer	Parish Church
Sun 9 th Feb 9:30am	Holy Communion	Parish Church
Sun 23 rd Feb 9:30am	Morning Prayer	Parish Church
Sun 9 th Mar 9:30am	Holy Communion	Parish Church
Sun 23 rd Mar 9:30am	Morning Prayer	Parish Church

Parish Council Update

XEC Covid variant

As we navigate the emergence of the latest XEC Covid variant, it's important to remain vigilant and take proactive measures to protect ourselves and our community. Here are key points to keep in mind:

Symptoms to Watch For

The symptoms of the XEC variant are similar to those of cold or flu and may include:

- High temperature
- Aches
- Tiredness
- Cough
- Sore throat

Vaccination Drive

A major vaccination campaign started in October, targeting:

- Adults aged 65 and over
- Residents of care homes for older adults
- Individuals with clinical risk factors
- Some frontline workers

We encourage all eligible individuals to get vaccinated to enhance community immunity.

Testing

Covid test kits are available for purchase at high street and online chemists. If you experience symptoms, please test promptly.

Contagious Period

Individuals may be contagious for:

- 1-2 days before symptoms appear
- 8-10 days from the onset of symptoms

Precautionary Measures

To help prevent the spread of infection, please adhere to the following precautions:

- Avoid close contact with anyone who is sick.
- Wear a mask in crowded indoor spaces.
- Stay up to date with vaccinations.
- Practice good hygiene—wash hands regularly and use hand sanitiser.

Support for the Community

If you are feeling unwell and need assistance with shopping or collecting prescriptions, please do not

hesitate to reach out to a member of the Parish Council. We are here to support one another during this time.

Parish Clerk - longstowepc.clerk@hotmail.com
Alternatively, you can reach out to Chair of the Parish Council Barbara Cooper on 07803903047
bcconfidential@caw.ac.uk

Neighbourhood Plan

Following the Survey of residents' opinions (reported in the September 2023 issue of *Skylark*), the Steering Group has continued to work on the development of a Neighbourhood Plan for Longstowe.

The crucial first step in the process was for Longstowe to be designated by South Cambs District Council as a Neighbourhood Plan Area: that was confirmed in August. That process required the definition of a geographical area to be covered by the Plan. Although the Survey had included residents on the Old North Road and Fox Road that form part of Bourn, in the end Bourn and Longstowe Councils decided to pursue independent Plans for their respective villages, whilst continuing to collaborate on matters of mutual interest.

Alongside the designation process, the Steering Group has been conducting initial work on the two building blocks of the Plan – the development of a set of Planning Policies and the establishment of a robust evidence base for those policies. Now that designation has been confirmed, work on both elements will accelerate.

The evidence that we require covers a wide range of matters relating to the village including population trends, land use, employment and business, housing (availability and market), transport links, built heritage and village design, and community facilities. Some of this material can be derived from public sources, but some will require specific research: part of that research may be undertaken by consultants employed to support the planning process but part may require further questionnaires to residents.

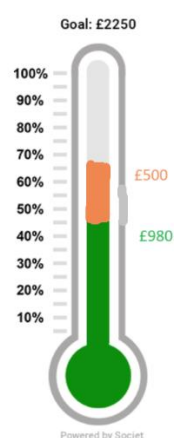
The Planning Policies have to be drafted within the framework of national and local planning requirements. Both of those are in a state of flux, especially following the change of Government in July. The focus of the Group's activity is, obviously, on the preferences and concerns expressed by residents in the Survey. Housing was a high priority in those responses (both in its availability and in its impact on the village environment) and, within that, the desire for affordable housing was particularly important.

To improve our understanding of that complex topic, we had a very useful tutorial provided by John Crowther and a colleague who have deep experience of this market. Technically, affordable housing comprises any housing that is available at a price lower than the open market price. Since the 1980s, new affordable housing has been provided primarily through housing associations and community-led projects, using a mixture of rental and shared ownership structures. Whilst it is true to say that most housing associations would look at developments larger than the scale envisaged by the majority of Survey respondents, there are still a number of smaller associations who might be interested in a development on a scale acceptable to respondents. The prospect of such developments is a matter that the Group will continue to explore as it prepares its Plan proposals.

When we have reached a point at which there are meaningful issues to discuss with residents, we will put those issues before you. In the meantime, we will continue to keep you informed about our activities through *Skylark* and, if anyone wishes to raise any matter relating to the Plan, please contact us through the Parish Clerk. Likewise, if anyone would like to become more involved in the development of the Plan through joining the Steering Group, you would be most welcome: please contact the Parish Clerk
Parish Clerk - longstowepc.clerk@hotmail.com.

Village Sign Revitalised – Can You Help?

We are delighted to share that the Longstowe village



sign has been given a fresh lease of life with a touch of TLC! This revitalisation project celebrates our village's heritage and ensures the sign remains a proud symbol for years to come.

To help fund this work, we have applied for a Community Chest Grant and are hoping to receive some funds from the Longstowe Millennium Fund. However, we still need to raise additional funds to cover the full cost of the project.

If you would like to contribute and support this community effort, please contact the Parish Clerk at longstowepc.clerk@hotmail.com. Every little bit helps, and your generosity will make a big difference! £47 was raised by a pop-up raffle and donations at the Christmas Fair.

Thank you for helping to preserve our village's charm and legacy.

Friends of Longstowe Village Hall

Longstowe Link

The Longstowe Link email service is up and running and many people have already joined and are getting updates of events happening in the Village Hall.

If you'd like to join this service, which aims primarily to send timely notices about events etc. at the Village Hall, especially those that haven't made it into Skylark, please contact Jane Bowden:

jane.bowden@icloud.com.

Christmas Fair



Despite the weather, the Christmas Fair was a great success with a dozen stalls selling a variety of locally made good quality Christmas presents. While it wasn't advertised as far afield as it could have been, the car park was full and cars spilled over onto the road. Shoppers had a busy time buying Christmas presents and enjoying the variety of cakes, mulled wine, teas and coffees on offer from the kitchen. Over £230 was raised towards the Village Hall refurbishment. If you missed it this year, look out next Christmas for the next Fair with something for everyone.

Longstowe History Society

DO JOIN US. There are five talks a year, £3 per talk, or membership for £10 a year. We have refreshments (which are free!) at 7.30 pm and the talks begin at 8.00 pm

Coming up on 29th April is a talk on the History of the American Cemetery followed by a guided tour of the Cemetery on Monday 12th May.

LONGSTOWE HISTORY SOCIETY



King James 1st's Royston Palace

King James I's royal palace at Royston was once described as "one of the most unlikely and unusual royal residences in the history of the monarchy". Discover more about the palace buildings and the significant events that happened in Royston during James' reign in this fascinating talk from Royston Museum.

illustrated talk by

Sophie Riches (Curator, Royston Museum)

Tuesday, 25th February 2025, 8pm

LONGSTOWE VILLAGE HALL

**Admission: £3 (members free)
Everyone Welcome**

The Village Hall

Longstowe Village Hall Hire Charges

Standard Hourly Rate £16

All lettings **must be booked in advance** and terminate by midnight. Maximum of 135 people.

NB: Licensable events and all events where alcohol is to be consumed, must be notified to the Booking Clerk at the time of booking.

For booking and further details, contact:

Christine Morton 07747 307833

email: longstowevillagehall@proton.me

The Village Hall refurbishment is due to start in the New Year to replace the water heating system, improve the insulation in the toilets and replace the toilet and showers furniture. Once this has been done we can be proud of hiring out our Village Hall and not being apologetic about the state of the toilets.

The Longstowe Church PCC (Parochial Church Council)

Christmas should be the time to celebrate the simplicities in life: gathering with Family and meeting with old friends and remembering those who are no longer with us.

More often than not December can feel like chaos – lots of social events, Christmas presents to buy, never-ending to-do lists and the pressure to create the perfect Christmas. But do you know in the midst of this chaos, our church can offer an opportunity to find peace during this busy time.

Why not come and join us for this year's Carol Service on Sunday 8th December at 3pm when we will be joined by the Papworth Team Community Choir? A rendition of the world-famous carol, Silent Night: "Silent Night! Holy Night! All is calm, all is bright..." Could be just the thing for you?

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY:

EVENTS & SERVICES

3pm 8th December, Carols

10.30am Christmas Day, Holy Communion.

10:30am 12th December, Holy Communion

9:30am 26th January, Morning Prayer

9:30am 9th February, Holy Communion

9:30am 23rd February, Morning Prayer

9:30am 9th March, Holy Communion

9:30am 23rd March, Morning Prayer

Our late Harvest Supper was a fun evening and although we welcomed fewer guests than normal it was lovely. A quick game of Heads & Tails between Mains and Puddings was just what the doctor ordered to aid digestion! A huge thank you to everyone who came and for their wonderful donations of food and raffle prizes. As a result we raised well over £320 which will go to the fabric fund for the church. Community events such as the Supper help to ensure no one is forgotten and as Yates says : "There are no strangers here, only friends you haven't yet met"



The Journey of the Magi

Godfrey Rust

Coming as they did from the first century, they had a few problems with London traffic and were seriously misled by signs to the Angel and King's Cross.

Inquiring diligently about the star, they were referred to Professor Brian Cox, who thought it was amazing while smiling in a constant and strangely unsettling way.

In Harrods the camels made a mess all over Soft Furnishings.

On the Underground commuters glared at No Smoking signs as incense wafted gently through the carriages,

and when the great day came they saw the entire voting population slumped on sofas by four o'clock, rendered senseless by too much dead poultry and the Queen,

while over Liberty's and Hamley's the flickering angels sang Glory to God in the High St

and they found him, with the inns full up once more, in the old familiar place, bringing their unregarded gifts to the empty stable of the human heart where the infant Christ is born again and again.

Longstowe PCC officers:

Dr Sheena McRae: Church Warden

Mr Nicholas Jenkins: Treasurer

Other members of the PCC: Mrs Maddy Crowther, Mr Stephen Owen, Mr Peter White.

For day-to-day communication about the Church in Longstowe please continue to contact Maddy Crowther on 01954 718303.

Albert Hemmins Obituary

It is with great sadness that we share the news of the passing of Albert Hemmins, a cherished member of our community. Albert was a true family man, well-liked by all who knew him, and a shining example of hard work and kindness. He was known for always having a smile on his face, a warmth that brightened the lives of those around him.

Albert's presence will be deeply missed, not only by the residents of Longstowe but also by many within the farming community, where his dedication and spirit left a lasting impact. Albert was head gardener at Longstowe Hall for over 50 years where he was highly skilled in the care of the herbaceous borders, the rose garden, the kitchen garden and the woodlands over the Estate.

Our heartfelt condolences go out to his beloved wife Debbie, his son Stuart, daughter Charlotte, and his adored grandchildren. During this difficult time, our

thoughts and prayers are with them and all who were fortunate enough to know Albert. He will always be remembered with fondness and respect by all who had the privilege of crossing his path.

His funeral was held on Friday 29th November in Longstowe Parish Church.

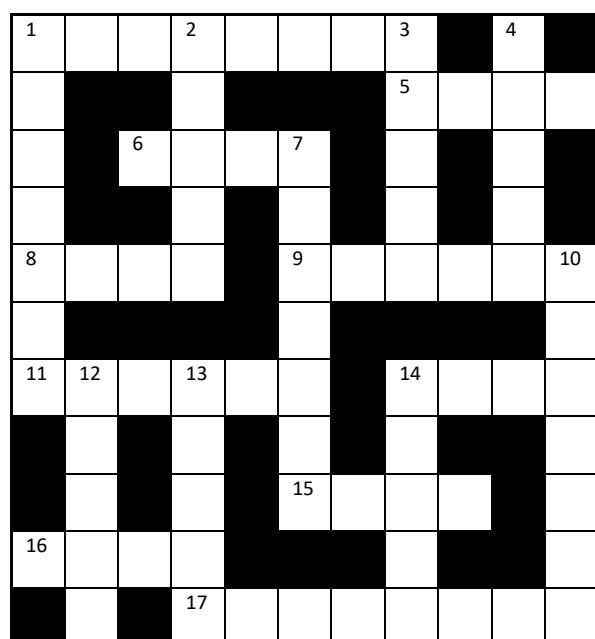
Longstowe Post Office

Opening times: Monday, Wednesday and Thursday 9:00–12:30 for the sale of stamps, issue of pensions, posting letters and small parcels, obtaining an account balance and issuing cash via debit card. Collection point for some parcels. **Use it or lose it!**

Here are the collection times for our local mailboxes:

- High St, opposite to our Post Office, 4.00 p.m. weekdays, Saturday 10.45 a.m.
- High St, outside Reading Room, 9.00 a.m., weekdays, Saturday 7.00 a.m.
- Fox Rd, (Close to A1198 junction), 9.00 a.m. weekdays, Saturday 7.00 a.m.

Crossword



Across

1. Good at painting (8)
5. Den (4)
6. The Kinks hit (4)
8. Nimble (4)
9. Adventurous (6)
11. Calculate (6)
14. Extinct bird (4)

Down

1. Consultant
2. Tusk substance (5)
3. Transparent (5)
4. US buffalo (5)
7. Postscripts (7)
10. Farewell (7)
12. Each one (5)

15. Mimicked (4)
13. Military cloth (5)
16. Laborious hike (4)
14. Be in fear of (5)
17. Flood, overwhelm (8)

Library Services

Get more from your library

Mobile Library :- Rushbrook Close, Longstowe , 3rd Friday of the month 9:40 am - 10:15 am

The Library Presents has been bringing arts activities to Cambridgeshire Libraries since 2018, thanks to funding from Arts Council England. Full details of the program, along with booking information can also be found at www.library.live/the-library-presents

If you would like to receive a hard copy of the brochure please email thelibrarypresents@cambridgeshire.gov.uk.

East West Rail Non-Statutory Consultation is now live

We are committed to creating as many opportunities as possible for people to participate and share their views during the consultation which runs from the 14 November 2024 – 24 January 2025. We will be holding events across the whole line of route as well as providing 3 online webinars and look forward to welcoming you over the coming weeks.

The in-person events will run from 2pm - 7pm on weekdays and 12pm - 5pm at weekends. The dates can be found below. Further details are available on our [Community Hub](#).

Tuesday 3 December - Cambridge Belfry Hotel, Cambourne

Tuesday 7 January - St Neots Football Club, St Neots

Friday 10 January - Comberton Village Hall, Comberton

Saturday 18 January - The Clayton Hotel, Cambridge

The virtual webinars are as follow

Wednesday 20 November - 2.30pm - 4.30pm [Join here](#)

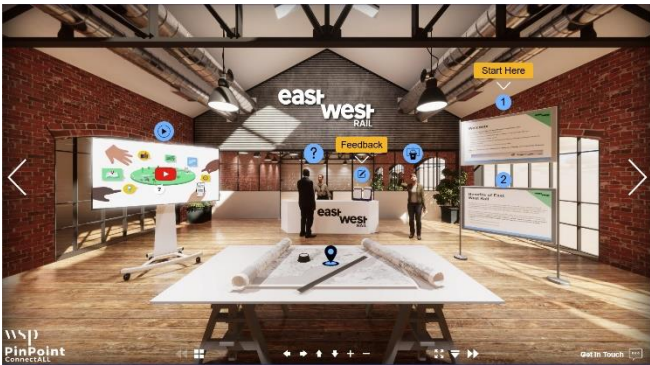
Tuesday 10 December - 6pm - 8pm [Join here](#)

Thursday 9 January - 10am - 12pm [Join here](#)

Virtual consultation room

We realise not everyone can attend an online or in-person event so we have created a virtual consultation room. A range of resources will also be

available to ensure that all the information is easily accessible by communities across the whole route



[Visit our virtual consultation room](#)

For more information about the consultation and how to get involved, including details of events near you, please visit our [consultation page](#)

BT’s move to digital voice technology and the effect on rural dwellers

We’ve been concerned for some time about the move by BT and other providers to replace the existing copper wire telephone system with digital voice technology (also known as Voice over Internet Protocol – VoIP). BT originally planned for the transition to be completed by December 2025. However, national concern and campaigning, particularly regarding the negative impacts of the switch-over on the elderly and vulnerable, has seen this deadline re-set to end-January 2027. Age UK provides detailed information about the changes – see <https://www.ageuk.org.uk/information-advice/money-legal/consumer-issues/changes-to-landline-telephones/>

Our concerns include the following, most of which will increase risks to people in rural areas where there is no or only variable mobile signal:

- no planning for when broadband servers – on which the new technology is reliant – go down, possibly for several days;
- the fact that during power cuts a digital phone, which is powered by electricity, will only work if it has a battery back-up. Batteries may not be available, or could run out in the event of a prolonged power cut;
- the impact on telecare device and alarm users;
- the increased risk of fire and explosion from rechargeable batteries.

You can read our article in full at <https://www.cprecambs.org.uk/downloads/voip%20phones%20-%20May%2024.pdf>

A Sudoku Puzzle for you
(solution on back page)

6	2		5					3
				2			5	
5			7		1			
		5				3		9
	3						6	
2		7				1		
			6		8			1
	8			7				
9					3		7	5

Wildlife Trust BCN West Cambridgeshire Hundreds Update: Dec 2024

Supporting people to connect with wildlife is one of the main aims of the Wildlife Trust movement. In December and January, the Wildlife Trust for Beds, Cambs and Northants join other Trusts across the UK to encourage people to take part in the 12 Days Wild challenge. The idea is to do something wild every day from 25th December until 5th January, to help keep nature in mind through the midwinter period. Your wild acts might be about connecting directly with local wildlife, or perhaps an environmental action. You can sign up on our website and tag us in social media (@wildlifebcn, #12DaysWild). Here are a few ideas:

- Visit the Wildlife Trust BCN website and find a new nature reserve to explore nearby
- Go star gazing (our Great Fen project has accredited dark skies)
- Spot tracks and signs of wildlife like feathers, burrows, and footprints (you can post photos on our Monitoring and Research Facebook page if you are not sure what it is)
- Try a volunteer work party
- Submit a wildlife record (visit the website of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Environmental Records Centre find out how)

- Refresh yourself about what you can put in the recycling bin
- Go fungi spotting

A few fungi that you might spot over winter are:



Jelly ear (sometimes called wood ear): a pinkish brown gelatinous bracket fungus, that looks a bit like a group of ears! They grow on decaying branches, especially elder.



Turkey tail: a colourful bracket fungus with a leathery texture, that grows in tiered layers, with rings of brown, cream, red, grey, and sometimes green in older specimens



Candle snuff: a small greyish fungus with a branching-antler appearance. Found on fallen branches and tree stumps



Trooping funnel: pale, with a funnel shape and raised area in the centre. These are often found in rings or arcs on woodland floors.

Further information

- Path and site closures:
www.wildlifebcn.org/explore/reserve-updates
- cambridgeshire@wildlifebcn.org
- @wildlifebcn
- www.wildlifebcn.org

The Wildlife Trust for Beds, Cambs, and Northants is a local wildlife conservation charity aiming to achieve bigger, better, and more joined up habitats for wildlife and people. We do this by working in partnership to conserve and enhance habitats and biodiversity, and through community work, helping people enjoy, understand, and take action for wildlife. The West Cambridgeshire Hundreds are a group of nature reserves owned and/or managed by the Wildlife Trust for Beds Cambs and Northants: Hardwick, Gamlingay, Hayley, and Waresley and Gransden Woods, and Cambourne Nature Reserve.

Stay safe online.

Your editor has recently had an undelivered parcel text purporting to come from Evri. It required me to pay a re-delivery charge online using my credit card – very believable but I'm not expecting a parcel and no card was left in my mail box. I reported the number to 7726 to block it. It seems with all the Christmas parcel deliveries flying around, this scam may be on the up again so take care.

I have also received a phishing scam requesting money and prayers for a "man in Africa who has been diagnosed with Coronary artery disease and whose family can't afford to pay for his surgery". Needless to say, I have forwarded the email as per the instructions below and got a very nice standard response thank you email from National Cyber Security with full details of how to report all types of scam attempts. The BBC recently did an entire week on scams and how to avoid them which may still be available on BBC iPlayer. The overall message was "If it's not expected or seems strange or 'wrong' it's probably a scam".

Please do not be taken in and never give your personal details or card details on line or over the phone unless you are VERY sure who you are dealing with. Don't be panicked into thinking your account has been compromised. Ring off and check using the number on the back of your bank card. If anyone asks you to download something onto your phone or computer to allow them to help you PUT THE PHONE DOWN IMMEDIATELY it is definitely a SCAM. Ask a friend or relative to help if you are unsure.

Report any scam attacks so they can be blocked to prevent other people being scammed.

- To report a scam text, forward it to 7726 and then send the sender's number when prompted. This is a free service, offered by mobile network providers.

- To report a scam call, simply text 7726 with the word ‘Call’ followed by the scam caller’s number.
- You can forward emails to report@phishing.gov.uk

If you’ve lost money or provided financial information as a result of a phishing scam, notify your bank immediately and report it to Action Fraud at actionfraud.police.uk or by calling 0300 123 2040.

Date	Black bin	Blue bin	Green bin
Thursday 5 December 2024	✔		
Thursday 12 December 2024		✔	✔
Thursday 19 December 2024	✔		
Friday 27 December 2024 (changed collection date)		✔	
Thursday 2 January 2025	✔		
Thursday 9 January 2025		✔	✔

Bin Collection Dates

Sudoku Solution

5	7	8	3	1	2	6	4	9
1	8	2	9	7	5	4	3	6
7	5	3	6	4	8	2	9	1
2	6	7	3	5	9	1	4	8
4	3	9	1	8	2	5	6	7
8	1	5	4	6	7	3	2	9
5	9	4	7	3	1	6	8	2
3	7	1	8	2	6	9	5	4
6	2	8	5	9	4	7	1	3

Crossword Solution

Across: 1. Artistic; 5. Lair; 6. Lola; 8. Spy;
 9. Daring; 11. Reckon; 14. Dodo; 15. Ape;
 16 Trek; 17. Inundate. Down: 1. Adviser;
 2. Ivory; 3. Clear; 4. Bison; 7. Addenda;
 10. Goodbye; 12. Every; 13. Khaki;
 14. Dread.

** Web links marked in blue may be followed by accessing Skylark on the Parish Council website. All links have been checked and are accurate at the time of going to press.

Please send items for publication in the March 2025 Skylark by no later than **Friday 14th February** to LongstoweSkylark@hotmail.com

Sponsored by Longstowe Parish Council: website address: <http://www.longstoweparishcouncil.co.uk>