



Starston Parish Council

Mrs Libby Alexander (Parish Clerk) 6 Selwyn Gardens, Pulham Market, IP21 4TR

Tel: 07943 279946 e-mail: starstonparishcouncil@yahoo.co.uk

Minutes of STARSTON ANNUAL PARISH MEETING **held in the Jubilee Hall at 7.30pm, Thursday 22nd May 2025**

Present: Cllr P Astor, Cllr J Broadhurst, Cllr O'Keeffe and Cllr K Ward

Members of the public: 8

Clerk to the Parish Council: Mrs Libby Alexander

1. To consider accepting apologies for absence.

Apologies received from Cllrs C Sparrow and S Griffin, CCllr M Wilby and DCllr C Hudson in advance of the meeting were accepted.

2. Chairman's Welcome and Report (See Appendix 1 for full copy of report).

Cllr P Astor welcomed everyone to the meeting. He gave an overview of events that had occurred in the community and activities undertaken by the Parish Council during the year. Cllr Astor thanked his fellow parish councillors for all that they do in their various positions of responsibility. He particularly thanked Andrew Knowles, who had stood down. Cllr Astor also thanked the Clerk, Libby Alexander for all her work over the previous four years following her recent resignation from the role.

3. To receive reports on matters of interest to the parish from the District and County Councillors.

There were no reports from the District Councillors.

CCllr M Wilby was not in attendance but had provided a report prior to the meeting (See Appendix 2 for full copy of the report).

4. To approve and sign the Minutes of the last meeting held on 23rd May 2024.

Approved as a true and correct record of the meeting.

5. To discuss matters arising from the Minutes of the last meeting.

There were no matters arising from the Minutes of the last meeting.

6. Reports from organisations and groups active in Starston (See Appendix 3 for the full copies of the reports).

(i) Parochial Church Council

Mrs R Cawcutt read the PCC report.

(ii) Starston Jubilee Hall

Mr K Murphy read the Jubilee Hall report.

(iii) Glebe Meadow

Mr K Murphy read the Glebe Meadow report in the absence of Mr P Grimble.



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(iv) Community Speedwatch

No report had been provided. It was reported by residents present that Mr H Websdell had retired and a new volunteer was required to manage the Community Speedwatch.

(v) Pigeon Post

Mr C Marven read the Pigeon Post report.

(vi) Starston St Margaret's Tower Ringers

An update on the St Margaret's Tower Ringers was included in the Starston PCC report.

(vii) The Starston Youth Club

No report had been provided.

(viii) The Starston Charities

Cllr P Astor read the Starston Charities report in the absence of Mr J Taylor.

(ix) The Starston Pealers

No report had been provided; however Mrs R Cawcutt reported that the Starston Pealers met every Tuesday at 2.00pm in the Jubilee Hall whenever possible.

7. Any Other Business

None.

Meeting closed at 8.30pm



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Appendix 1

Starston Annual Parish Meeting, 2025 Chairman's Report

Some of you may remember the delightfully lyrical book and radio series some years ago entitled "Lake Wobegon Days", set in a remote part of Minnesota in the United States. Each episode would begin, "It's been a quiet week in Lake Wobegon". Well, that's rather how I view this past year in Starston. And I say that with no hint of regret.

One disappointment, however, has been the recent departure from the village of Andrew and Helen Knowles. Andrew had been an exceptionally diligent member – Vice-Chairman, no less – of the Parish Council; his contributions at meetings were never less than wise and insightful. And you could always rely on him to be actively involved in any village event – planning, organisation, and often acting as Master of Ceremonies. Fortunately he and Helen haven't ventured too far away, and at the very least Andy has undertaken to come back and help Peter Grimble with the precious bees on the Glebe.

But it does mean there's a vacancy on the Parish Council, which means we will be looking to co-opt someone. If anyone has an idea for a suitable candidate – even perhaps themselves – do please let me know. The only restriction really is that he or she must have been a resident, or worked, in the Parish for at least a year.

We are also sad to be losing Libby Alexander as our Parish Clerk. She has fulfilled her role in a calm and prudent way for several years now, and has guided us thoughtfully with regard to what we as councillors can and jolly well can't do. Thanks very largely to Libby's keen attention to detail, I can report that the Council's finances are safely in order, and our comprehensive array of policies are up to date and relatively intelligible.

Libby has decided to switch from clerking, as she has been for a number of parish councils, to take up the opportunity of a full-time job, and we wish her all the very best with that. We have advertised for a successor, and a number of us are conducting interviews next week.

Meanwhile, our enthusiastic Councillor Kate Ward has assumed the role of tree warden from me, and coordinator of the village litter pick from Andrew Knowles. This year it's going to be on Saturday 16 August, and I really would encourage residents of all ages to participate.

Janet Broadhurst continues to coordinate the Emergency Plan for the village. Touch wood there have been no serious dramas this year – apart from the inconvenience of the bridge being closed every so often. The database that Janet maintains is a valuable resource in identifying the skills or resources that village residents could offer in the event of an emergency. So to anyone who has not provided their details to Janet, I would respectfully invite them to do so.

The Parish Council has responsibility for overseeing the highways in the parish, and it is one that I assure you we take very seriously. The Highways Officer at Norfolk County Council, one Gary Overland, is a frequent recipient of reports about the state of our roads. This past year he has also come for a site visit in response to concerns about high speeds, accidents and near-misses up Hardwick Road. While the criteria weren't satisfied for a restriction in the speed limit, we will continue to monitor the conduct of drivers along that stretch of road.



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We are also very mindful of the issue of speed in the heart of the village, and in particular on the approach to, and even going over the bridge. I should declare a personal interest, as my wife was crossing it the other day with our dog, and Justine was actually brushed – nay bruised – by a passing car that should certainly have been going slower.

I will conclude with a few more positive features of the village. First of all, I'm really pleased that the Warm Welcome lunches continue here on the Virst and third Wednesdays of every month. It's not strictly a Parish Council initiative, but we give it our heartiest blessing, as well as thanks to Geoff and Janet Broadhurst who are the driving forces behind it – and to the many kind volunteers who generously give their time (and more) to make it such an enjoyable success.

This meeting effectively coincides with the conclusion of the landscaping works we've been watching with interest and admiration on both the Glebe and Beck Meadows.

And finally, a brief mention of the village website. We are presently in what can best be described as a certain state of limbo. The old site is clinging on, but hurrah! – a new system is in the process of being developed under the auspices of the Jubilee Hall.

For now, I'd like to thank my fellow Parish Councillors for their dutiful support; our District and County Councillors for their sensitivity to the Parish's interests. And last but not least, many thanks to our departing Clerk, Libby.

PHILIP ASTOR



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Appendix 2

County Councillor's Annual Report 2025

At Norfolk County Council we have 84 councillors who cover and represent the whole of Norfolk. The political make up is 53 conservative, 10 liberals, 9 labour, 4 greens, 2 reform and 6 independents. I am vice chairman of the Infrastructure and Development committee and also a member of the Norfolk Local access Forum. We have 47 libraries and 42 fire stations across the county.

Update on major infrastructure projects, are the building of the Long Stratton Bypass which is progressing well with two bridges in place which will open up for public use during the summer, tarmac being laid and completion of the whole bypass is on schedule to be opened towards the end of this year. We have three major projects being built on the A47, Blofield to Burlingham, Thickthorn Roundabout and North Tuddenham to Easton. All of these projects will much improve the safety on our roads, improve journey times and cut congestion when completed. We also support local infrastructure projects through our popular Parish Partnership schemes and my local member's budget. This year we have supported 97 projects through our PP such as, village gateways, SAM 2 speed reduction machines and improved footways. Through my local members budget, I have supported schemes in Pulham Market, Pulham St Mary, Scole, Needham, Harleston, Starston and Brockdish.

Local government reform update. At the moment, Norfolk is what's known as a two-tier area with eight councils. A county council, which is responsible for key services such as highways and transport, adult social care and children's services. Seven district councils, which provide services such as bin collection, leisure and housing. The Government wants to see all eight councils replaced with fewer, unitary councils – which are responsible for all services. The proposal from Government is to have elections for the new unitary councils in May 2027. NCC currently have a consultation on this which is asking for your views. www.norfolk.gov.uk/lgr

Devolution update. The proposal from Government to have a combined authority of Norfolk and Suffolk with an elected mayor. The mayor would be elected in May 2026 to lead the combined authority which would cover the big strategic services such as housing, regeneration and local transport.

Your Norfolk magazine is delivered to every household across the county 3 times a year and keeps you up to date what is going on across the county, but you do not have to miss out on updates between editions. Your Norfolk Extra is our digital newsletter that keeps you up to date with the latest news from NCC every month, straight to your inbox. Subscribe to Your Norfolk Extra at www.norfolk.gov.uk/newsletters Information and access to all our customer services is also available at all our libraries.

Our local schools all provide an excellent education to all of our youngsters, giving them the best possible start in life.

It's been good to attend many VE celebration events over the recent days, seeing all of the bunting and flags that have been decorating our streets and homes. A big thankyou to all the volunteers involved with organising these events and to all of the volunteers who give up their time to make our towns and villages the special places they are.

Best Wishes
Martin



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Appendix 3

**ST MARGARET'S CHURCH
STARSTON
Annual Report of the Parochial Church Council
For the period
1 January 2024 to 31 December 2024**

**Incumbent
The Reverend Carl Melville
The Rectory
Station Road
Pulham Market
Norfolk
IP21 4TE**

**Independent Examiner
Mr Ben Adams
The Cottage
Garlic Street
IP21 4RL**



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BACKGROUND:

St Margaret's Parochial Church Council has the responsibility in promoting within the ecclesiastical parish the whole mission of the Church, Pastoral, Evangelistic, Social and Ecumenical. It also has maintenance responsibilities for the Church, the only Grade I listed building in this beautiful village, and the graveyard. Starston is a rural parish, covering approximately four miles in length and 1.5 miles in width. There are approximately 350 residents, some of whom do not live permanently in the village.

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL:

Members are elected at the Annual Parochial Church Meeting in accordance with the Church Representation Rules.

Rector:	Reverend Carl Melville.
Wardens:	Julian Lombe Taylor (JLT) and John Formston. (JF)
Elected Members:	
PCC Lay Chair:	John Formston
Safeguarding Representative	Rev. Norman Steer (NWS)
Deanery Synod Reps:	Rev. Norman Steer and Mrs Ruth Cawcutt (RC)
Treasurer:	Treasurer John Formston
Secretary/Electoral Roll Officer:	Mrs Ruth Cawcutt (Flower, Cleaning and Church Opening Rotas)
PCC Members	Mr Bryan Hanner (Verger). (BH) Dr Edward Libbey (EL) Mr Herbert Websdell (Tower Captain of Bell Ringers) (HW)

RECTOR'S REPORT

Over the past year we have been exploring what it means to be *'the heart of the community.'* What really struck me when I arrived here was just how central the role of each of our churches is within the life of our communities. What a blessing that is – what a burden that is!

To aid each church in continuing to be the *heartbeat of their community*, each PCC has devised some targets and goals for the year ahead using these four headings:

- **Worship** – our worship of God is essential to our identity and life as Christians.
- **Telling** – how will we share the Gospel with others?
- **Praying** – how are we prayerful, pastoral and prophetic?
- **Living** – how do we live Monday to Saturday?

These are shared goals between the congregation and PCCs and as such, will help us move forward together as we grow in faith, love and number.

Being the *heartbeat of the community* means we offer a diverse and lively ministry across the benefice. This takes a huge amount of skill and talent from so many people and I am grateful to everyone who gives so freely of their time to ensure Jesus is made known. Thank you!

During the year we introduced the Parish Giving Scheme into each parish. I still strongly encourage you to sign up to that scheme. It ensures a regular income for your parish church and enables us to use the Gift Aid instantly, rather than a year later. We have also introduced contactless giving at Pulham Market, Pulham St Mary and Dickleburgh, which allow visitors to give and ensures we have multiple ways to give in our ever-growing contactless society!

Our Ministry Team continues to provide a wide range of services from All Age, Communion and Services of the Word. As well as this the Team make visits to the sick at home and in hospitals, conduct funerals, weddings and baptisms, visits our schools, hold and attend meetings and provide pastoral care. In October we welcomed Gill to our Ministry Team. Gill is on placement with us as she and the Diocese discern ordination in 2026. I am particularly grateful for the full support of the Team in my own ministry here. We are a diverse group but yet hold ourselves together in complete love, trust and honesty.

Over the year, we had...

2 Confirmations



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GENERAL: (RC)

The PCC are very grateful to The Revd's Carl, Norman, the Benefice Ministry team and to both Julian L. Taylor and John C Formston (churchwardens) for their hard work ensuring that the weekly services are held in St. Margaret's Church.

Thanks also to Bryan Hanner as Verger. Thanks to John Formston, Treasurer, and Ruth Cawcutt, Secretary, who diligently give a great deal of their time to such important duties. The PCC are indebted to our organist Mr. Paul Grimble, who steadfastly plays the organ beautifully for our services.

The PCC has met 5 times throughout the year. The Annual General meeting for the year ended 31st December 2023 was held on 28th April 2024.

Starston Village is currently updating the website, this is being headed by the Parish Council and at a cost, St Margaret's will have a section within the site when it is up and running. All services and social events being held are notified within the 'Pigeon Post' the local village magazine. However, most details are also included in the benefice website.

We are delighted to say that as from 1st April 2024 our church is open every day. There are sufficient volunteers and the PCC are grateful to all those who have offered to help with this task. From the Statistics for Mission report there were 5 funerals held, 0 baptisms and 0 weddings held in the year.

Special Services and Celebrations:

On 10th February the concert postponed from October 2023, due to very inclement weather was held. This featured Mr Simon Limbrick, international percussionist, and the Village Voices Choir was held in the church and was very well attended. Also, in February (17th) we held The Burns Night Supper, again this was well supported and raised funds for church fabric, more specifically the replacement electric heating.

The Mothering Sunday Service was held on 10th March, posies were distributed to those present and also to several people within the village who were unable to get to church.

On 20th April a St. George's day celebration black-tie dinner was held by kind permission of Julian and Philippa Taylor at the Coach House. Numbers were restricted to 30. A handsome profit was made for PCC funds.

At the PCC meeting held in May there was much discussion about how we should outreach to our community. It was agreed that we change some of our services in an attempt to encourage families to join us. A leaflet drop throughout the village was made with an invitation to all to come and join with us. We re-introduced the Great and Small all age worship service in September 2024. Offering breakfast before the service and refreshments after. We have purchased a toaster and kettle to help in our endeavours.

A special church service was held on 9th June to commemorate the 80th Anniversary of the D-Day Landings. Mr Philip Astor played the bagpipes and refreshments were served at the conclusion.

The Annual Fete was held on 20th July at Starston Place, the event was very well attended and raised £1,900 for funds.

On the anniversary of the 9/11 attack in New York, Ms Janice Brook, who had been in the disaster, gave an extremely harrowing account of her experience of this event. The church was almost full to capacity and resulted in £2,168, being raised for church funds. Our grateful thanks to Ms Brooks for this.

At the September PCC meeting it was agreed that our Service pattern would be as following:

1st Sunday – Traditional Holy Communion from the BCP.



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2nd Sunday – Great and Small the emphasis being on Fellowship, Unity and | Love of God.

3rd Sunday – Holy Communion using Modern Service booklet.

4th Sunday – Morning Prayer using from the Common Worship booklet.

5th Sunday – Benefice Service.

The Battle of Britain Service - held on 14th September, at 11.00 a.m. Harvest Festival was held on 6th October at 5.00 p.m. followed by a supper at the Coach House, Starston Place with 30 people attending. Our grateful thanks to Julian and Philippa Taylor for hosting. The Annual Service of Remembrance was held on Sunday 10th November. The Christingle Service was held on 15th December with decorated oranges being distributed to all those who attended. It fell to Gill Shaw (Ordinand) to be the inflated orange this year! A new format of the Carol Service took place on 22nd December, the service was very well attended and all enjoyed the mulled wine and mince pies that followed. The Christmas Eve service of Holy Communion was held at 11.00 p.m. and lead by Revd. John Adlam with Mags Adlam playing the keyboard. John finished the service by heralding in Christmas with a trumpet rendition of Hark the Herald Angels Sing! Christmas Day Communion was extremely well attended and lead by Revd. Norman Steer, with children bringing on of their presents to show the congregation. The Benefice Service of Holy Communion on 29th December was again very well attended. The Revd. Carl's sermon explained the "12 Days of Christmas" and had the congregation participating.

TOWER BELLS: (HW)

Our gratitude is expressed to the Tower Captain, Herbert Websdell, and the team of ringers. The numbers of people ringing the bells has increased dramatically over the past 12 months, which is heartwarming to say the least. Much teaching has taken place with new ringers and fortunately experienced ringers have also joined.

Very sadly, Julie, Herbert's wife, passed away on 8th March 2024. Julie and Herbert had been an extremely hardworking members of the PCC since 2011, holding dinners and plant sales at their home. The memorable Burns Night Suppers held over many years, have raised thousands of pounds for the fabric fund of St. Margaret's Church. Julie was a dedicated Tower Bell ringer for many years and a Festival of Bells was held on 17th July 2016, to honour both Herbert and Julie for their service to Bell ringing. The Bishop of Norwich, The Rt. Revd. Bishop Graham James attended. 2026 will be the 80th Anniversary of Herbert ringing tower bells!

FABRIC: (JLT)

General: The Quinquennial Survey completed in 2022 still has many items needing attention. Although the plan to replace the old electric wall heaters is well underway and hopefully will be completed early in 2025. Grants from the diocese of £7,000, have been obtained towards the cost of new ceramic heaters, which is in excess of £15,000 pounds, including VAT. The remaining items will receive attention when funds are available.

CHURCHYARD –Mr Julian L Taylor (JLT) and Mr Bryan Hanner (BH)

General: Maintenance and grass cutting of the churchyard is an ongoing situation, it had cost £900 for 2024 and we are grateful to the Parish Council for their grant of £500, towards the upkeep of the churchyard. Grass cutting has been done throughout the year with the help of Julian and Philippa Taylor keeping the north end of the churchyard tidy and Mr Woodruffe dealing with the lower end of the churchyard for which he is paid.

Gates to the South Entrance of the churchyard: The work has been completed and a Service of Dedication was held on 21st January 2024.

Norfolk Wildlife Trust: An area of grassland has been set aside to comply with the Norfolk Wildlife Trust's request. This is ongoing

Churchyard Safety: Notices should be displayed at the entrances to the churchyard advising the general public of their and our obligations when entering the churchyard.

TREASURER'S REPORT: (JF)

Treasurer's Annual Report

2024 has been a satisfactory year financially.



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We started the year with liquid assets totalling £25,363 and ended with £26,476.

EXPENDITURE – Specific items.

During the year we paid £3,100 towards the Parish Share.

We also paid £13,665 for the cost of the new wall heaters in the church but received £7,000 in grants from the Norwich Diocese. We have also submitted a claim to HMRC for the recovery of VAT on the project that should amount to approximately £2,200.

Grass cutting in the churchyard amounted to £900

Repairs to the church clock amounted to £2,105

INCOME – Specific items

Apart from the usual items of income we recovered £4,086 in refunds of Gift Aid from HMRC.

We also received £2,168 from ticket sales of the 9/11 talk given by Janice Brookes.

Proceeds from the annual Fete/BBQ amounted to £1,879

We are also hopeful of receiving a donation from Roger Warne's estate in the near future.

ELECTORAL ROLL (RC):

At 31st December 2024 There were 16 names on the Electoral Roll. A revision of the Roll is currently underway and should be completed by the 4th May. 2025.

DEANERY SYNOD 2024 (RC):

RC volunteered to represent the PCC at the APCM held in April 2024. Two meetings were held during the year (April/October). At the April meetings the newly appointed Bishop of Thetford spoke about his first impressions and plans for future. At the October meeting there it was announced that the Revd. Nigel Tuffnell, would be leaving the Redenhall Deanery and that the Revd. Chris Hutton would be taking over. This was followed by a very interesting talk given by Revd. John Taylor on the work of the Anna Chaplaincy.

SAFEGUARDING OF CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS – Reverend N W Steer/Julie Woolterton

My first task is to thank all the PCCs of all the parishes in this benefice; you have made my job easy by working with the Parish Safeguarding Handbook. You have completed your training, although some of you have had difficulties working with your computers. Julie (Admin officer) has regularly updated your dashboards, which have a traffic light system, and has endeavoured to keep them out of the red. It would be helpful and a good system if all parishes looked at their dashboards at their PCC meetings as part of the Safeguarding agenda, and where Red light materials are flagged up, a decision to correct this would be helpful.

Thanks are given to Julie, our admin officer, for her diligence, oversight and essential management of the records. Julie is fully aware of the importance of keeping her knowledge of the 'Safeguarding tenor and principles' up to date and keeping information fully recorded in keeping with the UK Government data regulations (UKGDPR). I mention this because it has meant that the Rector Carl Melville, Tony Gray, Safeguarding officer for Pulham Market, and I can access information quickly and confidentially because of her exceptional record keeping.

The Dashboards are a simple way for the Diocesan Safeguarding team to send information to all the Parishes in the diocese and for them to see that National Safeguarding principles and guidelines have been received and understood.

My role as Safeguarding Officer is to be available to the parishes if the dashboards indicate that there are problems, and help is required to solve any difficulties. This has been working extremely well and has meant that my role has not been too arduous, and the diocese has had no complaints to date.

Everyone has a responsibility to make sure that no one within the purview of the parish church is subject to abuse psychologically, physically or verbally in particularly young people, vulnerable adults and those unfairly targeted. It is worth mentioning that during the year, ex-offenders have been able to join our congregation safely and in the hope that forgiveness prayed for and the road to changing a lifestyle will be the result through the power of God's love

reading Psalm 86 vv4-6 describing God's concern with the vulnerable and as Christians ours too.



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4 Sing to God, sing in praise of his name, extol him who rides on the clouds; rejoice before him—his name is the LORD.

⁵A father to the fatherless, a defender of widows, is God in his holy dwelling? God sets the lonely in families, he leads out the prisoners with singing. but the rebellious live in a sun-scorched land.

You will all have seen, read and understood the book of Safeguarding within your church. I am hopeful that Safeguarding will be registered on all PCC agendas. I will normally be present as the Safeguarding Officer, or if unable to be present, then any safeguarding issues will be notified to me at your earliest convenience. If it is confidential, please telephone or ask me to visit.

I would ask all of you, if you have any concerns about anything remotely or literally, about safeguarding issues, training or your personal feelings, please do not hesitate to contact me, and I will respond as soon as possible.

Finally, you will all realise that further training will be necessary for PCC members after a three-year time lapse after obtaining your portal safeguard training. If the Basic Awareness and Foundation levels were completed after February 2021, then the foundation level only needs to be refreshed. You will be notified by Julie when the three years have elapsed. If you need my help, I can arrange a visit with my computer and your password, and we can deal with the training. I am also trying to get a face-to-face morning or afternoon training session with the diocesan Safeguarding team. I will keep you informed.

I do understand that some of you are feeling that the training is pointless and especially with only a three-year cycle before you need to refresh. I do have some sympathies with that view, and I do know that the Diocesan Safeguarding team are in dialogue with the National Safeguarding team and hopefully a change will be made but at this moment after three years, if you are still in post on the PCCouncil and wish to remain in post the training will need to be completed. Again, if you would find it easier with me with you, just let me know.

DATA PROTECTION:

A revision of our records is currently being undertaken.

HEALTH AND SAFETY: (JLT)

The Procedures Manual is currently being reviewed.

A Fire Point gathering area notice is located on the southern pathway to the church. Fire extinguishers are located within the church.

Bun, Cuppa and Chat – Veterans' Group: Annual Report 2025 – Rosemary Steer

The Bun, Cuppa and Chat Group is open to all those who have served in the British armed forces – wartime, national service, regular, reserve or territorial, and their spouses/partners. It is also open to widows and widowers of those who served. The group was formed in 2016 under the auspices of the Dickleburgh branch of the Royal British Legion and following the closure of the RBL branch, became a pastoral group within the Benefice in January 2024, although members come from towns and villages across the local area, not just from within the Benefice.

We currently have about 70 members, mostly in their 80s or 90s, although younger veterans are most welcome to join too. We have four regular volunteer drivers who take those unable to drive to Bun, Cuppa and Chat events when needed, and about six volunteer bakers who provide the 'Buns' at Bun, Cuppa and Chat afternoon events. About twelve of our members have died over the past year – we have attended most funerals, and several have been taken by Rev Carl or Rev Norman. We have also had some new members joining.

We have held ten Bun, Cuppa and Chat afternoon events (4th Thursday of the month) this year at the Mariners' Galley Café in Rushall, kindly hosted by the owners, Glenn and Amy Hoddie (who also provide the savouries), as well as a Christmas lunch in December, also at the Galley. Between 20 and 35 members attend each month. Revd Norman rings everyone regularly (regardless of whether they come to the monthly events) to check all is well and has made many home or hospital visits over the year. Norman is also available at any time for members needing guidance or support, or signposting.

There is no charge to join the group or attend Bun, Cuppa and Chat events, other than a charge for the Christmas, or other lunches, though the donations we receive at each event from members and from other individuals easily covers our expenses, with any surplus used to subsidise the Christmas lunch and any other extras for members of the group.



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If you, or anyone you know, would like to join the Bun, Cuppa and Chat Group, please contact Revd Norman or Rosemary Steer, on 01379 854245.

Finances: (JF)

It should be noted that St. Margaret's PCC have agreed to hold the money for this group and currently hold £100.00 within the PCC No. 1 A/c.

(sgd.) Carl Melville

4th May 2025

Date: _____

Reverend Carl Melville

Chair of St. Margaret's Parochial Church Council



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Starston Parish Meeting 2025 - report of the Jubilee Hall

Starston Jubilee Hall, which includes Glebe Meadow, entered 2025 in good shape, ready as always to continue its role as a resource for the village, a place available to host private and community events.

In 2024, we achieved our aim of growing Hall bookings, and the Hall continues to provide the venue of the very successful Warm Welcome event as well as functioning twice in 2024 as a polling station. Other users throughout 2024 included the Starston Youth Club, Art Group, the Hand Bell Ringers, the Board Games Group and various groups and private events. The Burns Night celebration in February, for instance, was a great success. While no significant events, such the Jubilee or Coronation events of previous years, occurred on the Glebe, it continued to serve as a highly valuable open space for Starston and nearby communities. The 2024 Christmas tree and lights were spectacular, and though (for practical reasons) the fireworks event organised by Starston Youth Club was not held in 2024, it is intended that there will be fireworks as usual in 2025.

A new charging system, better reflecting the Hall's running costs, was instituted in April 2024 to ensure that rental income is sufficient to help maintain a secure financial position for the Hall. Throughout 2024 we have worked to regularise property title and title registration matters concerning the Hall and Glebe, and we expect this work to be completed in the next few months.

The 'Starston River Habitat Enhancement Project' has begun implementation on site and further details on this and other Glebe matters are provided in a separate report to the meeting. The Hall needs volunteers in order to deliver the service it provides for the village. If you think you can help, whether as a trustee or as a member of our management committee, please get in touch.

The Trustees and Management Committee continue to work to ensure the safe, efficient and financially sound operation of the Hall and Glebe, as required by our charitable status. As Chair of the Trustee group, I wish to express my thanks to my fellow trustees, members of the Management Committee and to the many volunteers who permit the Hall and Glebe to perform their roles in the life of the village.

Kevin Murphy, Chairman, Jubilee Hall Trust Thursday, May 8, 2025



Starston Parish Council

Mrs Libby Alexander (Parish Clerk) 6 Selwyn Gardens, Pulham Market, IP21 4TR

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Annual Parish Meeting 22 May 2025 Glebe Meadow report

Glebe Meadow has continued to be at the heart of the village and enjoyed by walkers, plus their dogs, from Starston, Harleston and other villages. Many access via the footbridge and the stile and some take time out to relax in the orchard. Glebe Meadow is maintained by volunteers in organised groups, by those stalwarts on the mowing rota, and by individuals. It is well established in its 13th year but still needs attention to keep it in its natural state. But big changes are now occurring through an Environment Agency project.

Volunteers

A work party of up to 16 volunteers joined the 'Bash' on 15 March and coppiced willows and hazel by the Beck and under the beech tree and removed regenerating sycamore. The Low Road bank by the footbridge was cleared of scrub and much of the derelict iron fencing removed. Much was achieved and it was good to have some new residents taking part and meeting others for the first time. More volunteers are always welcome.

Bees

The apiary is run by volunteer bee-keepers and the season's work is now full-on. With input from 'apprentices' Andy and Jake, inspections began in mid-March and now need to take place weekly through the spring and summer. All four colonies are looking healthy, three of them huge, with excellent prospects for honey production this year. The first honey extraction is likely to be any day now.

The pontoon arrangement behind the hives has already been in use, not on this occasion due to flood risk but to enable me to reach the higher parts of the hives which, unlike me, continue to grow as the bees store more honey. Honey sales have continued well both from home and via The Green Cupboard in Harleston where local Starston honey is particularly sought after. The sale of honey is providing a significant contribution to Jubilee Hall income and it is good to know that there are nearly ¼ million extra bees helping Nature in Starston and around.

I am introducing others to bee-keeping so if anyone would like more information then please get in touch.

Beck Project

The Starston River Habitat Enhancement Project began after Easter with engineering work in Glebe Meadow to 're-naturalise' and improve the ecology of Starston Beck. Safety fencing has been erected and engineering works will shortly be finished and the top end of the meadow re-seeded. Major work is also taking place upstream and further downstream. In all cases, obstructions to river flow are being removed (including the weir in Glebe Meadow) and the stream bed and banks re-profiled. Low Road is also being protected from being under-mined by the flow of the Beck. The main benefit will be to ecology, especially to fish which have been unable to pass upstream and downstream for the last 100 years, and to the community who should experience a closer connection with the Beck in Glebe Meadow. The scheme was inspired by the Environment Agency and has taken nearly 5 years to evolve in discussion with consultants and landowners. An information board will be erected near the footbridge, and a further board by the main entrance gate once the scheme is completed. In addition to Environment Agency input, project costs are borne by a Defra grant, and contributions from Essex and Suffolk Water and Norfolk County Highways.

If anyone would like to help with any aspect of managing Glebe Meadow, please get in touch. Volunteers are always needed and welcome.

Peter Grimble
14 May 2025



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Pigeon Post Report for Annual Parish Meeting - 2025

The Pigeon Post team of volunteers continues to produce and distribute a monthly 28-page magazine which is delivered free of charge to every household in Starston. It is also sent out to around 50 people by email and is available on-line on the Starston Village website. The magazine provides a mix of local news, feature articles and reports of events in and around Starston and is a valuable communication channel for a widely spaced-out village.

Pigeon Post is an independent not-for-profit magazine. Our main income is from selling advertising space and, not surprisingly, that is a fluctuating income. In recognition of this we are looking at alternative printers to see if sensible savings can be made, as this is our primary expenditure. Once again, we are pleased to have successfully applied for a grant of £100 from the Parish Council.

At the end of 2024 Michael Bartlett stood down as coordinating editor after many years of service to the magazine and I took on the role. We now have an editorial team of six: Christina Greathead, Kathryn Gates, Mark Spiers, Karen O'Keeffe, Tim Kirk and myself. In addition, the core team comprises Crossword & Quiz Editor Chris Doughty, Advertising Manager Liz Stacey, Treasurer Mandy Carter and Distribution Organisers Brian and Christina Greathead. There is also a large and dedicated distribution team and many other regular contributors and providers of moral support, too numerous to mention.

The magazine contains a rich mixture of more formal articles from this council, the County Council and the Benefice, along with contributions from across the village. We also showcase a range of local services and events along with a regular crossword and quiz. For the May 2025 issue a new design for PP was introduced with the intention of freshening the look and making it easier to read. So far, the limited feedback received has been very positive.

With a sound financial position, a larger editorial team and good contributions of content from local organisations and residents we are confident that Pigeon Post will continue to be distributed in printed form free of charge to every home in Starston for the foreseeable future.

Craig Marven
Co-ordinating Editor



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Starston Charity Report year ending 31/12/2024

The trustees met on Dec 8th 2024 and decided to make a Christmas distribution of £80 to 6 people. We were also able to help two individuals who had applied to the Charity for assistance during a period of hardship. During the year we received £1000.00 from NWMoore and Son for the rent of the Charity's land on Hardwick Road. We also received £862.70p from Starston Parish Council for which the Charity is very grateful.

As at 31/12/24

Current account: £8,966.85p

Premium Acc: £78.81p

The trustees were Julian Taylor, (Chairman), Bryan Hanner, Debbie Griffin and Sarah Willett.

Sarah Willett has since resigned and therefore it is at this meeting that a name can be forwarded as a replacement.

I would like to recommend to the meeting that Bryan, Debbie are re-elected for the year ahead.

I make the plea each year to be informed of any person in the village being in need of support, please will you or they contact me so that the Charity can look to give support. It will be done with the strictest of confidence.

Julian Taylor

14/05/2025